

REBELLION NOW AND FOREVER

Mayas, Hispanics,
and Caste War Violence
in Yucatán, 1800-1880

TERRY RUGELEY

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Terry Rugeley



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In all these households she could hear stories of political outrage; friends, relatives, ruined, imprisoned, killed in the battles of senseless civil wars, barbarously executed in ferocious proscriptions, as though the government of the country had been a struggle of lust between bands of absurd devils let loose upon the land with sabres and uniforms and grandiloquent phrases. And on all the lips she found a weary desire for peace, the dread of officialdom with its nightmarish parody of administration without law, without security, and without justice.

—Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo*

If you want a couple of stories, I'll want to tell them to you . . . Frightening things. How many there are, what their forces are, how they live, how they grow, how they kill, how they are driven out.

—Allan F. Burns, *An Epoch of Miracles:
Oral Literature of the Yucatec Maya*

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Acknowledgments

I dreamed of writing a fundamentally new version of the Caste War from the thousands of unexplored pages of primary material available in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and the United States. For that reason *Rebellion* has been less a research project and more a way of life. It grew out of material I began to gather while researching my dissertation, but other projects intervened in the process. More than ten years have passed since *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War* (1996), and in the course of that time so many people have helped me and informed my work that it has become impossible to mention them all. Books that have taken a long time in maturing normally have many debts to acknowledge, and this is no exception.

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regarding the history of southeast Mexico. Padre José F. Camargo Sosa's permission for access to Mérida cathedral archives allowed me to follow the evolving history of Yucatán's Catholic church during the decades of *violencia*. A history that explores the military dimensions of these years would not have been possible without access to the papers of the Archivo Histórico de la Defensa Nacional, and I am profoundly grateful to Generals Jorge Cervantes Aguirre and Clemente Vega García for their permission to work in the collection, together with the professional attentions of the AHND staff.

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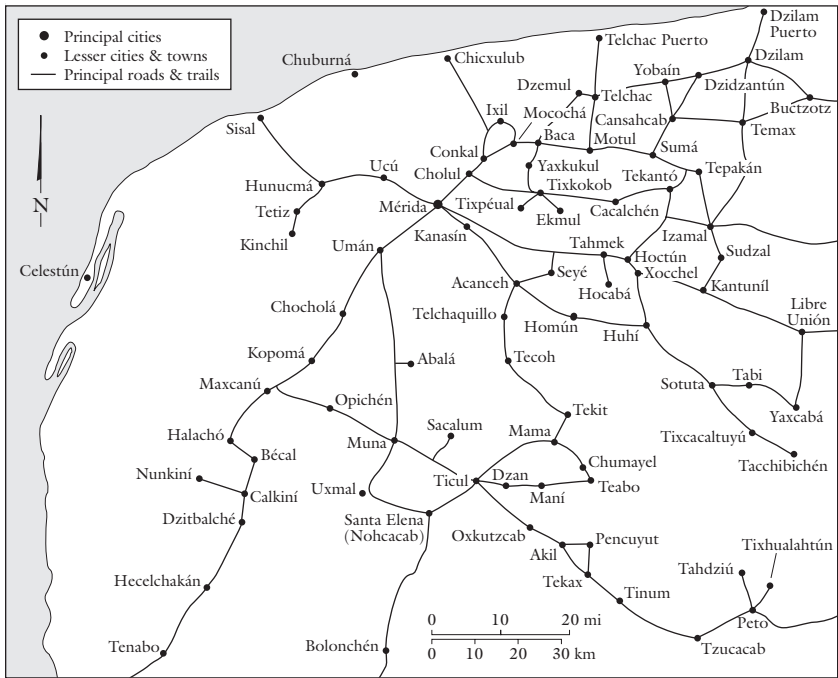
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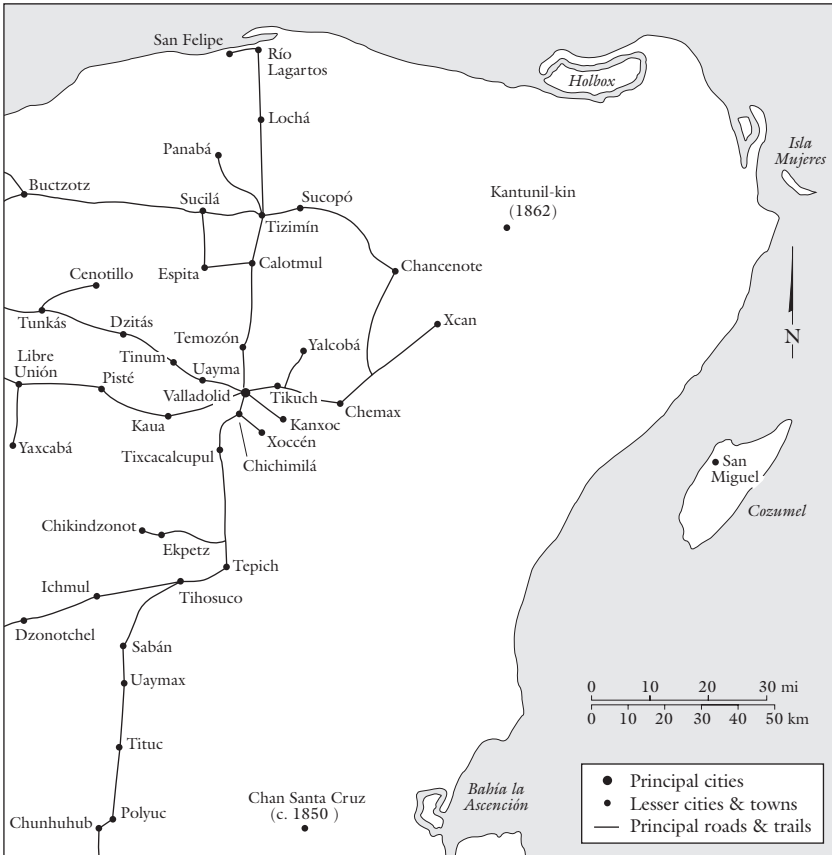
Above all, my thanks to Margarita, who lived it all.

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Finally, a word about a people and a place. For me, sixteen years of research have not robbed the southeast of its allure. The land beyond the altiplano and over toward the rising sun remains a realm whose history is as strange and compelling as the ruins of Uxmal seemed to those first nineteenth-century travelers peering through the overgrowth. There is still time, and fortune willing, I will return to see the reader again someday.



MAP 2
Northwestern Yucatán



MAP 3
Northeastern Yucatán

Rebellion Now and Forever

Introduction

The Caste War Uncrossed



All peoples have their moment in the crossroads. There are those times—usually at hours least expected, in places never imagined—when one step launches a train of events that dominates the historical landscape for decades thereafter. For the inhabitants of southeast Mexico, that moment came about through the primordial disobedience of one Santiago Imán y Villafaña, an irascible merchant, militia officer, and small-town patriarch from the unlikely metropolis of Tizimín, Yucatán.¹ Born with the new century in 1800, Imán grew up as one of the handful of privileged landowners on the northern coastal plain of the peninsula's predominantly Maya eastern half, a half commonly known as the *oriente*. While a young man, he had proclaimed in favor of Mexico's federalist constitution of 1824, under whose terms the states were to govern their own affairs. He married a prominent widow, then settled down to the life of the gentry, Tizimín-style. But fortune had something else in mind: Santiago Imán lived to see his little homeland debilitated by military levies, as Mexico, now under the control of centralists, voided the federalist constitution and launched its catastrophic wars with the renegade province of Texas twelve years later. Dragooned estate workers boarded ships for northern Mexico, never to be seen again; the more fortunate escaped to the woods, leaving haciendas untilled, churches unattended, and taxes unpaid.² Tizimín was rapidly becoming a ghost town . . . and, unbeknownst to contemporary inhabitants, the crossroads of southeast Mexican history.

Rather than accept the continued decay of his tiny homeland, Imán chose to answer political abuse with force. During the summer of 1836, he listened in amazement to news that Anglo rebels in Texas had captured General Antonio López de Santa Anna; emboldened, Imán set about organizing a federalist revolt. He had allies in the key Yucatecan

cities—Mérida, Campeche, and Valladolid—but also in a remote southern town called Tihosuco, where up-and-coming Hispanics rubbed shoulders with Maya bigmen, and where inhabitants resented centralist attempts to suppress their lucrative contraband trade with British Honduras. Unfortunately, several of his recruits panicked and betrayed him, and Imán soon found himself jailed in Izamal. For revolutionaries prison offers the great finishing school: there, without benefit of bed, light, or decent food, Imán's mistrust of Mexico and its centralist minions curdled into hatred. Released in 1838 for reasons of health, he fled to the outback and once more took up his banner of rebellion.³

The fugitive set up shop in a secret location that he styled “the General Liberation Headquarters of the Oriente” and sent out small bands of followers, who consisted mostly of deserted soldiers, to scare up support for his “glorious cry of liberty.” It turned out to be tough work, in part because the rebels had so few resources, in part because Imán himself cut such a soggy sight as Man on Horseback. Severe hemorrhoids often forced him out of the saddle, while migraines, invariably touched off by loud noises such as cannons, rifle fire, or even military music, sidelined him during the thick of battle. Many preferred to mistake his infirmities for cowardice; others ridiculed the fact that Imán, a country man, gargled his Spanish through a throaty Maya accent. The revolt floundered until in desperation the would-be Liberator began to arm Maya peasants. In this instance, charisma lay not with the man but with the message: animated by promises to abolish the hated religious taxes known as *obventions*, these recruits soon swelled into a human wave that flattened all resistance. Imán's peasant army took Valladolid, then marched west to besiege the last pro-Mexican stronghold of Campeche.

This city too surrendered, and for one brief instant Don Santiago towered above his world. His countrymen compared him to George Washington and Simón Bolívar and awarded him the lifetime title of brigadier general. But for the Liberator from Tizimín, there would be no follow-through. He watched helplessly as his peasant warriors drifted back to their cornfields; the *hombres de bien*, fine educated gentlemen of the cities, feared and detested this cowboy liberator almost as much as they dreaded his Maya mongols, and newspapers published satirical poems urging him to lay down his arms and go home to the rancho. In truth, he and his officers were men of action. Clueless in public affairs, they wearied of the endless parade of office seekers and sycophants petitioning their favor: “What a tiresome responsibility is this multitude of employees!” one lieutenant exclaimed.⁴ So too with Imán. Circumstances overwhelmed him; Mérida políticos outmaneuvered him; his Maya soldiers abandoned him. He yielded to the inevitable, but before departing, the Liberator composed a farewell

address peppered with classical allusions, his way of showing the city folk that he was not altogether the rube they had imagined; pledging to defend Yucatán always against “the haughty metropolis” of Mexico City, Imán disbanded what remained of his forces and returned to Tizimin.

Without so intending, Brigadier General Don Santiago Imán y Villafaña had chosen the future. Indeed, the consequences of his rebellion began to unfold even as his dispirited supporters trudged homeward. Mere federalism was no longer enough: dizzied by victory, Yucatecans now proclaimed their independence from Mexico. Separation restored democratic practices of the 1820s, but in so doing reawakened the scourge of town elections and their attendant political violence, as prominent men used mobs to win through force what they had lost at the polls. *Políticos* and their supporters simply refused to behave themselves. Within a few years the deepening violence had corroded its way into every corner of rural society. It spared no one, including the Maya *batabs*—caciques or village headmen upon whom Hispanics relied to carry out much of their dirty work. In 1842–43 Mexico tried and failed to reclaim its renegade province, and to pay off their soldiers, the Yucatecans launched a program of doling out untitled public lands known as *terrenos baldíos*. The problem of tax relief continued; obventions proved hard to eliminate entirely, while state taxes remained sacrosanct. Worst, all of this took place against heightened expectations on the part of Maya peasants who, since the last decade of colonial rule, had come to believe that their ancient burden of tribute and taxation was finally over.

These forces brought disaster. Of all the sad shadows cast across southeast Mexico, none exceeds that of the Caste War. It erupted in late July 1847 and gained rapid momentum in December of that year as peasant insurgents exploded northeastward from Tihosuco and its sister town, Tepich. By spring 1848 the usual limitations of peasant revolt—poor organization and training, conflicting goals, quarreling leaders, and lack of supplies and material—stalled the offensive. The state beat the rebels back, but in the latter’s hour of need, an oracle arose, a Speaking Cross whose utterances have now been sifted through many times. The war raged until late 1852, then subsided. When the Liberal Reform came to Mexico in the mid-1850s, Campeche split off to become a separate state, in turn sparking a series of civil wars that persisted in one form or another for some twenty-five years. The Caste War itself also reignited as Maya rebels, aware of Hispanic infighting and weakness, reorganized to raid the Yucatecan frontier. The renewed struggle grew particularly hot during the French Empire (1863–67 in the peninsula), when Hispanic Yucatecan society made its last serious attempt to bring the rebels to

heel. Armed conflict subsided thereafter, and the Mexican army eventually occupied rebel territory at the end of the nineteenth century. Regardless of the interpretation one places on these events, the importance of the Caste War and civil wars can scarcely be overestimated, if for no other reason than that the years between 1839 and 1876 cut such a bloody path. Thousands died in combat or through war-related hardships; thousands more immigrated to outlying islands and neighboring countries, or simply hid out in maroon communities throughout the deeply forested south and east. Property damage for the years 1840–76 defies calculation.

The wars also inspired, yet distorted, human memory. Through warfare and crisis, the Yucatecans became aware of their own past, but selectively so. To return to the saga of Santiago Imán, the man who had first opened Yucatán's box of rebellion found no gratitude in posterity, only the barren exile of the nonperson. Indeed, rather than commemorating Tizimín's bargain Bolívar, Yucatecans spent the following decades heaping landfill over his legacy. Unknown in greater Mexico and shunned by *meridanos*, the Caudillo fared no better in his hometown. By the late 1870s, as peace returned to Mexico under the dictatorship of General Porfirio Díaz, people had forgotten the name of Imán. Asked to choose a namesake in 1878, the burghers of Tizimín opted for Manuel Francisco Mezo, a nondescript native son and military officer. Apparently no one ever thought of writing their recollections of Imán, jotting his obituary, painting his portrait (no known likeness survives), or in any meaningful way reconstructing his life and career. No plaque commemorates the house that by legend belonged to Imán, a simple two-story colonial structure on a street corner west of city hall. The Yucatecans who survived this half century of violence constructed a new society for themselves, along with an accompanying sense of their own posterity, but for various reasons Imán—and a great many other compatriots both virtuous and dastardly—was not invited. It was a curious fate for the man who had once strode into the crossroads and pointed toward the future of south-east Mexico.

Today six generations stand between the Yucatecans of 1880, to whom Santiago Imán y Villafaña was but a wispy memory, and the living, who know only the bustle and commerce of a town transformed. Tizimín has become a prosperous cattle-ranching center whose jowly steers and vacant-eyed heifers consistently sweep prizes in the state fair. The exuberant foliage of the town's central plaza boasts such topiary creations as songbirds and a playful octopus, while progress beams in the form of banks, pizzerias, and imported clothing stores. Cars prowl the streets like so many contented cats. . . . But peel away these scenes in the dim light of a Saturday evening,

and the ghosts of Tizimín will still return to enact their ancient saga of rebellion and rebirth. Modern Mexico fades away along with the tiresome insistence of the present, and in its place come the people of a century gone by, equipped with castor oil lamps and wooden wagons and clad in suffocatingly proper clothing that refutes the tropical heat. Long-vanished faces peer from the windows of that house on the corner. Soldiers line the plaza, but no one can tell whether they have come here to protect the town or merely to serve as the agents of yet another bloodletting. The atmosphere drips with the condensed fears and anxieties of a people for whom rebellion had become a way of life.

Why summon these troubled ghosts through yet another history of southeast Mexico? Many academic and popular works on nineteenth-century Yucatecan history have appeared over the past forty years, including an extensive treatment of the military events of the Caste War, largely from the rebel and Belizean perspective. Skimming the long list of titles, further study might seem redundant: haven't these ghosts spoken enough? The answer is no, and the reason is a matter of focus. Forty years ago a prophet named Nelson Reed came down from the mountain and preached that real history lay with the Maya rebels and their mysterious and exotic society in the wilds of Quintana Roo, where awed soldier-farmers gathered to receive the dictates of their god of war. The prophet found his adherents. Existing scholarship inclines overwhelmingly toward a type of ethnohistorical apartheid—part of the cultural essentialism that has long dominated Maya studies—and the many writings on the Caste War invariably emphasize the rebels and their struggles. The Speaking Cross has proven every bit as tyrannical to the historical imagination as it was to its original followers, and the story of the rebels of the south and east has widely been assumed to be the critical, perhaps the *only*, story.⁵ In fact, Caste War studies have now reached the curious point of knowing more about the rebels' maroon world than about the larger Yucatecan society and how it pulled itself out of the wreckage and went on. The Hispanic-dominated areas of Yucatán and Campeche were dismissed as understood and in any event not worth bothering about anyway. When historians did choose to deal with the other side of this story, it was usually through the macroeconomic prism (or should I say prison?) of the emerging henequen monoculture, and less through the social and political evolution that accompanied it.⁶

Abundant arguments urge us to look at the Caste War uncrossed. The Reed prophecies thrilled and instructed, but inadvertently created a lacuna of knowledge about the state-controlled areas, which were more densely peopled and vastly more dynamic in commerce and the mechanical and literary arts, and in fact exhibited far greater complexity than

did Chan Santa Cruz, with whom they were in some ways linked. The greater Maya population lived here, not in remote forests. Finally, it was Hispanic-dominated Yucatán that served as the greater progenitor of nineteenth- and twentieth-century southeast Mexico. Relative ignorance about its history is therefore all the more curious and probably reflects the romantic allure of things other and remote. The attempt to understand the Caste War without coming to terms with social and political events of that larger world is like studying the post-1865 North American Indian wars with no knowledge of the burgeoning United States and thinking that such an omission does not matter. How then did a seemingly placid world degenerate into mayhem, and more to the point of this study, how did continuous political violence in turn mold the later southeast? It was a world we think we know but in fact do not.

The misleadingly labeled “pacific” side of Yucatán’s civil wars showcases another critically important dimension: how human beings react to, and learn to live with, periods of prolonged violence. It is a creature with many faces, this thing called violence, with almost as many genres, dynamics, and explanations as there are cases. All peoples have it: sometimes violence promotes group cohesion; at other times it validates power; at still others it assumes ritualized forms that discharge social tensions or enact deeply held values.⁷ To complicate matters, even relatively stable societies can accommodate a high level of violence. Recent arguments for seeing the Caste War as a response to genocide are overdrawn and presentist, since genocide implies a consciously designed program of extermination, something that never really fell within the intentions (or the capacities) of early national Mexico.⁸ Indeed, at no time during the half century of violence did Hispanics argue that the good of the world depended on wiping out Maya peoples. Early Mexico lacked the pseudoscientific racial theories that have informed twentieth-century genocides, even if many of those theories’ tenets existed in an intuitive form. Moreover, no one had the means of promoting or carrying out mass killings. Communications and transportation were inadequate at the war’s onset in 1847 and only deteriorated afterward. Militias remained improvised and unpopular, while overall state weakness—a poorly trained, underpaid, and inadequately staffed bureaucracy—also helped inhibit genocide’s grandiose visions of national cleansing. Finally, the idea of genocide against a vastly larger body of peasants is dubious. Genocides typically aim not at majorities, but at ethnic minorities: Turkey’s Armenians, Germany’s famously small Jewish population, the 14 percent Tutsi population of Rwanda.⁹ Latin America’s neo-colonial elites may have scorned the rural indigenous peasants disparagingly known as *indios*, but these same elites never had the luxury of purging the land of its tillers and tributaries.

A more appropriate comparison might be other episodes in which conflict overflows socially set boundaries and becomes a public medium conditioning many other pursuits and touching many people. In this sense, the civil wars are probably best seen alongside of such prolonged “weak state” conflicts as Europe’s Thirty Years War (1618–48);¹⁰ Korea’s Tonghak rebellion (1894);¹¹ Guatemala’s tragic cycle of insurgency and repression (1944–96) and the grim aftermath that rages to the present day;¹² or the prolonged undeclared civil war that Colombians call *la violencia* (1948 onward), and which has come to lend its name to similar episodes throughout Latin America.¹³ Though terrible indeed, *violencias* lack the overall vision that guides genocide. And if genocides are exercises in state building, *violencias* are rather exercises in postponing state formation, for their driving force is a rough parity among combatants who disagree over what the state should be, who should govern, and how.

Admittedly, every *violencia* is a different breed of dog, and yet they do share a dismally familiar profile. *Violencias* are akin to warfare, but with fragmented combatants and constantly shifting goals. In the beginning a similar constellation of conditions—including a fragmented and impoverished rural society and a crisis among the privileged class—fans isolated conflict into extensive public violence. Weak state control over peripheral areas allows the problem to metastasize, as do easy access to foreign arms and the prevalence of patrimonial relationships in which individuals, not principles or institutions, command highest loyalty.¹⁴ The propensity to force grows apace with social stratification and ethnic separatism—both ample in Yucatán—and when ruling groups have successful precedents of repression; peninsula elites could look back to the conquest and the subsequent crushing of indigenous revolts like the Jacinto Canek uprising of 1761.¹⁵ Moreover, *violencias* tend to run a similar course. Initial triggers to conflict are sudden; their sequels are not, and much of life comes to reflect fear of sporadic assaults. Episodes of robbery, murder, kidnapping, and raiding lose association with a single cause; they themselves *become* the cause, as reprisals turn into hereditary vendettas. Effects of this deplorable situation penetrate upward and outward, informing customs and political institutions alike. Eyes are taken for eyes; draconian rulers seem justified, while fear and insecurity become the stuff of a new folklore. Peasant insurgents or guerrilla irregulars at times defeat conventional armies, but mainly it is poor folk who feel the whiplash of these conflicts.

Although the events just described often appear to participants and historians alike as a form of madness, the use of violence usually has an underlying logic. Calculated brutality establishes control over disputed territories and peoples, punishes opposition or neutrality, keeps supporters in

line, complies with cultural norms that demand blood retribution, or generates uncertainty that actors can work to their advantage.¹⁶ Inability to control conflict erodes state legitimacy, lessens the threat of sanctions, and tempts more citizens to resolve their issues through force. Violent times also summon up violent men, people who in other circumstances might have lived out their hostilities in some sullen obscurity. Indeed, once the old rules have been thrown over, some people discover the advantages to be had in times of upheaval. Violence has a transformative quality, but if much changes, it is also true that much does not. Often some regions and economic sectors remained not only untouched but even vibrant throughout. The human need to hang on to something—to tune out the mayhem—ultimately reinforces selected parts of the old life and folkways. A serious history of any *violencia* must therefore trace the weaving together of different threads: the world before and the world transformed, the things lost forever and the old ways to which people ultimately return.

Finally, the endgame: *violencias* often have no definite or discernible stopping point, but simply fade into some semblance of normal life, and like certain cancers manifest a high incidence of recurrence. Far from ushering in a renaissance, these wars have brought national humiliation: catastrophe for the seventeenth-century German peasantry and the subordination of Germany to surrounding empires; the Japanese occupation of Korea; Guatemala rendered an international pariah state; the ongoing crisis of violence and sovereignty in Colombia; and finally the dismemberment of Yucatán, the death of its dream of national independence, and for many years a freeze on tendencies toward a more racially inclusive society. Early national Mexico's chaos gave way to the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911). Metropolitan histories typically represent *porfirianism* as either an imposition of political machinations from the center or as the tool of an international capital.¹⁷ In both versions Díaz and his cronies occupy center stage, while local or regional actors function only as allies or victims of metropolitan ascendancy. Correlatively, southeastern studies tend to identify the years 1880–1910 as the critical era, but the roots of later southeastern society in fact lie in the peninsula's *violencia*, its own peculiar Time of Troubles.

Finally a word about the ethnicities who fought for so long, the Mayas and Hispanics of this book's subtitle. In the past fifteen years, it has become clear that the term *Maya* is a twentieth-century construct. People of the time were far more likely to call themselves *indios*, which referred to the lower rung of the legal and political caste system; or *macehual*, an old Nahuatl term for *commoner* that gained popular usage throughout southern and central Mexico; or simply “we the people of such-and-such a town.” Similarly, the people here styled *Hispanics* most commonly referred

to themselves as *blanco* (white), *vecino* (non-Indian town resident), or in more poetic moments, *gente de razón* (people of reason). Hispanics also broke down into various subcategories: *criollos*, or pure-blooded Spaniards born in the Americas; *españoles* or *peninsulares*, of purely Iberian origin and birth; and *mestizos*, a biological mixture of Spaniard and Indian. To complicate matters even more, a person's ethnic camp was not always an infallible indicator of behavior or an unbreachable wall. Yucatán, like many parts of Latin America, witnessed extensive cultural borrowing and adaptation. Still, history demands a practical shorthand. For better or worse, we have to call people something, and despite crossovers and linguistic vagaries, the modern terms *Maya* and *Hispanic* did roughly conform to two broad groupings that the participants of the moment would have recognized through markers of language, culture, family ties, and socioeconomic level.

A Yucatecan governor once bemoaned his people's "anarchic genius."¹⁸ Perhaps he put his finger on something, for surveying their world at almost any point before 1880, Mexicans of the southeast beheld what looked like rebellion now and forever, a kind of steady-state chaos that humans were condemned to enact but never to transcend. What they could not see was the way in which that unending rebellion would ultimately transform them (and in some cases, not) well before the arrival of the Porfirian enchantment of national growth and modernization. Pre-1910 belle époque society, often interpreted as a top-down imposition wrought by railroads, authoritarianism, and massive foreign investment, was also something that issued from below, from little people living tiny lives in the remotest corners of nowhere. In the din sent up by the late nineteenth-century steam engines, the revolutionary gunfire, or the traffic jams and gaudy prosperity of the Mexican Miracle, it can be difficult to discern faint voices from a tropical province of a bygone era. But it is all a question of listening carefully enough. In the forests of unexplored documents that survive the years 1800–1880, the ghosts of men like Santiago Imán still mutter warnings that a world bent on bloodshed has either forgotten or consciously chosen to ignore. Beholding the coming of Porfirio Díaz from the other side of history, they tell that the people built their dictatorship brick by brick, and that this is the story of their work, the story we only thought we knew.

Men Newly Powerful

How Pueblo Politics Became a Caste War



In the first fifty years that followed independence in 1821, many parts of Mexico burned with strife, but few regions felt the fire as keenly as did the southeast. The fact was ironic, since the Yucatán peninsula constituted one of the most peaceful of all colonial provinces. Geographically isolated from the Republic, accessible only by boat, the peninsulars formed their own polity and culture early on. Economic doldrums helped perpetuate archaic colonial relationships between Maya and Spaniard, first as *encomienda*, or tribute, and later *repartimiento*, or the compulsory purchase of goods by hapless peasants. Corn, cattle, and honey remained staples, while henequen, later the fiber of fortunes, was only a glimmer in some entrepreneurial eye. Meanwhile, a series of interlocking and often conflicting authorities governed human life: the urban bureaucrat, the corrupt magistrate, the inflexible comandante, the church as both universal highway and local footpath, the landowner's fiat, and the system of Maya community elders known as the *repúblicas de indígenas*, led by the *batab*, or cacique, and inherited from a past that no one could any longer remember.¹ In 1821, however, few intuited the dynamite hidden within this tranquil watercolor.

It was a land of localities and not a uniformity of nation. More than any single point, the grand city of Mérida—*Jo'*, as rural Mayas knew it—incubated the peninsula's political turmoil. Mérida was the center, "the place to which all roads led and all gentility aspired." Genteel perhaps, but the city's well-to-do made it a hive of intrigues; gentlemen seldom carried out their own dirty work, instead relying on the city's poor and artisan classes for acts of intimidation, mob violence, and rigged voting. *Políticos* had plenty of raw material, for by 1841 Mérida already enjoyed a large artisan population. The barrio of Santiago set the tone with no fewer than

forty-one different trades, ranging from carpenters and shoemakers to the less familiar housepainters, musicians, soap makers, and well diggers. Laborers in these male-only callings eked out a living for their families, often laboring out of the home and employing one or more sons to assist them.² The lacuna of records regarding riots and popular uprisings suggests that middle and lower sectors found ways to bear the worst of times, but the precariousness of their lives allowed the tiny political class to control them—then as now—through patronage, propaganda, and simple repression.

From here a wagon wheel of roads radiated outward to secondary towns and subregions: northwestward through Hunucmá to the port of Sisal, south-southwestward along the *camino real* or royal highway leading to Campeche, eastward to Izamal and Valladolid, southward along the sierra to fertile lands around Ticul, Oxkutzcab, Tekax, and Peto. Of Mérida's possible rivals, the first was the scenic port of Campeche, in decline by 1821. Campeche's surrounding area was heavily Maya, and the court system, chronically ill-equipped with interpreters, repeatedly sought employees who spoke both languages.³ Still, Campeche's role as a port focused its attentions outward toward the sea rather than inward to the peninsula's complicated interior. Not so the other great secondary city: Valladolid, the Sultaness of the Oriente. It served as second capital for a secondary polity that traded in sugar, rum, and contraband from the southern border to the northern fishing village of Río Lagartos, and its elite resented Mérida's ascendancy with a rage that only runner-ups can truly understand.

In the countryside a certain sameness permeated economic life. Poor resources had rendered colonial Yucatán a backwater—harsh news for the conquistadors and their descendants, but a godsend for the indigenous Mayas, who were able to perpetuate many features of late postclassic life. And wherever the location, the lifeblood of the Maya peasantry was *milpa* agriculture. In this ancient practice, farmers slashed and burned the overgrowth in spring, planted seeds of corn and beans, then let the summer rain coax out the crops. Yucatán's thin soil allowed only one or two years in a single field before forcing the cultivator to move on to fallow land. Although almost as old as peninsular human settlement, by the nineteenth century the dependence on *milpa* generated headaches of both nomenclature and tenure. To Mayas, fallow land was *k'aax*, and cultivated land *kool*; Spanish-speakers used the terms *monte* and *milpa*, respectively. Spanish colonialism had consolidated Maya subjects into new villages back in the sixteenth century; each town—*pueblo* in Spanish, *kaaj* in the native tongue—had its guaranteed lands, borrowing on the ancient Iberian concept and term *ejido*, and those lands were worked on a first-come,

first-served basis, but also integrating pockets of private property. Some land remained common land, while other sections came under private control. Over the course of the colonial period, Spaniards, tempted by the attraction of urban markets, began to acquire significant properties in the countryside, some within ejido space, others beyond the village limits in untitled land known as *terreno baldío*, and which in theory belonged to the faraway king of Spain. The result was a mosaic of tenure and access practices that frustrated even the most persevering bureaucrat. Some peasants worked village lands; others migrated temporarily to farm distant baldío; still others abandoned their homes but never returned, preferring to build new communities around recently discovered fields; finally, some Mayas worked on a part- or full-time basis on private estates. This hodgepodge of approaches functioned reasonably well until the growing population, together with increasing commercial land usage from 1700 onward, began to generate pressures too great to be ignored.⁴

The majority of private properties were Hispanic-owned, but they also included a small class of Maya *rancheros*, a native elite who tilled and accumulated and patiently built.⁵ Almost everywhere people raised livestock and stole honey from bees, all the time tending corn, beans, chiles, fruits, and tobacco. True, some towns did have trademark specializations. By the mid-nineteenth century, Bécab was already famous for producing straw hats, a fact that owed to the abundant palm fronds and equally to the cool, moist caves where locals cured and wove the palm fibers. Maxcanú was a potter's community, whose craftsmen sold their wares both at home and in Mérida.⁶ Coastal villagers fished, as they do today; henequen thrived in the hot, dry north-center; cotton prospered around Valladolid and Tizimín. Men logged dyewood and mahogany in riverine areas such as the Belizean river systems, the Usumacinta and Grijalva, and the Laguna de Términos region of what is now Campeche state. The deeper, rain-watered soils of the south and east invited sugarcane. The Tekax region was then undergoing a transformation of ethnic composition and major redefinitions of both land tenure and local political structure, all favoring Hispanics but not excluding successful Mayas of the region.⁷ Only the poor roads of the deep south slowed the Hispanic expansion. On the eve of the Caste War, a project was under way to connect Champotón eastward to Bacalar (roughly today's Highway 186), but as of 1842 it had only reached just beyond Dzibalchén, at which point engineers discovered that they had gone terribly astray.⁸ Failure to complete this line eventually worked in the Caste War rebels' favor, since the southeast remained disconnected. The project never reached its goal, but it made authorities aware that small, isolated, and autonomous Maya settlements commonly termed *rancherías* still persisted throughout the south.⁹

The peninsula also existed within a larger web of trade and travel. The major ports sent goods to New York, Veracruz, and Havana, while Yucatecans of the Oriente funneled foodstuffs and *aguardiente*, or cheap cane rum, to the lumber camps of northern British Honduras; the British colonials in turn smuggled in finished goods such as textiles, glass and metal ware, perfumes, clocks, and paper—luxuries that Mexico could not supply at suitable cost to its citizens. Smuggling insinuated itself everywhere; hidden ranchos doubling as warehouses dotted the coastline, and raids on private homes periodically turned up bounties of contraband. The most critical artery was the line of villages extending from Bacalar to Valladolid, and the trade lines fostered a subregional identity that contributed to the Caste War. Finally, the Petén drove hogs and cattle to British Honduras and was beginning to send laborers to the Spanish-speaking logging camps of Tabasco, whereas the latter supplied horses and cacao to its neighbors.

Among the motors of political conflict stood the mahogany boom along the Río Hondo. After 1798 the British established definitive control of the area. This advance, coupled with the departure of the Spanish Empire in 1821, expanded Britain's long-controversial logging practices and opened Belizean commercial ties with Central America. Indeed, the issue of frontier logging rights simmered well before the outbreak of the war. At some unspecified point before 1843, for example, two Yucatecan residents of Bacalar (José Lucio and Crisostomo Manjarres) had sold Belizeans logging rights to an extensive strip along the northern bank of the Río Hondo. Selling mahogany trunks to foreigners was legal, but the state balked at the idea of foreign logging camps on national territory. Referring back to an item of 1832 legislation, the Yucatecan government voided the contract and ordered the Belizeans to decamp; in the future, Yucatecans who wished to deal with the Belizeans would have to cut the lumber themselves.¹⁰ The Lucio-Manjarres project probably reflected a practice that was already proliferating, and the 1843 ruling an undermanned bureaucracy's attempt to rein in logging impresarios. As with later laws mandating the privatization of public lands, these logging concessions merely ratified a process that had been under way for some time, usually without benefit of legal claim.

To the extreme south of Yucatán lay British Honduras and the Petén, the vast and thinly inhabited northern frontier of Guatemala. The region was a flat to rolling forestland surrounded by low-lying mountains to the south and west. Rivers such as the San Juan and the Pasión coiled their way through the hills and flats. The area enjoyed some seventeen lakes, together with innumerable small water holes known as *aguadas*. In the area near Belize, old-growth rain forest still covered much of the land. Harsh sunlight seldom reached the floor, keeping it moist and chilly. The ancient

rain gods were alive and well here; as one traveler noted, “The rain is announced by winds so violent and contrary that they make the timbers of the houses crack; they raise the palm leaf roofs, and it has happened that many of them have been thrown down at once.” The abundant water and shade also produced hordes of mosquitoes, as well as their distinctive gift, malaria. These hardships combined with geography and economic malaise to keep out settlers, at least until the Caste War.¹¹ British Honduras remained a decentralized region inhabited by English-speaking colonials and slaves turned freedmen loggers and small farmers. Understaffed crown officials exerted little control over events outside the dingy port capital. In fact, Spaniards had only conquered the Petén in the late seventeenth century: first, by the Guatemalan president Gabriel Sánchez de Berrope, advancing northward to what is now the town of Dolores; and second, through Yucatecan governor Martín de Ursúa’s conquest of the Petén Itzá in 1699. Political authority rested in military officers titled *comandantes*, and even in the days of the Guatemalan dictator Rafael Carrera (1838–65), that term still remained interchangeable with the proper civilian title of *corregidor*. Yucatán continued to claim the territory as far south as the lake, but actual practice fixed the border at San Pablo Nohbecán (just south of 19° latitude, and well into the territory of modern Campeche state).¹² Doubts concerning the Petén’s nationality persisted: in 1823 factions within the *ayuntamiento*, or town council, wanted to annex the region to Yucatán, but were defeated.¹³ Although within Guatemala’s political domain, the Petén also belonged to the archbishopric of Yucatán, the traditional source of its missionaries. Guatemala paid a small subsidy to support the two or three priests active in the region.¹⁴ But few wanted the job, and it fell by default to untalented and undisciplined men who eventually helped turn *peteneros* into Guatemalans.¹⁵

In all places family life was officially patriarchal, but numerous countervailing tendencies reinserted women into the equation. The family remained the fundamental unit of economic life, and gender its basic division of labor. Maya women raised the children, prepared the food, and produced clothing. Men were more likely to travel in search of land and work, leaving women as the link to a family’s village of origin. The church recognized this fact in the 1770s, when it made women responsible for the service fees in cases of intervillage marriages.¹⁶ Midwives delivered all babies and even administered basic religious rites in the absence of the priest.¹⁷ Prosperous Hispanic women passed their youth in “the most hothouse existence that Europeans could imagine,” but once married they too constituted the true locus of the family. The more affluent Hispanic widows found new life as entrepreneurs, and women of whatever ethnicity discovered that religion offered them a multifaceted role outside the home, so

that throughout the cities and towns pious matrons prayed fervidly for a Kingdom of Goodness that never seemed to arrive.¹⁸

Peninsular ethnic relations defy one-line summary. Regional poverty thwarted the ambitions of the early Spanish conquistadors, who contented themselves to reside in the cities. Mayas, meanwhile, reconstructed their lives but with the additions of European tools, livestock, religious vocabulary, and political oversight. The *batab* and *república* still handled most daily administration. Men practiced slash-and-burn agriculture, hunted, and built the simple homes; women processed the food and raised the children. Though once painted as sullen and withdrawn, Yucatán's Maya peasantry in recent histories appears more engaged. Mayas participated in local politics, and although cautious and stoic as peasants must be, to some degree they warmed to innovations such as commercial agriculture and petty commodity trade, actively defended their own interests, and picked up news (if not always accurate) about events beyond their own cornfields. Between Mayas and Hispanics lay differences of language, social expectation, economic level, and affect; Mayas were far more rural and lived a life more rooted in *milpa* farming, "poor folks" activities, and family division of labor.

But by 1821 the two peoples shared much. Although some 80 percent of the peninsula was Maya, all but the tiniest *rancherías* held ethnically mixed populations. Maya entrepreneurs and small property owners could be found in virtually every region, and the peninsula had its share of poor Hispanics who farmed the land and regularly spoke Maya. Mérida and elsewhere had Maya majorities, and those who could afford to do so bound their fortunes legally through the magic of paper and notarized title, just as their shrewd ancestors had done when the Spanish first imposed their system of rule.¹⁹

The mental world too was a matter of overlapping spheres. Hispanic high culture bore wise men, the learned sort who could expound fine points of legality and biblical exegesis. Meanwhile, low and syncretic culture spawned wonders: stories of strange and forbidden places, of the four gods who brought rain, of ancient ancestors, of men who could see the dead, of the benevolent saint who tucked the village under his arm, and of the elusive forest creatures that, like the jinns of Arabia, could bring riches or rain down destruction, depending on their inscrutable whims. The religion of the cathedral stressed hierarchy, obedience, dogma, and a dour Counter-Reformational morality; its popular foil emphasized celebration, cures, status symbols, the seeing of signs and marvels, and the reciprocal bond between spirits and men. Official religion could not subdue folk heterodoxies, and has not done so in the present day. And yet Yucatecans of whatever ethnic stripe could find one another on a street corner that lay

somewhere between the extremes sketched above. People shared a belief in apparitions; prayer healing; ostentatious public piety; the importance of *imágenes*, or icons; the role of unseen spiritual beings in daily life; a love/hate relationship with the priesthood; and the rough contours of that realm of mystery, the otherworld. People also invoked a common and growing body of stories, songs, recipes, cures, jokes, riddles, and most important of all, *creencias*—beliefs, or more pejoratively, superstitions—that illuminated the secrets of life. No one knew all of them, but everyone knew some of them, and “thanks to the creencias, every man could be a wise man.”²⁰

The spiritual path still lay open for those with the inner strength to follow it. Since colonial times the priesthood had offered a way up for talented young men. The *cura*, or parish pastor, had once stood at the center of an organic world, providing religious guidance, but in practice held a great many more roles: arbiter of justice, lender of money, distributor of information, community leader, and many other things. By 1800 the church supplied few social services, but rather exploited rural Mayas by demanding money and labor in exchange for rituals, dogma, and an unwanted moral scrutiny. Exclusive access to peasant head taxes known as obventions placed curas of large districts among the ranks of southeast Mexico’s most wealthy. Prominent among the estate-owning class were members of Yucatán’s secular clergy. During the early colonial years, Franciscans exercised a near-monopoly on peasant church rents, leaving members of the nascent secular organization to join their relatives in colonial private enterprise. The seculars gradually replaced the followers of humble St. Francis and thus came to dominate both peasant rents *and* many rural estates, controlling the latter through direct holdings as well as mortgage capital. The varied roles of the priest made him a linchpin of the rural economy.

However, since the mid-eighteenth century, the institution had been on a downhill skid. Virtually autonomous for decades, the Catholic Church originally operated through the lean and mystic Franciscans. Spain began to replace these with the less competent secular orders, while at the same time reducing church power in favor of a centralized, secular state measured to the cut of Louis XIV, France’s Sun King. Clerical quality declined as a result of increasing parish populations, poorer training for priests, dwindling parish revenues (mainly from the 1830s onward), and increasing suspicion and hostility on the part of the state. Out-groups learned that they could drum up support by attacking the clergy. Spain’s short-lived Liberal Constitution of 1812–14 abolished forced church obventions, something that appealed to Mayas—and to merchants and vecinos, who immediately smelled an opportunity to get their hands on still more

peasant surplus. Leaders of independent Mexico continued the Bourbon policy of downgrading priestly prerogatives, invoking the *patronato real* (royal right to review church appointments), abolishing tithes in 1833, renewing the assault against obventions, and handing over control of cemeteries, civil registries, public education, and general administrative power to secular officials. Clerical incomes visibly declined after the 1820s. Those who entered the priesthood were less well trained, came from lower socioeconomic ranks of society, and tended to use their offices ever more blatantly as sinecures. All Yucatecans were Catholic, and within the confines of their tiny world, the curas remained influential. And yet to those curas it increasingly seemed that every man's hand was against them, and that Mexico was heaping up sins that the Lord would someday punish.

While religious dualities tinted the cultural matrix, debt conditioned the realm of political economy. Mexico from birth was a capital-starved society, where everyone owed money to someone else. Peons (commonly called *luneros*) owed their masters; masters owed merchants, lenders, and states; states owed pensioners, employees, and the loan sharks known as *agiotistas*. Parishioners owed priests, priests owed cathedrals, cathedrals owed servicers; friends owed friends; survivors and loved ones of the recently departed owed estates, and vice versa. The federal government owed unpayable fortunes to foreign bondholders. Most debt ultimately settled like so many bushels onto the backs of the peasantry, keeping milpa farmers at subsistence levels. In a collective act of denial, Hispanics then blamed them for retarding economic growth by reason of the latter's alleged listlessness and stupidity. The sordid reality, of course, was that relentlessly evolving techniques of exploitation sapped peasants of the incentive to accumulate. Why kill yourself working for what you were going to lose anyway? The system bound everyone in a circle of jealous scrutiny, a condition of Limited Good Credit, where no one could pay off their share without raising the tally against someone else. Capital hunger wrought a profound influence on the formation of Mexico—itsself born of Hapsburg Spain, where debt almost transcended human culture to become part of the natural landscape, like the trees and the clouds.²¹ It compelled human beings to take whatever advantage they could of one another, for, as was said of village life in prerevolutionary China, “Those who did not go up went down.”²² Throughout the long, tragic course of the nineteenth century, the problem of Limited Good Credit successfully resisted all changes of philosophy and political administration.

In this world of want, the natural companion of capital hunger was the cult of the material object. True, nature had bestowed upon Mayab an abundance of fruits and grains for those who knew how to cultivate them;

a single mango tree, well tended, might yield over two thousand fruits in a season. But mangos were not what mattered for political dominance. Because so few people owned anything beyond products hacked from the forest, or *monte*, the few who did used their wealth to awe and control those who did not. Most obviously, this cruel calculus applied to land, loan capital, and control over the state budget, but also included simple manufactured goods. Folderol such as tablecloths and tarnished spoons elevated the hacendado over his dark-skinned prole and acquired a mystique unfathomable to those reared in abundance, while possession of such objects lent power to owners of wretched country stores, making them big-men of towns. The church too owned things: icon wealth, or *imágenes*, but also a variety of specialized items such as candleholders, bells, altar clothes, and books containing precious secrets, and the same reverence applied to land and cattle filtered over to less utilitarian possessions of the divine institution.

In the late 1700s the Bourbon Reforms, combined with a growing population and increased travel and literacy, roused this drowsy world from its hammock. A broad series of initiatives designed by Spain to put the American colonies on a paying basis, the Reforms liberalized economic practice while tightening Spanish administrative control. Growing population also played a hand, as haciendas and ranchos emerged to feed and service the towns.²³ Bourbon administrators imposed new officials known as *subdelegados* (later *jefes políticos*), who circumvented entrenched local *alcaldes*. Simultaneously, the eighteenth century had witnessed a rapid expansion of estates to accommodate growing urban markets. The hacienda originally provided corn and cattle for the cities. The hacendado displaced the doddering *encomendero* as the countryside's leading man of power, and haciendas became a feudal Hispanic umbrella beneath which many older features of the Maya village lived on in modified form. A few Mayas owned haciendas, but were more likely to adopt the rancho, a small, less capitalized counterpart that paired subsistence with commercial production. Individual Maya rancho properties established themselves early and survived all the political upheavals of the nineteenth century, even though information on their fortunes into the Porfirian and revolutionary times remains elusive.

These reforms brought the desired economic quickening, but in so doing they antagonized the lower classes and awoke creole nationalism, thereby setting the stage for Mexican independence. Yucatecan Hispanics were too few to constitute a serious political movement, and to accomplish their ends, they mobilized the Maya peasantry by demagoguery against what had become the easy target, the Catholic Church. Agitations of the 1810s amounted to little more than a weak echo of the national



FIGURE 1.1

Of menials and money. The good things of this world came in limited portions, and with assigned roles: Hispanics owned them, while Mayas did the toting. The following illustrated anecdote by Yucatecan humorist

Claudio Meex gives some idea of the disparities of the day: “At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Yucatán was unquestionably a poor country; but there was no lack of people who had money. One of these was padre Meneses y Tenorio, provisor of the Bishopric and at one time an aspirant to that latter office. Besides possessing hard cash, Meneses owned various estates, among them the hacienda Xcanchakán, in the district of Ticul. In order to enlarge it, he struggled to purchase the adjoining estate Hunabché, the property of one Doña Felipa Pacheco de Fajardo. Doña Felipa refused the persistent priest until one day, out of irritation, she insisted that she would only sell the hacienda when he laid a thousand ounces of gold at her feet. ‘José,’ said the priest to his Indian servant, ‘give the child the thousand ounces of gold in your sabucán [knapsack]’ . . . and the servant instantly poured a thousand shiny coins at the lady’s feet, each one of them worth sixteen Spanish pesos.” From Claudio Meex [Eduardo

Urzaiz Rodríguez], Reconstrucción de hechos: Anécdotas yucatecas ilustradas (1992). By permission of the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán.

independence struggle, but they did uncork the bottle of peasant political consciousness.²⁴ From 1812 onward, tax reduction (or, in its more millenarian hue, abolition) became the vocabulary that mobilized an ethnic peasantry indignant over administrative insensitivity, Hispanic disdain, land loss, and the gradual whittling of the repúblicas' purview. Spain finally exited in 1821 following central Mexico's eleven-year insurgency and the emerging consensus among privileged sectors that independence was the proper and inevitable path.²⁵ Something unprecedented now awaited, some passing of reins from the hands of lackadaisical custom and haughty Iberians to those of men whom the Spanish-American revolutions had made newly powerful.

THE DEBACLE OF DEMOCRACY: PUBLIC SERVICE,
GRAND CONTESTED ELECTIONS, AND
THE OVERBEARING EXECUTIVE

A transition was well and good, but to which men, and of what power? Peninsular political authority originally traced a kind of hourglass proportion: concentrated in Mérida and at the village level, with a slender ligament of go-betweens linking the two. At the top, the capital played home to a governor and his bureaucracy, the bishop's office governing ecclesiastical affairs, and the ayuntamiento. At the bottom, village authority rested in the Maya *cabildos*, or town councils, known as the *repúblicas de indígenas*, and their chief, the *batab*. The *república* collected taxes, kept land titles, dispensed petty justice, and ensured good behavior generally.²⁶ Connecting the two extremes were the parish priests, or *curas*; district taxmen known as *subdelegados* and town-level functionaries, the *alcaldes*; and finally, a collection of merchants both permanent and peripatetic. After 1800 the *repúblicas* declined in power but still held on. State government grew, its higher offices protected by property requirements, but it did not grow as dramatically as the local- and district-level offices.

The struggle for public employment began immediately, when the new state constitution of 1825, borrowing from colonial practice, established government as the region's greatest single employer. *Plazos*, or minor positions, included collectors of rent and *alcabala* (sales taxes), scribes, secretaries, inspectors, messengers, runners of errands, and takers of dictation. Copying official documents and correspondence generated enormous quantities of work, and the majority of papers that historians read today are in fact the handiwork of this anonymous starched-collar army. Humble though such labor was, it stood beyond the technical ability of peasants and

even of most urbanites, and distinguished the professional class from the rabble that it feared and despised. It was precisely the state's role as dispenser of jobs that purchased obedience but also guaranteed rancorous political infighting, a struggle between what one satirist of the times called *presupuestívoros*: budget-eaters.²⁷

The functionary's credential may have sated the ambitions of a petit bourgeois, but propertied gentlemen aspired to something grander: elected office. The greater egos of the small-town patriarchs yearned for seats on the ayuntamientos as testimonial to the public's deference and respect. Officeholders were overwhelmingly Hispanic property owners, even if not necessarily rich. Some descended from old patriarchal families, whereas others, like Andrés Villanueva of Valladolid, rose to prominence through commerce.²⁸ Public officeholders quite likely had held other posts; men such as Pedro José Campos of Dzidzantún occupied numerous small public offices before taking his seat on the town cabildo.²⁹ These bodies drew from an ancient strain of Hispanic thought that saw the municipality as the basis of political sovereignty.³⁰ But their rulers remained sovereigns with unsoiled hands, for early ayuntamientos performed relatively few operations, at least directly. Rather, they farmed out city services to contractors through a bidding process known as *remate*, in which individuals competed for such opportunities as the license to light and maintain the oil-burning streetlamps known as *quinqués*. Remates for Mérida's city services took place in December, with the new contractor assuming responsibilities at the beginning of the following year.³¹ Private individuals also contracted to provide the cities with beef and grain, collect alcabalas, combat plague, jail miscreants, provide lodging for travelers, poison stray dogs, and construct or refurbish public buildings. Municipal contracting involved deeper complexity and greater profit in the large cities but had small-scale equivalents in all the whistle-stops.

For the first time in history, Yucatecans could choose their own representatives. Popular elections were a novelty here, and the early contests for the people's hearts offered some of the most sizzling entertainment Mexico had ever seen. A satirical 1861 poem titled "Electoral Scenes" captured Yucatán's frothy confusion of voting. Serenades, grandiloquent oratory, rival parties marching through the streets, politicians publicly threatening to kill their enemies, unscrupulous journalists hiding behind anonymity, deadly duels with pistols, bespectacled functionaries patiently tabulating votes: it was a cocktail unimaginable to the Mexicans' colonial ancestors, and it quickly proved both intoxicating and addictive.³² Indeed, for many towns, elections marked the first time that any event outside a religious festival had interrupted the crushing boredom of life, and that contextual fact is essential for understanding the magnified passion of municipal politics.

Independence brought the euphoria of national birth, but postpartum depression soon followed. A variety of unanticipated factors made rapid expansion of ayuntamientos a source of conflict. To begin with, the fruits of office were too great to be ignored. Ayuntamientos lacked the power to grant land or to alter state and national taxes, but they provided salaries and contracts, controlled *fagina*, or unpaid municipal labor performed by Maya peasants, and imposed a system of small fees, or *arbitrios*, on items and services of daily life: meat, salt, animals, corn, cloth, grinding stones, and other household items. Like the state-level alcabalas, these taxes impeded commerce and infuriated the peasantry, but were virtually the only way to fund local government. Complicating all this was the weak and undeveloped private sector that made removal from office an economic Siberia. Too many people depended on public employment and revenues to simply hand the game over to some vote-hustling rival.

Despite the century's upheavals, two opposed if vaguely defined nuclei manifested powerful continuity: a more conservative, centrally allied sector with religious overtones and a more liberal, regionally oriented group, strongly secular in vision and more inclined toward rule by lawyers. In reality, actors in the two groups shared many assumptions of taste, class privilege, and ethnic superiority, and it was not uncommon for them to form brief tactical alliances with members of the opposing camp. The early years saw a division of a proto-independence group called the *Sanjuanistas*, together with their foils, the *Rutinarios*; then federalists (the *Liga*) versus centralists (the *Camarilla*); then Liberals versus Conservatives; then Republicans versus Imperialists; and finally one Porfirian clique against the other (followers of the more liberal Peón family against the more conservative Cantón group). Quarrels passed from father to son and thus weathered the passage of generations, and the inability to decide on a course kept the waters stirred.

The authoritarian traditions of colonial Mexico also shaded the process. Prior to 1810, ayuntamientos had existed in larger colonial cities like Mérida and Campeche but nowhere else. Lesser towns began independence with no experience in the give-and-take of democratic systems. Those who took part in the voting may well have imagined some sort of democratic ideal or legal revolution,³³ but in practice were far more interested in special privileges for themselves and their chums. Victors followed the maxim of winner-take-all; losers could eat crow or rebel.

Unsurprisingly, it proved difficult to manage elections in a rural world characterized by deep social inequalities and competing pyramids of patronage. Like the founders of the United States, early Mexican leaders espoused an egalitarian rhetoric that they were simply not prepared to enact. Ayuntamiento positions, together with all of state-level employment,

remained restricted to Hispanics through literacy and property requirements, as well as through the use of an electoral college by which voters selected electors, not the candidates themselves. Still, elections led to get-out-the-vote campaigns of the crudest sort.³⁴ Because powerful families had adherents among Mayas and less-prosperous Hispanics, feuds tended to divide the municipio vertically rather than horizontally; organized by their own elites, Mayas defended the interests of Hispanic patrons. As elsewhere in Latin America, these competing vertical alliances often outranked class or ethnic divisions, as ambitious factions lined up their poor, mostly Maya dependents to vote for them and, if unsuccessful, to revolt under their banner.

The construction of local government may have been beneficial and necessary in the long run, but it alienated the Maya peasantry who underwrote its growth. Expanding ayuntamiento power displaced the *república de indígenas*. Caste War leader Jacinto Pat's correspondence with British and Guatemalan officials offers the most candid statements of the war's origins; it documents peasant outrage over the tide of nickel-and-dime arbitrios that had swamped rural life.³⁵ Undoubtedly it *was* better to create schools, streetlights, sanitation, vaccinations, and some regulation of commerce. But for generations these benefits accrued mainly to a self-centered urban gentry, who also had an economic base in the haciendas that lay in the municipality's periphery. Moreover, exploitation in the rural towns was more naked. The larger cities could manage their affairs on a competitive basis and grew off state revenues, thereby lessening the burdens placed on their own residents. Rural towns had little alternative to such blunted authoritarianisms as *fagina* and the hated arbitrios.

For all of these reasons, the history of local balloting followed a tragic path. Trouble began in 1825 with the reinstatement of the ayuntamientos that had briefly flourished during the constitutional crisis of 1812–14. Enthusiastically received by local polity, these proved to be travesties of electoral process. As soon as a vote was counted, losers did everything possible to reverse the results, either because they really were fraudulent or because the losers found it useful to believe so. By 1830 electoral violence had become the resident demon of the towns and led in direct fashion to the forty years of rebellion. Perhaps, as with El Salvador in the 1980s, the idea of free elections in a nation of hacendados and peons was illusory, given the former's ability to manipulate the latter.³⁶ Whatever the case, the debacle of democracy roiled until the mid-1830s, when centralists overthrew the federalist system and choked down local power, forcing their rivals into hiding.³⁷ Political housecleaning went all the way to the top, with Governor Juan de Dios Cosgaya y Rubio (1777–1844) banished to the pestilent prison of San Juan de Ulúa, in Veracruz.³⁸

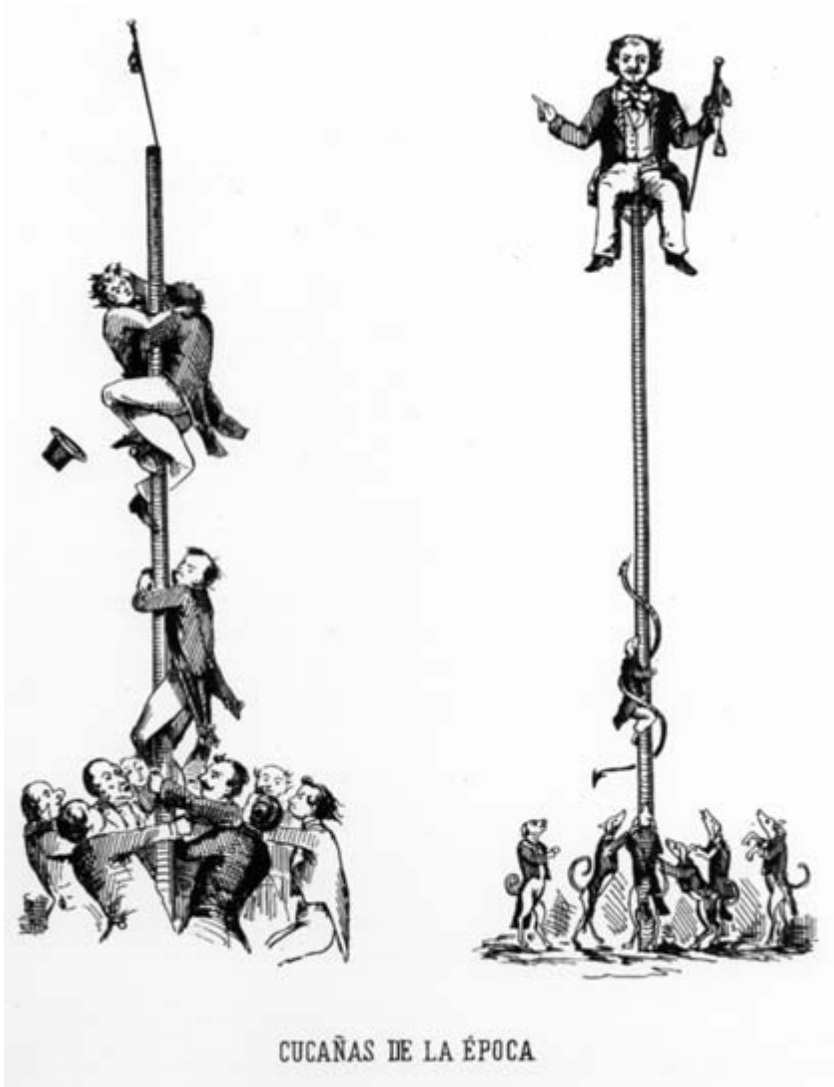


FIGURE 1.2

“Cucañas de la época,” or climbing the political pole. The state was the main employer of the educated classes, and obtaining public office involved cutthroat competition. It was a struggle to get to the top of the heap, but once there, the winner was guaranteed the false deference of patronage seekers. From the satirical newspaper La burla (1860). By permission of the Centro de Apoyo para la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán.

Ayuntamientos enjoyed special access to revenues, and their title of membership carried that prestigious flavor that small-town aristocrats craved. But they were not the true hubs of rural power. They contained too many people, were too unpredictable and too disconnected from Mérida, and most fundamentally opposed traditions of top-down rule. Out of the womb of these concerns sprang an executive who became the linchpin of rural governance: the *jefe político*. Appointed by the governor, each ruled his district through an administrative apparatus known as the *jefatura*. During periods of centralist, Conservative, and later imperial authority, the term *prefecto*, or prefect, often substituted, but regardless of political philosophy, the job description remained similar. In theory, these subregional princelings governed process rather than people. They were to stand above the flow of events, interceding when mechanisms such as magistrates, *alcaldes*, ayuntamientos, *batabs*, and *repúblicas* failed to meet expectations. Complaints went to the jefe for investigation, and he was free to remove the individual in question and, pending final approval from the governor, appoint a successor. Responsibilities also included overseeing elections, censuses, passports for domestic travel, tax collection, and communication of information.³⁹ This latter item made jefes the conduit through which official tidings reached the village *alcaldes*, but it also converted jefes into the eyes of the czar, reporting on any suspicious or dissident activity found in their districts. Thus began a tradition of internal espionage that is alive and well in modern-day Mexico.

Both the system and its crisis were a long time in developing. The jefe's office did not form part of the original political landscape, at least in name, for in 1824 the Yucatecan congress abolished the *jefaturas* and concentrated executive power in the state's *secretaría de gobierno*; underneath him stood a pyramid of employees known as *subsecretarios*, for which positions former members of the *jefatura* system received preference.⁴⁰ These figures generated little paperwork. Most daily functions of town and village remained in the hands of the *subdelegado*, a position that had emerged in the Bourbon era, gradually displaced other political authorities, and eventually grew into the jefe político. Officially, the *subdelegado*'s powers were limited to such matters as collecting the *alcabalas*, renting out public lands known as *terrenos baldíos*, and collecting the state head tax (*contribución*).⁴¹ But the *subdelegados*' purview grew by their frequent simultaneous appointment as *juez de paz*, or magistrate. The senate designated them for both positions for terms of four years. If serving only as *subdelegado*, they could be reappointed indefinitely; if serving as both, their appointment was limited to one consecutive term, with another term possible four years later.⁴² These latter articles

were after-the-fact additions and probably represented the congress's way of imposing some sort of restraint over local politics.

The change to *jefes políticos* came in 1834–35 during the initial triumph of Mexican centralism.⁴³ The office of subdelegado continued, but henceforth was limited to tax collection. By 1837 the system included twenty different *jefes* distributed over the five *partidos*, or districts, of Campeche, Izamal, Mérida, Tekax, and Valladolid.⁴⁴ Triumphant federalists enshrined the office in their 1841 constitution, restricting the job to literate men who enjoyed an annual income of three hundred pesos, a goodly sum at a time when peasants paid an annual (and onerous) head tax of one peso.⁴⁵ Each of the five *partidos* now had a *jefe superior*, its major towns had their *jefes políticos*, and secondary communities their *subalternos*, or assistants. *Jefes* received broad powers and two-year renewable appointments.⁴⁶

Who were they? *Jefes* hailed almost exclusively from wealthy and well-established families, cut from the same cloth as the earlier subdelegado. Men who claimed the title included Agustín Acereto, the caudillo who dominated eastern politics from the 1830s until his death at the hands of the Liberal army in 1861. Another fairly well-documented *jefe* was Juan Pío Pérez y Bermón, who served in Peto from 1841 until 1847. Today remembered as an amateur linguist who amassed an important Maya-language dictionary, in his own day Pérez was better known as the brother-in-law of magnates Simón and Felipe Peón.⁴⁷ Property owner Pedro A. Lara repeatedly served as *jefe* in the region of Bolonchén and Hopelchén, and along with four other families, controlled local government.⁴⁸ In almost all cases, *jefes* came from the landowning class, enjoyed valuable family connections, were literate, and had demonstrated their loyalty to the party of the moment.

Experience was the key qualification for this post. Early national Mexico lacked electoral experience, but its lower- and mid-level bureaucracies were well developed and reveal considerable continuity before and after independence. Most men who applied for larger office in 1825—including subdelegado—were actually looking for reappointment to a position that they had held for anywhere from four to twenty years. José María Echeverría began his life as a bureaucrat in 1802, holding some eight different offices before 1825.⁴⁹ Joaquín Bolio, subdelegado and juez primera of Sotuta, worked as a functionary in Hacienda from an early age and went on to serve in various interim commissions in Tihosuco, Sotuta, and Tecoh; these included port authority in Ascención Bay, where he dealt extensively with the Belizeans. By 1825 he had accumulated forty-eight years in public service, but with the Beneficios Bajos region flogged by smallpox and grain shortages, Bolio managed to secure a transfer to the

subdelegación (tax district) of Peto.⁵⁰ An even clearer service record is that of Eusebio Castellanos, who began as *alcalde* of Tekax and *juez primero* of the Sierra Alta in 1821. His crowning glory had been to repair roads and to complete the city jail: spacious and comfortable, he noted, and with a chapel for praying prisoners. In his mind the citizens of Tekax also owed him for their vegetable market, whose six stately arches made buying tomatoes a pleasure. All the while Castellanos had also managed to hold down the simultaneous positions of militia captain and elector and had carried out numerous ad hoc commissions in nearby communities. He came recommended with letters from *ayuntamientos* of twelve Sierra Alta communities, each with Maya and Hispanic representation.⁵¹

The right political credentials also mattered. Article 137 of the 1825 constitution stipulated that would-be officeholders had to have followed Iturbide's Plan de Ayala in 1821. Felipe de Aguilar, seeking the *subdelegación* of Seibaplaya, noted that he had led the "heroic cry of independence" in Campeche in 1821.⁵² Most gave only passing mention to Iturbide or his plans, an indication of how peripheral their involvement in such events really was. Others minced no words about public office as a political bone. Juan Crisostomo Sosa, owner of a soap factory and distillery in Campeche, thought he deserved the *subdelegación* of Bolonchén simply because he had been politically harassed during one of the quarrels of 1824, when soldiers entered his house and robbed him. The position was denied: either this sort of demand was seen as frivolous, or else Sosa's politics continued to be his downfall.⁵³

Far more important stood the matter of military service. The Bourbon decades had created a mass of militia ranks (discussed below) that demanded skills later valuable to public office, including discipline, loyalty, organization, communication skills, ability to lead and obey, and a sharply defined consciousness of the state as an entity that needed to be cultivated and defended. José de la Luz Andrade, seeking the *subdelegación* and *primer juzgado* of Peto, had served as *capitán* at the port of Ascención.⁵⁴ José María Campa of Seibaplaya occupied numerous posts in the years 1810–25, but he preened himself mostly on having prosecuted, while *comandante militar*, the incessant piracy and smuggling along the peninsula's western coast.⁵⁵ Others, like Juan Pablo Talavera, were retired military officers. Some even saw public office as a hereditary perk for the military service of some ancestor: Mauricio Canto's father had fought with Spain in its ill-fated attack on St. George's Cay in 1789; Spanish loss guaranteed British sovereignty in Belize, but the elder Canto received a job as doorman for Mérida's *ayuntamiento*, and Mauricio expected this work to translate into a corresponding position for him in the state senate.⁵⁶

By 1825 state offices were filling up with men who would dominate southeast politics for the next fifty years. Among the state-level leaders were Gerónimo Castillo, Francisco Martínez de Arredondo, Manuel Palomeque, Crescencio José Pinelo, and Policarpo Echánove. Locally based bigmen included Claudio Padilla (Yaxcabá), Juan Pablo Talavera (Dzitbalché, and later, Ticul), and Esteban García (Bacalar). But for every successful officeholder, dozens of other job seekers failed for lack of family pedigrees or distinguished service records; their petitions amounted to little more than a family man's pleas for mercy and employment.

Political power had a series of dynamics all its own. Rural society remained a patchwork of diverse customs, dispersed populations, and rival institutions. Poor communication and transportation provided little to link communities to one another, and the scant degree of national culture that did exist was insufficient to cobble together their disparate parts. To make this system work somehow meant a gradual expansion of some sort of executive political authority directly answerable to the state. Step by step, then, the subdelegado's authority extended itself into additional realms. To ensure timely tax collection, for example, he had to reduce people into accessible settlements; hence, the subdelegado received the authority to relocate people, mostly Maya peasants who had moved into the monte in search of cultivable lands.⁵⁷ More critical was the control of the ayuntamiento, for these bodies carried the danger of flouting or frustrating state- and even national-level power and needed watching.

Significantly, jefes almost never made it to the top of the political ladder. One of the few documented exceptions in pre-porfirian years—again, Agustín Acereto—rose to the governorship through armed revolt, and his administrations (1859–60, 1860–61) proved fiascos, partly because Mérida elites refused to accept an outsider.⁵⁸ The best analogy here may well be Mexican politics of the 1980s and 1990s: higher office was reserved for foreign-educated technocrats, who in turn formed alliances with brass-knuckled fixers in the states. The office of jefe político was therefore not a grooming station for state governorship, and few transcended the status of operative. Instead, gubernatorial candidates emerged from wealthy metropolitan families and rose through an apprenticeship in the upper executive or congressional branch, or, like Liborio Irigoyen, through the state judiciary. Although the term was seldom used in those days, actual practice then as now included *camarillas*, or pyramids of patrons and clients, that rallied under the banner of their top man in order for all to advance together. Jefes typically owned their position to the favor of their camarilla leader.

Still, jefes wielded broad and elastic power in their turfs. They influenced the militias, since they bore the responsibility of organizing

elections for officers of each company after the Imán revolt, a point explored in greater detail below.⁵⁹ Most important, they controlled the peasantry by managing taxes and the public labor systems, supervising elections of the *ataba* and *república*, and overseeing the gradual survey and privatization of public land. Through their *subalternos* and *alcaldes* they set up constabularies, arrested drunks, and made certain that peons remained on their estates.⁶⁰ At least in later years, *jefes* had the responsibility of riding circuit within their district. Citizens discontented with a *jefe's* performance had one basic recourse, which was to appeal to the governor himself, and many such appeals do exist. Still, it was far more common to confront him through petty acts of resistance such as non-compliance.

Regardless of its intent, the *jefatura* system suffered from a problem that has dogged Mexico from its inception. Like all powerful executive branches, *jefes* supposedly existed to put things right, but a state strong enough to rectify was also powerful enough to manipulate. *Subdelegados* began the tradition; as in 1830, when Imán's centralist foil Roberto Rivas used the office to hound enemies on trumped-up charges.⁶¹ Thereafter, *jefes* remained a mechanism not for realizing desires and initiatives from below, but rather for imposing them from above. After 1834 *jefes* enforced laws prohibiting reelection of those who had been removed from office, a bald attempt to ostracize federalists.⁶² *Jefes'* purview specifically enjoined them to preside over the *ayuntamientos* and to see that these bodies "fulfilled their obligations."⁶³ If other political figures tended to assume the lead roles in teapot tempests, *jefes* dealt in the larger picture. Their interventions usually involved state politics, and their loyalty was key to the survival of governments. *Ayuntamientos* resented the *jefes* and their strong-arming. Finally, the office invited malfeasance and double-dipping. A *jefe* received an annual budget of only five hundred pesos, a sum that no one could have believed sufficient; rather, in a tradition as old as the Roman *proconsuls*, it was understood that the *jefe* would discreetly work the office to his own benefit.⁶⁴

The *jefe's* word was a powerful word, but in reality few men ever heard it directly. Community-level authority usually came filtered through an operative: at times through the *jefe político subalterno*, a community-based assistant, or more frequently the *juez de paz*. More than any other functionary, it was these individuals who served as the villains of a thousand small-town tragedies and petty intrigues. Like Tennyson's Ulysses, it must have seemed to them that it was their fate to "dole out unequal laws unto a savage race." The *juces*, or magistrates, had to unravel all the contorted tangles of daily life: land quarrels, domestic violence, bad debts, street brawling, public intoxication, infidelity, and custody disputes were only

the most prominent. Jueces and subalternos investigated murders and suicides, identified the occasional dead body floating in a cenote (usually a drunk who had fallen in and drowned), and evaluated counterfeit money and paperwork. Finally, the juez oversaw the cleaning of public plazas, the opening of roads, and the carrying-out of any other public works decreed by the ayuntamiento. Unlike the jefe político, the juez was exclusively local in power, the visible face of justice in a land of scofflaws; he ruled people and not process, and for that reason was hated. The ayuntamiento of Chanceno bristled when subalterno Miguel Cámara publicly called them rogues, thieves, birds of prey, and *melem keps*, Maya for “little pricks.”⁶⁵ Melem keps or not, the antagonism was built into the situation of ostensible democracy that was in reality manipulated by an overbearing executive branch.

Ethnicity strongly tinted the job, largely because pre-Caste War jueces were selected by popular vote. Jueces tended to be Hispanic, but Mayas had made some headway in the position under the years of Centralism (something of an anomaly for a movement that tried to reconcentrate power in gentlemanly hands). This arrangement mainly held true for small communities that lacked other options. Maya jueces labored in at least eight communities in 1837–39, along with Maya *supplentes*, or backups, in ten others.⁶⁶ It is also a fact that both jefe and juez had certain limitations in their dealings with the people. Chief among these was the fact that in rural areas Maya folk belief often prevailed over official versions of reality, and thus had to be taken into account. If enough people *believed* something was true, then in some strange way it was, whether the juez chose to accept it or not. Small cases of this phenomenon surface periodically. Rumors of tax abolition, cases of peasant wishful thinking that bordered on the millenarian, flourished during the years 1812 through 1847. Administrators spent valuable time trying to lay these and other beliefs to rest. In 1846, on the eve of the Caste War, rumors erupted in one of the war’s genesis towns (Tixcacalcupul) that a winged serpent was terrifying the local ranchos.⁶⁷ The case was small enough to quash, but other instances were more complex, particularly when they touched upon the subterranean world of intravillage feuds and factionalism, and these had the potential for hijacking the juez’s life and authority altogether.

No better example of popular limitation exists than the story of the witches of Tekantó. Here, as in many parts of the world, witchcraft functioned as an objectified form of life’s everyday frictions: a cow did not simply die, but rather did so because someone had *made* it die through application of the malevolent arts. Trouble began in Tekantó in 1854 when a number of Maya townsfolk began to suffer mysterious maladies: a curious numbness and inflammation of the arm, along with two strange marks on

the wrist, as though some fanged monster had sucked their blood as they slept. The victims came to suspect that their in-laws (villains in so many village conflicts) had been casting strange herbs into their cornmeal. The community knew witchcraft when they saw it and demanded that the local juez, Simón Buenfil, do something. Buenfil was a recent appointee, and though skeptical of the charges, he remained on thin ice in terms of local support. He had no choice but to arrest the accused parties, interrogate them under torture of chile smoke, and in an exercise designed to frighten her into better behavior, chained one accused woman in a graveyard overnight. The case eventually bogged down in counteraccusations and was dismissed.⁶⁸ What is clear is that despite the newly invested power of the *jefes* and *jueces*, the state had circumscribed ability to alter the cultural assumptions under which it operated.

Despite the ever-present threat of witches, Mexico began with hopes for a broader distribution of political power: broader in concept, with some form of popular election, and broader in geography, with rights and purviews increasingly reserved for regional capitals and small-town bodies. *Ayuntamientos* were displacing the *batabs* and *repúblicas*, but not entirely, given the fact that huge sectors of the population remained culturally and linguistically inaccessible to Hispanic authority. The instability of the 1840s onward did not owe to bureaucratic inexperience, at least; by 1825 the public servants of the southeast had several decades of experience in administrative positions, and the history of early national functionaries reveals continuity, not change. Office holding rested on education, property, prior service, and political loyalty, and for the next six decades, bureaucratic continuity fostered persistence in political culture despite changes of party and philosophy. Determining leadership proved more controversial, and the selection process suffered from an authoritarian tradition of winner-take-all and an intolerance for opposition. Both tendencies in some way traced back to conditions of scarcity. The region's weak private sector tempted power holders to regard opposition as a criminal act. Attempts at elections provoked violence among a people unaccustomed to democratic process and with profound social inequalities, and to maintain peace it became necessary to foster an executive level midway between town and governor, and therein lay the problem.

ARMS AND THE MÁAKO'OB: THE MILITIAS FROM COLONIAL TIMES ONWARD

There were other men here who wore still other faces of power. A second institution dedicated to the accumulation and defense of power was the

military. Virtually nonexistent until the mid-eighteenth century, militias blossomed as a result of Spanish imperial concerns over foreign encroachment. Their seminal role in southeast history merits reconstruction, particularly since that role has been so neglected.

Yucatán's history of arms presents a modified version of the national experience. Decried as a response to British victories during the Seven Years' War (1756–63), the army of Bourbon Mexico spun out of the design of subinspector-general Colonel Francisco Crespo.⁶⁹ Peninsular Spaniards occupied top command positions of the resulting provincial militias. Aspiring creoles purchased their way into the secondary officers' level, whereas the rank and file consisted mainly of artisan-class *mestizos*.⁷⁰ This new insertion into Mexican society coexisted uneasily with older institutions, such as *curas*, *subdelegados*, merchants, and peasant communities. Bourbon officers also served as a means of transferring Enlightenment ideas throughout New Spain.⁷¹ Military commanders were among the few educated individuals not brought up in the archaic bosom of theology, and they often sneered at the church, yesteryear's partner in colonialism. Despite organizational weaknesses and a nascent ethos of creole nationalism, the army remained loyal until 1821, crushing both the Hidalgo and Morelos insurgencies. Over time, ambitious creoles such as Agustín de Iturbide, men of essentially Bourbon mentality, worked their way into the higher circles of command, and the institution lived on to become a hallmark of post-Independence Mexico.⁷²

Yucatecans participated in this buildup. They too steeled themselves against the invasion that never came, but when scanning the horizon from coastal watch points known as *vigías*, they were far more likely to contend with pirates, whether the sea dogs of legend or mere smugglers and contraband loggers.⁷³ In fact, one of the age's greatest corsairs, larger-than-life Jean Lafitte, is believed to have died and been buried near the Yucatecan port of Dzilam Bravo, but less illustrious competitors worked the same area.⁷⁴ There was a steady late-eighteenth-century military buildup near Bacalar, the southernmost outpost of peninsular society, in order to prevent or even reverse British encroachment into British Honduras. After a failed attack on St. George's Cay in 1798, Spaniards accepted the British presence, but Bacalar remained an important outpost in late colonial and early national times.⁷⁵ Occasional and rather atavistic pirate raids persisted into the 1830s,⁷⁶ but smuggling now formed the greater problem by far. As the Belizean mahogany industry expanded in the early nineteenth century, Bacalar also came to serve as a funnel to Yucatecan products. The villages and mule team trails leading from Bacalar northward to Valladolid became a scene of separate polity and political economy whose attempts to free itself from Mérida control helped precipitate the Caste War of 1847.⁷⁷

Maya cultural legacies notwithstanding, many of the features of the later rebel society were already in place in Bacalar by 1800. These included a standing military, martial law, soldiers who worked their own milpa, trade with farmers farther to the north, British Honduran contraband, and a passport system for transit in and out of the area.⁷⁸ Seen thus, Chan Santa Cruz was less the pre-Columbian atavism fêted in romantic literature, and more a peasant amalgam of earlier experiences with village government, the parish church, and above all the militias themselves—features cobbled together to confront an ethnically exclusionary state.

The militias outlived Spain's American empire. Yucatecan units grew in the years 1811–21 with the Morelos insurgency and briefly changed their titles to *milicias imperiales* under the short-lived reign of Agustín de Iturbide.⁷⁹ When Emperor Agustín I fell in 1823, they became the Active Battalions or Active Militias: the first such battalion in Mérida, the second in Campeche, and the third in Tizimín, with military outposts in Bacalar and assorted other points. Battalions divided into five or six companies, each with a commander, a handful of officers, and some one hundred enlisted men. Though far from splendid, the units did provide the men with rifles, bayonets, ammunition, and simple uniforms that consisted of shirts, short pants, caps, and even neckties.⁸⁰ Each unit contained a nucleus of seasoned militiamen, surrounded by a group doing much shorter service. As in other parts of Mexico, socioeconomic differences separated soldiers from the upper officers.⁸¹

By 1800 a core of professional soldiers had already worked their way up the ranks. Pension requests from 1841 reveal that most soldiers had signed on at the ages of sixteen to twenty-one (and sometimes younger) and served for eighteen to thirty-five years.⁸² Those who did become officers usually hailed from mid-level to prosperous families and underwent a period of military apprenticeship in which they were titled *cadets*. Little is known of their training, except that it began around the age of thirteen or fourteen, earlier than that of enlisted men. Their military education involved composition, mathematics, and physical education, along with routine evaluations of character. Later (in the 1840s) battalions had teams composed of a first and second instructor of captain rank, together with a full lieutenant and sublieutenant as their assistants. Beyond the incentives of pay prestige, a military tradition prevailed among certain families—the Badillo, Cepeda, and Carrillo clans spring to mind—that helped keep the institution alive.⁸³

Two bright novas of the Yucatecan military were Sebastián López de Llergo y Calderón and José Cadenas de Llano. Born in Campeche in 1790, López shimmered with all the glory of the Bourbon militias. He had entered a battalion in 1811 and had fought against the Morelos insurgency. Throughout his life he changed allegiances various times: a

centralist under Campeche strongman General Francisco de Toro in 1834, a federalist alongside Santiago Imán and during Mexico's ill-fated invasion of Yucatán in 1842–43, but a centralist again thereafter.⁸⁴ Yucatán's other senior officer, Cadenas de Llano, who held the title of brigadier general of the Mexican Republic, was the son of peninsular Spaniards, and José himself may have been a peninsular by birth, for his brother Mariano continued to live in Sevilla. A specialist in artillery, he dedicated his life to armed service, and most of the property he owned came through his entrepreneurial wife, Engracia Núñez de Castro, herself a widow who had acquired much real estate, including the building in Valladolid where Eduardo MacGregor operated a steam-driven cotton mill, the *Aurora Yucateca*.⁸⁵ Both López and Cadenas trained local militias: much like Iturbide himself, they represented the continuation of Bourbon values in early national Mexico.

Not all careers were so stellar. Some idea of the officer's life comes from the history of Ignacio Pérez de Acal. Born in 1780, Pérez became a cadet by age fourteen, a lieutenant by thirty-one; he had served in Iturbide's Army of the Three Guarantees in 1821 and attained the rank of captain two years later. Pérez retired in 1827 but at thirty-eight was still a relatively young man and returned to active service in 1832 under Imán, the soon-to-be Liberator. Though probably not a Yucatecan by birth, Pérez performed most of his post-1821 service in Isla del Carmen, eventually dying there at the rank of lieutenant colonel and leaving behind a grieving widow. His claim to fame was not service in a national war, but rather his leadership in an 1821 campaign that overcame and killed the black-hearted buccaneer Andrés Roch.⁸⁶ Pérez de Acal's career illustrates how service in a national army failed to supersede fundamentally regional orientation. The military life of Mateo Ramírez followed a similar trajectory. A sixteen-year-old cadet in 1821, he lined up behind Iturbide and rose immediately to the rank of sublieutenant, becoming adjutant eleven years later. Men such as Ramírez saw little combat, but they did absorb a great deal about military life, probably the only one they had ever known.

A social abyss separated commissioned officers and lower-ranking men. Wills document the obvious, which is that soldiers were poor and officers were not. The tendency to come from prominent families, as well as a pay scale that exceeded that of the infantry soldier by as much as thirteen times, allowed colonels and captains to build fortunes, while the conscript accumulated only debt and dingy clothing.⁸⁷ Another difference between the military's core professionals and the enlisted soldier was impermanence of place. Professionals were more likely to have come from outside regions, to have traveled through wider Mexico, and to

have less sense of the allegiance born of old family connections and life-long friendships. Typical was Antonio Ongay, of the permanent battalions. A Yucatecan by birth, Ongay had been among those unfortunate enough to march northward after 1836 to reclaim Texas; like the rest of the Mexican army, he never got beyond Tamaulipas and was finally released after the Pastry War of 1838. But by now soldiering was Ongay's only skill. He went on to fight under federalist rebel General José Antonio Mejía when the latter defeated General Martín Perfecto de Cos at Tuxpan, then saw action in Puebla. By the time Ongay returned, he had fought in at least three different states, taken a rifle ball in the leg, been held prisoner, and then abandoned to a hospice, ending up as a beggar amid the languid decay of Veracruz plaza. Ongay eventually stowed a ride back to Yucatán, where he received a minor pension.⁸⁸ Cases such as these illustrate how different were the lives of professional soldiers when seen against the backdrop of place-rooted conscripts.

The army also afforded limited mobility for those who would otherwise have found none. In Campeche the rifleman units of *pardos tiradores*, composed of black and mulatto soldiers, were hotbeds of Liberal sentiment and played an important role in peninsular independence; it required no genius to find Iturbide's color-blind Plan de Iguala more appealing than the profoundly racist Spanish constitution.⁸⁹ The city's white artillery units held the same ideological persuasion, and the sympathy that both these units held for anticolonialism was essential to the peninsula's peaceful split from Spain.⁹⁰ But if mulattos found mobility in the army, the same cannot be said for the majority of its members. Career records for Mérida's Active Battalion suggest that most lifers could expect only limited gain. Even in the colonial period, soldiers and noncommissioned officers found service a hardship.⁹¹ After nearly fifty years, men such as Lorenzo Campos and Fermín Ramírez had risen no higher than sergeant and corporal. A quarter century of service bestowed no insignias on José María Cruz, who retired in 1851 in the thick of the Caste War.⁹² Ceferino Rosales was still beating out his role as drummer forty-six years after enlisting in Hecelchakán.⁹³ For these men, the army meant a job with steady if modest pay (sweetened by exemption from church taxes),⁹⁴ a life of restationing in different towns, and an accumulation of ills that made it difficult to continue beyond middle age. Still, their lives were blessed in comparison to later war veterans, who suffered wounds and dismemberments, and whose chances of a pension were often nil. The enlisted man's lot only worsened after 1840. It involved low pay, recurrent sickness, and mistreatment at the hands of superiors. Separation from family imposed hardships in an age when households still depended on farming or artisanry, and when army pay did not fully compensate

for lost incomes. For these reasons desertion surpassed land invasions, debt dodging, noncompliance, and petty criminality as *the* most significant form of lower-class daily resistance in Mexico's early national period and arguably had a greater effect on history than those other responses combined.

Yucatecan militias followed colonial practice by excluding Mayas: *máako'ob*, or simply "persons." The matter of *máako'ob* service remained problematic, for although armed Indians violated the basic precepts of empire, exceptions had always existed. During the seventeenth century, for example, Spaniards had created Indian archer and rifleman units to help control bands of unpacified Cehache Maya of southern Campeche, but as the Cehache disintegrated, the units dispersed and were forgotten.⁹⁵ Maya archery units also protected Campeche against pirate attacks.⁹⁶ Subsequent Spanish policy makers shied away from arming the Indians and became even more reluctant following the Jacinto Canek uprising of 1761 and the Haitian Revolution thirty years later. Long-standing strictures prohibited Indians from bearing arms, even though most peasants had their *escopetas*, dilapidated shotguns useful for bagging quail but inadequate to military purposes (in fact, most arms captured from rebels during the Caste War were deemed junk and simply thrown away). After 1821 prohibitions against Mayas loosened—not in name but in practice—and military life clearly did provide upward mobility for a few. One such case was Guillermo Ku, who entered into service in the Campeche region in 1832; Ku fought in all the critical phases of the peninsular civil unrest, eventually rising to battalion commander during the Caste War. He joined the struggle against the French Empire in 1866 and only retired in 1882.⁹⁷ Mayas were far more likely to serve in the remoter villages—in this regard, military and political life resembled one another. The exact racial composition of the peninsula's rural militias is unclear. For example, the only unit that listed individual soldiers, the northern village of Teya, had no Maya surnames.⁹⁸ But it is impossible to believe that in 1821 there were really 163 Hispanic citizens in remote Chichanhá, near the Belizean border.⁹⁹ In the summer of 1821, on the eve of national liberation, rural Yucatecans were still going through the motions of organizing local militias. Records from some twenty towns distributed throughout the peninsula tell a sad story about the state of the military, one that suggests more pantomime than readiness.¹⁰⁰ These pueblos organized into units with hierarchies that ranged from captains to foot soldiers and musicians. Some had units with as many as five hundred men, although most hovered around one hundred.¹⁰¹ They met each Sunday on the town plaza for roll call, then returned to their homes.¹⁰² These sandal-footed militias had no arms, no uniforms, and no training,

but they did prove that names on a list could be translated into men mustered at the center of town, and for that reason carried within them the seeds of greater things.

The bulk of the units were foot soldiers, but they included some specialized skills that touched in important ways on the essence of rural life. Militias had surgeons whose work is principally known from later years, when they were called upon to testify to the incapacitating wounds that they were able to document but not heal.¹⁰³ There is little evidence that the Caste War's Maya rebels themselves had much of a concept of, let alone use for, pharmaceuticals. Army medicine hailed from the city and simply did not correspond with folk notion of disease, usually interpreted as the consequence of unseen agents known as *iik'* or *vientos* (evil winds), whereas wounds themselves probably called for nothing more than bandages and folkloric salves. But music proved more popular than medicine. The companies also included drum-and-bugle corps, whose musical instruments ran at a collective \$160, making them better capitalized than the soldiers themselves.¹⁰⁴ Bands proved one of the most durable of all institutions, perhaps because their chunky rhythms and off-key melodies provided excitement for a people accustomed to the monotonous sounds of rural life. Musical instruments—whether the imported instruments of the militias or the deerskin drums and homemade violins of the folk music known as *mayapax* (literally, “Maya music”)—were for that reason prized. Again borrowing from earlier experience with the state, Maya rebels of the late 1840s took up the practice, and drum-and-bugle units became standard in Chan Santa Cruz.¹⁰⁵

Benefits aside, the early militias amounted to a scourge for law-abiding citizens. From the beginning, soldiers held themselves above the populace and were inclined to work off their boredom and frustration through rowdiness. Assault and robbery seemed to come with the uniform, and drunken brawls were as common as evening serenades.¹⁰⁶ Hints of rootless violence had already appeared by 1825, when militia deserters robbed innocent civilians outside of Izamal.¹⁰⁷ Honor-hungry officers were also known to settle quarrels by dueling, a practice that had begun to offend official sensibilities (Spain itself had curtailed the practice in the seventeenth century).¹⁰⁸ As elsewhere in Mexico, *fueros*, or rights to special military tribunals, insulated servicemen from retribution at civilian hands. The problem of misbehaving soldiers remained a feature of life during the Caste War, and public revulsion toward the ills of an army in residence directly contributed to the southeast's own brand of the porfirian peace, in which brutality was routine, and bayonets served political arguments well into the 1920s.

Finally, the militias assumed an early role in politics. A growing number of studies have underscored the role of militia service in stimulating popular concepts of citizenship and even a certain folk liberalism.¹⁰⁹ What separated Yucatán from so many other parts of Mexico was that Yucatec Mayas failed to participate in the eleven-year independence struggle in any meaningful way, thus depriving peasants of an experience that might have bound them to national currents. Rather, Maya peasants did not do combat duty until the Mexican invasion of 1842–43 (see below). By the time arms came their way, they had already seen two decades of independent Mexico and had an idea of how hollow Republican political rhetoric really was. But militias certainly fed into politics in other ways. The commanders of these units were ambitious and well-informed, and they had armed and organized bodies of men at their disposal (again, there was the example of Campeche's pardos tiradores, supporting Iturbide). Local militia officers used their troops as forces of intimidation, in order to tip the battle for ayuntamientos during the early federalist days, and the barracks remained a reliable scene of plots favoring one or another national leader.

But if not generating peasant nationalism, the militias made their influence known in other areas. At the level of state politics, costs for maintaining the militias lay at the heart of Yucatán's insolvency crisis of the late 1700s onward.¹¹⁰ Militia service had social impact as well. Peninsular forces were inept, poorly armed, and no match for a professional army, but they did draw people out of their pueblos and reorganized their lives according to new measures of order and authority. Spanish Bourbon military officers brought Enlightenment ideologies, and their presence helped weaken that other traditional institution, the rural church with its systems of parishes and paternalistic curas. But while dominated by Hispanics and often dedicated to the cause of suppressing peasant revolt, the early militias, even if little more than hollow structures, were also a scene of interethnic contact, vehicles for local political aspirations, and routes of upward mobility for a chosen few. Roads crossed here as well, and their intersection permanently touched the larger society.

The hollow structures would be filled soon enough, and much to the regret of Yucatecans, for by 1821 the militias had taken on a life of their own. In fact, the army was the one institution that *prospered* during the independence wars. Regionally based militia officers in some ways saw themselves as watchdogs of federalism and, like Imán before 1836, would have enjoyed nothing greater than to go on donning their uniforms and mustering their men for Sunday inspection. But officers with greater connection to national organization favored centralism, and their egos, education, and organizational abilities eventually tempted them into politics.

In 1830 elements of the military and clergy joined with wealthy urbanites in Bécál to install Conservative representation in Yucatán's general assembly, then supported a centralist takeover four years later—aided by Maya volunteers who, like those who later followed Santiago Imán, joined under the hope of obtaining lifetime tax exemptions.¹¹¹ Santa Anna's own brother-in-law, Francisco Paulo del Toro, became governor and military commander in chief of the peninsula. Enraged Yucatecan federalists immediately attempted their first revolt in Izamal, under former Governor José Tiburcio López Constante, but the movement lacked grassroots organization and perished before it began.¹¹² Despite his failure, federalism denied became the bloody shirt of politics, here as elsewhere in Mexico, for the next two decades.

Worse still were the centralist wars. From 1836 onward, Mexico's struggle with the lost province of Texas generated huge demand for provincial conscripts. Yucatecans were recruited through outfits known as the Active Battalions; despite their dynamic name, the units originated as reserves partly designed to placate provincial elites with titles of command. Formal guidelines of the Active Battalions still excluded Indians, and in fact, part of the moral economy of rural Mexico lay in peasants expecting leaders to keep them out of the hated military service, a point testified to by the repeated appeals for help to well-known property owners and officials.¹¹³ Active Battalions were now roused out for foreign service, with impromptu drafts used to cover the manpower shortfalls known as *bajas*. From Mexico came orders to supply everything from soldiers to a pontoon bridge of twenty-five boats with which to cross the renegade rivers of Texas (the boats were delivered, but the army apparently never got around to using them).¹¹⁴ Population dispersals of the mid-1830s thus resulted not from agrarian crisis, but rather from the people's attempt to escape a meaningless death somewhere in the north.

Santiago Imán y Villafaña once relished his title as captain of the fifth company of the Third Active Battalion. Commanding a unit of 124 men (20 percent Maya), he found that it offered him control of labor, for he advanced money to his own soldiers, who then worked it off in his cornfields. But for Imán the office that had once been a sinecure suddenly made him the uncomfortable arbiter of life and death for hundreds of families along the *costa*; the Texas wars placed caudillos such as himself in the awkward position of targeting their own clients as cannon fodder, while his own land went uncleared and unplanted in the critical months of April and June.¹¹⁵ Military authorities ignored his complaints, while arrogant junior officers ran roughshod over local sensibilities. The final straw came on June 6, 1836, when Del Toro demanded two hundred more soldiers for Tamaulipas.¹¹⁶ This ill-advised levy gave way to Imán's rebellion, which

gave way to a new republic, which gave way to forty years of violence—in no small part because the captain had no one to plant his corn.

THE CIVIL WARS, PART ONE: THE BRIEF, GLORIOUS
HISTORY OF THE YUCATECAN REPUBLIC

Imán's personal gripes notwithstanding, it is a fact that *violencias*, long and important by definition, seldom issue from a single cause. Although the Caste War erupted out of the remains of a Hispanic-instigated political conspiracy whose full details can no longer be reconstructed, the broader counters have become clear enough. The story of Yucatán's slide into chaos runs something as follows.

The Campeche victory set powerful new dynamics in motion. Urban *políticos* who would never have dared lift a hand against Mexican soldiers now outstepped Imán by proclaiming independence and restoring the recently released Juan de Dios Cosgaya as governor. Yucatecans launched their new nation with appropriate splendor on May 16, 1841. Some 150 of the government's Maya troops paraded in the plaza principal, clad in the cotton drawers and short-sleeve tunics of the peasantry, with only a blue band or sash designating them as soldiers. At eight the following morning, with prominent citizens seated on benches across the street, political leaders lowered the Mexican flag from the railing of the governor's palace and replaced it with the new Yucatecan standard: red, white, and green, and with five stars that symbolized Mérida, Campeche, Valladolid, Izamal, and Tekax. The troops returned to their barracks, and the Mérida gentlemen formally proclaimed independence while an infantry colonel, accompanied by an escort of soldiers and musicians, paraded the new flag through the streets to rousing *vivas*. In the late afternoon, the city's *crème* made carriage rounds, their coachmen indistinguishable in dress from the morning's soldiers. The evening was reserved for formal balls, while peasants and the urban underclass filled the plaza with revelries that stretched over the next three days and included drinking, singing, beating the hollow log known as *tuunkul*, and Maya *sacatán* drum dancing, the same that accompanied religious processions on such fiestas as Corpus Christi. Similar scenes played out in the pueblos.¹¹⁷

When the *vivas* subsided, defense became the new republic's first concern. Yucatecans feared the return of Mexican imperialism for, as a poem of the early 1840s put it, "if you fall asleep free / you will awaken a slave."¹¹⁸ And with reason: by 1840 centralists had frittered away four years and much political capital in fruitless attempts to reclaim Texas and

could be counted on to do the same here. Peninsular arms and munitions were simply inadequate to the challenge of defense. A review of the rifles of San Benito, for example, revealed innumerable defects: loose screws, faulty triggers, and ramrods too short to pack the charges.¹¹⁹ Fearing the vulnerability of what was now a national capital, Yucatecans transferred rifles, cannons, and ammunition from Campeche to Mérida.¹²⁰ Campeche also launched a school to revive what had once been a key industry there, the manufacture of arms; two master craftsmen, one specializing in cannons, the other in artillery mountings, earned a monthly thirty dollars apiece training apprentices.¹²¹ Campeche produced rifle parts as well, although its artisan production proved insufficient to the needs of the civil wars.¹²² To offset shortages Yucatecans imported 678 rifles and carbines from New Orleans, thirty-eight boxes of British arms via a Spanish merchant, and ten cannons and five thousand cannonballs from French manufacturers.¹²³ The carnage that lay ahead partly resulted from this armament drive of the early 1840s, a drive complemented by the growing black market in weaponry from British Honduras.

New arms for a new army: the state decommissioned the hated Active Battalions on February 26, 1841, and substituted units more responsive to Yucatecan needs. (Demobilization rosters reveal that Maya enlistment in the various units ran as high as 20 percent in many areas.¹²⁴) These soldiers received unconditional discharge and promptly scrambled home. Those who remained had questionable commitment to the military life, and in one case sold their army carbines to Maya peasants, who found these weapons far superior to the decrepit shotguns they had used for hunting deer.¹²⁵ Still, the work went forward. Following the Bourbon template, the new National Guard militias were to draw primarily on Hispanic and mestizo poor folk, since the laws still forbade the recruitment of Indians, servants of ranchos and haciendas, and Maya church staff, as well as the thin strata of rural intelligentsia to be found in such professions as teacher, physician, bureaucrat, and *mayordomo*, or estate manager.¹²⁶ These restrictions sprang from a combination of political pressures, racial fears, and an enlightened impulse to foster development. But while sufficient for peacetime, they failed to supply the number of soldiers actually needed in time of combat, so that training and equipment filtered beyond their original, highly restricted sectors.

Equally problematic was the issue of militia leadership. As part of the new system's federalist flavor, the militias now elected their own officers. State regulations were set up in a way that kept oligarchic forces on top, very much as in the ayuntamientos themselves. Would-be captains had to possess two thousand dollars of property, enjoy an annual revenue of four hundred dollars, or hold a profession.¹²⁷ These qualifications lay far

beyond the reach of most rural citizens and excluded Mayas from serving as the units' elected sergeants.¹²⁸ In other ways, too, the rules bent to accommodate wealthy participants. Aspiring officers were to be under forty years of age, but Yucatecans ignored the rule on occasion. Domingo Barret, the wealthy Campeche merchant and real estate investor who fronted yet another peninsular separatist movement in 1846, served as captain of the Second Company of the Sixteenth Battalion, although beyond the legal age of forty.¹²⁹ Whatever their age, officers usually sported the credential of local bigman. Eduardo López, voted second sublieutenant in the Second Battalion, went on to negotiate one of the most important treaties of the Caste War in 1853 and later retired to civilian life in Hunucmá, where he remained a political official and property owner to the end of his days.¹³⁰

The deepening union of military and politics carried perils. Post-Imán laws stipulated that the *alcalde* organize voting, which meant that in practice, the *alcalde* tended to impose his own favorite against the wishes of the soldiers. The practice of open balloting made it easy to intimidate and manipulate the participants.¹³¹ When elections failed to meet the *alcalde*'s wishes, there was always the danger that he would overturn them—violently, if need be. Such was the case in Chancnote, when *alcalde* Juan Tomás Medina's faction failed to gain a single post. Medina proceeded to raise a mob (including part of the militia itself) that occupied city hall, declared the voting null and void, and elected their own favorites.¹³² In Acanceh, Campeche, Chancnote, and Umán, militia elections resulted in the same sort of mayhem.¹³³ A case in Teabo was particularly revealing, since it touched on the common and bitter problem of large towns lording it over smaller ones; in this instance, officers from Tekax and Ticul controlled the Teabo voting.¹³⁴ Elsewhere, militia elections involved the imposition of outsiders, as when Feliz Portas of Campeche became head of the militia at Champotón, a situation so unpopular that he was forced to resign.¹³⁵ Democracy and the army were not easily wed.

The reformed militias of the early 1840s had long-term consequences. They brought Mayas in increasing numbers into the realm of armed service; they also tightened the link between the armed forces and the southeast's unstable brand of politics. The new militia arrangement built a populist link between the soldiers and their officers, a relationship different from the lists of conscripts roused out to parade with stick rifles in the early national town plazas. Men and officers forged a shared bond, one that superseded matters of national loyalty, and which was an essential ingredient in the coming civil wars. Soldiers marched behind a particular man, not a constitution or national cause. The messy militia elections of 1841 anticipated

later conflicts between civilian and military authority, as town bosses tried to manipulate voting practices to their own advantage. The foregoing tendencies presaged events of the Caste War, when life in towns reclaimed from rebels became a three-way struggle between church, state, and military command, with Maya peasants caught in the middle. Like the ayuntamiento elections, the selection of militia officers opened up veins of discontent that would take decades to close.

The Imán revolt also marked a turning point in the history of the peninsular church. Prior to 1840, even the priesthood had its dissident sons, individuals who might have been termed “lowercase liberals” for their infatuation with Mexican independence, decentralized politics, creole pride, and the fuzzy dreams of progress that attended Spain’s departure. José María Meneses, the entrepreneur priest who subbed as head of the peninsular church between the death of Spanish-born Bishop Agustín Estévez y Ugarte in 1827 and the appointment of his creole successor José María Guerra in 1834, actively sympathized with Yucatecan federalism.¹³⁶ But for the first time in history, the priesthood now faced a broad popular movement that sought to strip priests of both pocketbook and the power to mold and educate the human heart. Curas had clearly underestimated the depth of peasant hostility, and that miscalculation allowed Hispanic demagogues to mobilize Maya support. Inadvertently, Imán purged clerical liberalism and laid the groundwork for a southeastern Conservative party.

A more sinister threat emerged from the world of civilian politics. During the centralist years, many federalists fled to the monte to avoid persecution, and they now sought their revenge. The Yucatecan Republic also suffered the paranoia common to early revolutionary states. The first order of business was therefore the suppression of the enemy within—in this moment, a clandestine centralist party known as *La Rochela*, a word that might be translated as “hullabaloo” or “racket.” Apropos of a secret society, it left no papers. Contemporaries described *La Rochela* as a nucleus of clerics and Conservatives considered unscrupulous even by their ideological sympathizers. Their group fomented a coup after Imán’s victory in Valladolid, but the momentum ran against them, and the overreaching conspirators were hunted down, imprisoned, and eventually expelled. The incident showed that the days of gentlemanly politics were over, and that mass mobilizations had become a permanent ingredient in power transfers.¹³⁷ *La Rochela* leader Pedro Escudero y Echánove escaped to Mexico, where he remained an addict of conservative causes and made the mistake of serving as justice minister for the ill-fated empire of the 1860s. Escudero lived until the 1890s, still inspiring vitriol from his enemies (“Tremble, Yucatecan *carajo!*” as an anonymous death threat put it).¹³⁸ Centralists such

as attorney José Luis Montero also went into exile. Montero relocated to the Mexico interior for the space of some five years, “wandering like the Israelites through strange lands,” during which time a number of his children died. Fearing to return because of his ties to Santa Anna, he even fought as a guerrilla in the disastrous 1847 battle of Sierra Gorda. Montero briefly settled in Villahermosa, only to end up working as a functionary in the Tampico treasury during the waning years of Conservatism.¹³⁹ His peripatetic existence, like those of La Rochela in general, epitomized the fate of men whose politics fell out of step with the ruling party.

Corresponding conflicts erupted in the municipios. As soon as Imán’s rebellion severed ties with Mexico and ushered in a new Liberalism, the problem of electoral violence returned with a whoosh and continued up to (and well beyond) the moment of the Caste War’s onset in July 1847. Despite adoption of the *jefatura* system, the Yucatecan republic restored much *ayuntamiento* autonomy, and with predictable results. Violence erupted in Hoctún, Tiholop, Espita, Calotmul, Peto, and Valladolid, among other places.¹⁴⁰ In Tzucacab, losing parties under Antonio Gutiérrez let prisoners out of the town jail to help them sack the house of rival political boss Nicolás Rosado.¹⁴¹ The old *ayuntamiento* tensions persisted, often intensified by the struggle for local autonomy, as smaller towns continued to resent domination by their more populous and affluent neighbors. Becanchén offers a case in point. A mushroom community that formed almost overnight in the 1820s with the discovery of a cenote, Becanchén lay in a region of lush vegetation and deep, rich soil. But the Hispanic bigmen who dominated colonization here chafed against the control of Tekax, the south’s political and economic center. In 1841, three *becancheños*—Vicente Garrido, José María Romero, and José Almeyda—seconded Imán’s proclamation of Yucatecan independence, their real aim being to liberate themselves from authorities in Tekax. They raised a Maya militia with the usual promises of ending taxes and peonage and marched on their neighbor-enemies. When the revolt fizzled, the three took sanctuary in the picturesque chapel of San Diego, still to be found on the hill overlooking Tekax. An amnesty eventually coaxed them out, and the revolt of Becanchén collapsed.¹⁴² Because of lingering resentments over the revolt’s failure, the Becanchén bigmen, led by Almeyda, participated only halfheartedly in the war effort of 1842–43 and obstructed the recruitment of a local defense force.¹⁴³

Meanwhile, as Yucatecans quarreled, the Mexican government laid plans of reconquest.¹⁴⁴ Its chief motivation was fear of national disintegration, coupled with an instinctive metropolitan urge to dominate the provinces. Further encouragement issued from the relative buoyancy of

the early 1840s, when a momentary economic recovery renewed national confidence. Finally, Mexico's consul in Havana penned a long report to the secretary of war, in which he, much like Cuban exiles pressuring Washington in 1960, argued that Yucatecans were eager to throw out the radicals and return to the old order.¹⁴⁵ Although never explicitly stated, Mexicans expected Yucatán's peasantry to support their campaign. In the middle third of the century, common wisdom held that Yucatán was an oppressive society, and that its ethnic underclass might lash out against property owners and *políticos* at any moment—a half-truth that downplayed the complex systems of mediation that characterized rural life there and that ignored the extensive political work that would be necessary for outsiders to forge a bond with the profoundly suspicious and xenophobic Mayas.

Santa Anna sent General Vicente Piñón; a staff consisting of generals Matías de la Peña, Francisco Andrade, and chief-of-staff Juan Morales; and a force that eventually exceeded six thousand men. Morales in fact handled most of the work. He had orders first to appeal to the Yucatecans for peaceful reunification and to proceed to arms only if rebuffed. These invaders mustered in Veracruz plaza on August 11, at the rather precisely noted hour of 8:45 A.M., to begin the voyage to Carmen. But a typhus epidemic delayed them: many of the soldiers died en route and were simply chucked overboard. By September 10 the island fortress of Carmen had become more a hospice than a barracks. Soldiers well enough to travel eventually moved up the coast in canoes, leaving on October 6 and landing in Champotón on the thirteenth, while a contracted U.S. brigantine, the *Democrat*, carried their freight. Here the men spent the night in an open area called *La aguada*, where still more fell ill.¹⁴⁶ Another transport vessel, the steamship *Guadalupe*, was manned with a British crew; but when *el vómito* struck, they broke their contract and headed home.¹⁴⁷

For an invading force, the Mexicans struck a decidedly leisured pace, giving rebellious southeasterners time to prepare. The Yucatecan Republic's commander in chief, one Pedro Lemus, ordered Sebastián López de Llergo to fortify himself with fifteen hundred men in Campeche.¹⁴⁸ Morales captured Champotón after a cannonade that flattened the town's masonry buildings; the damage was still evident five years later when Austrian botanist Karl Heller passed through seeking specimens for his collection.¹⁴⁹ After taking Champotón the Mexicans reached Seibaplaya on October 27 and occupied the town without resistance. On November 12, Morales took Lerma after a brief encounter. But the proposed sweep of the west coast quickly bogged down. Once established here, the Mexican commanders learned that their plans had rested on false and stereotypical

information regarding local conditions. Rather than serving as porters for artillery, ammunition, and supplies, Maya peasants bolted for the interior, leaving would-be taskmasters in the lurch.¹⁵⁰ At least seventy of the invading soldiers deserted as well. The centralist forces actually included a number of native Yucatecans, men such as Antonio Díaz and Mariano Rendón, who had been taken from the peninsula four years earlier to serve in the northern campaigns; once back in Yucatán, these men immediately fled to their homes.¹⁵¹ Shrugging off these early setbacks, the Mexican army stationed 80 percent of its approximately 4,750 men in siege formation around Campeche. Coastal access to Yucatán exceeded that available in the Texas campaign, but here the invading Mexican forces also had to reckon with artillery: cannons stationed in Campeche chased away steamships that came too close.¹⁵² Finally, the city's fortress—stone walls eight feet thick and twenty-five feet high, and encircled by a moat—presented a far more daunting mark than the ramshackle Alamo.

Morales's first assault on Campeche took place on December 5; his troops reached the plaza, but fierce resistance beat them away. The process repeated itself on the eighth and the fourteenth. On the latter date, the Mexicans pushed Campeche's defenders back to barrio San Román before losing the tide of battle and having to retreat once more. Some of the defenders decided that the day was lost and deserted to the Mexicans, arms in hand. But these limited signs of despair were premature. Most of Campeche's defenders stayed the course, and by December 18 López de Llergo commanded enough forces to raid the outlying fishing village of Lerma. While his attacks had little hope of dislodging Morales, they demoralized an army already suffering from widespread typhus.¹⁵³

The worst fighting of the entire invasion took place in Chiná, a small village about ten kilometers southeast of Campeche. De la Peña had learned that food and supplies originated in surrounding haciendas and funneled through this village on their way to the fortified city. It therefore became imperative to control the point. On February 2 De la Peña sent 250 men under Colonel Francisco Pérez, with another 380 as a rear guard under General Francisco Andrade. They occupied Chiná, but the following day some 1,000 men came out of Campeche to harass them; the attack lasted until dawn of the fourth, when the *campechanos*, reinforced with artillery and additional soldiers, compelled the Mexicans to withdraw. In the process De la Peña lost twenty men, including General Andrade and another officer.¹⁵⁴ It was a stunning blow and signaled that the invasion was in serious trouble.

Unable to seize Campeche or to close off the city's supply routes, the invaders tried an end run to Mérida itself. A political shake-up in Mexico

(Santa Anna loyalist Nicolás Bravo's dissolution of congress in early 1843) brought the recall of Piñón and Morales. Santa Anna sent his trusted ally Pedro Ampudia, who gave command of field operations to De la Peña, together with orders to attack the peninsula's northern coast.¹⁵⁵ Perhaps Santa Anna, who was almost certainly the plan's architect, remembered his victory at the Alamo, but the tendency to divide forces and string out men far beyond logistical support guaranteed results more akin to the disaster of San Jacinto.¹⁵⁶ The new expedition also deprived the invaders of the advantage of overwhelming force. Concentrated around Campeche, they outnumbered Yucatecans by nearly two to one, but with their men divided, the Mexicans could no longer maintain a siege or face Yucatecans in open combat. But these considerations appear not to have mattered, and on March 12, De la Peña sailed for the peninsula's northern coast.

The Yucatecan fated to deal with the crisis was one Miguel Barbachano y Terrazo (1806–59). He came from an affluent clan that had originated in Tijón, Asturias, in old Spain.¹⁵⁷ The father, Manuel Antonio Barbachano, immigrated in the late colonial period, establishing his large household among the Campeche crême. His marriage to Leonor Serrano produced at least three brothers: Miguel, Manuel, and Francisco. During the anti-Spanish hysteria that followed independence, Manuel Antonio relocated to Asturias, but returned in 1836 after centralist forces prevailed. The Barbachanos were wealthy. Miguel himself married into the pedigreed Quijano family and handled legal matters for the Quijano and related Peralta and Cosgaya families.¹⁵⁸ Middle brother Manuel gravitated to literature and journalism—his writings remain an important source on midcentury daily life¹⁵⁹—whereas Francisco worked in law and commerce. But Miguel, who had once studied navigation, found his compass drawn to politics. Acquaintances described him as communicative, impetuous, exaggeratedly courteous and gracious, and eager to please all sides of a dispute.¹⁶⁰ He entered politics as a Campeche elector in 1837, then rose to vice-governor following the Imán revolt.¹⁶¹ Appointed as emergency governor in 1842, Barbachano organized Yucatán's defense against the Mexican invasion of 1842–43, for which sycophants tagged him “guest of the sun, a luminous comet.”¹⁶² To escape from the pressure of public affairs, he liked to unwind with *Don Quijote*, the writings of Thomas Jefferson, the romantic novels of Sir Walter Scott, or other selections from his impressive personal library.¹⁶³ Despite the cultured brilliance, Barbachano suffered all the cuts of national-era public life. Unfounded accusations and perjurious defamations were tools of the day, and despite the pressures of daily administration, Barbachano at times had to go to Mexico City to deal with “injurious calumnies that have

been published against me,” leaving friends in charge of his personal affairs.¹⁶⁴

After a catastrophic attempt to dislodge the Mexican army from a redoubt above Campeche (the so-called *Eminencia*), in which more than thirty Yucatecans perished, Barbachano relieved Lemus in November and substituted Sebastián López de Llergo, politically fickle but at least capable in things military.¹⁶⁵ Sebastián’s brother Colonel Gerónimo López de Llergo became secretary of war and navy.¹⁶⁶ Working through the established pyramid of authority, López relied on the city’s jefe político, Antonio Fernández, to levy a defense militia of five hundred men.¹⁶⁷ But if Mérida were to survive, it would require a far greater army drawn from all parts of the peninsula. Following the Imán script, the defenders turned once more to recruitment of Maya soldiers. As specified in a decree of March 27, jefes políticos erected so-called patriotic juntas to do the task. Prominent landowners and political figures typically dominated these boards: Mérida’s junta consisted of Encarnación Cámara (magistrate), Francisco Barbachano (the governor’s brother), and one Esquivel Henríquez.¹⁶⁸ In Valladolid, the triumvirate included Manuel Vales, Pedro Baranda (owner of the Aurora Yucateca cotton mill), and Patricio Iturralde (scion of a wealthy family that later produced both porfirian and revolutionary governors).¹⁶⁹ In Peto the junta’s leader was administrator and amateur linguist Juan Pío Pérez, brother-in-law of the wealthy Simón Peón.¹⁷⁰

Mayas too participated in the 1842–43 mobilizations. *Junta patriótica* members may have been oligarchs, but they connected with the masses by using traditional indigenous authorities as mediators. Juan José Méndez, jefe político of Espita, worked through batab German Chi and the república so that “this body might exhort the members of their class, regarding the advantages that they would enjoy if they cooperated in the triumph of a just cause.”¹⁷¹ In Chemax, an overwhelmingly Maya community east of Valladolid, the alcalde followed what had become standard protocol for swelling the armed forces. He mustered his troops, then unfurled “that most brilliant standard of liberty,” the newly crafted Yucatecan flag, from a tree in the town square. After this came patriotic speeches, *vivas*, fireworks, ceremonial rifle volleys, and the ringing of the town’s church bells.¹⁷² The alcalde explained the benefits of militia service, including later claim to political leadership and privileged access to untitled public lands known as *terrenos baldíos*. Military recruitment thus relied on a combination of symbolic ceremony, elite pressure, and the tasty carrot of real benefits. A force of three hundred Mayas organized in rancho Keulil helped repulse the invaders near Champotón; newspapers lauded these “sons of Tutul Xiu” for helping to turn back the hated *huachinangos*,

as they derisively termed the Mexicans.¹⁷³ Farther eastward, a Maya-language letter from Tixcacalcupul reports on the men who had been recruited to serve in Campeche. Similar documentation does not survive for surrounding communities, all critical in the Caste War uprising four years earlier, but the Tixcacalcupul letter does reinforce certain points: military recruitment for men of the Oriente, their mobilization via the *batab* and *república*, their subordination to prominent Hispanic military caudillos (in this case, *imanista* lieutenant Pastor Gamboa), and their eventual service far to the west, in Campeche—“*can pech*,” as the authors themselves put it.¹⁷⁴

As the foregoing examples suggest, most auxiliaries came from the refractory Oriente. Perennial caudillo Agustín Acereto, now jefe and subdelegado of Valladolid, continued his role as *patrón*, exempting from forced tax levies those Mayas whom he deemed too poor to contribute.¹⁷⁵ Here and in many similar cases, the Oriente remained riven with vertical patron-client relationships in which prominent Hispanic elites bought their authority with small favors. Maya clientalism in the pre-1847 militias emerges from Tekax as well. After the war, commanding officer José Almeyda, the man who had rebelled in the name of Becanchén, came to the defense of his former Maya soldiers, who failed to receive the one peso in wages and the bundle of clothes that they had been promised as part of the recruiting drive.¹⁷⁶ Supplies mattered as much as men, and here too the war made a space for Mayas. As in periods of the later Caste War, *arrieros* and their animals remained untouchable, since they fed the capital.¹⁷⁷ Shipments of food came from as far away as Bacalar, although poor yields in the preceding two years had made corn somewhat scarce. Bacalar also maintained trade with British Honduras at the height of the invasion, exchanging sugar, tobacco, and *aguardiente* for rifles, gunpowder, and lead.¹⁷⁸

All did not proceed smoothly in the Yucatecan defense. Elements of La Rochela had survived the repression, and in 1842 tried to suborn Campeche military officers into cooperating with the invaders. This plot, hatched among a cohort of centralists, priests, and seminarians, was unearthed, and its perpetrators jailed. Following the battle of Chiná, seven conspirators were found stabbed to death in their cells.¹⁷⁹ Meanwhile, a Mexican irredentist movement surfaced in Espita, which Yucatecan federalists forcibly suppressed in September 1842.¹⁸⁰ Priests had suffered from the Imán revolt, and many were believed, with some reason, to favor the Mexicans. *Batabs* considered clients of centralist priests (as in Maní) were accused of withholding supplies at the latter's instruction.¹⁸¹ Accusations and harassment during the invasion period helped legitimize political violence and were a foretaste of things to come. Yucatecans also received a

preview of violence at the hands of armed Mayas, when peasant recruits from the towns of Nohcacab and Tixhualhtún raided the hacienda Uxmal for corn and cattle, in the process killing two of the estate's employees.¹⁸² Sensational as this event may have been, the greater problems, related to diseases such as typhus, appeared around Tizimín, and eastern soldiers often proved hard to discipline. Officers responsible for getting the men to Mérida complained "of the scandalous desertion" that crippled their effort.¹⁸³ Campaigns of the day had built-in time limits, since armies would begin to crumble through desertion if not deployed; defenders enjoyed an advantage, not for lack of deserters, but because replacements were easier to dragoon.

While Yucatecans prepared, De la Peña proceeded with his orders. The expedition included seventeen hundred men supported with two mortars, as well as four cannons of various calibers. Repeated northers struck the boats, drowning fifteen men and forcing a landing in Celestún, home of the rare pink flamingos, and close enough to communities such as Hunucmá and Tetiz for word to filter back to Mérida. De la Peña remained here until March 26. His vanguard occupied *vigías* in both Sisal and Telchac by the end of the following day, then waited for the remainder of the force to catch up.¹⁸⁴ Information reported that López de Llergo was in Motul with twenty-eight hundred men and eight cannons, supported by Badillo's five hundred soldiers in Conkal and with two hundred Tihosuco volunteers soon to arrive under the command of one Vito Pacheco—assassin, bandit, and the poster child of pueblo anticlericalism, who had an uncanny knack for organizing peasant guerrillas.¹⁸⁵ As the Mexican general, the anticipated opposition failed to materialize; in Motul he found only a priest and four old men. De la Peña proceeded to Tixkokob, lured by (false) reports of sympathizers. There on April 10 the Mexicans faced some of the heaviest fighting of the campaign, with Yucatecan defenders estimated at twenty-three hundred with four cannons. Although the Mexicans repulsed them, it was clear that the march on Mérida enjoyed neither the element of surprise nor the benefit of logistical superiority necessary to such an enterprise.

De la Peña reorganized, then on the thirteenth set out for the hacienda Pacaptún, a mere league from the capital. It was to be his final advance. All along the general had envisioned that once his army approached Mérida, pro-Mexican sympathizers would rush to support him. He also hoped to win some measure of support from the church, or at least to intimidate it, and sent a letter to Bishop Guerra urging him to persuade the people of Mérida to surrender before a genuine sacking began.¹⁸⁶ But increasingly it became clear that none of these things would happen; either sympathizers failed to exist, or else they were cowed into submission by the forces of López and others, while Guerra himself had little influence over public

opinion. Now supplied with estimates of a huge defensive force in Mérida, De la Peña realized that the intended occupation was impossible. Even retreat proved difficult, as his soldiers were forced to fight continual rear-guard skirmishes. Mexican supplies had dwindled to practically nothing; surrounding haciendas and ranchos yielded only abandoned buildings, empty storehouses, and unplanted fields. In Tixkokob, De la Peña found himself forced into the humiliating position of requesting terms from López, now working out of Dzemul. When the last boats departed for Tampico on May 25, they carried off thirteen hundred men, the survivors of an initial force of some seventeen hundred. Few had actually died in combat, but desertion and sickness had claimed over four hundred.

Once they had turned back the invasion, peninsular leaders tried to dampen the popular fires they themselves had set. Indeed, problems with an armed citizenry were becoming both common and diverse. Crime in particular surged. Following the Imán revolt, a highwayman known as José María Carrera terrorized the road from Polyuc to Bacalar; the fact that he made his headquarters in Tihosuco suggests that he enjoyed good relations with the local authorities. In reality, Carrera and the Yucatecan state were after the same loot: alcabala revenues associated with the Bacalar trade.¹⁸⁷ Arms and the máako'ob had an acquaintance that spanned some three generations, but by mid-1843 the level of violence, and the potential for more, had risen dramatically. If bandits struck with impunity, how long before the inscrutable Indians began to murder well-bred vecinos in their sleep? In June, therefore, orders went out for *jefes políticos* to collect the rifles from the population and to send them to Campeche.¹⁸⁸

Demobilization proved difficult, for the logistics of defense inadvertently heightened the existing quarrels over land, money, and resources. First, the state vacillated on pledges to reduce or abolish taxes: independence cost money, and to honor the promises of Imán and others would have spelled bankruptcy. Second, in 1842 and 1843 the state enacted sweeping new labor codes; partly designed to tighten security during the Mexican invasion (for wandering men spelled trouble), these same laws also pressured rural Maya to serve as workers on estates. At this time the majority of Yucatán's rural inhabitants were still independent subsistence farmers. Third, the period inaugurated a land-rental program (enacted in 1845) through which peasants were to pay taxes on any village ejido land they cultivated. Fourth, in order to reward soldiers, officers, and money lenders, the state accelerated its program for privatizing public lands. The so-called *denuncias*, or claiming of terrenos baldíos, excluded village ejido lands but did alienate significant amounts of land beyond the jurisdiction of the municipio, and which the previous 150 years of population increase had rendered necessary for survival. It sparked a

frenzy in the south and east and attracted curas, officers, ex-soldiers, and investors, as well as affluent and well-connected Mayas.¹⁸⁹ Jefes políticos controlled the process, for by law their recommendations served as the deciding factor for each grant.¹⁹⁰ The defense and subsequent land grants closely tied Barbachano to ambitious easterners, who gratefully renamed Dzitnup, south of Tihosuco, in his honor. Barbachano even toured the south, something of a rarity for governors. The land-grant process particularly concerned the Peto-Tihosuco region, whose inhabitants had already seen neighboring Tekax transformed from a Maya- to a Hispanic-dominated municipality within a single generation and had every reason to fear that they were next.¹⁹¹ However one looked at the matter, land—the basis of life and the cornerstone of Maya peasant culture—was getting harder to come by.

These changes, and the accompanying passions, beat down most heavily on the batabs, the indigenous middlemen who negotiated between urban and rural worlds. Stolid and prosperous in earlier years, the batabs had wielded a unique influence among their people. Arbiters of “the little community,” they could also be uniquely dangerous. Many had gotten by and even prospered on tax collection but now saw those taxes disappearing. They owned property, refined sugar, and distilled aguardiente but now saw their petty ranchos dwarfed by an influx of land-hungry Hispanics. Batabs suffered from growing popular unrest against taxes and military service, and as the 1840s wore on, they felt the effects of political violence. The new legal apparatus of jefe político, juez de paz, and ayuntamiento increasingly dominated matters of justice and administration. But batabs still commanded enough legitimacy to serve as leaders: too weak to adapt to these unsettled times on their own, too strong to antagonize and simply ignore.¹⁹² These pillars of colonialism depended on a system that was now failing them.

But their participation remained geographically limited. The Caste War had its genesis in a line of communities that extended from the northern coastal village of Yalahau to the southeastern fort of Bacalar, with Valladolid and Tihosuco serving as the critical points. The British Honduras border made the area what it was: first through Bourbon military buildup that sent men into the region, expanded infrastructure, and brought news of the wider world; then through the post-1821 smuggling boom that flooded the area with goods, sugar planting, and a newfound prosperity. “It is a well known and notorious piece of public information here,” editorialized *Los pueblos* in 1840, “that the towns of Tihosuco and Motul have become factories for things of criminal origin,” as indeed they had.¹⁹³ Tihosuco was particularly ill behaved. In terms of land tenure, communal and private rancho properties predominated, with a

few haciendas dating back to the eighteenth century.¹⁹⁴ Most communities were racially mixed by the late colonial years, the only exceptions being small outlying rancherías, exclusively Maya redoubts. The Hispanics who lived in Oriente towns lacked the profit margins or market access sufficient to isolate them from area Mayas, with whom they came to share certain cultural features, including food, language, entertainment, and the artificial kinship ties known as *compadrazgo*. These factors created a dynamic region with an identity separate from that of Mérida, and where prominent Mayas formed both political and economic alliances with unscrupulous Hispanics—hardly the “ladino/macehual” dichotomy or the autonomous and uncolonized Maya communities reailed in so many histories, and certainly not peoples living in some sort of tribal state.¹⁹⁵

While the immediate origins of the Caste War will probably always remain murky, the uprising appears to have emerged from a series of Oriente cabals spinning out of the Mexican invasion.¹⁹⁶ Hispanic bigmen—particularly Valladolid caudillo Agustín Acereto—resented Imán’s premature eclipse and began to dabble in revolts organized among people of the Oriente villages. An outstanding scoundrel in an age of scoundrels, Acereto defined eastern aristocracy, and together with his sons, dominated Oriente politics into the Porfiriato. Initially acting under the patronage of state Conservatives such as Pedro Escudero, he began his career with appointment as alcalde of Valladolid, and when he risked losing that position in 1832, organized his first insurrection. In 1836 he switched sides and backed Imán’s unsuccessful attempt at federalist revolt and spent a year in prison for his efforts. But his alliances paid off in 1840, when he acted as a fifth column for Imán’s assault on Valladolid. By 1841 Acereto headed a household of twenty-three persons, including his wife (Lucía Gálvez), children, sundry relatives, and servants. The new order made him simultaneous magistrate, subdelegado, and jefe político, and he used these positions to enrich himself and harass his enemies, particularly centralist Roberto Rivas.¹⁹⁷

Acereto and other eastern jefes now reached a crossroads. They enjoyed a strong support base; had access to cash from sugar, distilling, and smuggling; and controlled area militias: if excluded from state power by the western establishment, why not rebel? And rebellions came. In September 1843 Acereto launched an Oriente revolt that rehearsed the Caste War in many particulars. This uprising was less ideologically driven and more a matter of personal interest. During the Mexican invasion, he had used falsified receipts to graft money allocated for Yucatán’s defense, and the state treasurer (along with Santiago Imán) subsequently accused Acereto of corruption.¹⁹⁸ Either the revolt was intended to free Don Agustín from prosecution, or else the embezzlements were to fund the revolt itself. In either

case, Acereto relied on operatives in Tihosuco to do the fighting. In Tihosuco the uprising centered around a handful of powerful Hispanic families that were then in the process of cementing control over the town and its land and resources.

Foremost among these frontier empire builders stood Antonio Trujeque, a sinister figure who had spent the previous seven years consolidating power and wealth in the area of Tihosuco. Apparently a Tihosucan by birth, Trujeque was already a resident of the town by the early 1830s.¹⁹⁹ His upward march began in that decade with the town's economic growth—fourth largest in the peninsula by 1846—then accelerated with the advent of the Imán rebellion. His role in that rebellion remains cloudy, but by 1840 Trujeque was already growing sugarcane on his hacienda, Kom, as well as on a smaller rancho outside of Tihosuco.²⁰⁰ He organized Mayas of Tihosuco and Tepich during the aborted Acereto revolt of November 1843 (see below), but the state was eager to restore peace, and its general amnesty for the revolt's participants meant that Trujeque escaped retribution. Indeed, far from suffering, his recruiting work during the patriotic defense of 1842–43 allowed him to claim two leagues of terrenos baldíos outside Tihosuco. In 1843 a group of Mayas led by one Pedro Celestión Poot tried to stop Trujeque's claim, but to no avail.²⁰¹ Tihosuco thus promised to be a repeat of the land problems that followed the Hispanic colonization of Tekax twenty years earlier.²⁰² In Peto, meanwhile, Trujeque acquired rights to the terreno baldío known as Xmachén, near Tihosuco; a mere one-quarter league, it nonetheless added to the considerable landholdings he had already claimed within the previous four years.²⁰³ Not content, Trujeque applied for an additional one and a half leagues of Tihosuco's baldío lands in August of the same year.²⁰⁴ Like so many of the aggressive new Hispanic class in the southeast, Trujeque operated on the principle that if land was good, then an enormous amount of land was enormously good.

The Acereto-Trujeque movement was subregional, aimed at bettering the condition of the Oriente, including Valladolid, against political and economic rivals in Mérida. The rebels enjoyed a clientele among the local Mayas, a clientele to which Tihosuco's batab, Jacinto Pat, was key. They spoke the words that peasants wanted to hear: the elimination of taxes, the end of military conscription and clerical oversight, and free and unlimited trade with foreign merchants. Rebels took advantage of both the 1843 patriotic defense and their proximity to Belize in order to assemble a cache of arms and ammunition, including a cannon.²⁰⁵ But the plan fizzled; planning had been inadequate, and Mérida-Campeche elites remained relatively unified. Following the suppression of the revolt, jefe político Pío Pérez brought the captured arms to Peto, lamenting that nearby villagers

insisted on being paid before toting the unwieldy loads.²⁰⁶ The captured weapons were eventually tossed into a cenote. Trujeque and Pacheco walked free after political influence scuttled their brief trial. No retribution fell on Acereto himself, and he lay low for the next three years.

When General Zachary Taylor entered Mexican soil in late 1846, he loosed all the devils stirring in Yucatán since the late colonial era. The U.S. Navy swiftly blockaded Mexican ports, and to dissociate themselves from the conflict, Campeche elites under Domingo Barret rebelled against Mérida's Barbachano-led government in December 1846 through February 1847, with the aim of separating once again from Mexico and proclaiming neutrality. The war soon turned into a rural insurgency in which caudillos of each side mobilized peasant militias to their bidding. To Maya combatants of the Oriente, Barret and the U.S. invasion mattered little. Acting under the leadership of Hispanic recruiters, they saw the battles as their chance to settle old scores, something they did quite savagely when they attacked Valladolid. Indeed, those who survived the Valladolid attack recalled that Hispanic instigators could barely restrain their Maya recruits.²⁰⁷ But to noncombatants—including Maya noncombatants—the Barret revolt was a horror that they tried to escape as best they could. Some did not make it. In January 1847 Pastor Gamboa led his Barbachano supporters into the village of Tabi in search of armed rivals, who had apparently left shortly before. War had desensitized these insurgents to human suffering, and much like the Salvadoran army units of the 1980s, they discharged their frustration by executing civilians, in this case the entire *república* of Tabi village, accusing them of abetting pro-Barret insurgents.²⁰⁸ It was the first such massacre of the Maya headmen since some long-forgotten date in the colonial era, and a sign of what was to come.

Attempts to reverse Barret's victory began almost immediately. An insurrection broke out in Peto in late February, with participants proclaiming in favor of Miguel Barbachano and Santiago Imán; it lacked organization and soon fizzled.²⁰⁹ Valladolid-based Agustín Acereto was too patrician and too clever to take up arms himself, but he enjoyed a knack for persuading other men to do so. Working first through his home base of Valladolid, he relied on, as military leader, José Dolores Cetina, with Cetina's kinsmen Bonifacio Novelo and Secundino Loría as grassroots organizers. These men spoke to the peasants' dream of tax abolitions. Acereto's second support base remained Tihosuco. In February 1847 Antonio Trujeque somehow received his appointment as the *partido's* jefe político and subdelegado; among his main responsibilities, "the collection of public funds."²¹⁰ Once these powers were conferred, Trujeque's control over the region of Tihosuco was nearly complete and involved

military, political, and economic dimensions. With his authority of the region firmly established, Trujeque had thoroughly eclipsed the elderly Spanish-born cura Antonio Mais and batab Jacinto Pat and was now in a position to dole out rewards to his followers and to exclude rivals and enemies from such perks as land, public employment, and official favor in political rulings. In 1847, with the Campeche group now in control, he promoted a second revolt in Tihosuco and other Oriente towns by drawing on the old support network that had formed under Miguel Barchachano (who may or may not have been involved, but surely knew what was happening). Acereto used Tihosuco's former juez de paz, Juan Vásquez, as front man, but with the additional connivance of Trujeque and Pacheco.²¹¹ In fact, Trujeque and Pacheco changed sides various times in this conflict. The constant in their behavior was the quest to accumulate land and power, with militia service, elections, and the occasional well-timed uprising serving as means to that end.

But at some point Hispanics called off the revolt; either U.S. occupation of the coast intimidated them, or they feared growing Maya mobilizations, or both. They stepped back and allowed Valladolid authorities to arrest and execute batab leader Manuel Antonio Ay Tec, a known troublemaker who was almost certainly involved in the Acereto movement. His pathos-laden trial and shooting signaled to other batabs that the price of the aborted revolt was about to fall upon them.²¹² In earlier times they would not have been held responsible for Hispanic politics, but in earlier times the whole Oriente revolt would never have happened. What differed now was the fact that Maya batabs had arms and that eastern peasants were mobilized under their command—they could defend themselves, and they knew it.

Men newly powerful are not always men newly wise, nor are they likely to acknowledge the ways in which their sudden exercise of power harms the people below them. So it was in southeast Mexico. Ethnic violence was not something that had always existed, any more than violence had always existed between Serbs and Croats or Hutus and Tutsis. It did not come from the sudden intrusion of Hispanic colonialism upon a tribal and pre-Columbian Maya people. Nor was it some expression of state or national citizenship read backward onto a dispersed, illiterate, Maya-speaking peasantry. Rather, it came from the politically driven disintegration of an older balance among the many interests of both urban and rural society. Letting communities govern themselves in practice meant allowing powerful factions to lord over everyone else, in much the same way that Latin American independence meant Hispanics gaining unchecked control over indigenous peasants. Ayuntamiento-related electoral violence politicized the countryside, habituating the citizenry to achieving its ends through blows.

The separation from Mexico placed the *jefes políticos* in command of both civil and military affairs, while simultaneously flooding the peninsula with arms and ammunition.

All of this mattered most in the Oriente. Communities from Valladolid to Bacalar had taken on a quasi-separate identity based on smuggling as well as networks of family and friends. The political tempests since 1810 onward had heightened peasant expectations for a fairer share of society, running in direct contrast to the increasing tendency of heightened state and municipal taxation, privatization of land, tightening of labor codes, and ongoing attempts to maintain some level of economic support for the church. Popular resentment rendered the position of *batabs* and other prominent Mayas difficult: despite new pressures they were expected to keep up long-standing controls and levels of extraction among the peasants. Perhaps absurd in retrospect, the logic of the moment led post-1839 Yucatecan leaders to simultaneously antagonize *and* to arm *batabs* and their followers, with predictable results. Finally, intra-elite fighting, closely related to the U.S. invasion of Mexico, led to civil war violence at all levels. It was not that Maya villagers lashed out atavistically against the coming of Hispanics; rather, they had learned Hispanic ways all too well. Pueblo politics—in theory the fruit of Mexican independence and the right of all citizens as they pursued their peculiar vision of the *municipio libre*, or free village—empowered Oriente military caudillos and *jefe políticos*, folded Maya peasants into sordid schemes, and in the process became a Caste War.

“The Extremes of Death or Triumph”

A Society Goes to War, 1847–1851



In August 1847 authorities of Tihosuco hauled in seven Maya peasants with an incredible story to tell. Indians of Tihosuco and Tepich were planning a massive uprising that would kill the white men, divide up the widows as their concubines, and live as a free and independent people.¹ The latent fear of all Hispanics in early national Mexico—that the Indians would imitate the Haitian slaves, rise up, and massacre whites in their own homes—at last seemed a reality.

This shocking confession probably blended fact and fantasy. Much was nonsense, reflections of racial hysteria, or perhaps tall talk that the instigators used to animate their followers. After all, long-oppressed people often need a fantastic vision to stir them to action. Most evidence suggests that the original leaders launched the war for more limited aims, and that they only took up the idea of a separatist state when other options failed. The story's more credible elements also reflected the interrogators themselves. Antonio Trujeque, now jefe político of Peto, knew how to steer the testimony, since he himself had been part of the conspiracies that drew in the eastern Maya batabs. Indeed, Yucatán's Caste War almost certainly began as another Oriente rebellion, with the presumed intention of restoring Miguel Barbachano and thereby advancing the interests of his supporters in the south and east.

But the story was correct in one regard: Maya peasants of the Oriente were now armed, angry, and—to a degree never true before—organized. Hence the Caste War. The events of the early conflict have been told many times and require only a brief summary. The political situation of the Oriente remained fragile after the sack of Valladolid in January 1847. Another Oriente revolt began to form, this time aimed at restoring Miguel Barbachano, but it eventually fell apart over concerns about the U.S. invasion

and the growing threat of the ethnic underclass becoming too powerful and unruly. To check the threat of armed Mayas, eastern officials arrested, and on July 25, executed the batab of Chichimilá, one Manuel Antonio Ay Tec, on charges of conspiracy to race war. Soon thereafter a series of military sweeps tried to round up other Maya instigators. A militia from Tihosuco combed through the towns of Tepich and Ekpetz in an unsuccessful attempt to arrest purported coconspirator Cecilio Chi, batab of Tepich, who fled to the monte, then returned and massacred Tepich’s white inhabitants on the fateful day of July 30, 1847.² The war snowballed out of this episode, with Cecilio Chi commanding forces in the north heading as far west as Izamal, and Pat leading a second force northwestward to Mérida via Peto and Tekax. Thereafter, rebel weaknesses began to emerge. Disorganization, uncertain goals, shortages of supplies and ammunition, and rivalries between Pat and Chi led the former to sign the Treaty of Tzucacab on April 23, 1848, essentially an attempt on both sides to buy time. Rebels insisted on negotiation with Barbachano, restored to the governorship specifically for this purpose a month earlier; they knew of him because he had once toured the south, and because Hispanic conspirators of Tihosuco and Valladolid were his political adepts. Pressured by opponents of the treaty, Pat resumed his offensive and raided as far as Ticul, only to be halted and driven back. By August the Yucatecan army had gained men and supplies, while in retreat the rebels remained tenacious if divided. Thereafter, the army established what came to be known as the *línea*, or line, that arched southeastward from Valladolid through Tihosuco and Peto, and westward to the Chenes region of Bolonchén. For the next thirty years, the *línea* served as both a defense mechanism and as a launching point for various excursions into rebel territory. The tale of these events is old hat; less familiar is the experience itself, the story of how people reacted to the coming of war and how Yucatecans responded to the early years of their own peculiar violencia.

THE CIVIL WARS, PART TWO:
LA VIOLENCIA COMES TO TOWN

The first six months of the war were as confusing to the actors as they have remained to historians. To begin, leadership was not immediately clear, at least beyond Pat and Chi, two individuals who had both worked with Trujeque throughout the 1840s. Other prominent Mayas clearly took part. Among the secondary tier of leaders was Gaspar Balam, batab of Tesocó, and Agustín Camal, alcalde of the república of Chemax, both captured in

1850.³ But other rebels helped lead this chaotic uprising. Much of the early war involved decentralized activity led by autonomous chieftains inaccessible to the historian, much like the nameless bands of later revolutionaries who called themselves *villistas* but who never laid eyes on Doroteo Aranga. Military correspondence often refers to the capture and execution of “the notorious ringleader so-and-so,” of whom nothing more is known. This fluid association resembled the fluctuating alliances of the pre-Columbian Maya,⁴ not because of some bogus ancestral memory, but rather because it was the only approach for a land of localities, for a dispersed people lacking organization above the level of family and village. Decentralization gave both weakness and strength to the early rebels. It kept them from achieving larger goals, but the absence of a single army delayed pacification, allowing survivors to regroup and fight on, just as fragmentation had prolonged the Yucatecan conquest for twenty years.

To compound the confusion, rebels also included non-Mayas. These individuals came from obscure backgrounds; they had learned to relate to peasants, and when the last Acereto revolt spun off into the Caste War, a number of them cast their fortunes with those of the insurgents. The most important and best documented was Bonifacio Novelo Cetina, who later rose to become both rebel leader and the high priest of the Speaking Cross. Born in 1815 near the center of Valladolid, he was the legitimate son of Juan Justo Novelo and Juana Cetina and the younger brother of Cristóbal Novelo. At a relatively young age Bonifacio married a local woman named María Coronado and found work peddling goods in the communities outside of Valladolid. Marriage tied him to the Cetina and Loría families, both of which included individuals who were instrumental in stirring Mayas of the Oriente to arms: barbachanista Colonel José Dolores Cetina and Secundino Loría, a Chichimilá resident complicit in some of the early Caste War plotting. Novelo’s two youngest children disappeared—probably casualties of the century’s astronomical infant mortality—but his eldest son, Claudio, became a rebel leader, and his daughter, María Baluina, married an insurgent Maya commander of Bacalar after 1858, and herself conducted missions of diplomacy in Belize.⁵ In peaceful times it was precisely this lower tier of Hispanics who made the society function. They freely adopted a number of practices that later anthropologists would interpret as insurmountable ethnic barriers: these included the Maya language, folkloric religion and creencia, and the pueblo lifestyle’s rough-cut material culture. Lower-tier Hispanics had much to gain and little to lose, recruited peasants for the civil wars of the 1840s, and were most closely connected to the batabs who eventually assumed control of the Oriente revolts and redirected them for their own purposes.

The prewar career of another Hispanic leader, José María Barrera, is more elusive. Barrera first appears in the town of Bolonchén-ticul in what is today Campeche state, on a plebiscite ratifying Yucatán's return to Mexico.⁶ Everything else about his earlier life remains a mystery. His populist influence apparently grew out of military experience with Maya soldiers that dated to the 1842 invasion. Barrera threw his fortunes in with the rebels, and by 1850 he had become the leader of the largest of the rebel factions. Some accounts credit him with founding the Speaking Cross, whose cult he came to control. What is certain is that Barrera was assassinated in late 1852 or early 1853 in a quarrel over gunpowder.⁷ His descendants lived on in unpacified territory well into the twentieth century. Army officers understood that the insurgency drew upon elements such as Novelo and Barrera and treated any Hispanics encountered in the monte as enemy combatants.⁸

Closely related to the question of leadership were the nature and overall objectives of the conflict. To many it seemed at first a continuation of the Oriente wars and not a strictly racial conflict. In Tituc, a town that lay fifty kilometers south of Tihosuco on the old road to Bacalar, the prime motor behind the local defense militia of late September was the magistrate Leandro Pavía. Far from playing the Gandhi role of peacemaker, Pavía had served as one of the leaders in the January 1847 sacking of Valladolid, and with pro-Barbachano uprising still smoldering, he "began once more to commit iniquities and immeasurable evils, not only with the inhabitants of that hapless town but even with passer-bys, under the pretext of being a zealous defender of the government, and had lent his services as war captain of part of the eastern Indians." Pavía placed himself in command of some twelve vecinos and a handful of Mayas, "whom he now has armed and quartered to pose a front to the Indian insurrectionist." In other words, area leaders recycled 1842 defense methods. Pavía then confiscated some eight thousand pounds of corn from the local priest and demanded additional contributions of goats. Finally, Pavía seized the convent to serve as quarters for some fifty additional men from Chunhuhub, who were bringing twenty-one Maya prisoners from Sacalaca. Padre Santiago Ciriaco Esquivel protested Pavía's high-handedness but was thrown in jail, a convenient excuse to extort bail money and steal Esquivel's livestock.⁹ Was this Caste War defense, Esquivel must have wondered, or simply another step in the ongoing struggle whereby secular officials usurped the community authority of clerics?

A similar dynamic prevailed in nearby Bacalar, transit point for the Belize-Yucatán trade. Geographically remote, it appears to have played no role in these early convulsions of Tepich and Tihosuco, or even to

have been particularly aware of them. Rather, the fortress-town was embroiled in local factional quarrels that were echoes of the post-Barret revolts in Yucatán proper. A pro-centralist rebellion emerged among Antonio Glori Mendoza and his relative José Antonio Glori, cura of Chichanhá; their nephew, physician Manuel María Glori; and Padre José Francisco Delgado and his brother Benito. Alcaldes quashed the insurrection before it could spread, and Padre Glori himself fled into hiding in Belize, a place that he knew intimately. A certain Padre Juan Nepomuceno Trujillo came from Bacalar to replace Glori, but also to escape creditors; soldiers eventually caught up with Trujillo and escorted him back to Bacalar, leaving Chichanhá without church authority. This chaotic state of affairs characterized the deep south into late December 1847.¹⁰ The Caste War as an Indian uprising only reached Bacalar later the following month, when rebels surrounded the controversy-wracked town and demanded that the jefe político surrender.¹¹

Opinions also differed as to the degree of danger that the situation initially posed. No one was certain if this was a real war, and if so, when it began or what were its aims. After the raid on Tepich, the Caste War at first subsided. The delay in action probably related to the annual agricultural cycle, in which men tended their milpas from spring until the autumn harvests, but doubtless reflected last-minute recruiting efforts as well. At the end of August, for example, the urban and orthodox *cofradía*, or lay confraternity, of Izamal brought out their santo, the Virgin Mary, for a procession aimed at bringing about a swift conclusion to peninsular conflicts. It was a prayer not motivated by real suffering, only the cry of anxiety concerning what *might* happen, and to the townsfolk this prayer must have seemed fruitful, for in fact nothing took place.¹² In general, a greater sense of security prevailed in cities and towns, even though state control of roads and backcountry had become even more fictive than before the 1840s. In August the roads of the Sotuta-Yaxcabá area were considered dangerous “because of the indigenous classes.”¹³ On October 10 Padre José María Castillejo felt it safe to return to nearby Chikindzonot, where he found country quiet. Only on the evening of his arrival did he hear rumors “that the conspiracy of *indios sublevados* [rebellious Indians] had once more revived.”

A similar perspective prevailed in the south and east. As late as mid-August, Tahdziú, for example, remained oblivious to the growing conflict, instead bubbling with gossip about the scandals of the local minister.¹⁴ By September 25 peasant hostilities appeared to have blown over. The cura of Ichmul wrote, “As there has been no further movement of Indians, I am resolved and determined to return to my parish, even though I am still sick and it may be on koché [sedan].” The town of Sabán still seemed like a safe refuge to some. Both communities were later raided and pillaged,

but it is clear that an illusion of security initially lingered, even in the deep interior.¹⁵ In Tihosuco, rebels had made sporadic sorties to some outlying ranchos, including the estate of the late cura, Antonio Mais, burning the main house. Despite these ominous events, the town remained unscathed for the moment. As late as September, Tihosuco’s schoolteacher was still on duty, though troubled with ill health and the disinterest in education.¹⁶

By mid-November matters had changed. Corn harvests were now largely complete, and rebels now controlled a modicum of supplies seized from area ranchos. On November 12 Pat’s forces finally overran Tihosuco itself. His men destroyed both the house and the hacienda Tekom of Antonio Trujeque, the man who had led them into rebellion and later betrayed them, but also destroyed the estate of Padre Antonio Mais.¹⁷ Peto and surrounding towns were not evacuated until January 5.¹⁸ To the north, Cecilio Chi’s forces overran Tixcacalcupul shortly before November 23, assassinating the elderly Padre Eusebio García Rejón, who had had numerous run-ins with his Maya parishioners. Castillejo desperately consumed the hosts of the church, packed up the ornaments and parish registries, and fled to Sotuta, along with Padre Crisostomo Herrera. Their escape was fortunate. Three days later they learned that Chikindzonot had fallen as well.¹⁹ The war only became serious here in November. Inhabitants of Dzonotchel, Sacalaca, and Ichmul fled to Peto, along with people from outlying ranchos.²⁰

In general, the Caste War initially had limited impact outside of its area of birth. Even the term *guerra de castas* had an irregular application. (The vague term *casta* was used to refer to both the Hispanic/Indian division and to a society divided into well-to-dos and rabble.) For western urbanites, the Guerra de Castas was prophesy self-fulfilled, since rumors about such a war circulated before the conflict began; the Austrian traveler Karl Heller heard talk of such a war by early 1847.²¹ More than anything, these rumors reflected urbanites shocked by the Oriente rebels’ use of Maya peasant recruits and by the sack of Valladolid in January 1847, during the latter stages of the Barret revolt. Even as late as December, meridianos could not determine whether the peasant uprising was really distinct from the anti-Barret partisans commanded by José Dolores Cetina, then attacking Valladolid.²² The term *guerra de castas* was tossed around freely, too much so perhaps, and the overly liberal usage now makes it difficult to determine when a consciousness of this conflict took shape in the capital.

For those who did take up arms in rebellion, the early mood was one of a euphoria born of cathartic violence found among the long oppressed. A British Honduran who witnessed the early war years remarked that far from respecting the commands of their leaders, “the Indios appear to be runaway schoolboys who try to do the most of their momentary liberty.”²³ True, cathartic violence prospered on both sides. For the dominant forces,

the war challenged a long-assumed right to rule, and the self-satisfied, censorious tone of execution reports indicates the dominant class's need to restore its view of the world. Over time, the use of violence became more calculated and less spontaneous. Leaders of Chan Santa Cruz relied on ritual humiliation and execution of prisoners as a way of binding together their society. This form of violence ebbed and flowed in its intensity, spiking sharply in the war's first year, rising again when Venancio Puc dominated Chan Santa Cruz (1857–63), then returning once more with the rise of Bernabé Cen in the late 1860s and early 1870s. In all cases, the murder of people belonging to the overlord race glued rebels to a common cause and strengthened the leadership of those who directed it. Violence may well be a liberating act for the oppressed.²⁴ But its application has a way of leaping original boundaries and desensitizing practitioners and witnesses alike. Moral qualms about escalating atrocity, together with a general weariness, often turn people in a more humane direction. For this reason, leadership of Chan Santa Cruz repeatedly splintered over issues of peace versus continued raids and warfare.²⁵

But interpersonal relationships often trumped racial hatreds and the need for catharsis. Time and again, rebel Maya leaders adopted certain Hispanics, protecting and even releasing them in much the same way that Haitian revolutionary Toussaint L'Ouverture protected his former master. One exemplary case was that of Manuel Dzug, a captain under Jacinto Pat. When Pat's forces overran Tihosuco in late 1847, the rebels seized particularly unpopular Hispanics, the equivalent of modern revolutionaries carrying out targeted assassinations to win favor. Juan de Dios Alamilla had been one such victim and was eventually taken to Bacalar and executed along with his two eldest sons. For reasons unknown, Dzug took an interest in the welfare of Alamilla's widow, María Toribia Encalada, and her youngest son, Cornelio, and made them his protégés, protecting them from the more sanguine designs of generals like Crescencio Poot, who wanted to execute them both.²⁶

What was it like when the *violencia* came to town? The paucity of documentation prevents a clear focus on how the Caste War struck in any particular village. But the farther a people lived from the original area of conflict, the more time they had to prepare. One step was to pack up valuables and ship them to Mérida.²⁷ This process actually preserved much rural wealth and allowed for continuity before and after 1847. In fact, the church lost far more to later state confiscations than to rebel jacqueries. Towns simultaneously erected elementary fortifications known as *trincheras*, little more than breastworks of wood or stone. These were temporary and left no material trace; only in a few communities, such as Yaxcabá and Iturbide, did stone and masonry guard posts become permanent features of the town's architecture.

Not content to hide behind improvised barricades, towns such as Ticul organized evacuations. Much of the early Caste War confusion emerges from the Sierra Alta region. After the momentary pause in April, the rebels resumed their northward progress, overrunning Xul and then picking up recruits at Felipe Peón’s enormous hacienda, Tabi. By the time Pat’s forces staged their northernmost raid in Ticul itself, most of the Indians had disappeared: they had either fled to safety, were serving as army support, or had gone to join the sublevados themselves. No firebrand, Ticul’s batab in fact led the evacuation to Mérida. Here it was the outlying communities who suffered: more than one hundred were assassinated in Maní, but only one in Tipikal. Mayas of Pustunich took advantage of the breakdown of social control to torch the house of their unpopular batab, Antonio Ku, who wisely heeded rumors of his own pending murder and fled to Mérida.²⁸ The war touched local trip wires and opened town grudges, just as national political changes opened opportunities for counterattacks by provincial out-groups.

Oddly, the best-documented account of one town’s mobilization comes not from Yucatán at all, but rather from the hamlets of the Petén district of northern Guatemala.²⁹ Here the rebellion originated under Tubucil’s *governador* (the Guatemalan equivalent of cacique or batab), José María Hernández. He had earlier received a shipment of arms and ammunition from Jacinto Pat, who enjoyed prewar trade ties with the region. In November 1848, when Pat began to call in old favors, Hernández tried to rally support for the flagging revolt; the two hoped to use Tubucil as a launching pad for attacks against towns on the highway between Mérida and Campeche. Hernández and confederate Vicente Ek gathered the townspeople; some came believing it was a declaration of support for the government in Flores. But the crowd had been seeded with *patistas*, followers of Pat. Hernández dramatically announced that Tubucil was now under Jacinto Pat’s command. Under the direction of Hernández’s lieutenants, the rebellion quickly fanned out into surrounding villages, chiefly San Antonio, Nohtanché, and Concepción. The rebels seized food and supplies, burned houses, and began fortifying the roads. Peaceful townsfolk found themselves overwhelmed by a war momentum in which resistance could prove fatal. In San Antonio, the crown dragged an unpopular ladino³⁰ named Cardero to the town plaza and beat him to death with sticks. But others fell victim as well, including Mayas insufficiently enthused by the prospect of a race war. Many fled the pueblos to Flores or to the backlands.

Even in the Petén it soon became clear that Pat was losing. Refugees who escaped the failed offensive reported crippling shortages of salt, clothing, and meat.³¹ Rumor held that Cecilio Chi had made peace with the government to fight his former ally (the story was false, but gives some hint of the prevalence of misinformation).³² As the rebel army began to disintegrate, so

too did Hernández's influence over the masses. *Tubucileños* made him the scapegoat by capturing him and sending him to the authorities in Flores (his eventual fate there is unrecorded). This act split the movement between pro- and anti-*hernandecistas*; but the latter now outnumbered the former ten to one. They jailed and shot six of the remaining pro-war ringleaders, then burned the jail to the ground. Then, fearing reprisals from Guatemala, some fled for Chichanhá, near the Río Hondo; others left for a remote site named Nohpimienta, seventy leagues west of Chichanhá; still others feigned innocence. Thus ended the Caste War in Tubucil.³³

Several points in this narrative help clarify Maya mobilization and decline. First, the revolt was strongest in towns of origin, weaker in secondary villages: estimates held that Tubucil had no more than fifty pro-war men, the other communities about thirty each. Second, the pro-war factions were almost always a minority, probably less than one-half of the adult male population. Accounts state that women did not participate. Third, war fervor was strong with regard to local issues (killing a hated ladino), but weak in regard to ideologies and long-distance alliances. Fourth, the movement could not survive without growing, and it could not grow without reports of greater victories elsewhere to stoke the imagination: people needed to believe they were already winning before they would try to win (again, the fantastic vision needed to galvanize oppressed peoples). Finally, leaders had little real control over factions and followers, and once Hernández had doled out the arms from Pat, he had few sanctions or rewards for his recruits. In all these points Tubucil offers a study in the weaknesses of rural underclass revolt.

Finally, there is the matter of evaluating the overall success of the 1847–48 offensive. Of the many myths retailed about the Caste War, none is more entrenched than the idea that the Mayas almost expelled Hispanics from the peninsula. This view features in much of the scholarly literature and has become an article of faith in tourist brochures, Web pages, and popular legend. But nothing could have been further from the truth. To begin with, the walled city of Campeche was impregnable to the kind of forces the rebels mustered. Perhaps the best index of Campeche's ability to withstand assault comes from the year 1867, when embattled imperialists endured a siege of six months; the Republicans who eventually overcame them had artillery, naval support, coherent military structure, and a fifth column of sympathizers in both the city and its surrounding barrios, advantages unavailable to the 1847 rebels.³⁴ The Campeche of 1848, to the contrary, had already begun to receive relief donations from New Orleans, even before rebel offenses reached their apogee, and suffered no inconvenience greater than a temporary food shortage owing to dislocations among rural suppliers.³⁵

Nor was Mérida ever seriously threatened. Rebels to the south advanced no farther than Ticul, and that was only as a raid, not an occupation. Pat's northernmost base was somewhere around hacienda San Antonio Xocnech, and the sortie on Ticul came after he himself became aware of rebel weakness. The story of Cecilio Chi's occupation of Izamal is even more instructive. In 1848 rebel initiatives stalled outside of this important city for lack of powder and shot. Fed up with hardships, the army threw its ample supplies into the wells and then used lack of ammunition as a pretext to evacuate the city. Once rebels learned that Izamal was abandoned, they entered to look for anything worth carrying off. The city's fall was thus entirely avoidable, and when Chi's men found nothing to help them, they began their eastward retreat.³⁶ Sustained occupation requires military discipline, superiority in arms, and steady supply lines, all of which lay outside the insurgents' grasp. Mere raids on towns failed to provide the needed resources; otherwise, entry into Izamal and Ticul, two of the peninsula's larger secondary cities, should have allowed them to continue their advance. But this did not happen. In fact, the farther rebels pressed toward Mérida, the greater were the resources and organization at the state's disposal. Accounts of Mérida's sweeping panic are probably *ex post facto* exaggerations; notary records for late 1847 and early 1848 reveal a routine volume of business transactions in the capital, hardly evidence of an incipient evacuation. Those who did leave were the more informed and well-to-do, men such as Juan Pío Pérez, an amateur linguist and former jefe político of Peto, who had helped squelch Acereto's 1843 rebellion. At the war's outbreak he was serving on the Mérida ayuntamiento and simply skipped town without telling anyone.³⁷ But Mérida's own jefe kept up a variety of unrelated projects during the conflict's height: cattle inspection for the urban market, a smallpox campaign, and a commission for improving the port of Sisal.³⁸ What did heighten fear was the sight of eastern refugees flooding into Mérida and Campeche. This was an experience without precedent in the peninsula, so shocking that it inspired charity campaigns from as far away as Mexico City.³⁹ But the more informed understood that the crisis was momentary: the army had already begun to receive reports of rebel overextension as early as January 1848, and subsequent events showed that these reports were correct.⁴⁰ Indeed, Jacinto Pat had already opened peace feelers through officials in British Honduras by mid-February. For said reasons, the legend of the Maya near miss can be laid to rest once and for all. The real root of the legend lay in a racist rage that needed to darken its enemy in order to justify past abuses as well as the retribution Hispanics were preparing to inflict. Ironically, later authors picked up the story as a way of celebrating the achievements of the ethnic rebels with whom they sympathized.



FIGURE 2.1

The church at Oxkutzcab. This was the last major town fully occupied and controlled by the forces of Jacinto Pat in his northwestward push. The image shown above probably dates from the early twentieth century. By permission of the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, University of Texas at Austin.

Over the course of 150 years, it has become a habit to speak of the Caste War as though it were a well-defined and well-understood war, a clear-cut social conflict. But it was no such thing for the individuals who launched the offensive, nor for those who fought and fled them. The opening year of the Caste War presented itself more as a continuation of the Yucatecan Republic's anarchy, involving forces that rolled Mayas and Hispanics together, often over complex matters of subregional rivalries and municipal-level power struggles. The ethnic battle lines only hardened after 1847 (and more particularly, 1853). For the moment, the greatest challenge was simply understanding the nature of the violence that pueblo politics had unleashed.

THE SOLDIER'S LIFE

What of the Yucatecans who were mustered to put down this challenge? The force that suppressed the uprising was neither monolithic nor well

organized. Long ignored in Caste War studies, it formed one of the most important institutions in the history of the southeast’s century of ongoing crisis. What then was the Yucatecan army? What did its needs and dynamics have to do with the society in which they operated? What was its role in the emerging *violencia*?

Governor Méndez tapped Sebastián López de Llergo to lead the army. His army consisted of seven units known as battalions. At first these tended to be regional groupings—or, given Yucatán’s pretensions, national—but over the course of the next four decades, battalions became community based, with one for each of the twenty-two most critical cities and towns. Most important in field operations were the subsets known as companies, which ranged in size from 70 to 150 men. The sixth battalion, for example, had ten such companies, two of which were ad hoc compositions known as *compañías accidentales*. Each of these companies in turn consisted of three basic tiers of ranking. The highest was usually a colonel, who operated with a staff composed of a lieutenant colonel, first and second *ayudantes*, or assistants, and the company surgeon. At the head of the second tier stood the captain, who had an even larger staff, which included lieutenant, sublieutenant, paymaster, and administrator. Third and lowest were the vast majority of the troops, the soldiers themselves, presided over by a *cabo*, or corporal, and rallied into action by the company drummers and buglers.⁴¹

For these men, arms continued to flow into the peninsula, following the lines of the arms buildup that had begun with the Yucatecan Republic. Rifles, balls, gunpowder, and cannons flowed in from Spain, Cuba, and the United States. The state’s single greatest advantage in dealing with peasant revolts—its privileged access to industrial production—remained solid in the first three years and helped determine the course of events. In fact, the accumulation became so pronounced that by March 1848, well before the Tzucacab treaty, the Yucatecan state looked for ways to dispose of an excess of outdated armaments.⁴²

Yucatecans carried their world with them into battle. This included religion, for the Catholic faith remained woven into all aspects of Mexican life. Belief remained, but the parish system that had nurtured that belief disintegrated. Soldiers used the abandoned buildings as barracks and fortifications (the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century constructions often had windowed, upper-story walk spaces known as *gallinas ciegas*, which were ideal for lookouts and sharpshooters), and returning curas typically found their buildings gutted, the pews burned as firewood, and the floors covered in blood (in 1849, for example, soldiers executed Maya prisoners inside the church of Mopilá, near Yaxcabá).⁴³ Marauding soldiers took whatever pomp they could carry away, and the army did far more to destroy church



FIGURE 2.2

Military canton in the tropical forest. This scene of troops stationed in the southern hamlet of Nohpop actually dates from the 1898 federal campaign in Quintana Roo. But with some exceptions (such as the industrial wire and corrugated sheet metal) it offers a fair approximation of the material culture available to Yucatecan soldiers during the Caste War. Photograph by permission of the Centro de Apoyo para la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán.

construction than did the rebels themselves. In fact, thefts and sackings commonly attributed to the *sublevados* time and again were the work of the army. The worst case of this came during the humiliating March 1848 retreat from Valladolid, when the soldiers who were supposed to escort the evacuating civilians instead ransacked their homes.⁴⁴

Still, Yucatán's church, fundamentally a colonial bulwark, identified with the army, not with the rebels or even with the Mayas who failed to rebel. Given the church's exploitative relationship with the peasantry, together with the age's profound racism, it is not surprising that (the abundant) clerical correspondence manifests virtually no concern for peasant

well-being. A handful of priests served as chaplains, following the government cantons at all times and circumstances: "The Yucatecan soldier who spills his blood in repeated battles, defending humanity and civilization, is a Catholic and as such wants to leave this earth when the Divine Providence sees fit."⁴⁵ Some of the more devout military officers simply maintained the local curas with a monthly stipend of three or four pesos.⁴⁶ Finally, priests continued to serve as peace emissaries, even when they knew that the peace in question was a restoration of colonial power and in no way involved a reordering of society or even a redress of grievances.

While the spirit found solace, the stomach often went empty. The most common food consisted of *totoposte*, a kind of hardtack made from tortilla dough, along with a drink of dissolved cornmeal known as pinole.⁴⁷ The army starved at times, when it lived on little more than palm hearts known as *cogollos*.⁴⁸ But in better moments, soldiers enjoyed more substantial fare. As soldiers marched into the southeast, they dined on beans, rice, crackers, coffee, jerked beef, and salted catfish and sea bass.⁴⁹ Units carried quantities of lard with them as an essential part of cooking. In later years, when international trade had resumed, soldiers enjoyed barrels of pickled meat imported from the United States: the slaughtered cattle of the New York region fueled the suppression of peasant revolt in semitropical Mexico. But at all times it was expropriated corn that kept the army alive.

One taste that cut across battle lines was the thirst for aguardiente, the rotgut rum that fueled life not only in Yucatán but wherever Mexico's tropical climate sustained sugar cultivation. Several factors account for its prevalence among the fighting units. During the previous century, aguardiente had become a staple; in this preindustrial world its use knew few restrictions other than the stigma that came with lying facedown drunk in the street. Indeed, it was widely believed that aguardiente provided a prophylactic against the ailments that followed agricultural labor.⁵⁰ Aguardiente emboldened soldiers for actions that otherwise seemed suicidal. It was plentiful, and despite wartime damage, a number of clandestine *alambiques*, or stills, operated in ranchos throughout the war zone, much like the rebels' clandestine blacksmith forges. A number of the Maya insurgents continued sugar refining during these years, on what before the war had been their own private ranchos.⁵¹ Jacinto Pat, like his revolutionary forerunner Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti, forcibly kept men on his estate in order to maintain a commodity that could be traded for arms and supplies.⁵² Finally, the difficult recovery years of 1852 onward forced southerners to churn out *panela*, a cheap, dark sugarloaf popular for conversion into spirits. Whoever the distiller, mule-strong alcohol remained a prevalent feature of the society, and well into the 1890s Yucatecan civic leaders struggled in vain to curtail a drinking problem that found new impetus in wartime conditions.⁵³

An even rarer liquid—water—remained in high demand. The majority of Yucatán’s natural limestone sinkholes, known as cenotes, lay in zones fairly removed from the conflict. Land farther to the south sat high above the water table, making wells (dug with picks, shovels, and long metal pikes) a costly and time-consuming venture. Availability of water had always been a key feature in determining human settlement here and remained so during the war years. Rebels understood this and took care to close up the wells of towns before abandoning them.⁵⁴ The relentless rainy season did not help, since capturing rainwater required large, permanent structures unavailable to the smaller cantons and mobile units.

Even when the canteens brimmed, the soldier faced a hard life. The difficulties and deprivations of service invited an enormous variety of physical hardships, including respiratory infections, hernias, destroyed muscle tissues and reproductive organs, malaria and other mosquito-borne infections, rheumatism, heart disease, fractured spines, eye inflammations, hematomas and varicose veins, faces mangled by bullet, and wounds in all possible parts of the body.⁵⁵ In the far south, life was a panorama of mud, water, hunger, “and the plague of mosquitos that abound in these parts.”⁵⁶ As in the U.S. Civil War, summary amputation provided the cure-all for wounds.⁵⁷ Soldiers’ petitions for demobilization and pension, even when adjusted for exaggeration, are horrifying documents indeed. Justo Ruz, a physician to government forces in the Chenes area, reported, “No expressions can be found to describe the distasteful scenes experienced in the course of such a sad duty, struggling constantly among the mutilated and corpse-like.”⁵⁸ In one regard, at least, the army enjoyed an advantage over the rebels: access to medicine. As the peasant offensive peaked in May 1848, the state created a *comisión de boticas*, or pharmacy commission, that inventoried and expropriated Mérida’s pharmaceutical supplies. Overseen by the ubiquitous jefe político, this group quickly raided stores in order to build a medicine chest sufficient for the next six months. The only pharmacist to escape expropriations did so by relocating his business to Campeche before the commission’s acquisitive henchmen came to call.⁵⁹

Clothing too posed a challenge. Except at rare moments, few combatants on either side had uniforms. Illustrations showing men in Napoleonic high-waist pants and smartly decorated shakos are misleading: in reality, the majority wore sandals, not boots, accompanied by the crudely made shorts known as *calzoncillas*. The problem worsened in the first years of the war; by 1850 one comandante could report, “There are men who barely manage to hang on to the shreds of worn underwear that cover their private parts.” During the rainy season, clothing was perpetually wet.⁶⁰

Compounding these aches and pains was the concern for the family back home. Adult men were the sole providers for their wives and children, and families fell into abject poverty in the father’s absence. In fact, family hard-

ship competes with medical problems as the dominant motif in soldiers’ petitions. In some cases wives and children accompanied the menfolk, much like the *adelitas*, or female camp followers, of revolutionary fame. They washed clothes and prepared meals, and priests complained of soldiers audibly making love to their women while quartered inside the town church.

Death assumed many forms. Combat was the obvious cause: many, like Julio Aguilar, fell pierced by simultaneous bullets to the head and shoulders. The dead received a wake and a wooden-casket burial only if relatives happened to be near.⁶¹ Army mortality and casualties ran particularly high in 1848–49, as evidenced by the many widows requesting pensions.⁶² But far more people perished of harsh conditions than of combat. Most commonly this meant disease, for poor nutrition and the breakdown of normal means of sanitation, such as they were, heightened the probability of epidemics. Accidents too claimed lives. Campaigns at times dictated that troops move at night; soldiers had no illumination (lamps were rare, and torches or lanterns made a walking target), and it was not unknown for a soldier to tumble into a cenote.⁶³

As with so many insurgencies, set battles almost never took place. Virtually the only toe-to-toe engagements came when a besieged party made a desperate gamble to break free. Most fighting assumed the form of raids and sweeps. In the former, swift-moving *sublevados* tore into unsuspecting or inadequately defended communities, laid waste, then fled. In the latter, military columns marched through territory in an attempt to flush out rebels and commandeer resources. Both styles of fighting generated low casualty rates, since the disadvantaged party simply fled. While writers eager to celebrate the rebels have exaggerated Hispanic incompetence, the truth is that the army was almost always the insurgents’ match. Even after adjusting commanders’ reports for inflation, it is clear that the army usually won head-on confrontations and was able to maintain control over reclaimed territory through the use of the cantons. Gabriel “Picheta” Gahona’s famous woodcut showing two officer-dandies fleeing from battle—the illustration that for years has adorned the cover of Nelson Reed’s narrative—should not be taken as reality, and those individuals not toughened to counterinsurgency quickly became so. When army setbacks did occur, they usually derived from specific circumstances. The Yucatecans suffered when they advanced beyond their supply lines; when caught by a surprise raid; when they entered into unfamiliar, densely wooded terrain; when they tried to maintain distant and unconnected territory; or when they found themselves encircled by overwhelming numbers. As a rule, soldiers controlled towns, but became vulnerable when they marched out.

Regardless of their prowess at arms or the depth of their larders, standing militaries became a permanent presence in most towns. Many communities, and especially those along the *línea*, demanded a fully equipped

military installation to ward off rebels. In fact, the quest for full and permanent mobilization became a mainspring behind the turmoil of the late 1850s, a direct link between politics and the *violencia*. This resulted in a practice that, although varied in name, became a permanent feature of nineteenth-century Yucatán: the canton system, semipermanent military settlements. Large cantons quartered in correspondingly large towns, while small *línea* communities such as Ichnul had some forty soldiers, although much of their work involved periodic marches into the surrounding woods, leaving no more than ten to twelve to ward off attacks.⁶⁴ The presence of soldiers had another benefit, since they had to buy most of their food, supplies, and entertainment in the town. Merchants and suppliers of services profited as state money trickled out of the pockets of hungry soldiers and into their own hands.

One direct continuity between peace and wartime was desertion. The Achilles tendon of the colonial militias, its frequency heightened as societies fell into actual combat.⁶⁵ The problem of desertion haunts military communiqués. It existed from the war's beginning and continued throughout, always peaking as fighting and living conditions reached their worst. In 1849, for example, disease, starvation, and enemy assaults made the deep south a probable death sentence; whole platoons destined for Bacalar deserted, officers as well as conscripts, into the forests around Hunucmá.⁶⁶ It was a popular referendum on the projects of a military-dominated state, and for peninsular development, a process of change analogous to the rise of the colonial hacienda: a grassroots response that redistributed populations and redefined human relationships. In fact, desertion provided one of the most important social dynamics of the entire age of rebellion. It was the motor behind the *Imán* revolt and Yucatecan separatism, the power drain that prolonged the Caste War, the undertow that drowned the empire, and the subtext of peninsular movements welcoming the Díaz dictatorship. Through desertion the people created a tidal wave, even if they could not control either its course or consequences.

At the same time, a standing military generated no end of headaches. Its irregular and disruptive lifestyle rippled outward, and civilians who escaped the draft still had to serve in a number of ancillary roles, such as making cartridge pouches from deerskin (the same material that today binds many of Yucatán's notarial documents).⁶⁷ In peaceful moments, the men were bored; they came to liquor stores spoiling for trouble and usually found it. A typical case comes from Mérida itself, one of the largest single concentrations of soldiers in southeast Mexico. After drinking "a huge jar of *aguardiente*," soldier (and store owner) Anastacio Novelo killed fellow drunk Benito Briceño over a half-empty bottle of whisky. The punishment

for this sort of misdeed was a mere six months in prison, because one drunk less was a minor consideration by the 1850s, whereas the military needed men too desperately to lock them away forever.⁶⁸ Similar problems abounded throughout the peninsula. Perhaps robbing citizens and throwing them in wells should have merited at least a reprimand, but the protection of the comandantes got the offending soldier off scot-free.⁶⁹ In addition to rowdiness, the poor and underpaid soldiers were known to steal, above all from the church, which they increasingly treated as an open target. They took items such as vestments and sold them for petty cash; officers declined to discipline their men too harshly, perhaps calculating that the soldiers' loyalty outweighed the padre's blessing.⁷⁰ But the officers themselves often were to blame, because they freely expropriated whatever they saw as necessary to feed their troops. The magistrate of Dzidzantún described the town's military canton as "even worse than the Indian barbarians," stealing everything from corn to *camotes*, the starchy tubers that often helped poor folk endure famine.⁷¹

One aspect of military institution involves its use of brutality, systematic or otherwise. *Violencias* necessarily involve violence: how, then, did the state use it? Lack of precise documentation renders much of this conjectural, perhaps because Mexico's early national state lacked the obsessiveness, or at least the efficiency, of its twentieth-century counterparts, many of whom kept minute records of interrogation, torture, and execution. Aside from the early lynchings of *batabs*, few records survive of the treatment of prisoners. Detention centers provide the usual scene for such events, and the absence of these centers meant that prisoners were dealt with immediately upon capture, without bureaucratic oversight. And the frequency of captives' confessions does indeed suggest that the army worked them over. At first the army simply executed its prisoners, at least until they became valuable as slave commodities. Educated urbanites considered the army not only brutal but ignorant. "We've captured two men," ran a joke, in which a canton commander writes to the governor; "I've had them temporarily shot, until you dispose otherwise."⁷² It was an exaggeration, but one based on known brutality toward prisoners, and as the joke suggests, executions normally did indeed take place through firing squads. Valentín Cano, a soldier who served in the army during the Caste War's earlier years, recalled that the army shot Hispanic prisoners but hung Mayas, not by long drop, but by the more agonizing process of stringing them up to strangle. Far from nursing moral qualms, Cano thought that his role in the episode qualified him for a pension.⁷³ In 1848, when Yucatecan soldiers retook Tekax, they amused themselves by throwing captured rebels from the town's only third-story building onto the bayonets of soldiers waiting below.⁷⁴ The one feature recognizable by late-twentieth-century

standards was the use of rape, known only by a throwaway comment made by José Canuto Vela, a priest who served on the ecclesiastical peace commission; Vela knew full well what the army did to captured women, but his vision of a hierarchical caste society compelled him to work for pacification regardless of consequences.⁷⁵ What is lacking in all of this is evidence of the ritualized violence found in the Guatemalan security forces, or the perverse torturer-victim relationship that scarred Argentina during the late 1970s.

The army also retained its capacity for rebellion. Its unruliness reflected the miserable conditions under which soldiers fought, but also resulted from folding in many of the Yucatecan Republic's most perfidious elements, including early Caste War conspirators. As soon as the crisis had subsided in the northeast, for example, Antonio Trujeque became involved in yet another revolt, this time a military insurrection whose exact goals remain unknown. The revolt played itself out in late December 1849 in Mérida, where low pay bred dissatisfaction among the troops. A wealthy *político* named Bernabé Sierra secretly funded the revolt, working through Trujeque to mobilize followers. As with the pre-Caste War episodes, Hispanic political violence continued to involve Mayas; Trujeque revived prewar tactics by recruiting individuals such as Aniceto Chi and Juan Pablo Dzib. The revolt fizzled before it began, while Trujeque and twenty others went to prison in chains. But even this deterrent failed. The army's abysmal pay allowed the prisoners to seduce soldiers into plans for yet another revolt, but one that proved to be the Tihosucan's last hurrah. Authorities caught on and sent Trujeque and his original associates on to San Juan de Ulúa in Veracruz for three years.⁷⁶ Trujeque's eventual fate remains unknown, but it appears that the man who more than any other Hispanic helped bring about the ethnic revolt died in obscurity, somewhere in central Mexico.

The sudden growth of the military added a new actor to rural life: the occupational officer. In earlier times, commanders had either been stationed briefly in a particular area or else had been temporarily appointed from civilian life to raise *ad hoc* militias (recall the elected officers of the early 1840s). But from 1848 onward, officers now lorded over their territory for long periods of time and assumed the power of review over much of daily life. Urban-based commanders, known as *comandantes de la plaza*, took their place among the other arbiters of city affairs, and they demanded all the usual perks, including meals, laundry, and the forced sedan service known as *kochée*. They acted through local magistrates who, closer to society's moral economy, occasionally saw to it that the porters received some pay.⁷⁷ Finally, officers organized *poses* to ferret out deserters believed to be hidden among the civilians; when frustrated, *poses* compensated by stealing anything that caught their eyes.⁷⁸ These *martinets* demanded respect from the civilian population and grew vengeful when that respect was not forthcoming. When Nestor Pérez went on a drunken bender in Ticul (the

first time ever, he claimed), he began to say publicly what many citizens thought privately about their purported defenders, and his candor earned him two months in prison.⁷⁹

Significantly, the Yucatecan armed forces never quite became the paramilitaries that have plagued modern-day Colombia or Sudan. In these latter cases, high-profile national elites have relied on extralegal forces to carry out politically unpalatable tasks. For the most part the nineteenth century lacked media scrutiny and even disapprobation for such crimes as ethnic massacres, hence lessening the need for proxies. Nevertheless, in the 1850s and 1860s the weak state, coupled with growing military strength and self-assurance, gave landowning eastern commanders an autonomy that made them forerunners of later paramilitary chiefs: powerful, ambitious, inclined to violence, and difficult to control.

The expansion of military authority complemented rather than replaced the preexisting *jefaturas*. Rather, both expanded in scope as war panic caused *ayuntamientos* and *repúblicas* to collapse, leaving a power vacuum in the *pueblos*. In all areas not under rebel control, *jefes* continued to provide political oversight through a parallel system of authority. *Jefes* and commanders resided in the same major towns; the former communicated with the governor, the latter with the army’s central command. *Jefes* also acted as connecting tissue between the military and the people, rounding up manpower and resources, communicating warnings, relaying intelligence, and so forth.⁸⁰ For example, it fell to the *jefe* of Izamal and his functionaries to arrest deserters who had fled home and now lay in a hammock, ridiculing authority.⁸¹ *Jefes* also put together the civilian *juntas calificadores* that oversaw the composition of militia units by granting draft exemptions and discharges. Assorted other duties included checking passports, monitoring coastal activities, and filtering locally generated complaints, particularly those directed against the army itself.⁸² The *jefatura*’s staff of *jueces* and *alcaldes* supposedly enjoyed immunity from the draft, although at the height of the conflict, even this was violated.⁸³

Jefes políticos continued to operate in their accustomed manner, using legal leverage to divert public labor to their own estates and to those of their inner circle. In fact, the war actually enhanced security in office, since public servants from the governor on down now had dangerous jobs and could plausibly claim that emergency circumstances justified their continuation. Miguel Barbachano, for example, governed from 1848 to 1853, the longest stretch of stability since old José López Constante presided over Yucatán in the first decade of Mexican independence, and unsurpassed until the rise of Olegario Molina just prior to the Mexican Revolution. *Jefes* like Mérida’s Antonio García Rejón also took the opportunity to entrench themselves.⁸⁴

But shared power naturally sparked friction. Military commanders now encroached on *jefe* jurisdictions: it was the former who decided where

presenters were to go and for whom captives should work. In this (and in other regards as well) Pablo Antonio González epitomized the new military entrepreneur. Among the best documented of the upper military echelon of Caste War leaders, González is particularly interesting for his rapid and seemingly effortless transitions from civilian to military life and back again. His way of corralling labor was simple: to those who came into his camp, González offered three cargas of corn, a new shirt, a hatchet, and a machete, debts that the recipients discharged by working on the colonel's cotton and henequen properties.⁸⁵ The problems inherent in this muddled division of power also emerged in the Sotuta region, the old colonial partido of Beneficios Bajos. Sotuta's jefe político Pascual Espejo ran a network of cronyism and exploitation, diverting public labor from nearby towns to supply the needs of estate labor for his many relatives, many of whom happened to enjoy minor political appointments as well. When Marcos Canché, former resident of Kancabdzonot, was brought from the war zone, Espejo promoted him to batab and took advantage of his services in sorting out peasant labor. Unbeknownst (perhaps) to Espejo, Canché had already contracted a debt to González. The ensuing argument between Espejo and González turned on the question of how to interpret Canché: a presenter who had the right to return to his old home or a captive who was legally bound to the military commander?⁸⁶

Turf wars notwithstanding, the jefe-comandante system functioned reasonably well, in part because the two authorities hailed from the same social class and at times even from the same family. Colonel Manuel Cepeda Peraza, for example, surveyed the battle from horseback, while his brother Andrés, longtime jefe of Motul, took stock from the writing desk. Their cooperation proved instrumental in defeating the great rebel initiative. Organization wins wars and allows small groups to control far larger ones. It was some measure of the system's success that it outlived the Caste War. Both jefes and officers increased in power over the next thirty years; their uneasy relationship mixed politics with armed force, helped generate petty chiefdoms that stoked the civil wars of 1853 onward, and persisted until Porfirio Díaz co-opted the jefes and retired or co-opted their armed counterparts.

MAYAS FOR, AGAINST, AND IN SPITE OF MAYA REBELLION

If the early months of the war were a confusing time for Hispanics, they were sheer calamity for indigenous peasants. Despite a common language

and cultural heritage, Yucatec Mayas remained disunified, and their expectations differed markedly according to the circumstances in which they lived. Village, subregion, family structure, ties of patronage, or simple self-interest typically superseded ethnic solidarity. Practical considerations also intervened: the rebels themselves, long on fervor, were unprepared for sustained regional conflict. Twentieth-century insurgents profitably studied the strengths and weaknesses of predecessor movements, but here illiteracy, together with linguistic and geographical isolation, prevented Mayas from reviewing examples that might have helped them. Indeed, the very underdevelopment that fostered the rise of the Caste War also limited insurgent success. Economic changes had yet to produce new urban political actors ready to throw over the old order, while the absence of preexisting social movements meant that there was nothing that could merge into the insurgent cause, no organization that subversive elements could coax or infiltrate.⁸⁷ Little evidence suggests that rebels attempted political work or composed anything in the way of a coherent program. They did considerably better with spy networks, since sublevados revealed an ongoing awareness of political currents in the Hispanic state. But as in so many of Mesoamerica’s indigenous uprisings, a viable plan for the future, together with concerted efforts to promote that plan, simply never materialized.

Their effectiveness as fighters varied over time. At first the uprising prospered through the elements of surprise and naive enthusiasm; then declined in the face of repression and fragmentation during the early 1850s; then hit peak form in the 1860s, if at the cost of astonishing cruelty.⁸⁸ In terms of weaponry, reports from the first three years of the war reveal that rebel arms were antiquated, poorly maintained, and virtually useless. Their rifles were often mere shotguns. The state was too strapped to invest in restoration for use as army weapons, and they were simply discarded.⁸⁹ Caches of their hand-packed cartridges occasionally turned up in the sweeps.⁹⁰ Projectiles were whatever happened to be at hand. Combatants preferred lead, since it was easily molded. Following this came iron, tin, and finally fire-hardened wood, all of which could be shaped into darts known as *palenquetas*—improvised, but soldiers later attested to their devastating effects.⁹¹ Church organs provided the most important source of tin, and after the first few towns were overrun, military commanders began dismantling these pipes before evacuating, since they were certain to be cannibalized.⁹² Sublevados had repeated access to cannons, but either found them too complicated or simply useless to a style of warfare that stressed mobile raiding parties. Cannons also consumed immense volumes of powder that otherwise could be distributed among many men. When rebels seized Bacalar for the second time in late

1858, they immediately spiked all artillery rather than try to deploy it.⁹³ A few years later the rebels purchased a bronze cannon that traders unloaded at a coastal site known as Punto de Corcho. Yucatecan military reports fail to mention the device, and possibly its size and weight made it difficult to deploy in rapid jungle skirmishes. Functional or not, the cannon symbolized the obsession with arms procurement, a fascination that survived into the twentieth century, with Mayas expecting rifles, hand grenades, and even airplanes from visiting foreigners.⁹⁴ Over the course of the twentieth century, these requests became more performative than real.

Still, rebels themselves cobbled together more of a wartime infrastructure than is commonly recognized. Following a practice they had learned in the militias, they clear-cut underbrush surrounding their camps to guard against surprise attack.⁹⁵ Maya caste warriors used mules and horses for transportation. Because a number of the original war leaders had operated mule teams, these and other pack animals abounded, and in the early 1850s the army reported capturing sizeable numbers.⁹⁶ For cooking purposes, sublevados used cauldrons, iron griddles known as *comales*, and even carried metal coffeepots, all items that had become part of rural material culture over the previous century.⁹⁷ They continued to cultivate and refine sugar during the first three years, mostly for sale in British Honduras.⁹⁸ The rebels also operated clandestine forges throughout their territory, a critical component in a world where blacksmiths repaired metal equipment used in both war and daily life.⁹⁹ Given the frequent reports of the poor quality of rebel arms, these improvised arsenals were clearly insufficient to the need. In sum, the material culture of the rebel military did not always differ qualitatively from the regular army's. They used many of the same things, but rebels had less of them. The problem was that most goods came through plunder or else were remnants of a lost civilian life, and for these reasons could not be easily reproduced.

Previous militia experience affected the Maya peasants of the Caste War in manifold ways. To begin with, multiracial participation did not end suddenly with the eruption of the Caste War, but rather maintained continuities with pre-1847 precedents. What little organization existed among the rebels themselves was mostly an adapted form of the militia regiments. Units had captains, lieutenants, sergeants, corporals, and ordinary foot soldiers. Original mobilizations appear to have taken place among villages, with caciques or other prestigious individuals playing the role of officers. After the deaths of the early cacique instigators, leaders rose to power through ability and charisma. In its mature state, Chan Santa Cruz borrowed heavily from the old militia system by having the adult males double in militia service and subsistence agriculture.¹⁰⁰

The rebel diet also paralleled that of the regular army. Its main difference consisted of the lack of processed imports. The daily diet of prewar life was far more varied than mere corn, and the insurgent soldiers carried peacetime tastes with them into battle; they expected rations of both salt and meat, among other things, and when the fortunes of war changed in the late 1840s, they found the absence of these commodities among the bitterest of hardships.¹⁰¹ Many insurgents from the area of Tihosuco south to Bacalar were fishing peoples, who kept their canoes and fishing lines hidden along the coast; the catch could be dried and salted for consumption in the interior.¹⁰²

Most of the British Honduras trade concerned rifles, lead, and gunpowder. And since he knew that traders were coming, Pat used his connections to acquire a smorgasbord of other items. Well into 1849 he received shipments of such luxury items as cologne, cinnamon, scented soaps, combs, drinking cups, pepper, shaving razors, scissors, assorted textiles, cotton underwear, and correspondence paper, specifically, the thin blue paper known as *ilera*, on which many of the surviving rebel communiqués are written.¹⁰³ Pat had higher tastes and expectations than did the Caste War’s rank and file, but this is not to suggest that he wallowed in luxury while his men starved. A number of these items had practical value, and rebel society itself could not produce them. More important, merchandise created an aura of wealth that helped garner support, and Pat used such items as gifts in order to cultivate the loyalties of officers—again, the cult of the material object. The trouble was that luxury contraband came in quantities far too small, and did not address needs that were sufficiently basic, to cultivate peasant support in contested areas.

For rebels, then, life became a never-ending succession of smuggled weapons, secret trails, self-made militias, daring raids, and precipitous retreats. Indeed, the adrenalin-stoked excitement of war becomes an addiction that keeps *violencias* alive. But what of the Mayas who did *not* rebel? Received wisdom teaches that only peasants of the Oriente and secondarily the Chenes region around Bolonchén took part in the revolt. In the main this is true, but with some qualification. Some Mayas outside the area of the war’s genesis did in fact join the conflict. These included people from Maní, for example.¹⁰⁴ Workers from the hacienda Tabi, outside of Oxkutzcab, also threw down their tools and went to war. But even those who did not rebel nevertheless drew inspiration from the conflict. The experience of an ethnic uprising that separated peons from their estates came as a liberation to some. Peasants as far away as Hunucmá were heard to praise the revolt.¹⁰⁵ José Chan, a lunero of the hacienda Chuhkan (outside of Homún), was one such individual. The war came as an awakening to him: “Not content to return to labor as a servant should for his master,”

the Homún magistrate fumed, “he has come forward to alarm everyone of his class, inspiring them with scandalous ideas contrary to all principles of a well constituted society.”¹⁰⁶ No scribe recorded Chan’s heresies, but they presumably involved rejection of the servant role that defined life for so many.

The state, meanwhile, responded to the threat of a popular groundswell through martial law. On paper, at least, individual fines of fifty pesos befell those who rebelled, individuals for whom five pesos represented a huge sum. Directives aimed at keeping people in their villages, with stiff punishments for those who disobeyed. Orders also went out to disarm inhabitants of Mérida’s barrios and to form civil patrols similar to those of Guatemala’s civil war.¹⁰⁷ But in reality, the various plans advanced by the governor’s five-man council of state in February 1848 proved impractical and were ignored during the crisis of the next six months.¹⁰⁸ People proceeded more from lynch-mob mentality than state design. In this climate, Mayas who had nothing to do with Pat’s rebellion were suspected of complicity, and in areas far removed from the immediate violence of the war. Relatively minor infractions such as refusal to do *fagina* service—a minor and extremely common offense for most of the nineteenth century—now drew prison sentences of three to four years.¹⁰⁹

In this early hysteria it was the *batabs* who suffered most. The role of *batabs* in the early conflict defies easy description. Eastern *caciques* led the initial revolt, but counterexamples abound. While the office of *batab* had become more difficult in areas such as Tabi and Tihosuco, the *batabs* of places such as Mérida, Campeche, Motul, and Izamal remained prosperous in substance and rather bourgeois in attitude. Sadly, Mayas of this office became targets for persecution. Patrician histories remark on the phenomenon and even provide a few anecdotes. Known cases include Juan Cocom of Sitpach, whom authorities imprisoned in the chapel of Conkal, today a picturesque ruin, prior to his execution. Cocom was a modest property owner and had enjoyed the privilege of borrowing money out of subdelegado funds. But like so many others, his property dwindled to nothing when divided among his wife and thirteen children.¹¹⁰ Elsewhere, among the most moving of all Caste War documents is the melancholy collective will of Baselio May (*batab* of Motul) and his two accomplices, José Miguel Pech and Nicolás Kuk, who describe themselves as “of sound mind and body, and with the natural sense that God has seen fit to grant us, but near death in this chapel, condemned to the maximum punishment for the crime of conspiring against the whites.” These too were men of property and family; their complicity in an uprising in faraway Tihosuco strains credulity.¹¹¹

Another victim of the mid-1847 hysteria was Francisco Uk, *batab* of Mérida’s western barrio of Santiago. Uk had drawn out his will on the eve

of the Caste War, in June 1847, at which time he owned a house to the south of Santiago plaza, as well as the haciendas Tech’oc and Bobat, both in Nolo. The total estate bequeathed to his wife and daughter well exceeded \$200; but Uk also left \$480 in silver coins, an immense fortune for a Maya, to his illegitimate daughter Sebastiana. The inheritance also included various pieces of urban real estate. Because Sebastiana was still a minor, her father appointed the land baron Manuel José Peón as *curador*, or protector, but eight years after her father’s death, Sebastiana married José Kuyoc, a literate Maya who now became legal custodian of Uk’s fortune.¹¹² This unusual paradox—befriended by patricians but put to death by the state—underlines the complicated features of authority in the late 1840s. The great urban caciques enjoyed ties with both other urban Mayas and with extremely prominent creoles. But political decisions were not always the decisions of a united and wealthy class; rather, they responded to public panics and bureaucratic self-defense, and thus cost Uk his life. Hysteria struck in Hunucmá as well, and to quiet the lynch-mob atmosphere, local officials executed the batab and distributed his corn and cattle to angry vecinos.¹¹³ Finally, additional casualties included the batabs of Cholul and Chablekal, both sent to firing squads. An odd sequel to their lives turned up at the late date of 1900, when the batab of Cholul’s great-grandson and the batab of Chablekal’s grandson, now hacienda peons living near Conkal, were questioned regarding possible communication with remote Chan Santa Cruz. Everyone connected with these ludicrous charges was eventually released. Still, it is interesting to see how old guilts and accusations, false to begin with, became a kind of hereditary stain.¹¹⁴

Eventually the panic subsided, and public attentions turned elsewhere. Many Hispanics remained convinced that Mayas—ancient titles be hanged—were too stupid to have planned such an uprising; they instead preferred to see British and French machinations behind the war.¹¹⁵ Five survivors of the suspected Maya fifth column, all from Maní, had their sentences reduced to five years’ exile, while two more (from Dzemul) received prison sentences.¹¹⁶ Patron-client bonds between Hispanic and Maya prevailed in the cases of Narciso Xul and Pedro Cob of Ekmul, who managed to have themselves bonded from prison on the agreement to work as servants on the hacienda San Antonio Xtohil.¹¹⁷ Similarly, Pedro Cetina bailed out Sisto Uk, batab of Mejorada.¹¹⁸ One has to wonder whether these once-proud urban batabs made satisfactory peons. Although their later fates remain unknown, their fragmentary stories suggest that accused batabs continued to rely on the friendship and intervention of non-Maya allies to carry them through the persecutions of the early war. It was a measure of the suspicion that now fell on Maya elites that none participated in the 1848

town-based plebiscites approving Yucatán's reunification with Mexico. The situation contrasted with the 1843 plebiscite engineered for the same purpose, a consensus builder with extensive participation on the part of caciques and other prominent peasants. Moreover, while the earlier plebiscite had involved towns and villages throughout the peninsula, the 1848 approach was limited to key towns such as Mérida, Campeche, and Ticul. In time of crisis, power retrenched to urban centers.¹¹⁹

Batabs in fact sustained pressure from both sides. It was expedient to work with the army, and for that reason men like "the honorable cacique of Uaymax, Nicolás Cen," who had been at loggerheads with rebel batabs from the onset, served as guides for the patrols.¹²⁰ So too by 1850 the batab of war-tossed Bolonchén, one Bernaldino Mex, led efforts to raise money for Forty Hours' Devotion.¹²¹ Doubtless these actions smoothed relations with powerful Hispanics, but the rebellion's leaders understood the influence a cacique wielded over his people and went out of their way to attack any of the brethren insufficiently enthused by their cause. Antonio Ku, batab of Oxkutzcab, caught wind of rumors that Pat's men would assassinate him when they reached town; he fled northward, and the rebels had to settle for burning down Ku's house.¹²² Rebel hostility to quiescent batabs persisted over the next thirty years.

So much for the batabs' fortunes as of 1850. Most Mayas were not *principales* (village leaders), and most did not support the Caste War rebellion in any practical or visible way. Nor was there much reason for them to do so. The insurgents offered no benefits, provided no protection against army reprisals, articulated little in the way of a coherent program, and after the first six months gave no credible reason to think that they would ever win. Some evidence points to an early millenarian campaign; consonant with other pre-twentieth-century autochthonous movements, batab Manuel Antonio Ay Tec associated himself (or was associated by others) with an earlier Indian leader with "name recognition," in this case the fallen messiah Jacinto Canek of 1761.¹²³ And why not? After all, Jacinto Canek itself had been a *nom de guerre* adopted in reference to the king of the last independent Maya city. But the strategy worked mainly as an early mobilizing tactic, not as a way of sustaining long, complicated, and arduous campaigns. The targeted assassinations that formed so prominent a part of the later insurgent repertoire may have provided some momentary enthusiasm but did not address the basic needs of a peasant underclass. After mid-1848 all the rebels had to offer was messianic promises—and to those who opposed them, terror.¹²⁴ Small wonder, then, that the Caste War uprising failed to sweep the entire peninsula.

Geographical exclusion also played an important role in depressing participation. Only 10 percent of the some 500,000 peninsular population

resided in the genesis region of Peto partido (of which Tihosuco was part), and even adding residents from the partidos of Valladolid, Tekax, and Bacalar, the figure comes to only 30 percent of the total peninsula.¹²⁵ Even in those areas, huge numbers of Mayas (and the vast majority of Hispanics) either fled or actively resisted. Subtracting refugee Mayas who might have joined the uprising but apparently chose not to do so, we come to under 30 percent of the peninsular population, a clear minority. This left a vast peasant majority to somehow deal with a conflict not of their making.

In civil wars people tend to gravitate to the side that demonstrates greater control, and in contested areas of the Yucatecan conflict, it was usually the army that held the upper hand. In early 1848 the state launched a program that entered Mayas into military service on a large scale; receiving the title *indios hidalgos*—literally, “Indian noblemen”—after a nearly defunct honorific of the colonial period, these recruits served from a mixture of coercion and personal motivation. Even into the 1830s, *hidalgos* occasionally received military title and command over their fellow Mayas, but this practice remained limited in scope.¹²⁶ What happened in 1848 was different: large blocks of the northeastern haciendas’ Maya workforce suddenly assumed a title hitherto reserved for the faded indigenous nobility. The state busied itself drawing out formal papers, although with little consistency or depth of information.¹²⁷ From the hacienda Dzitoy, near the coastal town of Dzilam, came twenty-nine.¹²⁸ The exact number of *indios hidalgos* recruited from northwestern haciendas and villages remains unknown, but probably ran to a thousand or more.

From the beginning, military *hidalguía* also ran counter to the traditional *hidalguía*, in which selected Maya families received titles and tax exemptions in exchange for some long-forgotten services to the land’s hoary conquistadors. This class exercised virtually no real influence by 1847, but people were still aware of them, in the same way that so much other colonial regalia survived into the mental world of early national Mexico. Some old-time *hidalgos* had found their way into commerce and commercial agriculture, and the Pech family continued to enjoy prestige in the northwest area. Military *hidalguía* erased the old *hidalgos*’ special privileges, thus helping flatten them into the general peasantry. This objection apparently filtered up from the offended parties, but given the pressing circumstances of the war, confused *jefes* could do no more than shrug their shoulders and repeat that military service had priority now.¹²⁹

In the beginning strong incentives moved would-be “sons of something.” Enlistment for service against rebels dissociated them from the anti-Maya hysteria; enlistment for largely noncombat roles resembled the process of Evangelical conversion during Guatemala’s civil war, wherein

peasants took up Protestant inspiration as an ideological “region of refuge,” or else did time in the irksome civil defense patrols.¹³⁰ Maya military service also carried the promise of tax exemptions. Hidalgos gained freedom from the hated state head tax that had helped stoke the 1840s revolts. The Yucatecan state archive’s “*Disposiciones y decretos*” of 1849 contains hundreds of cursory notations wherein Maya peasants reaped the rewards of enlistment.¹³¹ Hidalgo service placed Mayas in a favorable position in bargaining with the government for other matters as well. For example, in February 1849 Maximano Can, captain of a unit of indios hidalgos from Hocabá, petitioned to have corn captured in eastern Yucatán routed back to the soldiers’ families.¹³² Hidalgos asked to have their children relocated to safety, to obtain pardons for past misdeeds, and to have their loved ones exempted from duty.¹³³ Finally, since cantons often harassed free villagers into doing unpaid service, peasants might as well sign up as hidalgos and receive something for their efforts.¹³⁴

The practice also opened a new pocket for Maya authority, the *capitanes de hidalguía*, leaders of individual hidalgo units. Some units, such as the one raised in Hocabá, had vecinos as leaders, while their men and supporting officers were Maya.¹³⁵ But other units clearly had Maya leaders, since numerous petitions exist from Maya capitanes de hidalgos. Doubtless the unsettled times and often transient populations forced ad hoc arrangements in each different location. At times their selection followed traditional methods of selecting batabs, with the local juez tendering a list of three names, the first being the preferred candidate.¹³⁶ In other cases, hidalgo companies simply elected their leader and passed the news upward.¹³⁷ Whatever the method, the capitanes stepped into roles of peasant political leadership previously reserved for caciques themselves. To take only one example, Capitán Damian Ku led the peasants of Muna village in their land struggle against Raymundo Ayuso.¹³⁸ Like batabs, these Maya reconquistadors exercised some degree of initiative, as when Juan Chi of Hecelchakán negotiated with the state for firearms.¹³⁹ In all these cases hidalguía were not simply a military chain gang, but rather a complex system that held both sanctions and positive incentives.

Not all demanded relief from office: some simply wanted the state’s help in hard times. Such was the case with three Maya hidalgo captains from Cusumá; they had served for some time in the canton of Kancabchen, facing personal danger and hardship for their families back home. Their homes had been burned, their milpas were trashed, and the three had the responsibility of scraping together rations every time a section of men headed out. What they wanted was not release, but simply a shipment of corn that, thanks to the support that Izamal’s jefe político lent to their petition, they did in fact receive.¹⁴⁰

A few other tendencies still emerge from the initial months of *hidalguía*. Surviving censuses of the year 1849, mostly from the area to the immediate east of Mérida, a cluster of towns that appear to have been the main recruiting ground for military adjuncts, reveal a new four-way and at times five-way division of the population. After culling out the *vecinos*, each town divided its Maya population between male and female. Men were then split between *hidalgos* and *indios*, the former being eligible for forced service, whereas the latter, for whatever reason, clearly were not. A few towns continued to distinguish between the new *hidalgos*, distinguished as *hidalgos nuevos* or *hidalgos con título a la girada*, and the *hidalgos de nacimiento*, that is, those who had inherited the name from long ago. Little distinguished *indios* and *hidalgos*; both groups ran the gamut in terms of age, affluence, and marital status. Proportions of the two groups varied from town to town; possibly, large haciendas were able to retain a greater proportion of their labor force and may have contributed a greater absolute number of workers while retaining a higher percentage.¹⁴¹ Wealthy property owners succeeded in gaining exemptions for their own workers, in part through political influence, but also because they could make a case that the state needed their haciendas to remain in production if it was to extinguish the uprising. The “Disposiciones,” a series of decrees and rulings from the critical year of 1849, include numerous entries in which wealthy hacendados such as Raymundo Pérez (Hoctún) and Felipe Peón (Ticul), as well as various landowners from Motul, managed to exempt their workers from the military draft.¹⁴²

As the war dragged on, the luster of this new arrangement began to dim. Recently titled Mayas first felt the pinch when asked to fight—or more probably, to carry baggage and clear roads—when they would rather have been working their milpas. After the occupation of Tunkás, for example, the town’s Maya refugees worked at Izamal as ancillary military support, particularly in the capacity of *kochée* porters.¹⁴³ Nicolas Tús, an *indio* born in the Caste War center of Chichimilá, rejected the path of rebellion and participated in the chaotic March 1848 evacuation of Valladolid. He stayed in the military for eight more years, even crossing the Gulf of Mexico to serve in Veracruz. When he returned, only loyal Tús could remember the secret location where the retreating army buried its four-caliber cannon.¹⁴⁴ *Hidalgo* service from peasants in the deep south was a far less reliable matter. Even in mid-1849, by which point the army had reversed most insurgent gains, Maya soldiers from cantons in Tiholop and Tixcaltuyú were still fleeing to the hinterlands, “returning to incorporate themselves among their rebellious race.”¹⁴⁵ In the spring of that year, *hidalgos* began to flood the government with petitions of temporary exemption, petitions sometimes granted and sometimes not.

In 1850 the title entered a final phase, one that defined it at least until the collapse of the French Empire in 1867. Hidalguía simply became another form of labor draft, joining the ranks of such hated compulsory drudge work as *encomienda*, *fagina*, Peru's *mita* system of forced mine work, and the Bolivian practice of *pongueaje*, wherein Indians performed menial tasks for Hispanics. Even in the imperial years, the state drafted and deployed hidalgos in supporting roles in the campaigns. Hidalgos feature less frequently as petitioners, indicating that service no longer served as a bargaining chip for much of anything. Hidalguía had gone from an opportunity to an ambiguous reciprocity to a positive burden. Evidence of this point is the number of peons and free villagers begging to be released from military service. Hidalgos even offered to do unpaid community labor (never popular) in place of military service.¹⁴⁶ It is never clear whether surviving documents originated from peons or their *hacendado* masters—the latter had better access to lawyers and literacy—or merely represented a natural convergence of interests.¹⁴⁷

At the same time, military service on both sides became a justification for and an incentive to broader political rights. Militia service and militia elections, much like the municipal violence of the 1840s, helped mobilize and radicalize the rural peasantry. In their role as soldiers, average Yucatecans of whatever ethnic background came to affect the larger history through acts of passive resistance and open rebellion. Militia units functioned in ways that resembled the porfirian camarillas: as complex negotiating systems that included both popular concerns and top-down political interests.¹⁴⁸

These militias hardly embodied the democratic flavor that some have sought in early national institutions. In this telling, popular thought equated a free and sovereign people with their ability to organize local units largely free of state or federal manipulations, a martial version of the storied *municipio libre*.¹⁴⁹ The institution in this particular guise may well have emerged in other parts of Mexico—particularly those places where it grew organically from participation in the independence wars—but Caste War mobilization was too abrupt, too racist, and simply too dangerous to become a legitimate institution. Peninsulars of any ethnicity mostly hated military service. The places where the free armed village *did* take root were among rebels themselves and among their counterparts, the *pacífico* communities of ex-insurgents that dotted the (mostly southern) landscape. And the armed communities proved no viable blueprint for the long run. Drills with their antique weapons in the village square failed to keep either group from gradually dissolving into postrevolutionary Mexico.

Early mobilizations were handled by the *juntas calificadores*, panels appointed to determine service eligibility. The composition and leeway of

such a junta traced local power. Members were usually property owners or their mayordomos (in Espita, for example, all members were linked through kinship ties to the owners of the great hacienda Calaktzonot). They tried to hang on to their labor at all costs and routinely excluded friends and relatives as well, while the state government, lacking adequate control over its townships, simply signed off on local decisions.¹⁵⁰ Collectively, these exemptions resulted in shortages in military manpower and helped prolong the war.¹⁵¹ Their few extant papers show them exempting citizens for problems that included old age, broken limbs, uremia, fevers, chest wounds, spastic bladders, epilepsy, pneumonia, venereal disease, and tuberculosis, among other woes.¹⁵² At least one case refers to a special exemption for families that had already sent three or more sons to battle.¹⁵³ Curas also took an active hand in exempting both the Maya church staff and their own personal servants (a petition along these lines from the town of Tixkokob is one of the few known documents revealing that some of the Maya church staff could read and write as well as chant and sweep).¹⁵⁴ By 1851, when government forces were clearly gaining ground, the boards became more disqualifying juntas than anything else. With the fear of extermination receding, hacendados now lost the incentive to surrender manpower to the army. Yielding to their pressures, a decree of February 27, 1851, granted service exemptions to luneros who had lived on the estates since November 1849. Estate owners quickly exploited this legislation to resist new military claims on their men.¹⁵⁵

As the tide of war began to swing against the rebels, new categories opened up for the Yucatec Maya: those in some way returned from enemy territory. At its most scrupulous, the army recognized three statuses: *prisioneros*, who had been captured with arms in hand; *recogidos*, who had been freed from captivity among the rebels; and *presentados*, who had voluntarily come in from the cold.¹⁵⁶ Presentados were originally an ethnically mixed group, but became more exclusively Maya with time. The practice was to shoot prisoners taken with their arms, a retribution occasionally applied to known rebels who made the mistake of surrendering.¹⁵⁷ Mexican generals were hard put to restrain the Yucatecan army but understood that the murder of POWs encouraged the guerrilla hard line: “Knowing that they will be killed, they fight out of desperation, pushed to the extremes of death or triumph.”¹⁵⁸ References to the *recogidos* thin out quickly. Presentados, by contrast, appear copiously in surviving paperwork and probably represented a lumping together of the two.

Several patterns emerge within presentado society. While in the monte, refugees still observed the leadership of república members; for example, three such *principales* continued to guide the people of Xcan, negotiated for a peaceful return, and even protected treasures of the town church. The

presentados' fate was more varied and less clear than that of captured rebels.¹⁵⁹ Priests who took a humanitarian interest in these refugees feared, with justification, that they would suffer abuse at the military's hands.¹⁶⁰ Women and children feature disproportionately, a fact probably reflecting the men's service in one army or the other.¹⁶¹ Some officers put them to work raising corn or searching for food, or even serving in armed units.¹⁶² In many cases, family bonds held people together. Fathers, mothers, and children wandered the outback, looking for whatever armed force could protect and feed them. Most presenters simply gave themselves up in a desperate attempt to find food.¹⁶³ While the majority hailed from the Oriente, *presentado* lists occasionally disclose individuals from as far away as Mérida itself; how they came to the Oriente and what led them to wander in the monte remains a mystery.¹⁶⁴ Raised in the Hispanic bosom of Mérida, military officers had to rely on the *batab* and *república* to interpret the *presentados*' desperate stories, and even sent *principales* to scour the outback in search of whoever else might be contemplating surrender.¹⁶⁵ The army had reason to be suspicious, since presenters were known to abscond with tools, either to return to the rebels or the monte.¹⁶⁶ These hapless souls represented a Maya response to the *violencia* that by mid-1850 was entering its third year.

Like latter-day Central American peasants trapped between armies, the *presentados* had to look both ways at all crossings. Mistreatment and forced labor often caused them to flee again. Politicians and high-ranking officers understood the problem, but could not always control local forces, and the problem of recidivism continued. López de Llergo even considered creating Maya police forces in central Yucatán, not so much to guard against rebels, but to protect the towns from any wartime exploitation that thwarted his pacification campaign.¹⁶⁷ Wartime conflict always fell hardest on the weakest, which in this case meant women and children of the rural communities. These poor souls found themselves abandoned by menfolk who had either risen in rebellion, been drafted or killed by the Yucatecan army, or else fled to the monte. Women were subject to rape, forced labor, or theft of what little property they possessed. Young women lost their parents and came west to work as domestic servants, where the more fortunate managed to recapture the bonds of patron and client that had prevailed before 1847.¹⁶⁸ The war also created a huge number of widows and orphans. Even the moderately prosperous Maya families lived close to the margin of security, and widows found their lot all the harder as a result of rebel depredations. In Tahdziú rebels not only murdered Jacinta Ku's husband, Calisto Puc, but carried off their five children, never to return them. The hatful of property Jacinta inherited (ninety pesos) meant only a minimal compensation for the loss of her entire family.¹⁶⁹ Priests who served in

Hopelchén in the late 1850s later recalled that much of their work consisted of baptizing and rearing, free of charge, the children of the sublevados.¹⁷⁰ The mentality of these abandoned children is hard to determine, but their early years differed greatly from those of their parents, who witnessed both church and state as the pillars of society and who had matured in a society of relative security.

Resettlement patterns varied tremendously from town to town. Some Maya peasants returned almost immediately to Oriente communities such as Chichimilá and Tihosuco, another clue suggesting divided Maya response to the original revolt. Yet a town such as Temax, to the west of Izamal, was reported as empty of Mayas as late as 1850.¹⁷¹ Moreover, presentados and settled Maya shared an ambiguous relationship with the rebels. Those outside of the rebellion’s original zone shied from the conflict, particularly after the euphoria of late 1847 and early 1848 faded. Thereafter, most villagers lived in terror of rebel sorties: they themselves



FIGURE 2.3

Rural Maya women. Seen here in happier times, Maya women were among the Caste War’s greatest victims. Their menfolk often abandoned them or were snatched away by combatants, while unprotected females made an easy mark for the peninsula’s lusty soldiers. From T. A. Willard, Kukulcan: The Bearded Conqueror (Hollywood, CA: Murray and Gee, 1941).

were the least defended and most vulnerable, and once Chan Santa Cruz came into being, they feared being seized as slave labor for its enormous church construction. Miguel Can of Peto chatted with a stray rebel captain in April 1850, but to his regret, for the captain and his men later kidnapped Can's two sons, who were never seen again.¹⁷² Clearly, Maya milpa farmers had more face-to-face contact with rebels, and if uncomfortable, these meetings could at least be civil. Such episodes only came to light when for one reason or another someone chose to report them.

Mayas who remained in their hometowns operated under an air of lingering distrust. Hispanics often suspected them of trafficking with the rebels, and when danger threatened, many landowners reflexively confiscated their laborers' pitiful firearms. Failure to disarm Tepich had certainly played a role in bringing about the war; conversely, many believed that rapid disarmament throughout the northwest had saved the day. One of the peninsula's periodic confiscations took place between April and June 1851, when numerous towns petitioned against the practice and demanded the return of rustic weapons used for bagging deer, javelinas, and the wild rodents known as *tepesquintle*.¹⁷³ The disarmaments all came too little and too late, but in Yucatán and Campeche alike, fear of the shotgun Indian walked with so many other ghosts for generations hence.

For peninsular Mayas, then, the Caste War's early years were more labyrinth than liberation. If the moment tempted some to take up arms, it terrorized others, and led still more to find ways to survive and even profit from the crisis. All peoples have their moment in the crossroads, but for the majority of Yucatán's indigenous peasantry, it was a crossroads not of their own choosing. And although the Caste War formed a watershed in the history of the modern Maya, they faced that war through many needs and perspectives, and not as a single people.

PAYING FOR WAR AND MAKING WAR PAY

Who paid for the Caste War, and how? In most regards, the methods that financed the rebels were simpler and have been fairly well documented. Like the Revolutionary-era *zapatistas*, Caste War rebels performed double duty as farmers and warriors, but dislocations made regular agriculture difficult. Land planted after January 1848 proved hard to control, and *jeffes políticos* received rights to oversee the cornfields that rebels had abandoned.¹⁷⁴ Any subsequent cornfields had to be well removed from the army's clutches. Meanwhile, four sources were available: the leaders' private funds, taxing the loggers from British Honduras, simple trading on rebel-produced commodities, and pillaging what they could of Yucatecan

society. Kidnapping and ransom also formed cornerstones of the pillage economy. Before his death in 1856, Norberto Santos (of a property known as Tixcanteil, Tekax region) precisely recorded in his will the 144 pesos, one real, and three horses that he had once paid to reclaim his mother and three children from the insurgents, noting that he found the price exorbitant. Whether Maya or mestizo, Santos belonged to that class of modest small-property owners that insurgents have always liked to target: wealthy enough to have something, but too weak to defend it.¹⁷⁵

The Yucatecan side was more complicated, for it involved a greater number and diversity of people, and the state had more commitments on its resources and more tools for acquiring what it wanted. But the story was by no means bright. Meridanos and rural property owners advocated armed repression but were reluctant to fund it. A basic grievance of the Caste War, tax work had never been easy here; in fact, one of Antonio Trujeque's last acts as jefe político was to collect workers' contributions from a recalcitrant hacendado.¹⁷⁶ Matters failed to improve as the war accelerated, and the money necessary for large-scale operations proved as elusive as the smell of victory. As early as October 1847, with conflicts still limited to Tepich and surrounding hamlets, the property owners and capitalists of Mérida refused to comply with a six thousand peso levy based on a monthly four reales per one hundred pesos of property and capital, which was supposedly to support troops headed for Valladolid. This resistance was partly Mérida's way of thumbing its nose at the Campeche-based Méndez regime that came to power through revolution. To complicate matters, the propertied classes of Mérida had been repeatedly dunned over the past ten years. Capital city residents therefore balked at producing the requested six thousand pesos, while collectors were still trying to bring in an earlier four thousand peso contribution.¹⁷⁷ But who could have known the scope the war would eventually assume? On December 30, 1847, the rate increased to six pesos; within three months this proved inadequate, and the state introduced a progressive system beginning at a monthly four pesos on one hundred pesos and reaching sixteen pesos for property at five thousand pesos or greater. The wealthiest Yucatecans found their rates quadrupled.¹⁷⁸ As López de Llergo put it, by 1849 they had been "inoculated" against appeals to patriotism.¹⁷⁹ This burden fell overwhelmingly on residents of Mérida and Campeche, since in rural areas, particularly those under threat of invasion, people had quit paying contributions altogether, and circumstances made it impossible to confiscate their estates.¹⁸⁰

That left only the usual victim. When Barbachano assumed power in early 1848, he stole a page from national leaders by forcing the church to turn over its imágenes for sale in Cuba.¹⁸¹ This March 1 order irritated

curas whose parishes did not lie under threat of immediate attack, and in fact, many curas complained more about the confiscations than about the war itself. Civil officials charged with collecting these goods did not stop with silver and jewels, but also made off with furniture and personal belongings. Barbachano acknowledged the abuses but did little to restrain them, and the practice of treating the church as a piñata, a stroke that began with Imán and that characterized much of later Liberalism, gained currency.¹⁸² The forced sale of imágenes, together with the military drafts and dislocations of the late 1840s and an 1850 cholera outbreak, reduced most parishes to penury.¹⁸³ When money was needed for special events—such as in 1850, when Izamal organized a *novena*, or nine-day prayer cycle in order to bring rain—curas had to rely on the jefe político to enforce a special subscription.¹⁸⁴

Much of the state revenues had always come from maritime duties. The peninsula's three main ports—Campeche, Carmen, and Sisal—collected taxes on shipping, which in turn funded the state but also provided Yucatán's share of national revenues. When Yucatecans returned to Mexico in 1848, the federal government granted its prodigal province the right to deploy the federal share to help defray war expenses. This provided some relief, but the maritime trade remained weak for the next decade, hence nullifying much of the intended benefit. More important, the wartime deployment of maritime taxes from Carmen and Campeche, neither of which had much to fear from the insurgents, provoked resentment that culminated in Campeche's separation in the mid-1850s.¹⁸⁵

Still, the war demanded feeding, and the alternative to paying soldiers was to let them pay themselves. In early 1848 the government decreed that it would split the volume of moveable goods taken from rebel-held areas with the soldiers in question, a "sack tax" that encouraged wholesale looting of furniture, livestock, and so forth. Items seized went straight to the local subdelegado; for him, the law established a byzantine series of guidelines that divided property according to the previous loyalty of the owner. Moveable goods reclaimed from rebel territory were split fifty-fifty between the soldier and the state. If the property owner had aided the government cause *before* the coming of the rebels, then he would join the soldier and the state in a three-way split. Abandoned property in towns not yet seized by the rebels would go to finance local campaigns, the idea being to discourage premature evacuation of rural towns. The law opened bold new vistas for graft, since the subdelegado was responsible for evaluating and selling expropriated goods and for distributing the returns.

Looting rights worked in selected areas, particularly in towns that had been hastily abandoned but without sustained rebel occupation. In Ticul, for example, whole families fled with their crops unharvested and their

cattle unsold, while merchants bid tearful farewell to stores overflowing with goods, all destined to pass into the hands of rebels or military looters.¹⁸⁶ Elsewhere the law in application deviated from its intentions. Like burglars, rebels tended to grab small valuables, mostly leaving heavy furniture or worthless trifles for the soldiers.¹⁸⁷ Hacendados often shipped out possessions in advance or had enough clout to get them returned. Transient soldiers had no way of hanging on to expropriated goods, particularly larger items such as livestock; nor could they challenge the decisions of the subdelegado. Finally, generals impounded food and munitions regardless of circumstances, as numerous complaints attest.¹⁸⁸ The law functioned poorly, but was probably a decentralized rural society’s best solution. (Still, one wonders what became of all the expropriated furniture: even in affluent Campeche, the ayuntamiento shared its chairs with people visiting prisoners in the city jail!)¹⁸⁹

But the soldiers had to be motivated to fight with humans as well as tabletops. The army was willing enough—many shared the patrician class’s dislike of Maya peasants, and even if they did not, they soon came to fear and hate the rebels. Military élan crumbled mainly as a result of lack of arms and supplies and out of soldiers’ concerns for their abandoned homes and families. The state tried to inspire them by offering five pesos for every captured rebel, but like salaries (and state promises in general), these bonuses were unreliable, and there is no record of their having been paid.¹⁹⁰ Worse, hard-pressed tax collectors at times tried to extort contributions from enlisted men, heightening the contempt that many officers felt toward the noble edifice of civilian politics.¹⁹¹

In the 1850s, looting rights—too irregular to supply a standing army—gave way to a head tax known as the quota. Used to fund National Guard units, it fell most heavily on hacendados, who harbored large numbers of exempted workers and who needed protection. Meanwhile, a patchwork of irregular local duties remained active. Far to the west, in Laguna de Palizada, owners of the large dugouts known as *canoas* struggled in vain to remove the one peso per ton tax on freight transportation. The tax had originally been imposed by the brief occupational government of the United States but persisted thereafter. It fell particularly hard on transporters of logwood. However, the Yucatecan government needed too much money to begin granting tax exemptions. In the coming years logwood taxes actually increased, even though the industry retained its extractive quality.¹⁹²

The business class, which should have constituted a critical tax base, naturally did everything possible to dodge the blow. Yucatán had inherited that peculiar construction of Hapsburg Spain: a state that in theory claimed vast authority, but which in reality lacked the means and manpower to

exert its will. None were more aware of the incongruity than merchants, one of the few sectors that actually dealt in significant quantities of liquid capital. In the 1850s (and particularly from 1858 onward, when the Reform wars made their entry here), the state treasury found itself crippled by this poor tax base. State law empowered the treasury to assess the value of businesses through a committee known as the *junta graduadora*. But this group amounted to a few men with notepads. They relied on the good faith of merchants in reporting the latter's value, but merchants, anxious to escape extortionate taxes, undervalued both their fixed capital and volume of sale by as much as 80 percent.¹⁹³ Despite Barbachano's emergency measures, government deficits exceeded seventy thousand pesos by April 1851.¹⁹⁴ The problem became even more critical in the rebellions of the late 1850s, when the state, deeply in debt, had to find alternate means of funding.

Requisition—robbery, if one prefers—offered an alternative for officers as well as enlisted men. Commanders considered local materials fair game for an undersupplied army. When legitimate supplies were unavailable, the army requisitioned what it needed and let the state figure out how to pay for it later.¹⁹⁵ This was particularly true of freight animals, which the army harnessed in massive numbers. To those who turned over their mules to the commanders, the government offered to amortize their debt through exemptions to the personal contribution.¹⁹⁶ In practice this arrangement had limited appeal. Poor men could find other ways to dodge the contribution, and soldiers needed money in advance to cover their expenses, chiefly food as well as support for their families. Worse, no one could count on a bankrupt state to honor its promises of tax exemptions in the future. For these reasons the debt forgiveness system floundered helplessly. In ancient times, communities had hidden their womenfolk as combatants approached; in towns such as Sacalum, only the horses received this preferential treatment, since people knew from experience that animals would be the first things confiscated.¹⁹⁷

Whatever the plan, people found war taxes no less objectionable than those of peacetime. Many took refuge in a loophole exempting those under immediate threat of attack, for who did not see himself under such threat? Nonpayment had its effect, for by 1850 the problem of pay in arrears to soldiers had reached disconcerting heights. There were only so many hammocks and tin pots to seize, and booty grew scarcer after 1848. By the third year of the war, officers demanded at least one-quarter of their monthly pay in order to continue the campaign. This spawned a poorly documented but real dimension of the war: agiotistas, or loan sharks, followed the troops, lending them paltry sums and garnishing their wages in return.¹⁹⁸ Precious state resources therefore passed into the hands of unscrupulous noncombatants. Grumbling surfaced that profiteers were

prolonging the war, but the agiotistas—and indeed, the whole problem of funding military service—hamstrung the Yucatecan state for the next thirty years and proved one of the war’s longest-lived and furthest-reaching consequences.

One of the critical figures in war finance scandals, and in society and politics overall, was Joaquín Castellanos. A politician, literary dabbler, and entrepreneur, he owned the hacienda Tenitz, where his callous treatment caused most workers to try to leave.¹⁹⁹ Throughout the *violencia*, and even in the patrician histories, allegations surfaced that key officials stoked the war for their own profit; Castellanos appears to have been one such figure. During the early years of the Caste War, he served as commissar, a position that offered him control over money and supplies.²⁰⁰ Here he earned a reputation for corruption, withholding or skimming the soldiers’ pay and failing to deliver allocated materials. Within a brief period of time, Castellanos generated bad blood with peninsular merchants; after the first few shakedowns for forced loans, merchants understandably grew reluctant to cooperate and created their own association that penalized any member two thousand pesos for cooperating with the comisario. Castellanos also understood that many soldiers and *hidalgos* would never come home again or would only be demobilized at some date far into the future; he thus withheld pay to their families, insisting that it be handed in person to the soldier upon return. U.S. mercenaries fought in the Caste War, and when they tried to collect, the comisario curtly replied that the law did not admit foreigners into national service, and he refused pay.²⁰¹ In spite of his misdeeds, or perhaps because of them, Castellanos enjoyed a long career in Yucatecan business and politics. He remained one of Mérida’s wealthiest urban property owners,²⁰² survived the anti-Barbachano coup of 1853, became a devoted imperialist, then retired to his prosperous final years under a republic in whose restoration he played no hand whatsoever.

An equally serious problem simmered in the dark cauldron of salaries and pensions. Despite shortfalls, Barbachano actually *raised* public salaries during the early war years in order to keep people on the job: a magistrate’s annual pay, for example, went up \$280 pesos.²⁰³ But the pension matter was more serious, since past employees far outnumbered present ones. Within a few years of the conflict, Yucatán had become a pension state, a wartime extension of the *empleomanía*, the furious quest for public employment that resulted from Mexico’s limited private sector and growing urban population. The largest single source of state revenues, the head tax, or *contribución*, was devoted exclusively to handling the massive requests for reward and relief. In May 1853, long after the matter had gotten out of hand, the government imposed a six-month limitation between the time of wound or end of service and the time of pension application. It

left a six-month grace period for filing back claims—unavoidable, perhaps, but still opening the gates to a new flood of petitions.²⁰⁴

Pensioners and employees were not the only people laying claim to the state treasury. By early 1851, with food supplies critically low, the Barbachano government signed a special contract with a consortium of merchants and capitalists (including prominent individuals such as Pedro Regil and Darío Galera, as well as Domingo Barret, the man who had overthrown Barbachano three years earlier), granting them a special food import contract. The investors received a loan of one hundred thousand pesos over five months; they in turn handled all the contracting, shipping, and merchandising, amortizing the loan by a 7 percent import duty. Anything beyond that was profit. Among other perks, the contract granted them monopoly power for the peninsular wheat trade. The limited size of the merchant class guaranteed that wartime profits remained concentrated in a small number of hands.²⁰⁵

Yucatecan citizens too needed relief from the worst of the wartime dislocations and thus claimed their own fragment of state funds. For example, in 1849 a group of 107 women from Homún, evenly divided between Maya and Hispanic surnames, petitioned Barbachano for some pittance to help them survive. It was no isolated case: war widows were everywhere, women whose husbands had disappeared into the military, leaving them and their children bereft.²⁰⁶ On rare occasions, hidalgo widows too claimed and received pensions.²⁰⁷ Even women who had never formally married their man successfully applied.²⁰⁸ Here as elsewhere, Barbachano *always* said yes: either because he was basically kind, or else because, being a politician, he found it easier to give people what they wanted and worry about the consequences later. Full payment was seldom an option, but in cases of extreme need the state came up with one-quarter of the husband's monthly payment. The effect was to further deplete the state treasury.²⁰⁹

A final source of war-related revenues—for individuals as well as the state—was the sale of captured Mayas as slaves to Cuba. The murky history of this business constitutes one of the most frustrating of all dimensions of the Caste War, mainly for the paucity of information. Most of the trade occurred without benefit of paperwork, and the few records that do exist are mainly diplomatic correspondence, or else bogus contracts used to legitimize the trade. As with the Africans taken from Guinea and Angola, no one bothered to record the victims' own experiences. The export of Mayas began in February 1848; Miguel Barbachano provided legal sanction the following November, and although eventually prohibited, it persisted at varying levels for the next thirteen years and lay at the heart of the political upheavals of 1857–61.²¹⁰ Even the nature of the victims' identities is shrouded in doubt. There were few pitched battles by 1857, and

actual POWs would not have sufficed to keep the business alive. A more likely explanation is that any Mayas found living in the monte or on abandoned estates during army sweeps were dubbed rebels and treated accordingly.

How active and how profitable was the trade? The investive had to do with profits more potential than real, for while only two thousand to three thousand individuals were transported over the space of thirteen years, ambitious parties signed contracts to furnish as many as twenty thousand (some 6 percent of the total Maya peasant population). If carried out at the price of \$120 per person, this would have resulted in \$2.4 million, an ungodly fortune in those days and more than double the amount of loan capital then active in the peninsula. The prospect was so enticing that Cubans set up their own contracting houses on the peninsula, firms such as the Casa Goicouvia y Hermanos, to purchase and transport “rebels” captured in the vicinity of Valladolid.²¹¹ The houses relied on *jefes políticos* to deliver the human goods, and the *jefes* in turn worked through military officers for actual capture. Finally, some of the regional slave trade appears merely to have involved using the peninsula as a port of call. Yucatán’s anarchy, its vast and desolate coastline (Mexico’s longest), and the chronic need for slave labor in the nineteenth-century Spanish Caribbean made the peninsula an inviting place to cast anchor. Ships sailing for the African slave coast were able to recruit sailors in Campeche, as did the U.S. frigate *Catarina*, detained at Isla Mujeres in December 1859.²¹²

The combined effects of salaries, pensions, relief, and military services generated a long-term economic crisis that conditioned much of Yucatecan history for the next thirty years. Time and again it proved impossible to frame policies that satisfied all the region’s diverse interests. Merchants and urban consumers demanded freer trade as a means of accessing cheaper imports; communities and producers that limped by on their exports demanded increased protection. In reality, private enterprise already benefited from the state’s highly regressive tax structure, which waived levies based on property, wealth, or salary in favor of head taxes placed on the mass of poor ratepayers.²¹³ A war sparked in large part by taxes only brought more of the same.

THE CIVIL WARS, PART THREE:
MICHELTORENA, 1850–1851

Yucatecans first sought help from Mexico in July 1848. Two members of Mérida’s upper class—Joaquín Rejón and wheat monopolist Pedro

Regil—went to then Secretary of War Mariano Arista to solicit some one thousand to two thousand soldiers. Their long, rhetorical plea stressed the dire situation, the fact that church decorations had been sold off in Cuba, and that the state's back was to the sea (a useful exaggeration).²¹⁴ But Arista had little to offer. Defense against the U.S. invasion had depleted the Mexican army's men and resources. At that moment an uprising in the Sierra Gorda and the continual problem of filibusters were tying the nation's hands, while rival generals struggled for control of the presidency.²¹⁵ Arista continued to put off the Yucatecans with promises, and aside from stray reports on the situation, no further communication took place for the next year. (Thus far the Yucatecan political situation did not seem to have factored much into Mexican thinking, since there is little reference to it in the correspondence, but that soon changed.) By October 1849, even though the tide of the Caste War had turned, López de Llergo still confronted a land of near anarchy. The Yucatecan army now had some fifteen thousand men, but their struggle suffered from indiscipline, the dry and difficult southern terrain, the lack of arms and supplies, and the irregular nature of the guerrilla insurgency. For these reasons, López insisted, Mexican assistance was more critical than ever.²¹⁶

The first Mexican general sent to heal the Yucatecan situation was Manuel Micheltoarena. A prominent officer of the early national period, Micheltoarena had a long career under Santa Anna. Born in Oaxaca in 1804 to the family of a petty official, he had entered the military academy at an early age and never deviated from the path of arms. At the age of seventeen, Micheltoarena pronounced for the centralist Miguel Bravo and later (1832) helped put down a revolt in Tampico, defeating a force five times greater than his own. The Oaxacan officer briefly served in the Indian wars of Chihuahua, and his knowledge of the north made him a logical candidate to deal with the increasingly chaotic California situation. Here, he forced the withdrawal of a U.S. warship from the coast in October 1842 and went on to assume the rank of general, and the region's *comandancia*.²¹⁷ Dispatched to Yucatán in November 1849, his priorities were to end the Caste War and instill military discipline.²¹⁸

Micheltoarena arrived sick and dispirited in April 1850. Bringing with him a doctor, a servant, and a long-suffering wife, who had followed him through his campaigns in Texas, Chihuahua, and California, the general had to pay all of his own expenses. In reality, this man's long military career had not prepared him for what proved to be his greatest challenge: dealing with the Yucatecans. At first all was joy: Barbachano, Bishop José María Guerra, and others treated him like a visiting dignitary, and everyone offered money and support. But these offers proved to be little more than rhetoric. Curiously, Micheltoarena never left the confines of Mérida.

He instead set up a spartan headquarters consisting of little more than a writing desk. Bowing to the power structures of the Oriente, the general appointed Santiago Imán commander of the Espita canto, "his services being considered necessary."²¹⁹ He also contented himself to work through the old Mérida bureaucracy. But the Yucatecan political class interfered constantly with his decisions; as he put it, "Cortés and Pizarro would have achieved nothing with the legislatures suited to normal times."²²⁰ Micheltoarena lacked the physical stamina to suppress them, but the urge to deal with the Yucatecans via military dictatorship, a solution that his successor imposed quite effectively three years later, had already suggested itself by 1850. Regardless of his personal circumstances, Micheltoarena faced a situation far different from that of 1847. Cecilio Chi was purportedly murdered in 1849 by an assistant with designs on Chi's wife.²²¹ Jacinto Pat was assassinated late that same year; confronted with a rapidly crumbling force, Pat had staked everything on a call for rebel forces to converge on Bacalar, apparently hoping to consolidate control over the state's southeast corner. But the majority refused to comply, and the caudillo, discredited, fell prey to ambitious subordinates, probably led by Venancio Pec.²²² Whatever his shortcomings as leader, Pat was serious about the Tzucacab treaty's article making him lifetime ruler of the Mayas, for occupying forces discovered the shield of gold filigree that Pat had created for himself: a silver star with a crown above it, and beneath, engraved in both Maya and Spanish, the words "Jacinto the First." It disappeared after being sent to Mexico City's minister of war, but if ever located, it would constitute a salient artifact of southeastern history. Similarly, the army forwarded a box of Jacinto Pat's personal papers to Miguel Barbachano; quite possibly these are some of the letters now found in Mérida's Centro de Apoyo archive.²²³ Soldiers also captured Pat's widow, Feliciana Puc, who quite correctly blamed Antonio Trujeque for involving her late husband in political conflict; her fate remains unknown.²²⁴ The deaths of Pat and Chi set a precedent among rebel leaders, who learned to advance by assassinating their superior officers; the practice remained common for the next thirty-five years. Whatever the particulars, the deaths of the two principal caudillos fragmented rebel forces, and in strange irony, thus made them more difficult to subdue. Rebels split into diverse bands led by charismatic warlords, each promoting its own protective santo. Ultimately the Speaking Cross group prevailed, although this was to change hands various times and had to survive various army raids into its lair of Chan Santa Cruz. Leaders Venancio Pec, José María Tzuc, and Florentino Chan all perished shortly thereafter. By 1853 Bonifacio Novelo alone of the original rebels survived; he now shared leadership with Zacarías May, Crescencio Poot, José María Barrera, Dionicio Zapata, and Leandro Santos. Theories of the

existence of a messianic leader named Juan de la Cruz (whose name does indeed appear on several prophetic documents sent to Mérida) are conjecture, based on highly debatable textual evidence. Indigenous uprisings in both Mesoamerica and the Andean highlands frequently relied on “name value” of either resurrected leaders or figures who suggested religious power. What is far more certain is that military leaders controlled this world.

Micheltorena mostly built on strategies that the Yucatecans themselves had already put into operation. He institutionalized the *línea*, the single front starting in Tizimín, arching southward to Tihosuco, then westward to Peto, Tekax, and Bolonchén. From the *línea* the army launched a series of sweeps to flush out and destroy the rebel presence. While this was under way, Micheltorena attempted to encourage peaceful surrender through the mediation of Catholic priests. Two factors limited the strategy’s success. First, Micheltorena himself had no control over the army, which routinely executed captives and refused to honor terms negotiated through the church. Second, the *línea* mobilization cost a fortune, and despite tearful letters to Mexico, Micheltorena came away with nothing. At first the general had given four hundred pesos from his own pocket to tide over the cantons. A subsequent windfall of abandoned rebel booty also helped offset costs; recovered items included sugar molds, silver and gold decorations, chalices, plates, candlestick holders, keys, and coveted religious *imágenes* like the then-famous portrait of San Antonio looted from the hacienda Xocneceh, outside of Yotholim.²²⁵ Still, the principal means of funding were to postpone soldiers’ pay and to dole out IOUs in exchange for requisitioned goods.

Micheltorena’s policy of total mobilization unintentionally drove Yucatecan soldiers into the ranks of the rebels. The ethnic composition of the rebel forces changed considerably over time. The original prewar skirmishes had Hispanic military leaders, subordinate Maya officers, and mostly (but not entirely) Maya peasants as soldiers. The early years saw greater racial polarization, as fears of race war caused Hispanics and mestizos to close ranks against the Maya insurgents, in the process radicalizing the latter. Even then, the Maya leaders often had dissident non-Mayas acting as secretaries, advisers, and arms traffickers. Mayas continued to join the insurrection even after the tide of rebel success had receded; the practice might have been avoided had the army shown any sensitivity toward civilians, but sadly it did not, and abundant mistreatments continued to drive Mayas *not* associated with the original uprising to flee to the forests of the southeast.²²⁶ The mobilizations of 1848–51 also caused many soldiers to leave Yucatán proper for the comparative security of rebel redoubts; punishments for desertion had become so draconian that it was

safer to hide out here than back in the pueblos. Indeed, two independent testimonies from 1852 report that Chan Santa Cruz had as many non-Indians as Indians, and the two groups set up parallel command structures, each with its own barracks and officers' corp.²²⁷ An 1853 peace treaty signed in Belize with southern bands based in Chichanhá even included an article stating that these nonindigenous elements were to be included in the treaty's guarantees.²²⁸ Micheltorena helped advance racial integration, although not in a way that his Yucatecan collaborators desired.

A series of army revolts finally ended Micheltorena's term here. The problem had begun before his arrival: unrelieved service, family separation, and constant rain had worn out the soldiers.²²⁹ But the campaigns of summer 1850 worsened matters, precipitating a troop revolt in Yaxcabá on September 3. When the noon rations failed to appear (for there was no food), exhausted troops complained openly. When the commanding officer attempted to quiet them at sword point, they cried, "To arms!" Instead of resisting, the commander adopted a divide-and-conquer strategy by allowing twenty-five to return to their homes with their weapons. Reinforcements eventually arrived, and the ringleaders died before a firing squad.²³⁰ This incident convinced Micheltorena that the situation was hopeless. He first tendered his resignation thirteen days later, but subsequently decided to stay on.²³¹

This atmosphere of weakness encouraged a familiar troublemaker to play his hand. On November 21 of that same year Agustín Acereto attempted an incredible *eighth* revolt, this time against Valladolid's jefe político (an old rival) and the city's comandante. The uprising was crude stuff: basically, throwing a drunken mob on the two victims, but it involved his sons and a certain Felipe Navarrete, the man whose own 1863 revolt inadvertently delivered Yucatán into the hands of the French Empire. Among the more vivid moments of Mayab's many revolutions was that of Agustín Acereto ringing the city's church bells in order to draw adherents for this revolution. It failed, for too many troops remained loyal. Still, the revolt revealed the way combat had altered local politics by throwing power into the hands of a jefe-comandante faction. Acereto ended in jail but learned a lesson that became important eight years later, during the Reform wars: drunken Oriente mobs were insufficient, and the man who wanted real power would have to go to Mérida to find it.²³² Barbachano put Acereto and his younger son, Agustín (born in 1821), on trial for sedition, but the case dragged on until Barbachano himself fell in early 1853, and the Aceretos walked away scot-free, as if protected by some evil spirit.²³³

The final revolt took place in January 1851. This time the leaders were major military figures (Lieutenant Colonels José María Covian, Patricio

O'Horán, and José Eulogio Rosado) and included petitions from the major cantons. Constant duty had pushed soldiers to the brink, and the policy of total mobilization had proven counterproductive, inspiring desertions that cut the sixteen-thousand-man army in half. Despite military successes, officers were frustrated by Maya tenacity under brutal second-generation leaders and feared a major rebel initiative at any moment.²³⁴ His heart disgusted with Yucatecan politics, Micheltorena tendered his last resignation, but remained on duty until relieved the following May.²³⁵

A final appraisal must deal generously with Manuel Micheltorena. Not at all the *miles gloriosus* that his successor or certain Yucatecans proved to be, the Mexican officer was neither ignorant nor callous and made no attempt to work the war for his own enrichment. In fact, Micheltorena actually sympathized with and respected the rebels and identified their mistreatment as the war's principal cause. He performed his work from a sense of national duty, not from some racist, neocolonial rage. Whatever the general's motivations, though, the Caste War proved to be his last battle. His body wracked with the illness of a lifetime spent in far-flung campaigns, Manuel Micheltorena died in Mexico City on September 7, 1853, leaving behind nothing more than a sheaf of service papers and an impoverished widow to a Mexico that soon forgot he had ever existed.²³⁶

If the first four years of the Caste War revealed anything, it was the facility with which mankind adapts itself to war. Yucatecans entered the months of late 1847 in confusion, but by late 1851 the Caste War had become a way of life, and not merely for the vainglorious colonels who hoisted their own reputations along with the standards of battle. The occupational officer now joined far older forms of local authority. Humbler men uprooted from their own precarious civilian lives now found new means of livelihood as soldiers. Rebels themselves never came close to an ethnic reconquest, but they did assemble a better army that anyone could have expected. For the Maya peasants who chose not to rebel, the role of *hidalgo* distanced them from military reprisals, freed them from tax burdens, and even held out hopes for a pension that would someday fall to them or their heirs.

The Hispanic-dominated Yucatecan state had managed to contain the great rebellion, as states usually do. But the strategies that it employed spelled trouble for future generations. The growing political clout of military officers—both through their control of men and resources and their intimate association with the *jefes políticos*—spawned dangerous agents not content to work through the sketchy democratic processes of earlier times. At the same time, in mobilizing men and resources on an unprecedented scale, the state assumed burdens that worked like a sort of fiscal leukemia, consuming funds before they ever materialized. New methods

of funding ultimately failed to keep up with skyrocketing commitments generated by the counterinsurgency. Caste War expenditures set the stage for the political chaos of the next thirty years. However, this was not apparent when Yucatecan dignitaries welcomed Manuel Micheltorena to their country. The question at that moment was merely whether the war was to continue, and the answer was that it would, and for a very long time. The violencia in Yucatán was only beginning.

“Nothing More Than a New Conquest”

A World Catches Its Breath



In July 1855 two intrepid priests hiked to the abandoned church of Sabán, deep in the war zone. In most regards the structure told a story of disaster. The santos survived, but stood exposed to rain from the leaky ceiling, while bat droppings had charred away much of the santos' fine exteriors.¹ Here the travelers also encountered two enormous wasp nests, commonly known by their Maya name *xuux*, fastened on both arms of the altar's cross. The priests announced their discovery as a miracle, for the wasps failed to attack them as they approached to kiss the cross's foot. These were the signs: the air of the fantastic and the uncanny surrounding this rural landmark, as it surrounded the seemingly miraculous victory over peasant rebels.

Other returns were more painful and considerably less wondrous. Priests who reclaimed Chichimilá, one of the rebellion's cradles, found the church bells scattered throughout the land: one turned up in a well in nearby Ebtún, another in a field outside Xoccen. Meanwhile, presenters continued to flow in, “all of them unclothed and with nothing to eat.” The padres had to baptize them and their infants free of charge: “It is true that the fee of a *medio* [half-real] has been decreed, but I avoid charging them for fear that they will return to their past lives, as many of them have threatened to do.” To rekindle religious enthusiasm among these lost souls, Padre Pablo de Sierra planned new spectacles: “Desiring to celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi in this parish so that by this means we may reanimate and more the recent presenters, and that they themselves might attract their companions to the holy religion, which is nothing more than a new conquest,” the priests requested loans of sacred decorations from nearby Valladolid.²

All these discoveries traced metaphors of the times. Between 1851 and 1856, Yucatecans struggled to recover what they could from a war-torn

world. These years witnessed a visible decline in violence and a partial return to prewar routines. Much had disappeared, yet much remained intact. A mystery or two confronted survivors, and everywhere lay a damaged landscape whose reclamation demanded their energies. Still, people found a way to go on. Looking at the devastated fields, the gutted buildings, the empty homes, they could only ask themselves: was this real recovery, or merely another wasteland mislabeled peace?

THE CIVIL WARS, PART FOUR:
THE FALL OF BARBACHANO

The first change of these years was the unification of military and political power. Micheltoarena had let civil affairs putter along on their own, but his successor took a different approach. Perhaps it was the deceits of fortune that had sharpened General Rómulo Díaz de la Vega's cynical edge. Born in Mexico City in 1804, he entered the military at an early age, and along with his brother Manuel, rose to become a high-ranking officer with loyalty to Santa Anna. He participated in the 1835–36 march to pacify Texas, and in fact led the first soldiers to breach the Alamo mission walls during the final assault of March 6. By 1840 Díaz, by then a lieutenant colonel, commanded the Zacatecas Battalion in the ill-fated campaign of reconquest and subsequently rose to head the division that encompassed Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas. He is probably best known for losing the battle of Resaca de la Palma at the onset of the U.S. invasion of 1846–48. Captured by the bluecoats, Díaz de la Vega spent most of the war imprisoned in Veracruz's Perote fortress, but was returned to Mexico City and appointed interim president in order to receive the capital from the departing North Americans. While stationed in the north, he met the wealthy Monterrey families and married one of their own, a certain María del Pilar Valera. By the time the general took on the Caste War, the two had made their home in Mexico City.³

Díaz arrived in Mérida in May 1851, where he found that the former Republic's war department consisted of four tables, assorted chairs, and a hat rack. He also inherited the army rebellions of the Micheltoarena years, such as a failed soldiers' uprising in Tihosuco that August. Commander José Eulogio Rosado managed to quash this revolt through draconian repression, but the underlying problem—stresses relating to permanent mobilization—remained.⁴ Following orders from the minister of defense (Ministro de Guerra y Marina), Díaz therefore instituted "mobile forces," a rotating system in which the soldiers spent six months at home and six



FIGURE 3.1

Rómulo Díaz de la Vega. This Mexican general built a cacicazgo based on centralism, religion, and Caste War military power. His adherents convulsed Yucatecan politics for the next twenty-five years. By permission of the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, University of Texas at Austin.

months at the front.⁵ Towns most vulnerable to attack opposed the idea: they had benefited from the vast mobilization that drained away men from safe communities in order to station them permanently in places along the línea. Díaz's strategy reversed matters. Just south of Ichmul, Sacalaca's guard now fell from sixty-two to thirty-eight men who, unlike before, did not even enjoy the dubious security of iron rations, but rather had to forage among the settlements. In vain *sacalaqueños* demanded a return to the permanent guard units, a homesteading program to replace their lost citizenry, and a guarantee of full protection for two years.⁶ But rotation worked in Díaz's political favor, for it satisfied the northwestern villages eager to retain peons and breadwinners. Pacified areas were grateful, while inconvenienced communities blamed the Barbachano state, thus setting the stage for its 1852 overthrow.

With the rotation system in place, Díaz divided his forces into five columns: three pushing southward to Lochhá, a fourth and fifth to Chichanhá and Chan Santa Cruz.⁷ The plan succeeded in weakening the insurgency, partly through Díaz's own efforts, partly because the uprising had already faltered before the army arrived. Pat and Chi were now dead, the survivors had retreated into remote southern forests, and leadership had splintered into three or four rival factions. In April 1852 Díaz occupied Chichanhá, temporarily sweeping insurgents from the area and marking the perigee of rebel fortunes.⁸ Chichanhá leaders found themselves forced to sign a peace accord, but their action infuriated other belligerents, who immediately took revenge by assassinating Padre Felipe Jesús Rodríguez. He had the misfortune of being at the nearby rancho Chakán when rebel caudillos passed through on their way to punish the Chichanhá group.⁹ Cirilo Baqueiro pacified Mesapich after fierce resistance on April 20, claiming the lives of numerous rebel leaders, while sublevados, acting under orders of José María Dzul, murdered José María Barrera (probable founder of the Speaking Cross) in a quarrel over gunpowder.¹⁰ On June 18 the army entered Chan Santa Cruz itself for the second time, killing leaders Venancio Pec and Juan Yam in hand-to-hand fighting.¹¹ For the first time in five years, the war appeared to be drawing to a conclusion.

But Díaz's triumph was more illusory than real. The campaign had cost a staggering thirty thousand pesos. Worse, numerous rebel cohorts remained intact and simply redirected their field of operations northward. On October 14 a small detachment of the Valladolid canton entered Chemax, where some three hundred peasants were doing community fagina labor of clearing grass and weeds from the plaza. The pacified presentados turned out to be in league with the rebels. Soldiers found themselves confronted with a force of some six hundred rifle-equipped rebels to the front, while

the presentados pelted them from behind with rocks, all taunting and intimidating the canton with frightful screams and war whoops. Eventually the soldiers managed to fend off their opponents, inflicting some twenty-two deaths. But the incident raised doubts about pacification in the east and the reliability of peasant support in general.¹² In the weeks that followed, the rebels continued to descend on the settlements lying outside of Valladolid, "making off with members of their race, as well as the rifles that they discovered in sitios, ranchos, and haciendas." Like so many political solutions, the campaign merely shifted costs, but it gave the momentary illusion of victory. The new strategy also leaned considerably on the so-called *guardias nacionales*, or "national guard," in reality locally mobilized and locally stationed units that were to provide defense for each town and village. Defend they did, if not always very effectively; but the guardia nacional system also kept town politics and armed groups closely connected, and as events were to show, provided incubators for further rebellion. Finally, Díaz's hands-on approach also provided high salaries for a retinue of officers who became his ardent supporters, and clarified to them as never before that the Caste War could be a profitable enterprise, even a way of life.¹³

These events formed the background for Miguel Barbachano's overthrow. At first glance a Mérida power struggle, the coup actually had its roots in the British Honduras border. The conflict grew from the discontent of Colonel José Dolores Cetina, one of the original fomenters of Caste War violence, who had been sent to pacify the Bacalar area in 1850. In May 1852 the state, which was having difficulty meeting his salary and expenses, granted him two leagues of terrenos baldíos near Bacalar, along with two more the following June, on the condition that Cetina had to find and measure them, not unlike the floating land grants that Spain had once issued for the Louisiana Territory. Cetina intended to stake most of his claims in the southern borderland along the Río Hondo. Initially all went well, but when he tried to establish limits for the second grant, he discovered that Barbachano, hard up for payroll money, had already granted logging concessions to Thomas Toledo and Company, from British Honduras. The terms of this latter arrangement were proto-Porfirian: fifteen years of usage and access to a sprawling four hundred leagues of land. The deal had thus far yielded a short-term revenue of some 7,000–10,000 pesos, in the long run a mere pittance of the true value of the resources in question. By Cetina's calculations, the land sold to national entrepreneurs on standard terms would have yielded the government some 350,000 pesos. He therefore demanded that the "usurious" arrangement be voided, putting himself on a collision course with Barbachano.¹⁴ All the while, Díaz de la Vega watched these events patiently. During his year in Yucatán, he had

used ties of friendship and *compadrazgo* to cultivate centralist commanders like José Eulogio Rosado, and he waited for the appropriate moment.¹⁵ Timing also favored the general: Barbachano had managed to squelch politics, owing to the crisis of civil war, and the end of that crisis brought vulnerability.

The catalyst to Barbachano's overthrow was the January 19, 1853, overthrow of Mexican president Arista in favor of Santa Anna and his Jalisco plan. Using national upheavals to mask his quest for personal revenge, Cetina led a mob into the *ayuntamiento* and pronounced for Jalisco. Díaz simply stepped back and allowed the coup to grow, until on February 13 he gathered military officers and political notables at his home in Mérida and pressured them to endorse the Jalisco plan; other communities followed suit, particularly in the Oriente.¹⁶ Díaz also silenced opposition press, such as Rafael Pedrara's *La opinión*, and hounded out barbachanistas alleged to be plotting in Baca, the town that would spearhead the final overthrow of Imperial-allied conservatives thirteen years later.¹⁷ Barbachano was forced to resign, and with Santa Anna in the presidency, the governorship passed through a series of interims, and finally on August 7 to Díaz himself, a mere week after he had forced the adoption of a draconian anti-conspiracy law that outlawed opposition writings, meetings among dissidents, or attempts to suborn troops.¹⁸

Díaz's rise rekindled federalist discontent. Tizimín in particular remained the crossroads: ever the political snapping turtle, its rebellious tendencies probably predated 1836, but still festered within the Imán, Molas, and Pérez families, groups connected through ties of blood and business. The town's cura, one Buenaventura Pérez, had served as national senator during the brief, glorious days of the Yucatecan republic. Tizimileños rose up again in July 1850, when jefe político José Pérez, Buenaventura's brother, refused to circulate the decree recognizing Yucatán as part of Mexico. José Pérez also had severe conflicts with the Micheltorena-appointed captain of the local National Guard, another of the civilian-military conflicts spun out of Caste War violence. An initial uprising against the burgeoning military consulship took place on November 4, 1852, when a group of soldiers waited until their captain had marched his troops out of town, then seized control of the local *cuartel*, or barracks. Theirs was the wrath of federalism thwarted, but it also built on the fact that Díaz's vaunted sweep of Chichanhá had merely caused rebels to shift their activities back to the northeast, leaving Tizimín exposed to attacks. Soon Vicente Pérez, José's son and a personal friend of the Imán family, led a movement pronouncing against Mexican authoritarianism. Their principal demands consisted of the abolition of the mobile forces and the reinstatement of the permanent guard.¹⁹ They circulated a plan that, to hear Díaz tell it, was seconded

“only” in Calotmul, Izamal, Panabá, Sucilá, and Valladolid—in other words, with a regionwide northeastern support.

The man who was to gather the last sparks of federalist lightning, Sebastián Molas, initially opposed the rebels. His strongest credential was that he was the adopted son of Santiago Imán himself, for as a young man, Imán had married the widow María Nicolasa de Molas and had raised her two children as his own. Young Sebastián had accompanied his stepfather on his revolutionary marches during the 1840s, married into the Pérez clan, and acquired a flair for the family business of revolt. But his position within the army made it difficult to rise up against the institution and its leaders; moreover, he was a close friend of Micheltorena.²⁰ The young colonel therefore took no part and had to flee. The revolt rapidly sputtered owing to poor organization, but also because it lacked the support of stronger names such as Molas, his friend Manuel Cepeda Peraza, or any other military chief of importance. The group surrendered on November 13, 1852.²¹

Of the nonparticipants, Molas’s partner Manuel Cepeda Peraza (1822–69) presents a historical enigma. He is generally (and wrongly) fêted as the Yucatecan counterpart of Benito Juárez, an icon of state mural history, but in fact few men with a past so wrapped in silence have achieved such fame in Mexican regional history. Cepeda left few written opinions, and in his lifetime changed sides so abruptly that his true convictions remain debatable. He was the son of a treasury official, Andrés Cepeda of Temax; this same Andrés worked as subdelegado of Motul at the time of his death in 1861 and had married a certain Narcisa Peraza. Andrés Cepeda’s will identifies him as the owner of only one hacienda (Pethá, outside of Cautel), and his worldly estate amounted to somewhere around forty-five hundred pesos, neither dirt poor nor rolling in riches.²² Second son Manuel entered military training at an early age and had no life outside of that institution. As a Liberal, he was far more along the military populist line of Porfirio Díaz than the legal-political grounding of Benito Juárez or the brothers Lerdo de Tejada.²³

September 1853 witnessed a carbon copy of the November uprising. But now the presence of an ambitious Mexican governor encouraged the participation of senior officers, precisely the ingredient lacking in 1852. On this occasion Vicente Pérez won over both Molas and Cepeda Peraza, the former to be forever identified with this new revolt. Díaz de la Vega’s installation as governor probably caused younger Yucatecan officers to break with him, even though both Molas and Cepeda Peraza, doubtless biding their time, initially endorsed Díaz’s rise to power.²⁴ Díaz’s supporters followed a dynamic common in caudillo societies, in that they grew disillusioned because the fruits of their coup (nothing grand, it turned out) were

not distributed according to their own desires. Molas paid for his movement by extracting forced loans.²⁵

The revolt made poor headway, largely because Molas's own west-bound troops carried cholera with them and killed or dispersed the very people they hoped to recruit.²⁶ Indeed, the anti-Díaz mutiny came as a nightmare for many small communities who did not share Tizimín's federalist obsessions. When Cepeda's soldiers passed through Cacalchén in October 1853, eighty people fell sick and died and were hastily buried in the atrium of the church. The sight of "this barbaric custom" shocked some *cacalcheños* into supporting Liberal laws dictating the creation of decently removed public cemeteries.²⁷ Meanwhile, cholera remained virulent for months thereafter. By late 1853 jefes struggled to implement rudimentary health measures dictated by the sanitation junta, and in communities and haciendas of the east, the disease was spreading "with virulence."²⁸ The epidemic was severe enough to disrupt sugar harvests in the south and was felt virtually everywhere else as well.²⁹ But Molas tried to look beyond this calamity. Like Imán in 1840, he spoke words that resonated among discontented factions of the peninsula. Also like Imán, Molas looked toward church wealth—far reduced from earlier days—as a way of sustaining his revolt.³⁰ Díaz too cultivated church support, hinting that the epidemic was God's punishment for this latest disobedience. Many priests thrilled to this apocalyptic rhetoric; like the cura of Tunkás, they saw the Molas revolt as worse than the Caste War itself and held processions, rosaries, and masses to quiet divine wrath, but looked to Díaz to handle the practicalities of repression.³¹ All the while, the general pressured Bishop Guerra to feed and quarter troops, on the promise that reimbursement would follow.³²

Unfortunately, Molas and his companions had little more luck than the previous rebels; Díaz's military success, the support of most clergy and conservatives, and the debilitating effects of cholera hampered rebel attempts to recruit a mass base. Within two months the revolt fell apart, while Molas and Pérez were hunted down, captured, and passed before a firing squad in November of 1853 outside Mérida's Ciudadela.³³ Sebastián Molas's will, dictated in prison on the night before his execution, highlights not only his sins but also the quixotic temperament that drew southeasterners to his cause. Molas himself was a backwoods man of property, much like his father-in-law, with five different ranchos scattered throughout the Tizimín region. He left everything (a house, a collection of ranches near Tizimín, sundry debts, and clothing hidden in a trunk near the coast) to his half brothers, but the twelve ounces of gold he owed to Micheltorena would never be repaid.³⁴ His prize possession, his white horse Reino, he gallantly bequeathed to half brother Juan Imán.³⁵

One person who did *not* support the revolt was Molas's caudillo stepfather Santiago Imán. He and other town bigmen denounced the revolt, reiterating support for Díaz de la Vega. Why? Tizimileños did not offer their support until the rebellion had failed; ayuntamientos were bodies without arms in an age dominated by force of arms, and they had few options other than to accommodate themselves to power. Perhaps the protests of loyalty masked far different sentiments. Or perhaps Imán himself had changed: in 1853 Santiago Imán had seventeen years over the young man who had once led Yucatán's separation from Mexico. Older and more established, he no longer felt the seduction of revolt. Moreover, the 1839 and 1853 movements differed qualitatively. Imán's struggle cut across lines of class and ethnicity, speaking to shared interests of peasants and property owners. Molas, to the contrary, addressed three limited constituencies: recently defeated barbachanistas, military officials partial to Micheltorena's style of Caste War, and ruined property owners who saw continued full-scale warfare as the way of recouping their fortunes. Missing, then, was Imán's popular support. The practice of periodic rotation of soldiers was preferable for the lower classes, who needed several months of each year to assure subsistence for their families. In short, the Díaz machine effectively divided peninsulars and prevented a repeat of Imán's 1839 uprising.

Rómulo Díaz de la Vega understood only too well the opportunities to be found among a quarrelsome people. Circumstances favored a strongman: support from the center remained firm, the insurgency had fallen into disarray, and Yucatecan elites were still sufficiently united by war concerns to form a political base. With Molas crushed, the new governor had no difficulty fabricating a consensus. Díaz also took the opportunity to arrest not only Barbachano but also Cetina as well, and shipped them both to San Juan de Ulúa. Cetina had apparently been shocked by the way his own revolt slipped out of his hands, and he quickly allied himself with the former governor to encourage the Molas revolt. Or what is equally possible, Díaz preferred to cover his tracks by eliminating the man whose uprising he had so opportunistically manipulated.³⁶ In Veracruz, Colonel José Dolores Cetina paused on his way to an exile in Monterrey (where Díaz's in-laws, conveniently, could spy on his activities) to give instructions on the management of his two haciendas, Chablé and Santa María, both located in Chocholá, to his appointed caretaker Pedro Rubio y Palomeque.³⁷ Meanwhile, the usual petitions of support flowed in from communities around the state, and Díaz forwarded these to Santa Anna to present the best possible face to the national regime.³⁸ In some regards, Díaz's brief reign previewed the revolutionary system of General Salvador Alvarado: a powerful military caudillo sent from the political center in order to rein in

rowdy separatists. Like Alvarado, Díaz assembled a group of followers seduced by his success and charmed by his links to central power. Also like the Sinaloan general, Díaz brooked no opposition from pundits or politicians. There was even a hint of the Revolution’s economic nationalism, since at Díaz’s urging, Santa Anna promised to purge British Honduran woodcutters from national soil by reviewing Barbachano’s giveaway concessions.³⁹

At that point all similarities between the two occupation generals ended. Díaz was a conservative who favored church-state association and shunned mass politics like a leprosy ward. He cultivated Bishop Guerra, soliciting prayers for divine help, arranging atrium burials for soldiers, repeatedly opining that the cholera epidemic was divine punishment for the Molas uprising, and promising to do all possible to reestablish church taxes.⁴⁰ Díaz de la Vega exempted sacristans from the draft and also saw to it that when possible, commanding officers paid rent to the cura when occupying church property such as rectories.⁴¹ The new governor also insisted on placing chaplains with the army (a substantial form of material support for unpaid ministers) and in general went out of his way to manifest concern for the institution.⁴² This strategy had little immediate effect, but paid long-term dividends in building clerical support for later Conservative militarists whose motives and actions were anything but spiritual.

Meanwhile, municipal and district politics also drew Díaz’s attention. He abolished the *jefaturas* and *alcaldes*—like Barbachano, vulnerable because of their prolonged tenure—but replaced them with a system of hand-picked prefects and subprefects, the former to reside in district capitals, the latter in *partido cabeceras*. These appointed officials in turn named the *comisarios municipales*. As in the later imperial years, the prefects and subprefects presided over and thereby controlled *ayuntamientos*, even though in theory they could only vote to break ties. Hispanic *cabildos* had returned to operation by mid-1849 in the pacified zones, while military authority continued to control the *línea* towns. Military officers in cities like Mérida and Espita were only too happy to dispose of their civilian rivals and cooperated fully in the coup.⁴³ While *ayuntamientos* still functioned, membership remained limited to those enjoying at least \$200 of annual income (no great change from the past, since wealthy men had always dominated membership). Prefects earned almost no salary: like the officials of Hapsburg Spain, they were already men of property, and it was understood that they would live off the fruits of office. Much of their work consisted of spying, inspecting, and reporting. The key requirement was that they be *adictos a la administración*—that is, of the correct political faith—for would-be employees now had to salute Rómulo Díaz de la Vega, “division general of the Mexican army, meritorious defender of the department of Puebla,

decorated gentleman of the distinguished national order of Guadalupe, governor and commander-general of Yucatán, etc.”⁴⁴

DAMAGE

Díaz de la Vega's coup succeeded largely because of the disarray of the rural sector. Certain problems crop up whenever one tries to analyze war-related damage. The first is the irregularity of the paperwork, since some areas enjoyed thick documentation, others none whatsoever. Beyond that lies the credibility of the papers themselves. Property values were often cooked; in Ticul, for example, the ayuntamiento knew only too well that property owners routinely undervalued their homes and estates for tax purposes.⁴⁵ Still, the overall picture is one of loss.

Perhaps most notably, the war took a severe toll on Valladolid and the entire Oriente region. On the urban front, Eduardo MacGregor's once mighty Aurora Yucateca cotton mill was destroyed.⁴⁶ A census of rural ranchos and haciendas in the year 1855 revealed that the number of resident workers had fallen disastrously. Of the ninety-eight properties surveyed, only nine had more than ten peons, while the average number fell to somewhere between five and six. The men rich and powerful had seen better days, but read in another way, these figures suggest a kernel of stability in troubled times. Assuming an average family size of five, then some 2,760 Mayas were still permanently on the properties. Valladolid had suffered but abided.⁴⁷

The area north of Valladolid—Santiago Imán's country—sustained similar losses. Jacinto Arjona lost no fewer than three haciendas in the area of Tizimín.⁴⁸ Rebels destroyed the nearby village of Popolá; rather than rebuilding the town's devastated church, the local priests simply carted its remains to Sisal de Valladolid to use in the reconstruction of the chapel of San Luis. In 1853 Popolá still remained without Maya peasantry, although it and surrounding villages had managed to escape the cholera epidemic.⁴⁹ Marauding rebels also tore through Río Lagartos in January 1854. Conditions were so awful in “the destroyed port of Río Lagartos” that the government offered a four-year tax exemption for the vecinos brave enough to resettle there.⁵⁰ As of June it had drawn only twenty-five (mostly Maya) families.⁵¹

The old Beneficios Bajos region had been a peninsular grain basket in earlier times, but now found itself destitute. Yaxcabá lingered in a state of “nonexistence” as of late 1852.⁵² Libre Unión, a community dating only from the 1840s, was burned to the ground, and the few who survived the Caste War in Kaua fled during the 1853 cholera epidemic, leaving its

church to collapse.⁵³ In the Sierra region south of Mérida, Ticul quickly revived its sugar industry,⁵⁴ but not so Tekax, which had suffered Old Testament ruin. The outlying towns of Ticum and San José, once thriving sugar communities, dwindled to mere ranchos. Ticum had only five Hispanic families and twenty-eight Maya, San José had a total of twenty-six for all races combined. All the rest had either died, rebelled, fled the region, or gone to live in the comparative security of Tekax proper.⁵⁵ As one official put it, "in consequence of the tragic Caste War, [agriculture] is reduced to nothingness, and above all in the partido, whose inhabitants, for the most part dedicated to it, carry in one hand the instruments of labor and in the other the weapons of defense, because of the continued threat from the savages."⁵⁶

The same held true for the southern and eastern peripheries. Towns in the Chenes did not return to prewar life until the Imperial years. Only in 1864 could authorities in Xcupilcacab report "a regular state of population." The town's sole permanent structure—its church—had collapsed in the preceding seventeen years, thus requiring inhabitants to reconstruct their world from the ground up.⁵⁷ Further eastward, Tihosuco returned to some semblance of normality, but it was far from the pre-1840 days when the town, then fourth largest in the state, had conspired with the liberator Santiago Imán. Díaz de la Vega imposed martial law over its paltry forty-eight civilians, but padre Joaquín Rivero's attempts to squeeze contributions from them proved fruitless.⁵⁸ Nor did the church and the army co-exist harmoniously, for squabbles over where to bury dead soldiers (a stickler for military honor, Colonel Novelo insisted on the overfilled atrium) led to unending friction.⁵⁹ The pacification and reoccupation of Tihosuco did little more than establish it as a canton where, far more than in other parts of southeast Mexico, military authority displaced all rivals in a sham version of earlier community vitality.

Towns provide one measure of destruction, people another. And the fact is that many people lost everything. Before 1847 Bernardo Cetina had been among the most prosperous individuals of the Oxkutzcab region. He owned the ancient hacienda Santa Rita Komak, as well as four others in the general region, and was one of the main beneficiaries of loan capital from San Antonio Xocneceh, the religious cult based on a hacienda of the same name. When Cetina died of cholera in 1853 after years of labor and investment, he bequeathed only debts totaling some \$3,000.⁶⁰ The once-prosperous family of Manuel José Carrillo (Tixcaltuyú) had the distinction of being ruined twice: once when the original rebels swept through in 1848, sacking the properties and murdering his father; and again in 1858, when Santa Cruz raiders carried off the family jewels that had been hidden in Tekax. When patriarch Manuel José died

two years later, the value of the estate came to a grand total of \$287; divided among the nineteen heirs, this yielded about fifteen pesos apiece.⁶¹

Agriculture, whether subsistence or commercial, fell severely in five years. Rebellion, emigration, and constant warfare all paralyzed “the soul of society.” Among those severely hurt by the Caste War were cattle ranchers, many of whom had to abandon whole herds to the advancing rebels. Those still active during the height of the rebel advance found that their export business to Cuba was suffering, with prices reaching new lows. They sent an agent to Havana to temporarily exempt them from import duties.⁶² This decline was less true of sugar, the cash crop whose continued spread had in many ways stoked the upheaval. Momentarily halted in the southeast, sugar haciendas now increased in the more stable regions of Campeche. By 1853 Carmen accounted for almost half of the total sixty thousand *mecates* (24 million square meters) of Yucatecan cane fields. Campeche itself was the only partido where cane production outdistanced that of corn. While most Yucatecans were worried about feeding themselves, the more fortunate entrepreneurs simply transferred their capital to a different region. And as hopes for peace returned, sugar reasserted itself in old haunts: “The hacendados of Campeche, those of partido Carmen, and the farmers of Tekax, Peto and Bolonchén, have reestablished and considerably expanded the plantings of sugarcane that were destroyed by the sublevados.”⁶³ To aid in the recovery, priest and amateur inventor Manuel Antonio Sierra O’Reilly even came up with a design for a wooden sugar mill, or *trapiche*. The design held great advantage over the iron models imported from foreign countries: cheaper and easier to repair, it also required less power to move than did the mills with heavy metal rollers.⁶⁴

But people could not subsist on sugar, and food shortages troubled the southeast throughout the 1850s. By 1854 four partidos—Izamal, Hecelchakán, Mérida, and Motul—accounted for 58 percent of the total 2.2 million *mecates* available for domestic consumption. Notwithstanding Izamal’s superior acreage, the major corn producer was almost certainly Hecelchakán. The vast majority of its cultivable land was in the more productive *milpa rosa*, or first-year planting, whereas Izamal leaned heavily upon *milpa caña*, or second-year planting, in which yields fell off dramatically.⁶⁵ By this time, effective communication with Bacalar had become impossible, so no statistics exist; but the region was a net importer of corn prior to the Caste War, and there is no reason to believe that the situation had changed. Only subsistence farming continued there. Well into the late 1850s, Yucatán depended on grain imports to feed itself. Reports from the first half of 1857 indicate that Peto, Tizimín, and Seibaplaya survived by these imports. The Sierra Alta region appears to have been in somewhat better shape.⁶⁶

The church too suffered. The peasant head taxes known as major obventions existed on paper, but even with a conservative regime in power, priests lacked the coercive mechanisms necessary for collection. War-related hardships gave new pretext for a piecemeal end to obventions. For example, Barbachano overrode the protest of the cura of Tihosuco by exempting the Maya presenters from church taxes, "as much for the misery to which they are undoubtedly reduced, as to the fear that if threatened they will return to the ranks of the enemy."⁶⁷ The story was similar elsewhere: although obventions remained legal, practicalities made them impossible, and in fact, little improved over the next eighteen months.⁶⁸ Most peasants flatly refused to pay. The worst offenders were those who now worked as servants and found their economic allegiances wholly oriented toward the estate, not the church-state.⁶⁹ Disgusted over his lack of financial support, the cura of Sacalum refused to participate in the town's annual (1853) fiesta of the Holy Cross and even procured an order from the jefe prohibiting the celebrations. The vecinos rebelled: "Who doubts . . . that in the previous years of the Caste War, conditions were more serious than now, and that nevertheless the fiesta was celebrated without incident, the afore-mentioned cura being one of those who took the most prominent part?"⁷⁰ As an Umán collector realized in 1852, without state coercion there could be no payment.⁷¹ At least in this sense, one of the major goals of the Caste War initiative had been realized: the major obvention, under assault since the days of the Spanish Constitution, had ended.

In fact, the war cut so deeply into church revenues in the 1850s that it is a mystery that the institution survived at all. Whereas prewar revenues for individual parishes averaged two thousand pesos annually, by 1855 parishes were taking in less than two hundred pesos. Most kept their heads above water by freezing construction and renovation and by foregoing the huge profits that had once accrued to the curas. Others, such as Tekax and Peto, ran deficits because of the massive outflux of regional peasants. High overhead of major cult centers like Telchac and Izamal also forced operations into red ink. Curiously, two of the more buoyant parishes in 1855 were Sotuta and Yaxcabá, where revenues from minor obventions, or fees for incidental services, still existed. Indeed, the entire Beneficios Bajos did well: curious, since the region had suffered some of the worst destruction. Perhaps these communities profited from an influx of peasants from the south and east. With massive refugees under their charge, curas had a captive pool for minor fees.⁷²

With so much institutional privilege lost, those priests who were able fell back on private initiative. José María Meno typified this approach to recovery. In the decade prior to the war, he had purchased rural properties

near the town of Kikil. While in Tunkás he learned of the death of Kikil's cura and immediately applied for the interim position, a post that allowed him to maintain his clerical activities while overseeing reconstruction of his haciendas, "the few interests that I acquired in that region through ten years of continued labor; and although I understand that the barbarians have destroyed the farms, I have great hopes in God Our Lord that they have left me something."⁷³ The ultimate success of his ventures remains unknown.

One of the most important sources of church wealth, but at the same time impossible to quantify, was its fund of imágenes. By January 1853 Tizimín had its prestigious Three Kings back in place and still inspiring veneration.⁷⁴ But most churches were not so lucky. Imágenes from Valladolid fled as far west as Acanceh, and the bells of Haitian refugee community San Fernando Aké, as well as their treasured San Benedito, permanently settled in Río Lagartos, for the former community had ceased to exist.⁷⁵ Rebels carried off the bell carriage and a statue of Santa Rosa from Tepich, the war's source point, to Chan Santa Cruz, but the army recovered these in the raids of the early 1850s. Representative of the army-church quarrels that the war bred, Santa Rosa remained in the hands of one Captain Andrés Reyes, who refused to surrender it.⁷⁶ The imagen wealth of Bacalar fled south, along with the town's refugees, into northern British Honduras, where priests spent years tracking it through its succession of keepers.⁷⁷ In Corozal, José Antonio Glori, the old cura who had been involved in the Caste War in Bacalar, had taken with him a number of icons that he had managed to rescue from his old parish and had sold several of them, such as a Virgin of Candelaria, to Jesuits who were trying to develop a foothold in the region.⁷⁸ In May 1851 gold earrings and a pearl necklace tempted some unknown soul to force open the sacristy doors of Sahcabchén, near Calkiní, and make off with a six-foot statue of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception.⁷⁹ As late as the mid-1860s, hidden imágenes were still turning up, whole or in pieces, while others simply never returned; the padre of Bolonchén sent eight crates of the town's imágenes to Veracruz, only to discover that the priests there refused to part with them once Caste War fighting subsided.⁸⁰ Untold numbers simply passed into private hands; these artworks, together with accurate knowledge of their provenance, have now disappeared forever. The loss of pomp, coupled with the increasing secularization of finance, brought about the contemporary austerity of Yucatecan churches, a far cry from their early-nineteenth-century apogee.

The struggle for church decorations, incidentally, may have resulted in the disappearance of what were the original Speaking Crosses. These imágenes doubtless came from some ransacked church or hacienda, and by the

early 1850s had become icons and spiritual forces in an eastern grotto that came to be known as Chan Santa Cruz, or "Little Holy Cross." In 1852 Captain Felipe de la Cámara y Zavala briefly occupied Chan Santa Cruz as part of the Díaz de la Vega campaign, and he took away the crosses and deposited them in the church at Dzonotchel, where references to them turn up in 1854.⁸¹ At that point several possibilities exist, the first being a relocation to Peto. In 1862 rebels raided the village of Sacalaca and, in addition to killing more than forty-five people, made off with the town's prize, the statue of Our Lady of the Blessed Assumption. To replace this treasured imagen, Padre Pedro Badillo sent for the crosses of Dzonotchel, which, as he put it, were being kept "in a state of hiding." Fearing that Dzonotchel would be too vulnerable as a permanent location, he ultimately decided to keep them in the relatively more protected church of Peto and carry them to outlying churches when necessary.⁸² The second possibility is that the crosses found their way to Tihosuco. José Dolores Cetina, an epileptic priest who accompanied the army to Tihosuco during the revived Caste War in 1865 (and who is not to be confused with the military officer of the same name), found a variety of icons in both Dzonotchel and Ichmul, but does not state whether these were the original crosses or, if so, what became of them. Cetina apparently took them along with him as ornaments for the reopened church at Tihosuco. But what became of church icons when government troops evacuated Tihosuco once and for all, later that same year?⁸³ It seems improbable that these items were simply abandoned, and for that reason—whether one prefers the Peto or Tihosuco route—evidence thus suggests that the original crosses of Chan Santa Cruz were reincorporated into mainstream Catholic usage.⁸⁴

As the violence subsided, landowners set about trying to salvage what remained. The economic core of haciendas and ranchos in western and central-northern Yucatán had suffered little from the war, and even prospered in the case of peripheral areas such as Champotón. Hacienda sales in 1852 around the Mérida region, as well as wills for the same period, reveal a system of property holding and labor that was fully intact. One example was the properties of María Salazar of Mérida, whose four haciendas between San Cristobal and Aanceh passed to her husband, along with numerous Maya servants.⁸⁵ Hacendados continued to buy and sell peon debts, as when Pedro Salustino Magaña acquired the \$360 attached to Higinio Castellanos's thirty-four Maya laborers.⁸⁶ Hacienda sales of this more developed region never mention war damage, the defining motif of property-related documents in Peto, Tekax, and Valladolid.

What they do reveal is the gradual rise of the henequen economy. As in the 1830s, the state made primitive attempts to promulgate the crop, requiring *jefes políticos* to see that each family planted at least one mecate

per year.⁸⁷ But it was private entrepreneurs who assumed leadership. One individual taking early interest in henequen was Joaquín Rivera, cura of Acanceh. In September 1854 Rivera purchased one hundred small plants in Timucuy, these to be planted back in his hometown.⁸⁸ Henequen also begins to appear in haciendas located outside of Tekit and Homún.⁸⁹ Americans too learned of Yucatán's henequen capacities; in 1858 the U.S. consul to Mérida, Ramón James Patrullo, acquired the rights "to rasp, cut, and dispose of the henequen plantings" of a small property near Izamal. The transfer of usufruct without property ownership was the owner's way of dealing with a crop that took eight to ten years to mature.⁹⁰

The condition of Limited Good Credit meant that Yucatecans could ill afford a combination of damage and debt. For property owners the most pressing problem was what to do about destroyed or deteriorated land that still carried a heavy mortgage. The issue also troubled mortgage holders (usually the church), who risked losing substantial amounts of loan capital. The solution came in a decree of October 28, 1850, that created a complicated system of mortgage adjustment. Property owners filed a claim on their ruined estates to the magistrate; he in turn notified the mortgage holder, who designated an expert to adjust the claim. Defense of church mortgages fell not to individual priests, but rather to the church's legal representative, or *promotor fiscal*, in those years one Manuel Secundino Sánchez. The arrangement allowed both parties to appeal cases before a civil court.

Surviving mortgage adjustments clarify winners and losers of this process. To take one representative case, Rodrigo and Francisco de Paula Salazar owned the hacienda Buenaventura Xcupul, in Huhí, which carried a complicated mortgage of \$1,000 to Padre José Sotero Brito and \$500 to later Bishop Leandro Rodríguez de Gala. After adjustments, the total was reduced by nearly 50 percent, from \$1,500 to a mere \$795. Similarly, the Salazar hacienda Subinteil, which owed \$800 to the funds of Mejorada, was completely destroyed, and the mortgage fell to \$288, a loss of two-thirds of the original investment.⁹¹ The book value of the great hacienda Tabi, south of Ticul, fell 35 percent, but the mortgage on it declined 77 percent, from nearly \$20,000 to a mere \$4,000.⁹² Details vary, but in these and most other cases, rulings favored hacendados, not the church mortgage holders. For example, promotor fiscal Sánchez resisted the 66 percent reduction on hacienda San Rafael Ucum, but a second court-ordered evaluation upheld the original ruling.⁹³ Secular lenders suffered as well, as Campeche capitalist Francisco de Paula Ocampo discovered when he lost money loaned against the hacienda Santa María Temozón, in Hocobá.⁹⁴ These resolutions perhaps reflected hacendados' political influence, but another explanation lies in the exigencies of the moment. Perhaps magistrates

thought that the hacendados had already suffered their loss prior to the ruling, and that the reductions helped share the burden. It was also a way of salvaging part of a debt from people who could no longer repay its entirety. Whatever the motivations, the mortgage reductions did shrink peninsular church capital and tilted the balance in favor of secular landowners, thereby anticipating later Liberal reforms in the southeast.

Hacendados were not the only ones with some sorting out to do. As the rural Maya began to return to places like Tizimín and Espita, they found property ownership in a tangle. Thousands of Maya speakers had lived in houses on small urban lots, while Mayas around Valladolid actually held the majority of registered titles (375 of 591), even if these were usually micro plots of land.⁹⁵ But thousands more throughout the peninsula inhabited property with no deed other than physical presence. Now, after a long absence, previous occupation was hard to prove; beyond that, the properties themselves were largely "destroyed and annihilated," making identification all the more difficult. Individuals such as "the rebel Pedro Tamay" of Homún forfeited their *solares* (lots), houses, and domestic animals.⁹⁶ Ticul alone had 120 pesos of property belonging to prosperous Mayas who had purportedly joined the rebellion.⁹⁷ Returnees inundated the *jefes* with claims to reoccupy. The normal limit of property values involved was one to twelve pesos, most worth no more than three pesos. *Jefes* typically honored them because a settled population was needed, and "because such *fincas* are in reality worthless." Their decisions ensured that a pastiche of small, often Maya-owned private lands continued to exist alongside the large estates.⁹⁸

At the same time, the war invited expropriations and property transfers throughout the peninsula, as wars often do. After 1852, townsfolk found themselves wondering what to do about large amounts of ownerless property. In one extreme case, Joaquín Saenz fled Tekax region in 1847 and died the following year in Campeche; his heirs were still trying to reclaim lost property as late as 1895.⁹⁹ In other cases the heirs themselves were dead or missing. Various properties were sold or awaiting sale on the basis of having belonged to *indios sublevados*. But the fate of individual peasants was difficult to determine and made legitimate property claims or their cancellation difficult, a fact that slowed rebuilding in areas where peasant mobilization had been greatest.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, abandoned *solares* proved one of the most intractable of war-generated conundrums. As late as the 1880s, for example, the citizens of Teabo were still wrangling over the problem: one faction auctioned off the land, while purchasers then settled and built, only to find their titles revoked when a rival faction took over the *ayuntamiento*.¹⁰¹ As a partial solution, abandoned lands came under the growing domain of the *jefe político*. Those seeking to work the

lands around Tekax, men like Melitón Rendón, had to petition the jefe, who had the power to grant or withhold the favor according to his own advantage.¹⁰² Several cases of property of abductees also reveal that their goods and houses were entrusted to the local political prefect until heirs eventually turned up.¹⁰³ Rights to abandoned land became part of the elaborate squaring off over new forms of war-generated wealth. To repeat, the people built their dictatorship brick by brick: jefes and officers benefited the most, ayuntamientos held steady, with curas and peasants mostly the losers.

While the war brought fire and loss to many, this same conflagration could favor certain landholders as well. When Seyé's Maya villagers were rousted into the army during the height of the conflict, Juan María Cervera exploited the confusion by moving the *mojoneros*, or marker stones, that separated village ejido property from his own estates. Nearly two decades passed before Seyé peasants managed to have this manipulation redressed.¹⁰⁴ Even more notable was the case of San Fernando Aké, the Haitian refugee community that fled for British Honduras at the war's outbreak. As soon as a modicum of peace returned to the region (somewhere around 1852), prominent investor Manuel Urcelay began to work a six-league expanse of land, stretching from what had been Aké's ejidos to a coastal point known as Culco. Urcelay used the land for logging and sugar planting, but also rented it out to milpa farmers. During the chaos of the 1850s, no one troubled him for land titles, and Urcelay only got around to formalizing them in 1862, when the state, desperate for both allies and revenue, happily agreed to all he asked in exchange for a 5 percent cut on the profits.¹⁰⁵ By seizing postcrisis opportunities, Urcelay remained a power in the northeast for the next several decades.¹⁰⁶

Land recovery also reawakened the Hispanics' suppressed appetite for politics. Who ruled the towns, and how much exactly did the towns rule? These twin questions lay at the bottom of most prewar political violence, and they remained operative throughout the conflict. As before, urban concerns partially counterbalanced the power of hacendados, even though a single person might simultaneously be hacendado and small-town bourgeois. By mid-1849 ayuntamientos had begun to reestablish themselves in places such as Ticul.¹⁰⁷ But town-oriented elites had to worry about keeping the place together and fending off the barbarians: they frustrated property owners by imposing arbitrios, taxing peons, and clamoring to allocate more manpower for defense purposes. At the same time, the town and the estate occasionally united against state- and national-level impositions. When hacendados and the ayuntamiento of Campeche pushed Barbachano to reduce guardia quotas, the governor, always eager to mollify, acquiesced.¹⁰⁸

Taxes, meanwhile, remained the basis of town politics. If Maya rebels aimed to do away with arbitrios, they failed utterly. The rural municipios continued to tax everything that could be raised, cultivated, manufactured, bought, or sold. Well into the 1860s Tixcacaltuyú taxed all commodities except liquor, some indication of who ran the roost. Except for the cattle tax, which mostly hurt property owners, the tax structure tended toward the regressive, emphasizing items of daily use by common people. In Champotón, merchants had to fork over four reales each month to pay for a boatman who ferried people up and down the river.¹⁰⁹ Mérida was something of an exception in its tax on luxury items such as coaches.¹¹⁰ And since some sort of legal identity was necessary to control those revenues, the quest for the municipio libre continued as fiercely as ever. Teyá, for example, finally had enough literate vecinos to declare itself a municipio; the creole and Maya citizens united to free themselves from the tyrannical Cansahcab, six leagues away.¹¹¹ This same dynamic applied when Sucilá and Panabá at last broke free of Kikil's cura and Espita's magistrate.¹¹² At that particular day and time, the greatest good was a municipio of one's own.

Land titles and town status felt gratifying, but only labor could wring fruit from this wasted land, and labor was scarce, for men could be soldiers or laborers but rarely both. For that reason, hacendados proved contradictory warmongers: they demanded crusades against the eastern barbarians and maximum home defense, but without drawing a single man from their jealously guarded workforce. For the duration of the conflict, everyone preferred to believe that somewhere else—beyond the estate, beyond the next town, perhaps in Mexico, or even in some foreign land—lay a reservoir of able men eager to fight against Chan Santa Cruz. In fact, the *juntas calificadoras* wanted to disband altogether and remained standing only by state pressure.¹¹³ Nor were Mayas the only people jeopardized; military impressment struck especially hard at poor mestizos, the preferred cannon fodder, with indigenous peasants often serving as hidalgos. Whatever the ethnicity, though, demand for military service probably debilitated the estates as much as did the rebel raids themselves. The latter came only sporadically, while the former caused a slow, continual bleeding.

One area that endured the ups and downs of labor was the west coast, a cusp of sparse settlement extending from Celestún, Yucatán, to Frontera, Tabasco. Few Mexican landscapes stimulate the imagination such as this does, yet few have received less historical attention. Its sudden prosperity came from the huge influx of refugees, providing the long-missing labor component for hacienda development, chiefly on sugar properties. Labor in the Seibaplaya area had always been hard to come by. Lacking sufficient workers the Seiba planters depended on indebted labor enticed by loans of

twenty to one hundred pesos. Increases in the size of the labor force came but slowly.¹¹⁴ On the whole, coastal areas did better than interior regions that lay immediately adjacent: the Maya population of Chicbul, for example, had melted away like ice on a Yucatecan road. Helpless to sustain themselves without extractions from the peasants, *vecinos* fled to Carmen, Campeche, and Sabancuy.¹¹⁵ Moreover, not all refugees were equally welcome. Tales of Christian charity to the contrary, Hispanic refugees from Valladolid and elsewhere met frosty glares in the west unless they came as laborers willing to accept risible wages. Popular understanding held them responsible for the Caste War (which in many ways they were). Hoping to settle in the sparsely inhabited regions of Laguna and Palizada, they found their aspirations blocked by the *jefe político*, who defended local interests.¹¹⁶ Westerners needed not more would-be physiocrats but a proletarian workforce, and they found it. Pedro Correa, who owned properties in Palizada and Laguna de Términos, used his boat to transport Valladolid refugee families from the northern coast and on to Campeche; destitute, many agreed to work on his estates accepting the combined transportation costs as a salary advance.¹¹⁷ It was the same deal offered to indentured servants in the heyday of the Atlantic world and showed the longevity and adaptability of such coercive labor practices.

However, Caste War tremors touched here soon enough. After Jacinto Pat signed the Treaty of Tzucacab in April 1848, news raced throughout the peninsula. Word of Article Seven's abolition of debt peonage—an article that Hispanics had no intention of honoring—reached the estates of places like Seibaplaya, and Maya laborers threw down their tools and fled to the monte to set up milpa farms. Tearful complaints poured into Mérida, but there was little anyone could do about it, and the Seibaplaya peons continued to exit the estates—perhaps to drink themselves senseless, as their former masters alleged, but more likely to enjoy the freedom of planting their own corn.¹¹⁸ The Seibaplaya anecdote in fact provides one of the rare glimpses of peasant attitudes about the war and its aims. Though not active participants, Maya peasants in the west apparently followed the event with interest and found that rebel triumphs spoke to their own situation. Had greater communication been available among southeastern peasants in those days, and had careful planning and political work preceded violence, the Caste War might have taken a different and more successful course.

By 1851 the situation in the west had not changed. Refugees continued to filter into the area of Sabancuy, Palizada, and Carmen; some petitioned for *terrenos baldíos*, while others simply homesteaded without paying the tax on products such as alcohol and sugarcane. The coastal landowners also hired labor recruiters to entice men from the Chenes,

already strapped for productive residents.¹¹⁹ The local authorities tried vainly to control the situation, but discovered that an open country does not admit doors. Carmen's jefe político ordered the arrest of anyone not carrying passports or other written credentials, but popular migration persisted anyway, and the town's eastern barrio of Pueblo Nuevo in fact consisted largely of war refugees.¹²⁰

With or without Tzucacab, the war forgave many a lunero's debt. Uncertainty prevailed regarding what to do about demobilized soldiers, former peons whose amos had fled and whose haciendas no longer existed.¹²¹ More common still was the problem of runaway servants. José Dolores Ramírez had prospered as one of the great hacendados of prewar Tihosuco; he escaped to Mérida, and as he lay dying in 1848, he demanded that his debts be collected posthumously, including those owed to him by peasants working on his estate. But as his executors duly noted, "said liquidation is impossible at the present moment, given the fact that Indian rebels control the town of Tihosuco."¹²² In Chemax, Manuel Jesús Pérez had an estate whose workers enjoyed some twelve hundred mecatas of their own milpa. When they rebelled at the comparatively late date of summer 1850, lonely Pérez had to gather the crops by himself.¹²³

Attracting laborers was one thing, but retaining them another. The closer an estate lay to the línea, the more likely it became that peons would run away. While some fled to the outback, others found shelter as domestics in prominent houses of the cities and towns, these being less vulnerable to rebel assaults. The practice is known by the homeowner-hacendado legal wranglings that it occasioned, one of the more interesting cases of which concerned a certain Juan Acosta. During the early recovery years of the war, he had led the National Guard unit of Tekax in rooting sublevados from the area. Rebels knew all about his counterinsurgent past, and when Acosta settled back to the life of property owner, they made a special point of harassing his sugar rancho Oxhaus, near Becanchén. Under these circumstances Acosta never stood a chance, and wealthy homeowners and better-positioned planters in Tekax found a ready supply of cheap labor fleeing from his hands, costing Acosta over one thousand pesos in lost workers' debt.¹²⁴

For increased labor stability some hacendados began to adopt written agreements. The labor contracts that occasionally surface among notary papers had little to do with bamboozling Mayas into slavery, since those Maya desperately sought security in an insecure world. More likely they were designed to preempt rival amos. The contract that six Mayas negotiated with Izamal patriarch and magistrate Pilar Canto Zozaya obligated them to remain at his hacienda Chabac, outside Tunkás; but it came because rival hacendado Santiago Cervera, working through the local prefect,

tried to lure them away. Canto thus offered clear and relatively favorable terms for the workers: regular account settlement in cash, a corn ration to supplement wages, guaranteed access to milpa land, and freedom from ill treatment.¹²⁵ Labor bosses also sent out captured Mayas to work in such places as Veracruz, Palizada, Tabasco, and Havana.¹²⁶ Still, these dubious contracts were the exception, and most labor continued without benefit of any legal paperwork beyond the hacienda ledger.

Another labor problem concerned the presentados. A nineteenth-century euphemism for combatants who surrendered (Spaniards used it when fighting Cuban insurgents a few decades later), it was here applied only to those who gave up without arms. The presentados posed genuine conundrums. Doubtless the majority were dislocated people returning home or else former combatants who decided to throw in the towel. But there were also exceptions that forced suspicion. For example, a number of Mayas who presented to the cuartel in Hopelchén in April 1850 used the opportunity to gather up as many hatchets and machetes as they could, then fled back to their comrades: one day's presenter could be the next day's fugitive.¹²⁷ For these people, military officers replaced jefes and jueces as the new labor brokers. Commanders took advantage of their power to stock their own properties with luneros, even though the practice quite naturally infuriated local gentry who fought back through the cabildos.¹²⁸

In addition to keeping workers away from the military, hacendados also had to compete with municipal demands for *fagina*, or uncompensated community services. These remained the only way to carry out large-scale public projects: clearing weeds, building roads, reconstructing public buildings, and so forth. Fagina constituted one of the principal experiences separating Mayas from creoles, and by 1821 the practice had acquired a certain moral economy: that is, Mayas developed an unwritten sense of what constituted the limits of fagina exploitation. Since the war and its preceding ten years had generated an unusual amount of decay and destruction, complaints of excessive fagina work (including reconstruction of private homes) became one of the most common during the next three decades.¹²⁹ The decline of a serviceable population had many implications. Yucatán's paltry infrastructure was now falling into disrepair. But communities often ignored government calls for road fagina because it cut too severely into milpa work and military duty.

Whatever the circumstance, many of the contradictory tendencies of prewar labor relations continued. Conflict abounded, but so did cooperation between amo and peon, and a spirit of clientalism often prevailed among Mayas and Hispanics. Domestic service probably brought ethnicities into closer contact and stimulated feelings of personal attachment. Artemio María Barceló of Izamal thought nothing of bequeathing a fifth



FIGURE 3.2

Life in the pacified areas. An uneasy peace gradually prevailed in the years 1852–55, as Yucatecan troops established their presence in communities throughout the state. A half century after the original conflagration, eastern towns that had been the war’s area of genesis—places such as Tixcacalcupul, seen above—remained poor and thinly populated. Only the politically contrived euphoria of official visits brought a crowd. By permission of the Centro de Apoyo para la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán.

of his goods to his six Maya domestic servants, while the peons of his various haciendas simply passed into the hands of new masters.¹³⁰ A thorny interdependence was simply the price of existence in this plantation world now permeated with the woes of war.

AMONG THE MISSING

By 1853 many Yucatecans hoped that the worst was over. The population hovered around 360,000, a decline of some 150,000 since the beginning of 1847. Some of these had died, but the majority were simply missing; the

1853 census, as its authors explained, was “unable to include the multitude of persons scattered throughout the backlands, nor the mass of sublevados with their families.”¹³¹ The Caste War reversed the demographic tendencies of a half century by draining the southeast frontier and sending people back to Mérida and its immediate surroundings or else into the monte, where they remained aloof from the usual tax and labor duties.

Some affluent Yucatecans relocated to the United States. Among the most prominent of the expatriates was José Tiburcio López Constante, the man who had served as governor during the five years of peace in the latter half of the 1820s. López settled in New Orleans. This city had long attracted the politically disfavored of both Latin America and the Caribbean, and the French creoles of St. Charles Street in fact resembled the meridianos in lifestyle and racist attitudes. From here López maintained commercial ties with both Yucatán and Cuba. For a time the expatriate and former governor held on to his hacienda, Vista Alegre, but in 1854 let go of that as well.¹³² López was already well on in years by this time, and died sometime around 1858.¹³³

Many less prosperous refugees abandoned the countryside and came to Yucatán’s cities and towns. By 1854 Mérida’s ayuntamiento found itself beset by “the multitude of beggars who are found in the streets,” and began to explore the possibility of a Casa de Beneficiencia.¹³⁴ The situation was similar in many northwest communities. Nor did all of these come from the indigent classes. José Antonio Glori, the priest who with his brother had played a prominent role in the conflicts around Bacalar and Chichanhá, ended up in Calkiní. From here he worked Dzitbalché and surrounding hamlets. It was a hard tumble from the tropical autonomy of earlier days, when Glori dealt freely with Maya headmen and Belizean traders along the border, and his Calkiní correspondence mourns the “miserable state” into which he had fallen.¹³⁵

The injection of war refugees into wholly different communities altered long-established power equations. Take, for example, the case of Maxcanú. For many years a handful of landowning families dominated the town. Unaccustomed to challenges, they reacted angrily when the Caste War settlers brought rival creole forces into the community. Case in point: one Lorenzo Avila, resident of Bacalar. When Maya insurgents overran that far southeastern outpost in June 1848, he first fled to Belize, but finding himself yearning for the bullfights of home, he returned three months later to establish residence in Maxcanú. Unlike the surrounding peasants and poor mestizos, Avila had means, and when his family and adherents followed him there, he naturally began to entertain notions of political office. Locals treated the Avila crowd as carpetbaggers and enacted residency requirements to keep the newcomers out of the ayuntamiento. What followed was

a series of quarrels, petitions, doctored voting lists, and invalidated elections.¹³⁶ For old-stock townspeople the residency requirement, conveniently backdated to pre-Caste War times when internal migration of elites was limited, remained the preferred method for dealing with rivals, picking up where armed mobs had left off.

But most arrived with fewer means and less fanfare. No one illustrated the quality of aimless drifting that characterized Mayas of the 1850s better than Marcelo Uc. Originally a peon on a Maxcanú hacienda, Uc had quarreled with the mayordomo about the former's too-careless method of shucking corn. Uc refused to be intimidated and walked all the way to Mérida (sixty-five kilometers) to take his case directly to the absentee hacendado. There he received only a hot meal and some vague promises. Reluctant to return to the estate, Uc prevailed upon a few other Mérida creoles he happened to know for odd jobs. Uc spent the next week living in the city market, passing the bottle of *anís* liquor with total strangers, wandering a radius of about eight city blocks, and sleeping under the pórticos of the corn exchange. Rumors began to circulate that this rootless soul (who in fact *did* seem to know quite a few people) was in reality a spy from Chan Santa Cruz, a suspicion that led to his arrest and interrogation and to his charmingly candid autobiographical testimony.¹³⁷ Journeys such as Uc's were routine, although they increased under the *violencia*. Potters from his hometown of Maxcanú came through periodically, hawking their wares. Eating, drinking, and sleeping under the market pórticos was standard practice, a kind of poor man's hotel; a bottle of cane liquor, their continental breakfast.

Other Yucatecan refugees found a home in British Honduras. They began in Punta Consejos, a small and previously deserted triangle of land that jutted outward from the south bank of the Río Hondo. The newcomers were allowed to settle on and farm the land without taxes or rent. Only later did they move inland to permanent residence in such places as Corozal and Orange Walk. The British did not get around to their first official survey of the northern district until late 1850. They found that in the wake of the Yucatecan upheaval, the exile population now surpassed five thousand, the largest settlement being the six hundred of San Esteban, closely followed by Corozal and Back Landing. At least a third of the people here were untabulated log cutters working the inaccessible riverine stretches.¹³⁸ By 1855 the number of refugees had ballooned to fourteen thousand, somewhere between 5–8 percent of Yucatán's surviving population.¹³⁹ Corozal alone had some three thousand Yucatecans. The problems resulting from the Caste War and other regional conflicts convinced Belizeans that they were destined "to receive

the off scouring of the populations of neighboring countries, including some of the greatest ruffians that the world can produce.”¹⁴⁰

At least one community relocated wholesale. Trapped between rebel sorties and army conscription, the entire community of San Fernando Aké migrated southward, probably by boat, into northern Belize. Slavery here had been abolished in 1838. As late as April 1855, Eduardo López, acting as Yucatecan agent in Belize, was still trying to get the Akéans to return to their old home, but to no avail. Still, the problem of the Yucatecan expatriates in no way diminished in the years after López’s abortive mission. In 1855 the prefect of Tekax was still wringing his hands about “the number of Yucatecans who are to be found in the English territory of Belize, whose denaturalized sons, far from being of service to the nation in the ongoing war against the Indian rebels, procure its ruin by furnishing them with war munitions, carried along by a passion for making themselves rich at whatever cost.”¹⁴¹ Nine years later, with the French-sponsored empire now in control, a commission of Yucatecan priests went to British Honduras with similar objectives, but once more came away empty-handed.¹⁴² Yucatán’s autonomous black community had ended, and its exact location and later fortunes south of the Río Hondo remain unknown.¹⁴³

The newcomers brought economic vitality to British Honduras. Corn remained the principal crop of settled peoples, but sugarcane and distilling had boomed around St. Helena and had made the area self-sufficient in alcohol. At this point, though, the principal farm exports were poultry and watermelon, both of which enjoyed a brisk market in Belize and Mérida. Settlers also cultivated some rice along the New River.¹⁴⁴ But this young province also had a wildness to it. Communication was poor, consisting mostly of river travel; roads remained scarce and, in the summer deluges, unpassable. The law was also shifting and unreliable. Smuggling had resumed its prewar proportions, with cattle heading south from Yucatán in exchange for liquor. Few bothered with the supposedly mandatory spirits license. Major crimes of property were rare, since the settlers initially shared a common poverty, but thefts of small items, including boats, proliferated. Quarrels over trespassing and small sums went on endlessly. Most important, master-servant relationships remained fluid. Yucatecans tried to re-create the hacienda system, but British legal codes required the master to travel to Belize City to obtain a legally binding control over his peons. Few did this, for in their absence the servants would loot the property and run away. “Contracts between masters and servants are there almost invariably entered into on the spot; they are broken daily and the injured party is left without remedy.”¹⁴⁵ A dynamic and varied people, weak political authority (no *jefes políticos*),

and the specter of peasant insurgency always looming in the distance: it was a recipe for conflict, and conflict came.

Part of the friction involved religion, for what most offended the Belizean colonial aristocracy was the newcomers' Catholicism. As a member of the Board of Education fumed, "I cannot conscientiously have anything to do with the appointment of a Popish Teacher, or the management of a school in which the dogmas of Popery are allowed to be taught."¹⁴⁶ But these protests had no effect on the larger changes wrought by population transfers. By 1862 the activities of the Catholic priests had outgrown British oversight. Superintendent Frederick Seymour had little choice but to recognize the unlicensed marriages in Stann Creek and elsewhere.¹⁴⁷ The exile community's church in Belize was itself an exceptional construction in that land of clapboard and wooden shingle. The entire edifice was of brick and slate, with colored stained-glass windows. Around it lay a stone walkway and iron fence; within, an organ worth six hundred pesos and "very beautiful decorations."¹⁴⁸ Prominent Yucatecan clergyman José Canuto Vela himself came from Izamal to visit the community shortly after the building's dedication on April 11, 1858, his visit arranged by the late Colonel José Eulogio Rosado's sister Petrona, now a civic leader among the exiles.¹⁴⁹ Wesleyan missionaries labored hard to turn the refugees away from the dark corridors of papism, but whether censorious Protestants liked it or not, Catholicism had settled in for keeps.¹⁵⁰

The Corozal community's relations with Chan Santa Cruz defy easy description. After their initial exodus from southern Yucatán, the refugees were vociferous foes of the rebels. The proclivity for raiding parties and conspiracies received fresh impetus from the second fall of Bacalar in 1858. But the refugees reconciled themselves to the situation and even developed a relationship of sorts with the people of the Cross. Corozal merchants in particular esteemed the rebels, who were famous for Christmas shopping binges along the border. Maya emissaries visited regularly. As in Corozal, commercial love found its coefficient in hate. Raids did happen, as in July 1851, when a party of ten *sulevados* surprised the islanders by killing the local trader in retaliation for some real or perceived injury.¹⁵¹ For the next thirty years, towns of the Corozal and Orange Walk districts alternated between racial hysteria and a passion for trade that would have flattered the bazaars of Damascus.

Relations with the Hispanics back home were equally problematic. Yucatecans who settled in Belize maintained familial and economic ties with the mother country, a strategy common among exile groups. The most prominent example was the Mexican consul himself, José María Martínez, who still owned the hacienda Xukú, in Homún, acquired when Martínez

married the daughter of the hacienda's former owner, Rochela leader Pedro Escudero. Only in 1857, well after the original outbreak of the Caste War and the first exodus to Belize, did Martínez finally decide to sell Xukú to its manager, Marcos Duarte.¹⁵² Similarly, Nolasco Rosado continued to work with his nephew Guadalupe Martín Rosado, based in the hacienda Yaxché outside of Mérida. In the 1850s the two operated an import business, with Rosado the uncle arranging shipments and Rosado the nephew arranging for purchase and resale.¹⁵³

The northern Belize towns began as refugee settlements, but later began to attract Yucatecans for purely economic reasons. Many found the lack of conscription, revolutions, and high taxes a tempting package, while the opportunities for cultivating sugar were more enticing still. This prosperity, alongside destitution and political anarchy, led to hard feelings. Yucatecans north of the Río Hondo resented Corozal's success, and with the complicity of Corozal discontents tried to extort the expatriates into returning. Anonymous threats poured in, promising fire and destruction if the Yucatecans failed to return home. These tactics crescendoed in summer 1857 with the fear of an armed attack from across the border by Mexican troops assembled for the pretext of raiding sublevado communities, and with the blessing and perhaps encouragement of the commander at Bacalar. Yucatecans, accustomed to a standing military, wanted immediate protection in the form of standing troops. But the Belize officialdom had no soldiers to give, and they encouraged the settlers to defend themselves through local initiatives. Plots and harassments failed to end the settlements. Indeed, while this was in the air, Belizeans were sending their first-ever shipment of sugar to Europe: one hundred barrels destined for Liverpool.¹⁵⁴ The intra-Yucatecan feud had important ramifications: when rebels overran Bacalar and the southeast in the following year, the expatriate Yucatecans could take some satisfaction in seeing their countrymen safely eliminated. Despite differences of ethnicity, sublevados and expatriates shared a political understanding that would endure for decades.

A second and far less scrutinized refugee area was the Petén. Settlements remained sparse, and large portions of the district were completely inaccessible during the rainy season. Refugees came as lone individuals, as war widows leading their families, and in groups of ten to twenty people. Witnesses described them as human ghosts, vacant in demeanor and with their clothes degenerating from their bodies. But given Yucatán's recent history, these pathetic stragglers still generated fear, and some *peteneros* demanded that they be expelled immediately. Corregidor Modesto Méndez understood the need to keep them isolated: taking up a collection, he set up a refugee camp in the rancho Chuntuquí, outside of San Andrés.¹⁵⁵

By January 1851 refugees had formed small settlements all along the road from Dzibalchén southward. More than seventeen hundred lived in the communities of Xtanché, San Antonio, and Concepción alone.¹⁵⁶ Still another community formed beside the shallow lake called Silvituk (twenty leagues from Concepción), the area of Tubucil itself. Silvituk was home to a mere ninety-six people, perhaps a reflection of its closer proximity to wartime violence. By 1867 some ten thousand people lived in the Petén, more than twice the 1847 population, and almost all the newcomers were Caste War refugees.¹⁵⁷ As one survey put it, “They have settled in towns situated to the north and east of the Department. They live in peace, and are very fond of the gun, which almost all manage well.”¹⁵⁸

From the beginning, insurgent leaders had sized up the Petén as a potential ally. Jacinto Pat knew the region through prewar commerce and tried unsuccessfully to spread his movement here. José Venancio Pec, Pat’s successor and the probable mastermind of his assassination, maintained ties with northern Guatemala. On September 23, 1850, he wrote to Méndez from Chichanhá, encouraging trade and guaranteeing “a hundred blows or death” to any of his own men who troubled the peteneros. To these overtures Méndez, ever the diplomat, assured that all visitors, whether Indian or “ladino,” would indeed be welcome here, requesting only that they carry passports. He also solicited Pec’s account of the war that, unfortunately, either did not survive or was never written.¹⁵⁹ Pec’s initiative bore fruit, although perhaps not in the way that he had intended. Encouraged by the overtures, Méndez traveled to Chichanhá the following August. Pec had since departed, but Captain Angelino Itzá, who had commanded the Chichanhá settlement since 1848, proved eager to deal with visitors.¹⁶⁰ The district chief, or *corregidor*, and his longtime companion Padre Juan de la Cruz Hoil thus managed to negotiate what would be the first real treaty of the war (discounting Pat’s stillborn Tzacacab deal), establishing Chichanhá as the first of several *pacífico*, or peaceful, zones whose inhabitants pledged themselves to benevolent neutrality. Angry eastern rebels who now followed the Speaking Cross subsequently raided the border settlement, but Díaz de la Vega’s massive 1852 sweep of the southern area reinstated friendly authorities in Chichanhá.¹⁶¹ Combined with the 1853 *pacífico* treaty signed in Belize City, it permanently weakened rebel influence in the deep south. The final outcomes of the treaty are familiar; less well known is that the Chichanhá diplomatic stroke came not purely at the hand of Méndez, but rather through a series of initiatives and overtures of the rebels themselves.

Treaties notwithstanding, the Caste War resulted in havoc for the handful of estate owners of the Petén. Numerous individuals would present themselves as laborers, accept cash advances, then flee into Belize or

the no-man's-land of southern Yucatán. Méndez entreated Belizean superintendent Frederick Seymour to return them, but the British themselves had no control of the situation, and little changed.¹⁶² In this sense, the Caste War contributed to the relative lack of development in the Petén, still thinly inhabited at the century's end.

Peteneros made few demands on any of these settlements: they only needed to build a church, cabildo, and jail to apply as municipalities, none of which involved more than thatch and pole. Méndez and his successors were reluctant to deny them municipal licenses, "since it is better that they be gathered together in communities, however small, than be dispersed throughout the backlands."¹⁶³ Refugee settlements continued in the wake of the 1853 peace treaty that established the larger pacífico communities of Macanché, Mesapich, and Nohayín. Two of the largest of this time were San Pablo Nohbecán and San Rafael Nohrío, the latter named in honor of the Guatemalan president.¹⁶⁴

Migration abated somewhat after 1852, when active fighting declined. But renewed Caste War hostilities in the mid- to late 1860s sent still more immigrants, often from formerly safe pacífico communities. Many of these people came from the Macanché area, a zone of pacífico communities to the south of Peto. (Most of these people living around Macanché by the mid-1860s had come from the lower Puuc area, as the 1866–67 pacífico marriage records document.¹⁶⁵) One Petén settlement, whose exact location remains unknown, even called itself Nuevo Macanché. In its immediate vicinity lay innumerable other rancherías, equally obscure: Tubleché, Yalyab, X-Balché, Holmul, and others. The leader of New Macanché was a certain Juan Can; ever the proponents of colonial practices like *congregación*, which forcibly consolidated Indian populations into new communities, Guatemalan authorities implored Can to relocate the scattered refugees into one town. This was not within his power, and it never happened.¹⁶⁶

Sheer distance isolated Petén hamlets from the urban centers of state government. Climatic conditions also facilitated their autonomy. Once the annual rains began in late spring, the northern Petén became inaccessible to both Yucatán and Guatemala for a period of six months. Even into the 1870s, Petén authorities still omitted the refugees in their annual inspections.¹⁶⁷ Prior to the late-nineteenth-century chicle boom, these communities were for all intents and purposes independent.¹⁶⁸ As Guatemalan inspector Joaquín Saenz put it, "They are ancient villages that during the revolution of [Yucatán] were left almost deserted. . . . The corregidor Modesto Méndez repopulated them with immigrant Yucatecan Indians. They encompass the space of some ninety-four leagues, and they live only for themselves."¹⁶⁹

Peasant immigrants had reason to like the Petén. Their annual taxes came to a mere three reales, some 25 percent of what they had surrendered to the church and state in Yucatán. Although authorized to collect more if need be, Méndez wisely postponed this "until the frontier is covered by a picket of armed forces," something that never happened.¹⁷⁰ The new villagers threw up thatch huts and called them churches and ayuntamiento houses, then petitioned for municipality status.¹⁷¹ But this suited the *corregidor*, who appreciated peace more than architecture. Even those who ventured closer to Flores found their new life hospitable. In mid-century Guatemala they found something approximating the society and culture of the late colonial period. Here, Maya settlers continued to function in municipal governments only slightly different from the Yucatecan *repúblicas*, with the so-called *gobernador* assuming the role of *batab*. Even in remote settlements, the refugees elected an *alcalde* (again echoing Yucatecan political formulas), whose activities they funded through improvised taxes.¹⁷² In areas more connected with the commercial economy, Mayas entered government employment as low-level tax collectors for the government purchasing monopolies known as *estancas*.¹⁷³ In addition to raising corn and beans, the refugees also cultivated yams, tobacco, and vegetables, some of which they sold or traded in Yucatán. (Tobacco was an important cash crop in this zone, and attempts to tax it contributed to the assassination of the aggressive Yucatecan prefect José María Arredondo in 1865 at the hands of angry *pacíficos*.)¹⁷⁴ Maya refugees also blended easily into the Petén's primitive livestock business, mostly geared toward sale in British Honduras and southern Yucatán, even though the war damaged both routes.¹⁷⁵ It was an enterprise they knew well, and their cattle brands are still to be found in the massive brand registries of the year 1873.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, most Petén ranchers owned no more than a small herd "ranging from ten to twenty."¹⁷⁷ They traded their cattle, pigs, and domestic fowl to Belizeans in exchange for clothes, weapons, gunpowder, and *aguardiente*. In prewar days they had driven hogs to the lumber camps at Belize, but the ongoing wars, feuds, and rent collections of the 1860s sharply curtailed the market.¹⁷⁸ As of 1866 there were still only five haciendas. Most cattle owners preferred to brand their animals, then turn them loose to graze on public lands without bothering to comply with the formalities of grazing fees for *terrenos baldíos*.¹⁷⁹ In sum, Mayas resumed a role they had known in prewar Yucatán: combining subsistence farming with petty commercial production.

The religious structures of the Petén communities paralleled the arrangements of the remoter hamlets of rural Yucatán. Mayas reproduced their original communities, with a straw hut now reserved as the church in every settlement. Priests made only occasional and irregular

forays to administer sacraments and say mass. Their control was minimal, and the people cohabited according to their own tastes. What else was there to do but recognize their common-law unions?¹⁸⁰ In the end, the padres accepted these concessions as the price of working with the exiles, whose numbers were considerable, and who were willing to provide for the fathers and even pay for special religious services and devotional objects. Capuchín missionaries operating out of Guatemala City also started up missionary work along the Río Hondo, where they found a harvest of Maya souls.¹⁸¹ Of all the countless thousands of peasants uprooted and flung outward by the Caste War, it was these more than any others who found what they were looking for. Here in the northern Petén they lived untroubled by churches, haciendas, armies, and tax collectors. The milpa farmers of the late nineteenth century labored in the shadows of long-collapsed centers such as Tikal, Uaxactún, and Mirador: Maya culture had in a sense come home.¹⁸²

Finally, there were the islands. Today the dots of land ringing the peninsular coast figure among the priciest real estate in Mexico, but in prewar days they amounted to sandy footstools for fisherman, seabirds, and the occasional pirate. The war changed all that. By 1849 outmigration to the islands had reached scandalous proportions, and when Andrés Cepeda Peraza became jefe político of Motul and the northern coast in that year, he made staunching that flow his main priority. Despite self-congratulatory reports, he was unable to halt the movement of either men or contraband. Pay for his newly installed guard points, or *vigías*, was constantly in arrears, and smuggling persisted.¹⁸³ For this reason the islands followed their own course of development.

The largest and most important of these, Cozumel, provided a haven for Hispanics and Mayas alike throughout the summer of 1848. Those with enough money were able to buy passage to Havana, and some priests were already requesting a license to allow them to work in Cuba.¹⁸⁴ By 1850 Cozumel had become a refugee station. Two-thirds of its 341 adults were white, the remaining third composed mostly of Mayas, along with a handful of mestizos, as well as some people of African descent. It was also a young population, with only six people (all men) over the age of fifty. Not a single soul had been born there. The vast majority of both ethnic groups had come from what had been the eastern partidos, such as Valladolid, Tizimín, and the Beneficios Altos. Four towns alone—Xcan, Chemax, Valladolid, and Tihosuco—accounted for forty-nine of the sixty-five Indian men. The pattern for Hispanics differed only slightly, placing more emphasis on larger cities such as Valladolid. In sum, these were young and healthy Oriente citizens who had fled the violencia.

Despite the fact that Cozumel is Mexico's largest island, its population remained tightly concentrated. Swamps covered half the surface area, and

the only pueblo was (and is) tiny San Miguel.¹⁸⁵ Eager to consolidate a Yucatecan presence, Barbachano elevated San Miguel from rancho to a pueblo of Tizimín partido in 1849; settlers received a four-year exemption from taxes and military service and a six-year allotment of land, with options to permanent claim based on productive use. Still, the island remained a wartime creation, with entry and exit contingent upon military passport.¹⁸⁶ An instant creation, the town lacked most luxuries.¹⁸⁷ San Miguel also contained the usual strays, whose incongruity was the stuff of Caribbean culture. To this unlikely haven came Josefa Novelo, the African laundress; José Barelini, an elderly farmer from Milan, Italy; and the obligatory Spaniard, Luis Leyba of Málaga. Even a few Americans turned up: María Burgos, the New Orleans washing woman, may not have stood out, but could the same be said for John Andin of Philadelphia? Today the world scuba capital, Cozumel was then an economically integrated community with an assortment of farmers, sailors, carpenters, shoemakers, tailors and seamstresses, laundresses, cooks, breadmakers, a priest, and even a silversmith should the need arise.¹⁸⁸

Self-sufficient in some ways, islanders still found their lives connected to events from without. Desperate to keep food at home, the state prohibited fishermen from Isla Mujeres and Cozumel from selling their catch in the more dynamic Cuba; the law frustrated islanders, who found no infrastructure for marketing it in the Yucatecan interior.¹⁸⁹ During the war Cozumel continued to serve as a way station for shipping of all kinds and nationalities. It was a port of call between Sisal and Bacalar and also a favorite provisioning station for corn importers coming from Belize; despite war-related hostilities, the island's contraband trade with its British neighbor remained rampant throughout the years of the Caste War and ensuing civil strife.¹⁹⁰ U.S. sea captains also touched here regularly. Doubtless, Cozumel's distance from the scrutiny of Mérida heightened its popularity.¹⁹¹ But Cozumel also had administrative ties to the mainland. In 1860 Hermenegildo Casanova, who had served as magistrate there for three years, found it impossible to continue in the office because his responsibilities continually carried him to Belize, Mérida, "and other parts of the state."¹⁹² These same connections often made life difficult. Islanders demanded services, but the church could offer only a single priest traveling back and forth from Cozumel to Isla Mujeres in a canoe. Often six months passed between visits. In the late 1850s, the Liberal Reform complicated matters by attaching civil paperwork to life passages such as birth, marriage, and death. Marriage on the islands now took longer than love-struck couples could wait, and they often dispensed with formalities to follow their natural inclinations.¹⁹³

Islands can be dangerous places. Havens for refugees, they internalized many of the conflicts of the mainland but without the corresponding

security forces. This fact struck home when a Maya gang murdered coastal trader Feliciano Godoy on Isla Mujeres in 1851, either from resentment or simple greed.¹⁹⁴ With populations born of conflict, these same islands also lived ready for further problems from rebels, slavers, or freebooters. In late 1860 news of William Walker's landing at Trujillo, Honduras, put the citizens of Cozumel in a stir.¹⁹⁵ Weather too played a factor in island economies, then as now, for the Caribbean Islands lie along the route of hurricanes. The July 1860 storm that wiped out all plantings on Cozumel doubtless inflicted a drama all too common on the Quintana Roo coastline.¹⁹⁶ But meteorological records for nineteenth-century Mexico are virtually nonexistent: long-term weather patterns, like concepts of posterity, lay outside human consciousness in those days.

Yucatecans may have occupied the larger islands, but elsewhere they received unpleasant reminders that foreign interests were chipping away at offshore national resources. American merchant marines had already begun to mine guano on the peninsula's outlying islets. Operations on the microscopic Isla Arena, off the coast of Campeche, began in 1844 and continued for a decade. After building themselves a home from the remains of a shipwreck, a devil-may-care band of guano poachers, led by a certain Captain Williams and surrounded by a menagerie of pigs and chickens, proceeded to excavate the deposits out of existence. They converted Isla Arena, a mere four hundred yards wide and fourteen feet in elevation, into a man-made atoll, a ring of beaches with a marshy depression at its center. Because of the island's distance from the coast, the Americans simply refused to recognize Mexican claims. These came too late anyway, since the sailors had mined out tons of guano faster than the seabirds could replace it: by the mid-1850s there was simply nothing left to take.¹⁹⁷

In other cases the foreigners came by invitation. Confronted with war pressures, Miguel Barbachano had granted unorthodox concessions, and on the islands this meant allowing Spanish fishermen the right to cast their nets in the waters surrounding Isla Mujeres. Fishing boats really functioned as a Trojan horse for Spanish merchants who converted the island into an entrepôt for black-market merchandise.¹⁹⁸ Such concessions ultimately undid Barbachano, but for the moment there seemed little option. Like the refugee community in Corozal, the islanders carried on a contraband trade with Chan Santa Cruz. Little is known about this activity, other than that it came under investigation by the mid-1850s.¹⁹⁹ The islanders also committed provocations; rebels were only too aware of the growing, island-based business of slaving (see Chapter 4).

Isla Mujeres has drawn even less attention than its larger cousin of Cozumel. Minimally inhabited prior to the Caste War, it began to receive refugees in the late 1840s. Early bigmen of the town included Pedro

Cámara Lino and Pedro Garma, who first designed its street in 1850. Since no one in Mérida had any idea what went on at Isla Mujeres, it was a simple matter to falsify one's history there, as did Guadalupe Rodríguez, who claimed land rights based on residence since 1842—an invention, since he had arrived in February 1848 with the rest.²⁰⁰ In reality, most of the inhabitants of Isla Mujeres lived under the patronage of a Spanish-Cuban merchant named Francisco Martes. He secured fishing rights, then moved to importing items of foreign manufacture that he traded to the fishermen in exchange for turtle shells, much as the British traded with the Miskitos of the Nicaraguan coast. A cholera epidemic in the autumn of 1850 closed the island to commerce, and severe shortages of grain prevailed for the next year; but once the danger passed, Martes resumed his operations, now importing sugar, aguardiente, and foodstuffs through small clandestine vessels known as *balanderos*.²⁰¹ In time Isla Mujeres witnessed miniatures of the same problems that plagued Yucatán during the expansion of the hacienda system: small subsistence farmers against commercial ranchers. In this case, José May and three others (one Maya, two Hispanics) had set up small plots of land in order to cultivate corn, chiles, watermelons, and fruit trees. But in 1866 they fell into conflict with Fermín Mundaca, who turned some three hundred cattle loose on the island. Mundaca was not even a Mexican national, but rather a Cuban.²⁰²

Little is known about life on the island of Holbox on Yucatán's northern coast. A group of refugees, almost entirely Hispanic, colonized the island in 1848. Like so many Maya milpa farmers, they worked the land without benefit of titles or surveys. Over time the island's land proved inadequate for their needs, and in 1893 they petitioned for baldío lands on the adjacent mainland.²⁰³ One of the few other fleeting references turns up in the will of Padre José Antonio García of Temax, who, at the time of his death in 1861, owned a herd of some ten or twelve wild horses that thrived in areas not converted to milpa.²⁰⁴ Beyond these simple endeavors, Holbox's few inhabitants limited their activities to fishing.

None of the islands was more peripheral than Carmen. This location has never received the attention that its history merits. Whereas the other islands grew from fishing or guano gathering, Carmen began as the center of logging activities in the surrounding Laguna de Términos, then developed into a military center from the late eighteenth century onward. A small community took root in the course of the nineteenth century. It was mostly Hispanic, but with one important exception: the Shields, a British family that began in commerce under the patriarch George Shields. Intrigue was part of their genetic makeup. The longtime British consul overseeing his nation's lumber connections, he dabbled in every aspect of the region's economic life, eventually dropped the *d* from his last name, and took Mexican citizenship. The now Jorge Shiels vociferously supported the

Imán revolt: he and his friends disliked having their island used as a federal military outpost.²⁰⁵ Jorge's fully Mexican son Arturo became a prominent leader in Campeche state's Liberal movement, a close friend of founding father Pablo García, eventually Carmen's jefe político and finally governor of Campeche itself in the years 1880–83.²⁰⁶

The island enjoyed a rogue vitality dating back to the days of pirate woodcutters. By the early 1850s, there were so many different nationalities plying commerce here that it became difficult to keep track of the different coins and monetary values. In June 1850 most of the town was destroyed in a fire that the wind carried from house to house; the thatch huts burned quickly, but were easily rebuilt.²⁰⁷ The sudden influx of Caste War refugees caught the islanders off guard, and the flimsy governmental presence could neither keep track of the region's exploding ranchería population nor tabulate an accurate census.²⁰⁸ The situation cleared somewhat by 1853, by which time the island and adjoining mainland were home to some 12,325 inhabitants, working well over one hundred ranchos, cattle estates, and woodcutting operations. Old cannons left over from the 1838 Pastry War lined the oceanfront, but the U.S. Navy had incapacitated these during its occupation, leaving *carmelitas* to their own devices when danger threatened from the sea.²⁰⁹ Though far from the bullets, Carmen suffered the intestine quarrels that plagued the nineteenth century. The community divided into two rival camps that would do anything to best one another. Lacking ideological differences, each tried to ingratiate itself into the lines of power that were developing around Rómulo Díaz de la Vega and his inner circle. Gossip, slander, and plotting were the standard weapons in this undeclared war of island bigmen.²¹⁰ In October 1853 Santa Anna placed Carmen under federal authority in order to better control this strategic point and its customs revenues, but once the conservative dictatorship fell in 1855, islanders reunited with Yucatán.²¹¹

With the exception of Carmen, the Caste War created an island population where none had really existed before. The islanders seldom bothered to record their popular culture, their diversions, and their private fears and obsessions. The temperament and political personality of these Robinson Crusoes was contradictory. Self-sufficient in some matters and prone to keeping a distance from outsiders and their quarrels, they still remained tied to larger networks of authority and allegiance; reproductions of peninsular culture and economy, they also exploited such coastal benefits as guano and fishing. Islanders received communications from such places as Cuba, England, Spain, and the United States. Years could go by without important news from places like Cozumel, but when conflicts became too great, islanders turned to the mainland, and in the process reinforced the links that bound Mexican peripheries to a political center.

Whatever the destination, the problem of emigration proved serious and long-lived. Sixteen years after the beginning of the war, the Yucatecan government was still floating schemes to reattract the citizens—peasants as well as *vecinos* and property owners—who had fled into British Honduras and launched new lives. To this effect, in October 1863 dictator Colonel Felipe Navarrete offered a five-year exemption from taxes and military service to any citizen of whatever race who came home within six months; the labor crisis was so acute that he extended the same offer to anyone willing to settle in communities throughout the frontier.²¹² The absence of takers suggests how many saw flight as the only real answer to the *violencia*, and how many, when faced with the twin scourge of ethnic conflict and Hispanic infighting, preferred to remain forever among the missing.

THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD PROVE FALSE

Caste War violence had another effect, previously unexamined: it blurred the truth concerning people, practices, and the past. This problem has confounded human society since wars first began.²¹³ But the matter of Limited Good Credentials flourished again in Mexico’s war-torn nineteenth century.

Papers could prove false. One finds penny-ante crimes such as forged pawn tickets to recover *imágenes* hocked in a moment of hardship.²¹⁴ Counterfeit IOUs—the nineteenth-century equivalent of hot checks—also came in handy, since handwritten vouchers were a common way of doing business in those days.²¹⁵ False wills offered a means of conning bereaved heirs out of their inheritance, although the complicated paper trail of such processes made it a difficult trick.²¹⁶ Soldiers were apt to forge the name of their commanding officer for papers of leave and to finagle small sums of money.²¹⁷ Village officials doctored lists of literate inhabitants in order to qualify for a higher political status.²¹⁸ Peons had everything to gain by forging the *carta-cuentas* that liberated them from estate service.²¹⁹ Businessmen like Antonio del Rivero Pórtaz cooked the books of his shop in order to declare a false bankruptcy, but escaped prosecution by reason of being under twenty years of age.²²⁰ José María Oviedo rolled bogus versions of a popular cigar known as *La Canchita* and sold them at top price.²²¹ Manuel Herrera, a down-and-out Spaniard, falsified letters of introduction, apparently to obtain employment. His efforts merely won him a six-month stint working in the San Juan de Dios hospital, the equivalent of minimum-security prison.²²²

The most important paper of all, the land title, also invited falsification. In 1857 Lorenzo Escudero presented himself as the proud owner of a

quarter league of land between Dzidzantún and the port of Dzilam. But the anachronism has always been the great enemy of forgers. It turned out that Javier Baquedano, the man who had purportedly sold him the land, and whose name and signature figured prominently on the new title, had in fact died of cholera several years before the document's date. Hauled before a magistrate, Escudero claimed not to have realized that the offense was so serious: his less-than-perfect crime netted the would-be landowner two years in prison.²²³

Homes were not as they appeared. In Campeche, the eminently respectable residence of the Domínguez family in fact concealed a gambling casino. On top of that, the games were rigged, and among those swindled out of their money was none other than Justo Sierra O'Reilly, Yucatán's emblematic man of letters.²²⁴ Popular games of the time included cards, dice, roulette, lottery, and the black-market lottery known—then as now—by the name *la bolita*. The problem became all the more urgent for the simple fact that the military governors of the mid-1850s took a hard line against gambling and repeatedly tried to decree it out of existence.²²⁵ Their efforts merely drove underground a passion that most Mexicans held as a God-given privilege and a pure delight.

More significant, the war years also witnessed an explosion of counterfeiting. This was all the more unusual for the fact that paper money did not yet exist, and all financial transactions had to be conducted with coin money that people frequently carried in tubular leather belts known as *culebras*, or snakes.²²⁶ Such coins became scarce during the Caste War, and lead pieces, easily convertible into bullets, often served as hard currency. Prohibitions against war bartering made no impact. Indeed, the people of Tekax did a lively business supplying the *pacíficos* with rifles, powder, lead, and flint.²²⁷ Where it did exist, coin money caused recurring headaches. Much of the specie in circulation in fact dated from the Spanish Empire; it was scarce and overused, and people often bit coins to verify authenticity. All this tended to wipe away its faces. Such worn-out coins were known as *pech'es* or *yuruches*, and they provided the basis of everyday petty commerce. Some *jefes* proposed forcing merchants to accept the old coins in order to avoid penalizing the poor, who used *yuruches* exclusively; others argued that this well-munched money was unverifiable and lent itself to fraudulent pay for the working class.²²⁸ No clear answer emerged, but false coins certainly did. When questioned, falsifiers could hide behind the smoke of the Caste War, as did Andrés Aguilar, who claimed to have received the money from a man who perished during the rebel occupation of Bacalar four months earlier.²²⁹ Others tried to pass off costume jewelry as the real McCoy.²³⁰ But imitation silver *medios* were more common in both use and abuse. Counterfeiters such as Espiridón Sambrano, resident of hacienda Petectunich of the Ho-

cabá region, produced counterfeit medios made of lead and tin in 1855. These circulated until an hacendado received some of the bogus bullion on a sale of henequen fiber and traced them to Sambrano himself. Authorities called in a silversmith to provide expert testimony, and the counterfeiter of Hocabá eventually went to jail for six years, but not before his artfully crafted false coins were traced on official paper as part of the court record.²³¹ And this was by no means the only case. Wartime dislocations continued, soon worsened by the Reform-era civil wars; and for this reason counterfeiting remained a problem in southeast Mexico as long as money could be made by making money.²³²

There were human yuruches as well, people whose identities time had nicked and bitten beyond recognition. The war caused huge population transfers, both internal and external; people disappeared for years, sometimes forever. Beyond this, the principal repositories of vital statistics, the churches, suffered serious destruction during the civil wars of 1840 onward. Papers on thousands of births, marriages, and deaths disappeared forever. Indeed, serious demographic information on the origins of the Caste War in places such as Tihosuco remains limited today by the loss of the church registries. Well into the 1890s, the problem of destroyed or missing papers still made it difficult to determine age and parentage of many citizens.²³³

Much of the falsification involved matrimony, always one of humanity's best defenses against hardship. True, marriage patterns tended to vary between Maya and Hispanic. Mayas were far more likely to cohabit. Faced with the prospect of a second marriage, Mayas tended to marry their sisters-in-law, either a reflection of convenience, the small circle of acquaintances in village life, or some pre-Columbian cultural holdover. Keeping up with these marriages had occupied much of the clergy's time before 1847, and persisted thereafter. Formal marriage was expensive and, given the massive destruction of paperwork, hard to arrange, so that now more than ever, the casual household seemed preferable. Even in relatively calm places like Izamal, curas noted that "laxity and loose morals have unfortunately contaminated even the rudest huts."²³⁴ One of the better documented cases was that of Manuel Pech, whose "scandalous life" raised the hackles of the Valladolid clergy. In earlier times Pech had married Eusebia Chable; when Chable died, he took up with her sister Rudesinda. The local priest urged the two to separate, but Pech refused on the grounds that he had already promised to marry her. But he could not do so legally because of the proximity of kinship. The local priest, José Joaquín Osorno, at last came up with the three pesos for a dispensation.²³⁵ Small wonder that peasants were reluctant to formalize such arrangements, since a dispensation exceeded by three times a peasant's annual church taxes in the heyday of obventions. Aware that hacendados often let their peons cohabit as a

cost-cutting measure, some priests took to waiving the cost of baptismal documents to encourage legal matrimony. In the so-called *matrimonios fidos*, witnesses to marriages (often the only verification of the bride's and groom's past) demanded ten reales plus a *trago*, or drink, "as all who have had the misfortune to be village cura can testify."²³⁶ Some padres remained sticklers for validation, while others preferred to marry the well-intentioned, no questions asked.²³⁷

Other cases involved documenting widowhood. After what in some cases amounted to years of matrimony, individuals became separated from their husbands or wives; desiring to start over, they found it difficult to marry when it was impossible to prove that their original spouse was really dead. José Sotero Brito, cura of Espita, tried to bring war refugees into a formal church marriage "to free them from the venomous tooth of the serpent that seduces them into illicit unions formed by natural instinct."²³⁸ But the practice persisted. It was a blessing for some, and many an individual knew more about the location of purportedly dead spouses than they cared to admit. Many simply took up new live-in arrangements without benefit of formal matrimony. One such case was Asunción Manzanilla of Cantamayec. From 1848 onward, when her husband disappeared in the early Caste War struggles, she had lived with Julián Garma; in 1865 rumors surfaced that her legal husband was in fact a merchant somewhere in British Honduras and reportedly had been seen trading with *pacíficos* in Lochhá. After a lengthy investigation, it turned out that the wandering husband had died of cholera in Corozal in 1854.²³⁹

An ongoing problem, at least from the church hierarchy's point of view, was the persistence of unauthorized or even false priests. True, other professions invited imitators: José Leonardo Puga presented himself in Campeche as a doctor, but in fact had no such license.²⁴⁰ But it was the priesthood that inspired most confidence artists. The most unusual case concerned the unorthodox ordination of Macedonio Tut, a Maya born in the Petén in 1829. As a boy he had come northward to Tixcacaltuyú, and being nearly blind, supported himself as a *maestro de capilla* (chapel master) and had picked up the usual smattering of Latin prayers and church formulas. Rebels captured him in 1848, and he came into the power of Cecilio Chi. All too aware of the church's influence over his followers, Chi made Tut a priest, equipping him with vestments and a press to create hosts for communion. Both Chi and Jacinto Pat put him to work baptizing children and used the fees to fund their operations. The army captured Macedonio Tut in 1851; he was released after a year in prison and spiritual exercises, but rural priests spent years trying to undo the marriages that Tut had performed.²⁴¹ His later fate is unknown.

But not all cases involved rebellious Indians. Irregularities had existed since independence, beginning with the secularization of the Franciscans and their recourse to itinerant and unauthorized ministries.²⁴² To satisfy the spiritual needs of the Yucatecan refugees, as well as the many who had submitted to the authorities in Chichanhá and in Guatemala, men now traveled the backcountry disguised as priests, baptizing and marrying for the accustomed fees. These self-ordained ministers infuriated the clergy but found ready acceptance among dislocated Mayas. They provided religious services without the unwanted moral scrutiny of the church. Padre Juan Ascención Tzuc, operating out of Dzibalchén, did what he could to end the careers of the self-ordained. In addition to regular correspondence with the political authorities in Mérida and the Petén, he also pleaded with Izac Pat, “who is the principal caudillo of Chichanhá,” to have nothing to do with the peripatetic ministers. But his actual leverage was minimal, and priests of dubious ordination continued to work the war-torn borderlands for some time to come.²⁴³

One of the more unusual cases of false identity concerned a false priest, a certain Antonio Rosello. Rosello’s real name was Raymond Pratt of Omoa, Honduras. Pratt had established a dedicated following within the vicinity of Corozal. Here he set up his own clergy, appointing “certain not very exemplary men, and certainly not bishops or popes, as his priests.” By means unknown Pratt had obtained a key to Glori’s church and was in the habit of opening it for services in the real priest’s absence. His assistants, meanwhile, worked the backcountry and riverside settlements. The last known sighting of Pratt had him departing Corozal to travel among the Mayas of Yucatán, and going from there to Tabasco. One of the real priests spotted him in Lochhá among the pacíficos. From there he disappeared.²⁴⁴ The problem of false priests did not, and occasionally vexes rural villages in the present day.

False identity played a key role in schemes of swindle. Army deserters fled to places such as Tetiz, where they worked the crowd disguised as peddlers of religious trinkets.²⁴⁵ In the late 1850s Joaquín Capetillo and Juan José Polanco traveled the country, the latter pretending to be the former’s debt peon. To other estate owners Capetillo would sell Polanco’s *nojoch cuenta*, the “big bill” of cumulative debt that kept servants bound to a hacienda; then, like characters from some Spanish picaresque novel, the two would escape to work the con somewhere else. Eventually the law caught up with these petty swindlers and threw them in prison for four months.²⁴⁶

The era’s greatest confidence man was José María Martínez de Arredondo. Martínez (1838–65) was the seventh of nine children from a prominent Mérida family. His father, Francisco Martínez de Arredondo (1790–1854), was a Morelos-era creole insurgent whom the Spanish had

exiled to Cuba, but who had escaped, fled to Mérida, and then made a fortune in the manufacture of both pencils and political consensus, an example of the “spirit of enterprise” that informed early national Yucatán. He was also a devout Catholic who named all his children “María.”²⁴⁷ José María’s maternal uncle was Martín Francisco Peraza, a militant federalist who eventually decided that perhaps freedom had its downside, rejected the Juárez reforms, and seized state power in 1857 (see Chapter 4).²⁴⁸ Martínez de Arredondo the father served as secretary of the government under Miguel Barbachano, among other key political posts, and supposedly came up with the idea of folding Mayas into the military as hidalgos. Unfortunately for the clan, however, he died early. Some problems already existed with the family, since the execution of his will reveals that he had chosen to give his son José María his portion of the estate within the father’s lifetime. For reasons unknown (but probably associated with conservative political persuasions) José María was exiled to New Orleans; to assist the young man, his mother arranged for him to receive his part of the family inheritance in advance.²⁴⁹ He soon returned to Yucatán, during the 1860 misrule of conservative Agustín Acereto, and received a political appointment as customs officer in Sisal. This job positioned him to become involved in the lucrative slave trafficking then rampant throughout the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. The details remain hazy, but Martínez’s fortunes changed with the coming of a slave ship called *Arquitectura*, probably a Cuba-bound Spanish vessel, that made the rounds near Isla Mujeres. Ordered to bring the captain of this slave ship to justice, Martínez instead fell in league with him, either by investing in the trade or simply by selling protection for the route. Eventually he was arrested when Liberals returned to power in late 1861 and tried to impose some sort of control over the Oriente.²⁵⁰

But Martínez de Arredondo’s career of adventure had only just begun. In May 1862 a guard was escorting him through the streets of Mérida to prison when the silver-tongued detainee persuaded his jailer to allow him a moment’s visit with his family in barrio Santiago in order to pick up some cigars. Once in the neighborhood, he broke and ran, fled to barrio San Sebastián, tricked a man out of his horse, then fled for the security of the remote south, passing himself off as a secret agent of the government.²⁵¹ Arredondo arrived in Flores, Petén, in 1863 and entered into an obscure intrigue with retired corregidor Modesto Méndez, and also attempted a marriage without proper credentials. Arredondo embarked on his dealings in southern Quintana Roo and Campeche at precisely the right moment, since an angry creditor was then pursuing him for the symbolic sum of thirty pieces of silver.²⁵² Under the empire, Arredondo once more came into good grace, and owing to his knowledge of the south, became prefect of Mesapich, a position that gave him supervisory power over the

notoriously independent pacífico communities of the south. Martínez ran up a fifteen-hundred-peso tab by sending a delegation of pacífico Mayas to offer the Emperor Maximilian “the flower of all things beautiful,” namely, their loyalty.²⁵³ He thought that the slick ways that played in Mérida would serve him here too, and by October 1865 seemed to have the south under control: the region was “as clean as a billiard table,” he reported. His attempts to impose greater control over the pacíficos—in particular, a tax on their tobacco trade—infuriated the southerners, who marched him to death and knocked out his teeth; the silver tongue was cut up and stuffed in his nose, his severed penis in his mouth. Such was the career of the age’s great imposter, born of and ended by the violencia.²⁵⁴

Another curious case of doctored identity concerned José María Avilés. This eighteen-year-old laborer was hired by Gregoria González to serve on the hacienda San Antonio Xocnech. Despite the estate’s prestige as the center of a regionwide religious cult,²⁵⁵ Avilés found life there not to his liking. He forged a selection of passports that allowed him to make his way to Sisal, where he fell in with a group of sailors who persuaded him to sign up with them (under the assumed name of Felipe Medina) for service on a Mexican vessel named the *Tamaulipas*. But the captain grew suspicious over Avilés’s curious ignorance of things nautical and turned him in to port authorities. These found the young imposter’s welter of conflicting stories so confusing—in addition to peon and sailor, he at times claimed to be a cobbler employed by some uncle—that they sent him to Mérida until the matter could be sorted out. En route, Avilés persuaded his captors to let him out of the coach to urinate, then fled into the monte, eventually making his way to Izamal. The law eventually caught up with Avilés/Medina and sentenced him to six months in prison.²⁵⁶

False people, then, came from all walks of life. Some, like Martínez de Arredondo, were upper-crusters gone wrong; others were petty bourgeoisie struggling to get by in times of hardship. Deserters found it imperative to concoct alibis. So too did escaped prisoners, and there were plenty of them. Jails in those days were miserable affairs. For example, prisoners of the jail in Campeche were periodically allowed to go to a nearby house to bake bread, an arrangement that virtually invited them to break and run, as indeed they did from time to time.²⁵⁷ The many revolutions that swept the peninsula between 1839 and 1876 also liberated countless prisoners, sometimes to help overturn the regime, sometimes (when coupled with promises of a pardon) to rally behind it; once free, the prisoners seldom returned, but if they backed the wrong side, then their former jailers paid the political price for letting them go.²⁵⁸ Meanwhile, Maya peons had their own reasons to get away from it all, and upon occasion did so by concocting false identities. A case in point was one Isidoro Chan, an unknown

individual who in September 1862 wandered into Mérida with a strange story to tell. He came, he explained, from the town of Pisté. One morning rebels of Chan Santa Cruz raided the community, seeking prisoners to work as porters; when Chan's mother refused to cooperate, they hacked her to death with a machete, then decapitated Chan's niece and hung her head from a *luuch*, or *jícama*, tree, a kind of visual joke because of the tree's head-size fruit. Chan got the message and submitted himself to slave labor, but when the rebels got uproariously drunk (as indeed they were known to do), he escaped to Mérida. This was a shocking tale, but people began to notice that details varied from one telling to the other: at times it was a niece decapitated, at times a nephew, on still other occasions his own daughter. Or perhaps it happened in Izamal, not Pisté at all. The case generated so much controversy that Chan was eventually interviewed by no less a person than Governor Liborio Irigoyen, Benito Juárez's hand-picked agent in Yucatán, whose career is detailed in Chapter 4. A bit of investigation soon revealed that Chan was really Isidoro Tun, who had fled from a hacienda near Tixpéual to get away from his unpayable eighty-peso debt. He had never been to Pisté in his life.²⁵⁹ The case of Isidoro Chan/Tun dissolved into bathos, but it revealed the anxieties of a war-torn age, the uncertainties of what really lay beyond the city gates of Mérida. What story of Maya atrocity could not conceivably be true?

Even family loyalties—ties that made one's home the haven in a troubled world—might be masking sinister intentions. This point emerges most clearly in the various cases of murder by poison. People murdered one another all the time; what distinguished the tropical Florentines was their insidious penchant for killing their husbands and wives while feigning affection. Esteban Can, age twenty and old enough to know better, poisoned his sweetheart and pleaded the ignorance of youth.²⁶⁰ Dolores Osorio, "swept away by the impetuous torrent of the passions," committed the same crime.²⁶¹ (Even when convicted of serious crimes, punishments for women tended to be lesser: whereas the man went to prison, his female accomplice was likely to do forced service in a hospital.)²⁶² Lovers Francisco Guzmán and Ursula Vargas did away with the latter's husband when he began to catch on to their affair; they used a mysterious but quite deadly substance known as *leche de mayorga*.²⁶³ At times the deception was nearly perfect. Who, for example, poisoned the entire family of Bonifacio Castro? The authorities, like the surviving Castros, remained stumped.²⁶⁴ In certain ways the tropical Florentines provided a metaphor for the political undercurrents of the time: malevolent, subterranean, laboring patiently toward their unspeakable goals.

If Yucatán had its own versions of Martín Guerre, then it also had its Man in the Iron Mask. In 1856 all that anyone knew about Pedro

Rodríguez was that he was a prisoner in the fortress San Benito, in Mérida. By his own account, this mysterious prisoner had been jailed by Rómulo Díaz de la Vega, but he himself claimed complete ignorance of any crime and clamored for his release. Rodríguez had good reason to want out: prison life was abominable. The prisons earned notoriety for serving spoiled fish and beans swarming with insects.²⁶⁵ The authorities were stumped. No records existed anywhere, nor did anyone remember anything about the man or how he came to be jailed. His story even seemed plausible, for in the time of the villainous Díaz de la Vega a man *could* conceivably have been imprisoned for having the wrong friends and without necessarily knowing the reason for his detention. But the Prisoner of San Benito hid secrets of his own. After a lengthy investigation, it was discovered that he was in fact a retired military officer from Sabancuy, and that in a jealous rage he had hacked his lover to death with a machete.²⁶⁶

Between 1852 and 1856 something resembling older routines returned to peninsular life, but these reconstructed folkways now had to coexist with the consequences of violence and its impending return. The aristocratic politics of the early national years had by now given way to an explicit authoritarianism, much as military dictatorships later swept away Latin America’s patrician pseudodemocracies in the wake of the 1929 depression. With the insurgency reversed, people returned to their old homes or found new ones. Now, however, the rules of labor and money lending had shifted underfoot. Under these conditions many inhabitants chose to build new lives elsewhere—in Guatemala, in Belize, on coastal islands, or even in the faraway United States. An instinct told them (correctly, as it turned out) that when human beings said yes to this degree of bloodletting, more was likely to follow, and that the peace of the mid-1850s was only a respite. Meanwhile, falsity and doubt circled the war-torn people of the southeast like so many buzzards. Yucatecans would require another two generations to clear away the vast confusion and uncertainty. Well into the late 1870s, the wills of dying Mayas like the war orphan Atanasia Ku still revealed how much of that unstable isotope known as truth had decayed and how many souls had been carried away to the mysterious region that lay on the other side of the Line.²⁶⁷

“The Roar of a Terrible Tempest”

Liberal Reform and the Civil Wars, 1855–1863



The years 1855–63 cast a painful shadow over the southeast. Beyond the sudden and unexpected return of Caste War violence, the leaders of Yucatán’s old order were falling like overripe papayas. The year 1855 saw the passing of old Padre Raymundo Pérez in November. His death marked the severing of the Mexican Catholic church’s ties to the colonial era, one of the few who could remember an institution of undiminished pomp and prerogatives.¹ José Tiburcio López, the state’s first governor, died in New Orleans, driven from his homeland by the Caste War and Mérida’s tumultuous politics.² Miguel Barbachano, epitome of Yucatecan politics and the prewar urban gentry, expired prematurely on December 16, 1859, leaving an estate of some twenty thousand pesos, as if to prove the Mexican saying that “politics pays off.”³ His passing spared him the ridicule that a younger generation heaped on his brother Manuel, who came to be known as “old Chano Barba.”⁴ The remote southern town that bore the dead governor’s name during the boom years reverted to its original and distinctly un-Asturian title—Dzitnup—as though he had never existed.

Many of these men lingered at the end, but their ordeals shriveled beside the prolonged agony of the old political order. The Liberal Reform constituted a critical passage in the history of southeast Mexico, affecting virtually every aspect of the society, from parish life to property to the Caste War itself. In fact, the most terrible wounds of the years 1847–76 did not result from Maya raids, but rather were self-inflicted injuries springing from the attempt to remake a society long based on religion and corporate political structure. What then was the Reform in the southeast? Did its strategy really manage to liberate individual energies, foster a sense of citizenship, and stimulate economic vitality? How did

Reform-era chaos start, what paths did it trace, and to what unexpected ends did the struggle lead? It all happened something like this.

THOSE LAWS CALLED REFORM: YUCATECAN
LIBERALISM TO LATE 1858

The Mexican Reform began through the 1854 Ayutla revolt in Guerrero. This uprising grew out of regional dissatisfactions with centralism, filtering upward through the person of regional strongman Juan Alvarez; but Alvarez himself was too old and disconnected from capital politics and yielded leadership to a new generation of Liberals, mostly younger provincial elites born after 1821, with fewer emotional ties to the colonial years. Infuriated with the catastrophic years of centralism and their attendant strongman politics known as *caudillismo*, this new generation determined to consolidate a republic, establish juridical equality, and quash what they considered to be religious superstition. Most important, Liberals proposed to free the energies and economic potential of the individual through a far-ranging program that invalidated corporate structures such as the church and the Indian community. In 1855 the Ley Juárez abolished the institutional courts known as *fueros*, long a church and military privilege. The 1856 Ley Lerdo dictated the breakup and sale of corporately held properties. It allowed would-be purchasers, in most cases the renter himself, to pay two-fifths of the property value in advance, with three-fifths in a kind of IOU called a *bono*. Sales taxes levied against the purchaser were to fund the state.⁵

In Yucatán the Reform's first victim was Rómulo Díaz de la Vega. Despite the opposition of Díaz's peninsular supporters, including Conservatives, Spanish merchants, and simple opportunists, Santa Anna recalled him to help suppress the Ayutla movement. After fighting on the losing side of this war, Díaz was charged with shooting prisoners who had surrendered during battles in Puebla (incorrigible troublemakers, he insisted) and was imprisoned yet again in the fortress Perote for the entirety of summer 1856.⁶ His brother, Manuel, went into the standard Cuban exile.⁷ Díaz's military caretaker, Cuban-born Pedro de Ampudia y Grimarest (1805–68), was uncertain how to act. He initially hewed to the conservative vision and mandated public rejoicing over the recently proclaimed doctrine of Immaculate Conception, but when Santa Anna fell, Ampudia shifted toward the new Liberal administration.⁸

Ampudia wisely heeded the decree to arrange state elections: “arrange,” for he decided in advance to install veteran Campeche statesman Santiago

Méndez, partly to mollify that state's growing separatist tendencies, partly to prevent the return of Barbachano, whose enemies wanted him eliminated once and for all. Even in departure, Ampudia remained the Spanish autocrat. The Yucatecan newspaper *El eco del pueblo*, a hard-core Liberal mouthpiece under the direction of Leonido Vadillo, published Ampudia's farewell message accompanied by satirical footnotes. Better that he had waited until Ampudia had actually departed, since Vadillo's stunt landed him in prison for sedition; his real crime was being a Barbachano loyalist.⁹ On November 9, with the press securely muzzled, Ampudia handed office to Méndez and circulated his formal recognition of the fact to all military officers, now key political forces of the southeast.¹⁰

Unanticipated conditions hindered the Reform's application here. First loomed the matter of bureaucratic resistance. As with Mexico's other political makeovers (the reform presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas comes to mind), the Reform in the Yucatán peninsula had to pass through officials who saw the project as another opportunity for personal gain. Valladolid, soon to emerge as the center of uprisings, remained in the hands of conservative families headed by the district's jefe político, patriarch Federico Amado Cantón.¹¹ Governor Méndez himself proved a halfhearted reformer reluctant to move against the church. He also refused to enact the mandated breakup of communal ejido lands for fear that it would spark another Caste War much closer to home.¹² Rather than expropriating lands, jefes issued new guarantees for village ejido lands (sixty mecatres per head of family) even as the national Reform gathered steam.¹³ Thus, although national Liberals blamed the delays on speculators and a reactionary clergy, much of the problem lay with the bureaucracy itself.¹⁴ One way or the other, the 1850s community land alienations simply never happened here. Still, talk about normalizing titles sparked concern. Many peasants responded through legal channels; in Valladolid, the Maya owners of innumerable small properties, solares, and milpas flooded the jefe político with requests to register their claims, most valued at no more than three pesos.¹⁵ It was the beginning of a highly varied Maya response that would complicate title normalizations for the next half century. Beyond that, no immediate change took place.

Another complication, and one that separated Yucatán from western states like Michoacán, was the fact that the southeastern Reform transpired amid deepening insolvency.¹⁶ The root problem was military spending. Yucatán had to maintain twenty-two cantons, fourteen of them located in Valladolid, Espita, Tizimín, and Peto, with the others in various points of Tekax and Hopelchén partidos. The cantons consumed insatiably but produced nothing; the army required six thousand pesos monthly, nearly a third of state revenues. At the same time, the cholera

epidemic had lowered productivity and left gaping deficits. Smuggling from British Honduras, Cuba, and New Orleans also sapped revenues.¹⁷ Meanwhile, merchants and sugar planters disagreed over who should bear the cost of government. Nine years after the war’s eruption, the distillation tax still brought a tidy revenue: some six hundred monthly, or seventy-two hundred pesos per annum, an indispensable source of state income. Distillation mainly involved large landowners but also included a number of Maya petty entrepreneurs such as Brigado Dzul of Sitpach, Pedro Dzib of Chuburná, and Juan Yamá of Tixbacá. Proponents of the tax promised fewer drunks on the street, but smaller towns pleaded for a graduated version that spared them the heavier payments of cities.¹⁸ A decree of April 28, 1856, shifted much of the burden over to merchants, for the victorious planters argued that the Caste War had so devastated agriculture that increased duties threatened to destroy it altogether.¹⁹

Still, the Reform lurched forward. Its first step in the southeast was a tally of wealth and property in the year 1856, when Comonfort and Juárez still dominated national politics. (See Table 4.1.) The wealthiest man in the peninsula was oligarch Felipe Peón, whose rural and urban holdings—scattered throughout Mérida and nine other municipalities—reached 40,789 pesos. Closely following him was his brother Simón at 36,205

TABLE 4.1
Peninsular landed wealth, 1854

Individual	Estimated Wealth ¹	Holdings
Felipe Peón	\$40,789	Mérida real estate, haciendas
Simón Peón	\$36,205	Mérida real estate, haciendas
Alonzo Manuel Peón	\$29,995	Mérida real estate, haciendas
Manuel José Peón	\$29,520	Mérida real estate
Raymundo Pérez	\$28,366	Mérida real estate, haciendas
Fidelia Quijano de Lara	\$24,865	Mérida real estate
Joaquín Castellanos	\$24,550	Mérida real estate, haciendas
Domingo Barret	\$22,535	Campeche real estate
Darío Galera	\$21,835	Mérida real estate, haciendas
Aznar Barbachano	\$20,260	Campeche real estate
Juan Miguel Castro	\$19,700	Mérida real estate
Juan Regil	\$18,900	Mérida real estate
Gaspar Oliver	\$16,500	Campeche real estate
Juan Peón	\$14,900	Mérida real estate, haciendas
Total	\$343,270	

1. This chart provides an only approximate tally of peninsular wealth. The figures in question indicate the combined value of urban and rural real estate and fail to take into account liquid capital, merchant goods, outstanding loans, underreporting, and money hidden among relatives or spirited out of the country. Hence, in all cases actual wealth was surely greater than indicated here.

SOURCE: From AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, “Censos de fincas rústicas y urbanas.”

pesos. These two, together with their brothers Alonzo Manuel, Manuel José, and Juan, had a combined fortune of 151,369 pesos, hardly war refugees.²⁰ Although the Reform supposedly aimed at limiting concentrations of wealth, none of these individuals were harmed in any way.

Wealth was there all right, even if hidden in jars; but *corporately* held land proved elusive. The peninsular church was an unlikely candidate for reform, since previous wars had already accomplished much of the proposed reduction of pomp and fortune. First came the 1833 abolition of compulsory tithes under Mexico's liberal precursor, President Valentín Gómez Farías; then the looting of the Imán era; then the slow death of obventions; then the plundering by Maya rebels; and finally, Barbachano himself liquidated much church decoration. The Molas revolt continued these trends, a point illustrated in the town of Chicxulub. Before the Caste War, pious vecinos had planted a milpa whose corn was to be sold in order to support church activity and upkeep. But when Sebastián Molas rebelled, sympathetic jueces gave him the milpa's thirty cargas (1,350 lbs.) "for bread and pozole." By 1855 the milpa had been abandoned, its once overflowing granary now empty.²¹ Everywhere the story was similar. Churches in towns such as Tixcacalcupul lay stripped bare by nearly two decades of fighting.²² Consequently, the Reform found little in the way of church-held land. As in Mexico City, affluent professionals quickly gobbled up the few dozen urban properties at auction.²³ Confiscated land usually consisted of small lots adjacent to the village church and was mostly near Mérida. Many curas had acquired houses, the rents from which they used to finance parish activities; these too were tabulated and put up for sale.²⁴ But only two or three haciendas were actually titled to the church per se. The rest belonged to individual priests, well within the bounds of private property, although given the unstable conditions and the small scale of southeastern haciendas, these properties hardly translated into prosperity.

Institutional real estate may have been rare, but church-held mortgages abounded. Banks did not exist in the Mexico of those days, and the loans usually came from private individuals or from investment funds known as *capellanías*. In 1856 some 134 of these latter existed in Yucatán alone, totaling approximately \$928,120. A few lay in secular hands, but the majority, including the most highly capitalized, were church-held. Sixteen megafunds accounted for 60 percent of the total (see Table 4.2). The largest (\$180,887) belonged to the Concepcionista nunnery, the result of the gradual accumulation of gifts and dowries, as well as taxes imposed upon the peasantry.²⁵ Following this was a capellanía created from the sale of rural *cofradías* in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, along with a series of similar funds associated with the cathedral. As in pre-1870 Guatemala, holders made scant effort to force mortgagors

TABLE 4.2
Peninsular mortgages: Largest holders

Name	Amount
Concepcionistas	\$180,887
Fondo de Cofradías	\$66,148
Manuales de la Catedral	\$40,785
Convento de la Mejorada	\$39,531
Capellanías de la Mitra	\$25,381
Fondo de Fábrica de la Catedral	\$24,166
Hospital de Mérida	\$23,965
Capellanías Vacantes	\$20,457
Fábrica del Sagrario de la Catedral	\$20,236
Hospital de Mérida	\$19,838
Capellanías de José Antonio Zorrillo	\$19,300
Callepanías del Padre Amado Belizario Barreiro	\$18,999
Obras Pías de las Monjas	\$18,956
Fundación de Ulibarri	\$15,133
Roque Milán	\$14,767
Casa de Beneficencia	\$14,182
Total	\$562,731

SOURCE: From AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 7, legajo 9, “Capitales impuestos manifestados por sus propietarios o administradores.”

to pay off in full, instead preferring to roll over the debt in order to enjoy the security of continued interest payments.²⁶

Tracking down church capital was an epic feat, for individual mortgage loans had gone out to a wide group of people. There were some 1,390 mortgages, the majority of them on rural properties. Of these, the six largest funds, all church-held, accounted for nearly 40 percent; the top twenty-five funds accounted for 70 percent.²⁷ Esteemed patron saint San Diego of Tekax still held outstanding loans of nearly \$6,500, money that he would thereafter see only in dreams.²⁸ Moreover, secular administrators complained that their clerical predecessors left unsatisfactory accounts (a statement with which the historian will readily agree). Manuel Meneses, responsible for clearing up a huge Alonzo Ulibarri investment fund, found the paperwork in shambles. He followed the leads as best he could into such towns as Campeche and Motul and guessed that the principal was worth somewhere around \$13,120. In such situations the beneficiaries were unregistered debtors, since no one could demand payment from them.²⁹ An undetermined but large quantity of church wealth thus existed as undocumented debt that simply evaporated under the Ley Lerdo.

Few precise records survive to explain what became of expropriated church wealth. Little paperwork survives, but liquidations presumably followed national laws dictating their transfer from church to private (and

occasionally state) ownership.³⁰ While the Lerdo Law provided guidelines for liquidating church-held mortgages,³¹ most debt, even that for which documentation existed, appears to have simply been erased. Material property was less in quantity and produced only sporadic income. A detailed budget for the month of June 1861 reveals that alienated clerical property constituted the single largest source of state revenues, topping even the contribución, war taxes, and liquor patents; a month later such revenues do not appear at all.³² Far from entering into circulation for investment, the money vanished into a wilderness of armaments and payrolls, both civilian and military, or else was simply grafted away. Finally, some of the larger funds shifted to the hands of secular interests, but still operated in much the same way as before; the Uliburri fund, for example, became the financial endowment for the Instituto Literario, ancestor of Yucatán's state university.

Despite the irregularities, church wealth did indeed decline by 1858, and the church ceased to be a controlling force in loan capital. José Canuto Vela, the influential cura of Izamal and master of hacienda Sihonal, near Sitalpech, once epitomized the dual authority of the Yucatecan clergy, yet it was now secular entrepreneurs who loaned money to him, and not vice versa.³³ Priests continued to purchase and own haciendas, but most of those cases were prewar holdovers, and once deprived of obventions, the clergy gradually dropped out of the landholding class, while access to the emerging international henequen markets remained firmly in the hands of secular entrepreneurs.³⁴ Overall, these changes benefited Hispanic entrepreneurs over Mayas, erasing the former's debt burden while leaving debt peonage intact. Peasants almost never contracted formal mortgages and made no discernible effort to oppose a process of which they were possibly not even aware.

A second dimension of the Reform concerned the growth of commercial partnerships. Indeed, the war had never halted commerce or manufacturing in the economic core and had even created new opportunities: given the years of upheaval, it seemed a propitious moment to set up a gunpowder factory, as did Spanish consul Antonio González Gutiérrez in April 1853.³⁵ A spate of partnerships appeared in 1855. In fact, the legal impetus to document commercial associations preceded the Liberal government, since the legislation that stimulated the revalidation of contracts dated from May 16, 1854, the late Santa Anna period. Enterprises in question included grocery stores, import-export houses, breweries, and pharmacies. Often the exact nature of the business was not stated, but most partnerships operated in Mérida. Peninsular commercial companies usually consisted of two partners: the *socio capitalista*, who invested the money, and the *socio industrial*, who undertook the work. In a typical arrangement the working partner de-

ducted a certain amount for operating expenses, while the two proposed to split the profits at the end of each year. Investments in question ranged from two thousand pesos to ten thousand pesos. Though given a free hand, the working partner was to consult the financial partner in major decisions. Normal terms for a contract were four years, with the option to renew.³⁶ Finally, financial incorporation also applied to rural property ownership. One such company formed between Antonio Bolio of Mérida and Manuel Avila of Ticul. For five years the two jointly owned and administered three estates specializing in corn, cattle, and sugar. By the time Bolio tired of the business and the two ended their partnership, their total capital topped twenty thousand pesos, a whopping success.³⁷ Similarly, the 1860s witnessed a corporate entity that controlled as many as twenty-six haciendas.³⁸

Yucatecans may have dominated hacienda ownership, but urban commerce retained a strong Spanish presence. Prominent Spanish merchants included González Gutiérrez, Miguel Pou, José Font, Ramón Coral, and Ildefonso Buñol, but also investors such as the José Antonio Zorrillo, better known as the author of *Don Juan Tenorio*, who resided to Mexico in 1855–66 in order to escape an unhappy marriage.³⁹ González in particular had strong links to actors outside the Spanish community. His sister Manuela had married another Spanish consul, Ramón Juárez y Patrullo (who bore a letter of security from none other than General Santa Anna himself). González also enjoyed close business ties with such prominent landowners as Remigio Novelo of Hunucmá.⁴⁰ In addition to his commercial interests and diplomatic responsibilities, he owned the hacienda Chucnaxim, outside of Mérida’s eastern Mejorada barrio.⁴¹ But while reaching out to local polity, Spaniards stuck together. González Gutiérrez bonded countryman Igancio Boneu to serve as treasurer and also served with fellow Spaniard Francisco Guardamino as a bonder when Carlos Mañé was appointed administrator of the Mérida ayuntamiento’s funds.⁴² Spaniards came armed with capital, connections, and—nationalist rhetoric notwithstanding—a prestige unattainable to Mexican small fry. Attitudes toward these Iberian newcomers are difficult to gauge: wealthy Yucatecans cultivated their friendship, doubtless in part from self-interest. *Políticos* and rebellious caudillos found them useful piggy banks, for while foreigners had money, at the same time those same foreigners lacked the support that grew from networks of family relations and economic dependents. Finally, the Spanish presence here was thus both privileged and precarious. The preceding decades had also attracted a body of Spaniards of lesser means. In 1866, when the empire was girding up for a renewed Caste War, several dozen volunteered as soldiers; these men were not merchants or diplomats, but down-at-the-heels adventurers who hoped that military service might win them a better place.

Along with the shuffling of mortgage titles or drafting of partnerships came an awakening in mores and attitudes. At times dismissed as a misguided attempt to change an intellectually inert society, the Reform did in fact generate controversy and popular ferment. Anticlerical sentiments sprang from old church-settler rivalries, the declining quality of the priesthood, and a secular worldview that had grown steadily since the early eighteenth century and had surfaced in bits and pieces since 1810; but in 1855, it suddenly became policy. Cultural revolution stemmed in part from a growing sense of the importance of secular public life. Ayuntamientos were now taking on more responsibilities than ever. Keeping drunks off streets and pigs out of plazas, overseeing the cleaning of streets, checking on milpa production, inspecting the sale of deer meat, and as always, collecting the arbitrios: these were selected tidbits on a list that had been growing since the 1820s, and that tightened available space for the cura, once *the* indispensable man in town affairs and for the Maya repúblicas.⁴³

District officials' response to the Reform varied. Along the línea, jefes políticos' correspondence throughout the years 1856 and 1857 shows only limited concern either for the end of fueros or for the auctioning of church property. Rather, most jefes spent their time responding to a new wave of rebel sorties. *Santacruceños* invaded Tihosuco on September 22. Loché was similarly worked over, and Ichmul simply abandoned out of fear, while the citizens of Peto called for a state of siege with all but the handicapped forced to bear arms.⁴⁴ But Reform issues assumed greater priority in more secure communities. Indeed, rural Yucatán's civil and religious authorities had been squaring off since the eighteenth century, and the rise of national Liberalism seemed to promise the final showdown. Impatient with clerical pretensions, jefes and alcaldes seized on Reform laws as a way of gaining the upper hand once and for all. A number of the jueces de paz launched plans to spruce up the appearance of their tiny fiefdoms. The juez of Tecoh, for example, busied himself with tearing down an old barracks of the plaza, "a monument to antiquity that cuts against the century of enlightenment to which we have arrived."⁴⁵ Similarly, the Reform inspired many small-town officials to ferret out the curas' rainy-day pittances. The pastor of Hunucmá, for example, was supposedly sitting on a fund of seven hundred pesos "which another cura set aside a long time ago for reconstruction of the church [in Kinchil]." For whatever reason, the work was never done, and the pueblo continued to celebrate mass under a shade tree. *Kinchileños* felt slighted and reported the matter to the jefe, who promptly expropriated the money.⁴⁶ Officials also developed a nose for the fragments of independent cofradía property that had somehow escaped the late-colonial seizures: as, for instance, the small communal property named Santa

Cruz, dedicated to the upkeep of the Rosario of Sotuta.⁴⁷ The Reform did indeed liberate individual initiatives, but too often in the form of a legal larceny that no more stimulated overall productivity than had the obscurantism Liberals hoped to suppress.

The southeast Reform also rekindled the war over the dead: that is, control over burials and cemeteries. By 1856 this conflict was already older than the oldest headstone. Mexicans of earlier centuries had seen lavish public funerals with altar or atrium burial as the head start to heaven, while burial fees provided the church key clerical revenues from its high-birth, high-death peasant constituency. In the eighteenth century Catholic reformers had begun to advocate simple funerals in public cemeteries as a return to the piety of the primitive church. Next to join the cause was Mexico’s emerging medical profession. These doctors dreaded the miasmas of rotting corpses, believed to be the cause of such maladies as cholera and typhus. Bourbon administrators embraced these causes as part of a larger strategy of supplanting church authority, their old partner in colonial rule.⁴⁸ Yucatán’s own conflict over burial fees had emerged during the Spanish constitutional crisis and heightened thereafter; in the 1820s the Mérida ayuntamiento purchased hacienda Xcoholté to be used as the general cemetery. Although destined for clerical control at the time, the idea was that the church would repay the expenses by installments. Political upheavals made this impossible, and the two institutions fell into a decade-long dogfight over Xcoholté; an 1856 commission to resolve the matter did nothing (probably a reflection of conflicting pressures), and the war over the dead persisted well beyond the late 1850s.⁴⁹ Similarly, Yucatán’s own *registro civil*, or civil registry of births, marriages, and deaths, only came into operation in 1861.⁵⁰

Proponents of cemetery reform had multiple objectives: public health, revenues, and the symbolic yet critical power to preside over life passages; he who buries the dead rules the living, or so the idea ran. Jefes políticos once more drew up plans for civil cemeteries that would lie at least two hundred yards from the town’s edge, in high and dry places far from water sources, and which were at most times downwind from the village (again, the fear of miasmas).⁵¹ But while secular Hispanics were eager to remove basic social welfare measures from the hands of the church, they were reluctant to assume responsibility themselves, making cemetery upkeep problematic. When the church and courtyard walls of Champotón collapsed, the local mason demanded sixty pesos for the repair. The cura offered to donate twenty pesos, with the local authorities providing the remainder. Town revenues fell short, walls remained unrepaired, and pigs wandered into the churchyard and rooted up the bodies.⁵² This story replayed itself elsewhere.

Popular response to the Reform also varied. By the late 1850s priests sensed that public opinion had swung against them: for many years, “whether for lack of Christian sentiment or out of a naturally wicked character,” as Tekantó’s cura put it, parishioners had stopped giving. Ideologues argued that priests were reactionaries—after all, most had sided with Conservatives during the still-smoldering Reform War.⁵³ At another level, the Yucatecan church felt the emergence of anticlericalism, a rejection of the colonial past. Townsfolk acted like a modern electorate, confidently demanding something for nothing. The new readiness to defiance surfaced in many places: in the separation of Campeche, in the Petén’s break from Yucatán, and above all in the growing refusal to cooperate with the norms and demands of Mother Church.⁵⁴ Church correspondence reveals a serious, widespread nonconformity among parishioners. This new cultural revolution even spoke to women. By tradition the tenders of altars and the embodiment of domesticity, at least some women now began to test, however warily, a new role in the sphere of public secular education. One could now find public schools such as the one in Dzemul, where Josefa Ortega taught women “their sacred duties regarding their parents, husbands, and children,” but also led them to think about “reforming the situation of the fairer sex, most imperfect with regard to the civil order.”⁵⁵ Ortega was probably an exception among Yucatán’s women, long accustomed to roles of subordination and piety, but it is revealing that she launched her career now, with a larger social redefinition in process.

In the final analysis, cultural revolution remained limited and selective. A nucleus of old believers continued to counterbalance debt dodgers and nonparticipants. Many tried to continue church funding through private fund-raising methods. Their efforts were at best partially successful. One instance comes from Tizimín, the home of the Tres Reyes, a santo cult with considerable popularity across the peninsula. At least until the mid-1850s, the cura funded their celebrations through a series of properties (disguised *cofradías*, essentially) whose returns yielded operating funds, while the fiestas themselves brought in profits from the sale of liquor and other amenities. Cura Manuel Antonio Cárdenas lost these scraps of land to the Ley Lerdo, and the distasteful episode put the padre in his grave. Eventually a group of laymen, including Santiago Imán’s eldest son, Juan, managed to scrounge up \$129 in funds to keep things minimally together.⁵⁶

Conversely, cultural conservatism maintained strong redoubts. A few blocks away from where Liberal political figures debated, the nuns of the Concepción convent continued to go about their sequestered lives; they took the opportunity of peace under Díaz de la Vega to disinter and relocate the remains of their dead sisters, some of whom had died during

a cholera epidemic of the early 1830s.⁵⁷ In other regards the Mexican Catholic church remained deaf to matters of science and philosophical inquiry, and like the Communist parties of the twentieth century, opposed whatever it could not control. Rural society had also had its conservative pockets, chief among them the *pacífico* communities in the deep south. These settlements—mostly Mayas, but also larded with deserters, traders, and assorted riffraff—sent regular petitions to Mérida requesting the services of priests. Such correspondence ranges from the years 1858 to as late as 1875, and the petitioners occasionally got what they wanted.⁵⁸ The priests who did visit despaired of the area’s poverty, dispersed settlements, and low moral caliber, and never managed to establish a permanent presence.⁵⁹ In reality this arrangement was entirely to the *pacíficos*’ liking, since it provided basic services while holding the church’s power at arm’s length.

The solution that emerged over the next two decades was to mobilize voluntary support among the lay parishioners. To this end the clergy launched tactics reminiscent of modern fund-raising. They compiled lists of support pledges, organized religious fiestas to encourage a sense of belonging and identification, and tirelessly reminded the people of their obligation to the mother institution. In the forefront stood Hoctún, where the office of the late, legendary Raymundo Pérez had fallen to his handpicked successor, Luis Francisco Ricalde; Ricalde still enjoyed some alliances with local officials, and through them organized town meetings to urge the townsfolk “not to embrace doctrines contrary to the church.” Ricalde, in turn, pledged to hold prices for religious services to the old price schedules, called *aranceles*.⁶⁰ Churches in communities such as Carmen committed themselves to maintaining early-morning mass as a gesture to parishioners who worked all day and late into the evening.⁶¹ In Tahdziú, the cura rallied support in early 1858 to finance the repair of a collapsed church roof.⁶² But forging solidarity proved an uphill battle. Times were so bad that even the faithful withheld their spare cash. In the south and east, the Reform coincided with renewed Caste War, a fact that depleted already scant resources. Tekax suffered mightily in one such attack, and most communities along the *línea* felt too threatened to provide money for anything but defense. Even in areas free from the war, the church had to compete with secular interests that used the same means. The town of Hunucmá provides a useful illustration: by the late 1850s virtually all public buildings were collapsing for lack of maintenance, and with arbitrios on everything but the sunshine, the juez found no other alternative to a campaign of voluntary subscriptions.⁶³ Parishioners, however, proved refractory.

The Yucatecan church reacted with anguish to what seemed a world turned upside down. The cura of Tixméuac described the Reform as “the

roar of a most terrible tempest,” and chided Juárez for violating the hoary edicts of Constantine and Licinio.⁶⁴ “The reward that the clergy now receives is to suffer the misdeeds of individuals nursed in its own bosom,” wrote Padre José Canuto Vela.⁶⁵ But what was to be done? The answer hinged upon matters of perspective. Mayas steeped in tales of the *úuchben máako’ob*, the Ancient Ones who knew all things, understood that the world lay under a great sky bowl guarded on four sides by rain gods. Beneath that bowl, between those four deities, a hive of wonders and miracles informed life around them. Hispanics were wise men, inclined to a more rational vision. But in rare moments even they intuited something of the world’s dangerous magic. In 1865, with the harshest Reform policies still in place despite foreign intervention, Padre José Espinoza of Chicbul stood beneath the great bowl, far from the camouflage that city lights cast upon it. The wind in the *ramón* trees whispered terrible secrets concerning a world of virtue under siege; unable to endure them, he climbed the church tower and hung himself from a rafter.⁶⁶

FURTHER DILEMMAS OF THE MAYA ELITE

One might expect that the combined Caste War and Liberal Reform nailed the coffin lid over the old ways of indigenous people. Not so: the war altered practices of Maya office holding, but also prolonged the institutions for another decade. Mayas clung to what they knew, and Hispanic governments, faced with the need to quiet the countryside, turned to the old familiars. For all these reasons the travails of Maya self-government in the age of Juárez merit a closer look.

Small Reform tremors touched the peasantry almost immediately, though without necessarily bringing down the rafters. By September 1855 the state government, in one of its fitful attempts at assimilation, had prohibited priests from either conducting classes on religious doctrine or preaching in Maya. Evidence of the obtuse mentality of officialdom, the decree proved impractical and was quietly ignored.⁶⁷ In other circles, even debt peonage came now into question. At the beginning of the Reform, a more extreme faction of Liberals tried to whip up popular support by preaching the abolition of peonage. Little is known about them; their movement died a predictable death, but not before hacendados rushed out a pamphlet (in 1855) defending the ancient practice. While no copy survives, the episode remained a painful memory ten years later, when hacendados republished their response in an effort to dissuade French imperialists from being too soft on Indians.⁶⁸ Similarly, Reform plans to modify marriage customs faltered when applied to the

indigenous peasants. Pondering the enigmas of secularism imposed upon a deeply traditional society, the ayuntamiento of Espita noted that national plans for a twelve-real civil marriage fee virtually doubled the thirteen reales that Mayas already paid for a church service. The reason was simple: Mayas saw church wedding as the authentic one (still a common sentiment throughout Mexico), but could not go through with it unless they first obtained a civil license. But peasants, the ayuntamiento maintained, would never understand the Reform's philosophical underpinning; they resisted paying the new state fee, which they saw as a local contrivance, and if pressed, simply cohabited without blessing of either church or state. The ayuntamiento therefore had no alternative except to obey without complying, and relaxed demands for the civil fee.⁶⁹

With land, labor, and even marriage customs off the table, the next item of potential reform was the Maya república. Here too continuity superseded change. After the initial hysteria subsided, Barbachano ordered a reappointment of Maya leaders throughout the pacified territories. Jefes políticos bore the responsibility for both hiring and firing but were often so removed from people of outlying communities that instead the cura and local authorities submitted massive rosters of nominations covering their pueblos. As in colonial times, the village level enjoyed input, and some consideration had to go toward a particular individual's ability to work with his own people. The process returned many prewar officeholders, and a handful of cases reveal extraordinary continuity of office: by the time that Andrés Canché stepped down as cacique of Cenotillo in 1864, he had served for an impressive thirty years, surviving every upheaval from the Imán revolt to the coming of the empire.⁷⁰

Between December 1850 and February 1851, at least 106 of some 200 towns received new batabs and repúblicas. But reconstituting the repúblicas was easier said than done. Many of the most qualified individuals had either perished or fled; women and underage boys could not serve. Attempts to set up repúblicas in the communities around Espita in 1850 had to be suspended until competent adult males resettled in the area.⁷¹ Finally, the work ate up time and energy, and for that reason some refused service, just as they had in prewar years. Conrado Noh of Muxupip pleaded both youth and hardship: "because of being very young he would be highly susceptible to mistakes, and having the need to carry out his personal labors in order to maintain his elderly mother." In Motul, weary two-time officeholder Juan Mata Chan also refused to accept, he too on the grounds of personal hardship.⁷² But the pool of viable batabs slimmed as the decade dragged on and hacienda life increasingly displaced the free village. In some unusual cases, such as Cacalchén, batabs were simultaneously peons on a hacienda. The arrangement satisfied no one; neither batab Juan Xool,

who found himself overworked, nor Cacalchén's Hispanics, who expected a full-time headman, and Xool had to be replaced with a free villager.⁷³ The batab and república of Chicxulub found themselves forced to work as hired servants on a local hacienda. When pride overcame poverty and the once-important Maya officers tried to escape their contract, they suffered the same legal compulsion as common *luneros*.⁷⁴ A peon *teniente* seems to have proved more acceptable, as was the case with Pascual Chan of Nunikiní.⁷⁵ Despite these obstacles, the office persisted, and the repúblicas resumed their ancient labor as brokers throughout the rural communities.

The preferred batab was still a man of parts, a bilingual and perhaps literate individual who owned a smidgen more land than did the average farmer. For example, José María Cuá, batab of Sitilpech, held title to the hacienda San Diego Yokdzonot; he had acquired it from the estate of Juan de Mata Cámara in 1851—one case of a Maya who actually prospered in material wealth as a result of the war—only to sell to the local cura six years later.⁷⁶ Some batabs kept their money as well. In 1856 Macedonio Dzul was worth some \$563, placing him among the wealthiest in the broken-down boomtown of Peto.⁷⁷ Others continued to engage in small-scale commercial activities. The batab of Ebtún, for example, manufactured and sold soap to merchants in Valladolid.⁷⁸ The wealth of batabs like Dzul was only part of a larger and related pattern: the Maya *petit bourgeoisie* survived into the 1850s (and indeed, far longer) in relatively decent condition. Examples include the brothers Manuel and Buenaventura Cab, of Hachó, who owned hundreds of pesos worth of rural property.⁷⁹ While the war may have accelerated conditions for the loss of communal land, it did not impose any prohibitions concerning private Maya acquisitions. Whatever the problems and contradictions of biethnic government, and however much rural Mexico had changed from the days of the colonial era, people continued to see the repúblicas as viable, and in places such as Tizimín, the ayuntamiento converted part of its *casa constitutorial*, or public house, into a permanent home for the república.⁸⁰

Once the repúblicas de indígenas had reopened their doors, it was business as usual. The old ambiguities came back in force, for the office of batab had always answered to two constituencies: the Hispanics, who expected him to keep the peace, and the Maya peasants, whose interests he supposedly represented. Among other continuities, towns reactivated old methods of funding their organizations. In 1853 Opichén split its fifty-peso budget down the middle, with half going to the república and half to the cura.⁸¹ Batabs in thoroughly urban Campeche participated in doctrina campaigns for poor Maya children.⁸² Batabship still involved real work, and when Felipe Tus of Espita found himself swamped, he demanded and received a *teniente* to help him out.⁸³

Batabs and repúblicas also continued to take a hand in investigating small-scale disturbances that involved the Maya people, for the simple reason that they spoke the language, understood the customs, and had more connections within the community. Strange Mayas who arrived from out of town were likely to be hauled before them, especially if there was any suspicion that the strangers were in league with Chan Santa Cruz. To take only one such case, Marcelo Uc, the hard-drinking peon who had fled from a hacienda in Maxcanú and fell into the rootless life of the marketplace Mayas, was brought before San Cristobal's república because of rumors that he had something to do with the rebels.⁸⁴ In significant matters, the Maya cabildos served as little more than preliminary investigators, since Hispanic courts made the final decisions. The question of the repúblicas' jurisdiction in small matters remains unclear: either they had none, or more probably they failed to record and retain their (essentially oral) decisions. Evidence for the latter case rests in the almost total absence of legal records on what must have been the thousands of petty arguments, infractions, and arbitrations that surely were a part of daily life of the peasantry, and which could hardly have been resolved by the small and strictly Spanish-language legal system.

The Caste War also added a new item to the batab's resumé: military leader. Maya hidalgos supposedly had their own capitán de hidalgos, a figure whose selection process remains unknown. Like so much else, the office devolved to the batab himself, and by 1860 batabs of eastern communities such as Tikuch and Chichimilá led patrol units that kept watch for rebels on the outskirts of their municipios.⁸⁵ And despite lingering fears of a Maya fifth column, most evidence suggests that batabs kept a close ear to the ground for reports on rebel activities in their areas and promptly relayed that information to Hispanic authorities.⁸⁶ For this reason headmen who knew what was good for them fled to the monte when sublevados came to call.⁸⁷ Accusations of batab complicity with the enemy probably reflected army frustration, not unlike the dynamics that surrounded so many assassinations during the Central American civil wars: somebody had to pay for embarrassing incidents like the October 1852 raid on Xoc-cén, when the town's picket of soldiers, caught unawares, dropped their weapons and ran. The batab "and other individuals of influence" were subsequently arrested because the rebels could not be.⁸⁸

The imperial years continued to pair the office of batab with hidalguía. Such was the case with Balbino Tzuc of Kinchil, listed as "hidalgo cacique," and thus exempt from militia service. Perhaps he represented old-style hidalgos who had later risen to the office of batab; or perhaps he was a military hidalgo who assumed municipal political office, another route to the same exemption.⁸⁹ By the time of the empire, in fact,

the colonial-era meaning of *hidalguía* appears to have been all but forgotten. Rather, the term referred almost exclusively to military service and was increasingly used to describe people exempt for whatever reason from public labor. The latter was the case with Manuel Ku, judged to be an *hidalgo* “not only for his advanced age, but also because he is physically useless.”⁹⁰

The return of active conflict in 1856–57 created hardships for the *batabs*, even making them the targets for rebel persecution. Bernardino Dzakum had assumed the office in Yaxcabá in 1849. Prior to the war, Maya office turnover had been rapid here, a fact related mostly to conflictive Hispanic politics. But following the restoration, Dzakum held office for eight years. Rebel raids weakened him financially; a final wave coming in April 1856 wiped him out entirely, and the following year Dzakum was forced to resign.⁹¹ In roughly the same period, rebels assassinated the *batab* of Kanxoc, name unknown.⁹² Dzakum’s misfortunes reflected the economic straits of war, but the other was probably a case of intent to eliminate rival indigenous leadership.

Yet the air of suspicion regarding the *batabs* never entirely dissipated. Frequent investigations, fines, and dismissals testify to the stigma associated with Maya authority. The *batab* of Sucilá, one Marcelino Camul, had served as *batab* at the time of the revolt; to retain his loyalty, the *juez* had granted him certain unstated “privileges” that, at least to the granter’s mind, Camul proceeded to abuse; as punishment, Camul was held liable for damages that the rebels themselves had committed.⁹³ As late as 1852, Pedro Ek, the *batab* of Chemax, was “discovered” to be in league with the rebels.⁹⁴ Three weeks after applying for measurement of village *ejidos*, the *batab* of Caucel found himself denounced as a “a rebellious and subversive character,” unable to get along with anyone in the village. The *jefe político* who removed him charged that he had in fact been in league with Caste War insurgents in earlier years, had been condemned to death, but was later spared by certain people pleading in his behalf.⁹⁵ The veracity of these charges is dubious: such accusations represented fear, convenience, and the Hispanic frustration over their continued dependence upon indigenous authority.

But to what degree did these post-1847 *batabs* continue to speak for their people? Much evidence indicates that their ambiguities survived into the decades after 1847, and that if *batabs* still served as tax collectors, militia recruiters, and general intimidators, they also continued to lobby for the community as well. For example, in 1852–53 the *batab* and *república* of Tekantó led the fight against Antonio Abad Aranda’s and José Manuel Rodríguez’s attempts to usurp communal lands. The two were eventually forced to come to terms with the Maya litigants, and Rodríguez ended up ceding various parts of his hacienda Sacalá back to the Tekantó Mayas,

along with a well.⁹⁶ Olayo Coyí led Hocabá’s boundary dispute with the village of Tahmek.⁹⁷ José María Cauich, together with *escribano* Norberto Pool, led Baca’s struggle against the expansion of Miguel Carvajal’s hacienda Nokac.⁹⁸ Francisco Ek of Nunkiní refused to distribute advance payment of corn and money to area Mayas in order to force them to work on a nearby estate.⁹⁹ Finally, the batab of Sudzal took the lead in urging peasants not to reject church authority.¹⁰⁰

But while Maya bigmen performed familiar tasks for the state, they by no means proved quiescent to authority. Indeed, whether old or new, recycled functionaries or handpicked henchmen, the post-1847 batabs remained their own men. The southeast Reform’s refusal to target village landholdings worked in the república’s favor, since the latter was therefore free to dedicate itself to fighting the Hispanic abuses that were the skin rash of rural life. Angelino Ek, batab of Teya, led a group of Mayas in demanding the removal of the town’s juez de paz, although Ek’s only reward was to lose his own office.¹⁰¹ José Ceferino Xool of Cacalchén joined with both Maya and Hispanic inhabitants to try to get rid of Juan Esteban Herrera, a tyrant who ran the town with an iron fist.¹⁰² The batab of Tacchibichén was thrown into jail for refusing to hand over a rifle when the juez demanded it.¹⁰³

Some cases reveal that batabs and repúblicas took an active hand in resisting the worst effects of the Liberal Reform: as, for example, when the indigenous leaders of Samahil halted the land measurements of hacendado Manuel Correa.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, Jorge Uc of Tetiz brought suit against the town’s juez for throwing him off of a disputed terreno: “I ask that [he] receive corporal punishment that the accused deeds merit.” Uc never got to savor the whipping he thought the juez had coming, but merely demanding that the town’s creole magistrate be whipped reveals the temerity of which the Maya officeholders were capable.¹⁰⁵

One of the more interesting cases of rebellious batabs concerned Pedro Pascual Chac of Hunucmá. Chac’s leadership in the town’s battle against landowner José María Fernández, a battle that the batab was destined to lose, nevertheless illustrates that the position still entailed a certain authority. By 1856 the ejido lands of Hunucmá had been severely eroded by the expansion of Fernández’s estates: Tacubaya, Buenavista, and Chunchchem. For the most part this expansion appears to have been legal, but that was small consolation to landless milpa farmers. A series of land invasions, squatting, and shifting mojoneros followed. Chan’s agitations eventually won a land remeasurement for the community, but it favored Fernández and his wife, Juana Peña. Resistance to land alienation around Hunucmá went underground, but erupted sixty years later with the coming of the Revolution, and Chac’s 1856 legal wranglings formed an important precedent in the emergence of those conflicts.¹⁰⁶

The dilemmas of the Maya elite, a continuation of pre-Caste War days, were dilemmas not only for the elite, but also for those who sought to control them. The same old problems returned: it was impossible to create or sanction such an office without lending it an authority that could be worked against the Hispanic-dominated order. As long as men wielded the ancient staff of *batabil*, there existed the chance that they would someday answer political abuse, if not necessarily with force.

Some of the most byzantine cases of politics and ethnic relations concerned a line of pueblos—Baca, Yaxkukul, and Nolo—and the ambitions of the bigmen who ruled them. The trouble started in 1853, back in the days when Sebastián Molas launched his failed rebellion against Díaz de la Vega. Three men dominated Nolo: brothers José Luis and Juan de Dios Silveira and their chum José Dolores Méndez. The three had supported Molas's challenge to centralism by funneling supplies to the rebels. Once Molas was crushed, the Silveiras were too stigmatized to hold office, but they did manage to install Méndez as town juez. Méndez immediately began a campaign of retaliation against Nolo's *batab*, a certain Juan Pascual Poot, who had fingered Molas supporters. Méndez replaced Poot with an individual loyal to Juan de Dios Silveira. All of this infuriated Pablo Silveira, strongman of nearby Yaxkukul and the sworn enemy of his Nolo relatives. The reasons for this enmity are unknown, but it appears that the Silveiras of Nolo hewed to federalist and liberal causes, whereas Pablo took an opposite tack and hated then-governor Liborio Irigoyen. Pablo Silveira championed Poot's cause mainly as a way of weakening his own rivals: under the right circumstances, pueblo Hispanics could become indignant over disrespect toward Maya authority. Sent to investigate, the Baca juez sided with Méndez and the Nolo clique, and thus put himself on Pablo Silveira's blacklist. He had allies, for local Mayas hated the Silveiras of Nolo, not for anything having to do with federalist philosophies, but rather for unpaid agricultural labor that was José Luis Silveira's favorite trick as juez de paz.¹⁰⁷ In January 1859 the citizens of Baca were shocked by something unthinkable since the beginning of the Caste War: angry peasants marching through town, brandishing machetes, shouting violent profanity, and demanding the removal of Méndez.¹⁰⁸ Tempers eventually calmed, and the mob dispersed, but the event profoundly shocked Baca's Hispanics.

The stereotype of post-Caste War towns holds that peasants fell under the yoke of hacendados and were never heard from again outside of petty acts of resistance. This view is misleading. Rather, the old political mechanisms continued to operate. The Yaxkukul uprising illustrates the force of personal and often interethnic ties in local politics. Town politics at

times dovetailed with state and even national movements, as happened in Colombia in the 1940s; but once drawn, these divisions took on a life of their own. And buried under the rubble of personalism, it *did* still matter to people who occupied the roles of Maya office, not only to the office-holders themselves, but to men like Méndez and Silveira, who both worked alliances with area Mayas. Despite the Oriente politics of 1847 and their catastrophic consequences, interethnic alliances remained an option. Yaxkukul never became a Tihosuco, but the whisperings and plots to be overheard under the town’s pórticos nonetheless echoed the fractured friendship between Jacinto Pat and Antonio Trujeque.

Meanwhile, the Maya church religious hierarchy suffered as well. Church mentality continued to be the neocolonial bulwark it had always been. It did not advocate Maya enslavement, but its priests, like most Hispanics, believed that if the purportedly inferior Indian race were to improve, it would do so in geological time and would need to remain subordinate in the interim. Church composition reflected these attitudes. The seminary was still virtually devoid of Maya students, and the only Maya priest was Juan Asunción Tzuc, whose father happened to be a successful entrepreneur (see Chapter 6).¹⁰⁹ Small wonder, then, that church-Maya relations enjoyed a certain continuity.

Figures such as the sacristan, *maestro de capilla* (chapel master), and *maestro cantor* (master singer) never commanded the clout of a batab or the awe inspired by the shaman known as *h-men*; but they were still figures apart from the crowd. Their connection with popular religiosity and ancient belief made them suspect individuals, but they remained indispensable for carrying out daily functions of the faith. A church funding crisis of 1813 had already shown that regardless of the religious belief and folk piety of the Maya population as a whole, the support of the maestros and other assistants was contingent upon regular patronage. Loyalty of Maya church assistants had more than once evaporated during the terrible years between 1839 and 1850, when systems for church funding changed with each new administration. Although order was always restored, the role of Maya assistants remained problematic.

The 1847 explosion of ethnic violence led to a reevaluation of the place of Mayas in the church. Once the war was under way, people began to seek refuge from military service, and church service offered one possible escape. For that reason, when sacristans were exempted from military service, a problem of overstaffing resulted. In some instances they were not Mayas at all, but individuals who simply wanted to stay out of the cantons. Sacristans created their own assistants by hiring army deserters (with no other pay than asylum). Díaz de la Vega maintained a warm relationship with the church, but alarmed by the situation, in early 1854 ordered a

census on Yucatecan sacristans, coupled with precise instructions to hire no one but pure Mayas.¹¹⁰

These directives prompted the church to look seriously into the issue of the Maya assistants. The first step was a systematic survey of the rural churches and their needs in regard to assistants. Oxkutzcab, for example, had six sacristans (five Mayas, one of partial African descent) and two maestros cantores. Ticul employed two Hispanic sacristans “because there are no Indians who are instructed to assist in the mass.” The only Maya servant was a maestro de capilla “who does not know how to read, nor write.”¹¹¹ The cura of Ichmul used two soldiers-volunteers, both non-Maya.¹¹² Sacalum used no Mayas at all; its sacristans had left the village, having joined the rebels in the year 1848.¹¹³ Cenotillo used eight church servants, all Maya between the ages of ten and eighteen. Cura Jorge Burgos had completely closed down activities in the auxiliar Tixbaká “for lack of Indians in that population.” Churches farther to the east had less Indian help: almost as soon as Mayas presented themselves “they soon pass to the condition of *criados* [estate workers].”¹¹⁴ Dzitás, which had once employed thirteen or more Maya sacristans, now limped by with one Maya and two non-Indians, along with a handful of Indian boys and an octogenarian *fiscal de doctrina*, teacher of religion classes.¹¹⁵

On March 16, 1854, the cathedral responded by issuing a circular instructing all curas to justify their use of non-Indians in the positions of church assistants previously reserved for village peasants. The circular stopped short of the prohibition that Díaz had stipulated, offering instead a bureaucratic means of legitimizing practices that had taken root since the war’s beginning.¹¹⁶ What it succeeded in doing was opening an intriguing window into how the curas really thought of their ethnic subordinates. Most curas employed Mayas, but mainly for lack of options.¹¹⁷ Many a priest would by far have preferred to honor the governor’s wishes. Indeed, the fact was that the peasant religious hierarchy was never entirely reliable or devoted, at least from what was the prevailing clerical point of view. Absenteeism, drunkenness, light fingers, and a general inattentiveness formed the usual complaints. To sum up the problem with his six Maya helpers, the cura of Kopomá whipped out a quote from Montesquieu: “Ignorance of the true God is the worst plague for any republic.”¹¹⁸ In Santa Elena Nohcacab, Padre Enrique Briceño hired no Mayas “because there are none who are intelligent.”¹¹⁹ Fresh from his work on the Caste War peace commission, where he had labored to persuade Maya rebels to return to what he assured them would be a better life, José Canuto Vela wrote that he had always hired vecino sacristans: “Responsibilities are safer in their hands than in those of the Indians, who are better suited to cleaning and sprucing the buildings and cemeteries, ringing the bells, and

other odd jobs for the faithful."¹²⁰ Under pressured circumstances, there was no way to predict how members of the hierarchy would act. Consider, for example, an episode relating to the military mobilizations of 1843. When troops entered the village of Tixkokob, the Maya sacristan and maestro de capilla locked the priest in the rectory and simply handed over the church's possessions to the soldiers. When reflecting over the new changes in rural church staff, the priest remarked, "If this measure of naming vecinos as sacristans had been undertaken before the Caste War, this parish would never have suffered the secret sacking that befell it in 1843."¹²¹ At the same time, there were also cases of more tolerant attitudes. José Baeza, cura of Mérida's barrio Santa Ana, hired Mayas and vecinos in equal numbers and professed indifference to matters of race as long as the individual in question was trustworthy. As an afterthought, he did note that over the past few years the Maya population had become difficult to work with: "For having been granted the privilege of freedom from compulsory labor, they resist [church] service, and if they do provide it, they do so with much arrogance, haughtiness, and disgust."¹²²

If clerical attitudes toward their Maya assistants were deeply mixed, popular attitudes are almost invisible. What did people—*any* people—think about such figures as the maestro cantor, mumbling his amalgam of Latin, Spanish, and Maya prayers? Figures like the sacristan, fiscal, or maestro cantor never commanded much prestige among Hispanics. They mostly carried the messages and directives of the church to rural peasants. Prestige among Mayas was higher (recall the false priest Macedonio Tut), although few comments ever worked their way into the documentation. But sometimes actions spoke louder than words, and those actions reveal that rural Mayas did recognize a certain level of authority in these church-trained and -sanctioned functionaries. During the disruptions of the early Caste War, when curas and ministers alike had fled for the security of the cities, Maya parents of Tihosuco called the maestros de capilla to baptize their newborn infants. From the church's point of view, it was a mess that in some cases required over twenty-five years to resolve: witness the story of Juan Manuel Xiu, born in Tihosuco and later a resident of Mama, whose baptism by maestro was still in debate in 1872, a quarter century after the war began.¹²³ What the curas could not dispute was that in times of crisis, rural Mayas looked to Mayas whom the church itself had trained.

Beyond that, the role of a high-visibility Maya could turn risky in moments of violence. Mayas who retained positions of authority in the pacified regions remained more vulnerable during raids than did Hispanics. High-risk groups included the sacristans, singled out for persecution during a rebel sortie on Tixcacaltuyú in 1859, but Mayas engaged in local self-defense ran the greatest danger of all.¹²⁴ Few cases illustrate the problem

better than Padre José Gregorio Carrillo's account of a rebel attack on Tikuch the Sunday before All Saints' Day 1862. The padre had traveled from Valladolid to offer services in this outlying town, but his visit was to be brief, for rumors of an attack were already circulating. At 6:30 A.M. he began mass, then he heard rifle shots and the sound of a multitude of Indian insurgents coming out of the north road that led from Yalcobá. The town's fifteen Maya militiamen, together with some forty companions, had stationed themselves at the church. Carrillo found some engaged in a dispute over arms, others making for the church roof. The defenders who remained below witnessed one of those peculiar ceremonies that fuse reverence and rebellion. Led by one Narciso González, the insurgent Mayas kissed both the altar and Carrillo's hand, then gave the priest a small amount of money to pray for their souls in purgatory, and sent him on to Valladolid. They then proceeded to execute the town's Maya defenders.¹²⁵

Stories like the Tikuch massacre help explain why Maya offices later died such a quiet death. By the time the repúblicas were formally abolished in 1868, village Mayas had learned that visibility carried risks because, as they say, *paisano mata paisano*: countryman kills countryman. The massacre also clarifies why Oriente peasants continued alliances with Hispanic caudillos in this age of violence. Bribes, physical threats, and economic leverage all bound them to the caudillo's cause, but so did a shared fear that declining military presence would throw them into the clutches of the rebels they had failed to become.

THE CIVIL WARS, PART FIVE: THE MANY SINS
OF LIBORIO IRIGOYEN

While Maya bigmen clung to their last shreds of bigness, the years 1858–63 played out as the most confusing in the history of southeast Mexico. Instability became endemic, with renewed ethnic violence, a coup attempt every few months, and at least six changes of regime. How to make sense of this confusion?

It began with politics. The possibility of elections reawakened the Yucatecans' anarchic genius, for within a year after taking office, Governor Méndez had to deal with new rebellions, a virtual return to the conditions of 1846–47.¹²⁶ A Liberal club centered around Mérida attorney and politician Liborio Irigoyen thought it had the edge in the 1856 balloting, but remained divided by the old issue of Rómulo Díaz de la Vega (with whom some had opportunistically sided). Conservatives outmaneuvered them by nominating Pantaleón Barrera (1816–76), a Hopelchén-born politician

and journalist. Barrera had subbed with surprising success as militia leader during the height of the Caste War crisis, and even wrote a novel about Chan Santa Cruz under the pseudonym Napoleón Trebarra.¹²⁷ This versatile individual enjoyed the support of wealthy Campeche merchants and five or six key military officers (including Manuel Cepeda Peraza) and won the day. Mérida Liberals, in association with dissident Campeche políticos Pablo García and Pedro Baranda, then launched their own rebellion. They drew in smaller urban merchants by demanding a 50 percent cut in the *derecho de patente* that allowed liquor retailing, whereas a plan to expand draft exemptions for peons appealed to property owners. The conflict raged through summer 1857, with Liberals mostly losing but retaining control of Tekax and Campeche, while Barrera ruled Mérida with an iron fist.¹²⁸ Campechanos now took the opportunity to proclaim the independence of Campeche state—an itch dating back to Bourbon times—and under the leadership of García and Baranda openly proclaimed their separation.¹²⁹ Even areas well removed from the zone between Mérida and Campeche manifested growing unrest. To take only one example, municipal elections in Acanceh tore the community apart. The supervising junta reported widespread violence, along with interference from the district's former jefe político, the elderly Policarpo Echánove, who naturally took up his own defense, branding the accusations and the annulment of the elections as themselves a form of abuse, as indeed they may have been.¹³⁰ Here and elsewhere, Reform-era Yucatán seemed to be disintegrating for lack of political consensus.

In early December the Reform War, a central Mexico bloodletting, began when the Conservatives' Plan of Tacubaya forced President Ignacio Comonfort's resignation. Although the war proper never reached the Yucatán peninsula, it briefly rehabilitated Rómulo Díaz de la Vega, who became governor of the Valley of Mexico.¹³¹ All factions in the peninsula proclaimed support for Tacuba, but merely for tactical reasons. In that same month the ongoing rebellion in Campeche and Tekax brought to power a Yucatecan military figure: General Martín Francisco Peraza (1806–75), an old-time military officer and literary dabbler who had fought in national campaigns during the 1820s, including tussles with holdover pirates off the coast of Sisal in 1823. Peraza had participated in abortive Federalist conspiracies and served as second-in-command in an 1835 armed landing in Tampico (in which capacity he was accused of grafting \$70,000), had also helped in the 1843 defense against the Mexican invasion, and finally ended up serving as the Yucatecan Republic's secretary of defense during the early Caste War.¹³² But second thoughts about the wisdom of Reform, perhaps more a reaction to local conditions, caused Peraza to switch to Conservatism. Assuming extraordinary powers,

and with the support of key clergy and military officers, Peraza tried to quiet the situation through a blanket amnesty for all civil war-related crimes prior to August 4, 1857.¹³³ Irigoyen accepted, but García and the campechanos, shielded by distance and stout walls, remained obdurate. Peraza also attempted to staunch the hemorrhage of military desertions through pardons for officers and soldiers who returned to their units within twenty days.¹³⁴ Confronted with the Campeche rebellion, Peraza extracted forced loans from parties with an interest in saving the political system “that protects property.” The church’s bill—a mere \$150—probably represented all that Peraza thought he could get from these once-favored sons of New Spain.¹³⁵

As always, state actors used national events to cloak their designs. Towns such as Tizimín proclaimed in favor of both Peraza and Tacubaya, but mainly to hang on to municipal offices.¹³⁶ Yucatecans who supported the counter-Reform also reacted to fears of a rekindled Caste War; troubled times brought out conservative tendencies, a point that Mérida’s ayuntamiento stressed when they seconded Tacubaya in April 1858.¹³⁷ The clergy, meanwhile, rejoiced. Priests launched plans for a massive Lenten celebration in Izamal, coupled with a bilingual doctrina campaign for surrounding haciendas and ranchos. Confessions were up, and everything looked to be on the mend.¹³⁸ The threat of expropriations halted, the cura of Hecelchakán launched an expensive reconstruction campaign, and suddenly came up with one thousand pesos to import the special lumber of the *chicozapote* tree from as far as twenty-four miles away.¹³⁹ Finally, leading factions in all the major towns looked to Tacubaya as a way of legitimizing their growing traffic of Maya workers to Cuba, handled though Spanish contractors such as Gerardo Tizón. The list of participants was long and included Manuel Cepeda Peraza’s brother Andrés, in Motul.¹⁴⁰

During these upheavals the area also faced a rebel resurgence. It began during the 1853 federalist revolt against Díaz de la Vega and fed on Reform-related dislocations, for Juárez-era legislation had weakened military power at a critical moment. With the end of the *fueros*, soldiers discovered that by committing civil offenses, they would be discharged and hauled before civil magistrates. Major crimes often got them into the army; minor crimes could get them out again. Partly as a result of this loophole, enlistments fell, and military readiness faltered. The military also suffered deteriorating weapons, poor training, and the virtual abandonment of all coastal fortifications, and operated at an annual deficit of forty thousand pesos.¹⁴¹ Rebels had now taken time to reorganize themselves under strongman Venancio Puc and a highly talented coterie of generals: Zaracías May, Bonifacio Novelo, Crescencio Poot, Bernabé Cen, Leandro Santos, and Dionisio Zapata. The tyrannical Puc controlled both the

insurgent forces and the Speaking Cross; he realized that raids into the Yucatecan interior brought prestige and lucre, so he and his successors relentlessly worked this practice into the mid-1870s. A hard drinker who kept British merchants and diplomats waiting for days on end until sobriety dawned, Puc executed prisoners en masse and left their remains to the buzzards. He reigned until his own officers assassinated him in early 1863.¹⁴² Still, he and his successors rebuilt the financial base through lumber taxes and the British Honduran trade. Unpaid soldiers were soon deserting the army and joining the *sublevados*, so much so that by late 1856 Chan Santa Cruz consisted of equal numbers of Mayas and Hispanics. Exploiting state weaknesses, the *sublevados* began a series of raids into the pacified territory, particularly the September 28, 1857, attack on Tekax.¹⁴³ Valladolid suffered a similar predawn raid seven months later, on Good Thursday.¹⁴⁴ The insurgents' crowning achievement came on February 28, 1858, when they recaptured Bacalar, a point they held for the next half century.¹⁴⁵ This was hardly a strategic death blow: Yucatecans were thinking of abandoning the old fortress, since it was notoriously unhealthy and had lost all population and commerce.¹⁴⁶ But the loss stung Yucatecan pride and piqued the militarists. As one colonel ruefully remarked, “The indio of 1857 is not the indio of ten years ago.”¹⁴⁷

On top of these disasters, peninsular *tacubayistas* saw national Conservatives losing battle after battle to the forces of Benito Juárez. Realizing that the Tacubaya government was doomed, a group of eastern officers overthrew Peraza on September 11, 1858, and installed Irigoyen in his place. The group's leader was Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Acereto, scion of a family that soon became the governor's principal headache.¹⁴⁸ Far from articulating legitimate political views, the coup's manifesto opted for duplicity: bone-deep conservatives who later supported the empire, the officers castigated Peraza for failing to adhere to Liberal principles. Their real gripe was Peraza's redirecting of resources (including 1,550 soldiers) away from the east to the subjugation of Campeche and the not-so-incidental fact that Peraza had stripped Acereto of his command for embezzlement.¹⁴⁹ On October 3 the rotund Irigoyen began his first gubernatorial stint.¹⁵⁰ *Ayuntamientos* went through the usual oaths of loyalty, but personnel seldom changed, for their allegiance was tactical, not born of genuine attachment to person or respect for institutions. The *ayuntamiento* of Valladolid illustrates this. With the change of governors, Juan María Iturralde assumed the *cabildo*'s presidency, and other members simply remained as they were.¹⁵¹ Like the revolutionary-era *cardenismo*, attempted changes in national political culture had to trickle through an entrenched collection of hacks.¹⁵² The episode serves as a caution against finding legitimate expressions of popular will in Mexico's nineteenth-century political coups and pronouncements.

Liborio Irigoyen Cárdenas, the dominant Liberal from this point to the early 1860s, remains a little-studied but critical individual. A doctor of jurisprudence, he proved to be one of Mexico's great survivors. Irigoyen was born in 1821, studied law in Mérida, and briefly served as militia captain in the first year of the Caste War. But Irigoyen's real talents lay in public affairs. He hitched his star to Miguel Barbachano and rose accordingly.¹⁵³ Among the writers of his day and region, he was rivaled only by the Petén's homegrown wise man, Modesto Méndez; Irigoyen's 1862 accounts of the civil wars still crackle with delicious irony.¹⁵⁴ While he and his wife, Clotilda Lara, made their home in Mérida, Irigoyen was also a man of property, with the haciendas Yumún and San José in Maní, three others outside of Sacalum, and a sixth in Abalá—nothing unusual for a man of his class, although they were occasionally used against him in charges of profiteering.¹⁵⁵ Irigoyen himself presents a bundle of contradictions. Although he served the national administration, he was deeply rooted in local values, and even while executing the Liberal property reforms, fought to maintain the right to a capellanía for his son and granddaughter.¹⁵⁶ He led the revolt against Pantaleón Barrera, but then accepted a position in Peraza's government (investigating the trafficking of Maya slaves to Cuba, a traffic that Peraza himself secretly supported) and triumphed in the peninsular power struggle by remaining loyal to Juárez during the Reform War.¹⁵⁷ Before any lasting advantages could be realized, Irigoyen committed four sins that guaranteed further conflict. First, the Liberal Reform resumed its forward motion. The new tone quickly emerged in his dealings with the church. Whereas predecessors had shown deference toward the state's fellow institution (only Ampudia had that anticlerical streak of the old Bourbon military), Liborio Irigoyen proved combative and scolding. He immediately sided with Yaxcabá's military commander in a quarrel with the town's cura, a man whose rectory the officer had expropriated as his own headquarters, justifying his actions by accusing the priest of negligence.¹⁵⁸ Doubtless, Irigoyen spoke from his innermost beliefs, but he also needed the money, since the state now owed over one hundred thousand pesos to private individuals, mostly consisting of the Regil family, prominent Spaniards, and the wheat monopoly.¹⁵⁹

Similarly, alienation of church-related property accelerated. As the Juárez group gained the upper hand, it punished a clergy that had assisted the Conservatives, confiscating church capital through the Nationalization Law. Published in Yucatán on August 12, 1859, by Irigoyen, this legislation allowed those who had contracted a church mortgage to escape the obligation through a process similar to that of the Lerdo law. Mortgagees could pay two-fifths in cash to the state, making up the difference in IOUs, and then receive a title clearing them of further obligation to the original corporate mortgage holder. Unlike the property-based Lerdo law, this struck at

the heart of church capital in southeast Mexico. Realizing that national Liberalism had triumphed, the church's *chanter*, or executive secretary, Silvestre Antonio Dondé, reluctantly promulgated on August 19 the decree disentailing church-held property. (Dondé had been part of the vanguard of southern sugar cultivation and a man of wealth and power in the 1830s and 1840s; the Caste War had wiped that away, and he had returned to Mérida.)¹⁶⁰ But for the church as a whole, the Reform War's three-year reprieve on the alienation laws now ended.¹⁶¹ Church-held mortgages were taken away once and for all, functions such as marriage and registration of births and deaths were secularized, and priests caught hiding assets or documents (*ocultación de bienes*) risked legal prosecution. Finally, Liberals outlawed church cabildos, decreeing that those who persisted in this would be considered conspirators against the state. Priests tried to deflect the blow by arguing that the Juárez decrees were merely to halt "the reactionary advances of bad priests," not to impoverish the loyalist faithful, but vecinos seized on the abolition of church contributions. They imparted their views to local peasants, "so that the Indians, in addition to resisting payment in imitation of their directors, also are losing that respect and holy fear that made them so docile to religious and civil precepts."¹⁶² Curas composed pledge lists for voluntary contribution.¹⁶³ Even this proved difficult. Parishioners of Maní, to take only one instance, were reluctant even to give verbal commitment.¹⁶⁴ The pattern in Tizimín was similar: an initial show of support and good intentions on the part of vecinos, followed by reluctance and lack of cooperation, reducing parish rents to a monthly six to eight pesos.¹⁶⁵ Resistance to church taxes proved irreversible; when people do not *have* to pay taxes, they seldom do. But events had so devastated local economies that even the well-intentioned felt reluctant to make promises they could not keep.

The effects of renewed Liberal Reform penetrated into many corners of life. Liberals seized the seminary of San Ildefonso (today a classy tourist hotel), occupied the bishop's palace, and confiscated a diverse collection of documents dealing with ecclesiastical affairs.¹⁶⁶ Churches such as that of Sotuta were nearing collapse for lack of maintenance, with the last remaining valuables hidden in the home of the Maya sacristan.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, in August 1862 the town of Ixil witnessed a scene increasingly common for southeast Mexico. Cura Manuel Osorio organized a town meeting, complete with the juez de paz and the partido's subdelegado, to try to determine why no one was willing to give so much as a dry tortilla to the church. Osorio read a long litany of his services, reminding parishioners that their stinginess was inexcusable in a town with no fewer than six haciendas. The people's reaction to this meeting can only be surmised. The subdelegado was on the cura's side, but unfortunately the juez happened to be Osorio's personal enemy and a convinced Liberal; so too the juez of

nearby Chicxulub, who sided with locals who had pledged contributions, but now wanted their pledges reduced by 50 percent. Osorio found himself trapped in scissors of declining state support and a vecino attitude that ranged from apathy to contempt.¹⁶⁸ José María Guerra made out better than most of his colleagues, since many bishops suffered exile. He was spared, in part because he had assented to the emergency sale of church properties in 1848, for which the government, incidentally, had never paid the promised compensation.¹⁶⁹ But for the most part, the Liberal triumph in the Reform War brought only misery to the Yucatecan clergy.¹⁷⁰

Irigoyen's second deadly sin involved matters more sordid than mortgage rates. The governor irritated many interests by cracking down on the sale of Maya slaves to Cuba. By 1858 Irigoyen's predecessor, Martín Francisco Peraza, had become deeply complicit in the trade, and during his brief administration launched a backstage effort to relegalize what was clearly a thriving operation.¹⁷¹ To his chagrin, Peraza discovered that Juárez's impending return jeopardized these plans, for the Veracruz-based Liberal government now ordered Irigoyen to halt slaving. But like Santiago Méndez, Irigoyen was a reluctant reformer, and despite issuing reports condemning the Maya trade, he left open a loophole that allowed a ten-year "exile" for captured rebels.¹⁷² Later accusations linked Irigoyen himself to the trade; these charges invite skepticism, since they came from rivals, and because Oriente interests controlled slaving, but given the often duplicitous nature of politics, cannot be discounted altogether. Irigoyen's cautious approach to slaving probably reflected his fear of antagonizing the military, for his real concern lay in hanging on to power. Still, the many Yucatecans threatened by halting the sales grew apoplectic over the mere mention of his name. The reason for slavery? "Many times have we not seen that from a small boat filled with castaways on the high seas, some are thrown into the water in order to save the lives of the rest?" one indignant Hispanic questioned.¹⁷³ Human opposition to slavery remained situational and not unconditioned.

Irigoyen's third mistake was failing to prioritize the Caste War at a moment when it was reheating. In addition to the fall of Bacalar, rebels launched devastating attacks on Tacchibichén (December 19, 1858), Supopó (January 18, 1859), and ranchos outside of Kikil (March 4, 1859) and Yaxcabá (July 19, 1859).¹⁷⁴ The governor knew that officers wanted action, and he flirted with the idea of another invasion of Chan Santa Cruz, but the fiscal crisis and deepening chaos of the late 1850s stymied him. To cobble things together Irigoyen proclaimed another forced loan and set an example by personally contributing fifty pesos.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, commanders of the Valladolid region (including Pedro Acereto, who had installed Irigoyen) resented the governor's attempt to organize municipal

elections while their campaign against the rebels was still in motion. Their concern had two motives: they knew that violence usually followed voting, but also feared that while off on campaign they could not adequately manipulate the election results.¹⁷⁶ Eastern caudillos also bridled at rule by civilians, particularly a clique of Mérida attorneys. The stage was therefore set for further insurrection.

Irigoyen's fourth and final sin was his vengeful style of political management. The governor brooked no guff from critics and systematically excluded "the satellites of the dictator of 1853," that is, the many Yucatecans who had committed the error of lining up behind Rómulo Díaz de la Vega.¹⁷⁷ The first wave of expulsions came in December 1858, with fallen Conservative governor Pantaleón Barrera topping the roster. But this measure proved insufficient. In mid-February Conservative forces led by Santiago Imán's old nemesis Roberto Rivas pronounced against the government in Espita; Tizimín and Uayma soon followed.¹⁷⁸ Actual plotting for these revolts took place in Havana, where Mexican conspirators had become fixtures of café life. In reality, the February plots had a national sponsor: defeated general José Mariano de Salas, later a lobbyist for French intervention but for now exiled to New Orleans, filtered money to key supporters, including Díaz de la Vega himself, who still wanted back into the Yucatecan game. From Cuba, Díaz in turn bankrolled peninsular Conservatives.¹⁷⁹ Meanwhile, intrigue also flourished among Mérida's pro-slavery factions, headed and financed by Spanish merchant Miguel Pou, who saw no other hope of recouping a one-thousand-peso loan he had made to the state. Pou hatched a bizarre plan whereby soldiers would enter the fortress of San Benito, supposedly to bathe in its water tank, then seize the fortress, ring the bells to gather sympathizers and discontents, and force Irigoyen's resignation. Shrewd enough not to rely entirely on the power of bells, Pou took the precaution of paying off his rebels in advance, most going for as little as four pesos.¹⁸⁰ But Pou's ill-planned revolt ran counter to national politics, since state Liberals still enjoyed federal support. Irigoyen managed to quash the uprisings with amnesties for the rank of second sergeant on down, coupled with additional waves of exile for the now-isolated leaders.¹⁸¹ This culminated in a new roundup of sixty-eight Conservatives sent to Veracruz for their political sins; the list included the unscrupulous Manuel Medina, as well as Joaquín Castellanos, longtime político, Campeche real estate investor, and Caste War profiteer.¹⁸² The peninsula was better off without these scoundrels, but they had family and friends who resented such treatment.

This was Irigoyen. Most of his policies aimed at the Hispanic political class, and it is difficult to imagine a person with fewer ties to the Maya peasantry. Indeed, the often strained readings of peasant nationalism and

folk liberalism seem particularly inapplicable here. But at least the campesinos benefited from benign neglect in his brief tenure. The governor made no attempt to alter their way of life, and his comparative disinterest in the Caste War meant fewer military drafts. Similarly, Irigoyen's sudden conversion to the antislavery cause lessened the chance of being rounded up and put on a boat to Cuba, although it is not clear how much Mayas knew of these policy fluctuations. The peasantry repaid Irigoyen with his own coin: an indifference that, if it failed to advance his cause, at least did not seek to throw him over. Opposition therefore remained rooted in cultural conservatives, eastern military officers, and thwarted rivals to public patronage.

Irigoyen's enemies hired one of Mérida's starving literati to pen *Liburrada: Zarzuela herética*, a satirical play targeted against the strongman-governor.¹⁸³ The plot of this particular *zarzuela* (a popular Spanish theater genre that alternated song and dialogue) runs something as follows. The scene opens over "the island Chan Santa Cruz," a place suspiciously resembling Mérida; the kingdom is ruled by man-beast Liburro, a fat creature with the ears and legs of a donkey, huge clawed hands (the better to gouge them with), and a crown that hovers eternally over his head. His motto is "Half the population in jail, and the other half in exile." Surrounded by a chorus of sycophants, Liburro and his cronies batten themselves on the public treasury until overthrown by an angry public. In a musical intermezzo, Liburro finds himself pregnant; unable to deliver, he goes to the Angel of Justice, who cuts him open with her sword. This celestial caesarean yields all the properties that Liburro swallowed over his long career as public magistrate, even the indios whom the righteous Liberal sold to Cuba. Who did these things? the angel asks. The indios reply in good Maya, "Yum gobierno yetel yum kepe político Joil!" or, "The governor and jefe político of Mérida!"

Liburrada spoke prophecy, for enemies soon tried to overthrow the iron-fisted governor. The first serious attempt came under the leadership of Pantaleón Barrera, who stole back into the peninsula through remote Río Lagartos and secretly made his way southwestward to recruit followers in his home territory of the Sierra Alta. The roots of popular support for his revolt lay in the renewed Caste War. Anxious to please their superiors by filling the recruitment rosters, municipal authorities there had begun illegally drawing upon Maya laborers from the surrounding haciendas. Even Irigoyen supporters denounced the practice, but were stumped for alternatives. It was this abuse that set the stage for the Barrera uprising: a state-level caudillo leading angry hacendados and peons who shared a common interest, a struggle of the country against the town. Hence in places such as Muna, the Barrera loyalists' first act was to overthrow municipal offi-



FIGURE 4.1

Liburro the Wicked. In the mock music-hall libretto *Liburrada*, Liberal governor Liborio Irigoyen Cárdenas's enemies painted him as a monster ready to devour the public. Though anonymous, this illustration was almost certainly the work of a popular mid-nineteenth-century regional artist, José Dolores Espinosa. By permission of Michel Antochiw.

cials.¹⁸⁴ At the same time, the revolt had links to earlier political mayhem. Among those who actively promoted the revolt was Leandro Pavía, patriarch of remote Tituc and unfondly remembered as a ringleader in the assassinations during the January 1847 sacking of Valladolid (see Chapter 2); Pavía himself led a three-hour raid on Peto on April 26 in the Barrera revolt's early stages.¹⁸⁵ On April 28 a similar revolt erupted in Peto, under Lieutenant Colonel Justiniano Manrique; it failed, but its leaders escaped.¹⁸⁶ Finally, the movement drew the support of one or two of the priests more radically opposed to Irigoyen's promotion of the Reform.¹⁸⁷ Pro-Irigoyen officers took the lead and attacked the Barrera forces at Tekax on April 30, while extracting forced loans from hacendados such as Felipe Peón, men believed to be complicit. But the rebellion continued. The entire south was soon in panic, as rumor spread that Barrera was leading thousands of Mayas from the south, false reports that reflected ongoing fears regarding the true aims of the communities of former insurgents in the deep south, the so-called *pacíficos del sur*. The actual number was far smaller, and weakened by the fact that Barrera split his men into two groups: one to Hopelchén, the other remaining in the Tekax/Peto region. The turning point came in late June, when an eighty-man detachment of government loyalists from Bolonchén occupied Hopelchén, decimating that half of the Barrera insurgency.¹⁸⁸

More effective opposition emerged among the Oriente group—never a formally recognized entity, but one that stirred southeast Mexican politics for the next twenty years. They shared many goals and alliances and were often linked through family connections. The core consisted of key families from Valladolid, Tizimin, and Espita: the Acereto, Centeno, Iturralde, Navarrete, Novelo, Peniche, and Rosado groups. All lived in grand homes clustered around the town's spacious central park: large families with many sons and even more servants (always Maya, a fact that town elites viewed as the natural order of things). These families shared more than an address. All opposed Mérida ascendancy, and all produced officers who participated in, and at times led, the civil wars of the southeast. Their mentality exuded praetorianism, that sense of "right to rule" that often accompanies military power in times of state weakness.

In mid-1859 these forces coalesced around Agustín Acereto and his energetic son, Colonel Pedro Acereto. There was plenty of bad blood between Don Agustín and the governor, since the latter had presided over the former's 1851 treason trial.¹⁸⁹ Irigoyen had also sentenced Antonio Trujete, Acereto's henchman and himself an unrepentant Caste War plotter, to prison in Veracruz.¹⁹⁰ Acereto had lain low since 1851 but now found good reason to get back into politics, for the war had reduced his rural estates to a total value of one hundred pesos, so that in ten years the fam-

ily had gone from Oriente oligarchs to struggling frontiersmen whose only hope was to recoup their fortunes through revolution.¹⁹¹ Acereto’s commitment to political philosophy remains dubious; he in fact served Irigoyen in the critical position of *primer vocal*, head of a gubernatorial council of five, and waited until the national Conservatives had collapsed before moving against Irigoyen.

Pedro Acereto (1830–63) was the third oldest of their seven children and the patriarch’s closest collaborator.¹⁹² He had matured in the turbulence of the 1840s and 1850s. With Valladolid agriculture destroyed and the local polity in chaos, Pedro found his career in the army, and by 1859, with the rank of colonel, had risen to commander of the eastern línea. As such, he was in charge of virtually the entire war operation.¹⁹³ Rehabilitated by Díaz de la Vega, the Aceretos remained loyal to Irigoyen for tactical reasons, waiting until potential rivals had been crushed; in summer 1859, with the state in crisis, the family staged another uprising. Those who openly rebelled included Felipe Navarrete and Francisco Cantón, both of whom emerged four years later as military supporters of Conservatism and the empire.¹⁹⁴ Rosters from Pedro Acereto’s movement in 1862 reveal that most of the rank and file were non-Maya. Because Liberalism was a Mérida project, Acereto picked up the detritus of Imán’s and Molas’s federalism, drawing men predominantly from Tizimin and surrounding communities, men long inured to violence. Santiago Imán’s youngest son, Jesús (born 1839), even served as a lieutenant.¹⁹⁵

Oriente revolt had its wobbly start during the summer of 1859, just as the Sierra Alta movement was fizzling. On June 13 soldiers of the Cenotillo battalion proclaimed against the government and began a march to Ixamal, where they hoped to gather support. The movement included sympathizers along the línea and enjoyed the support of prominent individuals such as Caste War hero Andrés Maldonado and Andrés Cepeda Peraza, jefe político of Motul. Cenotillo rebels got as far as the hacienda Santa Rita, only to discover that irigoyenista Manuel Peón had beat them there, dampening interest in the uprising. They returned to Cenotillo amid torrential rains that incapacitated their rifles; there, government loyalists scored an easy win. But disciplining the culprits proved impossible, and the rebel threat was so great that Comandante Franciso Osorno of Espita declared an amnesty.¹⁹⁶ The Yaxcabá contingent of the revolt only faltered when cura José Dolores Cámara armed and mobilized his own peons, joining forces with the local militia holed up in the church and eventually expelling the uprising.¹⁹⁷ Under the right circumstances, elements of the clergy could and did support the embattled Liberal government. In reality, the Sierra Alta and Oriente forces operated at cross-purposes: the former

wanted protection for their estate laborers, whereas the latter demanded greater attention to the Caste War. Only their hatred for Irigoyen united them.

Agustín Acereto himself seized power three months later through a Borgia-like conspiracy. Pedro Acereto staged a revolt on August 25, one that removed Irigoyen and recalled Joaquín Castellanos. While acting as *primer vocal*, Don Agustín allowed his ally, Colonel José Concepción Vera Rivas (age thirty-five), to do most of the plotting, taking care to retreat to Sisal shortly before the disrecognition of Castellanos on October 1. Vera and key allies had the responsibility of assigning troops to specific officers and were therefore in a position to assure that pro-Acereto forces predominated. With the support of Vera and his circle, Agustín Acereto then assumed full power on October 5.¹⁹⁸

But Irigoyen was not yet finished. He and Colonel Lorenzo Vargas worked out a cunning plot to return to power. On October 16 Vargas informed Vera that Acereto (for some reason incommunicado) had been captured by rebelling irigoyenistas and prevailed upon Vera to bring Irigoyen to the Ciudadela, ostensibly to isolate him from supporters. But the real plan was to protect Irigoyen from Acereto partisans and to use the Ciudadela along with its soldiers and arsenal as the basis of a counter-revolt, one that was to hook up with supporters in Abalá, where Irigoyen held numerous haciendas. Thinking that Acereto had already fallen, Vera reluctantly went along with the scheme. Vargas opened nearby stores to troops in order to purchase their loyalty, but most soldiers took the opportunity to drink up. Alcohol dampened their revolutionary fire, and during the evening they began to go over to the enemy. By October 17 further resistance seemed futile, and Irigoyen and Vargas surrendered. Characteristically, Acereto refused to forgive Vera his moment of doubt, imprisoning his former ally and four other officers for sedition.¹⁹⁹

With the opposition silenced, Acereto now launched a series of changes. The new governor ruled even more autocratically than Liburro, and local wits satirized his megalomania with a poem in which Acereto waltzes with King Victor Emmanuel, a jab at the family's purported Italian roots.²⁰⁰ Mérida's new boss had a taste for pageantry, and he allowed friends and sycophants back home in Valladolid to organize a tumultuous welcome, complete with military parades, triumphal arches, gun-fire salutes, bells, skyrockets, and fawning speeches. "We guarantee," declaimed one orator, "that for a long time neither Valladolid nor any other city in Yucatán has enjoyed a day of so much joy!"²⁰¹ On a more practical level, the regime sacked the standing jefes and replaced them with relatives and loyal cronies: son Antonio Acereto in Izamal partido,

and in Espita, Roberto Rivas, once Acereto's enemy but now united against the Mérida Liberals.²⁰² But the principal victim of the Acereto revolt was Irigoyen himself. Confined to the Ciudadela, Mérida's fortress-barracks, he had to accept an Acereto deal brokered after tearful pleadings from the prisoner's wife: friends bailed out the deposed governor for two thousand pesos, whereupon he boarded a steamship for Veracruz, promising never again to set foot in sunny Yucatán.²⁰³ (During his absence, Maní's cura, Manuel José Ancona, managed Irigoyen's properties, evidence that friendships at times transcended ideologies.)²⁰⁴ Doubtless it was this sort of treatment that led Irigoyen to dole out similar punishments after returning to power: later accusations of Irigoyen the dictator bore some truth, but also reflected a losing faction's taste of its own medicine.

Agustín Acereto presented himself as a kinder alternative to the hardened Irigoyen, particularly in church matters. He did make certain inconsistent efforts to have jefes collect the religious contribution. The problem was that many impious jefes had it in for the padres and simply dragged their feet.²⁰⁵ Acereto also scotched his chances for clerical support through a series of forced loans to fund the National Guard, his real support base. These extortions fell upon at least fourteen priests; indignant or frightened or both, eight fled Mérida for Havana. The Caudillo of Valladolid was unaccustomed to this sort of disobedience, and he pressured Bishop Guerra to resolve the situation, offering to lift subsequent fees if the priests paid their original quota.²⁰⁶ The whole atmosphere made priests leery. Padre Santiago Pacheco, for example, was reluctant to take the affluent Motul parish in October 1859, fearing yet another revolution.²⁰⁷ In this regard, Acereto's first administration previewed the contradictory empire, which expected clerical support without ever really delivering the promised roll-back to church-state unity.

The Reform itself also continued. Acereto could not risk a direct confrontation with national power, and laws such as the civil registry and secularized marriage therefore remained in effect, reiterated to the rural parishes on August 25.²⁰⁸ The pious elements of the population were alarmed and urged priests to perform clandestine marriages.²⁰⁹ The new governor also inherited the intractable cemetery wars; wary of alienating either the ayuntamientos or the church, he did nothing whatsoever.²¹⁰ Priests were disappointed with the turn of events, even in the Aceretos' home territory of Valladolid, where their relations with clergy had previously flourished. Pedro Acereto, who operated the military arm of the regime, was even more brusque than his father. He arrested several priests, including family enemy Pedro José Alcocer, on suspicion of subversive activities (fomenting an anti-Acereto disturbance in Valladolid in February

1859—the hometown always breeds enemies).²¹¹ Some months later, Alcocer was impressed into chaplain service for Acereto's troops in their upcoming march against Chan Santa Cruz.²¹² Any way one looked at the matter, life for the rural Mexican clergy—and probably anyone else—failed to improve with the 1859 coup.

So much for man's immortal soul. Acereto's real priority was to revive the war, and for this he levied new taxes on property, commerce, and the lucrative salt pools, or *charcos*, of the coast.²¹³ Motives varied: continued slave raiding, wartime profiteering, economic revival for the Oriente, and a jihad mentality all factored into the equation. Acereto and Spaniard Miguel Pou had worked out a secret deal back in the days of Castellanos, whereby Pou and partner José de Jesús Madrazo enjoyed monopoly rights to sell slaves to Cuba, paying the governor fifteen thousand pesos in advance, with thirty-five thousand pesos more to follow in installments, a kingly sum in those days and some hint of how lucrative the trade promised to become.²¹⁴ The arrangement leaked out, and Acereto's support for Pou became a running joke in Mérida's satire sheets.²¹⁵ Oriente officers looked for slave-producing situations such as military sweeps, whereas the occupation of Chan Santa Cruz itself promised human booty by the thousands. Troop mobilizations for this project began in Mérida (not at all what the eastern officers had in mind, since it strengthened the capital's hand relative to their own). Peasants smelled trouble and stayed away from the conflict: 40 percent of the hidalgos rounded up from the pueblos fled while en route to Mérida.²¹⁶ Meanwhile, human shipments to Cuba resumed. Reports from Sisal once more reveal Mayas with "passports" to Havana, as though issued to tourists intending to stroll the Paseo del Prado.²¹⁷ Nor were Yucatecans the only ones dealing in Maya slaves. By late 1859 a gang of Spanish raiders worked the peninsula, capturing free peasants and selling them in Cuba. Little is known of their activities.²¹⁸ Unfortunately, Colonel Acereto got ahead of himself, occupying Chan Santa Cruz in January 1860 without sufficient manpower or logistical support, and suffered one of the most stinging routs that the rebels ever dealt to the Yucatecan state.

But the cause was not lost. Like the old Portuguese colonials in Brazil, Pedro Acereto hoped to use Indians to hunt Indians. One of his most important steps was a treaty with the newly settled *pacíficos* of Kantunil-kin, located to the northwest of Valladolid. In this agreement, the new community pledged to aid government troops in the ongoing war against the rebels. The Kantunil-kin group, led by former rebel José Antonio Uicab, had no intention of honoring this clause, and there is no evidence that they ever provided the requested material support. What mattered to the Kantunil-kin group were tax exemptions, the

right to retain their arms, and a homeland far from the conflicted *línea*; for Acereto, the treaty, eventually signed on March 4 in the still-standing *palacio municipal* of Calotmul, provided a publicity coup and helped guard his back during the coming political wars with Mérida-based Liberals.²¹⁹

Agustín Acereto's misrule soon provoked more rebellion. On November 15, 1860, Colonel Lorenzo Vargas returned, headed to Muna, and, with Juárez on the verge of national victory, proclaimed for the Liberal system. This officer's personality and convictions remain a mystery; the few comments that do survive come from *aceretistas*, who predictably tarred him as an adventurer. Accusations that Vargas was a front for Mérida político Anselmo Cano may have borne truth. As former secretary to Ignacio Comonfort, Cano enjoyed some claim to Liberal leadership in the southeast and wanted to displace rival Irigoyen as well as the unscrupulous Acereto. He immediately became vice-governor of the new regime.²²⁰

This new revolt counted on sympathetic soldiers. Towns such as Chocholá experienced the Vargas movement as a barracks uprising that authorities put down by driving insurrectionists into the monte.²²¹ Elsewhere Vargas supplemented his troops by drawing in hacienda workers with the promise of freedom from the National Guard quota. While this strategy shifted costs to a future administration, it succeeded in the short run.²²² Lacking cohesive support, the Acereto regime soon collapsed. The ritual of adhesions followed, as always, with towns and villages offering their testimonies of support. In some cases even the *batabs* signed on, much like the 1843 plebiscites that had reunited Yucatán with Mexico.²²³ Chance played no role: in Muna the *ayuntamiento* deliberated with a cannon trained at them, in case democracy proved hostile to the new order.²²⁴ Like their predecessors, Vargas and Cano used *jefes* to control elections, as happened in Mérida in January 1861, when the *jefe* of the city's tenth district simply withheld the voter lists until the elections had passed, hence disenfranchising large sectors. Electors like Pantaleón Barrera, rehabilitated under Acereto, could only protest.²²⁵

But the Vargas regime proceeded incompetently. Mindful of the 1860 rout in Chan Santa Cruz, Vargas sent peace feelers to Venancio Puc, assuring him that POWs would no longer be sent to Havana: such crimes, he insisted, belonged exclusively to the fallen Acereto, and to prove his point jailed Miguel Pou, the leading financier of Maya slavery. In other regards the promise rang false, since it was common knowledge that Vargas was still using presenters as forced labor in Valladolid. Puc was now in a position of strength and made no reply.²²⁶ Vargas himself could not decide whether the Liberals' main political figure, Irigoyen, should be let

out of prison or not; both men had taken part in the overthrow of Acereto, but Irigoyen and the four *políticos* imprisoned with him were also potential rivals, and needed watching.²²⁷ Vargas's uncertainty proved costly. His fall two months later (February 1861) exposed his indecision, as well as the peculiarities of the political system: the bundle of pueblo adhesions meant little when Pedro Acereto reorganized his forces and reinstated his father.

The months of February to December 1861 gave Agustín Acereto one last chance to hold things together. Once in Mérida, he liberated the rascally Pou and all others jailed on charges of slaving.²²⁸ Acereto also restored officeholders removed the previous November, hoping that grateful bureaucrats would shore up the regime.²²⁹ But public servants as well as soldiers needed their pay, and by August the state treasury was a staggering three hundred thousand pesos in arrears. At this point, the national government could neither provide help nor restrain Acereto. Facing a French invasion, Juárez merely processed correspondence regarding the Yucatecan situation. Federal authorities also ingested a steady diet of lies from pro-Acereto operatives such as Nicanor Contreras Elizalde, an ex-jefe of Tizimín and ardent supporter of the caudillo from Valladolid; to hear him tell it, the sale of Mayas simply never happened.²³⁰ Moreover, peninsular politics followed the venerable practice whereby all state-level factions, regardless of their aims and social compositions, claimed to be standard-bearers of the reigning national party, much as reactionary hacendados of the 1930s created clubs claiming to champion agrarian reform while secretly working to subvert it.²³¹ For better or worse, peninsular Liberals were on their own when dealing with the restored dictator.

Acereto's enemies first tried to unseat him through surreptitious means. They secretly approached the governor's physician, a multilingual Italian named Morandini. Arriving mysteriously at the doctor's home at 3:00 A.M., they gave him a bag of three hundred ounces of gold and a bottle of strychnine, with instructions to poison Acereto and live rich—or else. Morandini demurred and was twice the victim of unsuccessful assassination attempts, one of which sent a bullet through his coat, narrowly missing him. The doctor wisely relocated to the more casual ambience of British Honduras, where his run-in with the tropical Florentines became public knowledge.²³²

The failure of covert operations left armed rebellion as the only option. Vainly seeking assistance from the national minister of defense, Anselmo Cano wrote, "There are no words . . . to convey the state of ruin, of decadence, and of immorality to which affairs have sunk in this unfortunate land."²³³ But no help came. As an answer to political abuse, Irigoyen, in league with Pablo García and Manuel Cepeda Peraza, an-

nounced their own rebellion in April in the town of Halachó, conveniently located along the border with Campeche state. The cause enjoyed powerful allies here, chief among them a property owner named Joaquín Antonio Fernández Monfilla. This Málaga-born Spaniard had links to the Liberal party dating back to the time of Barbachano (now canonized as a martyr to Conservative intrigues); Monfilla was such a hard-core Liberal that he set off skyrockets when the town's conservative judge was forced to publish a Liberal decree.²³⁴ Irigoyen's military strength, meanwhile, lay under the command of loyal ally Colonel Francisco Remírez, who rolled eastward from Mérida with the intention of wiping out Acereto once and for all.²³⁵

Agustín Acereto's last stand was sordid business. To avert defeat he imposed an ad hoc 3 percent tax on property owners and capitalists and doubled the monthly quota on liquor levies. Acereto called it war funding, but everyone knew that he was simply propping up a discredited dictatorship.²³⁶ Ever fearful of the meridano elite, he kept his government and military command in Izamal, directing what existed of state funds to pay the eastern troops. Pedro Acereto spent October 1861 building yet another army and intimidating whoever opposed him—for example, arresting an uncooperative priest in Calotmul, releasing him only under pressure from the cura and jefe político.²³⁷ The Aceretos continued to rely on old systems of patronage and recruitment to levy Maya peasants from outlying hamlets such as Tikuch. The beleaguered dynasty's desperation gave their partisans a green light for an astonishing level of violence: in one episode, they captured irigoyenista Colonel Jorge Manrique and hacked him to ribbons with their machetes. The two sides attempted parleys, including one at the initiative of Acereto's more moderate son Antonio, but common ground proved elusive; livid over Manrique's murder, Irigoyen loyalists executed several of the emissaries. Remírez pushed forward, defeated Pedro Acereto on December 9 outside of Chichimilá, and then took Valladolid on the nineteenth; to underscore their dominance, Irigoyen and Pablo García entered the town together on the twenty-second. The next day government troops cornered the seventy-year-old Acereto in a hut in the woods; one version has him shot in the stomach, another states that he took a cold-blooded machete stab to the abdomen. Whatever the case, this relic of the Imán years soon died, and as Irigoyen put it, "The truth is that Don Agustín Acereto now belongs to history."²³⁸

Once restored to power, Liborio Irigoyen went after his enemies with a fury that made *Liburrada* appear not all that far-fetched. Prominent opponents such as Joaquín Reyes, Izamal's cabildo president, soon found themselves rotting in jail.²³⁹ Irigoyen understood the precariousness of

his position and rounded up anyone believed to be subversive. For example, in February his operatives arrested sixteen men who fit the demographic profile of *revoltosos*: mostly young men (ages eighteen to thirty-four), all laborers, believed to be part of a conspiracy to reinstate the Valladolid clique. Rumor held that Pedro Acereto was paying them as much as one hundred pesos apiece—a Croesus-like sum for blacksmiths and farmers—for their support in an upcoming pronouncement. They languished in a Valladolid prison until April.²⁴⁰ Irigoyen's reelection of September 16, 1862, doubtless engineered from above, made it certain that he intended to stay the course.²⁴¹

The struggle between Acereto and Irigoyen also bred microcosms throughout the peninsula, everyday lives that swelled and contracted with the vicissitudes of power. In January 1862 Pablo Silveira, strongman of Yaxkukul, interpreted events to mean that irigoyenista families were coming after him, as indeed they may have been. He once more raised a mob of supporters armed with swords, pistols, and shotguns, but the Baca guard unit managed to put down the uprising.²⁴² Elsewhere, few stories more faithfully reflected the times than the murder of Buenaventura Alcocer. Arrested in Pisté in early July 1861 as an anti-Acereto partisan, Alcocer was summarily executed by the *ley fuga* ("fugitive law"), some ten leagues outside of the caudillo's home base of Valladolid. This law's application, standard procedure in later years, still raised eyebrows in the early 1860s. The one unusual detail that all witnesses remembered was the Pisté magistrate shouting three times in Alcocer's ear, the lack of response being taken as proof positive of death. Acereto had quashed the investigation of this incident, since it threatened to implicate his own followers. The magistrate of Valladolid, José F. Pren, complied, but his malleability proved liability when Irigoyen returned to power in late 1861. Faced with a front-loaded investigation, Pren wisely opted for exile, not returning to Yucatán until 1864, when the empire restored him to public favor.²⁴³

Revenge came mixed with overall changes in policy and political philosophy. Under Irigoyen, the Reform resumed its course. Liberals softened the top-down administrative system by creating the position of *presidente municipal*, a figure to be elected by the citizens; to keep out Acereto partisans, military commanders were prohibited from holding said office. Property and income requirements were lifted, although literacy laws still disenfranchised the vast majority. Towns with more than sixteen citizens could form juntas; the argument was that these would prevent tyranny by the repúblicas de indígenas, a common Liberal perception of how indigenous power functioned. But all was not *municipio libre*. Irigoyen retained the *jefatura* system that allowed him to control rural affairs, while

cabeceras, or head towns, still dominated outlying pueblos through their right to elect the latter's auxiliary *alcaldes*.²⁴⁴ Irigoyen also worked land privatization issues in his favor. Each town had its Irigoyen and Acereto factions, each with its preferred surveyor upon whom it could rely to warp the property lines in its own interests. It came as no surprise that aceretistas now found themselves systematically disfavored.²⁴⁵

Cultural revolution also figured into the agenda. Opposition from the church hardened the peninsular Liberals' hearts, just as it had done to their national counterparts, and clergy who had supported Acereto regardless of his inconsistencies became fair game for persecution. Manuel Antonio Paz, padre of Dzitás, was linked to Acereto through both family and friendship and had to hide while Irigoyen's troops dominated the region; in his secret correspondence, written from the village of Tekal, he mourned the death of the patriarch and observed that the same would have happened to him, too, if he had chosen to remain in Dzitás.²⁴⁶ (Paz had reason to worry: the recently reinstalled Irigoyen took a personal interest in ferreting out enemies, taking advantage of the anarchic conditions to cast the blame on others.)²⁴⁷ Anticlerical elements also seized the initiative in Hunucmá, where they launched plans to alienate church-held urban lots.²⁴⁸ In most instances, however, the harassment and physical persecution of priests was limited, perhaps because priests themselves either fled or chose not to fight, perhaps because it was distasteful and unpopular. More consequential was the renewed ban on church taxes, processions, and other public manifestations of religious piety. In Opichén the cura agitated in vain for a procession on Corpus Christi, for, as he noted, with understatement, "the faithful of the town are in serious need of spiritual reinvigoration."²⁴⁹ Luis Francisco Ricalde de Hoctún now pined for the days when his town held Forty Hours Devotion that included an enormous procession at midday; to him and to so many other believers, it must have seemed that the great age of religious faith had passed forever.²⁵⁰ Public use of clerical garb once more became prohibited, and at the same time, jueces throughout the southeast continued to insist that cemeteries be handed over to their care, even when, as in such places as Mochochá, there *was* no cemetery outside the church atrium, which according to the Reform laws was exempted from disentanglement.²⁵¹

One of the better-documented cases of the late Irigoyen Reform period comes from Béal and, more specifically, from its difficult *sujeto*, or auxiliary community, Nunkiní. Only a short time before Irigoyen's restoration, the *nunkineños* had succeeded in driving out Hurtado's assistant priest, a certain Padre Solís Hurtado, who hotly opposed this, in no small part because at age seventy-five he did not feel inclined to train a successor. As he complained, "I am not prepared to tame half-broken horses,

as they say in the vulgar, even less if they are gamblers, inclined to drink, loaf, or take part in political affairs. And even if they are good, who would want to come to a rebellious town, and for the measly salary of ten pesos?" As so often happened, resistance to both clerical and civil authority found its most fertile ground in outlying communities, not in cabeceras. People of Nunkiní had joined together to stop any attempt at collecting church contributions. The town's coalition had a makeup that would have seemed bitterly familiar to observers of the pre-Caste War Oriente, with juez José Silverio Flores and his nephews leading the movement and mobilizing area peasants through the influence of two influential Mayas, Eusebio May and Francisco Coyí. Oddly, the owners of rural estates were current in their payments: Liberalism at times found its strongest support not from the hacendado class, but from the petty intelligentsia of the rural towns.²⁵²

The second Irigoyen governorship also staggered under a profound fiscal crisis. Even the most important of the ayuntamientos, Mérida, was foundering in red ink. So too the state: Irigoyen himself desperately needed liquidity to ward off political rivals, and in the first half of 1861 he contracted over fifteen thousand pesos in mortgages on his estates.²⁵³ He also imposed a forced loan of 1 percent on all capital and property.²⁵⁴ This latter move, coming on a long string of state extractions, cost the Liberal governor dearly in terms of support among the merchant and hacendado class. Fiscal pressures also encouraged Irigoyen's interest in foreign-driven development. At the moment of his second overthrow in 1862, Irigoyen was busily at work on a project to stimulate peninsular economic growth, but with a thoroughly pro-Mérida slant. State secretary Antonio García Rejón drew up a contract with Edwin Robinson of the United States to build the first-ever railroad from Mérida to Progreso. This contract, which was never fulfilled, resembled the private fiefdom that Minor Keith carved out in Central America. Robinson was to receive ownership of a fifty-yard strip in perpetuity; a square quarter mile of property in Mérida and twenty-five solares in Progreso for the terminal and pier; a thirty-year tax exemption; duty-free importation of construction materials; military exception for all workers; a fifteen-year monopoly; and a five-thousand-peso subvention for the first decade of service.²⁵⁵ Porfirianism before Porfirio Díaz, the Robinson contract threatened to finalize the supremacy of the Mérida commercial elites over their counterparts in the Oriente.

Irigoyen's high-handedness and hickory-stick justice provoked a backlash. The first round of revolts came in February 1862. The plan called for an uprising in Dzitás, to be led by the Vega brothers, both of them aceretista officers. They offered a combination of carrot (one hundred

pesos, informants claimed) and stick (two hundred blows to those who refused). Unenthusiastic townsfolk may have inflated the numbers, but the overall recruiting method was common enough during the civil wars. Still, news of the plans leaked, and a military detachment extinguished the flame before it could spread.²⁵⁶

A second round erupted in March under the leadership of yet another *aceretista*, brigade commander Francisco Cortés. On March 9 Cortés issued a manifesto against Irigoyen. Some of its charges were true: Irigoyen did indeed violate the rights of his enemies, search their property, impound their belongings, and was not above having them assassinated. But there was little he could do to end the Caste War, as Cortés demanded. The plan called for the governor to step down and hand over power to perennial conservative Pantaleón Barrera. Unfortunately for Cortés, there was no organization behind the revolt; pro-Acereto forces remained scattered and disoriented by Irigoyen's recent triumph and failed to rally behind this premature pronouncement. Cortés watched helplessly as key officers in Motul, including Felipe Navarrete, backed away from the project.²⁵⁷

Pedro Acereto's final rebellion came in late 1862. Dying of tuberculosis, the colonel rallied his forces, claiming that Irigoyen's attempt to disarm political enemies was playing into the hands of Chan Santa Cruz, and drawing popular support by denouncing the recent taxes. Still counting on officers such as Francisco Cantón and Jesús Imán, the rebellion's rank and file continued to use Maya conscripts. A sympathy rebellion erupted in Hopelchén under Colonel Romualdo Baqueiro Lara. Meanwhile, rumors were already surfacing that Oriente rebels were in league with the French invaders at Carmen: prophetic, since the coming empire relied heavily on Oriente support. But Liberal strongmen remained united, and Manuel Cepeda Peraza defeated Acereto on October 18–19, forcing him back to the Tunkás area, where he later died.²⁵⁸

The year 1863 opened with signs that further convulsions were imminent. Large troop detachments remained garrisoned at Izamal, the scene of recent battles, and priests hid their few remaining *imágenes* to keep them from soldiers seeking loot they could exchange for a drink.²⁵⁹ Irigoyen's soldiers also occupied both the church and convent of Temax.²⁶⁰ Farther to the east, the roads around Valladolid were congested with soldiers who had deserted from Acereto's collapsing army; people were not certain whether to fear renewed civil war or yet another raid from the *sublevados*.²⁶¹ Oriente hacendados continued to see themselves as bearing the brunt of the Caste War; they resented Mérida's insistence that they pay the contribution along with everyone else and turned to military demagogues who promised to rectify the situation.²⁶²

Finally, no one knew exactly what had become of Pedro Acereto himself. Reports variously placed him as hiding on the hacienda Chimoy, outside of Temax, or heading east, as the Aceretos were apt to do in moments of difficulty.²⁶³

Irigoyen's victory reignited the Valladolid group's hatred of Mérida paper pushers, whereas any talk of retreat from total Caste War gave rebellious military caudillos the pretext they needed. The Valladolid families also remained united by their resentments over the death of the two Aceretos. Lucía Acereto commissioned Federico Amado Cantón to recover the fifteen-hundred-peso inheritance her father Agustín had left her; Cantón also acted on behalf of Pedro Acereto's widow, Soledad Rosado.²⁶⁴ Irigoyen's situation also suffered from new national taxes imposed by his sponsor Benito Juárez. To sustain the war against the French invaders, Juárez promulgated a tax on renters. Even though the law exempted individuals who paid less than four pesos per month ("those persons of lesser means who inhabit tenements"), it nevertheless touched enough people to prove a liability for its designated enforcers, the state governors.²⁶⁵

Again, the revolt's leaders were Oriente bigmen. Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Rodríguez Solís, commander of the Izamal plaza, resented Irigoyen for not doing more to rescue Solís's wife from the clutches of Chan Santa Cruz.²⁶⁶ Felipe Navarrete, the rebellion's other commander, hailed from a large family of the Valladolid-Espita region.²⁶⁷ His family included classic good old boys who had learned to get ahead by working public office to their advantage.²⁶⁸ It was Felipe Navarrete who had suppressed the most recent Acereto uprising in early 1862,²⁶⁹ and in this byzantine political world, the figure who had put down the last revolt was always the most likely to lead the next: he better than anyone else saw that it could be done, and how, and had just eliminated potential rivals to leadership. This dynamic played out again with the peninsular revolt against the empire in 1866, and Victoriano Huerta plied the same strategy against Francisco Madero in 1913.

Who rallied behind Navarrete and later the empire? The most prominent and ultimately the most successful of the conservatives was Francisco Cantón. Son of Valladolid patriarchs Juan Cantón and Rita Rosado, Francisco was born in 1833, the youngest of three children and, like the rest of his family, the purported descendant of conquistador Alonso de Rosado. His early affluence (large house, domestic servants, plus the best education to be had in Valladolid) quickly foundered on the reefs of civil war: young Francisco lived through the sackings of 1840 and 1847, then accompanied his family on the exodus westward when the Caste War swept the city the following year. The family returned in



FIGURE 4.2

*Felipe Navarrete. His 1863 rebellion against the Liberal government of Liborio Irigoyen segued into the empire. From Eduardo Urzaiz Rodríguez, Del imperio a la revolución, 1865–1910 (1971).
By permission of José Luis Villamil Urzaiz.*

December 1848, and the underage Francisco—widely known as Pancho—tasted something of military life through the city’s guard duty. He gravitated to the increasingly politicized military, becoming a soldier in 1849; two years later, when Francisco was eighteen, Miguel Barbachano promoted him to subadjutant. Cantón repaid the favor by betraying the governor for Díaz de la Vega and stood by the Mexican general during the Molas revolt. Between 1853 and 1858 Cantón narrowly escaped death three times: first during a cholera attack, then in a duel of honor, later in a squall that nearly drowned him while canoeing to the island of Cozumel.²⁷⁰ At the time of the Navarrete revolt Cantón was thirty-three. He had experienced the civil wars firsthand and saw those wars as the result of attempts

to force social equality on two fundamentally different races, one enlightened and the other barbaric.

Navarrete also picked up support from religious quarters. The church's sagging fortunes found their symbol in the death of Bishop José María Guerra; because the public cemetery of Mérida was now under secular authorities, high-ranking clerics refused to inter him there, instead placing the body in the crypt on the Guerra family hacienda. Some Catholics hoped that the coming of Navarrete promised better things. Old Padre Hurtado of Béal firmly believed that his entire town, a haven of professed devotees of the Virgin Mary, was about to openly proclaim itself Catholic in defiance of the government, but no such declaration took place, here or anywhere else. Rather, the revolt disrupted routines of the liturgical year, as the mobilization of troops in Campeche had essentially put an end to Forty Hours' Devotion.²⁷¹ Still, when speaking to proclerical factions, Navarrete emphasized the social issues of a revolt that had more to do with private ambitions, war addiction, regional rivalries, and the quest to control patronage.

Meanwhile, a round of political resignations augured some new calamity. José María Ascencio, municipal president of Mama, suddenly found himself so weak that he could barely sign his name, a fact that, coupled with his deplorable financial state, forced him to tender his resignation.²⁷² Ascencio had reason to be concerned, for within a few weeks, Navarrete's adepts had already entered into the town of Seyé and kidnapped three local officials, ransoming them through a forced collection of five hundred pesos.²⁷³ Which presidente would be next? Maya hidalgos also tried to get away; men such as Francisco López, one of the survivors of the ill-fated Acereto expedition to Chan Santa Cruz, found his lumbago flaring up after fifteen years of hard military service and managed to obtain a military discharge to return to life on his rancho.²⁷⁴ Indeed, Mayas often seemed to have a premonition of looming power struggles, and reports complained of the near impossibility of rounding up hidalgos.²⁷⁵ As the junta municipal of Timucuy lamented, "An immense terror has seized the Indians, in spite of explaining to them, and making them understand in their own language, that the government has sufficient forces to pulverize [the revolt]." Perhaps, as the junta saw it, "their judgment, born of their rusticity, does not allow them to see reason."²⁷⁶ Or perhaps the peasants, for all their rusticity, knew something that Irigoyen and the junta did not.

Navarrete opened his revolt with a manifesto issued on March 28 in Izmamal. Devoid of popular concerns, his proclamation demanded that Irigoyen sink every available pittance into the Caste War, whereas his only plan was to replace the governor with a five-man junta that would in turn name ayuntamientos for each of the districts (with two ayuntamientos for

Mérida, an arrangement to help weaken and divide the metropolis).²⁷⁷ The rebellion's sluggish growth suggests that its leaders' vision of intensified Caste War did not resonate among the masses. The Tizimín ayuntamiento officially opposed Navarrete, but this was a pretense, for the town generally hewed to his cause.²⁷⁸ As with the state army, the Navarrete movement generated its own deserters, disenchanted men whom travelers found loitering near cenotes in the backlands.²⁷⁹ Desertion increased in proportion to the length of the struggle, and for that reason the critical factor in a successful revolt was to win rapidly, and that depended upon organization, logistics, and timing. Moreover, the distinctly subregional nature of the revolt became clear enough when Tekax, the most important city of the central south, remained loyal to Irigoyen and refused to second the rebel pronouncement.²⁸⁰ But southerners remained paralyzed by fears of Maya raiders, and for that reason offered the governor no material support. The Oriente group therefore enjoyed both the forces and the momentum. The bulk of its operations took place in the stretch between Hochtún and Valladolid. Rodríguez Solís distributed pre-signed receipts to his officers, a kind of legal fiction that allowed them to expropriate whatever they liked on the premise that the new administration would pay reparations. Hispanic officials fled, but Seyé's *república de indígenas* was not so mobile, and its members soon found themselves in the company of a single *sad juez de paz*, collecting five *cargas* of corn daily for the troops in Tixkokob. Rodríguez's followers also took the opportunity to raid horses from Canicab, the splendid hacienda once owned by the powerful Padre Raymundo Pérez.²⁸¹ Similar raids took place in Hocabá.²⁸²

Initially Irigoyen's forces managed to best the rebels. They repulsed the latter's attacks on Mérida and Tecoh, and in March Irigoyen set up his government in Izamal to better oversee the defense. But three events unexpectedly revived Navarrete's fortunes. First, Manuel Cepeda Peraza fell ill and could no longer direct operations. Second, Irigoyen lost his national patron. Following their overthrow in the Reform War, national conservatives retreated to Europe, where they persuaded Louis Napoleon of France to intervene on their behalf. French troops reached Veracruz in December 1861 and suffered a surprise defeat in Puebla on May 5 of the following year, but in June 1863 French soldiers bypassed Puebla and marched into Mexico City, sending Benito Juárez into a peripatetic, four-year guerrilla resistance. Third, Irigoyen's cash shortages now became acute; unpaid soldiers between Dzitás and Izamal lost their patriotic élan and ceased to put up a fight.²⁸³ Rather than retreating, the rebels began an active campaign of dragooning Maya peons from the estates, forcing them by the threat of blows to take up arms. By July the Navarrete movement had managed to occupy Espita, Tizimín, and Cacalchén. Valladolid

itself fell on July 4, and ten days later Irigoyen fled to Campeche, relinquishing the capital to Navarrete's army.²⁸⁴ Navarrete's first act in power was to confiscate all of Irigoyen's family property. Leading Liberals went into exile in Havana; an undetermined number perished en route when their steamship caught fire, and all hands went down with the ship.²⁸⁵ Irigoyen himself survived the passage but ended up like poor Liburro, a banished potentate.

But a larger force soon displaced Navarrete. A French warship occupied Carmen in June 1862; the invaders hastily conscripted the island's laborers into a militia whose main purpose was to keep others from escaping.²⁸⁶ From there the occupation quickly extended to Campeche, then Sisal.²⁸⁷ Still, Yucatecans remained uncertain. The French may have come under Conservative urging, but not *peninsular* Conservatives. No other cities or parties seconded the pronouncements of the ship's commanding officer Harquart. Elites in the two major cities protested but did little, while in Valladolid and Izamal, Pedro Acereto tried to exploit the situation by organizing patriotic militias, thus rehabilitating his political career, but died before the plan could work.²⁸⁸ The fall of Campeche under the combined pressures of a French gunboat and Navarrete's army brought cheers from Conservative quarters in Yucatán. In Valladolid, the *comandante militar*, José Cantón, rejoiced that the long civil wars were over, an assumption more mistaken than he could have possibly imagined.²⁸⁹

Well into the twenty-first century, a kaleidoscope of views continues to revolve around the Mexican Reform: national birth, bourgeois betrayal of community, sin against a people's spiritual past, unfinished Bourbon remodeling, ineffectual fiddling with entrenched folkways, hydra-headed movement with appeal for peasants and statesmen alike. What the southeastern story illustrates is how violence and the Reform walked hand in hand. Much of Liberalism came early here, partly as a conscious project, but more through inadvertencies spawned by the federalist wars. With the Franciscans secularized (1821) and the staggered destruction of church resources from 1812 onward, the *peninsular* Catholic bulwark had already lost power and wealth by the time Benito Juárez entered the Palacio Nacional. Church lands were few; rather, individual priests held private property. The single greatest change was the end of the church mortgage system, and thirty years passed before secular financing networks took its place. Without a substantial return on Reform policies, the next best enterprise became the sale of Maya POWs, an enterprise whose revenues were more projected than real, but one that could only have existed during a time of prolonged civil war.

For the peasantry, wartime pressures outweighed matters of ideology or

regional autonomy. The Reform itself drew scant attention. Indeed, Maya peasants were reopening the doors of village government at the very moment that practice came under attack elsewhere. Studies of the Puebla *sierra* argue that the Reform appealed to landless peasants over stalwart community elders, giving them the opportunity to become small-property owners and backbones of the coming porfirian order.²⁹⁰ Yet this seems inapplicable to the Yucatecan case. The great alienation of baldío lands had already transpired, and huge areas were lost to rebels or remained at high risk of attack, while Yucatecan Liberals had privatized not one inch of village ejido lands by the time the empire arrived, largely for fear of reigniting the Caste War. Missing too is the elite-peasant alliance described in other explorations of the early national period. In this telling, regional caudillos moved into the national political fray to defend the interests of their peasant clients. Little evidence exists here for grassroots consultation. The one great instance of such an alliance—the Imán rebellion—ended in mutual bitterness. Violence may have spawned reform, but it also applied brakes to the process, diluting the great policy initiatives of the 1850s. By a curious twist of events, then, the 1850s brought renewed stability for the Maya peasantry, not some crisis that drove them into alliances with regional caudillos.

But at the same time, the Yucatecan Reform did lay the groundwork for later Maya immiseration. Alienation of church mortgages favored the secular Hispanic proprietors and entrepreneurs who owed these mortgages and helped give them an edge in the four decades prior to the Mexican Revolution. The changes disrupted an earlier balance between rival Hispanic forces—the church now being eliminated as an economic power—and widened the advantage secular Hispanic hacendados already held over Mayan small freeholders or tillers of communal land. The consequences of this change remained unfelt and unsuspected, but an important brick in the coming Porfiriato had thus fallen into place, and back when the name “Díaz” meant Rómulo, not Porfirio.

Finally, visions for the reformed Mexico also had to pass through the smoky filter of camarilla politics. As with village elections of the 1820s, the stunted private sector made political domination paramount and tempted in-groups to ensconce themselves to the exclusion of all others. Regional camarilla ties to national leaders also meant that capital city upheavals such as the Reform War were telegraphed instantly to the provinces. Irigoyen’s group, itself a child of the Barbachano clique, eventually triumphed over rivals to Liberal ascendancy, but had to contend with two separate Conservative factions: an ideological group with strong Catholic underpinnings, centered in Mérida but with diverse nuclei based around village curas, and an eastern-based militarist faction that demanded continued Caste War for reasons of profit, racial outrage, and resentment over Mérida ascendancy.

Complicating the effectiveness of any ruling party was the inertia of rural town life, the limited set of potential allies, and community elites' heavy investment in a status quo. In all these ways the violencia both fed and frustrated the Reform impulse. Astute Liberals doubtless perceived the problem by the time Irigoyen fell for the second time; but in 1864 it was the Conservatives' turn to grapple with the dilemma of how to bring about good government in a world now addicted to war.

The Empire Comes to Mayab



The year 1865 witnessed a startling event when the Empress Carlota, daughter to the king of Belgium and wife to Mexico's recently installed Emperor Maximilian, house of Hapsburg, came to call. Her visit dazzled the meridianos and passed forever into the folklore of southeast Mexico. The empress arrived in the city on November 23 amid the ringing of bells, the vivas, and the explosion of fireworks high overhead. A multitude of authorities and common folk paraded through the streets, accompanied by the brassy quarter notes of a military band. That evening a serenade filled the air, "and all the city was completely overjoyed." The following morning witnessed the obligatory *Te Deum* in the cathedral, a preface to Carlota's real business of shoring up the empire by buying off provincials. She sent forty pesos to various towns to be dispersed among the poor; bureaucrats who attended her recorded her largesse, right down to the four reales given to José Arcadio Balam, pauper of Tunkás.¹ With Mérida lit up like a great candle all three nights of her visit, the evenings became scenes of lavish balls feting the army and civil servants, twin pillars of the regime.² Teenagers who attended to Carlota were granted the title of "Imperial Honor Guards."³

But the most remarkable moment of the tour happened in a remote town named Bécál, and it was an event without precedent in Mexican history: the town's *batab* met the Empress, the only known occasion in which a Maya of that ancient title stood before the Mexican head of state. Wealthy Yucatecans and a military guard escorted Carlota. Padre Pedro José Hurtado, a geriatric Spanish leftover who had once led a campaign to keep condoms out of Yucatán, looked on with approval, his dream of royalty restored suddenly made reality. The *batabs* pledged their loyalty to Carlota and in return received her blessing.⁴ This convergence of authorities—regal, oligarchic, military, religious, and indigenous—symbolized a flickering moment when all seemed possible, all people (except Republicans) gathered

together harmoniously in one vast chain of political authority: peace now and, with luck, forever.

The period of July 1863 through June 1867 constitutes a strange interlude in southeast Mexico. Everyone knows that the Emperor Maximilian carried on with the chambermaids and strolled the avenues dressed as one of those singing cowboys known as *charros*—but what was the empire at the provincial and town level, where most Mexicans lived? Was it a set of foreign values and directives imposed over a recalcitrant people, or was it fundamentally a Mexican machine, crafted and operated by the Mexicans themselves? Did its ersatz regalism offer a respite from the southeast's violence, or was it simply violence continued under different terms? Did it leave any lasting change upon either the rural or urban worlds? Finally, how did it all come crashing down? While few studies explore the empire at the state and municipal levels, the Yucatecan evidence points toward an empire by and for locals, one that maintained earlier lines of political authority while attempting a few genuine innovations in management.

THE SCEPTERS OF EMPIRE: ROYAL DESIGNS MEET PUEBLO POLITICS

First came the political makeover, and because the empire unfolded seamlessly from Felipe Navarrete's rule, the two must be taken as one. Navarrete was mostly interested in fighting the Caste War and favored eastern interests during his brief rule. He acted generously when Chemax and other communities demanded increased peasant fagina labor (but doled out the same favor for a property owner in Halachó eager to open roads to his new steam-driven henequen rasper).⁵ Navarrete also backed up eastern hacendados in their efforts to keep hunters and farmers off their estates as part of land conflicts that had persisted since the 1840s.⁶ The church too thought its stock might rise with Navarrete, and municipalities such as Calotmul managed to procure the right to six additional rounds of fagina service to rebuild their church and thereby preserve "the venerable religious traditions."⁷ Even batabs worked the governor's swelling ego, flattering him on his recent victory while asking time out from fagina so that villagers could do their planting.⁸ The strongman suffered from the inability to say no, a syndrome common to those anxious to consolidate their new power by granting favors (recall the ill-fated Barbachano).

To carry out his designs, Navarrete swept out the *jefes* and imposed handpicked Conservatives, men such as Francisco Cantón in Valladolid

and Felipe Rosado Lavalle in Espita. Under the empire their titles changed to “political prefect,” but a comparison of names for early 1864 (when Navarrete still governed) and 1865 (when the first imperial commissar had already arrived) reveals continuity of personnel. Pantaleón Barrera, the journalist-turned-military-leader who briefly fought his way to the top of peninsular power, became subprefect of Ticul partido.⁹ Doubtless, all this was a concession to reality: appointments had to be made rapidly, and the strata of qualified supporters was tortilla thin. But the decision meant that imperialism kept faith with the earlier Conservative governments. The chain of command ran from imperial commissar to political prefects who covered macrodistricts, to subprefects stationed in smaller subdistricts, to *alcaldes* of the various municipalities. *Alcaldes* were mere functionaries assigned to transmit information and orders.¹⁰

A second critical level of authority lay in the *ayuntamientos* and *juntas municipales*. These bodies were more inclusive and presumably represented greater participation than did the centrally appointed system of *jefes* and subprefects, but it was this latter system that ruled. *Ayuntamientos* reacted to events in a manner that strikes later observers as spineless. The Ticul *cabildo*, for example, lauded the Campeche governor for standing up to French imperialism, but with the collapse of the Mexican government in the port city, toasted the French triumph; peace and civilization, they noted, prospered more reliably under a monarchy.¹¹ Similarly, their Espita counterparts sent an unctuous letter welcoming Maximilian to Mexico and swearing loyalty to both his person and his politics.¹² Who can now fathom their true opinions? When it came to voicing loyalties in the *pueblos*, circumstance bred circumspection. Lacking arms and resources, incapable of coordinated action among towns, and fearful that unrest could lead to further *violencia*, most chose to bend to the prevailing winds. To complicate matters, some *vecinos* saw the national change as a mere annoyance to which they had to adjust in order for local power and sinecures to go on as always. The situation forced prefects, like the *jefes* before them, to function as spies and fixers for the regime.¹³ It was assumed that *ayuntamientos* would never tell the truth to political higher-ups and for that reason required surveillance.

Still, Navarrete understood that these bodies mattered if his tenuous rule were to survive. He therefore imposed direct control over the *ayuntamientos* of Izamal, Valladolid, and Tekax, then empowered them to reappoint corresponding bodies in outlying *pueblos*. Details of the Tekax case are particularly clear. The presidency went to the *alcalde*, who in turn named six municipal commissars—police, accounts, city water wells, schools, jail, and secretary—together with a treasurer and an acting agent known as a *síndico*.¹⁴ Imperial-era *ayuntamientos* also had figures known

as *consejales*; the exact nature and responsibilities of this office are not clear: it may simply have been an alternate term for an ayuntamiento seat or else may have served as some kind of legal adviser.

Even these changes were superficial. Outside of Mérida, the two best-documented ayuntamiento transitions are Espita and Ticul, and their composition reveals continuity, not change. In Espita, where Navarrete had ready-made support, the Peniche family's control of town was a rock over which the shifting political winds blew idly. Only the cabildo president changed: Dioncicio Peniche gave way to Gumercindo Méndez Rivas, later replaced by Francisco Osorio. The Rivas family had been Conservative centralists since the 1830s, and Don Gumercindo was no exception.¹⁵ The instability of this uppermost slot reflected the fact that no one wanted to be responsible for local politics in a time of such extraordinary flux. Once French power established itself, Osorio too stepped down to make way for Pedro Rosado Lavalle.¹⁶ At the same time, José María Iturralde of Valladolid briefly served as Espita's jefe político, only to be replaced by Rosado Lavalle himself.¹⁷ Meanwhile, supporters of the new system, townsmen such as Manuel Sierra Arce, wasted no time in claiming (and receiving) their due in the form of valid titles to land they had been working illegally prior to the revolt.¹⁸ Ticul presents a similar case. Its presidency changed with Navarrete, but four of the original ten members remained, and in fact constituted a majority on the new council, since its size shrank from eleven to seven.¹⁹

What made these ayuntamientos important? Part of the ayuntamiento's importance at this juncture had to do with control of local property. Irigoyen had tried to win them over through a directive of April 21, 1862, letting them distribute vacant houses and property as they saw fit. Hence, Bernabé Baeza was able to pick up a terreno once belonging to Merquiades Medina y Criollo, "carried away, unfortunately, to the chief headquarters of the barbarians, Chan Santa Cruz."²⁰ No one expected such people to return, but the deeds mandated that the new owner would provide minor compensation (in this case, \$20) to old owners who happened to appear. A similar situation prevailed in Ticul, where the abandoned solares occupied official energies in the years 1860–63.²¹ Baffled by the surfeit of property belonging to vanished Mayas, Ticul's cabildo leased out some of it on a yearly basis.²² The Espita cabildo also prohibited running livestock through town and operated its own lottery: the council members had to verify, or at least assert, that it was aboveboard.²³ In Peto, the ayuntamiento's annual budget amounted to \$1,847, no mean sum; of that, \$720, or 39 percent, went to education, with the remainder dedicated to sundry operations.²⁴ These sorts of management issues formed the core of cabildo activity.

In issues concerning the peasantry, cabildos still relied on the república to carry out the actual administration. The rents that milperos paid on municipal land rents remained an important source of revenue, even if under-represented in surviving documentation. The ayuntamiento also laid claim (often more pretension than reality) to control of wood and guano in the outlying monte and to deposits of the lime-filled clay known as *sajkab*, which townsfolk and peasants alike used in construction.²⁵ The ruling juntas determined which surveyor mapped out village ejido lands and thus guaranteed favorable rulings: the surveyor's gun may have been an impartial guide, but the surveyor himself was not, and Navarrete allowed pro-Acereto groups eclipsed under Irigoyen to resume control of this critical issue.²⁶ Finally, cabildos enjoyed legal power of community labor drafts, even if they had to negotiate that labor through the *batab* and república.²⁷ Power relationships between Hispanic and Maya bodies still involved some degree of give-and-take—whatever else may have changed in Mexico with the coming of the French army, *caciques* still *caciqued*.

Ayuntamientos and juntas remained weak and undermanned even into the 1860s and continued to farm out much work to private individuals. Espita sold rights to arbitrio collection, settling on \$300 as the state cut; the winner, one Bernabé Patrón, agreed to pay this in monthly installments of \$25, with whatever surplus he collected accruing to his own pocket.²⁸ More than anything, ayuntamientos of this period tended to matters of local education, in that regard a clear continuity with both earlier and later versions of the same institution. Valladolid spent half of its monthly 250 pesos on local schools, the remainder divided up to cover a variety of salaries and repairs.²⁹ (Valladolid was somewhat unusual in its ability to operate on a financial balance: Mérida's ayuntamiento ran three-figure deficits, while Ticul was not far behind.)³⁰ Cabildos also performed intelligence services, defense committees for whatever regime happened to be in power. This was above all true during the Caste War, when any stranger who wandered into town was potentially a spy sent by the *sublevados*. For that reason, when Casiano Berzuna of Calkiní noticed an unknown Maya in the village, his first impulse was to go straight to the ayuntamiento, which proceeded to launch "a detailed, prudent, and discrete investigation." Although rumors circulated to the effect that this wandering stranger was part of a sweeping indio conspiracy that linked the *batab* of Calkiní with Chan Santa Cruz, the stranger turned out to be a certain Juan Moo, and the only authority he sought to overthrow was that of his wife, back home in Chocholá.³¹ Still, it fell to the ayuntamiento to investigate such rumors in the interests of upholding local peace and authority.

The few popular thoughts and attitudes regarding ayuntamientos that made their way into the historical record clash with the official vision of

harmony. Sent to take part in a commission investigating the cura of Uayma, Padre Juan Iturralde took the chance to present his own vision of how politics *really* worked in the important ayuntamiento of Valladolid. The city was in fact controlled by prefect Federico Cantón and his uncle, escribano José Eligio Rosado. These two families managed the city according to their own whims and provided virtually all cabildo members. Iturralde's view of the Valladolid ayuntamiento as "a band of rogues" rings true, in part because the padre had many years' experience in Valladolid and in part because he himself came from a prominent family who contributed governors, congressmen, and later revolutionaries, and who knew the inside dirt. In all probability he described a situation prevalent throughout the southeast: small controlling cliques linked by family structure doing little more than going through the outward motions of democratic process.³²

The man whom Maximilian tapped to govern this hive of intrigue was José Salazar Ilarregui (1823–92). An engineer who had studied at Mexico City's Colegio de Minería, Salazar headed the Mexican half of the commission that heroically mapped out the postwar boundary with the United States after 1848. He somehow offended President Santa Anna and was dismissed from his job in March 1855, a few months before the Liberals seized national power. As it happened, Salazar had been a Liberal until marriage drew him into Conservative circles. In 1863 he represented Chihuahua in the *junta de notables*, a group of prominent citizens whom French general Elie-Frédéric Forey assembled to aid in governing the empire. Salazar then rose to subsecretary of development under Maximilian. The former's selection rested on his political sympathies and the fact that he was one of Mexico's few trained professionals. He threw himself into the role as if it would last forever, purchasing three solares a block west of Santiago plaza for a palatial home. Despite lack of experience, he did as well as possible in coaxing along the refractory Yucatecans, taking up a seventeen-year-old war against ethnic separatists, and furthering the interests of an empire of dubious legitimacy.³³

Legend portrays Salazar as honest and conscientious, and this may well have been true; he appears to have lived up to the ideal of the colonial appointee by avoiding economic speculation in the peninsula. In contrast to Yucatán's propertied classes, the imperial commissar is virtually absent from the notarial archives, reliable indices of economic activity. His wife, Julia Capillo, struck the correct imperial tone by founding a school for orphan girls in Mérida.³⁴ But Salazar's low economic profile may also reflect the brevity of his tenure. He did not arrive until September 1864, was recalled in March 1866, and was restored to the position in October of that same year, by which time conditions had become unmanageable.

When gazing beyond the palace window, Salazar fretted over secret pro-Juárez cells, but he worried in vain. The empire found its staunchest support where need for dominant social institutions was strongest. Hence, the Yucatecan elite proved most willing to give the new system a chance, since their control of hacienda life and its export revenues depended on a unified authority. Colonel Cirilio Baqueiro, whose son Serapio later wrote the standard nineteenth-century account of the Caste War, saw the imperial commissar in the same way that many Parisians saw Napoleon III: a Bonaparte who would “lay to rest the spirit of partisanship and political boundaries that hold the country in the most lamentable state imaginable, and which make palpable the ruination and poverty and the danger that the villages of the interior will fall into the hands of our barbaric common enemy, unless wise and prudent measures are taken to save them.”³⁵ But support was less reliable farther west. Around Palizada in western Campeche, the loose, disjointed, and peaceable social fabric resisted imperial intrusion. Imperialists never conquered Tabasco, which remained a center of resistance, with Republican militias organized from the start in Palizada and Jonuta.³⁶ These areas had scarcely tasted the Caste War, and the case for foreign dictatorship in the interest of peace carried less water.³⁷ This also applied to Campeche, where Pablo García, the schoolteacher-turned-statesman who had led the movement for statehood, attempted an unsuccessful rebellion against Navarrete.

As with Barbachano, followers penned unctuous poems in Salazar’s honor: “When you were born / the celestial spirits gave your house the happiness of Heaven.”³⁸ But on an earthly level, Salazar found the Yucatecans petty and difficult. The ayuntamiento resented this outsider’s power; to remind the newcomer of its own importance, the cabildo imposed minor taxes on him, and its police stopped Salazar’s carriage from time to time to prevent it from entering “restricted streets,” forcing him and his wife to walk home. Salazar endured these harassments, even though, as he mused, he could go anywhere he wanted in the peninsula with an escort of soldiers. It was simply the price of doing business in the peninsula.³⁹ Not surprisingly, then, the imperialists chose to leave well enough alone in many issues. Among the more untouchable of cultural events for meridianos were the annual cockfighting seasons, whose matches took place from January to June, closed for sixty days owing to rains, then resumed for the months of September through December. From time beyond memory, the state had indirectly taxed cockfighting by farming off the right to license the matches (more government-by-auction). Salazar quarreled with the licenser, but retained what was a lucrative business and a useful distraction for the common people.⁴⁰

The linchpin of the new system, and what distinguished it from the *municipio libre* dreams of yore, was an imperial appointee known as the superior political prefect of the department, or in simpler terms, the prefect. This figure was a throwback to the days of the corregidor and repartimiento. Yucatán's old system of labor drafting had leaned on a patchwork of curas, batabs, and local officials, decentralizing political control and making it more responsive to the needs of local cultivators. The prefect tied power more closely to the imperial bureaucracy. Those seeking laborers had to apply directly and in writing, explaining exactly how many workers they needed, where and for what purpose, and providing the precise length of time they would be employed. The system had the potential for a new paternalism and rural peace, but it meant red tape and inefficiency. It also provided unlimited opportunity for corruption, since impatient hacendados would pay extralegal fees to get what they wanted on a bureaucratic black market.⁴¹

Political culture transcends differences of party and ideology, and indeed, the imperialists often shared the Liberals' mentality. Their dream of uplifting a wayward citizenry perhaps deserves admiration, but this was never an easy project. Situations that the imperialists attributed to immorality usually had a basis in practical considerations. A textbook illustration of this emerges in the problem of what are now referred to as *expedios*, but were then simply known as *tiendas*, stores that sold a wide variety of goods but specialized in liquor. By late 1864 the prefects went on a crusade to close these at 9:00 P.M., for as they saw it, men who should have known better idled away the wee hours outside tienda doors while strumming guitars, flirting with the ladies, and drinking away family savings. Locals resented such restrictions: most of the peasants in a town like Conkal worked until 9:00 P.M. and could only buy what they needed thereafter. What one side read as decadence, the other interpreted as necessity.⁴²

In terms of ability and approach, imperial officials differed little from their Republican counterparts. There were capable men like José Demetrio Molina, but also individuals like Calisto Contreras, employed as city attorney of Izamal although he was virtually blind, merely because his relative Juan Contreras was Izamal's subprefect.⁴³ Elsewhere, municipal commissars committed manifold abuses. To take only one case, Aurelio Castillo of Kinchil represented the more conflictive side of comisaría. He freely expropriated stones and other natural construction material from the terreno of vecino Agustín Solís; when the latter complained, the thin-skinned Castillo had him thrown in jail for thirty days.⁴⁴ Castillo freely jailed and fined individuals who failed to comply with draft duty.⁴⁵ His high-handedness was normal for rural authorities; it had both a long history and abundant sequels in southeast Mexico and was thus nothing unique to the empire itself.

Upper-class elitism (plus economic necessity) helped many prominent Liberals swallow their pride and make peace with the empire. Chief among them was Liborio Irigoyen. After his overthrow, the deposed governor went to live in Chocholá to tend his haciendas Yunkú and Chankín. But the life of the physiocrat proved brief. When Pablo García's revolt reached those parts, the jefe político assumed Irigoyen was involved and forced him to flee to Havana and embargoed the haciendas, placing them under the supervision of political ally Carlos Barrero without so much as a bonding. But Irigoyen's wife, María Clotilde Lara, remained and persuaded Navarrete himself, who maintained some sense of proportion and justice, to return the estates to her control.⁴⁶ When Salazar extended an amnesty in 1864, Irigoyen returned from Cuba to once more take up his residence in Mérida, and by June 1866 was carrying out land surveys of Manuel José Peón's hacienda Macuyché.⁴⁷ This sort of revolving door of collaboration and exile was hardly unique, for Republican Eligio Ancona kept working as lawyer before assuming the governor's office in 1873. He once received a two-hundred-peso fine for failing to show the imperial commissar proper respect, but his resistance did not surface until mid-1866, by which time the empire looked doomed.⁴⁸ Even Pablo García returned from sunny Havana, although García had too much the reputation of troublemaker to assume public office and instead dedicated himself to routine legal work.⁴⁹ These individuals probably saw their alliances as tactical arrangements to be used to their advantage and betrayed when opportune.

THE WEALTH OF EMPIRE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1860S

Is imperialism really the highest form of capitalism? Somewhere, perhaps, but the Mexican intervention proved a liability. Its open-ended costs—soldiers' pay, salaries for civil servants, money for corrupt politicians—eventually helped force a French withdrawal. Yet the 1860s did witness certain economic changes, some beneficial, which affected Yucatán and its civil wars.

To begin with, urban business prospered. The partnerships that blossomed during the early Reform years continued; among the more active were Vicente Escalante Sánchez of Peto and Pedro Escalante of Acanceh, who opened such joint businesses as a distillery and a pen-and-paper store, all the while retailing women's intimate apparel in Mérida. As in earlier partnerships, each had his assigned role, with Vicente as capitalist

and Pedro as manager, while above their enterprises flew a single banner: no credit, ever, under any circumstances.⁵⁰

Still, the southeast remained an agricultural society, a place where life was the soil, and where control of land underpinned almost all future development. The regime's larger strategy involved the normalization of titles and usage rights, both of which had become dreadfully tangled in the preceding half century. But how to proceed? In order to untie the knot, all peninsular departments were to carry out comprehensive surveys; owners were to present titles; older titles were to be checked against the new imperial maps; *mojoneros*, or stone markers, were to go up along all property lines; and finally, all lands not declared by the first day of 1866 were to become national property, subject to privatization.⁵¹

These words put milk of magnesia in administrative stomachs, but resistance to the policy surfaced even as the ink was drying. Most citizens simply responded with inertia. No one knew how long the regime would last, and few liked the idea of handing over land titles to be copied: once in the hands of predatory officials, would these papers ever be seen again? In Campeche, for example, few villages complied with the law of title review and desamortization; "I must point out here," said the district prefect, "the reflection that many of them derive their land titles from some royal grant made by the Spanish government on behalf of individuals of the Indian race." But in fact little paperwork existed. Time had all too often destroyed the documents, if not necessarily their memory. In other cases, villages were too poor to afford formal surveys, and without maps, markers, or titles, effective privatization was impossible. To complicate matters, each village had developed its own system of allocating land. The more fortunate communities allowed free access to all. Less commonly, the ayuntamientos rented out village lands to the first applicant. In such places there was no limit to rentable lands except the renter's ability to pay. Renters were also free to stay as long as they chose, but usually had to relocate after a few years: rent prices, along with soil productivity, declined after the first year. In amply endowed Champotón and Bolonchén, rents ran at two pesos per mecate of cleared land, or *milpa rosa*, twelve reales for uncleared, or *milpa caña*, twenty reales for sugarcane; in Seibaplaya, land was hardscrabble and cost only half as much. In areas where haciendas had already absorbed ejido properties, ayuntamientos now rented out their lands at higher prices to local peasants. This sort of anarchy naturally resisted legal uniformity.⁵²

Beyond titles lay the issue of remaining terrenos baldíos. The imperialists originally took a hard line with alienation of public lands (baldío lay outside the municipal limits and thus differed from ejido). Indeed, the new regime supposedly stood above the fray of private interests and

would defend customary practices of the little people, including access to communal lands or untitled monte. But it cautiously gave out selected lands, both large and small. The pittance that Yucatecan entrepreneurs paid for these tidbits—four pesos, nine pesos, or in the case of truly large title, a mere one hundred pesos—suggest that political support outweighed state revenues. The 1866 denuncia grants thus were minor favors, not an imperial fleecing.⁵³

For a serious tax soaking, Maximilian's circle had something very different in mind. A national decree of November 8, 1865, voided all baldío grants based on either the 1824 or 1857 constitutions. But the imperialists had no intention of stripping private owners of their land. Reaching back into peninsular history, the November decree demanded that recipients of earlier giveaways pay the land's "legal value"—whatever that might be and whoever might determine it—in order to revalidate their titles. Those who failed to do so within three months of the decree risked forfeiture of title, at which point commissars would be free to resell the property, even to foreigners if necessary.⁵⁴ This proclamation, a shabby trick worthy of Hapsburg Spain, victimized innocent citizens, since most of the properties in question had been awarded more than twenty years earlier, mostly between 1841 and 1846, and no longer lay in the hands of the original recipients. It jeopardized hundreds of proprietors, and their sluggish response suggests that most chose to wait out the regime rather than pay up.⁵⁵ Baldío policies only softened in the empire's final days. Besieged in Mérida by January 1867, Salazar offered a quarter league of land for anyone who would aid the regime.⁵⁶ By this time Yucatecans saw that Maximilian was doomed and that cooperation with the sinking empire might bring reprisals at the hands of its successor. Few responded.

At the beginning, though, the coming disaster was not so apparent, and those who could afford to acquire land through private purchase continued to do so. There was much prosperity here, the most established area of Yucatán being Mérida eastward to the emerging henequen zone. Those who could afford to do so now began to acquire steam engines to propel their rasping machines.⁵⁷ Military empresario Pablo Antonio González expanded his holdings south of Mérida and in 1864 bought up the hacienda San Antonio Tah, just outside of Tekit.⁵⁸ The old Campeche-Mérida highway known as the Camino Real also flourished. While multiple haciendas had developed here, many of them property of the wealthy Peón family, the stretch from Mérida to Maxcanú still remained the home of small-scale Maya rancheros such as Marcelino Chim, who farmed some six hundred mecates. Imperial law protected them to some degree: when Chim fell into a dispute with rancher Enrique Pacheco over the paraje Chunabal, the courts split the decision between the two of them.⁵⁹

Logging of precious woods remained an option in the peripheral riverine areas. Salazar negotiated for a time with a certain Nemegy and Company regarding logging concessions on the east coast. But nothing came of the talks, presumably because of political instability in Mérida and Mexico, together with the hegemony of Chan Santa Cruz in the east.⁶⁰ Similarly, tobacco remained a valuable crop, even if its actual volume was limited. It was the main product of Panabá and provided the basis of local arbitrios, although selected estates fell under a state tax and received corresponding exemptions from municipal duties.⁶¹ Mayas in both Chan Santa Cruz and the pacífico territory grew it as well, and sold to the Belizeans whatever they did not consume themselves. On the whole, though, southeast Mexico did not become a supplier to the more critical world tobacco markets.

The most important economic event of the empire was the short-lived cotton boom. Cultivation of this commodity extended back to pre-Columbian times, for the postclassic Maya exported cotton textiles to Honduras and Mexico, and remnants of their finely woven clothing feature among the objects retrieved from the cenote of sacrifice at Chichén Itzá. They called the plant and its fiber *taman*, a word still used today. After the conquest, cotton blankets known as *mantas* became a regular tribute item, so much so that the word itself passed into local vernacular to mean *eight people*.⁶² Toward the end of the eighteenth century, cattle, corn, sugar, and henequen far outstripped Yucatecan cotton, which was unable to compete with Egypt, India, and the U.S. antebellum South. Still, the industry never entirely disappeared. The peninsula's northeast maintained active production, so much so that Pedro Baranda was able to set up his Aurora Yucateca mill in Valladolid in the 1840s. Baranda's death in 1845, together with smuggling, the wars, and the ensuing henequen boom, kept the Yucatecan industrial revolution at bay.⁶³

Cotton blossomed again with the dawn of the U.S. Civil War, when Union and British textile mills grew desperate for suppliers who could take the place of the embargoed Confederacy. In fact, one of Irigoyen's last acts in office was to order a tabulation of the crop's acreage.⁶⁴ The wave continued under Navarrete. William Binney, of Ireland, a resident of British Honduras and an associate of the firm William Guild & Co., saw so many possibilities that he requested a license to set up a cotton mill, hoping to pick up where the Aurora left off in supplying the domestic market; his manager was to be none other than hacendado and slavery investor Manuel Medina, now back from exile. Binney and Medina got what they wanted, and with all taxes waived, but no record survives of their manufacturing activities.⁶⁵ By 1861 a popular technical manual circulated, and two years later José Tiburcio Cervera published his *Manual for the Culti-*

*vation of Cotton, Expressly Written for Yucatán.*⁶⁶ Somebody boned up on these how-tos, because Yucatecan cotton increased substantially during the years of the empire, an increase facilitated almost entirely by the U.S. Civil War. In 1862 the peninsula exported only slightly more cotton than it imported. Within two years imports fell by 75 percent, while exports increased more than sevenfold. Boats had once come from such points as Galveston, Sabine, Mobile, and Indianola, but this trade had ended by December 1863 as the Union blockade began to take effect, and the destinations for Yucatecan cotton shifted to New York, Liverpool, Belize City, and Havana.⁶⁷

Nearby British Honduras also tried to benefit. Its land was underutilized, and purchasers such as the New York Cotton and Fiber Company made plans to lease some ten thousand acres of Belizean crown lands at Punto Ycacos, in the Toledo District. The deal was to include full mineral rights, coastal acreage for a harbor, and the right to revert to an annual lease at a year's notice. But the deal never came through, despite Governor Seymour's approval.⁶⁸ Development of the southern districts had to wait until the coming of former Confederate planters after 1865.

To the victor, the spoils. Cotton planters in the Tizimín area, including in-laws of liberator Santiago Imán, developed some real political clout, and by 1864 had squelched talk of a cotton arbitrio.⁶⁹ Among those to try their hand at the cotton trade was Felipe Navarrete himself, recently widowed.⁷⁰ In a partnership with José María Gómez he set up a ranch named San Gregorio Tejas, somewhere in the vicinity of the abandoned Haitian refugee community of San Fernando Aké; capitalized at three thousand pesos (split equally), the estate produced cotton, but with side endeavors of logwood cutting, sugarcane, corn, and tobacco. Still the titular leader of a victorious revolution, Navarrete had no intention of abandoning city luxury and left Gómez as manager.⁷¹ Even the church profited from cotton. Ildefonso Gómez, a Mérida entrepreneur, contracted with Bishop Gala to rent the convent of Tizimín to set up a mechanized cotton gin. In exchange for three years' usage, he agreed to restore the building, destroyed by nearly two decades of civil war.⁷² Suddenly everyone was a cotton baron.

No estate records survive, and no novels or memoirs recount the bygone splendor of life on the old plantation. Cotton estates were rain fed, not irrigated, and labor remained expensive, for the Costa was a wide land, thinly inhabited, and dotted with milpas and fishing villages that encouraged peasant autonomy. Mayas in the Tizimín region thus enjoyed high wages when they chose to work; area grievances had always focused on taxes and militia service, not hacienda growth. Low water and scant labor combined to help prevent the sort of plantation system that would later coalesce around henequen. What is clear is that King Cotton's reign

was to be brief. The boll weevil in the boom was its dependence on extraordinary conditions abroad. Having tied much of their fortunes to U.S. wartime circumstances, Yucatecan producers were unprepared for the market's sudden collapse, as prices fell to 25 percent of their 1864 levels within months of Appomattox.⁷³

In other regards the brief but intense years of the empire shared continuities with surrounding eras. Among these was the state's desire to consolidate control over outlying territories. But could it do this on its own, or did it still require the service of impresario-colonizers who temporarily assumed many of the state's privileges and responsibilities? Salazar in fact launched plans to expand peninsular infrastructure through a renewed road-building campaign. Eager for consensus, he called in the pro-imperial dons of Mérida prior to reestablishing the *fagina* system that called out villagers four times a year for the project.⁷⁴

One hope lay in European colonization, the *fata morgana* that beguiled so many Mexican statesmen. Numerous Mexican policy makers of the early national period believed in colonization as a means of injecting what was widely considered to be superior bloodlines into an underdeveloped country. Agustín Acereto had attempted to promote colonization, providing land titles and tax exemptions to foreigners willing to settle as entrepreneurs, but found few takers outside of a lone Spaniard who opted for a grant of land outside of Yalahau—the last word in isolation.⁷⁵ Imperialists proposed to link future colonization with a massive national land survey, making available as much as six leagues of land along the coast south from Campeche.⁷⁶ The first part of this plan, the *deslinde general*, was to distinguish private property from “the national lands, vulgarly called baldíos.” Doubtless this project would meet with some initial resistance from local estate owners, who found a certain vagueness of land titles to their advantage; but eventually these too would come around, convinced by the patriotic imperative. Who would the imperial bureaucracy settle upon these lands? No one was more energetic or quicker to learn than men from the United States, the planners argued, but *americanos* also carried their well-known racial animosities; Spaniards quarreled too much; Italians had even more faults than the Yucatecans themselves and were thus a bad risk as future citizens. The planners settled on an improbable combination of Belgians and Asians.⁷⁷ Salazar eventually sold concessions to an entrepreneur who procured colonists and financed their travel and homesteading with the help of federal government loans. Thus was born Villa Carlota, named in honor of the benevolent empress. The exact location of the project remains unknown, except that it was somewhere in the vicinity of Pustunich, in Campeche state, near the Rio Champotón, a region that to the present

day remains sparsely inhabited. To this remote location came hopeful German settlers (not at all the desired Belgian-Asians) on October 23, 1865. Some seventy-three families made the trek, totaling 228 colonists in all, some bachelors, but all farmers or tradesmen.⁷⁸

The Germans adapted to local custom more quickly than anticipated: several fled without paying the transportation debt owed to the state government. Things went downhill from there. Would-be settlers found that the soil turned into stone under their ox-drawn plows. Habituated to German products, they pined for the milk, cheese, and beer of the *Vaterland*. The rainy season depressed them, but its greater effect was physiological, for yellow fever now struck the Germans, who were strangers to tropical mosquito-borne disease. Finally, they accused the project's director of fraud and mismanagement and openly wished "that they had never known of this country." Flight from the community continued during the year following their arrival. Those who remained eventually petitioned to relocate to the cool elevations of central Mexico.⁷⁹ By late 1866 Villa Carlota had dissolved.

Through the late 1860s much of the northeast's economic vitality remained dominated by one man: Darío Galera. Few persons had a greater impact on the economic development of what is now northern Quintana Roo than this unusual entrepreneur. Galera was born in 1797, the second of eight children, to a prosperous but hardly oligarchic family.⁸⁰ Before the age of forty, Darío had established himself as a trader and log-wood empresario in the region north of Tizimín. But it was the Mexican invasion that made Galera. Acting in concert with Santiago Imán, he provided the vast amounts of wood needed for barricading Sisal against the Mexican invaders. He also handled much of the international arms trafficking that kept Yucatán independent. Darío Galera grew extremely wealthy prior to 1847 and brought a staggering fifty-six thousand pesos to his marriage to Dominga Pastor. Despite losing some of this in the Caste War, he emerged from the conflict with nearly twenty thousand pesos of Mérida real estate alone, with additional holdings in Izamal, Tekax, Progreso, and Sisal—aided in part by the profits he made as part of the wheat monopoly. He also owned several ranches near San Felipe (by the name of San Laureano) and two on the island of Cozumel (San Pedro and San Antonio del Refugio, the former alone worth twenty-five hundred pesos, and the largest private property on the island), and as a crowning glory purchased the hacienda containing the ruins of Chichén Itzá.⁸¹ On Cozumel, Galera also reaped large profits by allowing U.S. interests to log wood from the island.⁸² He remained a dominant force in the region throughout the Republican and imperial periods. Among other posts, Darío Galera served as a political alternate in the first

government of Agustín Acereto.⁸³ At the same time, he kept up the requisite mansion in Mérida and there hosted the visiting Empress Carlota in 1866. In fact, he bankrolled the Mérida ayuntamiento by purchasing over three thousand pesos in bonds.⁸⁴ But more to Galera's liking was hands-on control of the far northeast, where he tyrannized the islands through his office as tax collector. Galera also provided loans to other coastal entrepreneurs, and only toward the end did his influence over local politics begin to slip.⁸⁵ He died on July 29, 1869, of a condition resembling uremia ("*mal de orín*") at age seventy-one. His wealth passed to his only daughter, Dominga, at which point the family fortunes become obscure, even though his opulent home a few blocks east of the cathedral remained a familiar landmark for decades.⁸⁶ Galera's meteoric life represented the opportunities that the Oriente provided for an unscrupulous man willing to take his chances, a war-driven prosperity on the periphery similar to that of Monterrey's Garza Sada family.⁸⁷

One of the more problematic possessions was still Isla Mujeres. Everyone knew that it had strategic importance, but few of the Mérida political set had ever been there. Hence, it was possible for an imposter like Manuel Rivera to petition for empresario status in August 1866, asking for exclusive rights to colonize the island in exchange for \$500. Investigation revealed the falsity of his claims. The island already had a town of eighteen blocks, with 110 houses, a church, cemetery, and barracks. Yucatecans had even introduced cattle, although it is difficult to imagine more than a few head strolling about. Fifty-one fishermen constituted the main labor force out of a total population of seven hundred, and the island produced a total of \$250 in yearly contributions to the state. Nearly all these people were refugees from the Caste War and had found a new and peaceful existence on the Isle of Women. Instead of granting Rivera's petition, Salazar preferred to set up a customs house, or *aduana*, to tax the foreign (probably Cuban) purchasers of the island's catch.⁸⁸

The eastern islands had begun as part of the Caste War exodus, and they continued to receive refugees fleeing raids, captivity, or political violence. Cecilio Pat was one such case. Pat was captured in the 1850s when the sublevados made one of their last serious raids on Valladolid; only nine years old at the time, by his calculation he had remained a prisoner for ten years. In late 1866 he managed to escape, making his way to Isla Mujeres, but unfortunately leaving no recollections of his experiences among the people of Chan Santa Cruz.⁸⁹ Perhaps more than anything, the islands were havens of illegality. Cotton may have been the white gold of the empire, but there were other forms of merchandise, and with colors of their own. African slavery remained a dynamic institution in Cuba, and those willing to assume the risk stood to make a quick

fortune—a state of affairs that in many ways formed the defining spirit of the empire. Had Lenin toured Mayab in these years, he might well have quipped, “Imperialism, the highest form of improvisation.”

IMPERIAL BENEDICTIONS: MAKING PEACE
WITH THE CHURCH

Crops died, fortunes faded, and land titles lost their validity, but the embattled Yucatecan church promised a likely—and timeless—bulwark for imperial support. Throughout the terrible years of 1855 onward, rural curas, the institution's backbone, had held on by the fringes of their stoles. What saved them was diversification of individual wealth. North Yucatecan haciendas retained their viability throughout the war, and southern corn and sugar estates had partially recovered by 1855. Private clerical ownership of haciendas continued into the latter half of the century. Padre Jacobo Machado owned numerous rural properties outside of Mérida, Campeche, Bécál, Hecelchakán, and his own parish of Halachó. The cornucopia of his estate spilled out bequests to family, friends, and parishioners in the villages that had been his charges: Tunkás, Hopelchén, Pencuyut, Akil, Maní, and Halachó itself.⁹⁰ Padre Manuel Esteban Rivero, cura of Maní, procured land measurement and valid title for the sprawling sitio Santa Teresa.⁹¹ A certain Padre Ancona of Halachó, working in concert with the town juez, forced local Mayas to accept money in advance (and not enough, in their opinion) as a way of leveraging labor on his sugar hacienda Nohlam, a device straight from the pages of colonial Spain.⁹² If not the grand empresarios of the 1820s, these clerics still managed to defend their own against the changes around them. But most other signs point to a decline.⁹³ With the Reform, priests lost the ability to reproduce their fortunes and ceded rural property to secular owners. Or, like Padre José Antonio García of Temax, their sugar ranchos and recently acquired terrenos baldíos of the deep south passed into sublevado hands. García still retained his hacienda San Antonio Dolores, as well as his herd of wild horses on the island of Holbox, but the rest had disappeared forever.⁹⁴

The clergy was understandably fed up with the juarecistas “slavishly adopting the conduct of France in the memorable epoch of the Revolution and everywhere spreading the *yolos* [shouts] of terror through a decree that has nationalized the properties of the Mexican church,” as one so floridly put it.⁹⁵ In fact, clerical pro-French reaction began long before imperial commissars ever arrived. Vicente Méndez, cura of Campeche, cheered when the entire Campeche garrison and surrounding suburbs

pronounced for Navarrete's revolt. Méndez had tasted humiliation at Liberal hands in January 1860, when Campeche's juarecistas had expropriated the cemetery and available church funds; with the pro-French rebellion, Méndez ostentatiously reclaimed this lost treasure. The city's priests, heartened by French war vessels offshore, gratefully redonned their clerical garb and performed a votary mass for the benefit of soldiers in the church of San Román.⁹⁶ Similarly, Mérida's ecclesiastical cabildo organized a lavish reception for Salazar as he entered the edge of town.⁹⁷ In the Oriente, curas heard the news and dreamed of stable church funding and operations, untroubled by demagogues.⁹⁸

The rejoicing proved premature, for the imperial presence did little for the Yucatecan church. Both the French generals and Maximilian himself were nineteenth-century European liberals, proponents of the secular state and impatient with the Mexican clerics' fossilized mentalities. The imperial commissar himself belonged to Mexico's thin strata of scientifically trained professionals and could be openly vindictive with clergy. To show his displeasure with Padre Doroteo Rejón of Cozumel, he ordered the erection of a public school that purposefully obscured the view of the church itself.⁹⁹ At a lower level, the prefects and subprefects simply inherited an earlier anticlericalism. For example, the subprefect of Teabo did nothing whatsoever to prevent residents from troubling cura Francisco Palma.¹⁰⁰ In Maxcanú cura Francisco Sóstenes Aguilar warred interminably with the imperial subprefect.¹⁰¹ Just as it was limited in its ability to normalize land titles, the empire failed to curb the anticlericalism that had become entrenched in rural life.

Some dynamics broke in the church's favor. If not pro-clerical, courts were at least more impartial and kicked decisions to political higher-ups when uncertain. Such was the case when the chaplain of Mérida's cemetery tried to stop a local entrepreneur from raiding the cemetery's deposit of lime.¹⁰² The empire's naive attempt to regularize jurisdictions—definitively assigning hamlets and estates to a *cabecera*, or head town—favored the church, which had long struggled over peasant taxpayers in the years before the Caste War. However, in some moments individual clerics wanted the power to manipulate political jurisdictions for personal reasons. Pedro Macial Guerra y Correa, nephew of the late bishop and himself the *provisor*, or cathedral secretary, was perhaps the most important layman in the peninsula. When authorities of Motul and Tixkokob harassed his servants for military service, he tried to move his hacienda, Santa Ana Cucá, to the jurisdiction of a different municipality, in this case Tixpéual. Owing to Guerra's importance, this trivial case went all the way to Maximilian himself, only to be denied: the empire was about fixity, not fluidity.¹⁰³ In other instances, too, the administration worked in favor of less important

churchmen. The cura of Tixkokob, Manuel José Ancona, owned a small hacienda outside of Ticul by the name of San Antonio Ekbalam; from there his team of ten mules connected him with his only source of food. When the alcalde of Tixkokob tried to impound these for military service, Ancona stopped him by arguing that the estate and its livestock were outside the jurisdiction of Tixkokob and Motul.¹⁰⁴

Minor imperial frictions could be put down to happenstance. The first serious disappointment came with the decision to continue secularization of cemeteries. It was with heavy heart that Luis Francisco Ricalde of Hoc-tún turned over the keys of the churchyard to the local alcalde. Town authorities also used the Juárez-era legislation to sell off a solar that had once belonged to the rectory.¹⁰⁵ Manuel Salvador Sosa, cura of Baca, also confronted the loss of man's eternal resting place, and while he filed complaints refusing to recognize state authority on the matter, those complaints proved impotent.¹⁰⁶ The same controversy transpired in Espita.¹⁰⁷ In 1865 the magistrate of Hocobá quarreled repeatedly with the cura over that town's burial grounds, at last working with the local *república de indígenas* to raise a force to occupy them.¹⁰⁸ In all cases curas saw themselves surrendering keys to the Kingdom as well as the cemetery, a sad farewell to a world whose virtue existed more in their imaginations than anywhere else.

The loss of cemeteries stung, but perhaps the uppermost consideration remained church funding. Here the story was at best mixed, for while imperialists restored Yucatán's hated obventions in June 1864, existing attitudes eviscerated the policy. Mayas and Hispanics alike simply refused to fund church construction, comply with the reinstated religious taxes, or show the institution the reverence it had once commanded.¹⁰⁹ Few cases illustrate this as clearly as the ordeal of Juan Ortega, cura of Ticul. Ortega had trouble collecting money well before 1865, and outlying peasant communities like Pustunich continued to hold out, claiming lack of clerical attention.¹¹⁰ Armed with a letter of support from Gala, Ortega set out for a showdown with village debtors. His first attempt fizzled for lack of attendance, but with the aid of local officials, Ortega later gathered a number of peasants at the casa constitorial. He read them the letter of support, translating it into Maya, then demanded to know how much they proposed to give. A certain Luciano Balam hotly declared that he would pay nothing whatsoever, and others immediately joined in, repeating their assertion that Ortega seldom made an appearance in the town, but was only too happy to take contributions. Eventually Ortega prevailed upon them by threatening to close the church and send the names of dissident peasants to Mérida, a veiled threat of military conscription. The following day the peasants grudgingly promised

to provide some form of support, but this victory won Ortega few friends in Pustunich.¹¹¹

The dynamics of hacienda life compounded the problem. Hacienda servants paid for civil marriage but still expected church ritual, a common practice in Mexico to the present day. Loyal if syncretic Catholics, these same peons balked at the notion of paying twice, and instead charged the bill for church services to the hacienda's account, the unpayable debt known as *nojoch cuenta*. Having little hope of ever squaring accounts, they simply squeezed the arrangement for all it was worth. Hence, there were cases of servants who owed more than eighty pesos each, who made only token efforts to repay, and who "died owing." The cura of Muna (and brother of the frustrated Padre Ortega) made virtually no money from marriages.¹¹² Other parishioners exploited one of the empire's basic contradictions: a supposedly centralized system that lacked adequate means of communication and travel. When cura Felipe López of Espita went to collect contributions from Roberto Rivas's workers on hacienda Xuilic, Rivas (an arch-Conservative centralist, but also a major skinflint) simply refused, insisting that in Mérida he had learned that the parish belonged to another priest altogether. In the remoteness of the Espita, who knew which version was really true? Final authority lay so far away, and was so abstract, that to say something had nearly the effect of making it so, especially when people wanted to believe it.¹¹³ Words in and of themselves virtually became physical barriers.

Whatever the cause, parish poverty persisted throughout the imperial years. Hardship in places such as Tekax traced to three factors: military recruitment of over two hundred men (per town), heads of families that might otherwise have contributed; increasing outmigration to escape the same fate; and the Mayas' passive resistance to the religious contribution. "And to all this must be added that many suffer from our brothers' almost universal defect of stinginess for maintaining the ministers of religion," the cura lamented. Public meetings produced little result; revenues were scarcely a third of what should have been available, even though Tekax was better off than outlying hamlets. More than one minister wondered, as did Ildefonso Barrera of Tekax, whether both the parish and himself would be better served by a separation?¹¹⁴

Church deterioration also continued. Widespread when Salazar arrived, it failed to improve in any significant way during the empire's years in the southeast. The church that Carlota visited in Béal had been on the verge of closing operations prior to her arrival, but the elderly Spanish-born cura, Pedro José Hurtado, doddered on in hope of deliverance.¹¹⁵ Affairs in Padre Manuel Rivero's home of Maní were similar; the church was understaffed, and hemorrhoids prevented him from traveling to outlying

Chapab by any means other than *koché*, which meant paying the Maya *kocheros* with money that Rivero did not have.¹¹⁶ Church decline indicated a process that could not be reversed or even arrested by decree.

Clerics fought back with the pre-imperial repertoire of strategies of funding through voluntary contributions. Curas personally reasoned with property owners for the latter to commit both themselves and their peons; they circulated pleas for help to absentee landlords (of whom there were apparently many); they provided the local subprefect with a list of potential payers, in hopes that he might apply pressure; and finally, they resolved to evaluate progress after a predetermined period of time.¹¹⁷ These strategies resembled modern fund-raising techniques, which depend on heightening contributors' awareness of a cause, making them feel personally involved with the institution, composing lists of potential givers, and regularly monitoring donation rates. In other instances relations between *cura* and people assumed a rather contractual tone. José Inez Castro of Tixcacaltuyú hammered out a deal with the people of Yaxcabá: as long as they paid him contributions, he would make biweekly trips for mass, as well as special emergency trips for extreme unction.¹¹⁸ Surely the most novel method appeared in Hopelchén, where church reconstruction sparked a community-wide effort. The people banded together to burn limestone in anticipation of the work, but they still needed money for timber, decorations, and specialized labor. To those ends they purchased a lottery ticket from Havana and prayed to the Virgin for their number to come up. The results of this unusual gamble are unknown.¹¹⁹

The ambitious would-be renovator of parishes had to remember fund-raising could just as easily provoke reaction. Everyone was hurting, and despite the priests' skepticism, many people simply could not afford to pay. The church's insistence on support during a time of universal hardship was understandable, but it also alienated many and stoked the very Liberal sentiments that the *padres* hoped to combat. Precisely this sort of backlash took place in Yaxcabá, a community where in easier times the Catholic church had once wielded immense influence. Padre Manuel Hernández's overly insistent collection of the *medio-real* sparked a show of resistance on the part of both Hispanics and Mayas, including the town's *batab* and *escribano*. Their complaint of poor service had some basis—in trying to cover a large geographical base, the hard-traveling Hernández suffered a broken arm—but the larger problem was that all ends, however saintly, could not be met.¹²⁰

Chaplaincy remained an option for underpaid assistant ministers, although one with limited openings. Unlike service in a rural parish, the job offered steady pay and provisions, and it was a service popular among soldiers, a people poised close to death. Padre José Dolóres

Cetina, for example, gave up on civilian life to serve the soldiers in Tihosuco; they welcomed his ministry, but found his epileptic fits unnerving.¹²¹ (Cetina went on to become a pastor in Campeche, where the attraction he exercised over the women of the town proved an embarrassment for his superiors.)¹²² Curas, meanwhile, had opposite interests: to keep their ministers and *tenientes* out of chaplaincy, away from the war, and down on the home front, another instance of the religious-military conflicts that the *violencia* bred.¹²³

Small wonder, then, that priests often found themselves asking for clarification on imperial policy.¹²⁴ Some drifted into alienation. Borrowing a page from their Maya parishioners, they reacted with passive resistance. For example, the cura of Tixcaltuyú refused to go through the bother of tabulating population movements within his parish. The petty five-peso fines that followed such infractions meant nothing to people who had no money to pay.¹²⁵ Another option was to become, in the phrase of the times, a “clerical vagabond,” a wandering freelancer who eked out pittances in exchange for minor religious services. This same phenomenon had appeared after the Franciscan secularization of 1821, and it returned in the depths of the years of Reform and empire. Máximo Abreu took this humiliating course in 1865, traveling from one village to another and ministering to a people whose language he could not understand and whose faltering Spanish was matched by their inability to provide anything but tortillas. After a few months of this hardscrabble existence, even a life of tending to Campeche’s lepers and consumptives began to look inviting.¹²⁶

Despite all the heartaches, the Yucatecan church stayed true to its supposed defender. Even while the empire foundered everywhere (late 1866), to the elderly cura in Bécál, scene of Carlota’s historic visit, it seemed that imperial forces were prevailing, and that it would only be a matter of time before order and conservatism flourished once more.¹²⁷ Perhaps this distorted vision of reality reflected the desperation of a cornered institution. In all probability priests and arch-Catholics continued to support the empire because it was their only alternative to the “yolos of terror” that had long bedeviled them and that would soon do so again.

THE COMMONERS: IMPERIAL-AGE MAYAS

The Good Book warns of nothing new under the sun, but in 1865 Salazar Ilarregui looked for something no governor had ever sought before, something no governor ever thought he needed: Maya support. The policy lacked formal articulation and was poorly conceived, but it re-

mains a fact that the empire tried to cultivate peasants. Salazar hoped to heal Maya pain, thereby re-creating the kind of social balance that he believed had prevailed under the Spanish. This strategy presaged the post-1915 revolutionaries, whose commitment to the rural peasantry was similarly mixed and who also came to terms with hacendados and vested interests. Unlike those later revolutionaries, the imperialists failed to destroy the old bureaucracy and military apparatus; their hold over Mexico was more precarious, and their overtures to the indigenous peasantry more tenuous. Nevertheless, the southeast offers a study of relations between the new regime and the lower classes upon whom it sought to build a house of peace amid the gales of violence.

But how to access the communities? That depended on the *batabs*, and they in turn remained as difficult as ever. Timucuy's *batab*, Ignacio Canul, lived in continual conflict with his own people. Old folks who could remember earlier customs of land usage accused him of encroaching on other people's property. Men had to threaten him with machetes to escape his overbearing demands for picket duty. Villagers accused him of sending them off to do personal service so that he could make advances to their wives. (Was Canul really carrying on with eight different women?) Perhaps, as Mérida's jefe político concluded, the basis of all these complaints was Canul's liberal use of the whip.¹²⁸ Or perhaps villagers objected to his excessive drinking, for Canul was in some ways a smaller version of Venancio Puc, Chan Santa Cruz's alcoholic master. In Maxcanú as well, the *batab* played the role of enforcer. Juan de Dios Kol had the village gendarmes known as *tupiles* arrest and whip the potter José Benito Chan merely for throwing away some of the corn husks he used to pack and display his wares in the patio of the casa constitorial.¹²⁹ In Chablekal, *batab* Agustín Chan continued to oversee *fagina* for projects such as remodeling of a public jail; he also distributed advance payments and then compelled the local peasants to work his fields. Mayas who failed to cooperate received the hated road-building assignment, even if they were república members such as Juan Euán. Imperial officials did little to rein in these excesses.¹³⁰ An individual such as Chan stayed in power despite the wishes of the people—perhaps, as was often said of the iron-fisted Texas sheriff, because he kept the peace.

In other cases, though, imperial-age Maya politics appear more democratic. By 1866 various towns had elections for community offices under way.¹³¹ In terms of grassroots action, Mayas of Espita managed to unseat the unpopular *batab* Nasario Quetzal and replace him with "a just and true cacique," one Felipe Tuz.¹³² That was more civil than the Mayas of Ixil, who tried to assassinate their *batab*, Juan Bautista Poot, in the late 1850s; recall-by-murder failed and landed the six culprits in jail.¹³³

In Sicpach tensions lay between the batab—José María Nahuat—and the town's juez de paz, Bernabé Alcocer. Batab elections took place among the Mayas of Sicpach every ten years; if his service proved satisfactory, he stayed in office until he saw fit to resign or else was removed for bad conduct. True, ballot decisions necessarily had to await approval by Hispanic oversight, and the juez could manipulate this process by misrepresenting results to the prefectura. This is precisely what happened, with Alcocer attempting to insert his own client, Teodoro Kem, with relative Antonio Kem as *teniente*. But villagers of Sicpach rose in protest behind Nahuat, who enjoyed greater popular support.¹³⁴ Meanwhile, other evidence suggests that batabs occasionally took the lead in defending village interests. Attempts to increase *fagina* demands among the peasants of the Ticul area precipitated a minor riot led by batab José Nieves Tec. Given the racially charged atmosphere that was the war's legacy, Maya public resistance of any sort caused concern; but once people realized that it was merely an incidental issue, a colonial-style negotiation by revolt, the matter was quickly forgotten.¹³⁵ Still, it was the batab who led.

Beyond the contentious realm of politics, virtually any Maya-related social problem festered into the imperial age. Indeed, violence fell hardest upon the poorest, and their woes were reflected everywhere: in acts of flight, in lawsuits and complaints, and in ongoing low-level crimes such as cattle rustling.¹³⁶ Maya families suffered from the war, the emotional rheumatisms of hacienda life, and the endemic family instability that so often afflicts poor people. It is not uncommon to find tortuous custody trails such as that of young María Luciana Tun, who went from her mother, to her great-aunt, to hacendado, to her biological father, and back to the great-aunt.¹³⁷ In sum, all the old war-related difficulties persisted in force.

How to address such bewildering issues? Rather than remold Maya society from within (basically impossible), the imperialists operated at the level of Maya-Hispanic relations. Imperial labor laws simply reinstitutionalized many of the features dominant since the eighteenth century. These laws began with the ritual prohibitions of forced labor: Maximilian hoped to count upon the veneer of paternalism that had cloaked Mexico's rulers until the coming of the Liberal Party. All labor was to be paid, batabs and *repúblicas* would maintain their accustomed authority, and although responsible for rounding up workers in times of need, they would reserve, at least in theory, the right to refuse when they deemed such roundups excessive or illegal. Sound enough: but would the empire find a way to deal out enough favors to a large enough body of the indigenous peasantry? And would the regime take the political heat that was certain to follow any strategy that favored Mayas over Hispanics?

The answer to these questions, and the key to imperial authority in rural Yucatán, came in the form of the *abogado defensor de indios*. This figure was a deliberate re-creation of Spanish colonialism and a downsized version of the Junta de Protectores then operating in central Mexico (and that would be revived during the national indigenist projects seventy years later¹³⁸). He was to play the itinerant jurist, taking up peasant lawsuits throughout the countryside. The defensor quickly became the most overworked man in the peninsula: a lone legal warrior doing the labors of hundreds, riding circuit throughout the pacified zones and lending his hand in settling rural Maya affairs. The first individual chosen for this job was a certain Joaquín Patrón. The only records of his actions are a few fleeting reference in a series of papers from late 1864, mainly involved with efforts to liberate Maya villagers from grinding corn for cantons along the line.¹³⁹ Patrón resigned, and the office passed into the capable hands of one José Demetrio Molina, member of the clan that produced porfirian regional strongman Olegario Molina. Little is known about the former's pre-defensor career, other than that he had served as attorney to the Peón family while performing other assorted legal work.¹⁴⁰

Molina certainly threw himself into the job. Indeed, the amount of paperwork generated by the defensor was simply amazing, and so too the amount of geographical territory and scope of litigations he covered: overseeing the sale of Nabanché,¹⁴¹ securing fagina exemptions in Teabo,¹⁴² arranging bail for the peons of the hacienda Mulcuy,¹⁴³ scrounging up draft exemptions for the overburdened families throughout the peninsula.¹⁴⁴ A glance at the January 1865 itinerary of Yucatán's defensor in assorted villages gives a hint of his varied activities and concerns. In Conkal he made a Hispanic repay a small debt to a Maya peasant. In Mochochá he oversaw the execution of a peasant will. In Bocabá he checked out complaints of community land seizure. In Izamal he arranged to have an old Maya woman returned to the custody of her son. In Valladolid he successfully advanced Maya demands for higher pay for their required labor at the Hospital de Sangre and heard complaints of hacendados refusing to settle accounts with peasant workers. In Chichimilá he heard peasants demanding money from the governor for services rendered "at the conclusion of the Caste War." In Uayma he heard complaints of estate encroachment on community lands. No doubt about it: the *abogado defensor* was everywhere, and even in abbreviated form this list conveys the fact that peasants came to the defensor for any conceivable sort of problem, just as they had once appealed to the Spanish public defenders known as *procuradores*.

Despite these efforts, the institution became mired in a fen of conflicting interests and cross-purposes that exhausted the office's resources. The first problem concerned authority. Uncertain of its control in rural



FIGURE 5.1

José Demetrio Molina. As the empire's abogado defensor de indios, Molina was everywhere, but his efforts failed to create a peasant-based monarchy in the Americas. Molina survived the transition back to Republicanism, gave up the law for agriculture, and died a wealthy philanthropist. From Alvaro F. Salazar, ed., Yucatán: Artículos amenos acerca de su historia (Barcelona: Talleres Gráficas Comas y Portavella, 1913).

areas, the empire shied away from enforcing its powers high-handedly and instead tried to insinuate itself into preexisting systems of local control. Rather than deciding cases, the defensor merely pleaded cases before magistrates, who were usually in the pocket of area hacendados or who were themselves the root of many problems. Local jueces had a well-known penchant for using their discretionary powers to expropriate land rents or to impose taxes to fund nonexistent schoolteachers, all the while filtering the money into the pockets of local cronies. The office of abogado helped offset weaknesses such as illiteracy and legal inexperience.

ence, but it failed to overcome a corrupt judiciary, thus making the empire appear to be little more than a transient ally from without.

Another problem was the magnitude of the job. A single individual attended the legal needs of several hundred thousand Mayas, who were quarrelsome if “pacified.” It took Molina a month to travel the eastern *partidos*, during which time he was beset by so many complaints that it was impossible to do justice to all, for to choose one village was to ignore another. Book learning aided but little, because the overwhelming majority of Maya legal affairs did not involve written documentation; instead of examining papers at his convenience, the defensor therefore had to call a meeting of all involved parties, a practice that was both laborious and time-consuming. Molina’s predecessor had eliminated some of the work by having local *jueces*—themselves corrupt—screen cases in advance. Molina continued the practice, but found that *jueces* were not always receptive to these added responsibilities, and he instead advocated a special *Tribunal de Indios* as the only solution.

Mexico’s mosaic of land use and abuse also hampered progress. The imperialists based their laws regarding land and the peasantry on the *altiplano* model, where indigenous communities had maintained intensive production in a fairly circumscribed *ejidal* limit around the community. But the majority of Mayas worked *milpas* far outside their village’s *ejido* limits; these lands were *monte* (*k’aax*) for which they possessed no title.¹⁴⁵ Try as he might, the defensor could not squeeze Maya land usage back into the neat colonial system, partly because that neat system had never really existed. *Haciendas* had expanded considerably since 1800; the upheavals of the times facilitated their advance. Consider, for example, the matter of land encroachment. When *hacendados* eased themselves into *municipio* lands, peasants supposedly could protect themselves through the *amparo*, or staying order. While waiting for the *amparo* to be executed, a process that could take years or never happen at all, the estate owner was supposedly liable for land rents (*arrendamientos*) to the community. But a prosperous *hacendado* could usually afford these, and once outsiders gained access to the land, peasants were unlikely to reestablish control. With innumerable Mayas dragooned into militias, unscrupulous landowners such as José María Cervera simply moved the *mojoneros*, thereby helping themselves to part of the town’s *ejido* lands. True, imperial officials did follow their instructions to respect peasant rights: Seyé’s municipal commissar, Julio González, came to the rescue by confiscating Cervera’s titles and imposing a fine of sixty-four *cargas* of corn to be used as the beginning of a *pósito*, or community fund.¹⁴⁶ Elsewhere too the imperial years did see limited Maya gains in the courts. José Sacilio Noh, a war refugee living in Mochochá, had set up house in one of the *solares* that

the war had left unoccupied. When he resisted the local juez's attempts to have him evicted, the subprefect of Motul came to his defense and awarded him rights to the terreno.¹⁴⁷ But by the time the law finally caught up with such manipulations, the empire was collapsing, and future regimes had little interest in restoring ejidal properties.

Sadly, the defensor's work also suffered from the resistance of corrupt local Maya leaders. One example of this comes from Muxupip, where Molina assisted the peasants in a land litigation with neighboring Euán. Years earlier the village had secured a contract from Euán that formally ceded the property; but that paper was now in the hands of Gerónimo Pat, Muxupip's obstinate batab, who refused to produce it—on the grounds that Molina lacked an order from the emperor commanding him to do so!¹⁴⁸ Indigenous communities in Latin America were riven with class divisions and political abuses from the colonial period onward, and imperial Yucatán affords no exception.

Imperial Yucatán also stumbled over the issue of labor mobility. What, for example, did the presence of the defensor mean to peasants who had become dissatisfied on the estates of their amos? "In addition, the servants of rural properties are persuaded that by the institutions of the empire they are free to separate themselves from service whenever they wish, without regard to the agrarian law of 1847."¹⁴⁹ Molina found himself at wit's end trying to counteract this perception, yet another return to the millenarian visions that had stirred through the peninsula since the constitutional crisis of 1812–14. "This is an extremely serious problem that to my mind might well be remedied by making them understand the continued validity of the 1847 law," he wrote. "I have worked to this end with those who have come to me with such pretensions; and in general I have made all the caciques of the villages understand it."¹⁵⁰ Maya elites understood this, for they themselves had long been among the propertied classes who had benefited from laws controlling labor. Their cooperation was not total, nor did that cooperation necessarily neutralize popular discontent, and rural disillusionment with the promise of the empire proved a serious debit in the long run. Though peasants did not rise up en masse against Maximilian, neither did they take up arms in his defense.

A similar problem concerned land tenure. The empire offered guarantees for remaining ejido land, but Maya peasants interpreted the empire to signal a return to a strict system of common lands. This point of view served them well, since few possessed valid land titles of their own. As the abogado himself pointed out, to respond to their interpretation of land tenure would have meant filing suit against virtually every private holder in the peninsula.¹⁵¹ Molina suffered the dilemma of a halfway empire that tried to build

a peasant base of support while remaining committed to certain liberal land policies that limited peasant mobility and codified land use in favor of commercial producers.

Obstacles notwithstanding, the defensor's powers made themselves felt by late 1865. One example comes from the town of Tiholop, where the *república* complained that their villages had worked for three years as corn grinders and all-around factotums for the canton of Ichmul. The commander in chief of the southern *línea* hastily repudiated the charges, arguing that other villages had taken turns at these responsibilities, and that the Tiholop peasants were "the only ones who, ignoring the urgent necessity of the service that is demanded of them, have committed the crime of abandonment." But the defensor was able to prevail over his protests, and Tiholop received a temporary dispensation from corn grinding.¹⁵² Elsewhere, Mayas clearly did find some degree of sympathy in the courts in these years. One example was that of the Us family of Tekax. The old family patriarch, grandfather Agustín Us, had amassed considerable wealth in his life, including four choice properties located to the south of town. But Agustín died shortly before the Caste War, and in the ensuing confusion, all the paperwork was lost. Confronted with property disputes on all sides, granddaughter Manuela Jesús Us managed to obtain a writ of *amparo* against her adversaries.¹⁵³

Fumbling though Indian protection may have been, it infuriated Yucatán's reactionary landowners. The Swedish consul in Mérida noted that mild innovations, such as labor codes and the defensor, had rendered Salazar so odious "that a revolution was very probable."¹⁵⁴ An exaggeration, perhaps, but the precariousness of Salazar's situation also struck José Fernando Ramírez, a Chihuahuan gentleman-archaeologist who, improbably enough, decided to tour the peninsula in 1865. As nearly as Ramírez could determine, the problem lay in the commissar's high-handed style of governance: to popular dismay, Salazar had substituted road tolls known as *peajes* to pay the Indians for work traditionally performed through obligatory *fagina*. The continued *registro civil* also sent mixed messages to Conservatives hoping for a return to the days when priests tabulated village affairs. More important still was his creation of a *sorteo*, or draft, to determine service in a renewed Caste War.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, some evidence supports this notion of oligarchic discontent. Led by Izamal lawyer and patriarch Pilar Canto Zozaya, angry hacendados defended themselves from legal innovations that were corrupting their laborers. "Inclined by instinct to insubordination and immorality," the Maya peons were now going so far as to disobey and even threaten their masters, and work stoppages were turning up on numerous properties. To stem the decline of Western civilization, Canto and others paid to republish a pamphlet, composed during

the Ampudia regime, that rehearsed all the old arguments as to why peonage was the best of all possible labor worlds. No copies of this tendentious treatise survive, but clearly in the planters' minds the very notion of an Indian legal defender had stirred the Yucatec Mayas to unacceptable levels.¹⁵⁶ Still, it is a fact that the anti-imperial revolt did not originate among the great hacendados *or* among land-hungry peasants. Whatever its weaknesses, the empire's land and labor policies seemed to have met the bare needs of both Hispanic and Maya. The real problem remained what it had always been, the volatile cocktail of militias and local politics—a cocktail that, when mixed in imperial volumes, was to prove fatal.

THE CIVIL WARS, PART SIX: THE COMING
OF BUENAVENTURA MARTÍNEZ

In 1865 coastal authorities scouted the horizon for enemies. Yankee sea captains such as Charles Stevens found themselves summarily arrested when the port authorities of Sisal discovered “a small quantity of gunpowder” in his ship.¹⁵⁷ A pitiful flask of powder was enough to have Stevens jailed during these paranoid times. Fears of foreigners proved misplaced, however, for the real threat came from within. The individual who was to launch the revolt against the empire's Yucatecan branch was neither a patrician statesman, nor a man of letters, nor a Maya peasant. He had no brilliant military career behind him, no foreign connections; he composed no memoirs, and in the future no statues would consecrate his memory in public parks and spacious boulevards. Nor is there even evidence to suggest that he was a committed Liberal. Rather, Buenaventura Martínez Basto was a now-forgotten militia officer serving in Baca, a small community in the partido of Motul. Hitherto unknown, his story explains how and why provincial Mexicans turned against their imperial overlords, and how in this period of violence, national and international events intersected with intensely local concerns, with explosive results.¹⁵⁸

The unraveling began over matters of war. The new regime sought nationalist credentials and justified its presence as necessary to assert control over Mexican territory.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, the Caste War remained hot throughout the early 1860s, with rebels launching highly successful skirmishes and spy operations. Offensives near Valladolid continued throughout 1863, and in March of that year, spies from Santa Cruz Tulum were apprehended in Tekom. In October 1863 rebels appeared at the hacienda Canacuytún, outside Espita.¹⁶⁰ All of these factors resulted in a tighten-

ing of canton security throughout the surrounding countryside. Demands for renewed war therefore emanated from the municipal level, and mainly in línea communities, one of the strongest proponents being Tizimín.¹⁶¹

To some degree, intelligence coming from British Honduras urged on the conflict. Indeed, much had happened in Chan Santa Cruz in the preceding years. In January 1863 prominent insurgent generals overthrew and assassinated Venancio Puc, briefly introducing talk of peace. Zacarías May, for many years a key hard-liner, reportedly perished during a raid on Peto in September 1864.¹⁶² Rumors of new peasant uprisings also surfaced at Maxcanú, where a Maya servant informed the cura of “a conspiracy against the whites, perhaps related to attempts to suffocate the Indians at Chan Santa Cruz.”¹⁶³ The Yucatecan ambassador in Belize, José María de Martínez, saw this as the proper moment to go on the offensive, since the revolution against Dionicio Zapata had (at least in his view) destabilized the society. In Martínez’s telling, more than five hundred rebels had died in the intestine fighting since the coup, and many were looking to surrender themselves to either the British or French. Meanwhile, entrepreneurs continued to court the rebel leadership in hopes of new logging concessions.¹⁶⁴

The commander in chief who was to suffer the most acutely from the many reversals of the campaign was Francisco Casanova. He soon learned that war had exhausted the peninsula. To begin with, existing fortifications were inadequate to the task of sustained counterinsurgency. Casanova beefed up cantons in Peto, Valladolid, Tihosuco, Sotuta, and Pisté, and on several haciendas between Valladolid and Izamal: “All of those points are crossroads commonly frequented by the Indians,” he reported, “and consequently where most murders have been committed.” Medical facilities were poor even before the fighting began: the sick in the Peto infirmary lacked basic food, while facilities in Sotuta, Tihosuco, and Valladolid urgently required assistance.¹⁶⁵ The war preparations even included arming the island of Cozumel, where one José Tiburcio Basto served as commander.¹⁶⁶

At first the military spent lavishly on its objectives. Not all projects received funding (plans to restore Campeche’s artillery factory, closed due to Navarrete’s occupation, had to be put on hold¹⁶⁷), but money spilled out into the society in a number of ways, initially buoying up the regime, and towns that stood along the supply routes flourished as never before. Transportation was critical, and Maya couriers capitalized on the situation by contracting to deliver mail between Traconis in Tihosuco and General Macario Prieto in Ichnul. For their services they received \$25, good profits for Mayas in those days.¹⁶⁸ The army also needed storage space, and to

facilitate troop passage through the Sierra Alta, it set up a series of warehouses in selected points like Sacalum, Ticul, Pustunich, and the hacienda San Antonio Xocneceh.¹⁶⁹ Churches became reserve barracks.¹⁷⁰ The arrival of Castillo's army in Tekax (1865) also brought construction opportunities, such as the refurbishing of palm-roof houses as quarters for the new troops, and money poured into the town in a way not seen since the 1840s.¹⁷¹ Ticul merchants raked in unprecedented profits from much traffic passing between Mérida and the línea, and while other municipalities teetered on bankruptcy, the Ticul ayuntamiento was busy planning a \$354 facelift for the town center.¹⁷² Store owners, on learning that their employees had been drafted into the great crusade, successfully petitioned to have them serve out their tour of duty in Ticul itself, where they could still be called upon to sweep floors and tote sacks.¹⁷³ Similarly, the imperial talk of railroads resonated among the communities of the Camino Real, one of the most traveled stretches of the peninsula. After a town meeting in which the comisario municipal explained the potential benefits of such an investment, nine of the town's prominent citizens formed a society to promote the venture, each pledging \$50—positive, but also a sign of hard times, when one considers that thirty-two years earlier the leaders of Campeche had shelled out \$1,000 each to build the city's theater.¹⁷⁴ Hunucmá prospered from the booming Sisal-Mérida trade, and in May 1866, on the verge of armed uprisings elsewhere, police reports from a typical eight-day stretch mention nothing more subversive than a few tipsy peasants.¹⁷⁵

But the campaign's negative consequences usually outweighed its benefits. A plan for the widening of roads, both for economic development and to aid in the campaign, squandered whatever good will the abogado defensor might have earned in the east, for it expanded peasant fagina obligations for projects such as the construction of a ten-league road between Tihosuco and Tixcacalcupul. Although the Valladolid prefect promised that their services would "be paid religiously," he had to increase the length of fagina service to complete the project.¹⁷⁶ Such contradictory movements typified the empire's problem throughout Mexico.

Military procurement also invited corruption. The pressing needs of war, the lack of peacetime competition, and the nature of sweetheart contracting generated the kind of abuses that are tolerated so long as they lead to victory. This is true of open democratic societies, and it also held for an authoritarian system like the empire. Finally, nineteenth-century Mexico's chronically weak private sector—the same factor that had contributed to electoral violence in the Republican years—played a hand. Access to the state, whether through office or public contract, was the only guaranteed source of revenue. For this reason scandals associated with military procurement remained common in the mid-1860s.

In Dzonotchel, for instance, Lieutenant Tomás Quijano expropriated civilian-owned construction materials, then sold them to army contractor Eduardo Vadillo; civilian authorities were powerless to prevent such abuses.¹⁷⁷

Another obstacle was scarcity of provisions. While the July 1865 cornfields of Hopelchén were outstanding, Dzibalchén, a mere thirty-eight kilometers to the south, faced complete crop failure for lack of rain. Not a drop had fallen in what one witness described as “ten months of summer,” the second drought in three years.¹⁷⁸ The unevenness of agriculture made supplying Casanova’s horde difficult. Much of the campaign provisions were imported. Among other items, they included dozens of barrels of pickled meat from the United States, long present in the peripheries of this conflict and now with war surplus to unload.¹⁷⁹

Portage also created problems. Though poorly documented, arrieros constituted one of the society’s most important sectors. They came from the lower cuts of society, principally Mayas and mestizos, but they provided the only way of moving freight from town to town. Their service required cash, and during the 1865–66 war against Chan Santa Cruz, Maya arrieros were able to demand advance payment for their services.¹⁸⁰ Indeed, the empire needed mules as much as men. Throughout the campaign, the Yucatecan branch of the empire issued repeated calls for mules, horses, and arrieros from the haciendas. What they got from powerful landowners like Simón Peón was a torrent of insults.¹⁸¹ Virtually all animals came from haciendas, where mules represented not only capital investment but also an essential motor of economic life. Each hacendado suspected that he was being overtaxed at the favor of some nearby rival. Pressured, he handed over animals so old and sick that they could barely walk.¹⁸² Similarly, official designs called for no fewer than 450 horses to be sent to Peto, but as of mid-January only 2 had arrived, and a dashing Yucatecan cavalry failed to materialize.¹⁸³

But the most difficult item to procure was the soldier. Who served? Surviving rosters reveal a majority of Spanish surnames, supplemented with an appreciable presence of Mayas.¹⁸⁴ Soldiers in the Light Permanent Battalion of Valladolid were ranked according to a primitive IQ system: “good,” “bright,” “regular,” and “medium,” with only the commanding officer making it to “very good.”¹⁸⁵ Regardless of their ratings on this spurious scale, most were smart enough to perceive the drawbacks of military life. Daily rations consisted of five tortillas and a glass of pinole. Soldiers were reduced to eating putrid meat and *galleta picada*, or crumbled hard-tack. Along the frontier, civilians too dreaded the army and ran from its approach, fearing to lose their own scanty provisions. Even when food was available farther behind the lines, the lack of freighting made it difficult to

get it to the front. Peto, for example, had only fifty mules, many without proper pack fittings, and with three arrieros to guide them.¹⁸⁶ The men also received a daily half real, but quickly discovered that in the wartime frontier, no one had anything to sell, at least at official prices. Goods and supplies were either hoarded for personal use or sold elsewhere on the black market. By May even medio payments were two months in arrears, the result of a specie shortage after two decades of anarchy.¹⁸⁷

Hidalguía continued, but hidalgos themselves suffered. Even if not bearing arms, they ran the same risks as conscripts: witness the various reports of casualties among ancillaries.¹⁸⁸ The people most aware of the poor treatment of Maya hidalgos, or at least those most at liberty to express those complaints, were their wives. Maya women from Tecoh bitterly resented having their menfolk drawn away to the remoteness of Peto, where, they lamented, there was no one to wash their clothes or cook their food.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps the empire would have fared better if, as in Pancho Villa's División del Norte, the women had traveled with the men in order to provide services. But families who abandoned their property were liable to return to find strangers controlling their houses and fields; true too, the 1865 campaign lacked the popular support that characterized later revolutionary armies. These facts discouraged family-based armies.

This sorry state of affairs bode ill for an army of conquest. A few patricians, like Juan Ursaley of the Costa region, offered to raise two hundred men, but in fact most hacendados did everything possible to protect their workforce, and most soldiers came through a highly unpopular draft.¹⁹⁰ Many men simply did not present themselves for service despite warnings. Others managed to avoid being put on the recruitment lists in the first place. Most men were peons, and hence under the protection of a landowner with influence over the army's weak spot, the junta calificadora. Others managed to procure false papers testifying that they were jornaleros, when in reality they were nothing more than simple milpa farmers.¹⁹¹ To compensate for losses, the army conscripted those hapless souls legally defined as *vagos*, or vagrants.¹⁹² Primarily mestizos without village or occupation, they were the ideal soldiers for nineteenth-century Mexico, but their impressment cut deeply into the labor pool. And there was a reciprocal effect: as the war continued to disrupt local production, more and more people fit the description of *vago*, feeding the leaky sieve of the military rosters, expanding the war and its chaos, and further crippling rural production. Casanova's army also received periodic infusions of undesirables from central Mexico, a preview of porfirian Yucatán's role as the national gulag. For example, in April 1866 the general admitted fifty prisoners, mostly from Puebla and Veracruz, convicted on such unwholesome offenses as murder, robbery, and bestiality.¹⁹³

Recruitment of hacienda workers was particularly touchy. A decree of November 1, 1865, had authorized the drafting of peons to round out the militias. This antagonized estate owners, many of whom supported a revived Caste War as long as someone else's workers fought it out. Bowing to their wishes, Salazar suspended the decree two months later.¹⁹⁴ But *alcaldes* simply ignored the suspension, for they were under pressure to make up the difference in recruitments. *Hacendados* of places like Conkal felt little threat from the Caste War, had little interest in renewed campaigns, and deeply resented impressment of their workers.¹⁹⁵ Despite the obvious popular resistance, authorities continued to advance suspicious lists of "individuals who have voluntarily offered themselves . . . for the Caste War."¹⁹⁶

Those unlucky enough to escape recruitment often deserted, "for the most part carrying off their arms, and throwing them into the brush with the plates, cartridge pouches, and other articles that it has cost such effort to furnish them."¹⁹⁷ *Hacendados* harbored deserters who helped supplement the labor force, and military authorities had to conduct regular inspections to help combat the abuse.¹⁹⁸ Men deserted in large numbers each day, weakening the force of the battalion and inviting others to do the same. As Casanova remarked, "Desertion in this corps is utterly scandalous, and if I do not take energetic measures there will be no one left to serve."¹⁹⁹ Commanders found the lower officers encouraging wholesale desertion among the enlisted ranks. For example, Sergeant Marcelino Echeverría, stationed at Tzucacab, tried to start up a mass desertion among fellow *Sotutans*, but was apprehended.²⁰⁰ Deserters also fled from Valladolid; most did not even bother to take their rifles with them, suggesting that they did not have much intention of taking part in struggles for the nation or the republic, even if their actions did in a larger sense aid the Republican cause.²⁰¹ Similar difficulties prevailed in Campeche, where port captain Andrés Sotelo found it impossible to round up the requested one hundred men. And of thirty-eight listed on the *matrículas* of San Román, all but seven had fled, making for outlying haciendas and ranchos of the coast, where they were welcomed as additions to the labor force. Substitutes for these so-called *faltistas*, or draft fugitives, proved impossible to locate.²⁰² The opening death struggles of the empire fed the hacienda boom that had begun during the early Caste War, while the *hacendados* and *rancheros* themselves played a dual role: at bottom opposed to a regime that was bent on taking away their workforce and resources, they were nonetheless happy to sell provisions to the imperial-controlled cities to the very end, even when those cities were under siege of Republican forces.

While the empire focused its resources on the Tihosuco campaign and on equipping formal battalions, local communities had to fend for

themselves. They formed what were called *municipal guards*, volunteer or semicompulsory units that reflected local prosperity and population size. Seldom threatened, the tiny settlement at Cozumel had a mere twenty-five men.²⁰³ Panabá, more vulnerable and more populous, boasted nearly one hundred guardsmen.²⁰⁴ Of course, these were nothing next to those places where planters could use their considerable influence to mobilize protection for hacienda wealth. In Ticul, for example, latifundista par excellence Felipe Peón “recruited” no fewer than two hundred men to serve in the local guard.²⁰⁵ But these forces aided little in the Caste War, since the organizers themselves did all possible to keep manpower—especially defensive manpower—at home.

Beyond the matter of expenses lay the difficulty of dealing with a military in residence, a problem as troubling in 1866 as it had been in the 1850s. Much of the tension remained below the level of official record, but occasionally it peeps out. In Valladolid, much of the conflict lay between the ayuntamiento and the local military garrison, a conflict that had its roots in the military-civil rivalries that had emerged in the wake of the Caste War. When the alcalde and ayuntamiento hosted a public gathering in the central plaza, doubtless the last thing they were expecting was an attack by a public drunk. The alcalde summoned a police escort to throw him in jail, but it turned out that the drunk was a soldier, and members of the local garrison rose up to prevent him from being subjected to civil authority. A throwback to the old argument of the fueros, the military prevailed in this instance.²⁰⁶ In other cases as well, the military continued to pose a thorn in the ribs of the civilian world, even frustrating the intentions of imperial tax collectors by confiscating their revenues to cover war expenses.²⁰⁷

By the first half of 1866, then, war-related pressures had pushed the peninsula toward grassroots rebellion. One index of the situation’s untenability was the flood of resignations. The explanation was largely fiscal: in places such as Valladolid, the subprefects could no longer pay employees as a result of the financially ruinous campaign; the only advice their superior prefects provided was to appeal to patriotism and honor until funds for a payroll could be found.²⁰⁸ State employees throughout Yucatán began to tender their resignations in early 1866, even before the debacle at Tihosuco. They papered over their actions with morally unimpeachable excuses—ill health, personal crisis, the pressing affairs of their estate—but the real explanation was imperial insolvency.²⁰⁹ More information on the empty-till problem comes from Maxcanú, where the man appointed as alcalde municipal in September 1865 was Leonido Lara, owner of a local liquor store. Bureaucratic conflict had prevented the approval of the town’s arbitrio system, and so there was no pay for operating an ever-

increasing set of responsibilities that included, among other things, the registro civil. The only reward that could be handed down to him was an exemption from the *patente*, or liquor sales tax.²¹⁰ This same kind of pay surfaces in the case of Eduardo Badillo, named supplier (*vivandero*) of the First Brigade in Peto. Like Lara, Badillo operated a cantina, a lucrative enterprise that could be more so if freed from state taxes. His exemption put him well ahead of local competitors, understandably livid over Badillo's sweetheart deal. The empire's private contracting system thus created islands of support by selecting favored individuals, but at the same time infuriated competitors who resented the obvious favoritism. There was indeed money in the peninsula, but it had to be coaxed out through devices such as arbitrios, liquor sales, and forced loans, and was not given freely or systematically for the support of the state. The ayuntamiento came to rely on arbitrio receipts from barrio fiestas, such as that of Santiago, to make up the back pay of the city's teachers.²¹¹

The resignations reflected the regime's visibly sagging political fortunes. The problems of trying to centralize a chaotic, decentralized region kept Mérida's alcalde Angel Toledo sweating at his desk until eleven every night, and still he fell under the swelling wave of paperwork.²¹² Even as Maximilian's regime tottered, Toledo struggled with the latest imperial project, which was to normalize the operations of city illumination; lighting and maintenance of the *quinqués*, or tube-fed oil lamps, had always been farmed out through public auction, like other city services, but the empire planned to assume responsibility of this too, via a standing commission.²¹³ Toledo labored on, but the situation prompted less-dedicated men to turn in their badges. These resignations normally advanced some problem such as poor health or the call of personal affairs, but clustered in the early months of 1866.²¹⁴

But resignations were numerically insignificant next to the thousands of requests for exemption from military service. Like the letters of resignation, exemption requests came with all manner of justification. The majority pleaded that they had already provided goods or money. In Ticul the Maya church staff, now reverting to its traditional colonial status under conservative rule, begged exemption from worldly duties.²¹⁵ It underscored imperial contradictions that the government mostly chose to honor these requests: insistent on a war that would disrupt the lives of locals both high and low, it lacked the will or ability to muster enough forces to win that war.

The revulsion against military service once more reinforced bonds between hacendado and peon, thereby laying the groundwork for the later porfirian-age hacienda system. As part of the empire's broad (if ultimately shallow) pro-Indian initiative, its draft laws favored Maya peons

over their Hispanic counterparts. These racial preferences infuriated non-Maya servants in haciendas such as Dzidzilché, outside Chuburná; drafted into the Mérida cuartel and unable to shift the burden to perceived racial inferiors, they informed on other hacendados harboring workers like themselves.²¹⁶ Similar dynamics underlay the case of two workers who had fled from the estate of Padre Juan Pablo Ancona in Hachó. Ancona is now better known for authoring a brief report on superstitions among the Maya peasantry, but in his own lifetime depended more heavily on revenues from his private estate of Noh Balam (Great Jaguar). When his workers left to seek better opportunities, Ancona declared them deserters and had them arrested by a private labor recruiter.²¹⁷ The threat was effective, since anything was better than falling into the hands of the army. But it does mark a trend of a milder treatment of Maya and a different, harsher treatment of Hispanic workers. Hispanics were in such cases the victims of their own racism, since they were deemed more reliable as soldiers. These policies made Maya peonage a more desirable condition than it might otherwise have been and also helped winnow non-Mayas out of the hacienda labor force.

Not all deserters were prepared to hide out passively in the haciendas and frontier areas, and some began preparing for armed resistance. By March 1866 reports were beginning to drift in regarding men who had fled from the army but had taken their arms with them. A series of arrests in communities near Izamal (Cacalchén and Motul) revealed a ring of escaped soldiers, both Hispanic and Maya, who were trafficking arms. Their wares, mostly stolen from the army, included both the old-fashioned, long-barreled shotguns popularly known as *espingardas*, as well as the new percussion rifles that were beginning to circulate throughout the country.²¹⁸ Moreover, this ring of deserters, peons, and firearms operated with the blessing and protection of hacendado Leocadio Moguel, who not only welcomed the men into his employ, but struggled with the bureaucracy to have them set free.²¹⁹ Far from being isolated cases of criminal mischief, these small networks of men and firearms were the beginnings of a renewed civil war that was about to sweep the southeast.

The man whom fortune chose to address these spiraling abuses hailed from the modestly successful Martínez family of Baca, some ninety kilometers east of Mérida. Patriarch José Isidro Martínez built most of the family empire and owned the hacienda K'uxub (achiote), a relatively small estate with a mere thirty-six residents.²²⁰ Throughout his life José Isidro occupied numerous small political roles. In 1853, for example, he joined with all the other local elites in seconding the Plan of Jalisco, the orchestrated wave of support that brought Rómula Díaz de la Vega to power.²²¹ Martínez subsequently served as comisario municipal under

Pedro Ampudia. Although the Martínez group had a powerful rival in the clique centering around the Gamboa family, the two usually worked together, at least at a superficial level.

For them as for so many, family was the key to life. In 1835 José Isidro's marriage to Apolonia Basto produced Buenaventura, the second of seven children. The latter was twelve years old at the outbreak of the Caste War, and for that reason took no part in the initial struggle. Rather, he matured during the brief window of peace that preceded the Liberal Reform. In 1854 Buenaventura Martínez married Ramona Lara, a local lass, and by the time of the Revolt of Ayutla, the couple, together with their son, José Pilar, had established themselves in the community. Martínez became a merchant and landowner and outshone elder brother Francisco in most regards.²²² While Buenaventura and his father fit the description of small-town patriarchs, family prestige dwindled considerably only one or two removes from either individual. Buenaventura's mother was illiterate; her side of the family, the Basto group, was a large clan that included many people of lower means. Some spoke only Maya, and many were married to individuals with such last names as Pech and Cauich.²²³ Finally, ties of *padrazgo*, or godfathership, bound Buenaventura and his father to poor folks of the town.²²⁴ They looked to the Martínez family to provide a margin of aid and security in a world wracked by the two decades of *violencia*. Rather than a family apart from other families then, the nucleus of Martínez and his wife, Ramona Lara, stood in the center of a web of relations that radiated outward into poor elements, both Maya and Hispanic, of the Baca community.

Rebels are often men with a past, and the caudillo of Baca was no exception. The quarrel that first placed Buenaventura Martínez in the legal limelight was the stuff of which small-town Mexico was made. In 1854 a close friend of Martínez, a certain Ladislao Cantón, fell into a legal quarrel with a group of enemies, one of whom happened to be the brother-in-law of Baca's juez de paz, Francisco Gamboa, a person whom Martínez considered to be "a shameless man, a pig, someone suited only for a pigsty." Cantón won the case, but thereafter Baca remained split into two camps, each with a municipal authority at its head. On one hand there was the faction under Comisario Municipal José Isidro Martínez; on the other, the partisans of Gamboa, who were in turn better connected to military governor Pedro Ampudia. In the waning days of Ampudia's rule, trouble erupted in that incubator of brawls, the public dance. There, Pedro Acosta (no less a person, in fact, than the cura of Izamal and a partisan of Gamboa) fell into a fistfight with Buenaventura Martínez and Cantón. Gamboa tried to arrest the two, but Martínez the elder intervened, while Buenaventura himself, armed with a saber, managed to jump on his horse and

escape to Mérida, where he was eventually arrested. Though lenient, the ruling in the case favored Gamboa, and the two young rowdies were sentenced to time served. Four years later Martínez again ran afoul of the law when he was arrested for badmouthing town officials “and for singing satirical songs.”²²⁵ Strange as it may seem, within these trivial fracas lay the seeds of greater things: Buenaventura Martínez the impetuous rebel, the leader of men, the opponent of Mexico-sponsored centralists, the man who answered political abuse with force.²²⁶

In 1859 Buenaventura Martínez watched as Pablo Silveira marched his army of angry Maya peasants through the streets of Baca (see Chapter 4). “If we try to determine the origin of the Indian uprising,” his father said, “we do not have to look to distant times, but rather to the year 1840 in which for the first time Indians became involved in the intestine political dissensions of the country.”²²⁷ He knew of his father’s warning not to raise the indios, but Buenaventura, like Imán, soon forgot that warning when given the need and the opportunity. Or else he drew a different conclusion: popular uprisings can work.

Enter into this tiny-town tableau the empire. Like so many Yucatecans, the Martínez family initially cooperated with the campaign, albeit out of necessity. Having come into a small inheritance, Buenaventura became a major in the Baca unit of the National Guard. His only known service was to lead a picket of men to Izamal in August of 1864, and his only known battles were against recurring fever. However, abundant evidence indicates that something was wrong in Baca, and that much of it touched Martínez directly. At least two of Martínez’s cousins had deserted by mid-1865.²²⁸ Nor were they alone: Baca was experiencing the same grassroots rejection of formal military service seen elsewhere. To take only one example, hidalgo José Manuel Moo deserted once from the Neuelá canton, south of Sotuta, only to be captured, returned, and sent to Mérida for further service.²²⁹ Humans were not the only victims, for in April, Motul’s subprefect began the process of requisitioning mules.²³⁰ Finally, local politics suffered from instability, given resignations for “ill health” in both Baca and Mochochá within a few days of one another.²³¹ Martínez could hardly have been satisfied to see Prudencio Gamboa, a member of the town’s rival family, appointed juez de paz in January 1865.²³² In sum, Baca, like many other communities, was suffering numerous strains in the first year of the empire.

Martínez was ideally positioned to lead the 1866 revolt for the simple fact that he had suppressed the previous challenge to local authority. When Juan de Dios Silveira complained about Gamboa’s high-handed treatment, the latter sent Captain Martínez and a group of soldiers to have the other arrested.²³³ This was hardly palatable for a man who

hated Gamboa as much as Martínez did, and for those versed in the currents of Mexican politics proved an accurate omen of rebellions to come, just as Victoriano Huerta's suppression of Pascual Orozco's revolt positioned the former to overthrow President Madero.

Armed insurrection against the empire's southeast branch began on June 12, 1866. Buenaventura Martínez opened his career as political outlaw by raiding the town of Mochochá; on June 7 his gang, which numbered some forty to fifty men, all of whom were military deserters, overran the local barracks, killing two and wounding seven. They briefly captured the comisario municipal, Manuel Valle, but released him and retreated to Martínez's hometown of Baca, where they made off with a far more valuable prize, the contributions collection.²³⁴ The Seventh Division, under the command of Colonel José María Adalid, poured out of Mérida, hoping to nail Martínez in Mochochá. But the rebel and his men had just evacuated. The next day, June 13, the army reached Baca, but again the wily Martínez had fled. The imperialists' only satisfaction was capturing Martínez's father on his hacienda, K'uxub. From him and another captured gang member, they learned that Martínez had taken a squadron of soldiers in Izamal, stripped them of their weapons, and turned them loose. And in Baca he squeezed eighty pesos out of the local tax collector.²³⁵

Somehow the Martínez gang managed to survive. Authorities knew that they were hiding somewhere in the monte, but were unable to engage them.²³⁶ During July the revolutionaries were occasionally seen on rural roads of Motul partido; they traveled in two separate groups, dressed as hunters, but always with their military-issue rifles, and maintaining sullen silence when encountered.²³⁷ For the next six months Martínez continued a surprisingly strong resistance, not in the hinterlands, but rather only a brief distance from Mérida.

Emboldened by the dramatic events of Baca, other discontents soon launched copycat rebellions. What was required at that moment was Martínez's strike against a key psychological barrier, namely, the aura of invincibility that had hitherto enveloped the empire's southeastern branch. The most important of these early imitations came toward the close of the following August, in the town of Dzitbalché. The ringleaders, brothers Laureano and José de los Angeles Rodríguez, appealed to the masses by insisting that Maximilian had decreed the reinstatement of Spanish despotism. This much was believable, in the way that almost anything said out in the remoteness of the countryside was believable: but what exactly was Spanish despotism in the minds of the rebels' audience? The return of *encomienda*? Of the head taxes paid to the church in the days before the Liberal Reform? Of institutionalized racial inferiority? The documents remain silent on this point, but in fact all three of the foregoing suggestions are



FIGURE 5.2

The ayuntamiento of Mocochoá. The revolt against the empire's southeastern branch began here on June 16, 1866, under the leadership of Buenaventura Martínez. After robbing the town's tax collections, he left a sardonic IOU for "the sum of eighty pesos which I have taken by force." Photograph by Terry Rugeley.

plausible. Perhaps this rallying cry's most potent appeal lay in its vagueness: since few were alive who could clearly remember the days of Spanish colonialism, the threat of its return created a dark closet in which a frightened and war-torn people could place their deepest fears. Whatever Rodríguez meant and his audience heard, the appeal clearly carried weight, since the Dzitbalché gang did in fact include an unstated number of Maya constituents. An army detachment from Calkiní managed to quell the revolt almost as soon as it started, but its instigators fled to the *pacífico* settlement of Mesapich, where they contributed to the growing political convulsions that accompanied the late empire in southern Campeche state.²³⁸

Dzitbalché merely served as a warm-up for the real rebellion. Anti-imperial disaffection swelled uncontrollably following the Yucatecan army's mauling, when rebel forces besieged and nearly overran them at Tihosuco, a siege that lasted from August 3 to September 6, 1866.²³⁹ The Martínez revolt had unintentionally contributed to the army's embarrassment by drawing away both infantry and cavalry even as the siege was un-

der way.²⁴⁰ Imperial leaders naturally looked for the positive spin and hailed the breaking of the siege as a triumph, while meridianos read overblown triumphal poetry in public gatherings.²⁴¹ Always a haven for hawks, the ayuntamiento of war-torn Tizimín also kept up its petitions to bring the war to a successful conclusion.²⁴² But this enthusiasm failed to resonate with the larger population, particularly among those who were to be levied, and in this regard the Tihosuco fiasco marked a turning point in the power of the empire in southeast Mexico. Although doubtless such was not their intention, the indios sublevados who besieged the town ended by irreparably weakening the imperial power structure. The campaign had cost a fortune in terms of both money and political capital. Perhaps those who had suffered most were the citizens of Tihosuco; the only thing that could be done for these hapless souls was to waive their contribution debts for the siege months of August and September.²⁴³ Conscripts reacted far differently and took their narrow escape as a sign that it was time to give up the soldiering life once and for all.

Elsewhere another serious threat was brewing. By late summer 1866 the U.S. Civil War had ended, U.S. support had begun to flow to the juarecistas, and the French army was retreating from northern Mexico.²⁴⁴ In October 1866 Pablo García, Campeche's Liberal ideologue, organized a force of some two hundred men near San Juan Bautista, under the leadership of commander Francisco Vidaña. This well-armed group worked their way down the river to the coast, then made for García's ultimate destination, Campeche.²⁴⁵ General Casanova readied troops in Hecelchakán to defend against the feared invasion from Tabasco but found his efforts hamstrung by massive desertions, aided in grand part by "the seduction that the enemies of the empire know how to employ so effectively."²⁴⁶

In October 1866 Salazar Ilarregui resumed his original post as the peninsula's imperial commissar. Despite the disappointments of the past two years, the Yucatecan clergy still held Salazar in high regard and welcomed his return.²⁴⁷ The pious held prayer vigils for Carlota, then stricken with an untimely illness. But Salazar's return coincided with new difficulties. Autumn 1866 witnessed poor harvests in the south, at least in the vicinity of Hopelchén, which was notoriously dry.²⁴⁸ Regime insolvency compounded the sense of failure and unpopularity that surrounded the renewed Caste War. This problem made itself felt at all political levels. On March 2 Salazar Ilarregui imposed a new 1.5 percent tax on capital; the regime normally cosseted Spanish merchants, a mainstay of the peninsular economy, but expelled Iberians such as Juan Planas and imposed a 50 percent confiscation when they refused to pay.²⁴⁹ At a local level, authorities in such municipalities as Tekantó struggled over the pittance (\$6.20) that they gouged from the burial of Maya peasants.²⁵⁰ The public deficit hurt

everyone: middle-class urban merchants could expect to pay \$20 a year in taxes by this point.²⁵¹ The peninsular branch of the empire became something of a *multa* economy, since multas, or fines, figured prominently in state revenues. The Mérida ayuntamiento took in nearly \$100 per month on assorted small fines ranging from 4 centavos to \$5.²⁵² Doubtless some, perhaps the majority, were justified; nevertheless, these fines brought the cumulative exasperation that small service fees produce in the modern age and to some extent played a role in bringing down this, the last gasp of old-style Mexican conservatism.

Tihosuco was also a deep psychological disappointment. Like Argentina's Falklands War, the plight of expeditionary-force-turned-besieged-heroes briefly inflamed public passions and ended with a sense of disillusionment. When the siege was at its height, the entire ayuntamiento of Tekax, led by the presidente, resigned to form a cavalry unit for the relief of the soldiers. The sequel was equally bizarre: more interested in maintaining local political institutions than fostering autonomous militias, the prefect threw them all in jail before these overage conquistadors had a chance to mount their horses!²⁵³ In reality, the prefect had good reason to be cautious. Pay for public employees was so far in arrears that if one man resigned, a flood of similar resignations was likely to follow.

In the last months of 1866, funding had virtually evaporated everywhere. In Hopelchén contributions that should have reached \$135 for an eight-month period barely tallied up to \$17.²⁵⁴ With so few options, Yucatán's political prefect imitated his Liberal predecessors in yet another way: he suggested to Bishop Guerra's successor, Leandro Rodríguez, that he and the rest of the clergy pay a quota to help fund the war. This suggestion, coming as it did at the end of a series of economic and institutional calamities that had befallen the peninsular clergy since the 1830s, naturally angered Gala and his subordinates.²⁵⁵

Meanwhile, Buenaventura Martínez rolled forward. His revolt scored a major triumph on December 30, 1866, when a detachment of eighty-four men from the Ninth Battalion revolted. Unlike the original pronouncement by Martínez, the Hunucmá uprising is well documented and presents some insight into the mentalities and dynamics that informed pro-Republican troop mutinies. The soldiers, under the command of French officers Jules Segut and Sublieutenant Antoine Leconte, were traveling from Mérida to Sisal. Though not stated, their probable destination was either to go to the relief of Maximilian in central Mexico or else to shore up imperial fortunes farther down the west coast, in Campeche or Tabasco. The unit had recently been drawn from Valladolid, and because the soldiers were current in their pay, it was believed that Salazar Ilarregui

still commanded their loyalty. But as with the Imán revolt eighteen years earlier, it was precisely the threat of combat in foreign regions that provoked the soldiers to rebel; the force of authority, together with the onus of self-sacrifice, decreased the farther one moved from home. The troops had been drinking heavily since their departure at 11:00 P.M.; when their carriages (a type of regional vehicle known as *volankochés*) reached Hunucmá at 4:00 A.M. for the customary halfway rest stop and a cup of chocolate, trouble erupted almost immediately. The leader of the rebellion, a certain Sergeant Leonido Váldez, roused the men with cries of “Death to the Empire!” and “Long live Juárez!” then rallied them to the plaza, where the rebels shot Segut and dumped his body in the patio of the ayuntamiento. Váldez seized Leconte’s shipment of coins; prudent enough to pay his insurrectionists in advance, he allowed each man to reach into the chest for a single handful of lucre. Leconte and a tiny group of loyalists were permitted to escape to Sisal. The entire revolt had taken less than two hours.²⁵⁶

With his men properly animated, Váldez set out for Baca, where he placed his forces under the command of Martínez. Unfortunately, things had begun to go wrong. When the revolt began, the company’s team of young carriage drivers substituted empty carriages for those with ammunition, so that Váldez, in his haste, made off with nothing in the way of arms or munitions. Moreover, the experience was confusing for the soldiers themselves. Most thought that they were marching for Mérida—home for many—only to be startled by an abrupt detour to the east. The detour to Baca mystified the hungover soldiers who had murdered Commander Segut, but it made perfect sense to authorities, who received word almost immediately of the deserters’ whereabouts.²⁵⁷ Martínez was exceptionally active at the time of their rebellion, staging robberies in Sitilpech and Yaxkukul, apparently in anticipation of a larger initiative.²⁵⁸ Many of those later questioned did not even know of the Baca insurgency; so it was that on the following Wednesday they found themselves sober once more and marching under an unfamiliar command toward Bécál and Calkiní, where Martínez hoped to join up with Republican sympathizers from Campeche.

The Caudillo of Baca needed a victory in Calkiní, and in order to bring in as much support as possible, he sent a dozen letters to imperial military officers of the area, urging them to come over to the Republican side.²⁵⁹ He also tried to create a more formal political structure for his movement. On January 14, 1867, Martínez and twenty of his officers met in the town of Halachó, where they issued their only programmatic statement on the rebellion. Avoiding sensitive specifics such as the future of the Caste War, their *bases*, or fundamental points, demanded the recognition of Benito

Juárez as president, the restoration of the 1857 Constitution and the Reform laws, guarantees of political rights for all citizens, and speedy elections for all state offices.²⁶⁰ Sadly, final victory would have to wait. Imperial forces had harassed Martínez since the Hunucmá incident and managed to rout his rebels in Calkiní on January 20. Many were captured and placed under arrest; they were sentenced to the customary drawing of lots to determine who would die, but at the last minute the executions were commuted, and the rebels, who may have actually been more enthusiastic participants than their testimony claimed, were allowed to live.²⁶¹ Imperial communications boasted of the high casualty rate among the defeated Republicans, as well as the dismantling of their fortifications.²⁶² Martínez himself managed to escape and eventually went on to become a colonel in the Motul unit of the National Guard, in the restored republic.²⁶³ Even in this victory, there were signs of severe weaknesses in the imperial forces. The man who led the attack against Martínez, Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Moreno, was so short of money that he had to ask for loans from private citizens in order to keep the campaign alive, even after the Hunucmá rebels had been trounced.²⁶⁴ On the very day of the battle a Hispanic-Maya contingency that was guarding one of his cannons fled to Campeche and took the weapon with them, in order to join it to the forces of the Republican siege.²⁶⁵ Meanwhile, a military revolt in Río Lagartos only failed because of torrential rains.²⁶⁶

Martínez tasted defeat, but his revolt had set the stage for the return of a far more powerful caudillo. The January 14 bases had also contained a fifth and final clause, one that came to erase Martínez's achievement from later histories: understanding the importance of personalism, Martínez decided to recognize Manuel Cepeda Peraza as the commander in chief of all Yucatecan forces and invited him to return to assume control.²⁶⁷ Cepeda Peraza had taken a hand in the conspiracies that birthed the Caste War, served as a military officer in the early years of anti-Maya repression, and supported the 1853 coup of General Díaz de la Vega, only to pronounce against Díaz some months later; thereafter he had remained in the Liberal camp and had fled to Havana with the coming of the empire. The circumstances of his return remain murky; Cepeda does appear to have kept in touch with the broad contours of peninsular events from his Havana exile, to have secretly reentered Yucatán at some point after the Mochochá raid, and to have remained hidden somewhere in Mérida.²⁶⁸ A key question therefore arises: Why did Martínez cede leadership to Cepeda in the bases? Perhaps Martínez originally envisioned placing his army under Cepeda's command. The problem here is that no evidence connects Cepeda to the original uprising, and he himself made no effort to claim credit, even when it was to his political advantage. More likely, Buenaventura Martínez de-

cided to subordinate his forces to Cepeda when it became clear that he himself lacked the reputation, connections, or military skill to carry on a resistance outside of Baca. This explanation seems the more persuasive. In all probability, Martínez did know something of Cepeda and his family. Although hardly adjacent, Temax and Baca lay in the same geographical subregion of Yucatán, and for two decades Cepeda had built a reputation as a military leader. Moreover, in 1860 Martínez had briefly served as captain under Cepeda's brother Andrés in the sixth company of riflemen, although this in itself did not necessarily prove a close relation.²⁶⁹ Whatever the final answer, it is clear that Martínez's moment became the Cepeda saga only after a six-month gestation, when the rebellion's growing proportions forced it to transcend Baca-level quarrels and to seek out broader symbols and higher-profile actors: put simply, Cepeda Peraza stood on Martínez's shoulders.

These were the early military and political events of the anti-imperialist struggle. Less clear are the effects that the war wrought upon common citizens. Was Republican occupation of secondary cities a terrible scourge or business as usual? As with central Mexico during the Reform War, the gradual triumph of Liberal forces included persecution of the party's old enemy, the church. Perhaps it was the anticlerical, anticonservative fervor that led people to accuse Padre Francisco Burgos of the rape of María Isabel Chuc, "in a holy place and with violence." This is the only such known case, but may well have been trumped up, since it collapsed without detailed investigation and without ruling.²⁷⁰ Vicente Marín, cura of Izamal, would later reflect on "those terrible days in which we found ourselves, by reason of the Republican forces that occupied us." However, the padre cited nothing more outrageous than having to hand over the keys of the cemetery to the jefe político (who later handed them back).²⁷¹ Was this nothing more than the shock of defeat, the final fall of clerical authority, or had real outrages seared public memory? Marín and others remained silent.

The regime's hold over the peninsula was in serious danger by January 1867, but all was not lost. Salazar still controlled Mérida and Campeche, and he responded to the challenge by declaring a state of siege. No one could pass through the city gates after 6:00 P.M.; individual liberties were suspended; and anything that smacked of public gathering, specifically the ringing of church bells, was expressly prohibited.²⁷² Moreover, he had powerful friends among the conservative caudillos of the Oriente. Felipe Navarrete became commander of Valladolid's two líneas against the rebels. Francisco Cantón, who continued to trouble stability with his charismatic personality and Conservative politics, remained firmly in charge of the Sultanness of the East.²⁷³

There remains, of course, the question of how much people really knew of these events, for the greatest transmission (and mistransmission) of news took place through rumor and gossip. And information passed through official channels was hardly more reliable. The December 1866 town meeting of Teya offers a case in point. On the eighteenth, the comisario municipal gathered all the village principales together and explained what was happening in the larger stage of Mexico: the Emperor Maximilian, his struggle with the wicked Liberals, his noble vision for Mexico's future, his "heroic determination" to return to his throne in Mexico City. In fact, Maximilian *was* still ruling in Mexico City, but who could be certain? The true sentiments of the principales remain shrouded; in public, at least, they acknowledged Maximilian's wisdom and voiced support for the emperor and his commisario, Salazar.²⁷⁴

For average citizens, and particularly for those who owned a little more than the rest, the defense of the empire was in some ways worse than the rebellion itself. The church of Tunkás offers a case in point. Occupied in 1865 by soldiers en route to defend Tihosuco, it was again requisitioned the following year by the forces of Daniel Traconis, out of Valladolid. Soldiers scandalized the dispossessed Padre Cosme Bobadilla by hanging their laundry from the church doors and even the altars.²⁷⁵ The threat of these armed bands, as well as a fear of general unrest and lawlessness, emerged at many levels. These included the repúblicas de indígenas: in Ticul, for example, the república now included no fewer than nine *alguaciles* (sheriffs) and fifteen *tupiles* (two was an early national norm), a sign that the regime was having its problems.²⁷⁶

With lesser towns falling into Republican control, both Mérida and Campeche eventually became the scene of prolonged and painful sieges. In January 1867, with Cepeda Peraza's loyalists now controlling large stretches of the countryside, Conservative meridianos made a last attempt to rally around their failing cause. Fearing the worst both personally and professionally, Salazar drew out his will. The comisario was not a wealthy man; he owned little beyond houses in Mexico City and Mérida and a list of people who owed him money.²⁷⁷ At the same time, long-impoorished Franciscans who still held out against modernity in the convent of Mejo-rada supported the cause. With the blessing of the convent's president, layman José Dolores Baldizón put together a citizen's militia of twenty-five men there to defend Salazar Ilarregui against the "rebels and pronouncers."²⁷⁸ As late as April 5, the commisar was still in command, although his surviving communications were restricted to Mérida, his prison. Even as the regime collapsed, he worked with the Ecclesiastical Cabildo to secure a donation for the Universidad Literaria, forerunner of today's state university.²⁷⁹

Personal letters dating from the siege of Mérida give some idea of the

stress in which average citizens lived. Manuel Cecilio Villanos had his home destroyed by cannonades on the night of April 24. He and his family fled the city under a rain of bullets and went to their hacienda Kilinché, where he remained until after the fall.²⁸⁰ The siege was terrible, but as Villanos's case demonstrates, it was still possible for noncombatants to come and go even in the final weeks. In this affair the rich suffered alongside the poor. To finance the city's defense, Salazar imposed a forced contribution on fifteen prominent Spanish merchants of the city, who paid, but only under protest.²⁸¹ It was the only instance when a political crisis actually shut down the city's economic life, since during the height of the siege it became impossible to locate an escribano, and (in contrast to the Caste War) notary production actually ceased.²⁸²

The Republicans proved remarkably restrained for victors in a brutal civil war. In Yucatán itself, Manuel Cepeda Peraza lived up to his reputation for being relatively humane (that is, for a military officer during a twenty-year civil war), and from his camp in the eastern barrio of Mejo-rada, he tried to bring the siege of Mérida to a bloodless conclusion. To persuade the imperialists to go quietly, Cepeda assembled a packet of foreign newspapers that had reached his hands; although slightly back-dated, they proved that French troops had withdrawn from central Mexico, and that no further support was forthcoming.²⁸³ On June 15, four days before Maximilian's execution, Cepeda Peraza allowed Salazar to go into a New York exile, and "the so-called empire" in southeast Mexico collapsed. Only in Campeche, under the implacable Pablo García, did former imperialists go to the firing squad.

If the Yucatecan version of the empire teaches anything, it is the importance of nominality and the lengths to which people will go to defend practices that exist more in name than fact. Indeed, the imperial years offered no abrupt departure from what came before or after, and while Yucatecan Conservatives made their last serious attempt to turn the world right side up, it was clear how little they differed from their Liberal foils. Only a fringe group believed in somehow reenchanting daily life through religion, much less installing priests in the Palacio de Gobierno. Conservatives—whether homegrown or of the proconsular stripe—made no serious attempt to solve the decades-old problem of church funding. True, they no longer used the church as a fiscal milk cow, but mainly because the cow had long since gone dry. If spirituality existed at all, the piety of men such as Felipe Navarrete stood secondary to issues of employment, patronage, and Caste War. Yet the old shibboleths of religion somehow remained a rallying cry for enemies of the Juárez movement. Whether those shibboleths could have ever become something more substantial is a question condemned forever to the disembodied world of counterfactuals.

Politics too had its nominality. Both Republicans and imperialists expected agro-export economies controlled by landowners, and in fact, the Civil War-related cotton boom gave those landowners new clout. Imperialists lived up to their centralist reputations by imposing certain restraints on land and labor usage, but the modesty of their proposals, together with the irregularity of their application, limited the effect. Imperial policies were so easy to circumvent that passive resistance proved better than rebellion. The greater conflict was not so much landowning Liberals against pious bureaucrats, but rather small-town patricians like Buenaventura Martínez against military entrepreneurs motivated by war contracting, potential profits from slaving, and megalomaniac visions of ethnic conquest. By now most public actors had embraced authoritarianism, but the difference lay in the nominal participation that Liberals demanded: in the matters of gubernatorial elections (very much confined to elite cliques) and in the return of ayuntamientos (which had ceased to have much real power next to the *jefes*). In this regard the next important brick of the porfirian order had already come into place. For southeasterners the nominal trappings of democratic practice mattered, perhaps for psychological reasons, perhaps to give a chance to excluded *camarrillas*, perhaps as a way of sopping up discontent, or perhaps as nothing more than some vestigial ideal that a people clung to as a measure of themselves.

The most prickly question regarding the empire concerns its ethnic relations. Imperialists apparently saw Mayas as less dangerous than Hispanics, less susceptible to the sirens of Mexican nationalism, and less likely to oppose foreign-sponsored manipulations. If so, the new rulers were probably correct: existing documentation does not support the idea of a Maya-based Mexican nationalism, unless one is willing to bend the definition of nationalism and national identity to accommodate virtually any reference to the state and its functions. It has also been suggested that peasant uprisings played a nationwide role in preventing the establishment of conservative regimes.²⁸⁴ This may have been true somewhere, but in the Yucatecan case it was only inadvertently so. The renewed offensives of Chan Santa Cruz had preceded the empire by a good eight years and became the empire's cause through inheritance, nothing more. Within the pacified areas, no peasant uprisings took place until wartime pressures drove peasants of the central north to rally under Martínez. Indeed, the problem had to do with the return of an old form of violence, one that most peasants wanted to put behind them. Peasants had no quarrel with imperial strategies, only with the ruinous military levies to which they were victim. What is certain is that peasants too became disgusted with the revived Caste War, and almost exclusively for that reason, turned against an empire that had purportedly come to their rescue.

A World (Mostly) Restored

The Paradoxes of the Republic



Unburdened of its imperial logo, Mexico now embarked with hope on the road to a better future. Public deference followed authority, and on June 15 the citizens of Sisal began what became a public ritual by gathering to proclaim allegiance to Manuel Cepeda Peraza, just as they had once proclaimed their opposition, and later loyalty, to the empire.¹ These dubious affirmations generated the illusion of stability that the war-tossed Mexicans craved. Public schools, the vehicles by which triumphant Liberals hoped to transform Mexico, also lent their services, imparting lessons of stoicism, justice, and law-abiding tranquility. In war-torn Espita, for example, young Darío Quetzal spent his afternoons copying Seneca-like maxims: “Compare the inner regret of the wicked with the inner calm of the just and pure soul,” he counseled.²

Perhaps the adults should have copied these maxims instead. Despite its initial optimism, the Restoration soon proved a time of anger and frustration, yet another decade of chaos. Nine years later, Yucatecans were ready for the revolution of Porfirio Díaz. Paradoxes stymied the victorious Republic, and while the French had decamped, armed men still prowled the countryside, not unlike those unleashed in Germany following the Thirty Years War. The Restored Republic (1867–76) remains largely unexplored, and what works do exist disagree over the ultimate significance of these years. One view, enamored of the Liberal statesmen and written from a metropolitan perspective, sees the Restoration as one of the few moments when public institutions and free political debate flourished in Mexico.³ A more skeptical version argues that chronic state-level infighting led Benito Juárez and Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada to construct a political machine.⁴ Seen from the park benches of towns like Baca, the latter vision of Restoration chaos is the more persuasive of the two. Political chicanery persisted,

even though the people, including Maya peons and small farmers, did manage to win some of the demands that motivated them to take up arms behind Martínez. Still, pronouncements and patriotic celebrations could not conceal the fact that Republican Yucatán suspiciously resembled the empire. What explains this story of a restoration gone wrong? What had changed, what had not, and why?

RESTORATIONS WITHOUT REMEDIES:
POLITICAL LIFE AFTER THE EMPIRE

Perhaps the most prominent continuity was that of political behavior. For pueblos the Restoration resurrected visions of democracy and self-rule, the storied *municipio libre* that always glinted just beyond the horizon. Several factors help explain why bad habits of the past undermined these ideals, the first of which was a profound disjunction between city and the country. A year or so after the anti-imperial wars, the Mérida leisure class was already back to its old hothouse indifference: for them, strolls in the plaza offered “a flower-scented atmosphere on whose subtle wings waft the cadences of a music that tenderly infiltrates the heart.”⁵ No such wafting in the countryside, where lives were hard. Lacking rapid travel and communication, and poorly informed of affairs in outlying communities, *meridanos* left the old top-down administrative machine in place, relying on the *jefes* to carry out instructions and to provide peace, order, and support in exchange for broad discretionary power.

At the same time, there was no dominant *caudillo* with a broom large enough to sweep away the past, even if so inclined. *Caudillos* fared poorly here, in part because Mérida elites chafed against being dominated by anyone not of their own club. For this reason Liborio Irigoyen briefly contested Cepeda’s control of the Liberal party, but the latter controlled the army and still resented Irigoyen’s role in the 1857 revolts. Urban *políticos* lacked rural roots, and the few men who straddled both worlds died young. Manuel Cepeda Peraza’s death on March 3, 1869, from tuberculosis (that gaunt look on his statue is not artistic convention) left the political landscape without a leader.⁶ But more intimate details of his life remain elusive. Newspapers suffered from that vagueness characteristic of the era’s journalism, in which poetic encomiums, like Platonic forms, were considered a truer form of knowledge than mere biographical fact. Reportage dwelt on his abstract glory: stretching over days and covering whole pages of newsprint, the articles contained virtually no concrete information.⁷ Jacinto Cuevas, a local composer, band-

master, and fanatical spiritualist, penned a special funeral march for the occasion.⁸

Buenaventura Martínez soon followed. As Cepeda Peraza consolidated control over the areas outside of Mérida, the captain of Baca rose to the rank of colonel. In mid-April 1867 his band of fifty men overran Motul, imprisoning the municipal commissar, the tax collector, and prominent collaborators.⁹ After the suppression of the 1867 military uprisings, Martínez's forces were formally dissolved, and the caudillo of Baca returned to what remained of private life.¹⁰ But he was not long to enjoy his new rank. The hard life of soldier and political outlaw took its toll on this young man, and at 7:00 P.M. on the evening of January 3, 1870, Martínez died of natural causes in Baca. As his brief obituary accurately noted, "Martínez lent opportune services to the Republican cause, having been the first to raise his voice and energetically pronounce, with a handful of men, against the so-called Empire."¹¹ The deaths of these men, coupled with the lack of a prestigious successor, meant that politics fell to less-credentialed individuals.



FIGURE 6.1

Hacienda K'uxub. This was the family home of Yucatán's liberator Buenaventura Martínez. Today the house is ejido property and can be found a short walk from the town of Baca. Photograph by Terry Rugeley.

Yucatán's crippling stasis also stemmed from the sad fact that constitutions alone do not move mountains. Material limitations abounded, beginning with the state's budgetary shortfalls. Bonded individuals managed the auction of the right of wholesale supply to cities; the state was too weak and disorganized even for this supervisory function.¹² Additional revenues came from retail taxes over meat, liquor, and nationally produced goods, and from a variety of lesser activities, such as the lottery, cock-fighting licenses, and fines. Despite the rise of henequen as the leading cash crop, liquor patents remained critical, and the prevailing system of rewards and punishments encouraged production; one of the few perks that could be doled out to loyal officers was an exemption from the distillation tax.¹³ State and stupor remained inseparable. Yet despite the Yucatecans' heroic effort to drink themselves to solvency, the destruction of the preceding two decades continued to cripple revenues. By 1875 the state's operating money only reached \$191,000.¹⁴ This limited sum had to salary the bloated public sector, which was a key support base for any administration.

State revenues depended heavily on collections from the towns, but most of these were in severe shape. The civil wars had wrought damage that would require four decades to repair. Buildings had been looted and burned, others simply abandoned to decay, while plazas and cemeteries succumbed to the ravages of weeds, weather, and rooting animals. Tekax tried to raise money for reconstruction by putting on a show of trained acrobats, but only came away with forty-eight pesos and an evening of never-to-be-forgotten thrills.¹⁵ Another problem that lingered in the rural communities concerned the abandoned solares whose owners had died, fled, or been drafted. Tekit, located an intermediate distance from the línea, had an incredible seventy-two urban lots without owners: four linked to missing owners with Hispanic surnames, nineteen with Maya surnames, and forty-nine whose former proprietors were simply unknown.¹⁶ Under these circumstances, rural towns often tried to excuse themselves from the contribution, arguing that they bore much of the cost of defense for the ongoing war against the indios sublevados. Petitions for tax exemptions abounded for the next decade. In theory the línea extended southwestward from Valladolid to Peto, with towns like Yaxcabá perched on the long, exposed middle. But a mix of paranoia and economic necessity prompted property owners well within the línea, even in such tranquil areas as Izamal, to demand relief based on their "frontier" status.¹⁷

What money did exist in the municipios went mostly to local matters. Indeed, one feature that most certainly did *not* disappear from town life was the arbitrio, the diverse body of sales taxes and licensing fees that kept city

government afloat, but which had so antagonized Maya peasants in the 1840s. Townsfolk hated paying taxes to the state, but they loved to impose their own versions, and arbitrio purview actually expanded in the three decades following 1847. In the final year of the Restoration, for example, Maxcanú taxed some eighty-seven items, ranging from houses and shops to cigars and pumpkin seeds.¹⁸ Only in rare moments did cash-strapped ayuntamientos bend these rules, as when Espita exempted the gunpowder needed to make fiesta skyrockets, a nonnegotiable item.¹⁹ The expansion of municipal tax purview contradicted earlier expectations, but it afforded stability and solvency. In this regard, the Caste War bore unintended and often tearful consequences, as peasant rebellions so often do. But continuities persisted underneath the tax expansion; even the largest ayuntamientos lacked the manpower to collect taxes and routinely farmed the responsibility out to individuals determined through a bidding process.²⁰ Town life continued to operate through a hodgepodge of public and private initiatives.

Somebody had to pay. Once in power, Manuel Cepeda Peraza therefore resumed Salazar's practice of extracting forced "loans" from Spaniards, a small but relatively wealthy and tightly knit group. In addition to the activities previously described, some of these same merchants had also come to mediate trade with Britain. Much of the merchandise in which the Spanish merchants dealt came from England via British Honduras, and the Belize City shipping houses now had to contract Spanish agents to go to Mérida to collect from their counterparts there. But Mérida's Iberians remained politically vulnerable, especially during the nationalist fervor that exploded in the empire's last days, and Cepeda's new extractions ran as high as one thousand to two thousand pesos apiece.²¹ As with imperial loans, the merchants protested under an 1862 treaty between Spain and Mexico that supposedly exempted them from shakedowns, but to no avail. The procedure was for the collector to go to the debtor's house accompanied by an escribano to officially verify events. This double wave of forced loans made full collection difficult.²² Juan Pastor Rios, a jefe who briefly substituted for the ailing Cepeda in early 1868, went after ex-imperialists as well, squeezing them not only through loans but by a series of bondings (extortion, if one prefers) that allowed them to remain in the peninsula on good conduct.²³

Still another factor limiting change was the fact that popular demands continued to restrict both revenues and options. Pension requests still clogged the arteries of state, whereas political considerations depressed revenues. Cepeda understood the character of rural people and on May 30, 1868, wisely decided to erase back debts of the personal contribution for anyone who had done service against the indios sublevados; with a

stroke of the pen, he neutralized one of the chief complaints of past and present soldiers, the groups most likely to serve as fodder in future uprisings.²⁴ The new governor also realized that the people were weary of emergency requisitions and forced military recruitment of the labor force. Consequently, his rulings tended to favor the rights of private property owners against rural officials. When the jefe político of Tixkokob impounded the shotguns of workers from the hacienda San Francisco, in Chablekal, hacienda Rosa Vega Labradores was able to appeal to Cepeda to have them returned. The jefe político's concern that "there has been much discontent in those parts, particularly among the Indian class" mattered less than losing the support of estate owners.²⁵

Perhaps the most important tie to the past was the persistence of political culture. Although people complained about local authoritarianism, such practices continued because Yucatecans in some ways preferred this type of arrangement and the larger modes of behavior that made strong executive rule possible. In fact, the *poder ejecutivo* remained stronger than ever, with jefes and their subordinate jueces enjoying a free hand in rural affairs. In the first years of the Restoration, jueces stood accused of extortion, arbitrary arrests, stealing land titles, separating poor children from their parents, and other sins both venial and mortal, and almost always walked away scot-free.²⁶

The post's hammerlock on political culture partly stemmed from a continuity of political actors. Post-imperial municipal elections did bring in some new blood: in Mérida one of the individuals chosen as *escrutador*, or overseer for the electoral commission, was a young surveyor and ex-soldier named Olegario Molina, the man who would later corner the market on henequen purchasing and become the peninsula's kingpin under Porfirio Díaz.²⁷ But older actors predominated. Like many former imperial bureaucrats, the former abogado defensor de indios, José Demetrio Molina, redeemed himself and immediately joined the Liberal fold.²⁸ At the highest level, Liborio Irigoyen may have lost out to Cepeda Peraza in the 1867 power struggle, but in other regards he remained an important political actor well into the Restoration period. Irigoyen went on to become vice-governor, serving until June 1875.²⁹ Similarly, a glance at Valladolid's 1874 ayuntamiento reveals how tenaciously the great families clung to power. Agustín Acereto was dust, but his grandson Narciso could still take his seat when the cabildo convened. The family remained prosperous, even if they had lost the ability to challenge Mérida political circles.³⁰ Francisco Cantón's older brother Federico (born 1833) served alongside him. Also present were members of such clans as Iturralde, Tracónis, Rosado, Rivas, and Navarrete.³¹ Similarly, the nepotism of old flourished in the ayuntamientos of communities such as Tixkokob.³²

Mexico's shallow pool of technical expertise made such figures welcome in any regime, but in the process ensured a certain continuity of political culture.

Suspicious about town loyalties also persisted. The ayuntamientos swore fealty, but the facile shifts of allegiance among essentially static membership failed to reassure the ruling clique, who understood these shifts to be tactical. To implement its designs, the government needed the manpower and (albeit limited) infrastructure of the ayuntamientos, although these same bodies had a limited pool of qualified individuals. The only alternative was to leave them in place, but to constantly watch them for signs of disloyalty and political scheming. Now more than ever, the role of the jefe político involved surveillance and internal espionage, another fact that perpetuated the system's top-down authoritarianism.

The jefes were not entirely wrong, for experience taught that municipal elections, although necessary for creating a sense of inclusion, also carried the threat of destabilizing regional peace. Indeed, at numerous moments the disastrous electoral violence of times past threatened to return. Electoral irregularities turned up in 1873, exemplified by the case of Aanceh, where factions went after each other tooth and nail to determine who would rule the ayuntamiento.³³ Mérida voting of that same year resulted in deaths.³⁴ Impugning elections had become a way of life here: no one ever believed that their opponents had honestly won. Either higher-ups really *were* manipulating the votes, or else losing parties believed that they had some inextricable right to rule that overrode democratic process. Cases of this sort, throwbacks to the volatile 1820s and 1840s, have a kind of thudding familiarity and require only brief overview. In Telchac, for example, one Lucas Torres was denied the office of comisario municipal on the grounds of some unknown scandal that had taken place on election day. Only Torres's appeal to Cepeda Peraza saved the day and restored him to office.³⁵ This petty incident revealed how and why the Porfiriato became necessary: nineteenth-century Mexicans had difficulty carrying out fair elections, and when and if they did, losers simply could not accept the results. An unchallenged strongman increasingly seemed the way to resolve matters that defied local capacity.

Restoration politics shed blood, but had its comic side as well. Yucatán's elite, whether of state or town level, always manifested a positivist passion to quantify material goods as a sign that they were on the right road to progress. Hence the numerous pre-1847 statistical reports. This obsession returned in force with the Republic, and there began new attempts to tabulate resources, count heads, and keep track of potential problems. Of all things, in 1872 the Mérida ayuntamiento launched an ambitious census of all the city's dogs—part of a push toward increased

public health and urban regulation. But with pets as with politics, the old ways demonstrated great resilience. It quickly got back to the ayuntamiento that the census was causing “alarm,” and fearing public opinion, they called it off.³⁶ But positivist obsession with documentable development persisted. By 1878 the cabildo of Abalá found itself tallying cattle, horses, mules, burros, livestock brands, henequen mecates, beehives, servants’ debts, and even dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, and doves—anything to prove forward motion toward a better tomorrow.³⁷

One town that epitomized the stubborn quality of politics was Baca, cradle of the Restoration. Buenaventura Martínez may not have lived to profit from his disobedience, but his family, friends, and foes did, whether they deserved it or not. Francisco Gamboa, Martínez’s old nemesis and the “man suited only for a pigsty,” survived his association with the empire and within a year of its collapse purchased a new home located on the town plaza.³⁸ Baca received the immediate reward of being redistricted away from Izamal and into the department of Mérida.³⁹ The quest for a more favorable redistricting and a less exploitative head town was a motor of political life of both towns and haciendas. Quite probably no solution satisfied permanently—then or now—but such demands mattered in their moment, and in this case were met by a grateful Republican governor. But in other ways the Restoration brought little change. Within six years of Martínez’s death, the town of Baca discovered that the long-anticipated Republican Restoration was not a cure-all for political chicaneries. Rather, old behavior soon reasserted itself. The tyranny of the small-town official, one of the original wellsprings of the southeast Restoration movement, in no way disappeared with the abolition of the prefect system and the restoration of cabildo autonomy. By the time of Buenaventura Martínez’s death, a parvenu named Alvino Gómez controlled Baca by somehow working himself into the good graces of both Cepeda Peraza and his successor, lawyer Manuel Cicerol. For five years Gómez cronies dominated town affairs through voting manipulation, intimidation, and the arbitrary arrest of their opponents. The Gómez gang finally fell in 1873, in part through the opposition of Francisco Martínez.⁴⁰ But this was a fleeting victory against the abuses of a system that returned in full force with the fall of the empire. Small-town tyranny lived on, as in 1876, when citizens still groaned under the high-handedness of Baca’s juez, a certain Luis Lino Cervantes, who jailed people for petty debts.⁴¹ For this, Buenaventura Martínez gave all to serve the Republic?

In sum, the collapse of the empire did away with blatant centralized control of juntas and ayuntamientos, but it failed to end the abuses associated with small-town political life, and rural affairs remained a Restoration without remedies. Undercurrents of factionalism still governed

village-level authority. Sacalum, for example, continued to split between the clients of Caste War strongman Pablo Antonio González and rival Juan Bautista Azarcoya. Everyone knew that the feud dated back to these men's grandfathers, but as with the Montagues and the Capulets, no one, including the warring parties themselves, could remember what it actually had been about.⁴² This kind of hereditary animosity was also a legacy of the *violencia*. Just as the wars obscured ages, family lines, and property rights, so too they threw a veil over the origins of factional alignments and village controversies, but without necessarily quelling the hatreds themselves.

REPUBLICANS WITHOUT REPÚBLICAS: YUCATÁN'S
MAYA PEASANTRY AND THE CONSEQUENCES
OF THE CASTE WAR

The fate of the Yucatec Mayas during the years of the Republican Restoration remains one of the least-explored aspects of the entire period. The peninsula's numerical majority, they appear in history books as if possessing little more substance than the henequen fibers they processed. Yet behind this stereotype lies a tale of adaptation that is essential for understanding the larger trajectory of nineteenth-century Mexico, as well as the later revolutionary years.

Before all other things, rural Mayas suffered. Unquestionably the wars' greatest victims, they (along with poor rural mestizos, with whom they shared much) endured dislocations, assassinations, forced service, hunger, rape, disease, and the loss of loved ones. Maps and statistics fail to capture these terrors, but one of the best windows, the three thick packets of "Exemptions from the Personal Contribution and Community Labor," make for truly depressing reading, for the personal vignettes included therein paint a vivid portrait of the wretched lives of a war-torn people. Who then were the true casualties? They were Victoriano Huchim of Dzemul, struck in the chest with a heavy wooden beam; with his ribs shattered, Huchim was unable to provide for himself or his family.⁴³ They were Ambrocio Pech of Seyé, seventeen years old, his right hand withered and useless because of the smallpox that had flourished during and partly because of the upheavals, and with huge, pus-filled sores across his shoulder blades.⁴⁴ They were Juan José Chan of Izamal, a hacienda servant who was mentally deranged and who also suffered from fits of grand mal epilepsy.⁴⁵ They were Felipe Perera of Izamal, wounded at Sitalpech during the Caste War in 1848; a rifle bullet had struck him in the lower spine, leaving him paraplegic for life.⁴⁶ They were Laureano Aké of Dzemul, who as a boy

had fallen in a well, permanently deforming his backbone. Aké had been conscripted into Felipe Navarrete's army in Motul; Cepeda Peraza routed them, and in the retreat Aké had the responsibility of removing the cannonballs, which gave him a hernia.⁴⁷ They were José Esteban Chan of Conkal, incapacitated during a previous encounter in the Caste War, "as a result of being injured in those most delicate parts of a man, which are the testicles."⁴⁸ They were Cecilio Pech of Motul, born with his right ear completely sealed, later to have his foot crushed under the wheel of an army carriage he never heard coming.⁴⁹ They were Juan Angel Tec of Motul, who had served as an *hidalgo machetero* to the Tihosuco canton, and whose abdomen was ripped open by a wooden spike as he labored over a barricade.⁵⁰ And they were Faustino Vela of Ticul. When serving as a soldier years earlier, Vela was stationed in a room with crates of rockets. The munitions caught fire and exploded, destroying both his feet as well as his right arm. He lived the rest of his life suspended in a hammock.⁵¹ No amount of economic growth could reclaim these men; no land grants or elections could restore them to a more meaningful life. The wars had consumed them, and they spent their remaining energies by joining in the demand for pension relief until they found time to die.

The more fortunate now struggled to pick up what they could of a world that now seemed centuries gone. Their success constitutes one of early national Mexico's most extraordinary sagas of perseverance. Working in their favor, the rural towns of the early 1870s still resembled their prewar counterparts. The Maya language, the ambivalent relationship with gods and Hispanics, the battered yet serviceable ramparts of folk knowledge, the centuries-old material culture: all endured. But in other ways the change was considerable. Chichimilá had been one of the cradles of the original rebellion, but war altered the town's demography. By 1883 fewer than one in ten had been more than adolescents on the fateful day in 1847 when Manuel Antonio Ay met his end before a firing squad. They could listen to the tales of Apolinario Ek, an incredible 101 years old, a man who had literally seen the passing of multiple empires; yet narrated experience was not lived experience. It slipped into the process by which all human moments become malleable and distorted and lose the emotional fire that once animated them.⁵²

But townsfolk needed a past. One of the more moving anecdotes in their search for lost time was the pilgrimage of six Maya peasants, prewar residents of Tihosuco, who had subsequently gone to live in Peto. Overcome with nostalgia for the rolling hills of home, they trekked through what was dangerous, war-torn territory, arriving on November 16, 1868, only to find their beloved Tihosuco in ruins: "The famous church destroyed down to its very foundations, along with the atrium and the houses that

were once there,” with only one home, which had been converted into a granary, left standing.⁵³ This is the first reference to the destruction of the Tihosuco church, apparently carried out in 1866 as Bernabé Cen’s way of rendering the town indefensible after the retreat of the imperial army. It marked the end of the community that had once been the fourth-largest in Yucatán, a center of hard-core imanistas, the home of Jacinto Pat and Cecilio Chi, and more than any other place the cradle of the Caste War. Tihosuco languished in abandon thereafter, only to be repopulated in the twentieth century by migrants from villages farther to the northwest. For other, less nostalgic peasants, it was a moment to strike out for new worlds. In Ticul, twenty-five destitute Mayas (fifteen men and ten women) accepted a plan to resettle in the remains of what had once been Villa Carlota, the abortive German colony of the mid-1860s.⁵⁴ Longing for lost stability thus found some counterbalance in a determination to survive and prosper in this postimperial world.

For the vast majority who chose to remain behind, many of the same features of prewar life continued. Among these was the abuse of authority common among small-town officials and the same limited options in resisting that authority. The president of Tepakam, for example, forced Mayas to carry mail and repair stone walls without pay. The put-upon postmen found an attorney who defended them under the terms of the 1857 Constitution. This strategy produced a predictable response: the jefe político of Izamal warned against such extralegal demands, while the municipal president, who saw no particular harm in the practice, continued as always.⁵⁵ In other words, the extrajudicial remained commonplace. The continued growth of the hacienda system, and the corresponding erosion of town freedom and economically independent Mayas, guaranteed that local boss rule would continue into the twentieth century. Mayas still participated, but often as clients, resisters, and small-scale power brokers, while non-Maya townsfolk continued to struggle against the stacked deck of a magistrate who usually sided with powerful landowners.

But Mayas continued to interact with officialdom. They found systems of law and justice indispensable girders of life and strained to work these systems for their betterment. As they had from the 1830s, Mayas continued to occupy political appointments in hamlets such as Chacsinkín, outside of Peto.⁵⁶ Among the advances for which they hoped, if irregularly, was education. Prewar state builders often complained of the lack of Maya cooperation, but by 1878 one could point to petitions from remote hamlets such as Cuncumil, in which groups of approximately equal numbers of Mayas and Hispanics demanded the return of their beloved old schoolmaster.⁵⁷ It marked a departure from the pre-1847 days, when angry

milperos yanked their boys from their rough-hewn classrooms and back to the cornfields where, it was assumed, they belonged.

Perhaps folk wisdom made every man a wise man, but not all had the privilege of being a bigman. The majority of Yucatec Mayas fell into the opposite category: poor, of few resources. The underclass, as always, found ways of coping with the situation. When making out their wills, some designated special protectors called *tutores* and *curadores* for children. The exact nature of the process resembled *compadrazgo*, and like *compadrazgo* was born of a world where officialdom was predatory, and where people could trust no institution above the level of the family. These designated individuals were most often non-Maya, and in all probability the children were given out as servants in hopes of leaving them some form of security. In other moments the arrangement appears to have been more flexible. Case in point: Fernanda Bak, age twelve, child of parents who had died while working as peons on the hacienda Balché. Fernanda had been educated by the property owner, one José de la Luz Villamil and had continued in her mother's steps as a domestic servant. But upon reaching age twelve she demanded the right to select an uncle, José Guadalupe Balam, as new *curador*, a request that the courts did indeed honor.⁵⁸

Others, lacking both patrons and possibilities, invented a past for themselves, much like the false people of the 1850s. Every so often Mayas turned up mysteriously, bearing no papers but with unusual tales regarding their origins. Victoriano Canul, who materialized in Acanceh in 1874, claimed that he had just returned from military service in Puebla, but that all his papers were blown overboard during the voyage from Veracruz to Campeche, and that he was in fact owed thirty-three pesos for his services. As with so many other such tales, no one could determine the actual truth: Canul received not a penny, but was in fact released.⁵⁹

Maya servitude provided continuity with the past. For a huge percentage of the peasantry, there was little to be done except rely on the few who controlled this world's resources, thus fostering the gradual drift toward peonage. Mayas themselves had come to seek out patron-client relationships as a means of survival; this did not mean that they had no will or consciousness, but it did mean that the whims of the *patrón* heavily influenced their behavior. Low-level resistance continued in the form of cattle theft, debt dodging, heavy drinking, flight, and so forth. The ability to force effective political initiatives from below weakened under these circumstances.

Surely the most noticeable change in local-level authority *and* Maya culture was the end of the *batab* and *república de indígenas*. The imperial regime collapsed in early 1867, but the ancient practice of Maya self-government survived, trimmed but tolerated, into the second year of the

restored Republic.⁶⁰ While Béal's elderly Padre Pedro José Hurtado worked the standard village brinkmanship of threatening to close the church and deny services if peasants denied support, he and other priests continued to lean upon the *batab* to squeeze what he could in the way of contributions from Maya parishioners.⁶¹ In Mérida too the *batabs* of the various *barrios* still collected taxes, and their Spanish-language receipts survive among the papers of haciendas.⁶² But the *batab's* ability to coerce was more limited than ever, for the power structures that had once enveloped and sustained him were themselves undergoing transformation.

Energized by their victory and now without open opposition, in 1868 peninsular Liberals proceeded with one of the oldest items on their agenda, the abolition of the special offices and titles that had made up a key part of Maya life since the conquest. A partially destroyed finding by the Consejo del Estado rehearsed all the old arguments: the *batabs* and *repúblicas* were petty tyrants who terrorized their fellow peasants, and the entire arrangement smacked of feudal inequality.⁶³ Such opinions were hardly surprising, but what did Mayas think of this, one of the greatest discontinuities in three hundred years? If massive protest against the law took place, it failed to register, perhaps because the job had become such a bother and, in *línea* towns, a dangerous liability. Or perhaps, as some have suggested, the social distance between the poor *vecino* and the *mayero*—the man who plied the self-sufficient lifestyle of the *milpa* and spoke the Maya language—was now so shortened that the concept of separate indigenous self-government had become difficult to defend.⁶⁴ Or perhaps their opinions were simply silenced. Still, at least some *batabs* went down fighting: their final stand was to collect money for land measurements as part of an effort to preserve some measure of community resources. Juan de Dios Col had served as the last *batab* of Hunucmá, and as a parting act had gathered forty-two pesos, then entrusted it to the *jefe político* to contract a surveyor. But months went by, and no surveyor ever appeared: legitimate proceedings, or simply another scam? The *cabildo* inclined toward the latter view, and sued Col, now ex-*batab* in a *batabless* world, for the money. But Col had learned his role well, and because he had kept the receipts, he could pin the blame on the *jefe*.⁶⁵ The story illustrates not only the managerial abilities that had served the office from its inception, but also the type of activities that occupied Maya officeholders in their brief months under the restored Republic.

Batabs no more, but Maya bigmen refused to die, or what is equally true, people were reluctant to kill them. In remote areas like Iturbide in southern Campeche state, the office persisted a good two years after its

supposed abolition; either the news took awhile to travel, or else there was no alternative to some form of indigenous self-government here.⁶⁶ At the same time, rather than eliminate Maya participation altogether, ayuntamientos continued to make concessions to local Maya interests. Much like the diverse arrangements that supplanted pre-Bourbon *cofradías*, it was not that one single role replaced the *batab*, but rather that a variety did, all of which in some way continued to negotiate between the Maya and Hispanic worlds.⁶⁷ Cities such as Valladolid still employed *tupiles*, the Maya constables who once served the ethnic *cabildos*, into the early 1900s.⁶⁸ Lacking *repúblicas*, the ayuntamientos now operated with a consultative position of *escrutador* typically assigned to individuals of Maya surname, as, for example, in Sitalpech, where the two *escrutadores* were Lorenzo Xool and Luis Chi.⁶⁹ The transition out of the colonial situation was thus a bit more gradual than one might imagine. This same position turned up in elections in Hunucmá, and in Uayma, outside of Valladolid.⁷⁰ Papers from Izamal reveal a similar pattern, even after the 1876 Revolt of Tuxtepec had altered national dynamics.⁷¹ The practice remained widespread well into porfirian times, with some of the smaller communities possessing electoral juntas that were almost entirely Maya in composition.⁷² At the same time, smaller eastern communities tended to have predominantly Maya *cabildos*. Chichimilá, Caste War community par excellence, had a Maya presidente and secretary (Gregorio and Ramón Poot, respectively), while Tinum had Maya *escrutadores*.⁷³ Maya perhaps, but in direct continuity with earlier times, these communities, rather than presenting a front of ethnic solidarity, remained very much in competition with one another, with smaller populations like Dzitnup and Ebtún resenting domination by Chichimilá. Farther to the west, Ekmul's juez continued to appoint a Maya *alcalde auxiliar*, cranking up the old nominating mechanism wherein locals presented the jefe with a choice of two or three candidates.⁷⁴ Even relatively mestizo towns such as Espita still had their Maya *alcalde suplente*, an understudy official who amounted to little more than a disguised *batab*, well into the 1870s.⁷⁵ Maní peasants recognized the leadership of Mateo Koyoc, who styled himself *u kapitanil masewalo'ob* (captain of Indian commoners).⁷⁶ Maya surnames continue to turn up in such positions as village secretary (*secretario*) in Uayma, Cenotillo, and elsewhere, precisely the sort of eastern communities where Conservatives of the 1830s had seen fit to permit Maya *jueces de paz*.⁷⁷ The function of these individuals remains open to surmise. It doubtless had much to do with an intense need to live in the illusion of conformity and consensus; like the bureaucrat's loyalty oath, the officializing documents of the electoral and municipal juntas provided democratic patinas to authoritarianism. But power is seldom unidirectional, and the existence of low-ranking

Maya officials, like the existence of *ayuntamientos*, opened space for give-and-take between those officials and their political superiors.

Finally, the memory of *batabship*—who exactly had been a *batab* and what that counted for—outlived the office itself. There were men such as José Koyoc, who in 1874 still referred to himself as the “ex-cacique of suburb of Santa Ana,” and whose word still served as legal verification of events among Mayas living in the city.⁷⁸ In 1882 Juan de la Cruz Pantí, the last *batab* of Tixméuac, claimed an exemption from guard duty based on services that had ended eleven years earlier, but now was denied on the basis that “according to the law, no differences [between races] existed.”⁷⁹ Similarly, Baltasar Canché of Mérida’s *barrio San Cristóbal* petitioned for, and received, an exemption from *guardia* service partly on the basis of long-time membership in the neighborhood *república*, a capacity that had ended nearly ten years earlier.⁸⁰ A final and highly telling bit of evidence on this point comes from Espita. In 1884, sixteen years after the abolition of Indian self-government, rumors surfaced that the Chan Santa Cruz rebels had opened communications with *caciques* throughout the state and were planning a new uprising. These rumors lacked substance, but what is significant is that everyone accepted that *caciques* existed, whether they held official writs of appointment or not.⁸¹

Maya *batabship* also survived as a lifestyle of modest rural wealth, even if few studies have taken up this secondary gentry on the edge of town. Judging from the wills, estate executions, and intestates of the 1870s, a small but important class of prosperous Mayas managed to hold a stake in the economic life of southeast Mexico. They took part in the buying and selling of land, even if in the larger calculus they lost more than they won.⁸² Mayas recognized and sought the advantages of henequen cultivation; but they could only compete on a small scale. For example, the area around Acanceh and Tecoh—prime henequen country—included dozens of small Maya entrepreneurs who received abandoned *solares* and planted them with henequen. As of late 1869 the state still upheld their right to use this land despite lack of written title.⁸³ Similarly, the notary archives of the 1860s through 1880s contain dozens of Maya wills, each a nutshell account of a lifetime of struggle, but probably representing a mere fraction of the number of Mayas actively engaged in private commerce and property ownership.⁸⁴

Two of the more interesting cases can serve here as examples. Felipa Xooc of Xocécén, born in the eventful year 1847, was a woman with no prewar history. Life in small outlying communities like her native Xocécén was dangerous, and as a girl Xooc moved to the comparative safety of Valladolid. She married Manuel Mex, and the two, along with Mex’s six brothers, worked together to purchase and develop a small property

known as Kaxek. They also acquired the property Culumpich, six leagues east of Valladolid, and two urban solares, in Xocécán and Tahmuy. This sort of joint effort permitted temporary accumulation of resources that held the family together. Felipa died a widow in 1883, and the property was split up among surviving heirs.⁸⁵ More impressive still is the career of Bacilio Tzuc of Ticul. During his lifetime he managed to acquire (and hang on to) eight different properties totaling 7,800 mecatés, or an impressive 780 acres. His first wife died, and his second proved to be a spendthrift whom the tight-fisted Tzuc eventually divorced. As some measure of family success, Tzuc's son Juan Asunción became one of the few Maya priests of the nineteenth-century church, but came to a bad end while working in the conflict-ridden south. Tzuc survived the turmoil of the civil wars (both political and marital) to die of natural causes in 1870.⁸⁶

These and many other such lives tell a common story. While the overall picture of spreading peonage is true for the many, particularly in the henequen zone, a minority of Yucatec Mayas still enjoyed resources and economic self-sufficiency. Their fortunes suffered a familiar ebb and flow. Wealth came through decades of work. It may have begun with a small inheritance, grown with a fortunate marriage, and then prospered over the years with the gradual acquisition of land, livestock, and goods. Built over a lifetime, their fortunes dispersed with division of the estate among multiple heirs. Still, all their children did not necessarily slink away peons and paupers. The inheritance of cash, some livestock, and a spot of land could serve as the seed of a new family, particularly if the heir was young and industrious. Well into the 1880s, in virtually any municipality one could find small-scale indigenous ranchers with registered cattle brands.⁸⁷ The most successful of the late Maya entrepreneurs were diversified. What emerges from their surviving papers is a combination of urban real estate and land (often a collection of small properties, not a single consolidation in the form of large hacienda). Like José Clemente Chan, they dabbled in petty commerce, selling tools, cloth, and knickknacks in their vicinity. Their rural properties produced corn but also a variety of fruit and livestock. And they supervised the hardest-working creatures of all Mexico: bees, and more specifically, the stingless *xunaan kaab* variety of the monte. No single one of these items necessarily translated into riches, but a healthy combination could result in moderate prosperity.

Beyond this, Maya entrepreneurs were culturally complex and socially influential. Like the pre-1847 indigenous brokers, they straddled two worlds. Determining actual, phenotypical composition of someone with a Maya surname is difficult: they could be racially mixed, whereas people with Hispanic surnames at times turn out to be *mayeros*—that is, individ-

uals living the life of the rural milpa farmer. But most evidence suggests that these entrepreneurs did indeed spring from pure or almost pure Maya backgrounds. They had parents with Maya surnames and married to other Maya surnames and in general lived the *mayero* life of the land. They had acquired numerous cultural traits from the Hispanics. Literacy, at least to the ability to scribble one's own name, became more common than at the century's onset. These Maya survivors used the law courts. Some were also *patrones*, for outstanding debts tallied in their wills reveal them as significant employers of other Mayas. Well into the 1930s these better-off Mayas—landowners, teachers, peddlers, and so forth—functioned as the town-level political negotiators, much as Jacinto Pat had done a century earlier, and played critical if strictly local roles in both making and breaking Revolutionary reforms.⁸⁸ What did it matter to these *patrones* if men in some faraway capital embraced new philosophies that discounted Mexico's indigenous past? Here, Maya remained the language; here, the old stories and family rivalries kept their flavor; here, life could still be good. A minority in their own world, they remained popular bigmen of the rural peninsula and no longer suffered the discomfiture of collecting taxes or rousting out cannon fodder.⁸⁹ Small-scale entrepreneurs—the Maya *rancheros*—had become the new *batabs*.

Less prestigious and powerful than the *repúblicas*, the Maya church staff nonetheless proved more durable. After 1850 indigenous sacristans and church assistants still performed the same functions as in the years before the Caste War (as they do in the present day). No secret archive captures their lives, but surviving fragments suggest that the same old frictions between Maya and clergy persisted. Once such case concerned Figuración Chan, the scandalous sacristan of Ixil. Dismissed by *cura* Padre Mezquita for continual drunkenness and inattention to duty, Chan won reappointment when a new *cura*, unacquainted with his moral shortcomings, came to the parish. Before being fired again, Chan went on several benders, stole chickens, fell into a public row with his own mother, lost the rectory mule, and crushed the *cura*'s hand quite accidentally while closing a drawer.⁹⁰ Slapstick notwithstanding, the silence of the documents (and the testimony of common sense) argues that most served competently, and that they enjoyed the respect, or at least the tolerance, of both their employers and the community Mayas who formed the bulk of parishioners. In all probability their prestige was never high, and they performed work that Hispanics, however devout, considered menial. For them, the greatest change had not been so much the widening racial gap associated with the Caste War, but rather the overall demotion that their employer-institution had suffered as a result of the Reform.



FIGURE 6.2

*Maya farmer, early twentieth century. The ultimate survivors, Maya small farmers weathered electoral violence, the Mexican invasion, the Caste War, innumerable civil conflicts, and a sweeping redefinition of law and land tenure. Seen here with man's hardest-working friends, the bees, in the rustic hives known as jobono'b. From Robert Redfield and Alfonso Villa Rojas, Chan Kom: A Maya Village (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution, 1934).
By permission of the Carnegie Institute.*

SURVEYORS WITHOUT SURVEYS: HOW THE LAND
REMAINED AS IT WAS A LITTLE WHILE LONGER

Life was better now; that much people understood: better at least than the last desperate days of the Yucatecan Republic or the bloodshed of the empire falling. It was some measure of returning stability that Yucatán could organize a relief drive for victims of the flooding in Tamaulipas.⁹¹ Still, unresolved property issues continued to taint the Restoration's renown. For all their intrusions, *denuncias* had spared much of the common lands that surrounded each community, one of the principal reasons that land grievances played only a secondary role in the rhetoric and mobilizations of the early Caste War years. The new administrations once more attempted to impose the Liberal vision of private property, but the process remained hamstrung by limited state resources, conflicting interests, and the gulf between agrarian capitalism and preexisting customs. All of these factors retarded changes in land tenure.

Once in control, Cepeda quickly reimplemented the 1857 Constitution, including its commitment to the rights of private property owners. One unanticipated challenge came from the *ayuntamiento* of Valladolid. Despite two decades as one of the Caste War rebels' maximum leaders and the high priest to the Speaking Cross, Bonifacio Novelo Cetina still maintained secret ties to his hometown. Sometime around 1860 he had entrusted one of his many sacks of money—\$110—to an old chum named Fermín de Irabian. Somehow the *ayuntamiento* found out about this money in 1869 and angrily demanded that the governor allow them to confiscate it. (Unbeknownst to all parties, Novelo, the man whom British Honduran officials styled “the late Presidente, or first Jefe” of the rebels, had already died of natural causes in May of the previous year, but there were still plenty of *Novelos* who might plausibly claim the inheritance.)⁹² The *ayuntamiento's* demand put Governor Cicerol on the spot. Confiscation of personal wealth was the old Spanish colonial approach to crimes against the state; at the same time, the governor could not appear to look soft on a rebel as notorious as “the famous and chief caudillo of the *indios sublevados*.” Solomon-like, Cicerol refused to allow confiscations, but instead placed the money in the *ayuntamiento's* treasury as a “deposit,” where, as he surely realized, it would be grafted away.⁹³ The anecdote illustrates that *ayuntamiento* support remained critical for any regime, so much so that Restoration governors had to compromise the national vision of property in order to guarantee local alliances.

Spare change could be finessed, but land was far more controversial. A third dynamic of 1876 Yucatán, then, was the state's often bumbling

attempt to privatize common lands. The idea had sat on the table for decades. Utopian state builders of the early national period saw it happening through a few simple directives; later, acting more forcefully in order to pay off veterans of the defense against Mexico, the state gave titles to baldío lands and in so doing helped provoke the Caste War. More worldly-wise, the second-generation Liberals liquidated church mortgages, but even Irigoyen had instructed his *jefes* to refrain from further privatization of *terrenos baldíos*.⁹⁴ The empire then launched a comprehensive initiative that faltered for lack of time and resources. In 1873 the new governor, Eligio Ancona Castillo (1835–93), dusted off the imperial legislation in a plan to move southeastern land titles toward legal transparency. Over the next two years, a series of decrees mandated distribution of *ejido* lands in such communities as Cacalchén, Cansahcab, Chuburná, Dzan, Euán, Mochochá, Motul, Oxkutzcab, Pustunich, Sacalacum, Sumá, Tetiz, Timucuy, Ucu, Umán, and Yotholim.⁹⁵ Were these decrees really end-of-an-era legislation, the termination of a centuries-old system of land tenure that favored Maya peasants? The reality was far more involved. Laws that run counter to real conditions are typically negotiated or ignored, and property-reformer Ancona met an end similar to that of his predecessors.

The idea was deceptively simple. The 1873 legislation, which was clarified in subsequent directives, called upon *jefes políticos* to survey the land, compose a census of inhabitants, then divide existing *ejido* properties into lots to be distributed among heads of families. The law invoked 1844 legislation for determining *ejido* size: five thousand square *varas* (a *vara* roughly equaling a yard) for communities with 150 or more inhabitants, fifteen hundred square *varas* for fewer than 150. If a town lacked sufficient land, then it was to divide whatever was available with the adjoining community. Some towns included outlying *ranchería* settlements; in those with more than twelve inhabitants, adult men could also earn rights as heads of family and be included in the allotment. Finally, survey costs were to be covered by the *arrendamientos*, or land usage fees, that cultivators had paid since 1844.⁹⁶

In practice, an array of factors thwarted normalization of titles. For centuries *milpa* farmers had worked both *ejido* and *baldío* lands through right of first claimant. The idea of manipulating this process through Spanish-language written statutes disfavored them. Privatization decrees came roaring from the governor's desk, but they had to pass through the creaky machinery of the district and town officials. Mindful of the demons that could be loosed when reformers tampered with local custom, political bosses simply dragged their feet.

Landowners themselves often had reasons to oppose the first step of the privatization—survey of land and review of titles—since their own estates

had grown by the erratic hook-or-crook process common since the days of New Spain. Title reviews could explode in proprietors' faces if they lacked valid right for some portion of their lands, whereas conversely, legal ambiguities allowed hacendados a margin for evading the supervision of the ayuntamientos. Much of the surveyors' work in fact consisted of determining which hacendados cultivated lands that rightfully belonged to the ejido.⁹⁷ If Bernardo Peón's hacienda Aké (containing massive archaeological ruins, and today well worth a visit) were fully surveyed, he risked liability for encroaching on Tixkokob's ejido lands.⁹⁸ Another strategy was to move the mojoneros, stone piles that demarcated land limits, thereby monkey wrenching the survey process.⁹⁹ Landowners could also hijack the measurement by paying surveyors to do nothing whatsoever; for this reason the surveyor of the hacienda Kanchen, outside of Tixkokob, sat on the project for four years under the protection of hacendado Francisco Moguel.¹⁰⁰ To adapt a phrase from Stalin, the people who performed the surveys determined nothing; the people who paid for the surveys determined everything. Opposition to title normalization was therefore as likely to come from hacendados as from Maya peasants.

Ayuntamientos and municipal juntas too might oppose the abolition of ejidos, since those bodies derived revenues from arrendamiento. By 1867 the better-documented towns, places such as Pustunich, Yotholim, and Dzan (and presumably others) depended on the revenues that land rents generated.¹⁰¹ Moreover, political actors in many communities had to live face-to-face with peasants and poor townsmen and doubtless felt a greater sense of obligation toward local constituencies. In 1875, for example, the Tetiz junta contracted its own Mérida lawyer to protect what remained of ejido lands "so that its inhabitants are not reduced to servitude."¹⁰² Similarly, Tixkokob picked up nearly one hundred pesos in annual arrendamientos, money with which it was loathe to part, even though the state had directed it to be used to measure ejido lands prior to the breakup.¹⁰³ Despite Liberal rhetoric, few wanted to sacrifice a proven moneymaker for the supposed prosperity to be derived from privatization, and as late as 1879, ayuntamientos were still defending ejido integrity.¹⁰⁴

Problems of finance and liquidity also hampered surveying and other municipal projects. Even if public funds existed, the money was often divided among various private individuals, who were not always willing to hand it over.¹⁰⁵ In an involved case from Ekmul, the ayuntamiento contracted Pedro Macial Hernández, a local landowner, to collect land rents to pay for the surveying process. Hernández failed to meet his goal, and to cover the deficit, organized a collection; to set the example, Hernández himself gave the first donation. But even this came up short (*why* is never exactly clear, but money had a way of disappearing). Hernández eventually

handed the funds over to a successor, who was soon re-collecting the same arrendamientos, this time from Hernández himself. Incensed, the ex-collector now led a community movement to abolish arrendamiento—and presumably surveying—altogether.¹⁰⁶ Here it was hacendados like Hernández, and not Maya milperos, who played the role of village skinflint: ready to go to court over sums as low as three pesos, in part because the Caste War had hypersensitized them to routine soakings.¹⁰⁷

Finally, the ejido system was already a crazy quilt of common and private lands. Individual Mayas held numerous private properties; to take only one example, they controlled the numerical majority of fincas in Campeche state, even though like post-1940 Mexican ejidos, most of these were small, undercapitalized, and geared mainly toward subsistence and domestic markets.¹⁰⁸ No one expelled titled property owners (Maya or Hispanic), even if their land did fall within village jurisdiction. At the same time, ejido properties had become such a checkerboard that even if genuine common lands were given out, in many cases there was not enough to satisfy everyone. In some ways Yucatán offered a muted version of divisions found in the Andean highlands, where communities broke down between original settlers and newcomers, each with different land rights.¹⁰⁹ Did recent arrivals merit the same land allotment as old-timers? Governor Ancona's contradictory decisions in no way helped on this point.¹¹⁰ Crafty nonresidents also tried to finagle allotment titles.¹¹¹ Nor were all communities equally blessed. Years earlier, Pustunich made provisions to sustain its ejido farmers by purchasing additional lands, but the title had unfortunately disappeared with a Maya who had fled to pacífico territory during the wars. At the same time, nearby Dzan had less than one-eighth league.¹¹² Poorer communities had less money to hire surveyors, and since those who struck first were apt to gobble up ambiguous border properties, small towns like Santa Elena (formerly Nohcacab) opposed their neighbors' surveys not on principle, but over issues of fairness.¹¹³ In these cases one law for the *buey* and the *tigre* proved tyranny: well-endowed communities might lose some land, but smaller and poorer communities risked losing their entire subsistence base.

Maya response to the land problem varied. Milpero anger over encroachments ran high; in Ekmul alone, twenty-two Mayas petitioned against the abuse, and property owners understood that to pay such money was a confession of encroachment, thus leaving open the door to further lawsuits.¹¹⁴ In other cases parcelization was equally unpopular; ejidatarios of Dzan, for example, grew livid over the plan and confronted the town's juez, informing him that "they were not children to take advice and could do whatever they wanted, showing themselves altogether rebellious against the government."¹¹⁵ But there were countercurrents. In areas such

as the Mérida periphery, where haciendas had already made significant incursions into ejido land, many found it better to press for family-based titles as a way of salvaging something (recall that landless peasants of central Mexico supported the Reform¹¹⁶). In barrio Santiago, where a certain Marcelino Poot led the allotment movement, it was local officials who stalled, despite orders from the national secretary of development.¹¹⁷ Elsewhere, surviving legislation alludes to numerous requests for private parcels.¹¹⁸

Community ejido property still held some of its original sanctity. This point was illustrated in the case of Tixkokob, a community inside the prime henequen country. Hacienda encroachment was advanced by the time of the legislation, and peasants there filed numerous petitions for private title as a last-ditch effort to defend what remained before the estates gobbled up ejido lands altogether.¹¹⁹ Yet the ayuntamiento continued to defend ejido rights against denuncias of terrenos baldíos by private individuals. The denounced land fell outside of the original ejido boundaries, but the ayuntamiento found a clause that allowed those boundaries to be extended if land *within* them had already been privatized.¹²⁰ Doubtless the ayuntamiento looked to its own interests, since rent for ejido lands continued to provide municipal revenues. Circumstances therefore combined to provide some baseline protection against hacienda encroachment. The pattern also held true for broader Yucatán. Tekax's ayuntamiento had the same conflict with outlying sugar planters.¹²¹ Halachó was another community that attempted to preserve some element of its subsistence base. The renewed denuncia process reaped an abundance of lawsuits; sensing the changing winds, the ayuntamiento purchased lands directly for both farmland and the gathering of firewood. The Halachó case was ironic, since the Hispanic-controlled ayuntamiento defended these properties against, among others, Toribio Coyí, a Maya who had denounced them as terrenos baldíos.¹²² In 1878 the case went all the way to the minister of development, Vicente Riva Palacios, only to be decided in the ayuntamiento's favor.¹²³ Only in mid-1890s did parcelization gather steam, but then mainly in the henequen area, and far less in outlying districts such as Peto, Sotuta, Tekax, Ticul, and Valladolid.

Land privatization in the 1870s thus resembled a similar process under way in El Salvador during the 1890s. In both places, peasants took part in the commercial economy; some struggled to hold onto the ejido concept, whereas others took part in commercial cultivation of henequen, foodstuffs, and animal products and favored private titles to guarantee their gains. Opposition to ejido privatization also reflected awareness of the process's objective difficulties and resentment of some communities' comparative advantage over others.¹²⁴ The difference between Yucatán and El

Salvador lay in greater Yucatecan hacienda growth prior to the export boom. Land concentration and encroachment continued, but on a piecemeal and private basis rather than through sweeping state directives. Well before 1867 the process of private land transactions disfavored Mayas, who seldom appear as purchasers. Although most land sales were between Hispanics, Mayas more typically sold land to Hispanics and almost never purchased it, either from them or from other Mayas.¹²⁵ What Maya landholders did possess usually remained in their hands through dogged persistence, and a fruitful persistence it was, since, as numerous studies have shown (if perhaps not in sufficient detail), Maya small property holders were alive and well at the time of the Revolution. They enjoyed particular vibrancy in the south and east, where henequen mattered less.¹²⁶ For this reason peons weary of their overbearing masters could find peace in the shade of Maya-owned ranchos outside Nohcacab, working under the patronage of rancheros such as Gregorio Ku or the Ticul ranchero Bacilio Tzuc.¹²⁷

Finally, two side issues colored the land controversy in the Restoration period. The first was the long-festering issue of ownerless urban solares, mute orphans of the Caste War. Lots of a town like Mama had lain vacant for an incredible thirty years; the law authorized expropriation and sale of abandoned rebel property, but said nothing about non-rebel property. Even as Porfirio Díaz deployed his troops throughout Tamaulipas, townfolk of Mama were still debating what to do about the property of a well-known individual who had fled to Campeche in 1847 and never returned!¹²⁸ Similar anguish surfaced from communities throughout the Sierra Alta region in the Restoration period.¹²⁹ In some isolated cases, solares still belonged to the now-defunct repúblicas.¹³⁰ In general, these lands became the plums of the jefe político, who sold them off as he saw fit.¹³¹

A second land issue, and one involving far greater potential profits, concerned logging rights. At the dawn of the porfirian era, the coastal dyewood timber known as *palo de tinte* remained a lucrative activity, one that drew peninsulars and foreigners alike. Companies like J. Craseman (U.S.-owned) and Hoffman and Domínguez operated extensive holdings. The largest of these, J. Graumann & Company, enjoyed rights to twelve thousand *quintales* (roughly twelve hundred tons) of logwood in such places as Sisal, Celestún, Dzilam, San Felipe, Río Lagartos, San Fernando, El Cayo, Holbox, and Dos Bocas. Other smaller operators, such as Nicanor Ancona, were Yucatecan. In these matters, Eduardo López's diplomatic experiences in Belize during the Caste War served him well; beyond enjoying his role as the long-standing patrón of Hunucmá, he also dealt in *palo de tinte* and became one of the peninsula's ten

largest exporters, despite the fact that rights to forest access continued to inspire Maya peasant violence for the next half century.¹³² Dyewood logging thus remained an active enterprise into the early Porfiriato; most operated on advance contracts with foreign purchasers. They suffered when Díaz imposed a five cent per quintal tax upon them in early 1878, but their protests were denied, and they paid up and kept chopping anyway.¹³³ Few papers exist to describe the inner workings of these operations, but one case, that of Rancho Moctezuma along the coast north of Tizimín, was a logging camp with economic diversification into sugar and livestock. Owner Ramón Ancona employed some seventy-four men; this was, in Yucatecan eyes, within the enemy territory of the Maya rebels, but Moctezuma survived raids, heavy rains, and the far more dangerous mosquitoes to produce an annual six thousand quintales.¹³⁴ These were coastal lands, often swampy and unsuited for slash-and-burn agriculture, and their alienation appears to have provoked little in the way of peasant grievances.

In brief, the tremors of Tuxtepec radiated onto a land where issues of property and land tenure remained cenote murky. Far from enacting a sweeping redefinition of land usage, the Eligio Ancona administration found itself flummoxed by matters of customs, irregularities, and cross-interests. Yucatecan state builders had perhaps restored more of the pre-war world than they intended. Meanwhile, the real alienation process took place through piecemeal sales and encroachments, not through some sweeping decrees of the state. The land remained as it was a little while longer, and in fact its slow seepage of access made the process more difficult for peasants to resist and helped minimize the risk of future Caste Wars.

FAITH WITHOUT THE FAITHFUL: REACTIVATING THE LIBERAL REFORM

The church too felt the paradoxes of Restoration. By 1870 the institution had already suffered the deaths of the last great colonial priests and the loss of the Petén to the bishopric of Guatemala. But while Mayas struggled to keep what they had and townsfolk quarreled over land and militias, the Liberal movement still had some unfinished business with its old adversary. After 1867 the national government began to exert its presence in the peninsula, as evidenced by the growing number of Juárez-issued circulars found in the regional collections.¹³⁵ The Yucatecan state followed suit, and once again asserted itself over the church in a variety of forms.

One of the Liberals' prime goals was to pressure the church out of politics. In March 1875 the state issued "Regulations for the Ringing of Church Bells," a directive that circulated once more in 1879; among other points, it forbade the ringing of church bells before 4:00 A.M., or for longer than ten minutes.¹³⁶ These prohibitions partly sprang from memories of church bells being used to herald revolts, as when Agustín Acereto sounded the chimes of Valladolid in his uprising of 1851. While some of the anticlerical fervor subsided with the ascension of Porfirio Díaz, the directive was still enforced in the late 1880s, even in relatively remote locations such as Peto.¹³⁷ In this case, the Reform's durability reflected a larger initiative toward the secularization of town life. The cura of Motul (Domingo Escalante) went so far as to remove the church bells altogether, a foreshadowing of the lockout clerics staged in the years 1926–29, when priests withheld services to protest the anticlerical tack of the Revolutionary government. To townsfolk of Motul, a day without the rhythmic tolling of the bells offended the sensibilities and, by extension, blemished the Liberal government whose decrees had brought about such a disgraceful impasse.¹³⁸

At a village level, the military continued to provide the cutting edge of anticlericalism. Perhaps it was the Bourbon tradition; or perhaps the cruelty of war simply made officers intolerant of talk about benevolent spirits and a kingdom beyond the skies. The jefe político oversaw military readiness, and like his colonial predecessor, the subdelegado, the jefe político often found the cura a meddlesome rival. Once the arbiter of personal and public morality, village priests such as Cosme Bobadilla of Tunkás now found themselves imprisoned when they dared to whip local boys for their sins.¹³⁹ True, isolated counterexamples surfaced: the secretary of the new Izamal ayuntamiento was in fact Padre José de la Cruz Avila.¹⁴⁰ But this case was the exception, not the norm that it would have been forty years earlier.

Taming the church also meant cracking down on the politics of processions and *cofradías*, twin landmarks on the bourgeois spiritual path. During the initial months of Manuel Cepeda Peraza's rule, the pious of Ticul shelved plans to re-create their chapter of the *archicofradía*, a high-society urban lay organization that, like so many, had fallen into abeyance since 1854. At least 315 were ready to join, but rumor led them to think that Cepeda Peraza would expropriate their treasury, even if Bishop Gala could be persuaded to approve the organization's charter.¹⁴¹ They had reason to worry, for reformers were busy expropriating the last scattered remains of corporate property. Take the case of an urban solar named Jesús, a property that old-time Catholics had purchased in the name of Hocabá's patron saint, the Virgin. The town faithful advanced the argument that

Jesús was not communal property, but rather private property of the *santo*, a novel if fruitless spin on Liberal ideology.¹⁴² And in 1867 Cepeda turned the last nuns out of their Mérida convent despite protest, but the property itself sat vacant for the next decade while the *cabildo* tried to decide what to do with it.¹⁴³ The only other wealth that remained was the old Franciscan convents, which were more white elephants than red plums. Too large to serve as rectories, they were also so sprawling and dilapidated that no one wanted them. Liberal officials drew up a *résumé* of such buildings in nineteen other communities as well.¹⁴⁴ Despite the unwieldy quality of this property, functionaries pushed ahead, assessing values and posting the structures for sale. Success varied per individual case. The scheme was workable in Mérida, where urban property values were highest, but in other cases, such as Oxkutzcab, the modern-day tourist can still stroll through the picturesque ruins of convents that found no takers.¹⁴⁵ Little is known about the people who claimed these properties or what they thought about carving up pieces of an institution that had once been the soul of Mexico. In one rare instance, a man who had acquired property in Tunkás developed pangs of conscience for fear that it had been church land and that he would be cut off from rites and services; but an investigation showed that it was merely Maya *ejido*, and the pangs soon dissipated.¹⁴⁶

Chiná village epitomized the southeast Liberal reform and its frustrations. The priest of this small village, Máximo Abreu, lived on in the convent's rubble-strewn remains. The aid from his parishioners amounted to little more than alms shared among poor folks. On top of this, the local *jefe* of Hacienda had denounced the broken-down masonry structures as national property, forcing Abreu to relocate once and for all to Campeche.¹⁴⁷ Who profited from such petty transactions? The motive seems largely to have been spite, a final overflow of long-simmering anticlericalism, a sentiment that remained powerful even when the priestly wealth that once inspired such sentiments had tumbled into ruin.

Still another form of disputed property was the peninsula's immense and diverse collection of *imágenes*: statues and portraits of the *santos* and the Virgin Mary, stylized Yucatecan crosses, and, in a more inclusive reading, the pomp and decoration that had adorned altars here from time beyond memory: candlesticks, chalices, tapestries, and many other such items. These had been steadily disappearing for well over two decades, vanishing as if recalled to heaven but in fact hidden away in private salons and chapels. In response to the renewed Liberal menace, some were placed in hiding, just as had happened during the Caste War. In other cases the bishop ordered a centralization of the *imágenes*. The idea was to remove them from smaller and less defensible points and to

place them in the larger churches, where they would be less subject to casual pillaging and the whims of small-town políticos. The plan could backfire, as happened in Sisal in July 1875, when people of the port town rioted rather than allow their imágenes to be taken to Hunucmá.¹⁴⁸ To retouch the santos—something that could cost seven to eight pesos—curas had to hire local sculptors and painters.¹⁴⁹ Many of the church interiors had been gutted and pillaged by soldiers who had been quartered there in the course of the revolutions.¹⁵⁰

Financial support for parish activities remained even more miserly than it had been during the worst years of the 1860s. In Uayma the citizens refused to pay, insulted cura Lorenzo Gutiérrez when he solicited their help, and even went so far as to cut the tail off his horse: “Such is their immorality, and on every occasion the progress of this disease is evident,” he mourned.¹⁵¹ The story was the same in Cozumel, Hocabá, Isla Mujeres, Izamal, Kopomá, Panabá, Punta Chan, Sacalum, Sucopó, and doubtless many other towns.¹⁵² When hacendados did not wish to cover their workers’ fees for church services, they could always take refuge in the old accusation that those services were inadequate. The logic was circular but sufficient.¹⁵³

Hoctún was one town that felt the full brunt of the reactivated Liberal Reform. Here the jefe político, acting at the urging of leading residents, began the alienation of the convent’s terreno and converted the rooms of the convent itself into barracks. The junta municipal, led by its president and his excommunicated brother, had torn down the terreno’s stone wall and let people graze their horses there, quickly wiping out the tiny gardens the padres had planted to support themselves. “What brutality!” mourned a pious citizen. Even the Ley Juárez did not authorize some of the abuses found here, such as personal attacks on the padres themselves.¹⁵⁴ Only in a few communities, such as Tecoh, did the situation appear relatively optimistic.¹⁵⁵ Curas caught an occasional break, as when sympathetic estate owners such as Mateo Vales of Tizimín, or two well-wishers from otherwise uncooperative Kopomá, came forward to contribute.¹⁵⁶ But most communities shared the bitter experience of Bécál. Despite the civil wars, Bécál was still an area of stability, in part because of its entrenched haciendas, in part because of the advantage of lying along the principal highway from Campeche to Mérida (today it lies just within the Campeche side of the borders). With the death of Padre Hurtado, it also enjoyed a prestigious and influential priest; none other than Manuel Antonio Sierra O’Reilly became *vicario*, or religious administrator and magistrate, of the region in September 1870.¹⁵⁷ In or shortly before 1870, the antediluvian Hurtado finally passed away. Even in his day, political conflict had made funding the parish next to impossible.

The man who inherited this mess, successor Padre Lucas Canto, had far less personal prestige than Hurtado and had to sell off imágenes to pay for his own necessities.¹⁵⁸ Sierra tried to remedy the situation through a two-pronged strategy: he suspended Canto, then made a personal tour of local communities in order to appeal to both townsfolk and hacendados. The latter constituted the economic and political motor of the area and also the greatest resistance to church taxes, which would fall disproportionately on them. Hacendados united in Nunkiní to thwart Sierra O'Reilly's tour, although the vicario encountered a somewhat greater tolerance in the other villages.¹⁵⁹

After politics and property, a third dimension of the Liberal Reform concerned the life passages of baptism, marriage, and burial. Under the new system, priests intending to perform such ceremonies were to demand to see a *boleto*, or paper certifying that the individuals requesting baptism or wedding ceremonies had first gone through civil channels. Priests who failed to do so were to suffer fines, as, for example, happened with Padre Tiburcio Falango of Seibaplaya.¹⁶⁰ Farther down the coast, the parish of Champotón lay in a state of abandon. People had quit paying church support altogether and cohabited with sweethearts and buried their dead without benefit of formal services.¹⁶¹ Was it the bride or groom who resisted church ceremony? Or both? The documents remain silent on this issue. Women have been one of the main columns of church support in Mexican history, but if women objected to their prospective husband's refusal to pay the church, their opinions failed to register. Lack of cooperation with the church is more understandable where Maya women were concerned: they had little money and even less status. Nor were rural Mayas the only ones to avoid religious services in favor of either civil ceremony or simple cohabitation; in many towns and villages everyone did it, including the Hispanic bourgeoisie. Perhaps the needs of household economy outweighed matters of piety.

Beyond the blessings of life loomed the final terror of death itself. The Catholic rites of extreme unction, Christian burial, and dedicatory masses had long protected souls of the faithful departed. The question of man's glassy essence assumed new urgency with the reappearance of smallpox in April 1875. Epidemics came and went in this mosquito-infested land, but were especially bad now. The mid-1870s outbreak was believed to have originated in Cuba, then convulsed in the Ten Years' War, and had been anticipated as early as 1871.¹⁶² Within a few months of arrival, it spread throughout the emerging henequen zone.¹⁶³ Militia service suddenly became more dangerous than ever; one infected soldier was enough to turn a canton into a death camp, and it was no accident that recruiting problems escalated at this time.¹⁶⁴ The only way of avoiding the *noj k'áak'*, or "great

fire,” was to separate oneself as much as possible from its carriers. In such times wakes for the dead were prohibited, although Liberal ideologues rejoiced to see these ancient practices curtailed, for they believed, with some justification, that wakes ended in gambling and drinking.¹⁶⁵

There was also the question of peons. Hacendados saw church services as useful for satisfying peons—blessing buildings and oratories, for example—but beyond this evinced little interest in the clergy.¹⁶⁶ Many did not demand that their workers attend days of religious instruction in neighboring villages.¹⁶⁷ Or, if religious instruction were to be permitted, they insisted that Mohammed come to the mountain, and not vice versa.¹⁶⁸ Compounding the problem was the fact that curas often called upon local Mayas, including hacienda peons, to perform unpaid labor in construction and refurbishing projects. Hacendados of Tunkás permitted such labor, but only on days normally reserved for doctrina. The cura understood that the arrangement turned holy days into workdays, but he saw no alternative.¹⁶⁹ This sort of minor compromise characterized church survival during the worst years of the Reform.

The church responded through the voluntarist strategies begun in the late 1850s: subscription lists, moral suasion, and a monthly half-real quota for rural peons and a full real for free villagers. Private individuals were more susceptible to pressure than was the state, and priests refused services to anyone who claimed what had been church property. Curas took up a subscription of those who were willing to support the faith, then persuaded them to sign a pledge to provide tithes (these being legal in voluntary form) or medio-real contributions. Tellingly, churchmen seemed to prefer old Spanish money, not the peso/centavo system introduced under the empire. The cura either carried out the collections himself or else relied on a local volunteer (a variation of *mayordomía*), or service to the town's patron saint, to do so. The cura of Sotuta was able to compile a long list of willing payers that included vecinos, Mayas, and members of the local National Guard unit.¹⁷⁰ Curas also tripled the cost of such special services as masses said for the benefit of departed loved ones, from one to three pesos: curiously, people would pay for masses but not for maintenance.¹⁷¹ In isolated instances, priests used political connections as safeguards, as when the cura of Peto relied on his personal friendship with Manuel Cepeda Peraza to prevent alienation of the casa cural.¹⁷² (Beyond revealing an interesting quirk in Cepeda's makeup, the anecdote also shows that the law's letter was not everything.) The problem everywhere was that the people fell behind on their intentions within two weeks. Leandro Jerray, Hocabá's would-be collector, had no real power of sanction and ended up merely hectoring parishioners; at this point they resorted to bargaining, the debtors offering to begin paying if back debts were written off. Priests had no choice but to dismiss

their ministers in order to cut costs. Public gatherings produced new pledges of support, followed by new resistance.¹⁷³

The church also embraced the press, a signal strategy for a more urban and literate age. In 1868 it launched a weekly titled *La caridad*. This journal shrewdly avoided confrontations it could not win; most of its articles revolved around the events of biblical times, although the editors went out of their way to eulogize Cepeda Peraza following his death in March 1869. Saccharine pieces such as “The Death of Fratricide,” “The True Friends of the Poor,” and “The Conversion of a Princess” probably glazed the eyes of all but the fanatical, while heavy doses of pastoral letters made *La caridad* a Catholic version of *Granma*.¹⁷⁴ The journal provided regular updates on the pope and above all cautioned its readers to shun the works of Honoré de Balzac.¹⁷⁵ Whatever their weaknesses, though, Catholic journals soon proved an indispensable part of the church’s survival and recuperation in the porfirian era.

The early 1870s may well have been the absolute nadir of Mexico’s nineteenth-century church. Clerical correspondence reached its most despairing, and church prestige and affluence fell to all-time lows. Baca, cradle of the Restoration, symbolized the decay. The parish was broke, parishioners had ceased to contribute, and years of civil unrest had literally demolished Baca’s church. The long-suffering pastor of Baca and Mochochá, Manuel Sosa, found no recourse other than to write to the governor in hopes of some economic support. Hoping to throw a favorable spin on a movement that had won the day, Sosa argued that the Reform meant only religious pluralism, not persecution of Mexico’s ancient faith: “If the Protestant can build his mosques, the Muslims, their pagodas, and the Jews, their synagogues, the Catholics can also raise their temples in which they pray to the true and only God, whom all nations recognize.”¹⁷⁶ Sosa may have been hazy on comparative religion, but his newfound ecumenicalism reflected the unrest that persisted two years after the Martínez revolution had triumphed.¹⁷⁷ Cepeda Peraza died almost immediately after this request, and the padre came away empty-handed. When Sosa set out to restore the chapel and oratory of Baca through grassroots contributions, he found few resources and many obstacles. A fund-raising commission came up with a measly three pesos, and in fact garnered more insults than contributions. Even when construction materials were available, the horses to carry them had to be brought all the way from Mochochá and Dzemul, and the municipal president, the pinnacle of local authority, refused to grant him access to peon labor. By begging door-to-door Sosa eventually managed to scrounge up two reales per day for his tiny team of brickmasons.¹⁷⁸

The suffering of the Restoration church imparts some historical lessons concerning the local roots of national trees. Economic explanation for the

porfirian revolution points to pressures from international capital and private Mexican ambitions: plans to reactivate Mexico's mining industry, the need for railroad infrastructure, and the quest for border security. There is much truth to this version. However, a detailed examination of daily life in areas far removed from the border area shows that national changes in the late 1870s and early 1880s owed in part to the fact that the resumed Liberal Reform under Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada was tearing Mexico apart at the local level. In matters of religion as in matters of state, prolonged violence converted the imponderable into the permissible. True, support for the Yucatecan Reform was broad and included property owners, townsfolk, petty civil servants, and rural Mayas both free and indentured. Either the priests themselves fell in the popular estimation, or else anticlerical tendencies that had long been present in the society had finally gushed to the surface, allowing many citizens to do and say what had been in their hearts all along. Partly the support was philosophical, partly a gut dislike of priests, and partly the result of simple poverty. But the Reform impulse was often diffuse and contradictory. And while a sufficiently broad consensus may have existed that the Reform was necessary, other and equally critical questions remained unanswered, both for historians and probably for the people of the day and age. How far was this process to go? Was the Reform to end after achieving limited objectives? Or was it to continue forever, just as the rebellions seemed to do, always guarding a land that threatened to backslide into clericalism? The renewed Reform had the potential of antagonizing the greater portion of the population, which was fundamentally moderate, or better said, sufficiently selective to embrace Catholicism even while refusing to subsidize it. One comparison is with China's Cultural Revolution against party ossification. Just as Mao Zedung's "permanent revolution" shocked surviving elites into embracing bureaucratic authoritarianism, so too southeast Mexico's brief, traumatic experience with "permanent reform" paved the way for the porfirianism that forced the coexistence of municipal dictatorships with continued church prestige.

THE CIVIL WARS, PART SEVEN: SOLDIERS WITHOUT
CAMPAIGNS, THE COLONIAS MILITARES,
AND THE PLAGUE OF THE GAVILLAS

Among those watching the disorder of the late 1860s and early 1870s were the sublevados. On June 27, only a few days after Salazar Iñarregui's surrender and flight, they occupied the plaza of Tixcacaltuyú for twenty-four

hours, long enough to sack the town, destroying among other things the furniture of the rectory.¹⁷⁹ These sorts of raids persisted for the next eight years. Just after midnight on July 1, 1871, the rebels gathered outside of Chemax, then fell on the town at daybreak. Colonel Daniel Traconis managed to rout them at a well known as Balmay, but not before they had torched eighty houses. The only relief that could be provided for Chemax was an exemption from state taxes, not much help for people who had lost everything.¹⁸⁰ Although not clear to Yucatecans, behind much of this violence lay a struggle for leadership within the ranks of Chan Santa Cruz. War with *pacífico* communities increased sharply in the late 1860s. Meanwhile, the death of Bonifacio Novelo in 1868 altered the political equation in Chan Santa Cruz itself, and generals such as Bernabé Cen tried to hold on to their power by mounting ever more daring raids into settled territory. As with the eastern generals, war had become a habit among rebel leaders and many of their followers; anyone who backed down sacrificed prestige and potentially his life. Cen lost his rivalry to Crescencio Poot, but inflicted much damage in the process, eventually perishing in a raid on the hacienda Xuxub, near Holbox, in October 1875.¹⁸¹ These internal power struggles eventually fragmented and weakened rebel society, but the fact was not evident to Restoration-era Yucatecans, many of whom remained at considerable risk throughout the process, and demand for military protection remained high.

One of the Caste War's greatest legacies to the later century, then, was the *colonia militar*. A modified version of the cantons, the colonia amounted to standing military service in a society no longer at war. Despite the rarity of dramatic battles, service in the colonia militar remained a cardinal obligation for rural men and, by extension, a fact of life for the families they left behind in ranchos and villages. What was this institution that gobbled up so many humans and resources, and what did it mean to soldiers and society?

The basic idea was to station units of 50–150 men each in selected points of the state. Each colonia consisted of four companies that could be assigned to different places and projects. The jefe assembled men one by one in the barracks of his district's head town, the first arrivals forced to wait as recruiters continued to round up others from outlying villages. Recruits received three days' pay in advance (a daily *haber*, or pay, consisted of 18¾ centavos, 50 for sergeants), plus \$5 after their service was completed.¹⁸² One feature that stands out from the colonia records is the high ratio (often one to four) of officers to enlisted men. This reflected rampant desertion, a fact that necessitated more officers to maintain discipline.¹⁸³ The practice of long-time service also contributed, since after years in arms many men had risen at least to the rank of sergeant, and hence had their

names removed from the draft rosters. Regardless of the causes, the problem of too many chiefs was apparent even within the militias themselves.

Recruitment campaigns took place wherever able-bodied men had the misfortune of being found, but the actual stationing of soldiers was more selective and more concentrated. The Oriente colonias consisted of Tixcalcupul, Kaua, Pisté, and Libre Unión. Colonias of the Centro were stationed in Yaxcabá, Tixcaltuyú, Tacchibichén, Neuelá, Tixhualtún, and even Progreso. (For who knew what menace the sea might bring?) Finally, three additional colonias—Tzucacab, Tinum, and San José—guarded the south.¹⁸⁴ Funding for these units came from area taxpayers. Agents from Hacienda handled collections in their *partidos*, including collection of quotas from those who had procured exemptions. In *partidos* not so favored, the work naturally devolved to the *jefe político*.

In practice the colonia system suffered from innumerable problems. Collections proved more difficult than recruiting, and quota drive had to compete with the head tax.¹⁸⁵ Colonias therefore remained chronically underfunded. The thirteen units should have consisted of nearly two thousand men each, but in 1874, during the institution's height, most operated with only slightly more than 50 percent of the specified manpower.¹⁸⁶ As with recruitment systems dating back to the early Republic, the laws excluded many people, including free Mayas and hacienda peons, thus encouraging men to settle on the hacienda to avoid military service. Mayas had good reason to embrace peonage, since prohibitions against Indian service were routinely ignored, a fact that recruiters acknowledged; the ninety-five soldiers of the Tixkokob regiment, for example, were almost entirely Maya.¹⁸⁷ The same held true of Sotuta.¹⁸⁸ Married men under eighteen (common enough in those days) and bachelors over twenty-one were similarly exempt. Although planners allowed two months off for individual labors, this time was insufficient to carry on the basics of agriculture. Haberes chronically fell in arrears, and guardsmen became demoralized and confused by the constant rebellions and political upheavals and often fled to live in the monte.¹⁸⁹ One taste of military service usually sufficed, and those who performed it seldom allowed themselves to be taken a second time.¹⁹⁰ Others hid out in the anonymity of Mérida or the larger towns.¹⁹¹ Tizimín's guardia officers tried to identify their men by special insignias, but these proved useless in keeping track of soldiers, since deserters simply threw them away when they fled.¹⁹² Finally, dozens won release from service on the basis of injury; indeed, the incidence of crippling wounds among the veterans was appalling.¹⁹³ Whatever the exact combination of factors, men stayed away from the colonias militares whenever possible: in Tizimín, in Izamal, in Tekax.¹⁹⁴ Remoter communities such as Río Lagartos and San Felipe became virtual refugee zones for those disinclined to serve.¹⁹⁵

At the same time, circumstances varied so radically from place to place that different towns and villages ended with notably different service obligations. Tixhualahtún's male population remained in a state of almost constant conscription. Faced with the enormity of the problem, the guardia organizers began a four-month alternation, which allowed men to finish their planting, while still keeping some in active service in the colonias militares.¹⁹⁶ The Temax recruiter tried a more creative tack: he offered men the option of signing up forty to fifty days in advance to allow them to coordinate service with their own work and to avoid surprising them with a task that, as he acknowledged, they detested.¹⁹⁷

Matters of local allegiance also clouded the waters. Only selected towns received colonias, but since those towns lacked sufficient men to form a unit, the remaining majority of the colonia necessarily consisted of conscripts from other communities. But why, asked the citizens of Oxcutzcab, should we go to fight for Tekax, when we receive no protection in our own homes?¹⁹⁸ Towns without colonias often did have their own guard units, but these were smaller and less reassuring than the colonias, and locals were doubly inclined to avoid guard duty after returning from a forced stint in someone else's terrain. And towns that did have colonias found them almost as troublesome as the outlaws they supposedly discouraged. Duty proved monumentally boring, and as in the days of the active battalions, soldiers worked off their energies in drunken brawls that could degenerate into murder.¹⁹⁹

Finally, politics also clouded military service, for it was the jefe político that ruled the colonias. The law placed control over guardia organization squarely in his hands, and he answered only to the governor. As long as the jefe refrained from drafting too much hacienda labor, the governor enjoyed reasonable command over armed force.²⁰⁰ In this critical sense, civilians were gaining the upper hand in their long battle with military power by the 1870s. Still, jefes had to negotiate with local interests and concerns. Officials such as José María Iturralde of Valladolid played the same role his predecessor Eduardo MacGregor had done forty years earlier, excusing men who were sick or wounded: "In this area one finds many who are useless as a result of the Caste War," Iturralde wrote. His words had some truth, but also reflected a jealous defense of local manpower. The jefe also made allowances for men who defended their own homes from attack even though not paid for such service.²⁰¹ Even when the jefe was unsympathetic, others took a hand; well into the porfirian years, a physician of Maxcanú, either from humanitarian impulses or—less stirring but more probable—out of pressure from landowners, wrote generous quantities of medical exemptions for men of the community.²⁰² Alcaldes auxiliares, appointed officials of the smaller settlements, also did whatever they could to keep political clients off the colonia rosters.²⁰³

The shortcomings of the system meant that línea towns seldom had enough men to make them feel secure. Peto, for example, lived in constant fear of raids, and although two hundred soldiers guarded the town, in early 1873 it was necessary to pull half this force to shore up defenses elsewhere. The town's protests found no response from an overextended government deeply embroiled in threats from within and without.²⁰⁴ Tunkás as well demanded maximum protection as well as continued prosecution of the Caste War. Most of the estates south of town had been thoroughly destroyed; Tunkás itself had been shrinking since 1861, the year of the terrible raid and the Irigoyen-Acereto wars, and by 1874 only forty adult men now lived in the town, half of them armed. Rebel raiders had devastated Dzitás two years earlier, and without troops or weapons, the people of Tunkás had reason to fear that their town would disappear altogether.²⁰⁵

For all the insecurities, though, the one thing that the colonias almost never did was fight. True, the outfits probably did help deter serious attacks, for much of police work is presence; and they even fought a rare skirmish or two with *sublevados*. But military service more often consisted of vainly tracking down raiders who had slipped into Yucatecan territory in search of booty. Colonias were simply too disorganized, too unmotivated, and too frequently deployed in nonmilitary activities like farming and politics to do anything more than react. By the time a colonia swung ponderously into action, raiders had already melted back into the forest. Nor did the colonias provide much in the way of intelligence, since virtually all tips regarding rebel presence came from milpa farmers working far away on the municipal periphery.²⁰⁶ Certainly the most unusual case of inaction was that of Santa Elena (formerly Nohcacab). The town's sergeant mustered his conscripts, but rather than reporting for duty at the colonia of Ticul, simply marched them in an elaborate circle that stayed out of harm's way, then returned to the village. The scam only came to light in the year 1879, when Santa Elena's ayuntamiento had the temerity to demand the protection of soldiers from elsewhere.²⁰⁷

While the residual Caste War has drawn most attention for this period, the fact is that law enforcement matured side by side with its *doppelgänger*, criminality. Following the imperial collapse, the countryside suffered from bandit gangs known as *gavillas*, and their presence remained a curse well into the late 1870s. As with the end of Cuba's independence war, the fall of empire should have led to a disarmament, but it in fact encouraged brigandage.²⁰⁸ This disorder flourished amid the Restoration-era disappointments, when the population found itself unsettled by such issues as land, religion, local politics, military service, ongoing violence, and the abolition of the indigenous community.

In part, bandits prospered in the absence of a single powerful caudillo, but the problem far predated the death of Cepeda. Cattle rustlers had operated since before independence and thrived in the early national chaos.²⁰⁹ During the height of Caste War violence in early 1850, for example, a gang of Mayas and mestizos preyed on wayfarers in Kanasín, just outside of Mérida.²¹⁰ A bandit leader named Juan Um had terrorized travelers in the area of Hopelchén until his capture and execution in October 1856, while assault gangs worked the roads along Conkal, north of Mérida.²¹¹ Like the bandits of Ignacio Altamirano's novel *El Zarco*, Yucatán's Restoration-era outlaw gangs originated in the social and political disintegration of the Reform wars. In the early 1860s, for example, José Encarnación Canto terrorized the area around Calotmul. His gang staged kidnappings (including a relative of Santiago Imán) and raided military barracks in search of arms and munitions. Hastily assembled citizens' posses proved incapable of tracking them down.²¹² At the same time, an individual named Brost led a gang of some twenty men in the region of Motul. Working from hideouts deep in the monte, they drank heavily and raided towns for whatever they could carry away; Brost's group remained active and tipsy at least until the end of 1867.²¹³ The most resilient of all bandit princes was Juan Reyes, a man with no known political connections. Originally from Umán, Reyes took up his career as highwayman in the late 1850s, operating along the well-traveled Camino Real between Mérida and Campeche. Reyes was finally captured (and presumably executed) on January 4, 1867, just after the Hunucmá uprising.²¹⁴ Neither a caudillo nor a disgruntled Liberal, he did share one experience with both: his career began during the civil wars of the Irigoyen years.

The post-1867 flood of arms and masterless men compounded the problem. The collapse of the crusade against Chan Santa Cruz released thousands of ex-soldiers back into the civilian world. Some gavillas were headed by former officers, for nationalists like Martínez gave lessons to more self-serving and unscrupulous men. It hardly helped that Yucatán, much like Central America after its civil wars of the 1980s, abounded in guns, ammunition, and secret hiding places. By mid-1867 the countryside was rife with lawlessness. Bandits holed up in remote locations, but could also mix with the people, turning up at dances and fiestas without necessarily provoking a hue and cry. Perhaps they derived revenues from like-minded townfolk and property owners, and yet they made no attempts to give to the poor, rather preferring to spend every last centavo on arms for another spin at political roulette. Still more funding came from plunder and extortion. Armed men descended on the people like hungry bears, stealing everything: food, weapons, even the mail.²¹⁵ One such group turned up outside of Tunkás, on the hacienda Nicté'-ha. Deserters

from the Tihosuco canton, this group of some thirty men committed no crimes, but they carried arms and availed themselves of the estate's water, throwing locals into a state of panic.²¹⁶ In Telchaquillo, a gang led by one Pilar Flores—by day an *albañil*, or construction worker, in the employ of aging Caste War hero Andrés Maldonado—robbed travelers of money, jewelry, arms, and even clothing.²¹⁷ A decree of February 7, 1868, called for *jefes* to disarm civilians, but few had the wherewithal to carry this out.²¹⁸ Military requisitioning in nineteenth-century Mexico had always involved an element of plunder anyway, thus making for a thrifty transition from legitimate unit to outlaw *gavilla*.

Gavilla leadership often came from former imperial officials and military commanders, men largely based in that incubator of revolt, the area from Izamal to Valladolid. The absence of a state strongman naturally piqued the ambitions of smaller fry. The most important of these, Francisco Cantón, went into a Havana exile in 1867, but quickly wearied of life under the *palmas reales* and returned to plague Yucatecan politics for the next three decades. But many never left the country at all. Only a handful of the highest-ranking imperialists went into exile or were killed, whereas hundreds of sympathizers in the cities and towns continued with their accustomed lives. Stripped of prestige and lucrative positions, former public servants now took recourse in banditry. One example was Pedro Rosado Lavalle; once subprefect of Espita, Rosado embraced the highwayman's life after June 1867.²¹⁹ The notorious *gavilla* headed by "the seditious Rosado Lavalle" raided and pillaged throughout the entire henequen zone from Acanseh to Izamal to Telchac on the northern coast.²²⁰ Another rebellious officer was Colonel Roberto Erosa of Espita. A mere twenty-five years old when Salazar Ilarregui fell, he could not accept Mérida's triumph over the hinterlands and spent the next nine years embroiled in a series of pronouncements.²²¹ Similarly, during the year 1868, the renegade officer Sixto Ortoll led a wandering force of some 150–200 men.²²² Even places close to Mérida were not spared. Still another group operating in the same territory was that commanded by Ramón Solís.²²³ These men knew only the life of arms and found civilian democracy starchy and unpalatable, particularly when they themselves were not in charge.²²⁴

The Valladolid area too continued to feel residual war tremors, as, for example, in early 1873, when rebels attacked Kaua and a number of outlying estates. Desperate to end the war, or at least to increase their protection, the Valladolid *ayuntamiento* tried to interest other towns in launching a movement to have federal taxes instead deployed to warfare.²²⁵ But nobody was listening. Towns and villages farther to the west had lost interest in what had proved to be a sump for money and labor. Self-appointed guardians of the Oriente therefore saw revolt against the complacency of Mérida as their only recourse.

The followers of the political outlaws are more elusive. Like the pre-Caste War rowdies of the 1840s, the gangs were an ethnic cocktail, drawing individuals with last names such as Aké and Catzim.²²⁶ They returned to a rural society that held fewer opportunities and was more oligarchic than ever. Blends of former soldiers, hidalgos, and escaped peons, they lived by preying on the haciendas and the ayuntamiento strongboxes. Social bandits perhaps, but there is little evidence as to their thoughts and attitudes, and still less to their reception among the rural poor. They did carry a certain crude political content in the sense that they mobilized the lower classes around a charismatic leader. Perhaps the most important factor that bound peasants to caudillos was that people in civil wars tend to line up behind whoever demonstrates the greatest degree of force and control, and for many, the eastern military units were the only power they had ever known. Maya milperos and peons thus obeyed a certain logic in following racist caudillos, who in other circumstances might have sold them into slavery.

Banditry was nothing new, but the war against these marauders involved a new weapon: the telegraph, an invention that promised to give the state new leverage over rural dissidents. The miracle of the technomessage was a long time coming; in fact, the prefect of Valladolid had demanded the installation of “that admirable and useful invention, the electro-magnetic telegraph” as early as February 1854.²²⁷ But he wished in vain. Telegraphs only came a decade later, under the empire, and would not be significantly employed until the Restoration.²²⁸ Lines were usually connected to offices located in each town’s casa municipal, a reflection of the centralization of political authority that persisted into the restored Republic.²²⁹ The jefes survived and even prospered with the introduction of technology, for who controlled the rural telegraph office? So too the lines allowed the military to communicate with the speed of electricity. By 1902 Yucatán had some 1,137 kilometers of line in place.²³⁰ But technology always cuts two ways, for people could know more than ever, and right away. Telegraphy allowed citizens to complain rapidly of military abuses, as the people of Izamal did in August 1874, when the military commander of Yaxcabá declined to pay for shipment of corn they had sent him.²³¹ Moreover, growing state dependence on the device made it the obligatory target for bandits and rebels. For example, in 1874 dissident “vandals” repeatedly cut telegraph lines connecting Mérida to Peto; they preferred that their skullduggeries in the deep south remain a secret.²³² Like so many other inventions—from the Clovis point to the Internet—telegraphy aided both civilization *and* its discontents.

While the decentralized *violencia* of banditry defies simple timelines, overall ebbs and peaks emerge clearly enough. The peninsula lived under a general climate of rural violence; tensions occasionally coalesced into

episodes of greater density (late 1867, 1872–73, and 1876), usually because leaders recognized national instabilities that favored their cause. The repression that followed a failed uprising usually brought a year or two of calm, in which aspiring revolutionaries reconsolidated their position and planned a comeback.

The first wave came early. Five months after Salazar's departure, disgruntled losers attempted to regain the upper hand. Some five hundred of these were reported to have gathered in Havana for an invasion; they established ties with the various discontents still living in southeast Mexico; they circulated leaflets with such slogans as "Long live the Regency!" "Long live Márquez!" "Death to Juárez!" and more enigmatic, "Death to Liberty!" The effect of such propagandizing remains unclear. A troop uprising did take place at this time, far to the south in the community of Peto; soldiers stationed at the hacienda Aranjuez (later to become one of the first installations of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, a function that continues there to the present day) were seriously behind in their pay and rebelled on November 3. The revolt fizzled without bloodshed nineteen days later; Cepeda still enjoyed sufficiently amicable relations with the church to prevail upon a local priest to negotiate with discontents.²³³ Ideological motivations appear to have played a role far secondary to bread-and-butter issues. A bandit attack in Kimbilá in November may also have borne some connection. It *does* seem to have had some political marrow, since in addition to robbing homes, the attackers also murdered the batab. Beyond these points, nothing is known about the episode.²³⁴ Felipe Navarrete and Francisco Cantón landed in Sisal in December 1867 to exploit a Mérida military uprising on the eleventh of that month.²³⁵ They enjoyed the support of caudillos such as Roberto Erosa and Felipe Rosado Lavalle, who had been gathering forces in the Oriente since early November, but also of disgruntled civil servants of Mérida, all with ties to the fallen empire.²³⁶ In this first-wave rebellion, roles suddenly reversed themselves: now it was Colonel Buenaventura Martínez vainly tracking down "criminals" and "quarrel-mongers" who somehow managed to dissolve into the common people.

The last sputter of this wave took place on January 1, 1869, when a portion of the Fifth Battalion rose up under Eduardo González Gutiérrez in the Ciudadela. Manuel Cepeda Peraza lay dying at that moment, and a young clerk named Olegario Molina, later to become peninsular strongman until the time of the Revolution, had to handle all the political and military dispatches of the crisis. Juárezista forces suppressed the revolt, and the insurrectionists were shot six days after a drumhead trial.²³⁷ Rebellions slacked off for a time following the failure of the January uprising, as martial law reigned in the countryside. Increasingly, ambitious peninsulars found themselves drawn to the new enterprise of henequen. By 1870 men such as Ramón Solís of Dzemul laid down their arms and made peace

with the new order; Solís himself not only took up henequen as a cash crop, he also made a good living selling the tiny suckers known as *hijos*, or “sons,” for would-be cultivators.²³⁸ Robberies continued throughout 1868, but former rebel leaders temporarily contented themselves with the entrepreneur’s life.²³⁹ In southeast Mexico key bricks of the porfirian order were already falling into place before the rise of Díaz himself.

The second wave of rebellion came in 1872–73, under the leadership of General Francisco “Pancho” Cantón, of Valladolid. This revolt resembled the unrest that troubled Cuba during the early years of the Platt Amendment: out-groups exploded when in-groups illegally prolonged their own terms of office, in this case Manuel Cicerol’s attempt to extend his term from two to four years. To some degree it was understandable, for the Cepeda circle had waded in blood for the Republic and now saw unreconstructed imperialists rallying for a return through the polls, much as U.S. northerners read the election of Samuel Tilden in 1876 as an unacceptable readmission of Confederates to political life. Difficult times heightened the probability that open voting would favor the opposition. Beneath this elite skirmishing lay broad lower-class discontent that neither political party addressed, but which both tried to exploit to its own advantage. Joined by former imperialists such as Pedro Rosado Lavallo and Romualdo Portilla, Cantón fought his way to Mérida by April, but was beaten back when a *juarecista*, General Vicente Mariscal, arrived in Campeche with a brigade. Combatants reached a compromise of sorts: Cantón surrendered and accepted the post of commander of the Línea del Oriente, while Cicerol stepped down, and General Ignacio Alatorre became interim governor, with an anti-*cantonista*, one Miguel Castellanos Sánchez, as his second.²⁴⁰

General Alatorre had no intention of ruling over the quarrelsome Yucatecans, and on May 16 of the following year, he returned to Campeche. Old Liborio Irigoyen briefly resumed the helm, but he had little stomach for reliving the strife of the late 1850s, and seven days later turned the office over to Castellanos. This shattered the delicate accords of the previous year, and the Cantón revolt erupted anew, with roughly the same lineup. Havoc prevailed for the next six months. Despite its conservative principles, the rebellion wreaked havoc on the parishes through which it passed; curas such as Cosme Bobadilla of Tunkás remembered it because the anti-Cantón forces of Espada, Ruiz, and Tracónis quartered soldiers in the town church, where they passed the evening audibly making love with their female companions. Similar indignations befell the casa cural in Temax. Bobadilla doubtless spoke for many when he interpreted the chaos as God’s punishment for the defilement of Mexican churches.²⁴¹ Cantón’s return may have helped the army’s erotic life, but it also emboldened the bandit gangs. One prominent *gavilla* worked the Camino Real between Mérida and Campeche. Led by brothers

Cecilio and Esteban Quintal, the gang robbed travelers and rustled cattle. In the summer of 1873 they turned up in Campeche, where they plotted the murder of hacendado Eulogio Sumárraga. But when city authorities got wind of their presence, the Quintal brothers fled to the comparative safety of Bécál, where “they enjoyed impunity.”²⁴² Like other such groups, they found support among the people of their home territory.

The man whom President Lerdo sent to contain the revolt was General Guillermo Palomino. Born in Veracruz in 1834, Palomino pronounced for Liberalism in the Ayutla revolt and had remained true to it ever after. Captured and deported by the French in 1863, he returned to fight again, only to fall prisoner once more two years later. The thirty-nine-year-old Palomino arrived on August 10, 1873, and quickly rallied pro-Lerdo forces and brought the Cantón revolt to its conclusion.²⁴³ However, the hard part was already over. José Coronado had crushed Cantón in Hunucmá three weeks earlier, on July 18, 1873; leaving his dead on the field, Cantón was forced to retreat to Valladolid, where he arrived with no more than twelve wounded men. Cantón’s followers in Cenotillo now began to desert the cause as well. Sadly, peace did not follow. Two days later Coronado’s own men revolted.²⁴⁴ Their grievances are unknown, but presumably related to factors that had been constants since the mid-1840s: forced recruitment, prolonged service, gimpy supplies, and arrears in pay.

Cantón himself managed to beat the rap. Legend holds that he was brought before a firing squad, but knowing that a reprieve was on its way, managed to buy time by puffing a leisurely cigar. Taken to Mexico City to stand trial before the consejo de guerra, he was defended by none other than national congressman Joaquín Baranda, a Campeche elite who had spent most of the postimperial years ingratiating himself to national-level Liberals, and who was planning his own takeover of Campeche state. For whatever reason, the consejo acquitted Cantón, who immediately returned to Yucatán.²⁴⁵ A free man, Cantón was elected diputado of his Valladolid power base.²⁴⁶ But his commitment to democratic means remained dubious. By now, Porfirio Díaz’s political discontent was public knowledge. Cantón understood that a power struggle was brewing in the political center, and that any change in the Mexican presidency would necessarily favor those who were out of power and in rebellion at that change’s onset.

For Pedro Rosado Lavallo and Romualdo Portilla, the Palomino repression brought a far more ignominious end. Because their deaths occasioned a great deal of controversy, they merit examination in some detail. The Rosado revolt of late 1873 in fact does appear to have resonated among the people, particularly along the “revolutionary strip” from Motul to Valladolid. In early February 1874 the two came to Hochtún, where they found

support among members of the Gamboa clan, who essentially ran the town. However, on February 19 news reached the jefe político of Izamal that Juan Gamboa had gathered some forty rifles to arm the rebellion in Hoctún; this official, a twenty-five-year-old named Valeriano Castro, dispatched Sublieutenant Agustín Flores with a force of some twenty-five men, mostly federal soldiers from such places as Veracruz and Puebla, to confiscate the arms. Arriving late at night, they invaded the house of Gamboa, who had fled; they found nothing, but noticed that in the house next door a light was burning and the doors had been left open. Entering, the soldiers discovered two men, still clad in their frock coats (for February evenings in Yucatán can be chilly), sleeping in hammocks. When prodded and asked his name, one of the men mumbled, "Rosado, Rosado." Asked if he were in fact Pedro Rosado Lavalle, he replied, "Your humble servant." The next day Rosado and his companion-prisoner, Portilla, began a fateful march toward Izamal at around one in the afternoon. Before departing, Flores divided his men into a main force, with smaller rear and advance guards. Castro ordered the two prisoners, bound tightly at the elbows, to march with the vanguard; in his explanation, he feared a possible assault from behind, since Hoctún swarmed with rebel sympathizers. He also ordered that the two men be shot if they attempted to escape. According to later testimony of both officers and soldiers, about three-fourths of a league outside of town the two men asked to be untied, to which Castro assented. Going to the side of the road to urinate, they suddenly broke and ran. When they ignored cries of "¡Alto!" (Halt!), two of the soldiers ran after them and dispatched rifle shots, one of which struck Rosado at the base of the neck, exiting through his left eye and carrying with it a substantial portion of his brains. Portillo fell struck through the chest. Death was instantaneous. Summoning Maya peons from a nearby hacienda, Castro had the two cadavers taken to Kimbilá, where they were buried in marked graves.²⁴⁷ This, at least, was the official story. A dissenting autopsy suggested that both men had in fact been shot from the front.

The ley fuga brought peace to Rosado and Portilla but to no one else, for political conspiracies continued to flourish. One of these involved Colonel Daniel Traconis (at that moment president of Valladolid's ayuntamiento) and Captain José Pinzón of the National Guard. Their plans, like so many others, were nipped before ever blossoming into full-scale revolt, and the arrested conspirators were eventually released on bond.²⁴⁸ Traconis himself returned to liberty just in time to lead his city in its ceremonies observing Mexican independence.²⁴⁹ While flags waved amid the popping of skyrockets, Yucatecans could only ask themselves: how many more of these insurrections lay just beyond the festivities?

The years 1867–76 suggest that the Restoration was not what Republican champions had hoped. The project stumbled over its own yardstick, since there had never really been a Republic to restore, only a neocolonial arrangement with certain democratic rhetoric and formalities. The victors of 1867 inherited the racism, insolvency, underdevelopment, and ideological strife of their forefathers. Difficult material conditions persisted, as did the exclusionary political system. Confronted with similar problems, they opted for similar solutions. Governance retained its top-down quality. Priests continued to struggle by with the limited support provided by voluntary contributors. Denied formal office, prominent Mayas continued to command respect by reason of titles they had once held or by lands they now owned. Ejido properties resisted complete privatization. Jefes políticos still controlled town politics through a system of subordinates who largely did as they pleased in pursuing their own peculiar vision of good government. And those who did not like the new order had a familiar choice: eat crow or rebel.

This tendency to keep faith with the past was one of the greatest lessons to be learned from Mexico's Restored Republic. Periods of political change often involve continuities not far beneath the surface. The Bolsheviks overthrew the old Russian system of czars and nobility, but they had little choice except to reemploy the same office workers, the only trained intelligentsia; Lenin's conversion of imperial functionaries into red commissars guaranteed survival of an authoritarian bureaucracy. The Mexican Revolution has long been criticized for its perpetuation of local boss rule, rigged elections, and porfirian values of positivism. Nor has the problem of the frustrated transition necessarily gone away. Eight generations after Salazar rode dejected (or perhaps relieved) into exile, Mexican voters elected a president who did not come from the ruling party; three years later, disillusionment with the lack of change led them to hand congress back to the party that media pundits had declared a cadaver. None of this is to deny that change happens, a rank exaggeration. But it happens slowly, often by halves or less, often punctuated by small steps backward. A stroll through the parks and avenues of Yucatán's restored Republic helps illustrate why.

Peace, Porfirian-Style

East Meets West, and a People Contort the Past



By 1878 the southeasterners could see much that had changed. A new revolt had swept the land, one that installed General Porfirio Díaz and a promise that Mexican presidents would never again reelect themselves. That year also marked the appearance of the first typewritten document in the Yucatecan archives, a brief note mandating the erection of telegraph lines for military purposes.¹ This convergence of mechanized print, electronic communication, and military power pointed the way toward the regimentation of the future. At the same time, newer ideas and information became available to the literate; only four years earlier, a salesman from San Francisco, California, came peddling the works of a certain Professor Hubert Bancroft, particularly his *Native Races of the Pacific States*. His argument resembled the one used today to advance social and ethnic history: unlike previous works, the vendor insisted, *Native Races* did not exalt the powerful and denigrate the losers.² The pitch fell on deaf ears among the Yucatecan intelligentsia, who preferred their sagas the other way around. Readers more probably heartened to the news that Victorio, the old Apache warrior who raided and plundered like their own Bernabé Cen, had been killed in Chihuahua; and they could imagine nothing finer than inflicting the same fate on Maya holdouts of the southeast, beings whom Mexicans dubbed “the new Tasmanians.”³ Their own Caste War chilled into a cold war. The violence did finally end, but not until Yucatecans had built their own version of what became porfirian society, and in the process took on the first important glimmerings of posterity.

THE CIVIL WARS, PART EIGHT: TUXTEPEC

In 1876 the southeast remained convulsed in a postimperial turmoil of Maya insurgents, contested elections, and unrepentant eastern generals formerly in the employ of one Maximilian, emperor of Mexico. Enter into this turbulence the national caudillo. Like many Mexican statesmen, Porfirio Díaz Mory (1830–1915) had never set foot in Yucatán and had heard of events there mainly through secondhand sources. Hero of both the Reform and anti-imperial wars, Díaz nursed presidential ambitions, but found that Juárez's political machine checked his path. His 1872 La Noria revolt fizzled, and Díaz seemed fated to irrelevance two years later when Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada engineered his own election, a fact that Lerdo's client, Eligio Ancona, used the entire first page of *Razón del pueblo* to celebrate.⁴ Bankrolled by a panoply of U.S. investors, Díaz launched his 1876 revolt from the wooden verandas of Brownsville, Texas, while relying on frontmen to proclaim for him in Tuxtepec, Veracruz, as a safeguard to his own nationalist credentials. Yucatecan newspapers, which depended on official patronage for their survival, branded Porfirio Díaz an outlaw.⁵ But the Oaxacan inspired good copy, and the *Razón del pueblo* repeatedly published accounts of Díaz's defeat in northern Mexico, only to have him resurrected and ready for battle in the following edition.⁶

Díaz might have operated out of Brownsville, but in every province of Mexico a smorgasbord of related problems had agitated politics and thus guaranteed that his call reached willing ears. The peninsula's equivalent of Tuxtepec transpired amid discontent over Ancona's support for the Lerdo brand of reform. Mérida's Santísimo Sacramento chapter remained the sternest and most prosperous of all who walked the bourgeois spiritual path, and on the feast day of Corpus Christi of 1876 they defied Ancona by conducting an unannounced procession in the streets, for which they suffered a one-hundred-peso fine—plus ten pesos more for ringing church bells out of hours. Catholics also circulated a pamphlet titled *El artesano católico*, targeting the laboring class and urging the faithful to shun civil matrimony.⁷ But for country folk compulsory military service and Ancona's tamperings with land tenure remained the two gut issues. In Hunucmá an irate mob of some three hundred peasants forced the state's land surveyor to withdraw, along with the small force of federal soldiers who were supposedly protecting him. Peasants tore through the streets of town that evening, chopping up the doors with their machetes and then departing.⁸ Behind these outrages stood an alliance of commercial loggers and milpa farmers who stood to lose from normalization of land titles, a fact that reinforced Ancona's determination to

break up the ejidos, “a fertile field of discord within the state.”⁹ These and similar donnybrooks underscored the weaknesses of the Lerdo-Ancona system.

The first of the new rebellions erupted on February 2 in Temax, part of the same region that hosted the Martínez revolt in 1866, and which a certain Wenceslao González had tried unsuccessfully to mobilize in late 1875.¹⁰ One of Francisco Cantón’s closest associates, General Teodocio Canto (1825–1907) of Cansahcab, issued a proclamation recognizing Díaz’s leadership and demanding the removal of both Lerdo and Ancona. Little is known of Canto’s life, except that he joined the military at an early age, spent his formative years filling subordinate roles in the violence, and in 1872 defended Cicerol against Cantón, only to change his allegiance four years later—as always, the most dangerous man was the officer who had just put down the last revolt.¹¹ Cantón himself described Canto as acting under his own orders, and this is in all probability correct.¹² Key supporters came from nearby communities and were concentrated among a handful of families such as Herrera and Méndez, while coerced Maya peasants and peons provided the shock troops.¹³ Canto replicated Buenaventura Martínez to the letter: his Cansahcab movement began with a raid on the hometown treasury, led by disgruntled military officer Valeriano Cortés and fifty followers.¹⁴ Allied guerrilla bands also surfaced in the region of Muna.¹⁵ State forces quickly beat down the *cantistas*, who fled into the countryside, and prominent citizens like Simón Briceño of Izamal found themselves in the embarrassing position of having to bail out mischievous sons who had been arrested while following Canto.¹⁶ Cantistas spent the next six months gathering their forces, raiding ayuntamientos and extorting “loans,” then fleeing again. These rebels picked up additional endorsements in the pueblos of Umán and Chocholá south of capital. It was difficult to counter determined lawbreakers when citizens continued to resist service in the colonias, a running complaint in 1876.¹⁷ Moreover, as with the late empire, state requisition of horses and saddles in the course of the repression merely fanned support for the outlaws.¹⁸

Fighting erupted once more in early summer of that same year, almost always with colonia deserters as culprits. On June 5 elements of a colonia militar rose up in X-Pechil outside of Peto, but were contained.¹⁹ The following day deserters attacked a rancho outside of Temax and managed to get away.²⁰ Rebel sorties soon convulsed the Cansahcab-Motul-Temax region. Communities such as Buctzotz witnessed armed men who entered the streets shouting “¡Viva!” at midafternoon, their identities masked by torrential rain.²¹ They extorted the town for money and liquor. The leader of the Buctzotz area was one Marcos Na, a Maya or mestizo whom the

civil wars had freed from social restraints and trained in the use of arms.²² In the Hunucmá region, Canto and Cantón relied on Laureano Pech and Nicolás Canul, who had played leading roles in land measurement conflicts of the previous January.²³ In all probability, peasant insurgents saw their actions as a tactical alliance to block Ancona's privatization scheme and little realized that their associates merely wished to change roles with the governor, not defend an older system of Indian rights. Whatever their motivation, these rebels robbed hacienda peons to sustain their cause and identified one another through specially colored belts.²⁴ Insurgent bands consisted of a core of true believers who attempted to recruit the less enthusiastic through a combination of appeals and threats of physical violence.²⁵ Peasants such as Juan Pablo Pech thus found themselves dragged by a group of armed Mayas led by a stranger "dressed in pants," that is, a non-Maya; from that moment on, Pech labored as the gang's unwilling accomplice.²⁶ Those who resisted could end up like Rosado and Portilla: summarily executed, as happened with Esteban Tzek outside of Motul.²⁷ The peninsular version of Tuxtepec did indeed include popular initiatives, but not over the issues outlined by Porfirio Díaz's manifestos, and made ample use of coercion.

These dramatic scenes masked Canto's larger intention: on July 24 he attempted a daring strike on Mérida itself through the city's southwest entrance, working his way down from Conkal and circling through the western barrio of Santiago when large numbers of people were distracted by the annual fiesta. General Palomino learned of the rebels' activities through a network of spies that he had planted within the rebel forces, and with some 375 men routed them once again.²⁸ At the same time, mobilizations remained geographically limited, and some areas of the peninsula experienced nothing whatsoever of the revolt: Cozumel, for instance, spent its energy coping with the destruction of plantings because of a July hurricane, leaving the island with only "suffering and faith."²⁹

Still, Canto's revolt continued to simmer. Activity in the northern Sierra Alta picked up sharply in November, just as Lerdo was falling from national power. Unrest also increased in Sotuta, Teabo, and Tekax.³⁰ Townsfolk experienced the rebels more as irritants than as angels come to redeem; for example, at midnight on the evening of November 16 a band of ten to twelve armed men appeared at the door of the presidente municipal of Chapab, demanding aguardiente.³¹ By late 1876 the rebels had begun to cut down telegraph lines in order to prevent effective response, leaving jefes to resort to armed patrols in order to clean out their areas.³² Lerdo de Tejada himself abdicated national office on November 15. Sensing defeat, Ancona tried to staunch the revolt by imposing an emergency 1 percent tax on liquor and property.³³ But pres-

sure for change became overwhelming, and Eligio Ancona, Liberal statesman and peninsular man of letters, finally stepped down on December 15, handing power to a nondescript interim.³⁴ Residual violence persisted for at least a month.³⁵

Cantón's last rebellion proved his only success, but it was the one that counted. Perhaps unaware that Díaz had already triumphed, he proclaimed for the Oaxacan general on December 10; as in the days of Imán and Molas, the breeding ground was Tizimín, Espita, Calotmul, and Dzitás. Colonel Erosa joined four days later in Izamal. On the twenty-fourth Cantón's forces reached the outskirts of Santa Ana; defenders and attackers squared off in a battle of artillery blasts against positions fortified by henequen bales known as *pacas*. But before Mérida could fall into another bloodletting, news of Tuxtepec's victory at last came on January 13, 1877, via one Colonel Protasio Guerra, a Díaz operative. For once Cantón had backed the right horse.³⁶ The following day an immense ceremony filled the plaza, as General Juan de la Luz Enríquez, jefe of the Línea, hosted Canto, Cantón, and the new provisional governor, Guerra.³⁷ The new order offered what many had wanted all along: a clear chain of authority, recognition of acting governors who recognized the Tuxtepec plan, a halt to the Lerdo/Ancona culture wars, and a decorous silence about the growing institution of peonage. The document of recognition confined itself to high-level politics, essentially using these to mask regional issues and ambitions.³⁸

FROM MUNICIPIO LIBRE TO BUEN GOBIERNO

For fifty-five years Mexican presidents had come and gone without altering certain fundamentals of the political landscape. But by the late 1870s, people had reason to believe that the endless rebellions were drawing to a close. Indeed, the most significant change in political culture was the gradual turning away from the utopian dream of the *municipio libre*—the autonomous village that in some mysterious way formed the soul of Mexican sovereignty—and an acceptance, alternately eager and grudging, of greater authoritarianism. *Buen gobierno*, or a system of “good government” whereby townsfolk ceded power to higher-ups in the interest of tranquility, now became the order of the day.

Buen gobierno began at the top, or so it was thought. The end of national-level rebellions took away the pretext under which so many state- and local-level uprisings had cloaked themselves and their intentions. Newspapers now lionized Díaz and in April 1880 provided lavish

coverage on the death of his first wife, Delfina Ortega.³⁹ Far away in Mexico City, a new generation of wise men devised arguments to explain why society needed to keep faith with its “organic” connections, code language for authoritarianism under a kingly president. Indeed, one of the greatest of these thinkers, Justo Sierra Méndez, had seen how Caste War mayhem had ruined and embittered his own family.⁴⁰ His grandfather, Santiago Méndez Ibarra, the man who governed Yucatán at the Caste War’s onset, died in 1872 of pleurisy; a lifelong campechano, Méndez Ibarra, who went to his grave believing in the dream of the Yucatecan Republic, had spent years fruitlessly opposing the peninsula’s partition.⁴¹ Sierra Méndez’s father, Yucatecan man of letters Justo Sierra O’Reilly, died on January 16, 1861, disillusioned with both religion and politics and tarred forever as the man who had once tried to annex Yucatán to the United States.⁴² For Sierra Méndez, as for countless others who had matured in the early national chaos, a blend of economic liberalism and political conservatism was the balm Mexico needed.

Díaz and his vision of foreign investment mattered, but equally important were the changes that had taken place on the ground. Buen gobierno had an economic bedrock: the rise of henequen, the miracle export crop whose profits concentrated as never before in the hands of the select estate-owning class. The newspapers reported, “The year 1877 can be said to have inaugurated a new era for this fiber,” and they were correct.⁴³ In fact, so many studies have documented the rise of this product that anything but the most summary essay would be redundant here. Between 1870 and 1915, production of henequen increased from 30,000 bales annually to 950,000, bringing with it mechanization, rail transportation, and a foreign purchasing monopoly.⁴⁴ Case studies in henequen frenzy surface almost everywhere. Teodocio Canto dedicated the next twenty years of his life to stealing Cansahcab’s ejido lands—prime henequen country—in order to cash in on the boom.⁴⁵ Yucatecans regretted that their new state treasurer, a certain Francisco Barrera, had lost his right arm and had to acquaint people with his new, strictly left-handed signature; but they applauded the fact that he had lost it in so noble a cause as inaugurating his own defibering machine!⁴⁶ Still, there were foreshadowings of later conflict. Growers remained convinced that they were victims of a New York-based purchasing monopoly and commissioned a Cuban-born relative of the late Miguel Barbachano to look for alternative markets in Europe.⁴⁷ He failed, and the problem of purchasing monopolies continued to nettle the henequen oligarchy for the next forty years, eventually producing revolutionary discontent.⁴⁸

Buen gobierno prospered from the retreat to the hacienda. Planters imported steam engines and rasping equipment, sponsored the growth of an

internal rail line, reveled in their newfound prosperity, and maintained profits by keeping their Maya peons at subsistence levels. Rumors continued to surface of Mayas sold to Cuba, but these proved false: workers were now too valuable to sell, and instead Cuban planters, now in the throes of abolition, picked up contract workers from such places as British Guyana.⁴⁹ (Most of those Mayas who had been sold never returned, and by the late 1890s the last survivors could be found sipping their pinole and dancing *jaranas* in Llano García, a small hamlet between Havana and Mantanzas.)⁵⁰ Nevertheless, property owners still had to make concessions to peons, free peasants, and interests both secular and religious of the towns that adjoined the great estates. The expanding hacienda system internalized many of the features of rural town life. The post-Reform parish system fell into abeyance: not disappearing, but never again to be the all-encompassing method of spiritual administration that it once was. To wean their workers away from the parish church, hacendados obtained licenses to erect small chapels known as *oratorios*; these sprouted up on estates throughout Yucatán and Campeche, and near towns such as Tizimín.⁵¹ Fiestas, patriarchal family structure, clientalism, and the Maya language were all part of the package whereby the estates internalized much of prewar village life.

For the peon, hacienda life's greatest perk became the *boleto de excepción*, the treasured paper that excused its bearer from ritual exploitation under a military tyrant. By 1878 hacendados openly flouted demands for the hated guardia duty, for no one wanted their peons to be rousted out for what often amounted to an officer-operated labor pool. Excuses abounded: their elderly father was ill, their daughter died, they didn't recognize the authority of the jefe político, the mayordomo was supposed to send men but forgot.⁵² By 1877 officials numbered the boletos as "an infinity." Most had been granted by previous officials as a concession to the economic and social realities of their district.⁵³ In Valladolid alone the number of exempted workers topped one thousand.⁵⁴ The situation resembled later confusion generated by post-1920 "certificates of unaffectability," official permissions exempting landowners from the agrarian reform that was also official policy. Conversely, independent Mayas considered town residents were responsible for service, and those who failed to comply found themselves dragooned into unpaid estate labor as a way of working off the fine.⁵⁵ The arrangement was institutionalized in an 1886 decree that set differential monthly rates for escaping military service: a stiff two pesos for town residents, but only a quarter of that for finca workers, in most cases paid by the property owner. The frantic quest for these exemptions fills hundreds of pages of the post-1886 archives.

Hacienda expansion thus formed a dominant motif of the century's final quarter. The ambitious, the imperious, the dislocated, and hungry:

all found the estate's peaceable kingdom preferable to the endless wrangles of the town plaza. Men like Juan Bautista Barrera chose to reside outside of city limits in splendid isolation with their servants, professing ignorance of such inconveniences as sales taxes.⁵⁶ Barrera was only one of many who rejected town life. Without them it became easier to manipulate municipal affairs. Still, ongoing hacienda expansion provoked other forms of conflict between private property and public access (not necessarily the same as communal property). For example, conflict flared in Tetiz, where José Emetrio Peniche constructed a road from town to his hacienda Nohuayun, one league away. Locals quickly took over the route in their firewood forays, and their constant traffic caused it to deteriorate rapidly; dyewood cutters worked the road as well. Peniche failed in his campaign to force a town road contribution tax (again, municipal actors checked the authority of individual hacendados), but he did manage to have his own hacienda workers' fagina duty restricted to road repair. It was an example of the many small compromises among peasants, town, and hacienda in the early porfirian years.⁵⁷

Another institution that endured well into the boom years and beyond was Limited Good Credit, that economic condition that had helped spawn so much mayhem. Tuxtepec did little to assuage the capital hunger that had afflicted Mexico, and few mechanisms existed for getting wealth to filter downward. Former practitioners of the *violencia*, soldiers like Felipe Alvarez, learned this when he turned to the state for a job. Alvarez was born in Tampico and had fought in the southeastern Liberal ranks, rising to the rank of infantry captain. But after demobilization there was no work to be had, and he, like so many others, sat waiting for rewards and opportunities that never came.⁵⁸ Indeed, hacendados had their own reasons for hoarding wealth. They detested arbitrios and went to any length to avoid paying them, disguising the highly taxable *jarana* dances and holidays as worker benefits.⁵⁹ In the 1890s henequeneros began to reap fortunes, but their estates required investments and overhead, while the planter class remained trapped at awe-inspiring levels of consumption that kept them in the thrall of the henequen purchasing houses.

Meanwhile, debt persisted at the national and international levels as well. Among Protasio Guerra's first acts was to disavow any state obligations incurred before January 8 of that year.⁶⁰ But Díaz had incurred expenses of his own, and while Yucatecan elites embraced Díaz's revolt, they refused to pay for it. Even the small-fry commanders who had organized pro-Canto companies at their own expense demanded that the state reimburse them.⁶¹ Perhaps the embittered Ancona supporters were right: one of Canto's critical aims was to generate a divisive rebellion, then once in power, to shift Yucatán's debts to the losing parties and

fence-sitters.⁶² In August 1877 Mérida elites, following a project gotten up in Colima (doubtless at the behest of Díaz cronies), began forming clubs to pay off the immense national debt to the United States. Literature circulating among the clubs calculated this at some three hundred thousand pesos annually, although it failed to mention for how long. Mérida leaders included old Liberals such as Liborio Irigoyen and Guillermo Palomino. But in the war-torn society of the 1870s, these organizations proved mills without corn. The Espita debt club produced elaborate lists of potential contributors, but in reality few of these gave anything, and those who did participate seldom coughed up more than a peso or two. Espita's president personally came up with five pesos, but no one followed his example, and foreign debt remained a permanent feature of the Mexican landscape.⁶³

Haciendas took, but they did not take everything. The greatest proof lay in the business of land title normalization. For over half a century, this goal had been like the weather: everyone talked about it, but the matter resisted rule by decree and helped bring down Eligio Ancona, its truest champion. Indeed, well into the Porfiriato, the old village ejido system proved stubborn and resilient. In 1882, six years after the Tuxtepec revolt, communities such as Sitalpech still relied on arrendamientos as a way of financing local government. Mérida officials sought the usual clarifications from the usual *jefes políticos* as to how this could be. The problem eventually prompted an investigation led by none other than historian Serapio Baqueiro, who found that while by federal law ejidos no longer existed, by empirical fact they did. As a perfectly muddy solution to this problem, Baqueiro proposed the temporary recognition of arrendamientos while waiting for future privatization.⁶⁴ Similar quarrels surfaced in the area of Sacalum, where people could still not decide where ejido stopped and baldío began.⁶⁵ In the Peto area, henequen cultivation was minimal, ejido rights remained strong into the twentieth century, and ejidatarios opposed the railroads' right of passage.⁶⁶ Oxkutzcab, as well, managed to conserve some of its ejido integrity.⁶⁷ The ejido land surrounding remote San Felipe remained unmeasured and undivided until the 1890s.⁶⁸ The Maxcanú cabildo, acting in common interest with area milpa farmers, continued to defend town ejido rights nearly two decades after Eligio Ancona cleaned out his desk.⁶⁹ Even in prime henequen country, final deadlines for parcelization continued to come and go into the late 1880s.⁷⁰ These cases underscore how weak the state really was in redefining folkways. More resilient still were the Maya rancheros who had emerged over the course of the preceding century. As the massive 1905 state survey of landholding reveals, Mayas maintained a significant numerical presence as owners of tiny farm and ranch properties variously

termed *parajes* or *tablajes*, particularly (though not exclusively) found outside the henequen zone.⁷¹ These Fabergé eggs of rural enterprise probably did not translate into clout in the statehouse. Their real achievement was to help perpetuate a substratum of language, customs, folkways, and overall ethnic integrity sometimes assumed to have vanished under the pressure of henequen monoculture.

Haciendas solidified their control, but the radical land privatizations were yesteryear's battle. Rather, concentration of ownership continued through piecemeal acquisitions. People denounced baldío only sporadically: little remained in areas of high demand (read henequen), even though well into the 1880s an occasional baldío property could be found even near Mérida itself.⁷² And when would-be proprietors did denounce, the past was apt to thwart them. Such was the case when four Mayas of Maxcanú denounced baldíos west of town; the surveyor (no less a person than Juan Imán, son of the Liberator) found they belonged to the abandoned but still unresolved properties of Poebichén, and hence were in legal limbo.⁷³ Similar dead ends turned up in Chocholá and Acanceh.⁷⁴ Parcelization and the erosion of freeholding does appear to have picked up steam toward the latter third of the Porfiriato. At the same time, no system could long function if the vision of national policy makers did not deal with the towns, motors of discontent since before the days of Hidalgo. Towns were dangerous because they harbored intelligentsia, because they clustered people together, and because they were knots of political authority and factionalism. Their inhabitants saw vistas that others could not. Larger movements had often germinated in a meeting of town and country, and this cross-fertilization could work ruinous magic as long as certain rules were not imposed from above. Residual resistance to the Tuxtepec movement continued through early 1877 in towns like Acanceh, where some troops still remained loyal to the old system.⁷⁵ But these were dying sputters. Once Díaz was in power, Yucatecan ayuntamientos rehearsed the ancient motions of plebiscite to ratify his ascent. Functionaries had to swear allegiance not only to the Plan of Tuxtepec, but also to the revisions issued at Palo Blanco prior to Díaz's final victory in late 1876.⁷⁶ Just as they had done for Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada five years earlier, burghers of towns such as Tixkokob assembled in the city hall to tabulate the people's choice: the *tixkokobeños* joyously reported that Díaz had in fact won a unanimous decision—reported with great urgency, as though the town's contrived votes had somehow put the general over the top in a bitterly contested national election.⁷⁷ Plebiscites became even more sycophantic than in the days of the 1843 initiative reuniting Yucatán with Mexico, when some participants and even certain whole communities had dared to vote no. As during the Time of Troubles, the oaths

created an illusion of consensus and obedience that was psychologically necessary (since everyone understood that those features did not really exist), but which at the same time fostered paranoia and sub-rosa politics.

Porfirian town culture allowed virtually everyone here to come in from the cold. Lerdista communities, for example, found pardon: Cenotillo originally adhered to Tuxtepec, but changed its mind at the last minute, forcing its pro-Díaz president to resign.⁷⁸ The unfaithful suffered no reprisals, and Cenotillo was not punished for its bad call. Former followers of Maximilian also returned, for, as Díaz himself quipped, “Those who served the Empire were no help to it anyway.”⁷⁹ Lerdista officers and politicians found their home. Guillermo Palomino went on to become inspector-general of the colonias militares, and briefly governor,⁸⁰ while rebels like Robert Erosa laid down their arms and prospered. In Valladolid, the Acereto family resumed its clout in local politics, interrupted for two decades by the deaths of Don Agustín and Don Pedro, and by 1881 Narciso Acereto had become jefe político.⁸¹

Regarding town life, Tuxtepec came as a godsend to public employees. Despite their overall decline in power, the ayuntamientos continued to function as the source of jobs and contracts. Men such as José María Pérez Chi of Hunucmá expected regular pay for their work as policemen and became irate when it was delayed.⁸² Pérez Chi was only one of the many who came to depend on penny-ante patronage. But the greatest perks went to Yucatán’s wafer-thin technocratic class. Porfirian growth and stability, not to mention strategies for political support, all meant an expanded bureaucracy and a boom in professions such as lawyer, teacher, clerk, accountant, and engineer. The coveted plazos were now more plentiful than ever. One of the southeast’s greatest imperial bureaucrats, the long-laboring Abogado Defensor de Indios José Demetrio Molina y Figueroa, had returned happily to the law once more by September 1877, now advising the prosperous Amada Villamil in the latter’s quest to acquire terrenos baldíos outside of Acanceh in order to set up a family cemetery.⁸³ Molina’s switch from defender of live Mayas to agent for dead Hispanics came effortlessly, for the latter paid superior wages. Molina eventually tired of the law and dedicated himself to agriculture, and upon his death in 1903 he bequeathed a personal fortune of twenty-five thousand pesos for the creation of Mérida’s Hospital O’Horan, a state-run institution that today draws in hundreds of Maya-ancestry patients each day from the pueblos of Yucatán.⁸⁴ In this sense, Molina’s work as defensor de indios has outlived him.

In the world of Limited Good Credit, debt still filtered downward to the level of the ayuntamiento, and beyond there to the shoulders of peasants and poor folk. Cabildos always had a hard time meeting ends, and now

they had to worry about covering Díaz's 10 percent federal tax, part of the price tag for *buen gobierno*. The tax had existed since the early Restoration, but in those chaotic years its collection had proven sporadic, and stiffing Don Porfirio was a very different matter.⁸⁵ How exactly did they come up with the money? *Cabildo* finances remain murky and doubtless varied per community, but in Valladolid (and most others) the arbitrios formed the principal income. Citizens detested the arbitrios, but, like the angry townsmen of Valladolid, could do nothing more than protest. City directors supplemented these with the usual fines slapped on drunks and back talkers. Payrolls remained the key expenditure, followed by the federal tax and supplemental costs of education. By the mid-1880s, this once-solvent body waded in deficits, a fact that underscored the towns' declining political authority.⁸⁶ *Ayuntamientos* in places such as Cenotillo had to raise minor funds by carving up the lots adjoining the church and auctioning them off for sums of ten to fifty pesos; whoever could get into local politics, including Mayas like secretary Vicente Yamá, shared in the *piñata*, picking up two of the *solares* for himself.⁸⁷

If *cabildos* declined, the *jefes políticos* prospered. Indeed, the great winners of this struggle—aside from northwestern hacienda interests—were the political bosses. Twenty-five years earlier, a *jefe político*'s revolution had degenerated into Caste War, but that same war brought the *jefes* themselves an ever-greater concentration of power. That change had taken place despite ethnic insurgency, civil upheavals, and the struggles of national revolution. The inevitable round of *jefe* substitutions began in February 1877.⁸⁸ Their powers solidified gradually, until at last becoming codified in the 1905 law for internal management of *pueblo* affairs. The document's extensive articles and subarticles covered virtually every contingency, and for those not foreseen, it peppered on a series of elastic clauses such as Article 52, subsection XVI, which authorized the *jefe* "to maintain vigilance over functionaries and public employees of his *partido*."⁸⁹

The political chief's powers remained broad under the new order, but now suffered less competition, since rivals such as priests, *cabildos*, and military officers waned. Indeed, *jefes* now exercised vast discretionary powers over human lives. *Fagina* was a basic tool, and they worked it relentlessly. *Jefes* deployed local peasants for such tasks as building roads, cleaning plazas, and dredging the waterways of Río Lagartos.⁹⁰ Changes in *fagina* practice theoretically required the consent of the governor, who knew little of local conditions and almost always yielded to the *jefe*'s recommendations. *Jefes* also arrested, imprisoned, and punished as they saw fit, regardless of ethnic background—as José Ruz of Ticul discovered, when the district *jefe* had him whipped on suspicion of setting off

a warning bomb.⁹¹ More important, jefes supervised the colonias militares, exercising an authority that at times superseded that of the governor himself. For example, during one of his periodic inspections, a previous governor (unnamed, but possibly Ancona) had promised to free the men of Dzitás from their hated military obligation. The 1881 jefe, however, simply refused to honor this pledge.⁹² In fact, governors often refused to intercede in local management; they willingly ceded authority to the jefes in order to dissociate themselves from essential but unpopular policies. Jefes supervised collection of local quotas designed to support the colonias, thus providing the office with a source of patronage (for a collector had to be appointed) and a body of funds that, though supposedly destined for the soldiers, might in a pinch be used according to the jefe's discretion.⁹³ Finally, jefes oversaw operation of the haphazard nineteenth-century education system. Liberals had long held up schooling as a panacea to Mexico's ills, but by 1876 the rhetoric had outlived both the will and the wherewithal to actually bring education to the masses. The postwar schools limped on, underfunded, of low priority, and with strongly racist messages for intended beneficiaries. Optimistic reports on schools in remote, monolingually Maya hamlets such as Xoy must have seemed preposterous, but the pretense was somehow necessary in order to maintain the fiction that the jefe served the people, and not vice versa.⁹⁴

In moral terms there was nothing intrinsically *bueno* about this new buen gobierno, for Tuxtepec ushered in no period of probity and public decorum, only the rhetoric of such. Civil employees could be incompetent martinets, and grumblings about their morals picked up where pre-Reform complaints against the curas left off. What were the people to make of Mariano Ruz, schoolteacher of Peto, who put aside his wife and family to carry on with a woman of questionable virtue and numerous gentleman callers? *Petuleños* understood the attraction, yet disapproved of Ruz's jealous rampages and were particularly troubled by his tendency to roam the streets in his underwear.⁹⁵ But Ruz could be brought to justice and removed, or at least forced to put on his pants again. Buen gobierno—not as an articulated concept but rather as an unwritten principle of authoritarianism—was here to stay. It existed whenever people accepted that authorities like jefes políticos could still step in and govern as they saw fit, without provoking riots. Often the acceptance was mere patina, for people remained deeply suspicious and resentful of the men of power who governed their lives, a truth that held for urban and rural populations alike. The urban underclass has received little attention, but it is clear that conflict over society's ways and means continued in the streets of the city after Porfirio Díaz ascended the throne. In October

1878 a rumor swept Mérida that the state legislature was about to raise personal contribution rates. Within no time an angry mob assembled outside the Palacio Legislativo demanding the rescision of the supposed tax hike. The government only restored order by ringing the Palacio with soldiers, who opened fire on the mob, killing an undetermined number.⁹⁶ But as with so many other instances of porfirian unrest, these stories tended to be buried, falsified, or simply ignored in the public voice.

Jefe-hacendado relations remained a tangle. Though often responsive to hacendado needs—and often a hacendado himself—the jefe also abused his authority by conscripting local estate workers over the heads of their amos. When relations between jefe and amo were most bitter, the former might use his powers to ill effect, as when Pedro Ortega Palanco of Acanceh jailed hacendado José María Barán for defending his peons from the colonia draft.⁹⁷ In the country, civilian political officials dominated; hacendados maintained an influence as men of power, but still had to reckon with the jefe. When he refused to cooperate, hacendados had ways of fighting back. The most effective of these was to encourage potential recruiting targets to hide or desert; as the jefe of Tizimín lamented, all too often property owners “made a weapon of seduction and intrigue.”⁹⁸ Valladolid hacendados won notoriety for harboring fugitives and took legal action against squads who entered the estates in search-and-recruit operations.⁹⁹ Military figures like Teodocio Canto may have usurped civilian power at the state level, but in the case of the haciendas, it was civilians who now excluded the military from their sphere of influence. And in both cases, other and distinctly pre-violencia forms of authority became secondary, with clergy and prominent Maya bigmen operating through an unofficial moral and social influence that is hard to document, but which must be presumed. This condition of half quarrel, half collusion between a landed oligarchy and the authoritarian state remained an undercurrent up to the time of the Revolution—and indeed, well beyond.

Ironically, then, the wars tightened the control of an abusive executive system that many participants had aimed to remove. The key political tension in post-Tuxtepec Valladolid became that between the ayuntamiento and the jefe; the former saw the latter’s job as merely approving their appointees, while the jefe rejected these limitations and made the actual selections himself.¹⁰⁰ But it was the jefe who gained. Increasingly, ayuntamientos were limited to education, tax collection, the scant municipal services, and not much else. Ayuntamiento members wishing to resign had to solicit jefe approval, something that was not always forthcoming.¹⁰¹ They went part of the road traveled by the repúblicas de indígenas. Sergeants make the army work, and now political bosses did the same for porfirian Mexico.

One representative scene of jefe-dominated buen gobierno was Oxkutzcab. In 1878 the town raised \$225 to reconstruct the church and the noria, two centerpieces of community life and both still badly damaged by the Caste War. But they never finished either project and could only do so with the aid of a matching grant from the state. To facilitate this, the jefe became the holder of funds and the reviewer of the reconstructions. Communities could still struggle for self-advancement, but it would now be with state—and jefe—oversight.¹⁰² In the broad sweep, then, jefes mattered more than ever. Testimony to their success lay in the widespread revolutionary demand for the abolition of jefe rule, found not only in Yucatán but wherever popular mobilization took place.¹⁰³

The islands too found buen gobierno in the halcyon doldrums of the late nineteenth century. Isla Mujeres remained something of a private fiefdom. It continued under the proprietorial gaze of Darío Galera until the latter's death in 1869, and thereafter under an equally rapacious nephew of the same name. In 1878 this second Galera took it into his head to charge a canoe tax, a certain moneymaker in a place where the inhabitants' only connection with Yucatán was by small vessels. He arrived in September of that year, demanding back taxes from the year 1876 onward; many of the islanders found his demands so extortionate (each vessel had to pay ten reales per month) that they preferred to relocate to the mainland and risk capture by sublevados. The state government now weighed in to limit Galera's hand in a place that had long been family property, but the threat of jefe abuses remained.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, Cozumel groaned under the strongman rule of Juan Bautista Anduze. As far back as the 1850s, Anduze, then a refugee in Belize, had managed to procure British citizenship as a hedge against Mexico's political upheavals; safe behind the Río Hondo, he threw himself into the POW trade, shipping captured Mayas from Carmen to Cuba.¹⁰⁵ Anduze eventually moved to Cozumel. Here he prospered from business dealings with the Galera family, and the former's influence became so strong that when a body turned up murdered on Anduze's island ranch, San Pedro, locals simply refused to testify against *el patrón*, and the investigation collapsed.¹⁰⁶ Mexican citizens or not, Anduze and his heirs ran the island as they saw fit well into the twentieth century. Cozumel may have had fifty-four soldiers and eighty-four jornaleros in reserve but only twenty-two rifles; a persistent past of militarism lived on, but the fighting was clearly over in "the place of the swallows."¹⁰⁷ The island eventually threw itself into the production of copra, or coconut meat. Conflict with the rebel-held mainland flared only occasionally, and always under the provocation of islanders themselves. The most clear-cut example comes from the year 1884 on the island of Isla Mujeres. During one of his travels to the

mainland, islander Laureano Sánchez abducted a Maya girl who turned out to be the daughter of Santiago Pech, one of the chieftains of Tulum, now a rebel splinter community. Pech exploded when he heard the news and threatened to burn the island right down to the sand if she were not returned immediately. The inhabitants were panic-stricken, and through an emergency petition to the governor himself, forced Sánchez to restore his captive to her family.¹⁰⁸ National political changes wafted like sea breezes over this, some of the Americas' most breathtaking real estate, but the islands remained very much the world that the Caste War had wrought.

What of religion, that incorporeal realm that spawned so much worldly hatred? Initially porfirians kept up the good Liberal fight. Desamortization crept along, as when tiny Kinchil sold off property surrounding the *casa cural*.¹⁰⁹ The first porfirian state governments also reasserted a rhetorical commitment to the anticlerical laws; Agustín del Río, appointed governor in March 1877, immediately announced a crackdown on outdoor religious ceremonies and excessive bell ringing.¹¹⁰ The solidly Liberal *Razón del pueblo* maintained its anticlerical line, reminding readers that if mere numbers validated a religion, then Buddhism had it over the faith of old Spain.¹¹¹

But no Buddhists came forward, and signs of a thaw were everywhere. Indeed, a truce of sorts now stilled the culture wars. The days of parish affluence had ended forever, but some signs of institutional health emerged as a counterbalance. Greater ideological unity now prevailed within the institution, for the four decades of anticlericalism had purged or converted the more Liberal wing that had once shared in federalist plots. More important, the open confrontation of the Lerdo years slacked off.¹¹² Polemics over religion bubbled for the next thirty-five years, usually in newspapers and journals that functioned as the mouthpiece of different groups, while in practical terms the mostly Liberal state backed away from overt persecution.¹¹³ Old-time caste warriors now revived the idea of sending Catholic priests to coax a rebel surrender, just as their fathers had done twenty-five years earlier.¹¹⁴ Lay organizations reconstituted themselves, and archconservative Oliver de Casares took the opportunity to pen the history of the Campeche brotherhood Santísimo Sacramento, dormant these many years but now revived in the more tolerant atmosphere.¹¹⁵ By 1880 Mérida's Sociedad Católica held public raffles, and with the blessings of the ayuntamiento.¹¹⁶ The Izamal branch rebounded with an elaborate 1879 hierarchy of twelve officers. New organizations emerged, such as Halachó's Nuestra Señora del Refugio de Pecadores, while at least twenty other *cofradías* formed in Mérida alone.¹¹⁷ The new or revitalized *cofradías* downplayed older features of mutuality

and instead stressed prestigious piety; the more visible trappings of religious devotion, such as tunics and scapulars, ceased to be integral features of such affairs. Porfirian Mexico may have lip serviced the church, but elites had less need for the primitive insurance policies provided by old mutualist organizations and refused to wear clothing that might look out of place in, say, the first-class coach of the Mexican Central. Meanwhile, the older, almost medieval strains of religion occasionally resurfaced. In 1879 Padre Irineo Muñoz went to jail for profaning the corpse of Baltazar Madera, magistrate of barrio San Sebastián: although political opponents in life, Muñoz did not want Madera condemned to the Inferno because of his excommunication and believed that by whipping the alcalde's cadaver, he would remove the spiritual stain.¹¹⁸ In other words, religious experience offered the same old layer cake that accommodated so many ingredients.

Despite secularization, the church's techniques for managing money proved highly enduring. Specifically, the practice of lending corporate funds persisted in new forms: now it was the Hospital General, or else the Instituto Literario, precursor of today's Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, that provided mortgages to a select circle of entrepreneurs and that accumulated a minor tax on wills and property transactions.¹¹⁹ Similarly, the capellanías did not altogether disappear, but continued on a secular basis, with the state government now assuming the role of the bishop's office in approving loans. Such was the case with the massive Ulibarri fund, still active into the 1880s and operating in much the same style as the old church-based mortgages, lending money on haciendas and administered by none other than the ubiquitous José Demetrio Molina.¹²⁰ Like so much of pre-porfirian Mexico, this practice continued for lack of an alternative. In the absence of a modern banking system, recourse to private or small, corporately held funds remained a necessity.

Wise men lived on, but so did the wonders that informed popular religiosity. This dimension of the later southeast remains unexplored, in large part because the story of henequen monoculture and the land where money was God has dominated the history books. As the Yucatecan church (never a great provider of social services) declined as an economic force and the cura lost his grip over hacienda peons, rural Catholicism's folk and syncretic versions waxed in strength over their orthodox competitor. Yet the methods that the porfirian church used to survive—voluntary contributions, Catholic worker guilds, indirect moral influence, and cultural campaigns that depended heavily on literacy and education—tied priests more closely to urbanites and small-town gentry and distanced them from a rural ethnic base. Consequently, the Yucatecan church, like its larger Mexican counterpart, never criticized peonage

or the political order that sanctioned it, and paid for its indifference years later, when the Revolution came to call. The clerical-led mobilizations of the independence struggles failed to recur in 1910. Twentieth-century popular uprisings manifested a far more secular flavor, and the Revolution's petit bourgeois leadership displayed an antireligious animus that would have made Liborio Irigoyen blush. Like many other features of porfirian society, then, the parish persisted, grounded in both custom and a substratum of religious worldview—but hamstrung by inefficiency, conflicting authority, and racism.¹²¹ How the Yucatecan church survived this period, and how it successfully fanned a culture of fanaticism in the second half of the twentieth century, remains an untold tale.

A very different institution, the *colonia militar*, went on to become a fundamental brick in the pre-Revolutionary order. The upward displacement of violence meant taking it out of the hands of private individuals and placing it under state authority and was essential for ending the chaos. After Tuxtepec, authorities got serious about enforcing the 1868 decree of disarming civilians: among other places, *jefes* prosecuted the campaign rigorously in the ranchos and haciendas around Espita and Valladolid, long breeding grounds of revolt. Politics hampered the project: as *jefe político* Sabino Peña summed it up, anyone who turned in his gun was loyal, and Peña therefore returned it to him; anyone who failed to respond was disloyal, but by the same token armed.¹²² One way or another, people tended to keep their weapons. But little by little, the fire-power in the hands of private citizens did indeed fall, while the state-supervised militias and their armaments held steady. By 1881 over seven hundred men were still doing regular duty in Valladolid and Sotula alone.¹²³ Thirteen years later, there were eighteen Guardia Nacional battalions, supposedly containing some eight hundred officers and nineteen thousand soldiers.¹²⁴ Guard units housed tens of thousands of ammunition rounds, and for decades the institution generated mountains of paperwork, most of it routine tabulations of service and pay. And while the late 1870s state military allocation fell behind public education and an assortment of federally mandated duties (11 percent as compared to 16 percent and 26.6 percent, respectively), this solid third-place ranking held firm for the next three decades.¹²⁵ The question, then, naturally arises: what were these hordes doing in a land without wars, and in a time and place characterized by labor scarcity?

Much of the militia presence grew out of ongoing concern for defense. The increasingly rare sorties into Mexican-controlled lands kept the *Línea* and its *colonias militares* alive even when their men and resources would have better served elsewhere. On February 25, 1879, for example, armed Mayas raided Tahdziú, “carrying away a considerable number of families

and leaving three individuals that they killed.”¹²⁶ Vecinos of Línea towns such as Pisté continued to live in dread of raids and were even willing to forego tax exemptions if it meant security, perhaps less in cold calculation and more out of habit of fixture to place.¹²⁷ The state gained legitimacy by providing some semblance of defense for these insecure settlements.

But the colonias addressed many other needs as well. Among other things, they generated a local labor pool. Indeed, recruits were more likely to find themselves working farm tools than wielding rifles, since the colonias often amounted to little more than seasonal labor pools for officials and hacendados with some connection to the commanding officers. More importantly, coercive labor systems require cudgels, and units provided the fulcrum necessary to make the peonage system operate. Duty helped maintain an internal peace by drawing off troublemakers and placing them under the authority of the executive branch and by prodding the more resistant into labor on the estates. In case of worker uprising, one half of the underclass could be used to suppress the other (by the 1880s the colonias had become heavily Maya, quite in contrast to the army of 1848). The system thus minimized the presence of masterless men. Of equal importance, the colonias provided an endless source of busywork for the jefes themselves, since the recruitment of men and the ceaseless tabulation, pay, and supervision of them occupied a class of political actors for whose hands the devil might otherwise have found time.

Ironically, colonias helped legitimize the Porfiriato for the little people as well. The system still provided a magic box of grievances and complaints,¹²⁸ but it was far less dangerous than the massive dragoonings of the years 1847–67. Colonia service also expanded the peninsula’s realm of cross-cultural contact, as military service is apt to do. Hispanics and Mayas met one another in this institution, passing the hours with conversation, storytelling, heavy drinking, songs, and rowdy behavior. Tedious and degrading but essentially safe, the colonia system allowed Mayas far more stability than during the Caste War years. Similarly, the mule requisitions and special war taxes came to an end.¹²⁹ In this regard, the poor folk who took up arms behind Buenaventura Martínez did finally reap some reward, for over the next decade both the Caste War and its related military service declined.

Similarly, towns began to let up on *bomba* duty. From 1847 onward, rotating teams of Maya peasants had waited twice each month for twenty-four-hour stretches that mingled boredom and anxiety at the edge of town, the watchers ready to detonate homemade hand grenades, or *bombas*, as a warning of the Caste War rebels who no longer menaced with the frequency of old. No law mandated this, but it seemed acceptable during the

civil wars. Now the deepening peace led many to question whether such practices were not in fact a waste of time. In 1877, when Matilde Alcocer purchased the hacienda Aranjuez, he prohibited bomba duty for his men, observing no written statute compelled him.¹³⁰ The needs of the hacienda had come to outweigh the needs of the many. (Bomba duty, incidentally, is almost certainly the origin of the modern Yucatecan *bomba*, a witty, four-line poem that interrupts the music of a dance, just as the original bomba once interrupted daily activity. No reference to musical bombas appears prior to the Caste War.)¹³¹

As the Yucatecan colonias aged, they came to typify the dry rot that plagued most porfirian institutions. Rather than trained soldiers or assembled masses, many of the participants were simply names on a list, men who were occasionally called up on a rotating basis to do little of anything. The wars were over, no one wanted to serve, pay was abysmal, soldiers sometimes ate only beans and a wild spinach known as *chaya*, and *jefes* extracted forced loans from local merchants to keep the system limping along.¹³² But the Great Fear persisted, and subsequent governors, anxious for legitimacy, tried to give the people the military presence they demanded. “The institution of the National Guard is highly liberal and democratic,” thundered the *Razón del pueblo*; “Each soldier serves through the dictates of his own conscience and sense of duty!”¹³³ Perhaps—but colonia demands and their accompanying rhetoric seemed increasingly farcical to hacendados, especially in the northwest. Estate owners like ex-governor Ramón Ancona kept their workers out of both the colonias and local fagina projects, claiming exemptions granted at some unknown point in the past.¹³⁴ To plug up the leaks, the state now added a second physician to the junta calificadora: those previously granted (probably dubious) medical exemptions were supposed to return for verification. But many people simply ignored these new demands and failed to report.¹³⁵ It evinced the same curious disjunction between law and reality that characterized so much of the later society. The full history of Yucatán’s porfirian security forces awaits some future historian, but the kernel of the system was clearly in place by the late 1870s. It consisted of a loose-knit collection of local conscript units, together with a more professionalized force stationed in the cities. The jefe’s need to organize them versus the hacendado’s need to keep his men out remained a key tension of the age.

The question of what to do about the colonias also related to the problem of local uprisings. Upheavals may have subsided with the triumph of Tuxtepec, but the political subsoil continued to suffer after-shocks. Unpaid troops still had a propensity to lay down their arms and flee.¹³⁶ Beyond the problem of the payroll stood an even greater question. The Caste War originally spun out of election-related violence in the mu-

nicipios, and this same violence still flared for another three or four years after the rise of Díaz. For example, by mid-1877 the town of Tixkokob lived in a state of near anarchy, all the result of elections. The problem lay in a split between followers of Manuel Sabido and Teodocio Ancona, two Hispanics who each commanded a body of poor supporters whom they could muster as needed to vote or rebel. Sabido was municipal president at the time of Tuxtepec and briefly remained on top, but how many divisions did he have? As president he refused to ratify election results favoring his rival, and with some grounds, since Ancona had pressured electors by assembling a gang of two hundred men that included his hacienda servants, all armed with sticks and machetes. When this tactic failed, Ancona's supporters cut the telegraph cables, stormed the cuartel and seized its rifles, opened the jails and let out the *anconista* prisoners, took control of the ayuntamiento, and proceeded to hold new elections at the door of Ancona's own home. Not surprisingly, this second round of voting favored Ancona. The cabildo's secretary hid out on the roof of his house, Sabido fled to his residence in Peto, and anconistas spent the following day parading through streets in drunken revelry. Such was the civic lesson culled from three decades of internal warfare.¹³⁷

Tixkokob was not alone. Mérida itself suffered a crime wave, something that many attributed to "some hidden and mysterious hand" that wished to discredit the state government (a real possibility); citizens began shutting themselves in at 8:00 P.M.¹³⁸ The violence was contained, but not before it had spread eastward to communities such as Cenotillo.¹³⁹ In Tepekán, praetorian tendencies lingered and produced their usual negative effects on local political culture. When municipal elections failed to suit local comandante José Manrique, he and three friends organized a group of forty-three Mayas and proceeded to threaten the president in his own home. But Izamal's jefe raised a superior force, dispersed the mob, and verified the election returns.¹⁴⁰ Tixméuac was another such community. The men who served as jefes políticos in Tekax knew of the place, because "these citizens have always been divided," and for as long as anyone could remember the faction in power would manipulate elections to its own taste. It happened again in spite of Díaz, so far away and so new in power that his name still amounted to an abstraction. The late 1878 elections involved what had become habitual fraud, provoking protest and demonstrations that succeeded in overturning the results.¹⁴¹

But these sample communities were the exceptions. Weary of bloodshed, most rural citizens now stopped short of the pre-1847 municipal uprisings. Towns acquiesced in the process of election management, particularly when measured against the yardsticks of the 1820s and 1840s. In 1879, Kinchil and Hunucmá both teetered on violence as a result of

election quarrels, but they ended without losers storming the ayuntamiento, as they most surely would have done earlier.¹⁴² Elsewhere in 1878 the unthinkable happened: elections took place without a riot, without aggrieved parties occupying the town hall, and without angry elites mobilizing Maya adherents who hoped that a change at the top might yield some minor improvement in their own pressing condition. The old dynamics within and between communities had not disappeared: sujetos like Xocchel and Tahmek still dreamed of breaking free of cabeceras, exactly as they had done forty years earlier.¹⁴³ Election-related hostilities still called for the occasional troop presence.¹⁴⁴ But the hormonal fury of the early national period now yielded to exhaustion, a weary submission to process that constituted political maturity. Of equal importance, the state's experience with guardia units, the result of the years of Caste War, had taught it that rapid deployment could stop riots before they began.

The last serious uprising took place in Valladolid in December 1979, a mere eleven months after the last rebel raid. It was a vehicle for the ambitions of the inveterate conspirator and political conservative Daniel Traconis, who wanted to install his brother Demetrio as diputado from Valladolid. To this end he deployed his troops to occupy the plaza, with José Coronado controlling the cuartel. The population was in a state of panic. Traconis, meanwhile, denied entry to soldiers sent from Kaua and Pisté, arguing that the Caste War was now a federal campaign and that he did not answer to state authority (porfirian centralism had local uses). Valladolid's jefe político, Roberto Rosado, was unable to arrest Coronado, since Rosado depended on the cooperation of the military commissar, a Traconis supporter. The uprising only ended when Lieutenant Colonel Eligio Erosa of Espita arrived with a detachment of fifty men. Lacking broader regional support, this last serious attempt at rebellion fizzled.¹⁴⁵

A year later, on the first day of 1881, Governor Teodocio Canto could report to the state legislature that in addition to enjoying record henequen profits, a smoothly operating Registro Civil, unprecedented railroad construction, and the final dismantling of the Ciudadela, Yucatán had weathered its last revolt and was finally at peace.¹⁴⁶ Henceforth, if mayhem did occur, it was likely to assume the form of criminal violence. As in the post-Cárdenas years, peninsular revolt did not really disappear under the porfirian peace, but instead retreated to subterranean levels, where it manifested itself as complaints, troublemaking, robbery, cattle theft, rape, assault, murder, and political rowdiness. Banditry and lawlessness continued, even if not in the form of the armed gangs that had plagued the Restoration period. The idea of a "Porfirian Peace" has doubtless been oversold. Even after the fall of the Lerdo-style Liberals and the rise of their more pragmatic cousins, southeast Mexico suffered from rural violence.

Criminality in the porfirian southeast was enough of a problem to make towns reluctant to let out able-bodied men to the colonias militares. Banditry apparently declined after Tuxtepec but did not disappear, and cattle rustlers stalked their four-legged victims well into the twentieth century. For example, the resilient Hipólito Méndez gang worked the countryside around Euán and Ekmul; some evidence links them to losing factions in power struggles of the municipios.¹⁴⁷ Even places like Progreso, a young town largely cut off from the interior by brackish swamps and mosquitoes, suffered from a criminal element that drifted in and out of its hinterlands. The ayuntamiento eventually put its foot down, and by early 1878 demanded that the comandantes direct some of their forces away from the Línea and instead toward constable duty in this far northern port. It was a sign of the changing times that *progreseños* got what they wanted.¹⁴⁸ Porfirian wrongdoing doubtless reflected popular stresses, but response to it was mixed: while the occasional Robin Hood may have won some admirers, criminality could just as easily reinforce state legitimacy for a people seeking functional law courts.¹⁴⁹ In these instances, buen gobierno amounted to governing the impulses that had once given rise to rebellion, instead rechanneling them into politically containable avenues.

These institutions—the warmed-over town government, the decrepit militias, the restored yet enfeebled parish system, the public schools, the bogus declarations of loyalty, the false public voice—formed the backbone of porfirian society, and they shared profound similarities. All were stately and well-trimmed bricks laid over a rotten foundation. All functioned, but only minimally. All invoked a rhetoric of equality, patriotism, and progress that was at odds with their real nature. The critical point is that the foundations of late-nineteenth-century order had already been laid—brick by brick, and in all their peculiar contradictions—before Díaz ever put on his white gloves in Chapultepec, and for the next thirty-five years those bricks persisted as factors that conditioned the workings of porfirian machinery, not as devices created and imposed from above. Díaz proved far more skillful in manipulating them, and he and his appointees worked tirelessly to prevent disorder,¹⁵⁰ but it was Yucatecans themselves who determined on what terms they would live out the century.

FOR THE CASTE WAR DEAD: MEMORY,
FORGETTING, AND THE DAWN OF POSTERITY

As buen gobierno seeped into the countryside, Yucatecans saw their past rapidly disappearing. Back in the west, old faces passed from the scene. In

1875 Martín Francisco Peraza went the way of the other great Caste War leaders. He died prosperous and held numerous ranchos as well as the more developed hacienda Xmacna', even if his estate of some fifteen thousand pesos hardly made him one of the wealthier men of his age.¹⁵¹ By the time of his death, this ex-governor, the general who had once confronted the Mexican army, was little more than a memory to most people in south-east Mexico—if they remembered him at all. Inveterate conspirator Pantaleón Barrera expired in March 1876, just as the Tuxtepec revolt was getting under way, a revolt whose craftiness he would surely have appreciated.¹⁵² Similarly, Rómulo Díaz de la Vega died in Puebla in October 1877 at the age of seventy-five. After Yucatán, the onetime strongman's career was one of defeats in the name of Conservative causes—in the Ayutla revolt, the Reform War, and the French Intervention—an endless replay of Resaca de la Palma.¹⁵³ His brother Manuel, also a general for the Conservative forces of Mexico's civil wars, was his only surviving kin and had weathered the changes to become a contented customs official in Ciudad Juárez. He too put aside the rancor and took part in buen gobierno.¹⁵⁴ The following year, 1879, saw the end of another key actor in the Caste War, Joaquín Castellanos, a man of innumerable political masks and offices and one of the deputies to Mexico's first congressional congress. Castellanos died a man of wealth, with four haciendas in the Chocholá area and others near Kanasín, together with assorted urban properties.¹⁵⁵ Dogged throughout his life by accusations of war profiteering, in death he was remembered principally for having opposed the coronation of Iturbide, when Mexico was young.¹⁵⁶

Several other political bulwarks also went the way of all flesh. Guillermo Palomino, sent to Yucatán to restore order in the wake of the La Noria revolt, never left. He married into the Valladolid-based Rosado family and passed away prematurely at age fifty-four, in the year 1889, while serving as governor.¹⁵⁷ Protasio Guerra died in Mexico City four months after his dramatic arrival in Yucatán heralding the triumph of Tuxtepec and was buried in Tepeyac cemetery, close to the Virgin of Guadalupe's Basilica.¹⁵⁸ Meanwhile, "Liburro" Irigoyen had the last horselaugh on his critics: he went on to serve as governor's advisor and magistrate and in March 1890 died of heart failure in his Mérida home, revered as one of the grand old men of Mexican Liberalism.¹⁵⁹ But others of that generation lacked the master's sense of timing. Manuel Cicerol, Cepeda Peraza's lawbook-toting understudy, became a wealthy leader in the *henequenero* organization but lived too long; he survived to see his cherished edifice of racially based laissez-faire torched in the Mexican Revolution and died during the height of socialist radicalism in 1924.¹⁶⁰

José Salazar Ilarregui, former imperial commissar, worked through his own slow rehabilitation. After a three-year exile in New York City, he returned to the Federal District to open a science academy. In 1882 Salazar led the team that surveyed the boundary between Mexico and Guatemala. His six years in this remote hinterland involved such feats as being lowered onto the smoldering floors of volcanoes, the geological equivalent of his ordeal in Yucatán. His health destroyed, the architect of both of the Republic's international boundaries returned to Mexico City, where he taught astronomy and geodesy at the Colegio Militar until his death in 1892.¹⁶¹ The man who had served as his six-month replacement in Yucatán, Domingo Bureau, became the mayor of Veracruz and presided over the destruction of the city walls in 1880: an egalitarian gesture that dissolved the boundaries between inner-city elites and poorer barrios, but as with the dismantling of Mérida's Ciudadela, that also served as a hedge against future rebellions.¹⁶²

Some characters who would have been better off dead lived for many a year. Indeed, Tuxtepec allowed the worst elements of the empire to contend with Liberals in public affairs. Perennial plotter and rebel Francisco Cantón survived until the century's end. By now a wealthy landowner, he established the Mérida-Valladolid railroad, the Oriente's economic lifeline, and challenged the Mérida-Progreso freight monopoly with a line of his own, much as his predecessor Agustín Acereto had challenged Irigoyen's clique forty years earlier.¹⁶³ A compulsive dabbler in the peninsula's shabby politics, he built a magnificent mansion on the Paseo de Montejo, later to become the state archaeology museum and, by special arrangement, the guest quarters of visiting U.S. president Bill Clinton in February 1999. Porfirio Díaz designated Cantón governor in 1897 to help deflect criticism when *el señor presidente* partitioned off Quintana Roo as federal territory.¹⁶⁴ His nephew, journalist Delio Moreno Cantón, learned the family business of politics and in 1909 unsuccessfully fronted an hacendado opposition to the Díaz-Molino group when Francisco Madero launched his movement against reelection.

Felipe Navarrete, the man whose 1863 rebellion segued into the empire, still survived, restored but unreconstructed. While Tuxtepec returned him to favor, it was the Caste War that remained his life. Navarrete rose to brigadier general but fought no battles, and most of his energies went to war-related clubs ranging from fantasies to out-and-out scams. He formed the Gran Junta Permanente de Veteranos, charged with the goal of reoccupying Bacalar and Bahía Ascención.¹⁶⁵ Navarrete also fronted a group called the Sociedad Patriótica Yucateca. Much like the POW/MIA movement that followed the Vietnam War, the Sociedad was built around the belief that large numbers of Yucatecans were being

held in tiger cages somewhere deep in rebel territory. Formed in 1874, it raised funds for the “handing over or ransom of poor or handicapped people who find themselves captive in the power of the indios sublevados of Chan Santa Cruz.” Periodic bequests to this fund pop up in wills and testaments from the 1870s onward.¹⁶⁶ The Sociedad also professed to aid widows and orphans of the Caste War. Laudable, perhaps, but the sordid truth was far more in keeping with regional politics. For the next seventeen years, the Sociedad failed to ransom even one individual or to provide a crust of bread for a single orphan. Rather, rumors of financial improprieties dogged the group. Navarrete defended himself in grandiloquent language: on the Last Day, he claimed, he did not want the Lord to say to him, “What have you done with your brother Abel?” Eventually a growing group of Caste War veterans got fed up with this sham and demanded that the Sociedad’s funds (twenty-seven hundred pesos) be disbursed among its intended recipients. The state refused to intervene, and the shady Sociedad Patriótica kept the money it had charmed away from so many philanthropic souls.¹⁶⁷ Navarrete then moved on to a sinecure as “inspector of mercantile and industrial establishments,” until he became too doddering and sclerotic even for that.¹⁶⁸

Specific individuals may have died, but memory took their place. In fact, it was the Caste War—the first peninsular event to generate a massive, dramatic, and tightly interconnected body of memories—that led to a widespread awareness of the past. Decades later the Caste War still served as the marker of an age, a frozen moment of folk knowledge akin to the fall of Tenochtitlán, the expulsion of the Jesuits, or the 1810 Miguel Hidalgo uprising. Men such as Padre José Inez Castro measured the passage of time by how many rebel invasions they had survived.¹⁶⁹ Twenty-two years after the fact, Ildefonso Burgos could still remember hacking a trail through the underbrush to relieve Tihosuco, besieged by rebels in 1866.¹⁷⁰ Far to the south, on the wooden verandas of British Honduras, José María Rosado recollected the day when rebels kidnapped him, a mere eight-year-old, and took him to live in Chan Santa Cruz; fortunately, in the year 1915 some irresistible impulse compelled him to write down his experiences, and the resulting memoir today serves as an important document of the age.¹⁷¹ These were only a handful of many peninsulars who, in search of lost time, found the Caste War to be the only immovable object of their mental world. Indeed, while the wars wrought many effects on their people, perhaps the greatest of all was the way those wars came to govern human memory. The wars affected matters of practicality, as their events became the markers that dated lives and events. The age of rebellions also engendered the first real sense of posterity on the part of Yucatecans, and perhaps of all south-east Mexico.

One sidebar of memory that will never be known is how Yucatecans reacted to settling down alongside former perpetrators of violence. This dynamic of hidden hatred has plagued the survivors of genocide, civil war, and mass murder for centuries. But rural Mexico's vast illiteracy meant that no one recorded their secret rage, whereas church and state, principal authors of the written word, simply denied the topic: rebellious Indians were criminals, the idea ran, and whatever happened to them was called justice. Reconsideration of the rebels' position did not take place until well after 1910, by which time most combatants and victims had gone to dust. In all likelihood, coexistence with culprits of violence joined ticks, boils, and high infant mortality rates on the list of bitter hardships that country people had to endure, and their enforced silence stands as one of the key differences separating nineteenth-century violence from its more contemporary counterparts.

At least initially, memories of the Caste War followed more practical lines. Few citizens could read, and records systems remained primitive and inconsistent. The early war destroyed church and municipal records from towns like Tihosuco and Valladolid, thereby guaranteeing that history would never fully understand them or their causes.¹⁷² Rebellious Yucatecans gutted many other collections: the restoration wars destroyed decades of municipal papers in towns like Dzilam, effectively robbing them of their past.¹⁷³ The ayuntamiento papers of Tizimín, key to so much of the peninsular past, perished in the town's many revolutions. What rebels missed often fell victim to disinterest, humidity, poor storage, and insects. Finally, an international traffic in Maya documents has dispersed much of the peninsular patrimony. For all these reasons, some temporal touchstone became all the more necessary as an anchoring for other recollections.

Often war memories were the only way to determine the precise date of births, marriages, and deaths, and those memories even came to be incorporated into the legal statutes. In 1898, for example, Francisco Elías Azarcoya wanted to determine his true age, legally and forever. Family lore held that he was born in Sacalum, but unfortunately the Maya rebels had carried off the town's birth records in 1848. Following articles 516 and 517 of the *Codebook of Legal Proceedings*, Azarcoya convened a panel of three witnesses—one Hispanic, two Maya—who swore that he had been an infant (“*niño de pecho*” or “breast feeder”) when the rebels invaded. But even this method could no longer retrieve the past with exactitude. Witnesses identified the date of the invasion as 1847 (in reality 1848), and all referred to it as the rebels' “second invasion,” which it almost certainly was not.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, when in 1884 onetime hidalgo Felipe Pool sought to be exempted from guardia service on the basis of old

age, he discovered that Izamal's corroborating church papers had gone up in flames during the first year of the war. But Pool was able to testify that he was some eighteen to nineteen years old when the war came to his region, easily qualifying him for an age-based exemption.¹⁷⁵

Other individuals had reason to dredge up the past. Former soldiers like retired Lieutenant Colonel Liborio Cervantes found themselves incapacitated and unemployable as a result of war wounds. Cervantes received a one-time-only gift of twenty pesos, an insult dealt out in exchange for a wasted life but better than the thousands who received nothing at all.¹⁷⁶ Those who resurrected Caste War memories in this form were likely to encounter indifferent looks. One man whose personal recollections in some ways formed a microcosm of this book was Francisco Genaro del Castillo. Of a wealthy family from the Sierra Alta, Genaro lost most of his property in the conflagration of 1847. Resettling farther north, he took part in the civil wars during the Irigoyen years. When Buenaventura Martínez was planning his uprising, Genaro sold off the remaining family heirlooms to help purchase arms and supplies. Unlike Martínez, he was captured during the fighting and sent to fortress San Juan de Ulúa for a year, during which time soldiers sacked his unoccupied house and made off with the sad remainder of his belongings. For a lifetime of sacrifice, the state awarded him one hundred pesos.¹⁷⁷

The most unusual appeal to those troubled years came in 1897 from a certain José de Susini—*Count* de Susini, in his telling. Acting through agents, Susini claimed to be a Gibraltar-born British citizen then residing in Havana and came with a story straight from Hollywood. He insisted that in the late 1850s, acting through slave entrepreneur Miguel Pou, he had loaned \$11,913 to the state, mainly to Governors Martín Francisco Peraza and Liborio Irigoyen; that while staving off the Liberal army in Querétaro, the Emperor Maximilian had recognized the debt; and that at 3 percent monthly interest, the total now amounted to a towering \$174,882.¹⁷⁸ The truth of his story remains doubtful, though not impossible, and Susini received not so much as a centavo. But the anecdote reveals the way people attempted to modify and build upon the Caste War years gone by.

Susini and other petitioners may have come away empty-handed, but on rare occasions the state remembered its own, and the most important of these was Miguel Barbachano. For starters, the three children of Miguel Barbachano (Miguel, Manuel, and the regrettably named Barbaciana Barbachano) received a collective pension of five hundred pesos, to continue until they had attained their majority.¹⁷⁹ Under Díaz, Yucatecans tore down the fortress San Benito, popularly known as the Ciudadela, and converted its space into a bazaar; the state even planned a Barbachano gateway, named in honor of the man “who governed the

destinies of the country during the ever-memorable epoch of the state population's recovery." This placed Barbachano in the company of such figureheads as Francisco de Montejo, the peninsula's conquistador.¹⁸⁰ The commemoration never materialized, but conversely, recollections of Barbachano died hard. In 1881 the people of Oxkutzcab could still remember the night when Miguel Barbachano danced under the pórticos of their hometown. No doubt about it: he was a man worth remembering. Their fathers had rallied behind this son of an Asturian Spaniard in 1842, when the army of Mexico invaded Yucatán; they suffered with him when the Maya peasants of the east rose up in the Caste War of 1847. The *oxkutzcabebños* rejoiced when he negotiated a peace treaty in 1848, and some at least smiled when he systematically violated its terms and reclaimed territory lost to the rebels and began to sell POWs as slaves. Still others seconded the coup d'état that removed Barbachano from power three years later. By 1881, though, this was all behind them. Oxkutzcab had shared in southeast Mexico's long climb back from anarchy; Barbachano himself had lain dead for twenty-four years, and the people put aside the old grudges and factions of their parents in order to recall the days when that gentleman, with his chin-strip beard and moustache, took off his frock coat and danced the jarana with ordinary people in the town hall.

Public memories of the wars surfaced throughout the mid-1880s, when a newfound prosperity allowed the privilege of doling out minuscule pensions in reward for services rendered three decades earlier. Widows now came forward, women whose fallen husbands had won their promotions under Miguel Barbachano, or who had taken part in Pedro Acereto's disastrous retreat from Chan Santa Cruz in 1860.¹⁸¹ In 1887 the sister and daughters of the long-dead Colonel José Dolores Cetina came forward to claim a pension. Their request, based on his services to Yucatán, neatly skipped over his role in provoking the Caste War; it met with frosty silence.¹⁸² (Incidentally, Pilar Quijano, Barbachano's widow, survived her husband by twenty-three long years. After Salazar's fall she led the fight to prevent exclaustation of the Concepcionista nuns, but the time to defend this institution had passed, and the Concepcionistas passed into memory. In 1872 Quijano turned up briefly in the court records for failing to pay municipal taxes on her indoor plumbing; worn out over the struggle for running water, she died eight years later, in 1880.)¹⁸³ To handle the matter of Caste War service, the state even created a Junta Calificadora de Veteranos de la Guerra Social, which continued to authenticate service records into the 1890s.¹⁸⁴

Sadly, prizes for the past often went not to those who deserved them, but rather to fence-sitters and standpatters. Buenaventura Martínez's

father, José Isidro, prospered under the new order, and during the first year of the restored Republic, he remarried at the spry age of sixty. After that came the ruling seat on the town *ayuntamiento*.¹⁸⁵ He also rose to the position of juez and operated the town's civil registry and lived to see the town elevated to the coveted status of *villa*, not as large as a *ciudad*, or city, but safely superior to the lowly *pueblo*, or village.¹⁸⁶ Other family members, men such as Buenaventura's only son, José Pilar Martínez, occupied the same posts into the late 1880s.¹⁸⁷ Buenaventura's older brother, Francisco Martínez, did even better. The man who had hastily abandoned the Baca revolt of 1866 became a member of its governing junta in 1870, while his heroic sibling's remains were scarcely cold in the ground.¹⁸⁸ Francisco lived at least seventeen more years; during that time he successfully took up the role of hacendado and merchant that fate had denied to Buenaventura.¹⁸⁹ He remained a devout Catholic until his death in 1887.¹⁹⁰ To the end of his days, Francisco also remained the master of hacienda Cosil, whereas K'uxub passed into José Pilar's colorless hands.

The quest for recognition eventually sired the *Veteranos Supervivientes de la Guerra de Castas* (Surviving Veterans of the Caste War), a group with more legitimacy—if spindlier resources—than Felipe Navarrete's scam organizations. The group's extraordinary longevity derived from two facts: the youth of many of the original participants and the war's half-century lifespan. They met each year on July 30 to reflect on what had been and by custom received state crumbs of ten pesos apiece. Now utterly forgotten, the *Veteranos* outlasted the Porfiriato itself, and when General Salvador Alvarado brought new hope to the peninsula in 1915, the *Veteranos* were among the first to present claims for help. Ever generous, and with henequen riches swelling his pockets, Alvarado was only too happy to oblige.¹⁹¹

Fact checking and pension rights were one thing; but there is a broader and more public-spirited dimension of historical memory, and that is the impulse to posterity. The sense of posterity involves an awareness that what we do matters, not only to ourselves, but also to those who come after us, and that knowledge about ourselves and our progenitors should therefore be gathered and passed on in some systematic fashion. Perhaps the impulse to posterity derives from the organism's vain desire for immortality. Whatever the truth, the need for a knowledge of the past, whatever the criteria or assumptions involved, appears to be a human desire almost as fundamental as the need for food and recreation. If not innate, it fills an appreciative capacity that developed alongside human culture: it is satisfying to be able to see backward, just as it is satisfying to be able to see a static scene in three dimensions around us. Most people seem

to savor and even *need* this ability, if in varying degree. The question of posterity has seldom been discussed in terms of Mexican history. It has not always been there, but it clearly exists now. So how did it come about?

Three factors favor a heightened consciousness of posterity. First, there is a sense of having lived through some momentous event. Plagues, migrations, and political movements qualify, but nothing surpasses warfare for prodding the historical consciousness. Second, that event must have touched the broad band and not simply the selected few. Third, the society must have the necessary means to preserve its past: literacy, academies, a reading audience, and people with sufficient time for antiquarian or historically critical pursuits. Put simply, the wars created Yucatecans' sense of posterity. Independence had come too peacefully here, but the civil wars were huge events that involved all the peninsula's population. Those who took part intuited the uniqueness of the moment and its power to alter the ways and worth of mankind. Finally, the wars transpired in a society that now had schools, literary societies, presses, newspapers, and a reading public that traveled and discussed what they knew. It was these factors, and not some imposition from Mexico City, that first led people to think of the need to systematically bequeath what they had done and seen in their time on earth.

Posterity's most primitive form may well be hero worship. Seeing the past as the deeds of great men à la Thomas Carlyle will always have selling power.¹⁹² And in fact, restoration governments did all they could to foster national consciousness through hero cults, particularly that of Miguel Hidalgo and his September 16 uprising, with the usual repertoire of patriotic speeches, public dances, military salutes, and the stirring fanfare of brass bands.¹⁹³ Yucatecan newspapers now commemorated such national milestones as the deaths of Hidalgo and Benito Juárez (July 30 and 18, respectively).¹⁹⁴ After 1876 Porfirio Díaz magnanimously invited himself into the pantheon, and Yucatecans renamed the street linking the plazas of Mejorada and Santiago (today Calle 59) as "Calle de Porfirio Díaz."¹⁹⁵ In the early years of his rule, his April 2 victory over the Imperialists at Puebla rivaled Cinco de Mayo as a national holiday.¹⁹⁶ Today the former is forgotten, and the latter carries little weight in the peninsula; September 16 did eventually take root.

It is a curious fact, though, that the Caste War generated no Cids or Beowulfs, even among the unabashed racists of Yucatán's upper crust. The explanation may lie in the fact that Yucatecans remained deeply divided over their forebearers' roles in the civil wars, so much so that no mythic figure could symbolically paper over the differences. One possible candidate was Manuel Cepeda Peraza, the man once ridiculed as "Chan

Napoleón”—Maya for “Little Napoleon.” His status as colonel and governor, as well as his belated role in defeating the empire, his untimely death, and his surviving powerful relatives (brother José Apolinar served as vice-governor into the late 1870s) briefly nurtured a personality cult of sorts.¹⁹⁷ Cepeda’s reputation began with his death and enjoyed a limited vitality during porfirian times. The observation of his passing (March 3) became the theme for public ceremonies throughout the state; Mérida’s municipal employees were required to hang symbols of mourning outside their doors.¹⁹⁸ A worse fate awaited the hapless civil servants of Tizimín, who were forced to attend *four hours* of funeral music (punctuated only by hourly rifle volleys) while wearing black armbands in honor of the lost leader, their slightest display of frivolity subject to a fine of five pesos or its equivalent in jail time.¹⁹⁹ Small wonder that these morose ceremonies never caught on. The cult never amounted to more than an invention by a few political winners. In fact, the storied gratitude for Cepeda’s services was mere lip service: by 1889 his widow Pascuala Argüelles lived in desperate poverty, and only the intercession of family friends eventually managed to secure a tiny pension for her.²⁰⁰ Cepeda’s personal mythology proved short-lived. Yucatecans quietly put away the black crepe for good at some undetermined point in the late nineteenth century, and the March 3 holiday took its place with Mexico’s other state-fostered flops.²⁰¹ No biography ever emerged beyond Francisco Gómez Flores’s somewhat inaccurate thumbnail sketch in the 1890 compendium *Liberales ilustres mexicanos*.²⁰² The Man from Temax enjoyed an only halfhearted revival in the brushes of post-Revolutionary mural art, which recycled him as nationalist state builder before a public that no longer recalled his face or exploits.

More interesting than the emergence of heroes was the forgetting of certain should-have-beens: the Most Likely to Be Lionized who instead tumbled into oblivion. Few of the characters of this book better epitomize memory’s implosion than Buenaventura Martínez, the caudillo of Baca. Exactly when and how this took place is not clear. Some evidence suggests that Martínez was remembered, and fondly, for at least fifteen years after his death. Throughout his brief career as a political revolutionary, Martínez had shown the curious ability to wring acknowledgments from the press, and his final days were no exception. In June 1868, on the first anniversary of the Restoration, the *Razón del pueblo* acknowledged, accurately, that although Manuel Cepeda Peraza had led the Republican army to triumph, it was in fact Martínez who had created that army.²⁰³ Cepeda himself acknowledged the fact.²⁰⁴ Finally, when Serapio Baqueiro toured the peninsula in 1881, he found that the ayuntamiento of Hunucmá still kept a portrait of Martínez on its wall as a commemoration of his services to both the town and the Republic.²⁰⁵

Forgetting Buenaventura Martínez is probably a more recent event, and it has been a collaborative effort. Much of the blame lies with the cult of the national heroes, a phenomenon that began during the Porfiriato and grew almost uncontrollably during the post-Revolutionary years.²⁰⁶ The traveler to present-day Baca will find no evidence of Buenaventura Martínez, only an outsized bust of Benito Juárez with strangely painted eyes.

Just as a state-level monopoly on violence displaced local caudillos, in a closely related process, the sagas of state-level leaders have also displaced local memories and actors. This process began with the triumph of 1867, for although Manuel Cepeda Peraza was controversial in his brief eighteen months as governor, his early death made him an attractive myth figure for later leaders anxious to wrap themselves in the glorious mantle of Republicanism. State-level political iconography reached its highest expression under the sun cult of revolutionary socialist governor Felipe Carrillo Puerto. The nature of pueblo life also helped to extinguish the flame. Almost everywhere in rural Mexico, the past has been effaced by pressures of daily life, the low levels of literacy and education, and the low impulse to posterity. Nor are scholars entirely innocent: historical microbiology has seldom enjoyed the same cachet as national-level political history, and social and economic studies usually cast a net too broad to trap the elusive Buenaventura Martínez. Finally, Martínez himself was an agent in his own forgetting. For whatever reason—inability, disinclination, or simple lack of time—the caudillo of Baca, like Tizimín's caudillo Santiago Imán, made no effort to explain himself to the world.

The dawn of posterity was also complicated by the fact that the past was not altogether past. Continuity prevailed almost everywhere and at all levels, even in the orbits of the original insurgents. Bonifacio Novelo Cetina helped launch the Caste War and had played one of the most important roles in building and maintaining rebel independence in the southeast; but he had been dead since 1868 and absent for twenty-one more. As late as 1880 this black sheep's in-laws, the Coronado family, still dominated local politics in the town of Uayma.²⁰⁷ Similarly, Chichimilá, one of the original Caste War communities where the rebellion had taken shape, provides an instructive example. Since 1847 Chichimilá's population had declined so sharply that it lost its rating as a municipality. In their petition of 1875 the *chichimileños* (thirteen Spanish surnames, eight Maya) made a successful argument to restore that status but carefully avoided mention of the prominent role their forefathers had played in bringing about the war.²⁰⁸ At times the facts of the past were better commended to the dead.

The dawn of posterity also mandated the dawn of systematic historical writing. Justo Sierra O'Reilly had intended to write a work that told the

entire story of the Caste War, but his *Los indios de Yucatán* tunneled into such detail that it never went beyond the year 1821. Instead, the project fell to Serapio Baqueiro, who became the first man ever to receive a grant to write a history of the wars. His monumental three-volume *Ensayo histórico sobre las revoluciones de Yucatán* remains an essential part of our knowledge of the war. The book's history is complicated. While not an "official" account in the sense of state-enforced propaganda, Baqueiro did have to rewrite parts of it to mollify descendants of the events' participants. Once cleansed of political hurt, it became Holy Writ for many. As human memory blurred and faded, people turned to the *Ensayo* for clarification. When Gregoria Chacón tried to win a pension for the services of her husband, Enrique Trujillo, she discovered that his personal service papers were lost; Trujillo appeared in the pages of Serapio Baqueiro's *Ensayo histórico*, and the pension was assured. From this point on, people increasingly relied on what the patrician writers, rightly or otherwise, had chosen to include in their narratives.²⁰⁹ The problem was that Baqueiro's work precluded investigation for a very long time, much as Nelson Reed's *The Caste War of Yucatan* did a century later. Almost all the following patrician historians borrowed wholesale from the *Ensayo*. This is true of Eligio Ancona's four-volume *Historia de Yucatán desde la época más remota hasta nuestros días*; of José Francisco Molina Solís's *Historia de Yucatán durante la dominación española*; and of a number of other accounts. Recourse to Baqueiro owed less to propaganda and more to the people's low impulse to critical investigation of the past and to the longevity of a shared body of racist, positivist values. Pre-Revolutionary histories varied in detail, but all refused to explore in any meaningful way the violence and colonial exploitation that Yucatán's mono-ethnic state had inflicted on the Maya peasantry.

Newspapers also dealt in a certain amount of data on the past, if not always reliably. With the porfirians now in charge, for example, Teodocio Canto's July 1876 trouncing at la Hermita was recast as a stirring victory against "the Lerdo-Anconista oligarchy."²¹⁰ Tidbits of historical writing now acquired sudden value as feature items. In the late 1920s newspapers serialized Felipe de la Cámara Zavala's lengthy account of Díaz de la Vega's campaign against the rebels.²¹¹ The memoir of Daniel Traconis's 1871 march on Tulum appeared six years later.²¹² Poetry retroactively softened the age of troubles, like mother-of-pearl encasing sand in an oyster's shell. Rodolfo Menéndez's sixtieth-anniversary ode to the Caste War dead even celebrated the role of the hidalgos ("Not all were enemies of our race . . .") and included a promise to provide liberty and schools in the by-and-by.²¹³ Nostalgia had limits, and these accounts invariably erased the presence of Hispanics themselves in foment-

ing the wars and kept the picture very much at the level of atavistic Indian uprising.

Paper immortalized, but bronze was better: what was a past without monuments? Postwar Yucatecans felt the urge, for as the newspapers put it, "All cultured peoples both ancient and modern have honored the memory of their heroes, wise men, and legislators, erecting statues to them in the streets and plazas so that the memory of their deeds should live forever . . . and to give a healthy impulse to posterity." Or, as another put it following the death of Caste War general Felipe de la Cámara Zavala in 1878, "May his memory be kept in the breast of immortality, since the benefits that he bestowed deserve to be sculpted in lasting bronze."²¹⁴ But in this regard the southerners summoned a feeble effort at best. The one figure they did choose to memorialize was Sebastián Molas, Santiago Imán's adopted son, then dead twenty-five years. A cult of Molas as the Last Federalist Hero had made initial headway in the pro-Liberal poetry of 1858 ("In the future people and caudillo/ Will fill the air with your fame"), but was cut short by the civil wars.²¹⁵ In January 1878 Molas's "venerated remains" were disinterred and placed in the broken obelisk monument seen today in the city's plaza of Santa Lucía. It was an unusual selection: many had done a lot more, while Mérida elites would never have accepted power in the hands of someone from Tizimín. Perhaps their selection reflected a human tendency to glorify those who died young; perhaps it canonized him as a martyr to Mexican centralism. But as the *Periódico oficial* rightly stated, many lay uncommemorated, and they would remain so.²¹⁶ In fact, the Molas obelisk was the only physical monument created during the immediate post-Caste War years.

The epoch's other great memorial, the life-size statue of Manuel Cepeda Peraza, was commissioned in 1869, but postponed for twenty-seven years.²¹⁷ The story behind its delay is revealing. In a typical act of cronyism, the Yucatecan legislature entrusted five thousand pesos to be used for its construction to an unbonded builder named Antonio Morales Ibarra. Morales squandered the allocation, then fell into a state of senile dementia and died; unbonded and without heir, he left no way to collect, and most mericanos forgot about the matter. After all, it was simply another case of the political set scamming other people's money, much like the Sociedad Patriótica. Eventually one of Cepeda's die-hard supporters, a certain José Matilde Sansores, discovered references to the original allocation in old newspapers. Like some character from the novels of Alexandre Dumas, he melodramatically stood before Cepeda's tomb in 1884 and swore to rectify matters. Sansores' campaign bore fruit several years later, when henequen revenues rose to the point of allowing a second allocation.²¹⁸ In general, though, Yucatán contributed



FIGURE 7.1

Remembering the Past, #1: The Broken Obelisk of Sebastián Molas. Stepson of the liberator Santiago Imán, Molas raised Yucatán's last federalist revolt in September 1853, only to perish before a firing squad. This 1878 tomb for his reinterred remains became the first physical monument to the Caste War era.

The obelisk stands in the Santa Lucía plaza, Mérida.

Photograph by Terry Rugeley.

little to that burst of statue building that characterized the Porfiriato elsewhere; its greatest monuments remained the opulent private home, testimony to the latter-day lordship of the henequen baron.²¹⁹ The Veteranos Supervivientes too lobbied to celebrate their past, in this case by creating a Caste War veterans pantheon in the city cemetery, but their political clout was fading more rapidly than their eyesight, and they came away with nothing.²²⁰ Elsewhere, the Paseo de Montejo's enormous statue of author and statesman Justo Sierra O'Reilly was a project mandated by Sierra's son, the porfirian education czar Justo Sierra Méndez, and hence depended on neither the largesse nor the cronyism of locals.

Sadly, one of the few outstanding art genres of the prewar peninsula—the *imágenes* discussed in Chapter 3—suffered from profound abuse and neglect. Given the fact that the Caste War transferred so many church-owned treasures to private hands, and that such transfers were of dubious legitimacy, it was in the new owners' interests to conceal their provenance. Admittedly, the impulse to document the history of material culture was rare, anyway, but it now became all the rarer. Over time, these objects dispersed and deteriorated. After the Revolution broke up the haciendas, aggressive urban merchants and collectors fanned out into the countryside, gobbling up irreplaceable statues and paintings for a song.

Posterity emerged more forcefully in an institution rare in preporfirian times: the museum, in which the state served as custodian to the archaeological and colonial past. The notion of conserving objects of antiquity was nothing new: two priests, the Camacho brothers, had maintained one such operation in Campeche in the years before the Caste War.²²¹ This poorly documented institution preserved objects more as curios, not as filaments in an officially recognized memory. But the curio departed from the museum piece in its singularity, its lack of comprehensible connection to some larger process of human development, for curios shared no inherent link with their viewer. All that changed in the Restoration and porfirian years. Mérida's answer to past instability was the Museo Yucateco. In reality one of the empire's better projects, the museo and its core holdings actually grew out of the private collection of Padre Crescencio Carrillo y Ancona; over time he donated or sold most of it to the state, a peace offering as part of his efforts toward church-state rapprochement and forgiveness for imperial collaborators.²²² It was a collection that documented how peninsular polity and culture had evolved from its precolonial past to its then-current positivist refinement. Positivism provided exactly what the hopeful bourgeois of the early national period lacked: a developmental framework, a theory of process that allowed them to position historical objects and customs along a straight line pointing to themselves. The museum differed both in size



FIGURE 7.2

Remembering the Past, #2: Manuel Cepeda Peraza. Bronze and resolute, the statue of Manuel Cepeda Peraza towers over Parque Hidalgo in downtown Mérida. Photograph by Terry Rugeley.

and quality from the curios of the Camacho brothers in roughly the same way that the mental world of the porfirian era differed from the free-wheeling if naive hopefulness of its early national predecessor.

The Museo Yucateco officially opened its doors to the public on Independence Day (September 16) 1871, but tidbits trickled in for the next two decades, assorted and poorly understood fragments of antiquity unearthed from ruins found in outlying stretches of the ranchos and haciendas.²²³ The institution also came to include several items of Caste War memory, such as a British-made machete that rebels had abandoned in their 1879 raid on Tahdziú; a mantel cloth taken from Chan Santa Cruz; and a religious oil painting once the property of rebel leader Crescencio Poot, stolen during the disastrous incursion of January 1860.²²⁴ For just such a purpose, Serapio Baqueiro led an excavation of a cannon buried in Kinich Kakmó, the giant pyramid just outside of Izamal. The piece was nine feet long and dated to 1763; in 1848 it had initially frightened the Caste War rebels, but they laughed when they realized it was aimed too high and sent its cannonballs far over their heads.²²⁵ Like pre-Columbian stone carvings, these items too marked a time of supposed barbarism that porfirians hoped to transcend.

The people of the towns and villages did not always consent willingly to this transfer of precious antiquities to the bourgeois Babylon. Authorities learned a lesson about popular resistance in October 1877, when the jefe político of Ticul received a telegram instructing him to remove the shield of Tutul Xiu from its traditional resting place in Maní and to ship it directly to the Museo Yucateco in Mérida. This latter was an item of stonework that purportedly dated back to the Maya clan that had collaborated with Francisco de Montejo in the conquest, thereby winning nobility for themselves and, by extension, the community. Townsfolk of Maní exploded when they got wind of this scheme, and the jefe was forced to back down. He justified his retreat on the grounds of preventing future Caste Wars: "The Indian race in this partido is very numerous. There are entire villages occupied exclusively by them, and to judge by the deep commotion that the Government's order has caused, an uprising on their part is entirely possible." The order was rescinded; Tutul Xiu's coat of arms remained in its ancient home; Governor Iturralde tried to save face by warning the Maní crowd that it was strong enough to put them down if necessary, a hollow piece of bravado but necessary if the state were to conserve its authority before the Maya peasantry.²²⁶ The folks of Maní ignored this negative undercurrent and thanked the governor profusely for responding to a matter that touched them "in the center of our hearts." Their letter was one of the last Indian-language documents to appear in Mérida newspapers for many years.²²⁷

Everyone knew that anniversaries could be special. The method that immortalized the saints by fixing them to specific days had functioned brilliantly for centuries, so why not days of the state as well? There was in fact a little-known effort to launch Caste War day; Governor Palomino even got the day right—July 30, when Cecilio Chi raided Tepich—and organized it to begin with the event's fortieth anniversary in 1887.²²⁸ But the project went nowhere, in part because of federal distaste for local identity. More favored were those holidays that took refuge in the veil of national patriotism. State-sponsored *fiestas patrias*, the celebration of national independence, became increasingly common from the early 1870s onward. For the September 16 celebrations of 1876, the last before Díaz, Peto's town leaders proudly announced that "no sacrifice whatsoever has been omitted to honor the memory of the magnanimous caudillo of national independence": they organized decorations, streetlights, fanfares, music, artillery salvos, patriotic speeches, and the "brilliant dances of the sons of the fatherland."²²⁹ Tizimin lacked musicians in 1878, but made up for them with "eloquent speakers who will remind the public of the events of independence."²³⁰ During the early restoration, some cabildos, such as that of Ticul, scrounged up as much as sixteen pesos to commemorate Cinco de Mayo and its hero, "the immortal Ignacio Zaragoza," even though few events could have been further from popular consciousness.²³¹ While Zaragoza orchestrated his now-famous defense, most Yucatecans were either lining up behind, or hiding from, the armies of Irigoyen and Acereto. Still, the anecdote conveys some sense of the deeply felt need to impose national traditions on a people who had little raw feeling for them.

The greatest of all exercises in posterity came only after Díaz had seized power. As the Time of Troubles began to recede from human memory, the towns and villages of Yucatán carried out one of the most unusual experiments of posterity in all the annals of southeast Mexico. In 1878, in concert with the upcoming observation of *fiestas patrias*, each town's ayuntamiento was to select an illustrious predecessor (not necessarily of the town itself), whose name would be permanently appended. Bocabá, for example, became "Bocabá de Hidalgo," while Cenotillo chose "Cenotillo de Juárez." These selections formed part of a national project in which secular heroes picked up where patron saints left off, and the choices themselves provide a window into the mentalities and memories of the urban burghers of the restored Republic. The renamings took place on or around September 16, 1878, as part of the celebration of *fiestas patrias*. Although never directly stated, the purpose of the activity appears to have been to create a past, while at the same time replacing certain pre-Reform customs, particularly the religiously oriented patron

saint. Whatever the agenda, the people who carried out this renaming took their work seriously. Prolonged and heated debates occasionally erupted, and the losers had to be given the consolation prize of a park or a statue.

The namings reflect a society in forced if only partial transition from local to national identity. Juárez and Díaz notwithstanding, the Caste War still cast the longest shadow over Yucatecans, for Caste War-era military leaders dominated other figures two to one, even though the worst of the fighting had ended ten years earlier, and many of the figures commemorated had done their service in the chaotic five years of 1847–52. Yucatecan namesakes who were not military figures were more likely to be located farther away from the *Línea*, in places like the area between Mérida and Sisal, the peninsula's most important commercial stretch prior to the construction of Progreso, and a place where merchants flourished. Noncombat towns still retained a potent memory of favorite sons, even when those sons had departed the scene generations earlier. In search of its own usable past, for example, Hunucmá turned up the good Padre Lorenzo Mateo Calderón, village cura from 1794 to 1799: a brief period, but enough to make his mark on human memory. He constructed Hunucmá's first schools, built a church at his own expense, and at his death left his town a financial legacy sufficient to tide them over through the terrible smallpox epidemic of 1827, still a potent memory after fifty years.²³² The padre was famous in life as a doer of deeds and a talented conversationalist; and in death, for having composed his will in verse. The discords of the Reform clearly did not efface Calderón from public memory, even though he was the only priest thus commemorated (the faraway Padre Hidalgo excluded).

The naming process did not follow a homogeneous ideology. While obvious villains and oligarchs were not mentioned, there were a number of non-Liberals. Time redeemed some people, like José Dolores Cetina, who had actually played a key role in starting the Caste War; or Pedro Acereto, who had been involved in innumerable rebellions and who had helped bring the Second Empire to southeast Mexico. There were also odd surprises, such as Hernán Cortés. No Yucatecan political figures prior to 1867 appear. Only one town invoked Manuel Cepeda Peraza, and there were no colonial-era peninsular references (Montejo or Landa). From the historian's point of view, some of the selections were disappointing: nothing on Sebastián Molas, Raymundo Pérez of Hochtún, or Santiago Imán of Tizimín, for example.

Something very special informed the renaming ceremony of Baca. When the burghers convened, they proudly proclaimed their town Baca de Martínez, "taking into consideration the eminent services he lent to

the state.” Following the proclamation, the ex-soldiers who had once fought under Buenaventura Martínez gathered one last time to march through the streets of town to remember their fateful raid on Mocoohá. A brass band preceded them; the town decked itself out in flags and patriotic bunting, while a ball continued late into the night in the lantern-lit plaza. Much like the former Confederate and Union soldiers who met to reenact Pickett’s Charge years after Gettysburg, these survivors somehow felt compelled to commemorate what had been the most important event in their lives and the man who had made that event possible.²³³

Despite their charm for the modern scholar, the consecrations seldom endured. In part, this resulted from the tendency for the memory of local heroes to give way to those of national counterparts. Indeed, with the consolidation of the nation-state, national hagiographies partially displaced local and provincial memory. Men such as Miguel Barbachano stand out in the archival documentation, but today few can tell who such individuals were. The decline of the renamings owes in part to the fact that these were bourgeois projects among a distinctly non-bourgeois, Maya population, people to whom the *yumtsilo’ob*, or field gods, mattered more than distant and dubious heroes who were often their oppressors. Nineteenth-century Yucatán was overwhelmingly illiterate. The old names of towns had too much cultural inertia to yield to these contrived adaptations. Of the many renamings advanced in 1878, only Dzilam Bravo remains, possibly because it served to distinguish the town from another of the same name. The situation is quite different in parts of Quintana Roo, where the memory of leaders such as Bernabé Cen remains part of local lore.²³⁴ Here, there were fewer factions to remember, less competition from national ideological structures, and a smaller population base on which to draw.

But the patrician canon did not preclude little people from making their own forays into written memory. A folk posterity arose to match official versions, and it included written as well as oral manifestations. One of the more extraordinary was José Campos y Montero’s verbosely titled “Lances y sustos que pasó Dolores/ a su ida a Veracruz, con mil rigores,” an epic of one thousand-plus rhyming couplets that chronicled in excruciating detail his sister Dolores’s 1847 exodus from the family hacienda Nohpat. Though likely to bore the modern reader with its exaggerated descriptions of suffering and awful ship food, “Lances y sustos” mattered in its moment as a personal expression of the sufferings of a people, an expression never to be published or adopted into the world of national or even regional literature.²³⁵

“Lances y sustos” notwithstanding, folk posterities remained most strongly rooted among Yucatán’s Maya peasantry, the group that had

most reason to mourn. The suspended animation of peninsular knowledge imminently qualified the *violencia* as grist for lore. The Caste War as motif has never enjoyed the attention that it deserves, but what happened on that fateful day “when the Indians rose up” filtered its way deep into peninsular narrative. Tales of hidden treasure derive partially from this strand of narrative, plausible enough since people did indeed bury their jewels and money in the ground, hoping to reclaim them in better times. Take for example the legend of *Wáay Kot* (Phantom Eagle), a nickname given to Yaxcabá’s juez and strongman, Claudio Padilla, for his supposed self-enrichment through trafficking with the devil. As rebels approached the town, Padilla buried his gold coins in his house (still standing north of the church, and well worth a visit); those who find the coins today will lose them through magical means. The war also figures in the narratives of community origin. The destruction of churches is often attributed to Caste War rebels, although in many cases the real damage came as a result of prolonged underfunding, neglect, and army occupation; these accounts attribute to Mayas what was really the fault of Hispanic infighting. Similarly, most regional caves are held to be the place where thousands of people hid out for years during the war—a blatant impossibility in practical terms, but like the other folktales, one wrapped around a certain kernel of truth.

For the Yucatec Maya, the war itself has remained a subject of debate, part of an ongoing labor of self-definition. What the nineteenth-century forefathers of today’s Mayas said in private will never be known. Resurrection of the Caste War probably began in earnest during the time of the Revolution, and with encouragement and manipulation from the socialist political figures. These latter knew little about the war beyond essentialized truisms, but Caste conflict attracted their attention as a way of justifying the Revolutionary system. The people for whom they supposedly brought the Revolution, the Maya peasants, were themselves far alienated from events, and had it been possible to trace their past, one would have found that many of their ancestors had fled the violence in terror, or had fought with and perhaps deserted from the army, and had come to settle in small towns and on haciendas in hopes of putting events behind them. Our own age, particularly in the writings of 1964 onward, has celebrated the rebels, despite the cataclysm that their revolt rained down upon the common people. We like our rebels, whether their actions, seen in the light of day, result in anything positive or not. The politically self-conscious indigenism that has emerged in Mexico in the past thirty years, different from 1920s precursors in that it actually has some roots among a Maya-speaking people with strong ties to the *milpa* lifestyle and village-based culture, has made forefathers of men like

Jacinto Pat, Cecilio Chi, and Manuel Antonio Ay. Their names now grace public schools and plazas, and their hometowns now have statues and plaques to commemorate their role in Mexico's greatest indigenous uprising. The government of Quintana Roo has recently (2001) issued handsome, well-realized genealogies of the three leaders as part of a larger publicity campaign promoting the state's dramatic past.²³⁶

What to make of this glorification? Like all important movements, the Yucatecan wars pose interpretive tensions. There is something to be said for the path of Jacinto Pat and Cecilio Chi: answering political abuse with force. The rebellion permanently stained the smug sheen of a planter society that received benedictions from churchmen and secular intellectuals alike. The war did not convince Hispanics of the error of their ways, but it left them with a reminder of their world's dark side, a condemnation never to be explained away entirely. For a people that lived for centuries as tribute-paying menials, then as hacienda peons, then for too often as wards of the state and as butts of jokes, cutters of lawns, washers of laundry, and moppers of floors for a late-twentieth-century bourgeoisie—for these people, the gunpowder that destroyed the church at Tihosuco carries a sweet aroma, and one not to be dismissed lightly from the armchair of revisionist history.

In other regards, however, the benefits of the Great Revolt are less evident. Rebel holdouts survived, but at the price of isolation and stagnation, much as Haitian slaves won freedom but at the cost of perpetual poverty on micro-properties and the exploitation of an urban merchant class. The Caste War revolt did not in and of itself preserve Maya culture. As should be evident from the foregoing pages, the war brought untold suffering to countless peasants. The society that emerged in the wilds of Quintana Roo was historically generated. Rather than encapsulating timeless Maya ways, it instead reflected a folk version of institutions that peasants had experienced in the decades before 1847: the Catholic Church, the military, the political boss, and the contraband economy, to name only the most obvious. Of Chan Santa Cruz, Nelson Reed wrote that "the basic structure was pre-Columbian," but nothing could have been further from the truth. Real Maya society was never a cultural essence; what continued in the west and north was as "authentic" as its Quintana Roo counterpart, only under different pressures. Rebel society did not somehow triumph to return and impart its wisdom to the westerners. There are still more powerful arguments against seeing the Caste War as the Maya peasantry's most glorious moment. No one could call prewar society equal, but the period of 1821–47 showed at least some positive signs of advance for Yucatán's Maya people. Mayas occupied low-level offices, participated in municipal politics (for bad as well as good), and made their presence and opinions known to the state

through a variety of mechanisms, legal and otherwise. Moreover, a significant class of Maya small-property owners and entrepreneurs existed before the war. One alternative path of development might have been for a Maya rural bourgeoisie to continue its already impressive progress, holding its own against Hispanic domination and slowly bringing the rest of Maya society up with it. Perhaps Mayas would never have found genuine equality with Hispanics, but they might have emerged in the twentieth century in better condition than they actually did. Instead Mayas suffered more than most the vicissitudes of war. Their hold over property and wealth proved more tenuous, their family connections more vulnerable. The analysis is counterfactual, but the losses suffered by this Maya entrepreneurial class at least give some pause when celebrating the uprising of 1847.

These difficulties of recording and explaining the past fostered another form of posterity: the latest installment of the Maya prophetic tradition. Familiar to modern readers because it has so often attracted the attention of ethnographers, the tradition speaks of a time of famine, war, and death, when humanity is convulsed, when the wicked are called to account. It will not be an easy time. "The day will come when the lizard will rule," runs one such account: "He will only nod his head yes or no to whatever is said, for he will not know how to resolve the problems that confront him."²³⁷ These long-standing predictions have been postponed for an equally long period, but as their proponents remind us, the actual hour cannot be far off. What to make of such disturbing visions? Prophecy usually has less to do with the future and more to do with the past and present, and so too the oracles of Quintana Roo. Apocalyptic utterances draw upon the violence and dislocations experienced between the years 1800 and 1880, when the evils described amounted to more than mere symbolism. A sense of posterity thus permeates works ostensibly foretelling a future of lizard kings. Prophetic knowledge of the apocalypse also serves to comfort and inspire the underdog, for in the earth's slated destruction, it is the tyrants who will suffer most. As in the old Maya folktale, the overlords of this world—say, the Agustín Aceretos—will walk the Living Rope, a too-narrow highway of judgment, only to tumble, and therein lies the satisfaction of the listener. But what is to come next? Will the world simply end? Will the millennium dawn? Will the old ways return, even to a people who no longer remember them in their entirety? It is part of the eerie charm of Maya prophecy that it refuses to answer these questions. Its artistic power derives from its ability to leave us suspended over a precipice of fantastic events.²³⁸

For both good and bad, then, the *violencia* inspired a sense of posterity among southeasterners. While it often seems that nineteenth-century Mexicans lived in a culture of historical poverty, one in which threadbare

information and debate satisfied the itch to know of things past, we must not overlook the genuine importance of the step toward a viable sense of the past. Their own set of Limited Good Chronicles explained that they and their forebears had participated in something that was both immense and immensely important, and that they carried the burden of imparting the story of that crucible to a later generation. But the sense of posterity arose before there were adequate professional means to record and analyze it, thus leaving only the parched military narratives of the patrician authors or the folk narratives of various ethnic constituencies. Caste War memory could be both real and wrong at the same time. Critical actors, stories, and dynamics disappeared for the simple reason that the impulse to posterity outstripped posterity's means. Finally, the war's key role in posterity formation also meant that Yucatecans would never entirely be assimilated into national memory. Over the years, something more than accents and bad roads has kept the Yucatecans aloof, and it was this: the central story that told a people who they were would always remain a story that others could not recount.²³⁹

In a final and larger sense, the Caste War dead became the legacies that rooted a people to their place. A nostalgia had begun to creep into public life and literature by the century's end and would flourish for the next fifty years, a sepia-tinted Caste War chic that left good men good and made bad men even better. Forty years after hostilities erupted in 1847, the state legislature proclaimed July 30 a day of remembering—in typical fashion, not for *all* of the Caste War dead, but only for “those who succumbed in the glorious battle of civilization against barbarism in the town of Tepich.”²⁴⁰ Still, in the memories and keepsakes of the Time of Troubles, average citizens found a warming emotional resonance, and it is that indefinable filling of emotional resonance that renders life meaningful and which must exist if mankind's projects are to become anything more than hollow formula. Few read history, but many embraced the attitude that came early to a certain Colonel José Eulogio Rosado. In 1851, when his army occupied the town of Tepich, Rosado exhumed the body of Caste War instigator Cecilio Chi and forwarded it to Mérida. As with so many other physical artifacts of the Yucatecan past, what became of that cadaver, with sandals and red damask shroud, remains a mystery, but Rosado's opinions on the matter do not. Overcome by a powerful sense of swimming in the waves of great events, he wrote what might be taken as the motto of an entire age of recollectors: “Just as the memory of extraordinary geniuses ought to be eternal, it seems to me that we should also perpetuate those of famous assassins and blood-letters . . . to execrate their names and to take pity on their poor souls.”²⁴¹

Conclusion

Violence and the Ghost of Santiago Imán



Buen gobierno picked up an unexpected endorsement in February 1880, when the Yucatecans hosted Ulysses S. Grant, victorious general of the Civil War, two-term president of the United States, and a man who had seen more bloodshed than even the peninsulars themselves. (Indeed, like most insurgencies, the Caste War did not involve set battles, whereas in such engagements as Wilderness and Spotsylvania, Grant had sent whole regiments to their deaths; at Cold Harbor alone, some six thousand men perished in the first eight minutes.) But Grant's wars, like the Yucatecan conflicts, now lay in the past, and news of his coming was news indeed. Since departing the presidency, he had dedicated much of his time to globe-trotting, and by now was arguably the most famous man in the world. Whether in Egypt or England, Grant tours had acquired a fame as tumultuous events, immense public spectacles as brassy and boisterous as some national holiday.

To top things off, the retired general nursed a well-known soft spot for Mexico. This former saddle maker from Galena, Illinois, saw his first military campaigns when he went south with Zachary Taylor in 1846, and though repulsed by the war's politics, Grant found the Mexican people and landscapes strangely captivating. He hiked Popocatepetl, learned some rudimentary Spanish, and remembered this unique land to the end of his life. Despite the pressures of the Civil War, he had remained outspokenly pro-Juárez during the dark days of the empire and had succumbed to that enchantment that Mexico is known to throw upon visitors from the north. Years later, as Grant lay dying, it was the contrived invasion of Mexico, not the cadavers of Cold Harbor, that hung in his cancerous craw. But the visit had practical motives as well: in early 1880 backers were grooming him as a world leader and possible third-term

candidate, while Grant himself promoted Mexican railroad schemes for cronies such as Jay Gould and Collis Huntington.¹

By February 13, Mérida tittered with the news that his steamship, the *City of Alexandria*, would touch down in Progreso while en route to Veracruz. That Saturday (the fifteenth) a cold norther chopped the waters of the gulf and kept the dignitary's admirers waiting on the pier. Grant eventually did come ashore, but despite lavish preparations that involved no fewer than two separate committees, the meridianos and their champagne lunch failed to persuade Grant to extend his stay. His laudatory opinions of Yucatán doubtless amounted to little more than boilerplate. But they deeply flattered the porfirian self-image, and following his departure, Progreso threw an all-night party, and the newspapers continued to lionize Grant for days thereafter.²

Behind this meeting of two peoples lay truths that Ulysses S. Grant, more than any man living, could have appreciated; namely, that the time of war and violence made this world what it had become. Yucatecos had lived through experiences parallel to those of their Mexican cousins, including not only the pre-1847 years, but also the Liberal Reform, the empire, the Restored Republic, the Tuxtepec revolt. Yet despite pressures, influences, funneled money, and filtered news, it always remained the Yucatecos who operated the political levers. They did so uncertainly; state power stayed weak throughout the *violencia*, and the final outcome of political initiatives usually reflected a convergence of popular participation and state directives. In recent years much has been made of the political legitimacy of nineteenth-century Mexico: that federalism grew logically from the aspirations and experiences of the early national people, that discourses of popular nationalism were somehow internalized in the nation-state. Perhaps: but the *violencia* in Yucatán also revealed the dark side of these aspirations.

Attention often focuses on the boom years of henequen; but these were a mere oasis of affluence in a centuries-long wasteland of poverty. The fact is that the early national and Reform periods were really the more critical for molding a people and their practices. The die was cast long before Olegario Molina signed his secret price-fixing contracts in Havana. How so? The French were now gone, but by 1880 this world (mostly) restored was now an hacendado's world. Cruel fortune had delivered to the planter the workers he needed and had helped break the vitality of the rural community that was his rival. Hacendados excused themselves from obligations to the town and its petty authorities. The Buenaventura Martínez revolt established once and for all the limits of what centralized political authority could demand from rural overlords. Political peace came with an east-west synthesis, as old Oriente plotters

like Francisco Cantón established their own rail lines to tie into the henequen business and assumed their turns in the governor's mansion, the synthesis that Irigoyen and Acereto never achieved. When the Revolution came, the more adept members of the elite class survived by joining the new order, switching over from landed wealth to a new economic power based on commerce, services, and—what should be no surprise—politics.

Pursuant to this last point, it was also a jefe político's world. Ayuntamientos remained: people savored the prestige and acclaim of small-town office and still found that office necessary for a variety of business interests and practical concerns. But townsfolk had wearied of the ditherings of democracy and understood that if left to its own devices, the rule of ayuntamientos might well have precipitated the whole struggle all over again. To remedy this, the bricklayers of the emerging dictatorship needed men newly powerful, jefes who functioned not exactly as they had long ago when subdelegados picked fights with curas, but close enough. Strengthened through the problems of war, by 1880 the jefes ran virtually everything in rural public affairs. They became a special target of the Mexican Revolution, which often aimed more at local abuses than at foreign capitalists. But the Revolution brought bosses of its own, and politics of both the bureaucracy and the ayuntamiento have remained avenues of wealth for the ambitious.

The wars put the two ethnicities of Yucatán farther apart than at any time since the conquest. From 1847 onward Mayas came to the estates to escape military service, accelerating a process that had been under way for the past century. That early egalitarian rhetoric that had colored early national Mexico collapsed: poorly thought out, insincerely endorsed, irregularly practiced, and perhaps impracticable, the vision of an inclusive Mexico lasted only a moment, and its stupendous failure gave way to the bitterness and flat-out racism of later times. In fact, the effort of withholding their true feelings about the ethnic peasantry seemed to have led elites to a backlash that culminated in the intolerant positivism of the henequen-financed golden age, just as Rafael Carrera's ethnically inclusive Guatemala gave way to the racist coffee culture of Justo Rufino Barrios and his successors. After 1880 a new spirit walked the land, one that fed on pseudoscientific racism and turned away from local customs in favor of a European culture. Robert Redfield, coming to Yucatán in the 1920s after a half century of porfirian chill, interpreted what he saw as something eternal. But in fact it was not. Here as elsewhere, ethnic relations had been in a process of continual evolution. It was the violencia, combined with subsequent henequen wealth, that widened social distances and deepened ethnic difference, with tragic aftermath. As with so

much of our contemporary world, Yucatán seems destined to stand forever in the shadow of the plantation.

Ethnicities polarized, but not entirely. For years a combination of factors had forced Mayas and Hispanics to function together: the need for labor, the twin imperatives of employment and security, the leverage of landownership, obedience extracted at gunpoint, overlapping cultural views, mutual fear of rebel machetes. Pushed to the extremes of death or triumph, some twenty-five thousand souls chose to remain forever in the eastern and southern forests. The wars subsided, but in spite of everything it was still partly a Maya's world, for although the wars and their attendant changes destroyed the formal trappings of ethnic power, in so doing they gave Yucatán's Maya peasantry new ways to go on. Their separation from the Hispanics had never been that complete, and the *mayero* lifestyle now continued in altered forms. Communal access to land did not vanish in a legal thunderclap, but eroded slowly (and incompletely) over the following decades. Response varied according to circumstance: some accepting the change, some digging in heels against it, some challenging the details but not the design. The Maya *ranchero*, the rural small-property owner tending his bees and burros, was permanently caulked into the odd corners of this world, and he continued to flourish in the interstices of life and commerce despite changes at the top. His later struggles and triumphs, particularly outside the henequen zone, remain unstudied.

The years of bloodshed strongly conditioned ethnic identity. Another 150 years were necessary before it was possible to see Mayas and Hispanics as people with the capacity to coexist and cooperate. The fault lay not entirely with the *violencia*—after all, ethnic divisions persisted in other areas that did not experience nineteenth-century Caste Wars—but there can be little doubt that the *violencia* and ensuing monoculture-based Porfiriato hardened racial arteries and made it difficult to think in new and more inclusive ways. Post-1920 trends have pulled Maya peoples in different directions, and when the real history of Yucatán's *ejidos* is finally written, it will surely tell a contradictory tale: improved nutrition and health care have slashed infant mortality rates, but national policies have marginalized the rural sector, thus expanding the numbers of *mayeros*. Simultaneously, increasing education, travel, and communication have introduced new tastes that make rural life unsatisfactory for many. The need to interact with the federal government has greatly privileged Spanish over Maya and other indigenous languages, and yet the demographic shifts and persistence of milpa farming and rural town life have actually increased the number of Maya speakers since 1940. Revolutionary programs generated a small set of educated young individuals of Maya descent and culture, able

to articulate the experiences of their own people. And yet this new cohort found their voice at the precise moment when renewed pressures to globalization have turned Yucatecans outward and away from their own past. For the urban middle and upper classes, markers such as brand names, celebrity awareness, and university pedigrees separate them from the unclean. Urbanites commonly scapegoat the rural poor for Mexico's developmental problems. Today's new Maya ethnic pride and assertiveness thus stand beside evolving justifications for a racism that men have known by many names.

To some degree it was still a world of the spirit, although hardly the theocratic utopia that the Franciscans of old beheld in their dreams. The words of apologists notwithstanding, the church's role among the peasantry had always been fundamentally parasitic; it taxed and took, but the ideology of the age, coupled with the self-sufficiency of the peasants, meant that priests provided little beyond moral scrutiny. The *violencia*-laden Reform—an era that seemed to some the roar of a terrible tempest—left secular actors with unrivaled control over Mayas. It forced Yucatecans to decide where religion could remain in their world, and those places from which it had to decamp. No longer the all-encompassing cultural atmosphere of colonial days, the church let go of its material treasures but retained its hard kernel of believers who once more enacted their beliefs in public. The Catholic institution lost its cemeteries but kept its sense of certainty, relinquished its monopoly but regained momentum, sacrificed a fortune but found a future. Still, uneasy questions persisted. Where did the Kingdom of Wonders fit into a harsher world more inclined than ever to individualism and science? How did the church, now more dedicated to urban social needs, reconcile its universalist rhetoric with the fact of a re-colonized and exploited ethnic majority? These questions lingered unresolved and would erupt all over again in the 1910s; what distinguished this post-Caste War age was that the questions and their ambiguities now lay exposed. Tension between the wonders of religion and the secular paradigm of the new wise men continues to define Mexico—and the human race—into the twenty-first century.³ What does seem clear is that in Mexico, as in so many other parts of the post-Cold War world, the volatile magic of religion offers a filling for the human void at a time in which the other dreams—say, the nationalist state, economic protectionism, and populist organizations—have surrendered to the armies of the global economy. Fanaticism in all its varieties joins racism and concentration of wealth as baggage that the world, like southeast Mexico, seems destined to carry now and forever.

But at least the wars curbed the warriors. This was no inconsequential feat, because war becomes habit-forming, and in Yucatán, as in so many

other *violencias*, profit-seeking officers such as Felipe Navarrete learn to survive and prosper. Only admittance into the upper circles of state leadership finally quieted Oriente generals who were the foremost practitioners of warrior ways; their own ambitions sated, they eased their followers back to the hacienda. Yucatecans still carried rifles, but as with many Latin American armies in the late nineteenth century, men who once marched as soldiers settled into the role of security guards for a planter class whose chief threat was its own exploited workforce. Untested by real combat and lacking popular legitimacy, the *guardias*' prowess as fighters—never stellar—now grew arthritic. Their officers' corps became a rusty bucket of political sinecures. Officers brutalized the recruits but could usually goad them into carrying out the work of internal repression. And like certain other mid-twentieth-century militaries (Cuba, Nicaragua, and El Salvador come to mind), the Yucatecan army proved incompetent when confronted with a relatively small organized force, as happened when General Salvador Alvarado arrived from Mexico in 1915.⁴ The suppression of these regional bullwhips in favor of a depoliticized and professional national army proved to be one of the Revolution's greatest achievements.

What never disappeared was clientalism. Indeed, the same atomic force that once compelled starched-collar functionaries to swear loyalty to strongman Rómulo Díaz de la Vega continues to bring marchers into the street today. Politically neutral public institutions remain scarce here. Mérida's universities produce significantly more professionals than the economy can absorb, meaning Limited Good Careers for the middle class; politics continues to offer access to patronage, pensions, contracts, public money, and urban real estate. In this world of want, a handful of affluent political actors can still control the underemployed by dangling jobs and favors. Now, as the Mexican Revolution recedes from memory, popular nationalist ideology steps further and further to the back of the bus, and parties tend to exaggerate their differences—most discourse these days hinges on accusations of corruption and incompetence—in order to justify their claim to power. As in Colombia prior to its own *violencia*, parties' loyalties have become hereditary hatreds. In the *municipios*, where poverty is most profound, the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party's betrayal of its peasant base has allowed the rival National Action Party to forge its own chains of patronage in what was once alien territory. Seldom does a municipal election pass without videotapings, protests, challenges, marches, and public accusations. In a curious way, then, the last twenty years have recreated some fundamental features of the early national period, only with an upward displacement of coercive means—in other words, no more local militias—and a vastly strengthened national state to keep the situation in check.

Survivors of the terrible eighty years had paid a price. In one of his moments of laconic philosophizing, Sherlock Holmes opined that violence recoils upon the violent; the Yucatecan case more than confirms this. Repression directed toward Maya peasants resulted in peasant rebellion. Repeated attempts to alter the course of peninsular politics through blows merely provoked counterblows. The Yucatecan *violencia* often showed humanity at its worst and helps explain the origins of a perception that Mexicans seemingly acquire at birth: that authority is predatory. But as with many lands and peoples who staggered through such mayhem, Yucatecans were willing to accept almost any political condition that brought peace. Their exhaustion served as an underpinning of Mexican state building under Porfirio Díaz. His was in many ways a false peace, since peninsular violence continued in subterranean currents often dismissed as mere criminality and erupted again in the Yucatán of 1915 with the coming of the revolutionary program. Since the late 1930s, overt peninsular bloodletting has subsided once more. Perhaps, as some have argued, there is *only* violence, either society's day-to-day repression of its members, or else the struggle of competing forces, a version of "the war of all against all."⁵ If that is so, then the potential energy of any seemingly stable nation can, under certain circumstances, be converted into the sort of kinetic force that erupted in Yucatán's Oriente 160 years ago, and the dynamics sketched in this book may still offer reminders for modern generations: the corrosive nature of hatred, the tendency of violence to escape boundaries, the need to understand and share, and the imperative to struggle against a global heritage of racism. Above the evocative peninsular landscapes, then, still lingers a great question: has the Age of Rebellion finally ended, or is the threat of that violence exactly as midcentury Mexicans saw it—now and forever?

Like ourselves, the early porfirians had no telescope into the future. But for the first time, they looked inquiringly into the past. The wars made the people think of who they were, of what they had been, and of how others might someday recount their travails. Widespread upheaval, cross-class sufferings that intersected class and ethnicity, and the dawn of new means to record and disseminate their history: these provided the nutrients necessary for a people's posterity. Peace porfirian-style made the state the first custodian of memory, jealously nurturing its new orchid with the waters of histories, museums, namesake ceremonies, plaques, and statues. Semiprofessional histories emerged; even if drenched in racist positivism, they were quite good in their own way, a fact evidenced by how many times modern historians have simply rewritten them. We might say of their literary reconstruction what porfirians proudly remarked of their museum: "Foreigners visit it with interest."⁶

But despite the state's pretensions, its less-than-total recall could never claim to capture All Memory. Profound chasms continued to divide the society, making objective inquiry difficult. Moreover, the sense of posterity arose before there were adequate professional means to record and analyze it, thus leaving only the military narratives of the patrician authors or folk narratives heavily tinged with Maya prophetic tradition.⁷ Intensely local versions of the past still held their own against government triumphalism. Artifacts of local pride remained in their hometowns. The existence of state-endorsed histories did not prevent individuals from writing their own recollections, which could indeed vary from the standard option. If states truly have minds and memories, then folded within Yucatán's cerebral cortex lay, and lie, thousands of stories far removed from the legends of cruelty, heroism, unity, scandal, self-sacrifice, and nationalism. Perhaps none of this is altogether surprising. The words *state*, *government*, and *regime* resonate impressively enough, but in practice these vaunted entities often amounted to little more than a secretary and his writing desk. The early porfirian regime (to say nothing of its chaotic Republican predecessor) simply lacked the wherewithal to impose tendentious visions upon a skeptical people, and if the Mexican Revolutionaries' far more concerted and well-financed attempts to corner the memory market failed, how could the consumptive Cepeda Peraza and his bickering cronies have succeeded? Like so many other state projects—Liberal reform, anti-fanaticism, and socialist education come to mind⁸—the end result was one of those stews that Yucatecans call a *puchero*, combining equal measures of legitimate history, protest and back talk, official propaganda, flat-out misinformation, and nuggets of folk custom worn to a glassy impermeability by centuries of use. Alternative versions of the past lived on, most notably among Maya refugees of the southeast, but also in the scribbling and tale-telling of poor folk everywhere. The latter remembered misery; Mayas saw beyond misery to a millennium whose vindications may even yet prove more than a mirage.

In the midst of the Caste War hurricane, a significant but uncommemorated passing occurred sometime between April 1854 and August 1855, when Brigadier General Ciudadano Don Santiago Imán y Villafañá departed forever from this life and Mexican history. No one in Mérida seems to have been aware of his death in faraway Tizimín. By that time Imán had become a virtual phantom, a difficult troublemaker and compulsive litigant condemned to live under the suspicion of having somehow "caused" the Caste War.⁹

Where had he been, and what had he seen and done during those missing years, once fortune had ushered him out of the crossroads of history? The

truth is that in the decade before his death, Santiago Imán lived on in an intermittent obscurity. The Liberator had promised always to defend Yucatán from “the haughty metropolis,” and he remained true to his word. Imán briefly came out of mothballs to lead his people against the ill-fated Mexican reconquest in 1842–43. Truculent as ever, he had to be constantly cajoled to keep from resigning over slights real or imagined. Nevertheless, Imán and his Oriente cronies, including the shadowy empresario Darío Galera, saved the day through an elaborate smuggling system that brought in arms and supplies through Río Lagartos, while Imán himself commanded the defensive forces immediately north of Mérida.¹⁰ The battle won, Imán reaped his reward of two leagues of land near Tizimín, the basis of the family hacienda, San Pedro.¹¹ Outside of Mérida his reputation remained high, as evidenced in 1848, when a Mérida troop movement dispatched to liberate Izamal refused to advance unless led by Imán himself.¹² Imán was subsequently recruited to negotiate with Maya rebels. It proved a fiasco, since Mayas rather unfairly laid the government’s failure to abolish taxes at Imán’s feet and refused to have anything to do with him.¹³ Thereafter he commanded a military canton in Espita, just as his centralist nemesis Roberto Rivas had once done, but saw little fighting.¹⁴ In 1852 Imán served as commander of Cozumel and Isla Mujeres, about as far removed from real power as could be imagined. His assignment was to stop islanders from harboring deserters and trafficking with rebels.¹⁵

The Liberator dedicated himself to his favorite pastime—penny-ante legal wranglings—although ever after taking care to stay on the state’s good side. Better, no doubt, that he did not survive to see the empire come to Mayab, for the rebellious fury in his aging body would have soured into impotent bile. Perhaps more than any other Yucatecan, he had had a bellyful of rebellion, and before dying simply wanted to repose in the peace of the land (and for occasional entertainment, the lawsuit). A certain sense of honor enveloped this cowboy liberator, and although crude and argumentative, he consistently refused to present himself as something he was not or to scourge his own people by reaching for maximum power. The caudillo’s last curtain call was his struggle for the estate of his executed son-in-law and regional folk hero, Sebastián Molas. Molas apparently had little in the way of material wealth, only his trunk of limited good clothing, but the army did owe him some \$4,000 in back pay. Furthermore, Molas had died in possession of \$315 in rural property, including two ranchos located in Tizimín and Loché.¹⁶ By the terms of his will, this money was to go to Imán’s own children.¹⁷ The government, following old Spanish custom, intended to confiscate the goods of “those who disturb public order,” but in this case agreed to postpone action for two months while Imán advanced his case.¹⁸ In 1854 Díaz de la

Vega had other things to worry about, since political trouble was brewing once again in faraway Mexico, and he ordered the case postponed.¹⁹ But Imán eventually got his wish, thanks in this case to another federalist caudillo. When Juan Alvarez overthrew Antonio López de Santa Anna in 1855, the entire ramshackle structure of sycophants, cronies, and tyrannical decrees fell with its Veracruzian patron. Pedro Ampudia, once Santa Anna's partisan but now confronted with a new national power, lifted the embargo over Molas's properties, along with all others that Díaz de la Vega had confiscated against political enemies in the peninsula.²⁰ Imán claimed his own once more, a sweet parting victory over the cabals of Mexican centralism.

Imán's death inspired no obituaries. And while his own fortunes once burned like the sun, the family that survived him never ascended into the constellations of the porfirian oligarchy. Indeed, even though the Imáns continued for at least a generation more, none would recapture the swank and audacity of Don Santiago. Juan Imán, elder son of the caudillo, assumed the position of family patriarch, since he was the main property owner of that surname in 1856, the year that his father passed away. Juan Imán took a seat on the Tizimín ayuntamiento; he cultivated good relations with the imperial administrators, and in March 1866 he petitioned for and received a revalidation of his title to the hacienda San Pedro, the same property that his father had built through his denuncia of terrenos baldíos in 1844.²¹ The caudillo's younger brother Isidro became the subaltern jefe político of Ticul, hardly the summit of success but still more than his family had enjoyed in earlier times.²² Some years later Isidro returned to the Costa, where he died in Panabá in 1864.²³ His son Martín blended into the political woodwork of Ticul, where he became secretary of the ayuntamiento in 1865, a post he occupied until 1870—more restoration without remedies.²⁴ Santiago's sister Francisca eventually abandoned Campeche and returned to her hometown, Tizimín, where she taught sewing to the talented lasses of the *liceo*.²⁵ Beyond these individuals, there were various other Imáns whose exact relationship with the Caudillo can no longer be determined with finality.²⁶ It is possible that these various relatives exploited the Liberator's fame in order to establish themselves among the petty bluebloods of the pueblos, but none of them became henequen barons. The surname remains rare in contemporary Mexico; given their narrow distribution, it is probable that today's handful of Imáns all trace back to the brigadier general.

Not that it helped all that much: in fact, by the 1870s Santiago Imán's surviving daughters—Marina, Inez, and Leonarda—were living in crushing poverty in Tizimín. Unable to pay their taxes, the three women suffered the confiscation of their home. Significantly, in begging assistance

from Governor Ancona (who knew all about Yucatecan history), they made no mention of their tempestuous father, but instead focused on the legacy of Molas, who lent his services to the fatherland “when the machete of the savages weighed over all the peninsula like the sword of Damocles,” and whose remains now moldered under the obelisk in central Mérida.²⁷ Ancona proved a heartless Solomon: he sold the house, giving to the tax collector what was his, the rest to the ruined spinsters. Six years later, and with the state now under strictly porfirian management, Inez enjoyed better luck. Her 1881 recollections, brief but evocative, served as signposts of posterity, of the way Yucatecans came to see the epic events not so long past. “I can still see the cruel General Rómulo Díaz de la Vega, more terrible than Hamlet,” she wrote; “Never, I repeat, will I cease to curse the petty caliphate of the dictator Santa Anna.” This time Inez raised the peninsula’s most unquiet ghost: “Will the fatherland ever forget the important services that my father, the unfortunate General Santiago Imán, lent in 1840 and 1843? I do not believe so.” State generosity toward the Imán family was still grudging, but now, ever so



FIGURE 8.1

The House of the Federalists, Tizimín. This colonial structure, which was once the home of the liberator Santiago Imán y Villafaña, still stands opposite Tizimín plaza’s northwest corner. The upper story is reputed to be haunted by the turbulent spirits of the Caste War era. Photograph by Terry Rugeley.

faintly, the past had begun to glow rose-colored: this second try netted her twenty pesos, at least something, if an insult to a family whose heroics for once equaled the rhetoric of the petition.²⁸

In modern-day Tizimín, the former home of Imán is reputed to be haunted; those who have spent the night alone in the building claim to have heard the sounds of soldiers scuffling in the abandoned second floor.²⁹ Who knows? Maybe there *is* something up there after all. The lives of individuals such as Imán carry the turbulence of a repressed past, of unquiet ghosts trying to make their heartache known. Yucatecans fêted Grant, but they rejected Imán, their own; memory of catastrophes the Liberator unleashed was the pain that no one could bear, and to quell that pain and so many others, later generations turned their eyes away and instead confected the outlandish myth of the tranquil Yucatecan, the good-natured provincial who stands apart from national violence and machismo. However, spirits such as Santiago Imán cannot be suppressed entirely. The Caudillo of Tizimín remains the maximal expression of local knowledge, southeastern separatism, defiance toward corrupt Mérida's corrupt political set, and regional hostility to the dominating hand of the Distrito Federal; and his life, like those of his adopted son and his region, even today, at hours least expected and in places never imagined, still return to recount their forgotten story of the days when Yucatecans saw only rebellion now and forever. Indeed, the provinces' sense of their own value and legitimacy has never died. Yucatecans resisted revolutionary change imposed from without, subverted the land reforms and popular mobilizations that Lázaro Cárdenas hoped would redeem a wayward people, and persist as a maverick state that federal authorities control through tactical political alliances and a stranglehold over revenues. The dream of the *municipio libre* continues to resurface, most recently in attempts to lift federal budgetary controls. Vicious attack-dog politics known as *la grilla* remain the order of the day, as does a pronounced regional ethos somehow different from that of the cold, curt men of the altiplano. In this sense, the ghost of Santiago Imán—patriarch, property owner, merchant, bringer of storms, would-be *hombre de bien*, glorious Liberator, and without doubt whatsoever mounted on his favorite horse—still gallops through the roads and byways of the southeast.

Reference Matter

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. On Imán's life, see also Terry Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 116–45; for an expanded version of the Imán story, see Terry Rugeley, "En busca de Santiago Imán, el caudillo de Tizimín," *Por Esto!* February 21 and 28, 1999. Both were written without benefit of access to the documents of Mexico's National Defense Archives (AHDN), employed heavily in this brief overview, as well as without critical correspondence in the Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán (AGEY), Poder Ejecutivo (PE) boxes 18 and 19, various *expedientes* (that is, specific documents) and dates, 1836. Santiago was the second son, through the second marriage, of patriarch Faustino Imán; see the latter's will in Archivo Notarial del Estado de Yucatán (ANEY), August 20, 1822, 86–89.

2. The exact role and numerical presence of Yucatecans in the Texas campaigns remains unclear. According to a reproduction of Mexican General José Antonio López de Santa Anna's field commands, General José Urrea commanded a 600-man division that included 260 reserves from Yucatán; see Richard G. Santos, *Santa Anna's Campaign against Texas, 1835–1836* (Waco, TX: Texian Press, 1968), 16–17. Although it has become common belief that Maya soldiers were in Texas, their actual presence appears to have been minimal, since total troop strength reached nearly 6,000. The most important source on the campaign, Mexican officer José Enrique de la Peña, scarcely mentions Yucatecan troops; see de la Peña, *With Santa Anna in Texas: A Personal Narrative of the Revolution*, trans. and ed. Carmen Perry (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1975), 89, 136; and, for validation of Peña himself, see James E. Crisp, "The Little Book That Wasn't There: The Myth and Mystery of the de la Peña Diary," *Southwest Historical Quarterly* (1994): 260–96. Peña does go into some detail about the various divisions and battalions on page 13; these make no mention of Yucatán, but the names of said units—Morelos, Guerrero, and so forth—were often honorifics, not places of the soldiers' origins. General Vicente Filisola fails to mention them at all; see Filisola, *Memoirs for the History of the War in Texas*, trans. Wallace Woolsey (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1985). Nevertheless, Yucatecan documentation in the AGEY in Mérida makes it clear that massive military recruitments were under way in the

mid-1830s, and this certainly outranked land as the major source of popular discontent at that time, even if the majority of those soldiers had yet to depart the peninsula.

3. AHDN, Cancelados, “Imán, Santiago,” xi/iii/2-378, 1838-39, 32-38ff.; June 10, 1850, 26-27ff. One persistent account of Imán’s rebellion holds that he led a mutiny of soldiers on a ship bound for Texas; in light of the recently discovered AHDN transcriptions of his trial, we can now state once and for all that this version is erroneous. Other important material on the revolt is found in AHDN, xi/481.3/1493 and xi/481.3/1546, various dates and places, 1838-40.

4. Hemeroteca Pino Suárez (HPS), *Los pueblos*, issue 69, October 6, 1840.

5. An abundance of works now guide the reader through the mysteries of Chan Santa Cruz and similar Maya redoubts in southern Quintana Roo and Campeche. In chronological order, they are Nelson Reed, *The Caste War of Yucatan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964); Ramón Berzunza Pinto, *Guerra social en Yucatán* (México: Costa-Amic, 1965); Victoria Bricker, *The Indian Christ, The Indian King: The Historical Substrate of Maya Myth and Ritual* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); Don E. Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross: Campesino Rebellion in Yucatán* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); and Paul Sullivan, *Xuxub Must Die: The Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatan* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004). For an older bibliography on earlier Caste War and Maya ethnohistorical writings, see Howard F. Cline, “Remarks on a Selected Bibliography of the Caste War and Allied Topics,” in Alfonso Villa Rojas, *The Maya of East Central Quintana Roo* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institute, 1943), 165-78; for a more recent review of the literature, see Rugeley, *Maya Wars: Ethnographic Accounts from Nineteenth-Century Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 211-20.

The post-Caste War fortunes of the Quintana Roo Maya communities are the theme of Villa Rojas, *Maya of East Central Quintana Roo*; Paul Sullivan, *Unfinished Conversations: Mayas and Foreigners Between Two Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, orig. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989); and Ueli Hostettler, “Milpa, Land, and Identity: A Central Quintana Roo Mayan Community in a Historical Perspective,” in *Maya Survivalism*, ed. Ueli Hostettler and Matthew Restall (Markt Schwaben: Verlag Anton Saurwein, 2001), 239-62.

Finally, since 1997 at least four Spanish-language studies retrace similar themes of the Maya separatists. See Carlos Macías Richard, *Nueva frontera mexicana: Milicia, burocracia y ocupación territorial en Quintana Roo* (Mexico City: Universidad de Quintana Roo, 1997); Lorena Careaga Viliesid, *Hierofanía combatiente: Lucha, simbolismo y religiosidad en la Guerra de Castas* (Mexico City: Universidad De Quintana Roo, Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología, 1998); Martha Herminia Villalobos González, *El bosque sitiado: Asaltos armados, concesiones forestales y estrategias de resistencia durante la Guerra de Castas* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2006); and Lean Sweeney, *La supervivencia de los bandidos: Los mayas icaichés y la política fronteriza del sureste de la península de Yucatán, 1847-1904* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2006).

6. Numerous economic studies illuminate the period. See Moisés González Navarro, *Raza y tierra: La guerra de castas y el henequén* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1970); Lawrence James Remmers, "Henequen, the Caste War, and the Economy of Yucatan, 1846–1883: The Roots of Dependence in a Mexican Region" (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1981); Allen Wells, *Yucatan's Gilded Age: Haciendas, Henequen, and International Harvester, 1860–1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985); and Allen Wells and Gilbert M. Joseph, *Summer of Discontent, Seasons of Upheaval: Elite Politics and Rural Insurgency in Yucatán, 1876–1915* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996). Most recently, Sterling Evans's *Bound in Twine: The History and Ecology of the Henequen-Wheat Complex for Mexico and the American and Canadian Plains, 1800–1950* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007) fleshes out the international connections between farming, technological change, and coercive labor. For an unusually chipper account of the Yucatecan Porfiriato, see Franco Savarino Roggero, *Pueblos y nacionalismo, del régimen oligárquico a la sociedad de masas en Yucatán, 1894–1925* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1997).

7. Steven E. Barkan and Lynne L. Snowden, *Collective Violence* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2001); Michelle Wucker, *Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2000).

8. Nicholas A. Robins, *Native Insurgencies and the Genocidal Impulse in the Americas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

9. The total number of Armenians in the far-flung Ottoman Empire probably totaled no more than two million, mostly concentrated in the eastern provinces; see Donald Bloxham, "Determinants of the Armenian Genocide," in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 31–32. On the case of Rwanda, I am indebted to Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Picador, 1998); the precise formula of ethnic percentages appears on page 57.

10. Hagen Schulze, *Germany: A New History*, trans. Debora Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 62–67.

11. Han Woo-Keun, *The History of Korea*, trans. Lee Kyung-shik (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1970), 403–15; Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 115–20.

12. The long-running civil war in Guatemala has drawn considerable scholarly attention, much of it from anthropologists. Among the best of these many studies, Robert M. Carmack's *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989) provides ten case studies and two valuable synthetic chapters, along with some of the most graphic accounts ever of the horrors visited upon Maya villages. In *Between Two Armies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), David Stoll argues that Quiché Mayas sought to distance themselves from both guerrillas and army, while Greg Grandin's *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America and the Cold*

War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) sees the civil war as spinning out of frustrated attempts to claim peasant participation in Guatemala's political life. Admittedly, the Guatemalan case does border far more closely on genocide, given high-level decisions to eradicate the peasantry believed to be supporting the insurgents. But much of the Guatemalan civil war spilled out into the cities and affected a broad if insufficiently studied spectrum of daily life.

13. Now the gold standard of *violencias*, the Colombian conflict has even sparked a whole new discipline of "violentologists." Among the most important studies of this conflict are James D. Henderson, *When Colombia Bled: A History of the Violencia in Tolima* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1985); and Mary Roldán, *Blood and Fire: La Violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-1953* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

14. Jeff Goodwin's state-oriented theory of revolution argues that revolutionary movements are most likely to succeed in situations of a patrimonial state with strong exclusionary tendencies and weak bureaucratic control. And as the title of his book suggests, the tendency to exclusion means violent repression of dissent; see Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Though aimed toward a different era of global history, these comments apply in some degree to nineteenth-century rebellions as well.

15. On the propensity to violence, particularly in cases of state formation in ethnically stratified societies, see David Maybury-Lewis, *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002); Charles D. Brockett, *Political Movements and Violence in Central America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 252-59; and Robert H. Holden, *Armies Without Nations: Public Violence and State Formation in Central America, 1821-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 9-49. Fortunately, we now possess two excellent studies of the Jacinto Canek rebellion: Robert W. Patch, *Maya Revolt and Revolution in the Eighteenth Century* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2002); and Pedro Bracamonte y Sosa, *La encarnación de la profecía: Canek en Cisteil* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 2004).

16. For observations on the use of violence, I am indebted to Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), *passim*, but particularly 11-12, 24-26, 55-58, 59, and 61-62.

17. Center-based political machinations feature heavily in the reading of Paul Garner, *Porfirio Díaz* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), whereas Alan Knight's *The Mexican Revolution*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), stresses internal social factors as dominant in revolutionary causation and process. The main representative of imperialist interpretations is John M. Hart; see *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) and *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico Since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

18. This catchy if sadly appropriate phrase comes from then-Governor Santiago Méndez; see his letter to the Ministro de Guerra y Marina in AHDN, xi/481.3/5385, December 11, 1856.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Terry Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), *passim*.
2. AGEY, PE 40, Censos y Padrones, vol. 3, expediente 28, May 21, 1841, Census of Santiago de Mérida.
3. AGEY, PE 52, Gobernación, Secretaría de Guerra y Marina, October 19, 1843.
4. On milpa farming, see Nancy M. Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 199–223.
5. Numerous cases of pre-1847 Maya wealth exist. For a representative estate, see the will of José María Uc of Tunkás, in AGEY, Fondo Justicia (FJ) Civil, vol. 8, expediente 7, October 10, 1834, Tunkás. Here, and throughout the notes, the term *expediente* refers to an individual document. This document is translated and reproduced in Terry Rugeley, *Maya Wars: Ethnographic Accounts from Nineteenth-Century Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 39–40.
6. AGEY, FJ, Penal, January 5, 1856; AGEY, PE 161, Gobernación, Subprefecto Político of Maxcanú, May 14, 1866. For a useful review of subregions in early nineteenth-century Yucatán, see Eric Villanueva Mukul, “La formación de las regiones en Yucatán,” in *Sociedad, estructura agraria y estado en Yucatán*, ed. Othón Baños Ramírez (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 1990), 167–203.
7. Christopher M. Nichols, “Solares in Tekax: The Impact of the Sugar Industry on a Nineteenth-Century Yucatecan Town,” *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 1 (2003): 161–89.
8. AGEY, Libro Copiador del Poder Ejecutivo (LCPE), Correspondencia de los Gobernadores, vol. 13, May 7, 1842, 56–57.
9. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia de los Gobernadores, vol. 13, September 25, 1841, 27.
10. AGEY, PE 51, Milicia, Batallón Local, 1843.
11. Archives of Belize (AB), *British Honduras Colonist and Belize Advertiser* (BHCBA), I, November 16, 1867, 3–4; November 23, 1867, 19; December 7, 1867, 1.
12. AB, BHCBA, I, November 2, 1867, 3–4.
13. Archivo General de Centroamérica (AGCA), Group A1.20, legajo 1507, expediente 9995, May 16, 1823.
14. AB, BHCBA, I, November 2, 1867, 3–4.
15. Terry Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men: Religion and Popular Cultures in Southeast Mexico, 1800–1876* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), chapter 7.
16. AHAY, Decretos y oficios (DO), Béal, October 20, 1866; in this relatively late document, Padre Hurtado briefly reviews the policy on intervillage marriages.
17. A point amply documented in the inquiries of the 1803–4 pastoral visit; see AHAY, Visitas pastorales (VP), 1803–4, various towns.

18. The comment on hothouse lifestyles comes from Methodist missionary Alfredo Giolma; see Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Archives (WMMSA), October 29, 1868, Corozal; a portion of this letter is reproduced in Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, 115–16.

19. See Matthew Restall, *Maya Conquistador* (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1998), 57–76, for a discussion and example of early colonial Maya staking their claims through written documents known as primordial titles.

20. Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, passim.

21. On Mexico's early capital hunger, see John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions, 1808–1826*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), 343–48; John Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750–1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 215–28; Richard Graham, *Independence in Latin America: A Comparative Approach*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 137–42; and Jay Kinsbruner, *Independence in Spanish America: Civil Wars, Revolutions, and Underdevelopment* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 133–34. The condition of universal debt certainly featured in other parts of the Spanish Empire, even in far-flung quarters like the early Texas settlement; see Jesús F. de la Peña, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 138.

22. This memorable quote comes from William Hinton's equally memorable *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (New York: Vintage, 1966), 38.

23. Robert W. Patch, "Agrarian Change in Eighteenth-Century Yucatán," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 65, 1 (1985): 21–49; and Patch, *Maya and Spaniard in Yucatán, 1648–1802* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 137–68.

24. Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*, 35–60.

25. Timothy E. Anna, *The Fall of the Royal Government in Mexico City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978).

26. On the activities of the repúblicas, see Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*, 90–116.

27. For this neologism I am grateful to Felipe Escalante Tió, "Las pulgas y el maquinista: La prensa satírica yucateca, 1872–1908," in *Los aguafiestas: Desafíos a la hegemonía de la élite yucateca, 1867–1910*, ed. Piedad Peniche Rivero and Felipe Escalante Tió (Mérida: Compañía Editorial de la Península, 2002), 93.

28. AGEY, PE 155, Gobernación, Valladolid, February 21, 1866.

29. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Tzitzantún, February 20, 1866.

30. Timothy Anna, *Forging Mexico, 1821–1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 211–13.

31. This, at least, is the account given by the ayuntamiento's alcalde in 1866; see AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamiento, Mérida, November 15, 1866.

32. This anonymous poem appears in HPS, *La burla*, January 27, 1861, 98–100.

33. The phrase "legal revolution" comes from Caplan, "Legal Revolution in Town Politics," 255–93.

34. *Colección de leyes, decretos y ordenes del augusto congreso del estado libre de Yucatán* (JMP/IRG), ed. José María Peón and Isidro Rafael Góngora (Mérida: G. Canto, 1896), vol. 1, November 19, 1824, 348–56.
35. For Pat's letter to the Corregidor, or governor, of the Guatemalan Petén district, see AGCA, Group B, legajo 28543, expediente 279, July 11, 1848; for a complete translation of this document, see Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, 55–56.
36. As Robert White, former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador put it, "No power on earth can convince a poor, unlettered campesino with a numbered ballot in his hand that the military commandant of his district will not know for whom his vote was cast." See Raymond Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit: U.S. Policy and El Salvador* (New York: Times Books, 1984), 301.
37. AGEY, Fondo Municipios (FM)-Izamal, Oficios de Izamal, vol. 2, September 23, 1834. For a more complete review of cases, see Terry Rugeley, "Rural Political Violence and the Origins of the Caste War," *The Americas* 53, no. 4 (April 1997): 469–96.
38. *Yucatán en el tiempo: Enciclopedia aflabético* (Mexico City: Inversiones Cares, 1998), vol. 2, 340–41.
39. Thus far little work exists analyzing in detail the role of the jefe político in pre-Revolutionary Mexico. The most extensive study is Romana Falcón, "Force and the Search for Consent: The Role of the *Jefaturas Políticas* of Coahuila in National State Formation," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 107–34. Falcón's work on Coahuila suggests that many of the features found in Yucatán's jefatura system—its elastic powers, its genesis as a response to local disorder, and its tendencies to fluctuate between petty tyranny and good government—were nationwide phenomena.
40. JMP/IRG, vol. 1, February 19, 1824, 172–73.
41. JMP/IRG, vol. 1, January 5, 1824, 144; January 29, 1824, 154; April 30, 1824, 222–23.
42. JMP/IRG, vol. 1, September 15, 1829, 345.
43. *Colección de leyes, decretos, ordenes o acuerdos de tendencia general del poder legislativo de estado libre y soberano de Yucatán* (AAP), ed. Alonzo Aznar Pérez, vol. 1 (Mérida: Rafael Pedrera, 1849), 18, November 20, 1834, 207–8; these laws were reiterated in AAP, vol. 1, February 17, 1835, 225.
44. AAP, vol. 1, May 24, 1837, 260–64.
45. The 1841 Yucatecan national constitution is found in AAP, vol. 2 (1841–45), March 31, 1841, 34–112; articles on jefes políticos are found on pages 96–98.
46. Cited in Wolfgang Gabbert, *Becoming Maya: Ethnicity and Society in Yucatán since 1500* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 61.
47. For details of Pío Pérez's life, see ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 10, October 6, 1853, 109. On his linguistic accomplishments, see Restall, *Maya Conquistador*, 84, 104.
48. Gabbert, *Becoming Maya*, 129.
49. AGEY, PE 14, Empleos, vol. 1, expediente 50, October 7, 1825.
50. AGEY, PE 14, Empleos, vol. 1, expediente 4, June 8, 1825.
51. AGEY, PE 14, Empleos, vol. 1, expediente 36, September 28, 1825.

52. AGEY, PE 14, Empleos, vol. 1, expediente 29, September 24, 1825.
53. AGEY, PE 14, Empleos, vol. 1, expediente 8, August 22, 1825.
54. AGEY, PE 14, Empleos, vol. 1, expediente 48, October 6, 1825.
55. AGEY, PE 14, Empleos, vol. 1, expediente 51, October 8, 1825.
56. AGEY, PE 15, Empleos, vol. 2, expediente 8, October 26, 1825.
57. JMP/IRG, vol. 1, May 31, 1823, 244-48.
58. In fairness to Acereto himself, his stint as governor also failed because the state-level political scene was utterly out of control by 1859, a point explored in Chapter 4.
59. As in Tekax; see AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia de los Gobernadores, vol. 13, June 11, 1841, 16.
60. These responsibilities of the auxiliary alcaldes are enumerated in AAP, vol. 1, September 4, 1840, 314-15.
61. Rivas became interim subdelegado of Valladolid in 1830, during a two-year centralist takeover (AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, 20, 10, 1830, 45f.). On his attempt to persecute federalists, see Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 190.
62. AAP, vol. 1, November 25, 1834, 209. This measure came rather late, after Díaz de la Vega had already returned to Mexico.
63. AAP, vol. 1, November 20, 1834, 207-8.
64. AAP, vol. 1, February 17, 1835, 225.
65. AGEY, PE 47, Justicia, vol. I, expediente, 7, May 20, 1842, Chancenote.
66. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia de los Gobernadores, vol. 8, various dates, 1837-39.
67. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia de los Gobernadores, vol. 13, June 25, 1842, 61. For a reproduction of the original correspondence, see Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, 46-47.
68. AGEY, FJ-Penal, various dates, 1854-58, Tekantó.
69. Christon I. Archer, *The Bourbon Army in Mexico, 1760-1810* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977), 3-4, 8-9, 20-22.
70. *Ibid.*, 193, 197-98, 237.
71. *Ibid.*, 217-22.
72. *Ibid.*, 299-301.
73. Jorge Victoria Ojeda, *Mérida de Yucatán de las Indias: Piratería y estrategia defensiva* (Mérida: Ayuntamiento de Mérida, 1995). For a representative case of smugglers labeled as pirates, see AGEY, PE 16, Milicia, vol. 5, expediente 6, December 11, 1827.
74. Existing documentation on the final resting place of Lafitte is found in *Documentos Históricos Peninsulares* (DHP), ed. Michel Antochiw (Mérida: Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórico de Yucatán), vol. 2, no. 7, "Sumaria instruida contra el inglés D. Jorge Schumph, rehtaiva al corsario D. Pedro Lafitte, su muerte y su enterramiento en el puerto de Dzilam." The account is clouded somewhat by the fact that testimony consistently refers to the pirate in question as "Pedro," not "Jean." As a representative reference on some less-celebrated pirates, see AGEY, Fondo Colonial (FC), Militar, vol. 1, expediente 5, May 3, 1799, Campeche.
75. See, for example, the report on Bacalar in AGEY, FC, Fondo Militar, vol. 1, expediente 16, 1801.

76. Pirates came ashore and rampaged through ranchos of the sparsely inhabited region between Valladolid and the northeastern coasts; see CAIHY, Manuscript Books, "Correspondencia, Valladolid," July 29, 1837, 10.

77. Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*, 149–64.

78. A number of these features are outlined in the "Informe reservado del gobernador del presidio de Bacalar, sobre diversos aspectos de dicha plaza," in AGEY, FC, Fondo Militar, vol. 1, expediente 16, March 2, 1801, Bacalar.

79. AGEY, PE 15, Milicia, vol. 1, expediente 24, September 1822, Mérida.

80. For this inventory of military issue, I refer to "Estado de armamento, vestuario, y munición del Batallón de Milicia Activa Número Tres, Cuartel de Chanconote," in AGEY, PE 16, Milicia, vol. 5, expediente 10, August 28, 1828. On the Active Battalions, see Ermilio Cantón Sosa and José Armando Chi Estrella, "Los orígenes de la institución militar en el Yucatán independiente: La milicia activa en el Partido de Tizimín" (thesis, Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 1993).

81. See AGEY, FC, Testamentos Militares, miscellaneous expedientes and dates.

82. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 3, January 7, 1841.

83. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 3, expediente 53, March 19, 1841.

84. López de Llergo has never received the historical scrutiny he deserves; these stray facts come from *Yucatán en el tiempo*, vol. 3, 1998, 601.

85. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 13, April 18, 1858, 60–62.

86. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 1, expediente 4, February 14, 1841.

87. Sample pay scales appear in AGEY, PE 16, Milicia, vol. 4, expediente 3, July 31, 1826, Mérida. For a representative officer's will, see the testament of Captain José Antonio Vidal, lieutenant of the Campeche militia's second regiment, in AGEY, PE 15, Milicia, vol. 1, expediente 3, August 12, 1823, Campeche. For some representative soldiers' wills, see that of Ignacio Basulto (AGEY, PE 15, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 10, June 10, 1824, Mérida); Ignacio Caballero (AGEY, PE 15, M, vol. 1, expediente 28, October 12, 1823, Mérida); Nicolás Díaz (AGEY, PE 15, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 28, December 29, 1823, Mérida); and Anastacio Ricalde (AGEY, PE 15, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 7, December 22, 1823, Mérida). Even noncommissioned officers like Sergeant Ignacio Gutiérrez typically died owing nothing; see AGEY, PE 15, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 6, November 23, 1823, Mérida. See also testament of Corporal Francisco González, in AGEY, PE 16, Milicia, vol. 3, expediente 26, June 29, 1823, Mérida.

88. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 9, April 20, 1841.

89. Melchor Campos García, *Castas, feligresía y ciudadanía en Yucatán: Los fromestizos bejo el régimen constitucional español, 1750–1822* (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2005), 104–17.

90. Justo Sierra O'Reilly, *Los indios de Yucatán: Consideraciones históricas sobre la influencia del elemento indígena en la organización social del país*, vol. 2 (Mérida: Compañía Tipográfica Yucateca, 1954), 186–87.

91. AGEY, FC, Fondo Militar, August 6, 1790, "Félix Esquilino, cabo en el pueblo de Teya, solicita ser relevado del servicio por urgencias económicas." These and similar narratives were composed in the interest of qualifying for a forty-year service award.

92. AGEY, PE 50, Gobernación, Milicia, September 29, 1851.
93. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 1, expediente 10, February 29, 1841.
94. The practice of exempting soldiers from the church taxes began early; see AGEY, PE 15, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 4, October 10, 1823, Carmen.
95. José Manuel A. Chávez Gómez, *Intención franciscana de evangelizar entre los mayas rebeldes* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2001).
96. Campos García, *Castas, feligresía y ciudadanía en Yucatán*, 36.
97. DHP, vol. 2, no. 5, "Apuntes para la vida del cacique de San Román D. Guillermo Ku, proporcionados por el mismo." Despite the title assigned to this published document, nothing in Ku's brief autobiography suggests that he had ever been a cacique; in fact, the office was formally abolished thirteen years before the date of the document. The document bears no date, but mentions the year 1882, and is either from that year or later.
98. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 12, expediente 32, June 22, 1821, Teya. At the time of writing, Teya is a restored hacienda and pricey restaurant frequented on weekends by affluent meridianos.
99. Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán (CAIHY), Manuscripts, vol. 12, expediente 32, June 3, 1821, Chichanhá.
100. These documents appear in CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 12, expediente 32, miscellaneous dates, 1821–23. Elsewhere, the records of the Costa divisions reveal heavy participation by artisans with Maya surnames; see AGEY, PE 16, Milicia, III, 24, May 27, 1825. Finally, the inscription records for the Third Active Battalion, based in Tizimin, make quite clear the presence of Indian conscripts by 1835; see AGEY, PE 19, Milicia, vol. 13, expediente 6, various dates, 1835.
101. The largest of the 1821 rural militias was Opichén, with five hundred (CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 12, expediente 32, July 17, 1821, Opichén).
102. As, for example, in the coastal village of Seibaplaya. See CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 12, expediente 32, August 31, 1821, Seibaplaya.
103. See, for example, AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 40, July 30, 1841; AGEY, PE 47, Milicia, vol. 1, expediente 29, March 28, 1842.
104. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 35, July 30, 1841.
105. Guy P. C. Thomson makes a case for musical bands as institutions that drew villagers out of their intense parochialism; something like this applied in the rural Yucatecan communities as well. See Thomson, "The Ceremonial and Political Roles of Village Bands, 1846–1974," in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico*, ed. William H. Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1994), 307–42.
106. For sample cases of militia-related mayhem, see "Sumario contra Pablo Rojas, sargento segundo del Batallón Tercero Activo, por insultos públicos al sargento de su compañía," in AGEY, PE 18, Milicia, vol. 12, expediente 27, September 14, 1835, Izamal; and "Sumaria contra los soldados retirados Julián Casanova y José María León, por robo de ganado en Hunucmá," in AGEY, PE 15, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 18, October 4, 1825, Mérida.
107. AGEY, PE 15, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 16, October 24, 1825, Izamal.

108. One of the few documented Yucatecan duels was stopped before it started, in 1854, when a lieutenant in the National Guard challenged his opponent to a pistol match. The young man, a certain Candelario Díaz, received a two-year prison term for his challenge. See AGEY, FJ-Penal, January 12, 1854, Mérida.

109. Militia service as a basis of citizenship does seem to have featured elsewhere in Mexico. Regarding Guerrero, see Peter F. Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's Nation State: Guerrero, 1800-1857* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); on Puebla, see Guy P. C. Thomson with David LaFrance, *Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Juan Francisco Lucas and the Puebla Sierra* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999); and for the state of Veracruz, see Michael T. Ducey, *A Nation of Villages: Riot and Rebellion in the Mexican Huasteca, 1750-1850* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004).

110. On the militia-related origins of Yucatán's "permanent fiscal deficit," see Sergio Quezada and Elda Moreno Acevedo, "Del déficit a la insolvencia. Finanzas y real hacienda en Yucatán, 1760-1816," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 21, no. 2 (2005): 307-31.

111. AHDN, xi/481.3/744, March 28, 1830. It was also a list of Conservatives who would be finished off or at the least persecuted politically after the Imán revolt, including Silvestre Antonio Dondé of Izamal, Pedro Marcial Guerra of Mérida, and José Manuel Pardío of Sotuta. On Maya participation in the 1834 centralist revolt, see AGEY, Congreso del Estado (CE), Acuerdos, August 22, 1834, 53. For an overview of the centralist takeover, told mostly from a high political perspective, see Melchor Campos García, *De provincia a estado de la república mexicana: La península de Yucatán, 1876-1835* (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2004), chapter 5.

112. AHDN, xi/481.3/8177, July 18, 1835. The revolt took place in 1834, immediately following the centralist takeover.

113. Stephanie Jo Smith, "A Reconstruction of Early Nineteenth-Century Valladolid, Mexico" (Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1997), 19-21.

114. AHDN, xi/481.3/1196, August 25, 1836; xi/481.3/1154, November 29, 1836. Apparently the state government had been getting an earful of complaints regarding drafts, or *sorteos*, as documented in AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, Book 8, March 12, 1838, 31-33; the practice was an initiative on the part of jefes/prefects, who found themselves under pressure to produce soldiers.

115. The roster of Imán's company appears in "Listas nominales y clasificadas de la fuerza de las compañías del Tercer Batallón Activa," in AGEY, PE 18, Milicia, vol. 12, expediente 25, June 5, 1836, Calotmul.

116. AGEY, PE 19, Milicia, vol. 13, expediente 13, April 19, 1836, Tizimín; June 6, 1836, Tizimín; June 29, 1836, Tizimín.

117. This picturesque account of Yucatán's independence ceremonies comes from the letter of Mexico's Cuban consul, found in AHDN, xi/481.3/1690, July 26, 1841, 628-38 ff.; on the *sacatan* dancers, see Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 90.

118. This witty piece of doggerel, a poetic dialogue titled “La fortuna y Yucatán,” appeared under the pseudonym Valeriano in *Siglo XIX*, and was reprinted in HPS, *El independiente*, February 14, 1843, 3–4.

119. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 6, expediente 124, August 24, 1841.

120. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 4, expediente 85, April 12, 1841; AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 5, expediente 106, December 28, 1841.

121. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 3, expediente 55, August 28, 1841.

122. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 5, expediente 96, March 13, 1841.

123. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 6, expediente 133, March 24, 1841; AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 6, expediente 122, November 30, 1841; AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, V, 107, June 25, 1841.

124. AGEY, PE 42, Leyes y Decretos, vol. 1, expediente 10, February 26, 1841; AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 5, expediente 105, January 31, 1841; AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 6, expediente 125, February 27, 1841.

125. AGEY, PE 47, Milicia, vol. 1, expediente 14, March 12, 1842.

126. AGEY, PE 42, Leyes y Decretos, vol. 1, expediente 3, April 5, 1841.

127. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 30, May 12, 1841. The original legislation was article 83, chapter 11, of the Reglamento of December 10, 1832. There was often a great deal of policy continuity between Conservative and Liberal governments.

128. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 2, miscellaneous expediente numbers and dates, 1841.

129. AGEY, PE 47, Milicia, vol. 1, expediente 22, March 8, 1842. According to the 1856 property register, Barret was the wealthiest man in Campeche; see AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, 1856.

130. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 3, expediente 63, June 5, 1841.

131. As shown in the elections of Umán; see AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 5, expediente 95, November 15, 1841.

132. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 50, May 10, 1841.

133. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 4, expediente 73, November 2, 1841; AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 5, expediente 95, November 15, 1841, Umán; AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 2, expediente 30, May 12, 1841, Acanceh.

134. AGEY, PE 46, Milicia, vol. 4, expediente 79, Teabo, December 5, 1841.

135. AGEY, PE 47, Milicia, vol. 1, expediente 1, March 12, 1842.

136. The matter of clerical division along liberal/conservative lines emerges clearly in José Enrique Serrano Catzim’s “La supresión de la sacristía mayor en Campeche, el Patronato nacional y los conflictos entre el clero yucateco en la primera mitad del siglo XIX (1823–1843),” in *Poder político y control social en Yucatán, siglos XVI–XIX*, ed. Pilar Zabala Aguirre, Pedro Miranda Ojeda, and José E. Serrano Catzim (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2007), 115–49. The complicated life of Meneses himself awaits future biography.

137. The only known source on the Rochelas is the lengthy account of Mexico’s Cuban consul; see AHDN, xi/481.3/1690, July 1841, 628–38ff. Assorted references in other documents corroborate the consul’s version of this secret society. The group, which included Manuel Pardío, Tomás O’Horán, Luis Toro, and Imán’s personal nemesis, Roberto Rivas, was still being kept under house arrest

in 1842, when the Mexican army invaded; see AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 12, March 15, 1842, 26. For information on the byzantine career of *rochelista* Padre José Manuel Pardío, see Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 134–36, 226.

138. A highly exculpatory account of Escudero's life appears in Silvano García Guiot, "Pedro Escudero y Echánove (político), 1818–1897," in *Enciclopedia Yucatanense*, vol. 7 (1944: reprint, México: Gobierno de Yucatán, 1977), 305–40. The death threat, complete with ominous doodlings, appears in University of Texas at Austin, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Library (UTA), Genaro García Collection, Pedro Escudero y Echánove correspondence, circa 1850.

139. Archivo General de la Nación de México (AGNM), Justicia (J) expediente 483, October 24, 1853, 123–27.

140. See Rugeley, "Rural Political Violence," 480–83.

141. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador vol. 13, June 11, 1841, 16–17.

142. AGEY, PE 47, Milicia, vol. 1, expediente 37, December 18, 1842.

143. AGEY, PE 51, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Tekax, April 19, 1843.

144. For more than a century the standard source on the failed Mexican invasion has been Serapio Baqueiro, *Ensayo histórico sobre las revoluciones de Yucatán desde el año 1840 hasta 1864*, vol. 1 (Mérida: Manuel Heredia Argüelles, 1878), 79–120. Although correct in most regards, Baqueiro omits a great deal and treats matters exclusively from the Yucatecan perspective. I have tried to balance his account with the previously unexamined papers of the AHDN, as well as archival materials found in Mérida. In particular, there are three reports that document the episode in question. The first is that of Antonio López de Santa Anna to the Ministro de Guerra y Marina, found in AHDN, xi/481.3/1992, May 30, 1853, originally published in the *Diario del gobierno de la república mexicana*. The second is the report of General Matías de la Peña y Barragán, also published in the *Diario*, and found in the same expediente. The third and most complete is by General Manuel María Sandoval, found in AHDN, xi/481.3/1986, December 11, 1843. In addition to being more complete, it has the advantage of not being written by one of the individuals most directly involved, and for that reason is somewhat more objective. In the majority of this narrative, I have followed the Sandoval report.

145. Many of my details of the Imán revolt and early national brio come from this lengthy and fascinating document; see AHDN, xi/481.3/1690, July 26, 1841.

146. AHDN, xi/481.3/1751, October 20, 1842.

147. AHDN, xi/481.3/1753, December 4, 1842.

148. AHDN, xi/481.3/1751, October 20, 1842.

149. See Terry Rugeley, trans. and ed., *Alone in Mexico: The Astonishing Travels of Karl Heller, 1845–1848* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007), 164.

150. AHDN, xi/481.3/1752, November 16, 1842.

151. AGEY, PE 51, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, January 24, 1843.

152. AHDN, xi/481.3/1752, November 16, 1842.
153. Almost all of this is from Sandoval; AGEY, PE 52, Gobernación, Secretaría de Guerra y Marina, Campeche, October 28, 1843.
154. Two reports exist on this engagement. See AHDN, xi/481.3/1696, February 6, 1843; and AHDN, xi/481.3/1986, December 11, 1843, Sandoval report.
155. HPS, *El independiente*, February 3, 1843, 2.
156. AHDN, xi/481.3/1986, December 11, 1843, Sandoval report; Sandoval insisted that it was Santa Anna himself who ordered a landing on the north coast.
157. The layout of Barbachano's immediate family comes from a power-of-attorney document in ANEY, January 5, 1854, 2-4. One of the político's two grandfathers was Francisco Terrazo, the execution of whose will required Barbachano considerable time and effort; see AGEY, Registro Público de Propiedad (RPP) #2020, September 1, 1842; this massive volume has no page numbers.
158. ANEY, February 5, 1847, 25.
159. Manuel Barbachano y Terrazo, *Vida, usos y hábitos de Yucatán al mediar del siglo XIX* (Mérida: Maldonado Editores, 1986, orig. 1851).
160. HPS, *Siglo diez y nueve*, December 9, 1843, 2-3.
161. *Yucatán en el tiempo*, 1, 1998, 474-75.
162. HPS, *Siglo diez y nueve*, June 6, 1843, 3-4. These lines come from a poem by Juan José Hernández titled "The Comet of 1843."
163. Barbachano's library is inventoried in AGEY, FJ-Civil, box 61, various dates, 1859. He apparently read Spanish, French, and English.
164. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 9, September 17, 1850, 55.
165. Baqueiro, *Ensayo histórico sobre las revoluciones de Yucatán*, 88-89.
166. AGEY, PE 51, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Arzobispado, January 12, 1843.
167. AGEY, PE 51, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Mérida, February 18, 1843.
168. AGEY, PE 51, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Mérida, April 3, 1843.
169. AGEY, PE 52, Gobierno, Correspondencia, April 8, 1843.
170. AGEY, PE 52, Gobierno, Correspondencia, April 11, 1843.
171. AGEY, PE 52, Gobierno, Correspondencia, April 20, 1843.
172. AGEY, PE 51, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, April 2, 1843.
173. HPS, *El independiente*, February 24, 1843, 2-3.
174. AGEY, PE 52, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Correspondencia, Campeche, January 6, 1843.
175. AGEY, PE 51, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, February 21, 1843.
176. AGEY, PE 52, Gobernación, Correspondencia, August 25, 1843.
177. AGEY, PE 52, Gobernación, Correspondencia, February 14, 1843.
178. AGEY, PE 52, Gobernación, Correspondencia, February 24, 1843, April 2, 1843.
179. The only source of information on this episode comes from Baqueiro, *Ensayo histórico sobre las revoluciones de Yucatán*, 95-96 and 98-106, who of-

fers various theories regarding the intellectual author of this crime, without deciding among them.

180. AGEY, FM-Izamal, Book 3, September 17, 1842.

181. HPS, *El independiente*, March 10, 1843, 2.

182. Arturo Güémez Pineda, "La rebelión de Nohcacab: Prefacio inédito de la Guerra de Castas," *Saastun: Revista de cultura maya* 2 (1997): 51–82.

183. AGEY, PE 51, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, January 10, 1843, January 17, 1843.

184. AHDN, xi/481.3/1986, December 11, 1843, Sandoval report. From this point on, my account leans heavily on two sources: the Sandoval report and López de Llergo's own version, published in HPS, *Siglo XIX*, June 10, 1843, 1–3.

185. For information on Vito Pacheco, see Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*, 120–21.

186. AGEY, PE 52, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, April 15, 1843. The threat came through one of De la Peña's officers, Martín de la Señoy Barragán.

187. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 13, August 31, 1841, 24–25.

188. AGEY, PE 51, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Mérida, June 22, 1843.

189. At least three studies dedicated themselves exclusively to exploring different aspects of the ever-tightening land situation in pre-Caste War Yucatán. See Robert W. Patch, "Decolonization, the Agrarian Problem, and the Origins of the Caste War, 1812–1847," in *Land, Labor, and Capital in Modern Yucatán: Essays in Regional History and Political Economy*, ed. Jeffrey T. Bannon and Gilbert M. Joseph (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 51–82; Pedro Bracamonte y Sosa, *Amos y sirvientes: Las haciendas de Yucatán, 1789–1860* (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 1993); and Arturo Güémez Pineda, *Liberalismo en tierras del caminante: Yucatán 1812–1840* (Zamora: Colegio de Michoacán, 1994).

190. AAP, vol. 2, April 5, 1841, 117.

191. On the matters of labor, land, and land rents, see Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*, 123–34; on taxes, 134–41.

192. I summarize here from material previously presented in *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*, 91–116, 154–56, and 169–71. For a more recent exploration of the same ground, see Arturo Güémez Pineda, *Mayas: Gobierno y tierras frente a la acomedita liberal en Yucatán, 1812–1847* (Zamora: Colegio de Michoacán, 2005).

193. HPS, *Los pueblos*, June 6, 1840, 2–3.

194. The hacienda San Buenaventura Popolá, for example, can be found in registries of 1750; see AGEY, RPP, vol. 174, February 3, 1750, 12.

195. I refer principally to Nelson Reed, but the same view prevails in numerous other histories. Incidentally, the word *ladino* was not used here, being an overwhelmingly Central American, and especially Guatemalan, term.

196. Sadly, many factors are working against the historian here. Massive amounts of local records (including church, notary, and ayuntamiento papers)

were destroyed. The Maya peasants who launched the rebellion lived in a largely oral culture. Their Hispanic counterparts in the southeast frontier were not much different, and while better positioned to record their experiences, Hispanics had many reasons to hide the truth, including their own complicity in the early stages of the rebellion. Finally, the principal actors in the early Caste War experience were almost all dead or exiled by 1853, and thus told no tales. That being said, it must be admitted that the origins of the Caste War are reasonably well documented for a nineteenth-century peasant rebellion in a remote province of Latin America.

197. AGEY, PE 42, Justicia, vol. 1, expediente 3, Valladolid, January 7, 1841. A 1911 Caste War memorial article credits Acereto with recruiting area peasants in helping Conservatives win the election of 1831; see HPS, *La campana*, June 17, 1911, 2. The accusation may be true, but the concept was hardly unique in 1820s elections.

198. Details of the case remain unclear. We only know of it through the summary newspaper references of 1843; see HPS, *Siglo XIX*, September 9, 1843, 4; September 16, 1843, 4; December 9, 1843, 4.

199. Trujeque's place of birth can no longer be determined with finality, but he does appear in the 1836 census; see AGEY, PE 3, Censos y Padrones, vol. 1, expediente 12, 1836.

200. AGEY, RPP, vol. 1810, April 1, 1840, 23.

201. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 13, September 25, 1843, 115-16.

202. We find mention of Tihosuco's boundary quarrels with hacienda Honyaxché in AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador #13, May 18, 1843, 105.

203. ANEY, Oficio #5, October 8, 1846, 132-33.

204. CAIHY, Manuscript Books, vol. 160, "Registro de anotaciones de las denuncias de terrenos baldíos," August 6, 1846.

205. The problem of interpreting the events of 1843-47 is complicated by the existence of an anonymous history of the Caste War, one that emphasizes the role of local, and specifically Tihosuco, politics in the war's genesis. The enigmas of this manuscript spin out of two problems. First, the author makes no effort to explain the sources of his information. Second, the text is an unusual mixture of accuracy, purported fact, and patent nonsense. (Regarding the last, the author argues that the pacífico-Santa Cruz split derived from "tribal" hostilities dating back to the differing roles that the Xiu and Cocom played in the conquest.) His account of village politics in relatively remote Tihosuco is suspiciously detailed and far exceeds what was reported even by the jefes políticos of adjoining districts. However, the author does seem to have his finger on certain key dynamics of Tihosuco: the shifting ambitions and loyalties of Antonio Trujeque and Vito Pacheco, the fact that Jacinto Pat was a wealthy and influential Maya, and Pat's and Cecilio Chi's participation in the attempted revolts of 1843 onward. A complete textual analysis is beyond the scope of this study; my own interpretation would be that the author was not a firsthand witness to the events of Tihosuco, but after the war picked up gossip from refugees who had fled Tihosuco for

Mérida. Moreover, the account was written at least twenty years after the war's genesis and probably reflects the garbling of both transmission and memory.

For printed transcription of this document, see Melchor Campos García, ed., *Guerra de castas en Yucatán: Su origen, sus consecuencias y su estado actual, 1866* (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 1997).

206. AGEY, PE 55, Gobernación, September 9, 1844.

207. One of the more detailed recollections of this event appears in CAIHY, Pamphlets, vol. 73, expediente 16, "El coronel D. Juan José Méndez. Estudios biográficos por Pablo Bolio" (Mérida: La Crónica Yucateca, 1907). In the course of the occupation of Valladolid, Méndez was imprisoned by Trujeque and barely escaped lynching.

208. Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry, 169–70*. Two photos of Tabi village appear in Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 101, 106.

209. See the collection of brief letters found in CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 43, expediente 1, February 1–17, 1847.

210. ANEY, February 6, 1847, February 19, 1847, 27–32.

211. The details of Acereto's career appear in the transcripts of his 1851 trial; see AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 19, expediente 2, February 1–6, 1851.

212. The complete transcription of his trial appears in Fidelio Quintal Martín, ed., "Proceso y ejecución de Manuel Ay Tec, Caudillo Campesino de Chichimilá, Yucatán," *Boletín E.C.A.U.D.Y.* 13, 76 (1986): 21–43.

CHAPTER TWO

1. AGEY, PE 65, Justicia, August 1847; for a more extended examination of these confessions, see Terry Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War, 1800–1847* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 178–79.

2. For a useful review of the events and persons of these early days of the Caste War, see Renán A. Gónoga Biachi, "La guerra de castas," in *Valladolid: Una ciudad, una región y una historia*, ed. Renán A. Góngora Bianchi and Luis A. Ramírez Carrillo (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 1993), 207–38.

3. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, May 6, 1850.

4. This view of Maya society is elaborated as "heterarchy," as opposed to hierarchy; see Vernon L. Scarborough, Fred Valdez Jr., and Nicholas P. Dunning, "Introduction," in Scarborough, Valdez, and Dunning, eds., *Heterarchy, Political Economy, and the Ancient Maya: The Three Rivers Region of the East-Central Yucatán Peninsula* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), xiii–xxx.

5. Claudio Novelo is usually described as Bonifacio Novelo's son, even though the 1840 census shows them as separated by a mere thirteen years; no conclusive church or civil registry information exists on this, and there also exists the possibility that he was a younger brother. What is certain is that Bonifacio and María Coronado produced three other children: María Baluina, Canuto, and Hermenegildo. Hermenegildo was born in 1837, much later than the rest, and had completely disappeared by 1840. Canuto too disappeared. This sketch of Novelo's early life was pieced together from baptismal records in AHA, Bautismos of Valladolid, various dates.

6. AGEY, PE 52, Gobernación, Correspondencia, December 1, 1843. This identification remains somewhat tentative, since there is no other evidence to link this particular signature to the José María Barrera of later fame.

7. The only account of Barrera's death is found in the report of Colonel Cirilo Baqueiro, in AHDN, xi/481.3/3505, May 17, 1853. It came from a rebel leader named Javier Flores, who insisted that Barrera had been killed by partisans of rival leader José María Pat in a dispute over gunpowder. Barrera's descendants continued to live in the area of Chan Santa Cruz for many years.

8. See, for example, the capture of Mauricio Belmonte, who was captured in rebel territory, processed, but eventually acquitted, in AGEY, PE 74, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar de Mérida, April 27, 1849.

9. Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán (AHAY), DO, September 23, 1847, Tituc.

10. The sketchy details of this attempted revolt appear in AHAY, DO, December 13, 1847, Bacalar; and December 31, 1847, Bacalar; and in AGEY, PE 65, Gobernación, Milicias Locales of Campeche, November 26, 1847.

11. AB, Records 28, January 18, 1848, 169.

12. AHAY, DO, August 30, 1847, Izamal.

13. AHAY, DO, August 21, 1847, Tixcaltuyú.

14. AHAY, DO, September 14, 1847, Tahdziú.

15. AHAY, DO, September 25, 1847, Ichmul.

16. AGEY, PE 65, Gobernación, September 4, 1847.

17. AGEY, FJ, March 7, 1854, "Documentos que elevarse al supremo gobierno nacional sobre la representación de D. Antonio Trujeque."

18. As recollected in a lawsuit concerning parish tax collections; see AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 40, expediente 8, June 12, 1854.

19. AHAY, DO, November 23, 1847, Sotuta. Chikindzonot fell between October 10 and 13. There was a space of some three months between Tepich and the larger offensive.

20. AGEY, PE 66, Gobernación, "Programa de Indios Sublevados," November 22, 1847.

21. Terry Rugeley, trans. and ed., *Alone in Mexico: The Astonishing Travels of Karl Heller, 1845–1848* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007), 169–70.

22. HPS, *La revista yucateca*, #10, December 1847, 159–60.

23. AB, Records 29, December 4, 1848, 153–55.

24. As argued most forcefully and memorably by Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968).

25. The constant splintering over the matter of violence is an underlying theme of Paul Sullivan's *Xuxub Must Die: The Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatan* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004).

26. This information comes from the recollection of Cornelio Alamillo, many years later; see AGEY, PE 721, Gobernación, October 16, 1911, Mérida. To distance himself from his father, whom the rebels clearly hated, Alamillo assumed his mother's last name—Encalada—and stuck with it to the end of his days. Once he managed to escape, Encalada forgot about Dzac and joined the Yucatecan

army, where he dedicated himself to fighting the insurgents; blood proved thicker than water.

27. Numerous references to this laborious process exist; for one example, see AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, May 11, 1848, recounting the inventory and crating of imágenes from Chapab.

28. Summary accounts of these events appear in AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, May 10, 1848; and Jefatura Política of Ticul, May 24, 1848.

29. Tubucil would probably be considered part of southern Campeche state today but was in those days part of the Guatemalan Petén's administration, for the simple fact that it was easier to walk there from Flores than from Mérida. Generations passed before the Mexican government exercised much control there.

30. *Ladino* is a strictly Central American term. It originally referred to Indians who had come loose from indigenous village culture; by the nineteenth century, it had become the equivalent of "mestizo"; in the present day, it refers to anyone not living the indigenous life. It was not used in Yucatán.

31. AGCA, group B, legajo 28544, expediente 247, December 2, 1848, testimony of Juan Esteban Fuentes, town attorney of San Antonio, who had gone to trade in Bacalar during the first rebel occupation.

32. AGCA, group B, legajo 28544, expediente 247, December 1848, testimony of Patricio Cocom of San Antonio.

33. AGCA, group B, legajo 28544, expediente 247, December 2, 1848, Modesto Méndez's investigation into affairs at Tubucil. This investigation is continued in AGCA, group B, legajo 28549, expediente 7, December 23, 1849. See also Méndez's letter to Jacinto Pat, taking him to task (gently) for meddling in the Petén, in AGNM, Gobernación, box 356, expediente 2, September 4, 1848.

34. A detailed account of Campeche's siege and final capitulation appears in Carlos R. Menéndez, ed., *Para la historia del Imperio en Yucatán* (Mérida: Compañía Tipográfica Yucateca, 1941), located in CAIHY, Books Section.

35. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, April 3, 1848.

36. The source on this is an important but hitherto unknown manuscript found in the Clements Library (CLE), University of Michigan, Yucatecan Collection, titled "Fragmento histórico de la guerra de indios de Yucatán por uno de los jefes que militaron en los primeros años de la misma guerra." Its probable author was Felipe de la Cámara Zavala, who was in a position to know all about the blemishes of the Yucatecan military.

37. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretario General de Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, May 1, 1848. A detailed microhistory of Mérida for the critical years 1848–50 remains to be written, but would almost certainly do much to correct received stereotypes concerning the Caste War experience.

38. See AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, May 10, 25, and 28, 1848.

39. See "Relación que hace el Doctor Don Domingo Campos de su viaje a Yucatán y cuenta que da al público de su piadosa comisión" (México: Vicente García Torres, 1849), in CAIHY, Pamphlets, vol. 6, expediente 22. Campos esti-

mated ten thousand refugees in Campeche alone, although he would hardly have been able to count them.

40. AGEY, PE 65, Gobernación, Correspondencia con los jefes y oficiales militares, año de 1848, January 7, 1848.

41. AGEY, PE 79, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Milicias Locales, November 5, 1850.

42. Notes on the receipt of arms shipments appear in AGEY, PE 65, Gobernación, Correspondencia con los jefes y oficiales militares, año de 1848, various dates.

43. Stories of church abuse at the hands of the army are a running motif for the years 1840–76. For some representative complaints from the early Caste War years, see AHAY, DO, October 9, 1850, Mérida/Tixcacaltuyú; March 15, 1854, Mérida; and August 9, 1876, Sotuta/Mopilá (this last item recounts the story of murdered prisoners of some twenty-seven years earlier).

44. CLE, “Fragmento histórico.”

45. AHAY, DO, October 30, 1850, Mérida.

46. AHAY, DO, March 14, 1852, Ichmul.

47. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, November 22, 1850.

48. AHDN, xi/481.3/3255, January 18, 1851.

49. AGEY, PE 70, Gobernación, Milicias Locales, May 24, 1849.

50. See Guadalupe del C. Cámara Gutiérrez, “Política arancelaria para la destilación y el comercio del aguardiente en Yucatán, 1821–1870,” in *Poder político y control social en Yucatán, siglos XVI–XIX*, ed. Pilar Zabala Aguirre, Pedro Miranda Ojeda, and José E. Serrano Catzim (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2007), 151–85.

51. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, April 13, 1850.

52. Reference to Jacinto Pat’s wartime sugar operations appears in the testimony of Pablo Encalada, who as a young man did forced labor on Pat’s estate, escaped, and later became an important leader of a group of *pacíficos*, or former rebels who traded promises of peace for nearly complete autonomy in the area of what is today southern Campeche and southwest Quintana Roo; see Archivo General del Estado de Campeche (AGEC), *Espíritu del pueblo*, September 24 and 27, 1867.

53. The only approach to alcoholism was to try to fine it out of existence; see the elaborate series of financial penalties in “Proyecto de ley para la supresión de la embriaguez pública d de los progresos del alcoholismo,” in AGEY, PE 287, Gobernación, March 19, 1894, Mérida.

54. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, December 31, 1850.

55. For a sampler of their terrible ailments, see AGEY, PE 50, Gobernación, Milicias, various dates, 1851–52.

56. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, November 18, 1850.

57. As, for example, in the case of Cesario Chavarría; see AGEY, PE 77, Gobernación, Milicias, Ichmul, February 13, 1850.

58. AGEY, PE 89, Gobernación, Milicias, March 19, 1852. See chapter 6 for sample petitions for release from service.

59. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, May 29, 1848.

60. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, October 28, 1850.
61. For unrelieved pathos, see the relatively rare personal letter of Fernando Aguilar, writing to his brother-in-law Alejo Sánchez from Tihosuco, in AGEY, PE 76, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, December 22, 1849.
62. See AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar, various dates, 1849. For some reason, overall army mortality records have not appeared.
63. As happened, for example, to one hapless soldier on a march from Valladolid in 1850; see AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, November 23, 1850.
64. This description of canton affairs comes from AHAY, DO, March 15, 1852, Ichumul.
65. On colonial-era desertion, see Archer, 268–73.
66. AGEY, PE 72, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Comandancia General, July 2, 1849.
67. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política, March 21, 1848.
68. AGEY, FJ-Penal, 9, Mérida, May 12, 1855.
69. AGEY, FJ-Penal, 7, Mérida, February 11, 1855.
70. See the case of the stolen vestments as described in AGEY, DO, July 4, 1856, Bolonchén.
71. AGEY, PE 75, Justicia, Dzidzantún, May 19, 1849.
72. This joke appears in HPS, *El album yucateco*, March 29, 1861, 24.
73. AGEY, PE 281, Milicias, July 29, 1893, Mérida.
74. CLE, “Fragmento histórico.” The three-story building that was the scene of this atrocity still towers over the rest of Tekax.
75. The original copy of Vela’s letter to Alonzo Peón is found in CLE, Yucatecan Papers, November 9, 1849.
76. Despite numerous documents referring to the case, relatively few concrete facts are available. The little we do know comes from AGEY, FJ-Penal, Mérida, June–August 1852, July 14, 1852; AGEY, FJ-Penal, Mérida, January–February 1853, January 29, 1853; and AGEY, FJ-Penal, Mérida, March 7, 1854. See also AHDN, xi/481.3/3255, February 13, 1851, a letter from Manuel Micheltorena that reviews selected events of the previous year.
77. This case comes from Chocholá, a town along the heavily traveled Camino Real between Mérida and Campeche; see AGEY, PE 86, Justicia, Juzgado de Paz Segundo of Chocholá, July 28, 1851.
78. AGEY, PE 89, Gobernación, Guardia Nacional of Champotón, February 26, 1852.
79. AGEY, FJ-Penal, Mérida/Ticul, June 21, 1851.
80. AGEY, PE 70, Gobernación, Milicias Locales, Mérida, July 21, 1848; AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Comandancia Militar, Mérida, August 11, 1849; AGEY, PE 74, Gobernación, Cuartel of Yaxcabá, various dates, 1849.
81. AGEY, PE 71, Jefatura Política of Izamal, July 20, 1849.
82. For sample activities of the jefes in wartime, see AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Motul, March 8, 1849, July 9, 1849, July 17, 1849, and December 7, 1849.

83. As happened in Dzidzantún; see AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Secretario General del Gobierno, December 7, 1849, Mérida.

84. García Rejón held the office from December 11, 1847, until overthrown in early 1853; even then his supporters mounted a campaign, ultimately unsuccessful, to save his job. See HPS, *El regenerador*, March 7, 1853.

85. AGEY, PE 88, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Guardia Nacional, various dates, February–April 1852.

86. AGEY, PE 88, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Guardia Nacional, various dates, February–April 1852.

87. My observation on revolutions' need for disgruntled urban political actors is perhaps a trite truism, but is amply documented in one case study after another; to take one example of comparative study, see James DeFronzo, *Revolutions & Revolutionary Movements*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996). DeFronzo identifies such actors for the cases of Russia, China, Vietnam, Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, and South Africa. The tendency of revolutions to draw from other popular movements is also widely documented; see, for example, the case of radical revolutionary forces of El Salvador in the 1970s analyzed in Charles D. Brockett, *Political Movements and Violence in Central America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 69–96.

88. Numerous reports describe the rebel armies at various stages of development. Three of the best of these are reproduced in Terry Rugeley, *Maya Wars: Ethnographic Accounts from Nineteenth-Century Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001). See “The Yucatecans Give Us a Very Bad Name,” 82–87 (originally AB, Records 96, November 15, 1867); “Active, Agile, Acute, and Generally Magnificent Marksmen,” 88–94 (originally from the University of Texas at Austin, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Library [UTA], García Collection, G559, Mérida, June 1878); and “From the General on Down,” 95–98 (originally from Tulane University, Yucatecan Collection, 265, Box 2, Folder 14).

89. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, October 15, 1850.

90. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, October 24, 1850.

91. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, April 5, 1850. On the effectiveness of the palenquetas, see the testimonies of Juan Bautista Vásquez and Pedro Martín Toledano, in AGEY, PE 74, Gobernación, Junta Calificadora of Yaxcabá, December 22, 1849.

92. See the testimony of Padre Manuel Vázquez in AHAY, DO, August 16, 1848, Teya.

93. The Caste War rebels' first experience with cannons came with their capture of Peto in February 1848, when they seized several mortars and mortar carriages; rather than attempt to make use of what to them were undoubtedly foreign weapons, they burned them. See AGEY, PE 65, Gobernación, Correspondencia con los jefes y oficiales militares, año de 1848, report of February 15, 1848. Second, the rebels also came into possession of several cannons in Bacalar in April 1848; accounts describe non-Mayas (“several white men”) attempting to provide instruction in the use of artillery; see AB, Records 29, July 17, 1848, testimony of Pedro Garma. However, experiments with artillery continued periodically thereafter. Colonel Pedro Acereto's failed 1860 invasion of Chan Santa Cruz left sub-

stantial quantities of abandoned arms, including cannons; see the anonymous report found in the University of Texas Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Library, García Collection, G559, Mérida, June 1878; an English translation of this report appears in Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, “Active, Agile, Astute, and Generally Magnificent Marksmen,” 88–94, with the item in question found on page 93. See also the report of Domingo Mendíburu, recently arrived in Sisal from Belize, in AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Sisal, October 5, 1865. Rebels had apparently purchased the cannon from Belizean arms traders, but abandoned it on the beach because it weighed too much to carry.

94. Paul Sullivan, *Unfinished Conversations: Mayas and Foreigners Between Two Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991; orig. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 61–62, describes how rebel holdouts in the community of Xcaacal Guardia in the 1920s came to believe that archaeologist Sylvannus Morley possessed aircraft, machine guns, and explosives, and that an alliance with him could provide them with these weapons.

95. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, October 14, 1850.

96. AHDN, xi/481.3/3255, January 23, 1851; AHDN, xi/481.3/3257, February 4, 1851.

97. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, December 31, 1850, report of captured equipment.

98. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, April 13, 1850, report of captured sugar-refining equipment.

99. One such forge turned up on a march on Cruzchen in 1850; see AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, November 23, 1850.

100. Chan Santa Cruz’s military structure is described in numerous primary and secondary materials. See, for example, José María Rosado’s *A Refugee of the War of the Castes Makes Belize His Home: The Memoirs of J. M. Rosado*, ed. Richard Buhler (Belize: Belize Institute for Social Research and Action, 1970); the majority of this memoir is reproduced in “‘Not as a Prisoner but as One of the Family’: The Captivity Narrative of José María Rosado,” in Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, 68–78.

101. AGCA, group B, legajo 28544, expediente 247, December 2, 1848; this material comes from Modesto Méndez’s investigation into the Tubucil uprising, described above.

102. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, December 31, 1850, report of captured equipment.

103. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, September 25, 1849.

104. AGEY, PE 75, “Disposiciones y decretos,” May 14, 1849, 33.

105. This particular item appears in Paul Eiss’s reconstruction of the Hunucmá region, *In the Name of El Pueblo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

106. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 23, January 5, 1849, 3. Sadly, the paper trail on José Chan starts and ends here.

107. CAIHY, Manuscripts, legajo 43, expediente 7, October 11, 1847; expediente 13, October 14, 1847.

108. AGEY, PE 69, Gobernación, Consejo del Estado, February 5, 1848.

109. AGEY, FJ-Penal, September 10, 1847, Ixil.

110. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 8, September 20, 1847, 83–84.

111. ANEY, August 27, 1847, 220–21.
112. ANEY, July 10, 1847, 151–53; ANEY, Oficios #5, vol. 12, July 6, 1855, 146–47.
113. See Eiss, *In the Name of El Pueblo*, chapter 2.
114. AGEY, FJ 366, “Diligencias,” December 24, 1900. A tip of the historical hat to Andrea Vergara for calling this document to my attention.
115. AGEY, PE 68, Gobernación, Milicias Locales, Hocabá, July 4, 1848.
116. ANEY, September 27, 1847, 85–88; October 18, 1842, 125–26.
117. ANEY, October 23, 1847, 101.
118. ANEY, October 23, 1847, 100.
119. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, miscellaneous dates, 1848.
120. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, April 15, 1850.
121. AHAY, DO, Bolonchén, September 5, 1850.
122. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Ticul, May 10, 1848.
123. For a long time I was skeptical of pre-Caste War millenarianism, instead believing that the phenomenon only appeared with the post-1848 downturn in rebel fortunes. But two sources suggest otherwise. First, the Austrian traveler Karl Heller came across a September 1847 document that specifically linked the slain Ay Tec with Jacinto Canek; see Rugeley, *Alone in Mexico*, 198. Second, Colonel Felipe de la Cámara Zavala, who oversaw Ay’s execution and burial, makes reference to area Mayas thinking of him as “presumed king”; see Felipe de la Cámara Zavala, “Las memorias de D. Felipe de la Cámara Zavala,” *Diario de Yucatán*, August 12, 1928. If this were the case, then the initial Caste War may have erupted out of fury over the execution of the man believed to have been a messiah.
124. I draw on the analysis of popular support for insurgents in Kalyvas, 124–32.
125. See the 1846 population statistics of José M. Regil and Alonso Manuel Peón, “Estadística de Yucatán,” *Boletín de la Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística* 3 (1853): 281.
126. We find fleeting mention of José May, described as “captain of Indian hidalgos,” in AGEY, FM-Izamal, vol. 2, May 21, 1836, 20.
127. See, for example, the papers conferring hidalgo status on one José Fermín Tzuc, in AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, May 10, 1848.
128. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Consejo del Estado, April 19, 1848.
129. The jefe político of Izamal explores this matter in AGEY, PE 76, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Izamal, May 5, 1850.
130. Sheldon Annis, *God and Production in a Guatemalan Town* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 3–11; David Stoll, *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 178–79.
131. See AGEY, PE 75, “Disposiciones y decretos en respuesta a exposiciones y solicitudes,” 1849.

132. AGEY, PE 75, "Disposiciones," February 20, 1849, 13.
133. AGEY, PE 75, "Disposiciones," various dates and pages.
134. Complaints of this sort are numerous; see the petition of Mayas from rancho Sabacché, in AGEY, PE 74, Gobernación, Yaxcabá, April 24, 1849.
135. AGEY, PE 70, Gobernación, Milicias Locales, Hocabá, December 19, 1849.
136. AGEY, PE 79, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Izamal, Xocchel, November 2, 1850.
137. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Tecoh, June 12, 1848.
138. AGEY, FM-Ticul, legajo 6, expediente 5, September 26, 1856.
139. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, August 1, 1848.
140. AGEY, PE 76, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Izamal, June 25, 1850.
141. See AGEY, PE 73, Poblaciones, various dates and locations, 1849, but particularly the communities of Cusumá, Dzidzantún, Huhí, Kantunil, Libre Unión, Tekantó, Santa Elena, Tixkochok, Tunkás, Xanabá, and Xocchel.
142. AGEY, PE 75, "Disposiciones y decretos en respuesta a exposiciones y solicitudes," April 12, 1849, 25; March 22, 1850, 107; April 17, 1850, 11.
143. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política, April 2, 1848.
144. AGEY, PE 103, Gobernación, September 2, 1856, Valladolid.
145. AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política, July 13, 1849.
146. AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Motul, July 9, 1849. The need for fagina was so great that their offer was readily accepted.
147. For example, see AGEY, PE 76, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Izamal, May 5, 1850, in which six peons of Tixkokob petition to be allowed to return to their hacienda.
148. Allen Wells and Gilbert M. Joseph, *Summer of Discontent, Seasons of Upheaval: Elite Politics and Rural Insurgency in Yucatán, 1876–1915* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).
149. Peter F. Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's Nation State: Guerrero, 1800–1857* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Guy P. C. Thomson, with David LaFrance, *Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Juan Francisco Lucas and the Puebla Sierra* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999).
150. This information comes from AGEY, PE 77, Gobernación, Milicias, Espita, June 4, 1850, describing the initial junta screenings of 1848. See also the case of Yaxcabá, in AGEY, PE 74, Gobernación, Junta Calificadora de Yaxcabá, 1849.
151. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, August 5, 1850, Micheltorena to the minister of defense; AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Espita, December 10, 1849.
152. AGEY, PE 74 and 76, Gobernación, Juntas Calificadoras, various dates, 1849; AGEY, PE 81, Secretaría General de Gobierno, December 10, 1849.
153. AGEY, PE 81, Gobernación, Guardia Nacional, September 20, 1851.
154. AGEY, PE 86, Iglesia, Tixkokob, July 29, 1851.

155. AGEY, PE 50, Gobernación, Milicias, October 10, 1851.

156. AGEY, PE 82, Gobernación, Comandancia General of Valladolid, June 24, 1851.

157. As happened with a rebel from Kaua who presented along with a group of people from Tekom; see CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 43, expediente 48, December 19, 1849.

158. This memorable quote comes from General Manuel Micheltorena's insightful overview of the Yucatecan situation and is found in AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, August 5, 1850. As remarked later in the text, Micheltorena manifested a certain sympathy for the Maya rebels.

159. AHAY, DO, December 10, 1851, Valladolid.

160. AHAY, DO, May 22, 1850, Bolonchénticul.

161. For some sample presentado lists, see AGEY, PE 70 and 74, Gobernación, Milicias Locales, various dates and places.

162. Cirilo Baqueiro, commander of the southern Campeche forces, used presenters for all of these assignments; see AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, August 31, 1850.

163. On the tendency of presentados to retain family cohesiveness, see AGEY, PE 70, Gobernación, Milicias Locales, March 6, 1849; and a report on presenters in the central and eastern region found in AHDN, xi/481.3/3858, May 6, 1851.

164. For example, a presentados census of Izamal, 1849, reveals the presence of Doroteo Jorge, of Santa Ana de Mérida; see AGEY, PE 74, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar, April 23, 1849; another Santa Ana resident, Joaquín Canché, presented in Valladolid; see AGEY, PE 70, Gobernación, Milicias, March 7, 1849.

165. AGEY, PE 82, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar, February 19, 1851.

166. As happened in Hopelchén; see AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, April 14, 1850.

167. AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Secretario General de Gobierno, Comandancia Militar, July 11, 1849, Mérida.

168. As did Petrona Catzim, who arrived from the Oriente without family and managed to attach herself to the house of Pedro Cramary, who took her in as a servant but developed bonds of friendship toward the young woman; see Catzim's will in ANEY, March 27, 1854, 63.

169. AGEY, PJ, box 003-00, expediente 012399, February 4, 1853.

170. AHAY, DO, March 14, 1859, Hopelchén.

171. The report on Temax comes from Padre José Joaquín Osorio, who would have known; see AHAY, DO, Temax, May 21, 1850.

172. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, April 18, 1850.

173. AGEY, PE 75, "Disposiciones," April 16, 1851, 147; June 12, 1851, 151.

174. References to the policy are common; see CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 43, expediente 47, December 7, 1849.

175. AGEY, PJ, box 003-005, expediente 012478, February 12, 1856.

176. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 43, expediente 5, September 20, 1847.

177. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 43, expediente 19, October 25, 1847.

178. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Consejo del Estado, February 26, 1848.

179. AGEY, PE 72, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar of Yucatán, August 9, 1849, Mérida.

180. See the report of General López de Llergo in AGEY, PE 65, Gobernación, Correspondencia con los jefes y oficiales militares, año de 1848, March 15, 1848.

181. This is precisely what Santa Anna had done during the U.S. invasion.

182. This is precisely what Santa Anna had done in Mexico City to help pay for the 1847 national defense. For samples of Yucatecan curas' angry complaints, see the letter from Padre Domingo Escalante in AHAY, DO, March 7, 1848, Dzidzantún; of Padre José Hurtado, in AHAY, DO, March 8, 1848, Bécál; of José Bacilio Abreu, in AHAY, DO, March 15, 1848, Calkiní. Barbachano's recognition of wrongdoing appears in AHAY, DO, April 15, 1848, Mérida.

183. The fact is reflected in virtually all the church's internal correspondence, for stories of woe abound in the letters of rural curas. For examples, see AHAY, DO, February 27, 1850, Kopomá; March 9, 1850, Hechelchakán; March 26, 1850, Izamal; April 3, 1850, Telchac; April 6, 1850, Dzutás; March 16, 1850, Chikindzonot; April 22, 1850, Tixcaltuyú; April 22, 1850, Temax; April 28, 1850, Tixkokob; May 23, 1850, Valladolid; June 1, 1850, Calotmul; June 3, 1850, Carmen; June 20, 1850, Cenotillo; January 20, 1850, Mérida; April 6, 1851, Dzitás; June 28, 1851, Sacalum; July 8, 1851, Izamal; and July 11, 1851, Mocochoá.

184. AHAY, DO, June 9, 1850, Izamal.

185. Claudio Vadillo López, *La región de palo de tinte: El partido de Carmen, Campeche, 1821-1857* (Campeche: Fondo Estatal para la Cultura y las Artes, 1994), 169.

186. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política, March 21, 1848.

187. AGEY, FJ-Civil, March 11, 1854. These papers, an inventory of the estate of a certain José León Montalvos, killed in a raid on Tiholop, reveal that the rebels mostly left behind heavy items like beehives, furniture, and sacks of corn. These passed into the hands of the subprefect of Sotuta.

188. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Consejo del Estado, February 28, 1848. Abundant complaints of military seizures and abuses appear in AGEY, PE 71, "Disposiciones y decretos en respuesta a exposiciones y solicitudes," various dates and pages, 1849. These are mere summary notations of complaints and their tentative resolution and do not provide details. Still, the overall direction of popular complaints against the military is obvious.

189. AGEY, PE 71, Jefatura Política of Campeche, August 10, 1849.

190. See, for example, the offer that circulated in Tihosuco and Ichmul, in AGEY, PE 70, Gobernación, Milicias Locales, March 14, 1849. As with so much concerning the slave trade in captured Mayas, details of the matter of paying soldiers for each prisoner remain obscure.

191. AGEY PE 72, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar of Yucatán, August 4, 1849, Mérida. The tax extortion case comes from Dzilam, where soldiers who resisted payment found themselves imprisoned. Presumably the local collector had a police force that was able to pick them off in small numbers.

192. AGEY, PE 68, Gobernación, "Solicitud," January 18, 1848.

193. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Tesorero General, January 15, 1861, Mérida.

194. AGNM, Gobernación, box 394, expediente 4, April 5, 1851, Barbachano to the Ministro del Estado, (vainly) seeking emergency funds.

195. For a representative case, see AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Motul, March 8, 1849.
196. AGEY, PE 67, Gobierno, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política, March 24, 1848.
197. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, June 29, 1863, Sacalum.
198. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, November 1850.
199. AGEY, PE 75, "Disposiciones y decretos," February 28, 1852, 178.
200. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, April 11, 1850.
201. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, August 5, 1850. These points come from the lengthy and detailed report of Manuel Micheltorena, who had ample opportunity to observe Castellanos's methods firsthand.
202. The 1856 property registers place him at \$20,550, third-largest urban property owner in the state; see AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, various dates, 1856.
203. AGEY, PE 75, Gobernación, Decretos, March 1, 1849, Mérida.
204. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 44, expediente 45, May 20, 1853.
205. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 9, March 22, 1851, 22-24.
206. Examples abound; for a representative case, see the petition of Getrudis Hernández, in AGEY, PE 68, Gobernación, Secretaría de Guerra y Marina, August 12, 1848.
207. As, for example, happened with María Inez Cupul, widow of Bernaldo Tsul; see AGEY, PE 77, Gobernación, Milicia de Hocabá, June 24, 1850.
208. See, for example, the case of Catalina Pinzón, in AGEY, PE 77, Gobernación, Milicia, Mérida, June 12, 1850.
209. For examples of the one-quarter payment system, see AGEY, PE 71, Jefatura Política of Izamal, January 30, 1849; and AGEY, PE 74, Gobernación, Tesorero General, various dates and places. Barbachano had a gentlemanly streak toward women, refusing, for example, to allow a war wife to be evicted until she could find alternate housing; see AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar, July 2, 1849, Mérida.
210. Javier Rodríguez Piña, *Guerra de castas: La venta de indios mayas a Cuba, 1848-1861* (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1990), 102-3, 125, 132-33, 140-45; Jorge Victoria Ojeda, "Los indígenas mayas del servicio doméstico en Cuba, 1847-1853," *Chacmool: Cuadernos de Trabajo Cubano-Mexicanos*, vol. 1, 2003, 335-66.
211. AGEY, PE 98, Gobernación, November 11, 1854.
212. AGEY, PE 119, Gobernación, Capitanía de Sisal, December 18, 1859; and Gobernación, Decretos y Oficios, December 27, 1859.
213. AHAY, DO, November 29, 1856, Mérida.
214. AHDN, xi/481.3/2850, July 29, 1848.
215. AHDN, xi/481.3/2892, November 27, 1848.
216. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, October 12, 1949; a series of letters from López de Llergo in this same group, dated from July onward, solicit help.
217. AHDN, xi/481.3/1793, November 1842; AHDN, Cancelados, "Micheltorena, Manuel," xi/iii/2-267, various dates and page numbers.
218. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, November 30, 1849.
219. AHDN, xi/481.3/1111, July 7, 1850.

220. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, August 5, 1850, report of Manuel Micheltorena.

221. The only source on this often-repeated story is Serapio Baqueiro, *Ensayo histórico sobre las revoluciones de Yucatán desde el año 1840 hasta 1864*, vol. 2 (Mérida: Manuel Heredia Argüelles, 1879), 103–4.

222. The account of Pat's Bacalar gamble comes from Mayas who presented at Becanchén in May 1849; see AGEY, PE 74, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar of Tekax, May 22, 1849. Pec's authorship in the assassination must be presumed by the fact that he assumed control once Pat was gone.

223. The story of the Pat shield appears in AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, June 21, 1850. Miguel Barbachano mentions the now-lost Jacinto Pat papers, which might have shed much light on the early Caste War, in his correspondence with Mexico's Secretario de Gobernación; see AGNM, Gobernación, box 356, expediente 2, February 6, 1848.

224. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 44, expediente 16, August 9, 1850, José Eulogio Rosado to José Canuto Vela.

225. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, April 11, 1850. On military recovery at San Antonio Xocneceh, see Terry Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men: Religion and Popular Cultures in Southeast Mexico, 1800–1876* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 161–64.

226. See, for example, the report of Indians fleeing from Tiholop and Tixcaltuyú, in AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Comandancia Militar of Mérida, July 11, 1849.

227. See the brief if revealing statement of Nicolás Koh, of the Tizimín region, in AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 23, October 28, 1852, 206. The second and more comprehensive testimony comes from José María Echeverría of Huhí, captured in 1853 and taken to Chan Santa Cruz because of his ability to read, write, and speak both Spanish and Maya languages; see AGEY, PE 104, Jefatura Política of Izamal, November 8, 1856.

228. Eduardo López, prominent landowner of Hunucmá, negotiated this treaty in Belize City in 1853; the original appears in CLE, Yucatecan Papers.

229. See complaints in AGEY, PE 77, Gobernación, Milicia, various dates and places, 1850.

230. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, September 14, 1850.

231. AHDN, xi/481.3/3255, September 16, 1850.

232. The details of this revolt, and much of our knowledge of the early career of Agustín Acereto, are found in AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 19, expediente 2, January 18, 1851.

233. AGEY, FJ-Penal, March 30, 1851; AGEY, FJ-Penal, August 20, 1851, Valladolid.

234. AHDN, xi/481.3/3255, January 31, 1851.

235. AHDN, xi/481.3/3255, September 16, 1850; AHDN, xi/481.3/3258, May 10, 1851.

236. Micheltorena's will, dictated six days before his death, is found in AHDN, Cancelados, "Micheltorena, Manuel," xi/iii/2–67, September 1, 1853, 6–7ff.

CHAPTER THREE

1. AHAY, DO, July 26, 1855, Sacalaca.
2. AHAY, DO, May 25, 1851, Chichimilá.
3. *Grandes biografías de México*, vol. 5 (México: Océano, 1995), 298; AHDN, xi/481.3/294, October 3, 1840; AHDN, xi/481.3/2147, 1846; ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 11, May 24, 1854, 90–91; AHDN, Cancelados, “Díaz de la Vega, Rómulo,” xi/iii/1–65, various dates and folios; John S. D. Eisenhower, *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846–1848* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 81–84.
4. See report from José Eulogio Rosado in AHDN, xi/481.3/3259, August 25, 1851. The soldiers’ plan was to steal the army payroll and disappear; Rosado captured and executed the ringleaders.
5. AHDN, xi/481.3/3150, October 8, 1851, Díaz’s report from Mérida. Díaz’s original orders appear in AHDN, xi/481.3/3255, April 16, 1851; his first dispatch from Mérida appears in AHDN, xi/481.3/3256, June 8, 1851.
6. AGEY, PE 89, Gobernación, Milicias, April 7, 1852, Sacalaca.
7. This comes from Díaz’s own analysis, in AHDN, xi/481.3/3300, February 17, 1852.
8. AHDN, xi/481.3/3300, May 11, 1852; for a partial reproduction of this document, see “‘Rejoicing Among All the Inhabitants’: Rómulo Díaz de la Vega Enters Chichanhá,” in Terry Rugeley, *Maya Wars: Ethnographic Accounts from Nineteenth-Century Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 60–61.
9. AGEY, PE 91, Iglesia, Izamal, January 17, 1852.
10. AHDN, xi/481.3/3505, May 17, 1853.
11. Accounts of this second raid on Chan Santa Cruz are terse and unrevealing; see AHDN, xi/481.3/3300, June 28, 1852.
12. AHAY, DO, October 30, 1852, Valladolid.
13. Admiration for Díaz de la Vega’s style emerges quite clearly in the anonymous “Fragmento histórico,” in CLE, Yucatecan Collection, in contrast to the negative portrayals common in later Liberal-authored accounts.
14. AGEY, PE 65, Gobernación, August 23, 1852. See also supporting decree in *Colección de leyes, decretos, ordenes y demás disposiciones de tendencia general, expedidos por el poder legislativo del Estado de Yucatán* (EA), ed. Eligio Ancona, 5 vols. (Mérida: El Eco del Comercio, 1882), April 1, 1851, 59.
15. Rosado had been among the most strident peninsular Conservatives, tirelessly devoted to the centralist rule and to the iron fist of Rómulo Díaz de la Vega. However, his untimely death in the 1853 cholera epidemic left his family in poverty. Conservative friends banded together in defense of the widow, Manuela Fajardo, and the four children, setting up a group of trustees that included Rómulo Díaz de la Vega himself to collect and administer a fund that eventually reached some twenty-five hundred pesos in silver coins; see ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 11, May 31, 1854, 101–7. As this anecdote suggests, political loyalty was intensely personal and practical.

16. AHDN, xi/481.3/3303, February 13, 1853, Mérida. Proclamations from Espita and Valladolid in support of the revolt appear in HPS, *El regenerador*, February 28, 1853, and April 4, 1853, respectively.

17. AHDN, xi/481.3/3505, May 24, 1853.

18. For years the only source on this event was the pro-Díaz account given in Baqueiro, II, 445–50. A more revealing version appears in AHDN, Gobernación (unclassified), 1853–55, February 16, 1853. The anti-conspiracy law of August 1 is described in Díaz's post-installation broadside; see AHAY, DO 1.118, August 28, 1854, Mérida.

19. The principal details of the revolt appear in AHDN, xi/481.3/3300, November 5, 1852, and November 16, 1852. The connection between Buenaventura and José Pérez is documented in the former's will; see ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 8, July 29, 1848, 36–37. Buenaventura also led a conflictive life. Although cura, he maintained a relationship with a certain Cecilia Palma, with whom he had seven children, who later inherited the priest's estate. The cura Pérez also administered Palma's rancho Yokpita, which he bought for her from his brother José. It appears that his life was a difficult one, for in his will he expressed fear of "reviving arguments." Concerning the first revolt of José Pérez, see AGNM, Justicia, expediente 383, July 31, 1850, 149–74.

20. In his will, for example, Molas mentions that he had lent the Mexican general twelve ounces of gold; see ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 10, November 1, 1853, 131–32.

21. See the report of Rómula Díaz de la Vega in AHDN, xi/481.3/3300, November 16, 1852.

22. See the intestate proceedings of Manuel Cepeda and Narcisa Peraza in AGEY, PE 127, Justicia, Intestados, various dates, 1861.

23. I rely on Paul Garner's distinctions of Liberal factions; see Garner, *Porfirio Díaz* (Harlow: Longman Press, 2001), particularly chapter 3.

24. We find him among a group of forty-five, headed by Gregorio Cantón, who supported the Díaz de la Vega coup; see AGNM, Gobernación (unclassified documents), 1853–55, February 13, 1853; and AHDN, xi/481.3/3303, February 13, 1853. Protests against the coup appear in this same collection, February 16, 1853.

25. AGEY, PE 57, Justicia, November 15, 1853; the extorted individuals demanded their money back after the revolt's end, but never received it.

26. Correspondence from parish priests (AHAY, Decretos y Oficios) provides a faithful chart of the epidemic's devastation; see October 4, 1853, Chocholá; October 5, 1853, Mocochoá; October 8, 1853, Izamal; October 10, 1853, Tixkokob; October 12, 1853; Dzilam; October 19, 1853, Teabo; January 4, 1854, Dzidzantún; and January 7, 1854, Tekax.

27. AGEY, FJ-Penal, Cacalchén, October 24, 1854. Concerning the social and political ramifications of disease during this period, see Heather L. McCrea, "Diseased Relations: Epidemics, Public Health, and State Formation in Nineteenth-Century Yucatán, Mexico" (PhD diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 2002).

28. AGEY, PE 93, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política de Espita, November 8, 1853.

29. Regarding the shortage of sugar harvest labor in Peto, see 1853 correspondence included in AGEY, FJ-Civil, "Demanda de Don Gerónimo Ruiz de Teabo, contra bienese del finado Don Felipe Rosado, por cantidad de pesos," 1855.

30. AHAY, DO, Ixil, February 7, 1858. In this letter, cura Manuel Osorio of Ixil recounts how the Molas supporters took over the public granary of Chicxulub.

31. AHAY, DO, October 11, 1853, Tunkás; October 13, 185, Hunucmá; November 23, 1853, Espita; November 23, 1853, Mérida.

32. AHAY, DO, September 29, 1853, Mérida.

33. There are various versions of this movement, of which I offer only a brief sketch here. For more details, see AHDN, xi/481.3/3698, October 10, 1853.

34. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 8, November 13, 1853, 131-32. Molás's wife, Gregoria Pérez, was already dead, and the couple had no children. It seems that Molás enjoyed a special friendship with Juan Imán; in addition to designating him executor, Molás also left him Reino. As executors, he designated Juan, Inez, and Santiago Imán.

35. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 10, November 13, 1853, 131-33; AGEY, FJ, September 22, 1854; AGEY, FJ, September 25, 1855, November 6, 1855.

36. AHDN, xi/481.3/3694, September 28, 1853.

37. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 11, March 16, 1854, 111-12; ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 11, May 24, 1854, 90-91.

38. AHDN, xi/481.3/3475, December 14, 1853 (Izamal); December 15, 1853 (Sotuta); December 16, 1853 (Mérida, Ticul); December 17, 1853 (Halachó, Peto); December 19, 1853 (Tizimín); December 20, 1853 (Motul); December 23, 1853 (Tekax); January 2, 1854 (Bishop Guerra, the cathedral hierarchy, and some forty-nine priests and deacons); and Díaz's accompanying cover letter of January 3, 1854.

39. See Santa Anna's correspondence in AHDN, xi/481.3/4442, February 14, 1854.

40. AHAY, DO, February 26, 1852, Mérida; AHAY, DO, November 19, 1852, Mérida; AHAY, DO, Mérida, November 23, 1853; November 4, 1854.

41. Regarding his protection of the church staff, see Díaz's communiqué to Bishop Guerra in AHAY, DO, January 23, 1854, Mérida. As for his protection of clerical property, see AHAY, DO, March 15, 1852, Peto, when the army converted the rectory in Peto into a military hospital, paying eight pesos per month as rent.

42. Regarding the placing of chaplains, see Díaz's letters to Bishop Guerra in AHAY, DO, September 6, 1851, Peto; September 15, 1851, Peto; January 13, 1852, Tihosuco; and October 14, 1852, Mérida. Barbachano had made similar gestures (for example, in AHAY, DO, August 28, 1850, Mérida), but without much conviction.

43. For example, the Motul ayuntamiento was back in business by July; see AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Motul, July 27, 1849. Orders for the abolition of the jefaturas políticas appear in HPS, *El regenerador*, March 7, 1853, reproducing an order of February 25, 1853; this particular order came from one of the pre-Díaz interims, Crescencio José Pinelo, but clearly reflected the general's interests and plans. Among the first to go were Antonio García Re-

- jón of Mérida and Juan José Méndez of Espita; see HPS, *El regenerador*, March 7 and 14, 1853, respectively.
44. EA, vol. 1, November 23, 1853, 169–80; for the short version of Díaz's bombastic title, see the broadside found in AHAY, DO, January 4, 1854, Mérida. The complete version appears in CAIHY, Decrees, August 2, 1854.
 45. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 4, legajo 4, expediente 4, July 2, 1856.
 46. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 13, April 18, 1858, 60–62.
 47. AGEY, PE 101, Gobernación, "Lista nominal de varones de 16 a 60 años que viven en haciendas y ranchos del partido de Valladolid," October 11, 1855.
 48. ANEY, November 18, 1862, 188–91.
 49. AHAY, DO, October 11, 1853, Sisal de Valladolid.
 50. AHAY, DO, May 22, 1854, Kikil; June 1, 1854, Mérida.
 51. AHAY, DO, June 16, 1854, Kikil.
 52. AGEY, PE 91, Iglesia, September 27, 1852.
 53. AHAY, DO, September 16, 1853, Sotuta; on the origins of Libre Unión, see Terry Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War, 1800–1847* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 80. The town is still worth a visit for its dramatic cenote. On Kaua, see AHAY, DO, September 2, 1853, Valladolid; October 24, 1853, Valladolid; and January 14, 1854, Kaua.
 54. AGEY, PE 89, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, Ticul, July 8, 1852.
 55. AGEY, PE 93, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política, September 9, 1853.
 56. AGEY, PE 106, Gobernación, Correspondencia, September 2, 1856.
 57. AHAY, DO, November 20, 1864, Hopelchén.
 58. AHAY, DO, November 29, 1852, Tihosuco; and November 30, 1852, Tihosuco.
 59. AHAY, DO, November 30, 1852, Tihosuco.
 60. AGEY, PJ, box 003–01, expediente 012425, October 23, 1853. On San Antonio Xocnech, see Terry Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men: Religion and Popular Cultures in Southeast Mexico, 1800–1876* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), chapter 5.
 61. AGEY, PJ, box 003–01, expediente 012443, July 1, 1854.
 62. AGEY, PE 47, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Consejo del Estado, March 31, 1848, June 3, 1848.
 63. AGNM, 1853 report.
 64. AGEY, PE 110, Gobernación, "Invento de Trapiche," December 9, 1857.
 65. AGEY, PE 98, Gobernación, December 23, 1854.
 66. AGEY, PE 109, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Seibaplaya, June 12, 1857; AGEY, PE 112, Gobernación, "Relación," March 22, 1857.
 67. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 25, March 24, 1851, 7.
 68. AGEY, PE 88, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Peto, May 17, 1852; AHAY, DO, October 19, 1852, Sisal Puerto; and AHAY, DO, May 31, 1853, Tixkokob.
 69. AGEY, PE 113, Iglesia, March 21, 1857.
 70. AHAY, DO, May 3, 1853, Sacalum.

71. AGEY, PE 91, Iglesia, January 5, 1852.
72. AGEY, PE 102, Iglesia, "Producto de los curatos," 1855.
73. AHAY, DO, December 12, 1848, Kikil.
74. AHAY, DO, January 30, 1853, Tizimín.
75. AHAY, DO, March 11, 1852, Kikil; October 11, 1852, Valladolid; March 11, 1852, Kikil; "Libro Copiador," in AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 15, expediente 20, February 25, 1852.
76. AHAY, DO, June 17, 1853, Tihosuco.
77. AHAY, DO, September 18, 1851, and April 14, 1853, Bacalar.
78. AHAY, DO, June 27, 1862, Belize.
79. AHAY, DO, May 17, 1851, Calkiní. For other letters documenting the quest to recover lost imágenes, see AHAY, DO, May 13, 1849, Cenotillo; April 26, 1851, Ticul; August 19, 1851, Tecoh; August 19, 1851, Mérida; September 8, 1851, Valladolid; October 20, 1851, Sacalaca; and December 16, 1851, Campeche.
80. AHAY, DO, July 7, 1850, Bolonchén. The cura in question was Manuel Antonio Sierra O'Reilly, brother of statesman and author Justo Sierra O'Reilly and an energetic figure and entrepreneur in his own right. His long and complicated career remains understudied and promises to reveal a great deal about his time.
81. Felipe de la Cámara y Zavala, "Relación circunstanciada de la expedición practicada por el Gra. D. Rómulo Díaz de la Vega contra los indios sublevados en el interior de Yucatán, con otras memorias particulares del que escribe, que comienzan desde el 15 de diciembre de 1851," *Diario de Yucatán*, various dates, 1928-1929; AHAY, DO, October 17, 1854, Peto.
82. AHAY, DO, July 9, 1861, Peto.
83. AHAY, DO, May 2, 1865, Tihosuco.
84. This author has also heard a legend that the crosses found their way to Cozumel, although I have never seen any documentation for this, much less the crosses themselves.
85. ANEY, November 24, 1852, 297-99.
86. ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 10, January 15, 1853, 6-7.
87. AGEY, FM-Ticul, legajo 4, expediente 4, February 24, 1856.
88. AHAY, DO, September 28, 1854, Acanceh.
89. ANEY, May 27, 1855, 55-56, will of Santiago Herrera.
90. ANEY, July 5, 1858, 103-4.
91. AGEY, FJ-Civil, Huhí, October 17, 1851, "Solicitud de D. Rodrigo y D. Francisco de Paula Zalazar pidiendo baja de gravamen de su hacienda Buenaventura."
92. AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 19, expediente 59, August 8, 1851. Tabi had been valued at fifty-one thousand pesos before the war; by 1851 its book value fell to thirty-two thousand.
93. AGEY, FJ-Civil, Mama, April 24, 1851, "Diligencias promovidas por Don Guadalupe Espadas para que se nobren dos peritos que evaluen la hacienda San Rafael Ucum."
94. AGEY, FJ-Civil, Sanahcat, May 28, 1851. Mortgage reductions for Motul appear in AGEY, PE 91, Hacienda, December 6, 1852, Motul, but provide only the adjusted value, not the original.

95. AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, 1856, Valladolid.
96. AGEY, FJ, March 27, 1851.
97. AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, “Fincas Rústicas, Ticul Partido,” 1856.
98. AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, January 17, 1860.
99. AGEY, JF-Civil, November 2, 1854, Tekax, “Testamentaria del finado Don José Joaquín Saenz, que fue vecino de Tekax.”
100. AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, December 14, 1860; Jefatura Política of Tizimín, December 14, 1860.
101. AGEY, PE 217, Gobernación, Teabo, May 15, 1881.
102. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 25, April 28, 1851, 17.
103. See the cases of José León Montalvos of Tiholop and Anastacio Puc of Tacchibichén, in AGEY, FJ-Civil, March 11, 1854.
104. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Seyé, October 12, 1866.
105. AGEY, PE 130, Gobernación, Mérida, July 15, 1862.
106. Paul Sullivan, *Xuxub Must Die: The Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatán* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), passim, explores in some detail the economic and political careers of the Urclay family.
107. See, for example, AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 47, expediente 37, September 20, 1849, Ticul.
108. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 25, April 14, 1851, 14.
109. AGEY, PE 87, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Seibaplaya, December 2, 1852.
110. AGEY, PE 141, Hacienda, various dates, 1864.
111. AGEY, PE 98, Gobernación, Prefectura of Izamal, August 22, 1854.
112. AGEY, PE 98, Gobernación, Prefectura of Valladolid, October 28, 1854.
113. AGEY, FM-Ticul, vol. 4, expediente 4, July 2, 1856.
114. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Campeche, April 30, 1848.
115. AHAY, DO, April 2, 1848, Sabancuy.
116. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Campeche, April 18, 1848.
117. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Correspondencia, April 18, 1848.
118. AGEY, PE 67, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Campeche, April 30, 1842.
119. AGEY, PE 84, Gobernación, Hopelchén, February 24, 1851.
120. AGEY, PE 89, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, July 8, 1852, Seibaplaya; AGEY, PE 87, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Carmen, February 13, 1852; February 14, 1852; December 19, 1852; Claudio Vadillo López, *La región de palo de tinte: El partido de Carmen, Campeche, 1821–1857* (Campeche: Fondo Estatal para la Cultura y las Artes, 1994), 92.
121. AGEY, PE 85, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Guardia Nacional, July 10, 1851.
122. AGEY, PE 68, Gobernación, Testamentero, July 18, 1848, August 12.

123. AGEY, PE 54, September 7, 1850, 125.
124. AGEY, PJ, box 003-00, expediente 012393, various dates, 1853, Tekax.
125. ANEY, July 10, 1854, 64-65; July 11, 1854, 65. As an additional example, see the contact between Maya laborers and Tomás Aznar Pérez of Peto, in ANEY, October 22, 1851, 84-85.
126. ANEY, February 26, 1850, 5-6; AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Pasaportes, various dates, 1848-51.
127. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, April 14, 1850.
128. As happened, for example, in Bolonchénticul; see AGEY, PE 46, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Ayuntamientos, February 5, 1851.
129. To take only one of many examples, see the complaint of peasants of Tahmek concerning the unpaid compulsory labor required to restore the village church: not the victim of Caste War, but simple neglect (AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador #23, June 6, 1851, 153). Hernando Piña, jefe of Sotuta, freed Mayas from roadwork to rebuild homes of the town; see AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Sotuta, October 30, 1860. The same applied in Tizimín; see AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Tizimín, July 25, 1849.
130. ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 10, March 3, 1853, 34-37.
131. AGNM, Gobernación, vol. 403, "Documentos pertenecientes a la memoria que el Secretario del Despacho presenta a las Honorables Cámaras del Estado en el primero de enero de 1852."
132. ANEY, Oficio #5, 12, December 12, 1854, 4-5.
133. The López family itself, most significantly his daughter Petronila, remained in Mérida with her husband, Nicolás María Ferrer. José Tiburcio's wife, Saturnina Ortiz, remained in Yucatán and inherited his estate; see ANEY, Oficio #7, vol. 8, August 14, 1862, 244. On reading "The Creoles," a Works Projects Administration history of Louisiana, I was struck by the similarities to Mérida society; see Lyle Saxon, Edward Dryer, and Robert Tallant, *Gumbo Ya-Ya: Folk Tales of Louisiana* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1945), 138-78.
134. AGEY, FJ-Penal, Mérida, April 3, 1854.
135. AHAY, DO, Calkiní, June 25, 1867. Padre Glori (at times Glory) was exceptionally rigorous in collecting obventions in the area of Bacalar and Chichanhá, and for that reason had a more than passing responsibility in generating Caste War discontent in this critical area; see Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*, 104-5.
136. AGEY PE 83, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Maxcanú, February 7, 1851.
137. AGEY, FJ-Penal, Mérida, January 5, 1856.
138. AB, Record 36, December 30, 1850, 123-32.
139. AGEY, PE 101, Gobernación, Prefectura, February 23, 1855.
140. British Foreign Office (BFO, accessed through microfilm of the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California), Records 39-5, March 13, 1858.
141. AGEY, PE 101, Gobernación, Prefectura of Tekax, February 26, 1855.
142. AGEY, PE 102, Justicia-Mérida, December 13, 1864. The commission was headed by padres Manuel Antonio Sierra O'Reilly and Cosme Bobadilla. In

reality, they planned to lobby *all* Yucatecan exile communities, but San Fernando was one of their principal targets.

143. AGEY, PE 101, Gobernación, "Comición en Belize," April 9, 1855.

144. AB, Records 36, December 30, 1850, 123-32.

145. Ibid.

146. AB, Records 39, April 15, 1852, 205.

147. AB, Records 72, January 20, 1862, 91.

148. AHAY, DO, May 1, 1858, Izamal.

149. Ibid.

150. The story of Rev. Richard Fletcher's attempt to bring Wesleyan light to the dark heart of Corozal and Orange Walk appears in the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Archives beginning in the late 1850s and continuing with varying degrees of success for the next thirty years. While Fletcher's dream of a theologically correct Belize failed, he did produce one important ethnography, which is reproduced in its entirety in Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, "The Methodist and the Mayas: Richard Fletcher's Ethnography," 103-14. The original document dates from December 30, 1867.

151. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 23, July 8, 1851, 155.

152. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 12, May 6, 1857, 79.

153. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 12, April 19, 1855, 92-93.

154. BFO, 39-3, July 16, 1857, 209-18; 13 August 1857, 235-44.

155. AGCA, group B, legajo 28549, expediente 55, April 8, 1850.

156. AHAY, DO, January 22, 1851, Dzibalchén.

157. AB, *British Honduras Colonist and Belize Advertiser (BHCBA)*, I, 21, December 7, 1867.

158. Ibid.

159. AGCA, group B, legajo 28551, expediente 135, October 22, 1850, Flores, Modesto Méndez to Venancio Pec.

160. AGCA, group B, legajo 28544, expediente 247, December 2, 1848; my account of Itzá's tenure comes from the testimony of Juan Esteban Fuentes.

161. AHDN, xi/481.3/3300, May 11, 1852, General Rómulo Díaz de la Vega's report to the minister of defense.

162. AB, Record 58, October 6, 1857, 408.

163. AGCA, group B, legajo 28624, expediente 270, December 5, 1870.

164. AGCA, group B, legajo 28564, expediente 166, October 31, 1854.

165. See Archivo Parroquial del Obispado de Campeche (APOC), "Casamientos y casamientos de la montaña de Sur en el año de 1863," along with the accompanying volume of 1865-67. In these years, marriage records, the only known index of the pacíficos' points of origin, overwhelmingly point to Tekax, Oxkutzcab, Xul, Nohcacab, Akil, Ticul, and the enormous hacienda Tabi. These same records include very few people of local birth. There was also an overwhelming tendency to marry someone from the same town, suggesting that the new immigrants hived off into factions based on place of origin. The pacíficos apparently continued to think of themselves in older and more familiar terms.

166. AGCA, group B, legajo 28614, expediente 115, May 2, 1868.

167. AGCA, group B, legajo 28633, expediente 98, September 20, 1872.
168. AGCA, group B, legajo 28633, expediente 98, September 20, 1872.
169. AGCA, group B, legajo 28594, expediente 1, August 2, 1859.
170. AGCA, group B, legajo 28564, expediente 183, November 29, 1854.
171. AGCA, group B, legajo 28564, expediente 183, November 29, 1854.
172. Salvador Valenzuela, "Informe sobre el departamento del Petén, dirigido al Ministerio de Fomento," *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia* 24, 4 (1951), reproduction of his report of July 7, 1879, 398. See also Grant D. Jones, "Levels of Settlement Alliance among the San Pedro Maya of Western Belize and Eastern Petén, 1857-1936," in Jones, ed., *Anthropology and History in Yucatán* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 148, for a discussion of indigenous authority among the Belizean and Guatemalan refugee communities.
173. To take only one of the many examples, see AGCA, Jefatura Política of Petén 1868-69, December 28, 1868, Petition of the estanqueros of San Luis.
174. On Arredondo's gruesome death, see CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 47, expediente 55, October 24, 1865; expediente 58, October 28, 1865; and expediente 23, October 30, 1865.
175. On the Petén cattle industry, see Valenzuela, 1879, 398-99, 400-401; AGCA, group B, legajo 28584, expediente 75, January 24, 1861; AGCA, group B, legajo 28623, expediente 132, May 4, 1870.
176. AGCA, Jefatura Política of Petén, miscellaneous dates, 1873.
177. AGCA, group B, legajo 28584, expediente 75, January 24, 1861.
178. AGCA, group B, legajo 28623, expediente 132, May 4, 1870.
179. AGCA, group B, legajo 28607, expediente 406, October 30, 1866.
180. This tidbit on local custom comes from the long and breathless report of padre Amado Belizario Barreiro, found in AHAY, DO, September 15, 1858, Flores. Barreiro's report, as well as his unfortunate career in the Petén, are analyzed in detail in Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, chapter 7.
181. AHAY, DO, February 2, 1862, Sabanas.
182. Modesto Méndez himself explored Tikal in 1852. Concerning Méndez's exploration of Tikal, see Franz Blom, "Colonel Modesto Méndez," *Antropología e historia de Guatemala* 7, 2 (1955): 3-16. Méndez himself listed his discovery of Tikal in a review of his accomplishments as corregidor; see AGCA, group B, legajo 28577, expediente 45, March 22, 1859.
183. AGEY, PE 87, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Motul, April 21, 1852. Cepeda Peraza had established four such vigías: in Telchac, Dzilam, and Santa Clara, each with a construction of four towers.
184. AHAY, DO, July 11, 1848, Cozumel.
185. AGEY, PE 78, Población, "Padrón que comprende todos los hombres que forman el pueblo de San Miguel en la isla de Cozumel."
186. AHAY, DO, November 22, 1849, Mérida (from *Boletín oficial*, 98, 1849).
187. As briefly described by the town's cura; see AHAY, DO, December 29, 1849, San Miguel de Cozumel.

188. See AHAY, DO, December 29, 1849, San Miguel de Cozumel. There are three significant histories of Cozumel island. *Historia de Cozumel*, by Michel Antochiw and Alfredo César Dachary (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1991), provides a synoptic view of the island's history, while Michel Antochiw's *Cozumel: Padrones y poblamiento* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998) offers a summary account. Martín Ramos Díaz's engaging *Cozumel: Vida porteña, 1920* (Mexico City: Universidad de Quintana Roo, 1999) focuses primarily on the early twentieth century.

189. AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, "Solicitud," January 1856.

190. AGEY, PE 125, Justicia, Juzgado of Mérida, January 7, 1860.

191. AGEY, PE 78, Gobernación, "Aduana de Cozumel," January 31, 1850.

192. AGEY, PE 125, Justicia, Juzgado of Cozumel, January 7, 1860.

193. The problems of marriage on the islands are described in AHAY, DO Dzidzantún, June 28, 1864.

194. AGEY, PE 86, Justicia, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, July 1, 1851.

195. AGEY, PE 124, Gobernación, Capitanía del Puerto, Sisal, October 31, 1860.

196. AGEY, PE 127, Gobernación, Consejo de Gobierno, Mérida, January 4, 1861.

197. AGEY, PE 99, Hacienda, "Explotación de guano," Sisal, miscellaneous dates, 1854. Santiago Méndez also noted rumors of guano poaching on the nearby Isla de Contoy; see AGNM, Gobernación [unclassified], February 7, 1856.

198. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 3, March 6, 1851, 104-5.

199. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 27, July 3, 1856, 81-82.

200. AGEY, PE 99, Justicia, Juzgado de Mérida, November 18, 1853.

201. AGEY, PE 86, Justicia, Juez de Paz of Dolores, February 12, 1851.

202. AGEY, PE 157, Gobernación, "Quejas," May 24, 1866.

203. AGEY, PE 283, Milicia, September 15, 1893, Holbox.

204. ANEY, March 19, 1862, 73-75.

205. AHDN, xi/481.3/1954, December 26, 1842.

206. Emilio Rodríguez Herrera, *Legislaturas campechanas: Compendio histórico (1861-1998)* (Campeche: Colección El Congreso, 1999), 72-75.

207. AHDN, xi/481.3/2914, June 5, 1850.

208. AGEY, PE 87, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Carmen, May 7, 1852; May 18, 1852.

209. See report of José Rosario Gil, in AHDN, xi/481.3/3366, December 12, 1853.

210. This vivid description of Carmen politics comes from its cura, Padre José María Clarain, in AHAY, DO, March 13, 1854, Carmen.

211. AHDN, xi/481.3/5585, April 17, 1856, report of governor Santiago Méndez on the history of Carmen.

212. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, "Decretos," October 1863.

213. The problem of wartime identity is best known through the case of Martin Guerre, in which a medieval French wanderer successfully assumed the identity of

the lost *Guerre* for several years, only to be found out and executed by the authorities. See Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

214. AGEY, FJ-Penal, box 11, September 29, 1855, Mérida.

215. Like that forged by Alejandro Barrera, for one hundred pesos; see AGEY, FJ-Penal, 1863–64, December 19, 1864, Mérida.

216. AGEY, FJ-Penal, September–December 1861, November 29, 1861, Tekax.

217. AGEY, FJ-Penal, September 22, 1856, Mérida; see also the case of Felipe Castro, in AGEY, FJ-Penal, January 9, 1857, Mérida.

218. As happened in Abalá; see AGEY, FJ-Penal, July 3, 1862, Abalá.

219. AGEY, FJ-Penal, March 11, 1857, Mérida.

220. AGEY, FJ-Penal, March 5, 1857, Baca.

221. AGEY, FJ-Penal, November 22, 1867, Mérida.

222. AGEY, FJ-Penal, January 11, 1858, Mérida.

223. AGEY, FJ-Penal, box 6, February 3, 1854, May 17, 1857, Dzilam.

224. AGEY, FJ-Penal, July 18, 1857, Campeche.

225. This was particularly true of Pedro Ampudia; see expedientes contained in AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 4, legajo 4, expediente 3, 3 March 1855; and AGEY, FJ-Penal, August 24, 1856, Valladolid; August 29, 1856, Mérida. For further information on Yucatecan gambling, see Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 94–96.

226. This tidbit of terminology comes from the counterfeiting trail of Santiago Fuentes; see AGEY, FJ-Penal, August 25, 1873, Maní.

227. AGEY, PE 101, Gobernación, Prefectura-Tekax, April 24, 1855.

228. An interesting rundown of currency problems appears in a jefe político's report in AGEY, PE 71, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Motul, July 27, 1849.

229. AGEY, FJ-Penal, June 23, 1858, Mérida.

230. AGEY, FJ-Penal, August 7, 1868, Mérida.

231. AGEY, FJ-Penal, October 21, 1855, Mérida.

232. To take only a few examples, see AGEY, FJ-Penal, September 7, 1857, Mérida; AGEY, FJ-Penal, September 13, 1858, Izamal; and AGEY, FJ-Penal, "Causa instruída a Guadalupe Soriano y Vicente Ramírez por presunciones de falsificación de moneda y complicidad a María Concepción Heredia," March 28, 1859. Cases persist into the 1880s (see AGEY, PE 217, Gobernación, March 2, 1881, Mérida), and probably a great deal beyond.

233. As happened with José Cian of Chemax; he sought exemption from military service for being over sixty, but his baptismal papers had been destroyed during the exodus of 1848. See AGEY, PE 268, Gobernación, April 22, 1891, Valladolid.

234. AHAY, DO, March 31, 1853, Izamal. The comment is from Padre José Canuto Vela, just returned from negotiations with Maya rebels.

235. AHAY, DO, July 28, 1856, Valladolid.

236. AHAY, DO, June 20, 1852, Telchac; August 29, 1852, Kopomá. Complaints about increasing cohabitation on the haciendas can be found in many letters throughout this same collection.

237. The two different attitudes emerge in the report of Padre Doroteo Rejón of Cozumel, in AHAY, DO, March 11, 1852, Cozumel.

238. AHAY, DO, July 2, 1851. See also the case of Juan de la Cruz Cab and María Balam, in AHAY, DO, December 11, 1851, Valladolid; the marriage confusions on the hacienda Kisch'en, near Muxupip, in AHAY, DO, circa August 17, 1851, Motul.
239. AHAY, DO, December 11, 1865, Cantamayec. Similar cases appear in AHAY, DO, April 25, 1852, Calkiní.
240. AGEY, FJ-Penal, 23, March 2, 1857, Campeche.
241. Tut's unorthodox career is documented in AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 19, expediente 9, July 15, 1851, and September 20, 1851.
242. See Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 181.
243. AHAY, DO, January 22, 1851, Dzibalchén.
244. AHAY, DO, August 5, 1858, Belize.
245. AGEY, FJ-Penal, 7, January 5, 1855.
246. AGEY, FJ-Penal, 24, April 4, 1856, Mérida.
247. Most of what is known of this individual comes from "El señor D. Francisco Martínez de Arredondo y Valletto. Apuntes biográficos por Felipe Pérez Alcalá" (Mérida: Revista de Mérida, 1913), in CAIHY, Pamphlets, vol. 76, expediente 8. Francisco Martínez de Arredondo's will appears in ANEY, January 20, 1854, 5-8. A tip of the historical hat to Howard Cline, who invented the phrase "spirit of enterprise" in regard to early Yucatecan entrepreneurs.
248. AGEY, PE 40, Censos y Padrones, vol. 3, expediente 52, Mérida, April 15, 1841. For more on Peraza's career, see Chapter 4.
249. AGEY, FJ-Civil, January 28, 1858, "Testamentaria de la senora Tomas Peraza"; AGEY, FJ-Civil, March 16, 1859, "Facultad concedida al curador del menor Jose Arredondo para que haga uso de una suma de su haber materno."
250. ANEY, March 28, 1862, 47-49; ANEY, Oficio #5, October 24, 1864, 198.
251. AGEY, FJ-Penal, March 6, 1862, Mérida; AGEY, PE 94, Justicia, Militar, April 21, 1862.
252. AHAY, DO, August 23, August 25, and October 18, 1863; AHAY, DO, October 1, 1862, Guatemala; Flores; AGEY, Justicia, 72B, September 2, 1864.
253. For the price tag on this expensive if largely meaningless delegation, see AGNM, Gobernación, box 511, expediente 11, February 20, 1865. For a translation of the pacíficos' ornate speech before Maximilian, see " 'This Flower of All Things Beautiful': A Speech to the Emperor," in Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, 117-18; the original appeared in HPS, *El periódico oficial*, February 15, 1865, 3.
254. The story of Arredondo's gruesome end appears in CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 47, expediente 46, April 2, 1865; 54, October 17, 1865; and 55, October 24, 1865.
255. On the cult of San Antonio Xocneceh, see Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, chapter 5.
256. AGEY, FJ-Penal, August 11, 1855, Sisal.
257. AGEY, FJ-Penal, July 23, 1857, Campeche.
258. AGEY, FJ-Penal, May 15, 1862, Valladolid.
259. AGEY, FJ-Penal, October 2, 1862, Mérida.
260. AGEY, FJ-Penal, October 10, 1848, Campeche.

261. AGNM, Justicia 424, October 24, 1853, 249–64.
 262. In addition to the case of Osorio, see the trial papers of counterfeiter Dorotea Pech, for example; see AGEY, FJ-Penal, October 21, 1855, Mérida.
 263. AGEY, FJ-Penal, September 2, 1851, Carmen.
 264. AGEY, FJ-Penal, January 2, 1855, Mérida.
 265. AGEY, FJ-Penal, August 25, 1862, Mérida.
 266. AGEY, FJ-Penal, March 3, 1856, Carmen.
 267. ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, vol. 3, August 29, 1877, no page numbers. For a translated reproduction of Atanasia Ku's will, see " 'I Commend My Body to the Earth': A Poor Maya's Will," in Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, 153–54.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. See Terry Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men: Religion and Popular Cultures in Southeast Mexico, 1800–1876* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), chapter 2.
2. *Yucatán en el tiempo*, III, 1998, 591–92.
3. Barbachano died intestate; the inventory of his property appears in AGEY, FJ-Civil, box 61, March 5, 1860. The exact Spanish phrase is *la política resulta*.
4. AHA, Libro de Entierros, vol. 31, Sagrario, December 16, 1859, 46; the joke about Barbachano appears in HPS, *La burla*, January 20, 1861, 96.
5. Numerous studies explore the origins, aims, and methods of the midcentury Liberal movement. See Robert J. Knowlton, *Church Property and the Mexican Reform, 1856–1910* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976); Richard N. Sinkin, *The Liberal Reform, 1855–1876: A Study in Liberal Nation-Building* (Austin: University of Texas Press, Institute of Latin American Studies, 1979); and Charles Berry, *The Liberal Reform in Oaxaca, 1856–76: A Microhistory of the Liberal Reform* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981).
6. The revealing lists of Díaz supporters are found in AHDN, xi/481.3/3698, November 11 and 27, 1854. Information on Díaz's later downfall appears in AHDN, xi/481.3/5355, April 18, 1856.
7. AHDN, xi/481.3/5339, September 28, 1856.
8. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 4, legajo 4, expediente 3, May 26, 1855; the original instruction to celebrate the Immaculate Conception appeared on December 8, 1854.
9. AGEY, FJ-Penal, November 15, 1855, Mérida. Alvarez agreed to ostracize Barbachano, since despite the latter's seconding the Ayutla revolt, Barbachano was accused of being too close to the fallen Santa Anna.
10. AHDN, xi/481.3/4663, November 13, 1855.
11. AGEY, PE 104, Gobernación, Subdelegación, Valladolid, July 1, 1856.
12. As Méndez himself tartly expressed in AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 27, December 31, 1856, 140–41. For additional exploration of these issues, see José Enrique Serrano Catzim, "Iglesia y reforma en Yucatán (1856–1876)" (thesis, Facultad de Antropología, Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 1998, Mérida), 15–18.

13. AGEY, FM-Ticul, vol. 4, expediente 4, October 1, 1856.
14. As an example of such accusations, see the letter of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada to Governor Méndez, in AHAY, DO, October 11, 1856, Mérida.
15. AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Jefatura Política de Valladolid, January 17, 1860.
16. On western Mexico's pre-Reform prosperity, see Margaret Chowning, *Wealth and Power in Provincial Mexico: Michoacán from the Late Colony to the Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 208–210.
17. This dire report comes from Santiago Méndez, in AHDN, xi/481.3/4820, December 15, 1855.
18. AGEY, PE 112, Gobernación, "Impuesto," April 16, 1857.
19. AGEY, PE 106, Gobernación, Tesorería General, November 4, 1856; AGEY, PE 106, Gobernación, Correspondencia, November 2, 1856.
20. AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, "Censos de fincas rústicas y urbanas," 1856.
21. AHAY, DO, February 7, 1858, Ixil.
22. AHAY, DO, August 18, 1863, Tixcacalcupul.
23. José E. Serrano Catzim, "Iglesia y reforma en Yucatán, 1856–1876" (thesis, Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, Mérida, 1998), 18.
24. AHAY, DO, October 2, 1856, Mérida, Santiago Méndez to Bishop Guerra.
25. Information on corporately held funds appears in the elaborate breakdown titled "Capitales impuestos manifestados por sus propietarios o administradores," found in AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 7, legajo 9, expediente 6, 1856.
26. David McCreery, *Rural Guatemala, 1760–1940* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 24–27.
27. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 7, legajo 9, expediente 6, 1856.
28. AHAY, DO, March 13, 1865, Tekax.
29. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, August 6, 1861, Mérida.
30. Knowlton, *Church Property and the Mexican Reform*, 76–77.
31. *Ibid.*, 95–96.
32. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Tesorería General, August 2, 1861, Mérida.
33. ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 12, January 24, 1857, 1–12.
34. For example, we find Padre Escalante, the cura of Umán, buying the ruined estate Kanisté, outside of Dzidzantún (AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 7, expediente 13, April 3, 1852); but this was clearly an exception to the overall currents of property ownership.
35. AGEY, PE 80, Gobernación, April 25, 1853.
36. Examples of these contracts are found in ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 12, April 21, 1855, 94–95; May 3, 1855, 97–99; May 8, 1858, 99–102; May 9, 1855, 102–4; and May 10, 1855, 104–5.
37. ANEY, April 28, 1859, 3–5.
38. ANEY, July 25, 1864, 116–18. The entity in question was a partnership between Manuel and Andres Urselay and Francisco Solís Bolio, created three years earlier. See also the unhappy end to the partnership between Darío Galera and Luis Pérez in AGEY, FJ-Civil, April 28, 1860.
39. AGEY, FJ-Civil, July 13, 1858.

40. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 12, July 23, 1855, 156–58.
41. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 12, July 11, 1855, 148–50.
42. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 13, January 9, 1857, 5–8.
43. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 4, legajo 4, expediente 5, December 20, 1857.
44. AGEY, PE 104, Jefatura Política, Peto, various dates, May–September 1856.
45. AGEY, PE 104, Jefatura Política of Mérida, July 10, 1856.
46. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, January 29, 1861.
47. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Sotuta, January 26, 1861.
48. Pamela Voekel, *Alone Before God: The Religious Origins of Modernity in Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 36–39.
49. AGEY, PE 121, Iglesia, Mérida, November 9, 1859.
50. AGEY, PE 128, Gobernación, Registro Civil, various towns and dates, 1861.
51. For more details, see the comprehensive list of instructions in AGEY, FM, Ticul, box 4, legajo 4, expediente 5, April 23, 1857.
52. AHAY, DO, May 7, 1859, Champotón.
53. AGEY, PE 121, Iglesia, November 23, 1859, Tekantó.
54. On the separation of the Petén, see Rugeley, *Wonders and Wise Men*, chapter 7.
55. AGEY, PE 121, Educación, August 29, 1859, Dzemuł.
56. AGEY, PE 111, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, Tizimín, March 27, 1857.
57. AHAY, DO, December 9, 1852, Mérida.
58. See AHAY, DO, March 15, 1858, Hopelchén; and AHAY, DO, May 8, 1875, Xcanhá. For a published translation of the latter, see “‘The Beautiful and Sacred Principles That Religion Teaches’: A Letter from the *Pacificos del Sur*,” in Terry Rugeley, *Maya Wars: Ethnographic Accounts from Nineteenth-Century Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 128–30.
59. AHAY, AT 15, January 27, 1866, February 21, 1866, and August 20, 1866. For published translations of these reports, see “‘Strange to the Century in Which We Live’: Three Accounts of Life Among the *Pacificos*,” in Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, 123–27.
60. AHAY, DO, October 21, 1857, Hoctún.
61. AHAY, DO, October 2, 1856, Carmen.
62. AHAY, DO, February 27, 1858, Tahdziú.
63. AGEY, PE 111, Gobernación, May 23, 1857, Hunucmá.
64. AHAY, DO, March 20, 1865, Tixméuac. The author of these words, one Manuel Mezo Vales, seemed destined to suffer. During the initial months of the Caste War, he had been trapped in Tzucacab; Jacinto Pat forced him at machete point to pray over the body of Pat’s son, killed in combat.
65. AHAY, DO, September 11, 1856, Izamal.
66. AGEY, FJ-Penal, November 24, 1865, Chicbul.
67. AHAY, DO, November 1, 1855, Mérida.
68. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, February 8, 1865, 2–3. For information on the pamphlet’s revival, see Chapter 5.
69. AGEY, FM-Espita, vol. 6, February 3, 1863.

70. AGEY, PE 139, Gobernación, "Renuncia," November 14, 1864.
71. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador vol. 23, November 30, 1850, 114.
72. AGEY, PE 79, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política, February 25, 1850.
73. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Motul, January 16, 1861.
74. AGEY, PE 75, "Disposiciones," April 6, 1850, 185.
75. AGEY, FJ-Penal, July 30, 1856, Nunkiní. Chan was eventually removed, but not for being a peon.
76. AGEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 12, May 12, 1857, 79–89. The sale price (four hundred pesos) suggests either that it was small or that Cuá was hard up for cash, for well-developed haciendas tended to run at two thousand pesos and upward.
77. AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, "Solicitud," 1856.
78. ANEY, Oficio #7, vol. 11, July 20, 1865, 21–22.
79. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 14, January 21, 1860, 10–11.
80. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, Tizimín, August 22, 1861.
81. AHAY, DO, January 15, 1853, Opichén.
82. AHAY, DO, January 2, 1852, Campeche.
83. AGEY, PE 120, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Espita, December 6, 1859.
84. AGEY, Fondo Justicia, Penal, January 5, 1856, Mérida.
85. HPS, *El eco del oriente*, January 9, 1860, 1.
86. Typical in this regard is the behavior of the batab of Ekpetz, an original Caste War town. He faithfully passed along presenters and information to the local juez. See AGEY, PE 93, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política, August 11, 1853.
87. As did the cacique of Chikindzonot; see AGEY, PE 87, Gobernación, Secretaría General de Gobierno, Jefatura Política of Sotuta, September 16, 1852.
88. AHAY, DO, October 12, 1852, Valladolid. One thinks of the Salvadoran army's execution of innocent civilians, described in Mark Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote: A Parable of the Cold War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993); and Leigh Binford, *The El Mozote Massacre: Anthropology and Human Rights* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996). The massacre took place after the Salvadoran army's Atlacatl Battalion returned from a day spent in vain pursuit of armed guerrillas.
89. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Hunucmá, October 15, 1866.
90. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política de Mérida, July 18, 1865. Even this role appears to have suffered a certain ethnic dilution, for in the last days of the empire, the capitanes de hidalguía were not necessarily themselves Maya, at least judging by the not-always-reliable index of surnames; see AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Mérida, October 3, 1866.
91. AGEY, PE 110, Gobernación, "Caciques," January 24, 1857; Terry Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War, 1800–1847* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 110–12.

92. AGEY, PE 109, Gobernación, Jefatura Política, March 23, 1857.
93. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 23, July 9, 1850, 91.
94. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 23, October 29, 1852, 207.
95. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, September 11, 1861; AGEY, PE 127, Gobernación, "Agencia del ministro de fomento de Mérida."
96. ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 10, February 2, 1853, 19-20; January 17, 1853, 10-15.
97. ANEY, May 15, 1853, 41.
98. ANEY, August 6, 1862, 170.
99. AGEY, FJ-Penal, June 30, 1856, Nunkiní.
100. AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 7, expediente 31, March 4, 1852, Sudzal.
101. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 23, May 5, 1852, 145.
102. AGEY, FJ-Penal, October 24, 1854, Cacalchén.
103. AGEY, FJ-Penal, October 18, 1854, Tekax.
104. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 27, December 31, 1856, 140-41.
105. AGEY, FJ-Penal, November 15, 1852, Tetiz.
106. AGEY, FJ-Penal, , September 20, 1856, Hunucmá.
107. Their complaints appear in AGEY, PE 75, 114, Exposiciones y Decretos, April 15, 1853.
108. AGEY, PE 159, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Baca, February 1, 1859.
109. AGEY, PE 115, Iglesia, "Seminario Conciliar de Mérida," August 7, 1856, other dates.
110. AHAY, DO, March 14, 1854, Mérida.
111. AHAY, DO, March 27, 1854, Oxkutzcab; March 28, 1854, Ticul.
112. AHAY, DO, March 29, 1854, Ichmul.
113. AHAY, DO, April 1, 1854, Sacalum.
114. AHAY, DO, April 3, 1854, Cenotillo.
115. AHAY, DO, April 20, 1854, Dzitás.
116. AHAY, DO, March 16, 1854, Mérida.
117. Most reports on sacristans show a Maya majority or totality; to take only three examples, see AHAY, DO, March 24, 1854, Ixil; March 27, 1854, Oxkutzcab; and March 30, 1854, Umán. In addition to these and the communities cited in the following five notes, see AHAY, DO, March 30, 1854, Muna; March 30, 1854, Tekantó; April 1, 1854, Sacalum; April 1, 1854, Telchac; April 3, 1854, Tunkás; April 4, 1854, Acanceh; April 6, 1854, Cansahcab; April 10, 1854, Espita; April 11, 1854, Calotmul; April 17, 1854, Mérida; April 19, 1854, Tecoh; April 19, 1854, Hunucmá; April 24, 1854, Conkal; May 2, 1854, Peto; and May 6, 1854, Tekax.
118. AHAY, DO, April 4, 1854, Kopomá.
119. AHAY, DO, March 28, 1854, Ticul.
120. AHAY, DO, April 20, 1854, Izamal.

121. AHAY, DO, April 22, 1854, Tixkokob. The two individuals accused were, respectively, Coronado Zulú and Bacilio Canul.
122. AHAY, DO, March 30, 1854, Mérida.
123. AHAY, DO, June 29, 1872, Mama.
124. AHAY, DO, January 6, 1859, Tixcaltuyú.
125. This unusual story appears in AHAY, DO, November 5, 1862, Valladolid.
126. AHDN, xi/481.3/5383, December 11, 1856; 4035, January 23, 1857.
127. See *Yucatán en el tiempo*, vol. 1, 477. His (extant) novel is titled *Los misterios de Chan Santa Cruz*.
128. Serapio Baqueiro, *Ensayo histórico sobre las revoluciones de Yucatán desde el año 1840 hasta 1864*, vol. 3 (Mérida: Manuel Heredia Argüelles, 1878, 1879), 31-33, 34-35, 47-48, 49-50, 55-56, 96-97.
129. As with so much of Campeche history, this episode has not received the scrutiny that it merits; for a pithy overview of events, see Carlos Justo Sierra, *Breve historia de Campeche* (México: Colegio de México, 1998); and José Manuel Alcocer Bernés, Ernesto Alonso Encalada Cardoso, Martín Enrique Rodríguez Mendoza, "Ignacio Comonfort es Presidente de México," in *Enciclopedia histórica de Campeche*, vol. 3, ed. Román Piña Chan (Mexico City: Gobierno Constitucional del Estado de Campeche, 2003), 243-65.
130. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 13, June 13, 1857, 56-57. It is not clear if Echánove was now juez de paz or simply a private oligarch protesting on behalf of friends.
131. He received the appointment from none other than acting president Miguel Miramón, later to die beside Maximilian at Cerro de Campanas; see AHDN, xi/481.3/7423, November 7, 1859. Curiously, there is little evidence of any consciousness of the Reform War in the correspondence of the Yucatecan clergy. This violent conflict, which raged in the years 1857-59, became harshly anticlerical, in part because priests of central Mexico supported the Conservative coup. In Yucatán, the furious winds that stirred the Reform War had dwindled to unpleasant breezes.
132. AHDN, Cancelados, "Martín Francisco Peraza," xi/1112-1014, various dates and folio numbers; HPS, *La independiente*, January 10, 1843, 1; AHAY, DO, June 8, 1848, Mérida (sample correspondence of Peraza as secretary of war); and CAIHY, Libros, "Una página ignorada del General Martín Francisco Peraza," in Carlos R. Menéndez, ed., *Cuadernos de historia: Hombres y sucesos de otros tiempos*, vol. 8 (Mérida: Compañía Tipográfica Yucateca, 1939), 27-31. The invasion in question was of Tampico and was led by José Antonio Mejía.
133. A copy of this amnesty appears in AHAY, DO, January 18, 1858, Mérida. On support for Peraza, see AHDN, xi/481.3/6623, various dates, April 1858; he was backed by General Cadenas, Caste War hero Andrés Maldonado, Bishop Guerra, provisor and former Tekax entrepreneur Silvestre Antonio Dondé, and future bishop Leandro de Gala. A tip of the historical hat to Michael Ducey for information on Peraza's role in the disastrous Tampico invasion.
134. HPS, *Las garantías sociales*, #388, March 22, 1858.
135. AHAY, DO, September 20, 1858, Mérida.

136. AGEY, PE 116, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, Tizimín, February 4, 1858; see also the account written by the caudillo's descendent, Albino Acereto, in "Historia política desde el descubrimiento europeo hasta 1920," in *Enciclopedia yucatanense*, vol. 3 (Mexico City: Gobierno de Yucatán, 1947), 288.

137. A copy of their proclamation is found in AHAY, DO, April 14, 1858, Mérida.

138. AHAY, DO, April 18, 1858, Izamal.

139. AHAY, DO, May 29, 1858, Hecelchakán.

140. AHDN, xi/481.3/6623, various dates and places, May 1858.

141. AHDN, xi/481.3/4082, August 1, 1857, report of General José Cadenas.

142. The violent life and equally violent death of Venancio Puc is documented in the British Foreign Office Records, February 15, 1858, report of William Anderson; José María Rosado, *A Refugee of the War of the Castes Makes Belize His Home: The Memoirs of J. M. Rosado*, ed. Richard Buhler (Belize: Belize Institute for Social Research and Action, 1970); AB, Records 74, August 26, 1861, 174-75.

143. On the Tekax attack, see AHDN, xi/481.3/3783, September 28, 1857, report of General José Cadenas; and AHDN, xi/481.3/4264, September 30, 1857, report of Colonel Juan María Novelo. Numerous accounts document the increase in army deserter presence among the sublevados during the mid-1850s; see Governor Méndez's report in AHDN, xi/481.3/5383, December 11, 1856; and 4035, January 23, 1857. There is also the account of José María Echeverría, found in AGEY, PE 104, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Izamal, November 6, 1856, and reproduced in "Nothing More Than Imposters': The Captivity Narrative of José María Echeverría," in Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, 62-64.

144. For a vivid account of the Valladolid attack, see the anonymous report in CLE, Yucatecan Papers, April 1, 1858.

145. Numerous writings document this, the second rebel capture of Bacalar. For a military account, see AHDN, xi/481.3/6444, February 28, 1858, report of commanding officer Perdomo. For a more personal recollection, see "'Not as a Prisoner but as One of the Family': The Captivity Narrative of José María Rosado," in Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, 68-78.

146. The case for abandoning Bacalar is spelled out in General José Cadenas's report to the Ministro de Guerra y Marina in AHDN, xi/481.3.4082, August 1, 1857.

147. AHDN, xi/481.3/4264, September 30, 1857, report of Colonel Juan María Novelo.

148. The manifesto of this duplicitous crowd is found in AHDN, xi/481.3/6234, September 11, 1858.

149. AHDN, xi/481.3/5440, August 28, 1857; Baqueiro, III, 154-55.

150. AHDN, xi/481.3/5925, October 16, 1858. Other documents place his inauguration as January 1859 (see AHAY, DO, January 17, 1859, Mérida), but the earlier date appears the more reliable.

151. AGEY, PE 120, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, Valladolid, various dates, 1859.

152. A point illustrated in Ben Fallaw, *Cárdenas Compromised: The Failure of Reform in Postrevolutionary Yucatán* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

153. Irigoyen served as state congressional diputado, then as criminal magistrate. See AGEY, PE 74, Gobernación, Consejo del Estado, December 17, 1849; AGEY, PE 78, Gobernación, Senado, Mérida, February 15, 1850, and *Yucatán en el tiempo*, vol. 3, 1998, 420–21.

154. See, in particular, Irigoyen's correspondence to the Ministro de Guerra y Marina for the years 1861–62, found in AHDN.

155. AHDN, xi/481.3/7556, November 1859; ANEY, Oficio #7, vol. 11, May 13, 1862, 11; January 7, 1865, 12; AGEY, RPP vol. 1810, various dates, 1861, 45–46.

156. AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 33, expediente 13, October 15, 1859.

157. AGEY, FJ-Penal, box 57, October 19, 1858. Irigoyen was investigating a certain Gerardo Tizón, one of the principal Spaniards involved in the Yucatecan slave business.

158. AHAY, DO, April 15, 1859, Yaxcabá.

159. AHDN, xi/481.3/6226, October 18, 1858.

160. Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*, 82–83.

161. The circular announcing the reactivation of the Reform in Yucatán appears in AHAY, DO, August 20, 1859, Mérida.

162. AGEY, PE 121, Iglesia, Tekantó, November 23, 1859.

163. As, for example, in Tizimín; see AHAY, DO, November 8, 1859, Tizimín.

164. AHAY, DO, December 18, 1859, Maní.

165. AHAY, DO, October 18, 1861, Tizimín.

166. Many of these papers found their way to the Bienes Nacionales section of Mexico's National Archives; hence the abundance of church-related quarrels in this collection.

167. AHAY, DO, May 21, 1859, Sotuta.

168. AHAY, DO, August 30, 1862, Ixil.

169. This is the explanation advanced by bishop and historian Crescencio Carrillo y Ancona; see *Los obispos de Yucatán: Historia de su fundación y de sus obispos desde el siglo XVI hasta el XIX* (Mérida: R. Caballero, 1895), 1046–50.

170. To take only a few examples, see AHAY, DO, May 16, 1859, Mocoohá; and AHAY, DO, June 22, 1862.

171. The surviving (and explicit) paperwork of then-governor Peraza's efforts is to be found in AHDN, xi/481.3/6623, May 17, 1858.

172. Javier Rodríguez Piña, *Guerra de castas: La venta de indios mayas a Cuba, 1848–1861* (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1990), 154–55.

173. This callous remark comes from none other than Manuel Medina, son of Hochtún's legendary cura Raymundo Pérez; see AGEY, PE 119, Gobernación, February 12, 1859, Mérida.

174. AHDN, xi/481.3/6318, December 21, 1858; xi/481.3/7112, February 18, 1859; xi/481.3/7125, March 4, 1859; xi/481.3/7199, July 19, 1859.

175. AGEY, PE 119, Gobernación, Préstamo Forzoso, January 1, 1859.

176. AGEY, PE 115, Gobernación, Milicias, December 28, 1858.

177. AHDN, xi/481.4/8574, February 5, 1861, report of Anselmo Cano to the minister of the army and navy on the political situation in Yucatán.

178. AGEY, PE 120, Gobernación, Tekax, April 28, 1859.
179. The details of the February revolts appear in Irigoyen's lengthy reports, found in AHDN, xi/481.3/7740, March 17, 1959; and AHDN, xi/481.3/5921, April 17, 1858.
180. AGEY, PE 122, Justicia, April 12, 1859, Mérida.
181. AGEY, PE 119, Consejo del Estado, June 16, 1859, Mérida.
182. AHDN, xi/481.3/8170, March 15, 1859.
183. I am immensely grateful to Michel Antochiw for providing me with a copy of this extremely rare and anonymously published work. The only known original belonged to a private collector who has since passed away.
184. AGEY, PE 120, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Ticul, June 23, 1859.
185. AGEY, PE 120, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Ticul, April 28, 1859; regarding the 1847 sack of Valladolid, see Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*, 168–69.
186. Details of the Peto revolt appear in AGEY, PE 120, Gobernación, Tekax, April 28, 1859; AHDN, xi/481.3/7740, May 11, 1859; and AHDN, xi/481.3/7598, June 18, 1859.
187. José Pilar Vales, interim cura of Peto, was eventually called to Mérida to account for his role in the uprising; see AHAY, May 7, 1859, Peto.
188. AGEY, PE 120, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Ticul, April 30, 1859, June 15, 1859, June 22, 1859.
189. AGNM, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 19, expediente 2, February 1–6, 1851.
190. AGEY, FJ-Penal, July 14, 1852, Mérida.
191. The 1856 property evaluations value his estates at one hundred pesos—probably a lowball, but still reflecting the fact that the Oriente's overall decline had hit the Aceretos hard; see AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, 1856. A tip of the historical hat to Sallust for his account of the Cataline conspiracy, in which so many nineteenth-century Yucatecans would have felt at home.
192. AGEY, PE 40, Poblaciones, Valladolid, May 18, 1841.
193. AGEY, PE 118, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar of Espita, June 13, 1859.
194. AGEY, PE 120, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, February 22, 1859.
195. AGEY, PE 131, Gobernación, Jefatura Política, Tizimín, various dates, 1862.
196. AGEY, PE 118, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar of Espita, June 13, 1859; AHDN, xi/481.3/7598, June 18, 1859; AHDN, xi/481.3/7598, July 20, 1859.
197. AHDN, xi/481.3/7199, July 19, 1859.
198. An account of this confusing plot is found in AHDN, xi/481.3/8056, November 10, 1859. The 1856 inventory of capital places Castellanos as number eleven, with about twenty thousand pesos to his name; see AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, "Fincas Urbanas, Campeche," 1856.
199. AHDN, xi/481.3/8056, November 10, 1859, is also the principal source of our information on the failed counter coup, although a far less detailed account appears in Carlos R. Mendéndez, ed., "El presidente Juárez, el gobernador Acereto, y el Lic. José Antonio Cicneros," in *Cuadernos de historia: Hombres y*

sucecos de otros tiempos (Mérida: Cía. Tipográfica Yucateca, 1943), 13–17, located in CAIHY, Sección de Libros. Naturally, there exists the possibility that Vera knew more than he claimed, or that Acereto intentionally remained incommunicado in order to flush out disloyal supporters. On the negotiations for the rebels' lives, see AHDN, xi/481.3/7556, various dates, November 1859.

200. See untitled poem in HPS, *La burla*, 1860, 118–19.

201. HPS, *El eco del oriente*, December 14, 1859, 1–2.

202. AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Izamal, January 17, 1860; AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Espita, December 25, 1860.

203. AHDN, xi/481.3/7556, November 12, 1859; ANEY, November 14, 1859, 134–35.

204. ANEY, Oficio #7, vol. 11, January 7, 1865, 12; this document refers to events of six years earlier.

205. AGEY, PE 121, Iglesia, December 12, 1859, Mocochá.

206. AHAY, DO, October 10, 1859, October 29, 1859, Mérida.

207. AHAY, DO, October 29, 1859, Motul.

208. Padre Pedro José Hurtado acknowledges receipt of Guerra's reminder of the Reform laws in AHAY, DO, November 5, 1859, Béal.

209. AHAY, DO, October 4, 1859, Campeche.

210. AGEY, PE 121, Iglesia, November 9, 1859, Mérida.

211. AHAY, DO, June 14, 1859, Valladolid.

212. AHAY, DO, December 20, 1859, Valladolid.

213. AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Milicias, Valladolid, June 27, 1860.

214. ANEY, September 3, 1859, 102–4; this was eight days after Castellanos had assumed power.

215. See various numbers of *La burla*, 1860, found in HPS.

216. AGEY, PE 120, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Motul, December 28, 1859.

217. AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar of Sisal, 24, February 27, 1860.

218. AHDN, xi/481.3/7589, November 23, 1859.

219. AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, November 6, 1860. The peace treaty of Yoktsonot appears in AHAY, DO, March 4, 1861. The negotiator of this treaty deserves a brief paragraph in the history of southeast Mexico. Vicente Marín was longtime cura of Tizimín. Marín was also one of the more active members of the eastern intelligentsia in the era of the Liberal reform, writing on a broad range of local matters; he became a minor cotton entrepreneur during the years of the French Empire.

220. *Yucatán en el tiempo*, vol. 2, 1998, 59; AHDN, xi/481.3/8056, November 21, 1860, reporting on the events of November 15–16; AHDN, xi/481.4/8533, February 6, 1861.

221. AGEY, PE 125, Justicia, Juzgado de Chocholá, December 20, 1860.

222. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Terorería General, January 18, 1861, Mérida.

223. AGEY, PE 124, Gobernación, "Adhesión al Gobierno del Colonel Lorenzo Vargas," various dates and places, 1860.

224. DHP, vol. 2, 3, "El golpe de estado de Agustín Acereto y la venta de mayas a cuba," March 11, 1861, Nicanor Contreras Elizalde to Secretario del Estado, 52.

225. ANEY, January 9, 1861, 208-9.

226. AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Milicias, December 11, 1860, Valladolid.

227. AGEY, PE 125, Justicia, Juzgado de Mérida, December 7, 1860. It is doubtful that the legal agonies over what to do with Irigoyen reflected an independent judiciary working its way through technical problems; Vargas's own influence is a far more probable explanation.

228. DHP, vol. 2, 2, "El golpe de estado de Agustín Acereto y la venta de mayas a Cuba," February 14, 1861, Anselmo Cano to Secretario del Estado, 30-31.

229. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Decretos, February 12, 1861.

230. DHP, vol. 2, 3, "El golpe de estado de Agustín Acereto y la venta de mayas a Cuba," March 23, 1861, Nicanor Contreras Elizalde to Secretario del Estado, 60-61.

231. As Fallaw documents, Yucatecan conservatives invented the Great Ejido Plan to replace federal supervision of agrarian reform with their own state-level bureaucracy, thus allowing them to retain control over the revolutionary order in general and Maya peasants in particular; see Fallaw, *Cárdenas Compromised*, 126-29.

232. AB, Records 68, September 27, 1861, 390-91, Price to Darling. Price estimated the gold bribe as the equivalent of one thousand pounds.

233. AHDN, xi/481.4/8574, February 5, 1861, report of Anselmo Cano to the minister of the army and navy on the political situation in Yucatán.

234. AGEY, FJ-Penal, April 30, 1862, Halachó/Mérida.

235. AHDN, xi/481.3/8760, November 23, 1861.

236. EA, vol. 2, September 26, 1861, 260-63.

237. AHAY, DO, October 4, 1861, October 8, 1861, Espita.

238. AHDN, xi/481.4/8393, December 11, 1861, report of Liborio Irigoyen; xi/481.4/8921, December 24, 1861, report of José M. Castañeda; and xi/481.4/8921, February 24, 1862, report of Liborio Irigoyen.

239. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Izamal, August 12, 1863; Reyes recounted the episode after his release.

240. AGEY, FJ-Penal, February 28, 1862, Valladolid.

241. AHDN, xi/481.4/8807, September 17, 1862.

242. AGEY, FJ-Penal, January-September 1862, July 26, 1862, Yaxkukul/Izamal. The uprising took place on January 29.

243. AGEY, FJ-Penal, March 29, 1862, Valladolid.

244. EA, vol. 2, April 26, 1862, 329-44.

245. As seen in the case of Ixil; AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, August 26, 1863, Ixil. The foregoing information was cited as part of a backlog of abuses that Ixil's Conservatives had suffered under Irigoyen.

246. AHAY, DO, October 24, 1861, Tekal.

247. AHAY, DO, December 10, 1861, Izamal. In this case, Irigoyen sent deceptive letters implying that Paz's disappearance was in fact the result of an abduction by Pedro Acereto.

248. AHAY, DO, November 23, 1862, Hunucmá.

249. AHAY, DO, June 3, 1862, Kopomá. Padre Juan de la Cruz Camal handled Kopomá, Cholula, and Opichén.
250. AHAY, DO, August 25, 1862, Hochtún.
251. AHAY, DO, April 30, 1861, Mocochoá; November 22, 1862, Izamal; November 23, 1862, Hunucmá.
252. AHAY, DO, July 10, 1861, Bécal.
253. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, Mérida, 1862. Mortgages on Irigoyen's haciendas appear in AGEY, RPP-1810, January 26, 1861, and May 31, 1861, 44-46.
254. AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Decretos, November 11, 1861.
255. ANEY, July 10, 1862, 95-100.
256. See the highly redundant testimonies of AGEY, FJ-Penal, February 28, 1862, Valladolid.
257. AGEY, FJ-Penal, March 12, 1862, Motul; AHDN, xi/481.3/8924, April 1862.
258. This account is distilled from the detailed reports of Liborio Irigoyen in AHDN, xi/481.4/8929, October 15, 1862; xi/481.4/8929, December 2, 1862.
259. AHAY, DO, October 21, 1862, Tekantó.
260. AHAY, DO, November 24, 1862, Temax.
261. AHAY, DO, October 30, 1862, Espita.
262. See, for example, the complaint of Padre José Dolores Cámara, owner of three haciendas between Tabi and Tibolón, in AGEY, PE 135, Gobernación, February 28, 1863, Motul.
263. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 4, legajo 4, expediente 9, November 16, 1862, November 17, 1862.
264. ANEY, February 3, 1863, 16-17.
265. CLE, Yucatecan Collection, "Juárez Decree," June 14, 1862.
266. Paul Sullivan, *Xuxub Must Die: The Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatan* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), 107.
267. One branch of the Navarrete family, although not including Felipe or Agustín, appears in AGEY, PE 41, Censos y Padrones, vol. 6, expediente 75, Valladolid, May 18, 1841.
268. For example, in early 1863, shortly before Felipe's revolt, his brother Agustín Navarrete purchased at auction two solares that had formerly belonged to the church there; two years later he sat on the same ayuntamiento that had sold him those solares. Even so, Agustín was never able to pay the original cost of the properties (\$166) and instead worked out a deal allowing him to lower the price by trading to the ayuntamiento a terreno of his own, worth \$70. See AGEY, FM-Espita, vol. 5, January 31, 1863, and November 9, 1863.
269. AGEY, FJ-Penal, January-March 1826, February 24, 1862, Valladolid.
270. AGEY, PE 41, Censos y Padrones 6, expediente 75, Census of Valladolid, May 18, 1841; Francisco Cantón Rosado, *Datos y documentos relativos a la vida militar y política del Sr. General Brigadier Don Francisco Cantón*, ed. Carlos R. Menéndez (Mérida: Tipográfica Yucateco, 1930), 1-7; AGEY, FJ-Penal, January-December 1854, January 12, 1854; and Wells and Joseph, 1997, 25-26.
271. AHAY, DO, March 3, 1863, Bécal.

272. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Mama, February 3, 1863.
273. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Seyé, April 10, 1863.
274. AGEY, PE 136, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, March 2, 1863.
275. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Xocchel/Tahmek, April 6, 1863.
276. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Timucuy, April 27, 1863.
277. AGEY, FM-Espita, box 3, vol. 14, exp. 3, March 28, 1863, Izamal.
278. AGEY, PE 136, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Tizimín, July 18, 1863.
279. As happened near the aguada Yaxuná, outside of Abalá; see AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Abalá, April 15, 1863.
280. AGEY, PE 135, Gobernación, "Rechazo al Plan," April 1863.
281. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Seyé, April 13, 1863.
282. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Hocabá, March 29, 1863.
283. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Dzitás, July 24, 1863.
284. AGEY, *Espíritu del pueblo*, July 7, 1863.
285. A key source on the Navarrete revolt is Liborio Irigoyen's version, written in Havana during the years of empire; see AHDN, xl/481.4/9373, February 22, 1864.
286. HPS, *Espíritu del pueblo*, June 10, 1862.
287. HPS, *Espíritu de pueblo*, July 1, 1862.
288. HPS, *Espíritu del pueblo*, October 24, 1862.
289. AGEY, PE 138, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar of Valladolid, January 26, 1864.
290. This argument features in Guy P. C. Thomson with David LaFrance, *Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Juan Francisco Lucas and the Puebla Sierra* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999), with particular emphasis on the relationship between land and popular liberalism found on pages 15–18 and 87.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. AGEY, PE 145, Gobernación, Prefectura of Tizimín, January 9, 1865; AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, "Donativo," January 20, 1866. For a lively account of Carlota's visit, see Fausto Sánchez Novelo, *Yucatán durante la intervención francesa (1863–1867)* (Mérida: Maldonado Editores, 1983, 105–13).
2. AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, "Noticia," 1865 (an anonymous account).
3. AGEY, PE 158, Gobernación, Ministro de Guerra, March 7, 1866.
4. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, December 13, 1865, 3; the date of the Béal visit was December 9. Regarding Hurtado's late-colonial campaign against what he called *condoes*, that is, condoms, see CAIHY, Pamphlets, vol. 103, expediente 10, "Historia de la introducción del condón en Yucatán. Quién tuvo la 'gloria' de darlo a conocer. Las diligencias del Santo Oficio. Prólogo por Leopoldo Archivero," Mérida, 1923.
5. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Valladolid, October 6, 1863; AGEY, PE 135, Gobernación, "Apertura de caminos," October 8, 1863.
6. AGEY, PE 136, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Espita, October 5, 1863.
7. AGEY, PE 136, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Espita, October 1, 1863, Calotmul.

8. AGEY, PE 139, Gobernación, March 8, 1864, Cacalchén.
9. AHAY, DO, March 31, 1865, Ticul.
10. As in the case of alcalde José María Rejón, of Tecoh; see AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Tecoh, May 11, 1866.
11. AGEY, FM-Ticul, vol. 5, January 29, 1864.
12. AGEY, FM-Espita, vol. 6, September 12, 1864.
13. AGEY, PE 139, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Espita, various dates, 1864.
14. Details of the Tekax system are found in AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Tekax, December 1865.
15. AGEY, FM-Espita, vol. 5, July 17, 1863.
16. AGEY, FM-Espita, vol. 5, January 26, 1864.
17. AGEY, FM-Espita, vol. 6, June 9, 1863.
18. AGEY, PE 135, Gobernación, "Copiador de correspondencia con diversas autoridades del estado," May 17, 1863.
19. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Ticul, March 5, 1863; September 15, 1863.
20. AGEY, FM-Espita, vol. 5, May 11, 1863.
21. AGEY, FM-Ticul, vol. 5, various dates, 1860-63.
22. AGEY, FM-Ticul, vol. 5, December 15, 1862, 49.
23. AGEY, FM-Espita, vol. 5, April 25, 1864.
24. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Peto, May 1, 1866.
25. AGEY, FM-Espita, vol. 5, July 30, 1863.
26. For example, the Ixil junta *and* its corresponding surveyor returned to the hands of the anti-Irigoyen crowd; see AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, August 26, 1863, Ixil.
27. As happened in Espita, where the batab and república negotiated up the wages to two pesos per square yard of construction; see AGEY, FM-Espita, vol. 5, August 31, 1863.
28. AGEY, PE 139, Ayuntamientos, Espita, March 22, 1864.
29. AGEY, PE 139, Ayuntamientos, Valladolid, March 22, 1864.
30. AGEY, PE 141, Hacienda, various dates, 1864-65.
31. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, Calkiní, September 8, 1866.
32. See Padre Iturralde's indignant letter in AHAY, DO, February 24, 1865, Valladolid. Some details of the midcentury Iturralde family itself can be culled from the 1841 census of Valladolid, found in AHEY, PE 41, Censos y Padrones 6, #75, Valladolid, May 18, 1841. Padre Juan María Iturralde was the younger brother of José María Iturralde, occasional jefe político and briefly governor of the state in the 1870s.
33. This sketch is drawn from *Yucatán en el tiempo*, V, 1999, 392; AHDN, xi/481.3/5023, April 9, 1855; ANEY, Oficio #7, vol. 11, August 21, 1865, 244-49; *El libro secreto de Maximiliano*, Cuadernos del Instituto de Historia, Serie Documental No. 1 (México: Universidad Autónoma de México, 1963), 100; and Luz María Oralia Tamayo Pérez, "La frontera México-Estados Unidos: La conformación de un espacio durante el siglo XIX" (PhD diss: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, 1999), 225-41. Some doubt exists

as to Salazar's place of birth, with some accounts making him a Sonoran, others a native of the Federal District.

34. ANEY, February 21, 1867, 21-25.
35. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 25, expediente 13, September 16, 1864.
36. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 29, expediente 59, August 25, 1865; Jasper Ridley, *Maximilian and Juárez* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1992), 224.
37. HPS, *Espíritu del público*, 397, March 13, 1863.
38. See the untitled work by Manuel Susano Villamar, in HPS, *Periódico oficial*, July 5, 1865.
39. AGEY, PE 145, Gobernación, Comisario Imperial, March 9, 1865.
40. AGEY, PE 145, Gobernación, Comisario Imperial, February 23, 1865.
41. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 48, expediente 10, 1865, "Copia del decreto del 1.º de noviembre de 1865 expedido por el emperador Maximiliano sobre jornaleros del campo."
42. AGEY, PE 141, Gobernación, Conkal, December 9, 1864.
43. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Izamal, January 3, 1866.
44. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Kinchil, August 9, 1866.
45. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Kinchil, September 2, 1866.
46. AGEY, PE 139, Gobernación, March 12, 1864, Mérida.
47. ANEY, Oficio #5, no volume number, June 12, 1866, 75.
48. AGEY, PE 164, Hacienda, May 8, 1866.
49. CAIHY, Books, Tomás Aznar Barbachano, *A la memoria del C. Lic. Pablo García*, second edition (Mérida: G. Canto, 1896), 126.
50. ANEY, Oficio #7, vol. 11, December 30, 1865, 423-25.
51. EA, vol. 3, February 4, 1865, 116-17.
52. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Prefectura Política of Campeche, January 1, 1865, report of Manuel Ramos.
53. ANEY, Oficio #5, no volume number, September 25, 1866, 122-25; October 1, 1866, 125-28.
54. Maximilian's November decree was published in the peninsula in the *Periódico oficial*, December 13, 1865, 2 (see HPS). This made March 13 the cutoff date for retitling.
55. AGEY, PE 159, Gobernación, Ministro de Fomento, various dates, March 1866.
56. EA, vol. 3, April 5, 1867, 151-52; the offer was good for anywhere in the areas of Yucatán, Campeche, or Laguna de Términos.
57. For example, Ramón Aznar Pérez contracted his own steam engine from New York City (unfortunately, the device proved defective and had to be returned); see ANEY, Oficio #7, vol. 11, February 24, 1865, 63.
58. ANEY, Oficio #5, no vol. number, March 5, 1864, 57-64.
59. AGEY, PE 148, Justicia, March 21, 1865, Halachó.
60. AGEY, PE 120, Gobernación, "Fomento," March 9, 1866.
61. AGEY, PE 135, Gobernación, Panabá, September 14, 1863; AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, Panabá, November 21, 1863. An 1856 decree had shifted Manuel Elizalde's tobacco estate outside Panabá from local to state taxation, although this appears to have been an exception.

62. Carol Steichen Dumond and Don E. Dumond, eds., *Demography and Parish Affairs in Yucatan, 1797-1879: Documents from the Archivo de la Mitra Emeritense, Selected by Joaquín de Arrigunaga Peón* (Eugene: University of Oregon Anthropological Papers, No. 27, 1982), 336.
63. The standard source on Yucatán's pre-Caste War cotton is Howard F. Cline, "The 'Aurora Yucateca' and the Spirit of Enterprise in Yucatan, 1821-1847," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 47 (1948): 30-60.
64. AGEY, PE 135, Gobernación, "Cultivo de Algodón," June 16, 1863.
65. AGEY, PE 134, Gobernación, September 9, 1863, Mérida.
66. See José María Dan, *Manual para los que se dediquen al cultivo del algodónero* (Mérida: Rafael Pedrara, 1861); and José Tiburcio Cervera, *Manual para el cultivo del algodonería, arreglado expresamente para Yucatán* (Mérida: José Dolores Espinosa, 1863). Both are found in the book collection of the CAIHY.
67. The last recorded shipment of goods from the Confederacy came from Mobile, Alabama, on December 8 on a ship named *The Two Sisters*; see CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 49, expediente 31, March 31, 1865.
68. AB, Records 72, June 13, 1862, 124-26.
69. AGEY, PE 140, Gobernación, "Libramiento," January 19, 1864.
70. His late wife's name was María Pilar Ponce; see AGEY, PE 139, Gobernación, January 9, 1864.
71. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 1864-65, September 10, 1864, 174.
72. AHAY, AT, October 22, 1864.
73. E. Bradford Burns, *A History of Brazil*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 161; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation: Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 91-93.
74. DHP, vol. 2, 6, "Informe de la reunión celebrada en casa del comisario imperial para el restablecimiento de las faginas," January 15, 1866.
75. AGEY, PE 135, Gobernación, May 3, 1861, Mérida; October 30, 1863, Mérida.
76. AGEY, PE 139, Gobernación, "Establecimiento," August 6, 1864.
77. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 45, expediente 9, May 7, 1864.
78. AGEY, PE 159, Gobernación, Prefectura Política of Laguna, May 22, 1866.
79. AGEY, PE 159, Gobernación, Prefectura Política of Laguna, June 5, 1866; June 16, 1866; AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, Comisario Imperial, August 8, 1866.
80. Darío Galera's mother was Cristanta Encalada, of a family that was hardly rich. Regarding his parentage and siblings, see the will of Galera's father, Manuel, in ANEY, August 5, 1854, 121-23.
81. Information on Galera's fortunes comes from AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, 1856; from CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 49, expediente 12, February 6, 1865, "Estado que manifiesta los ranchos, haciendas y puntos de la costa correspondiente a la jurisdicción del Partido de Cozumel . . ."; and from his will, located in ANEY, October 26, 1868, 225-27; the home, as well as its location, is mentioned in ANEY, January 14, 1879, 32.

82. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 23, January 18, 1852, 173.

83. EA, vol. 2, September 26, 1859, 67.

84. AGEY, PE 324, Milicias, December 28, 1885, Mérida. As the document's date suggests, the executor of Galera's estate was still trying to collect on these well into porfirian times.

85. ANEY, June 28, 1855, 34; August 31, 1855, 42. A year before his death, Galera lost a long-running land litigation with the ayuntamiento, one that forced the sale of one of Galera's abandoned properties in the center of town; see AGEY, PE 168, Gobierno del Estado, March 16, 1868.

86. Again, see Galera's will in ANEY, October 26, 1868, 225–27. Galera's death is registered in AGEY, Registro Civil (RC), Mérida, Defunciones, vol. 4, July 29, 1869. A second Darío Galera, also a merchant, born in 1813, was apparently a cousin or nephew; see ANEY, April 7, 1880, 41.

87. On the rise of the Garza Sada family, see Alex M. Saragoza, *The Monterrey Elite and the Mexican State, 1880–1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 19–30; and Juan Mora-Torres, *The Making of the Mexican Border: The State, Capitalism, and Society in Nuevo León, 1848–1910* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 29–51.

88. AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, September 23, 1866, Isla Mujeres. This report also includes some wonderfully precise measurements of the island.

89. AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, October 10, 1866.

90. ANEY, December 17, 1861, 297–99.

91. AGEY, FJ-Penal, April 16, 1866, Maní. This is in reality a civil, not a penal or criminal case.

92. AGEY, FJ-Penal, June 7, 1864, Halachó.

93. From the mid-1850s onward, priests withdraw from the most important index of peninsular economic activity, the notary papers. Clerical footprints crisscross the papers of prewar deeds, sales, wills, loans, and mortgages; but by 1870 those footprints largely disappear.

94. ANEY, March 19, 1862, 73–75.

95. AHAY, DO, March 20, 1865, Hopelchén.

96. AHAY, DO, January 26, 1836, Campeche.

97. AHAY, DO, September 2, 1864, Mérida.

98. AHAY, DO, January 28, 1865, Calotmul.

99. AHAY, DO, June 8, 1866, Cozumel.

100. AGEY, PE 161, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, May 12, 1866.

101. AHAY, DO, April 27, 1865, Mérida.

102. AGEY, FJ-Penal, November 19, 1864, Mérida.

103. AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, October 24, 1866, other dates.

104. AGEY, PE 162, Gobernación, Prefectura Superior Política, October 28, 1866.

105. AHAY, DO, April 22, 1865, Hoctún; AGEY, PE 161, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, July 2, 1866.

106. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Motul, various dates, including (for Baca) April 12, 1865, April 15, 1865.

107. AHAY, DO, May 2, 1865, Espita.
108. AHAY, DO, April 19, 1865, Hocabá.
109. AHAY, DO, April 12, 1866, April 16, 1866, Teabo.
110. AHAY, DO, August 9, 1865, Ticul.
111. AHAY, DO, September 27, 1865, Ticul.
112. AHAY, DO, July 21, 1861, Ticul.
113. AHAY, DO, November 27, 1866, Espita.
114. AHAY, DO, May 12, 13, and 25, 1865, Tekax.
115. CAIHY, Books, Ramírez, *Viaje a Yucatán*, 63.
116. AHAY, DO, May 1, 1866, Maní.
117. This, at least, is how it was done in Tekax; similar steps were to be found in other communities; see AHAY, DO, June 9, 1865, Tekax.
118. AHAY, DO, August 31, 1866, Tixcaltuyú.
119. AHAY, DO, June 11, 1866, Hopelchén.
120. AHAY, DO, July 1, 1865, Yaxcabá; July 11, 1865, Yaxcabá.
121. AHAY, DO, May 2, 1865, Tihosuco. This individual is not to be confused with Colonel José Dolores Cetina, early Caste War plotter and alternately the friend and enemy of Miguel Barbachano.
122. AHAY, DO, May 14, 1887, Campeche.
123. AHAY, DO, April 4, 1865, Peto.
124. Such as AHAY, DO, October 24, 1866, Bécal.
125. AGEY, PE 160, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Sotuta, January 10, 1866.
126. That is, he requested a transfer to work in the city hospital; see AHAY, DO, May 9, 1865, Campeche.
127. AHAY, DO, November 30, 1866, Bécal.
128. AGEY, PE 141, Gobernación, January 7, 1866, Timucuy.
129. AGEY, PE 161, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Maxcanú, May 15, 1866.
130. AGEY, PE 157, Gobernación, Caciques, March 15, 1866.
131. AGEY, PE 155, Gobernación, various dates and towns, 1866.
132. AGEY, PE 140, Gobernación, Subaltern Político, Espita, August 1, 1864.
133. AGEY, PE 141, Justicia, Mérida, 1864, from a roster of criminal cases spanning the years 1813–64.
134. AGEY, PE 145, Gobernación, “Irregularidades,” January 10, 1865.
135. AGEY, PJ, 004–04, f.012575, January 20, 1865.
136. On one occasion alone, we find eighteen Mayas in Valladolid sentenced to three months’ prison for the widespread offense of cattle theft; many such cases exist. See AGEY, PE 165, Justicia, Tribunal Superior, September 28, 1866.
137. AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, Comisario Imperial, 1866.
138. On the twentieth-century Indian defense attorneys, see Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 75–76. The problems that these later defense attorneys met in trying to represent five to six million Indians spread over twenty-two states closely echoed the problems of the Yucatecan abogado defensor.

139. AGEY, PE 138, Gobernación, Guardia Nacional, October 21, 1864, Mérida; AGEY, FJ-Penal, 1863-64, December 28, 1864, Halachó.
140. AGEY, PE 162, Justicia, various dates, 1859, Mérida.
141. ANEY, August 29, 1865, 84-85.
142. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Mérida, July 4, 1865; July 18, 1865.
143. ANEY, September 30, 1865, 270-71.
144. AGEY, PE 162, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Solicitudes," January 30, 1866.
145. AGEY, PE 139, Justicia, November 16, 1865.
146. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Seyé, October 12, 1866. González also reviewed and ratified land titles of Canicab, the great estate that Manuel Medina had inherited from his father, the illustrious Padre Raymundo Pérez; Pérez had swapped some land with Seyé during the early Caste War, but the legality of the action had been disputed for nearly two decades. See AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Seyé, November 17, 1866.
147. AGEY, PE 140, Gobernación, Suprefectura Política of Motul, November 25, 1864.
148. AGEY, PE 149, Justicia, Defensor de Indios, November 21, 1865.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.
151. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 28, expediente 5, January 1865. This document is reproduced in English translation in Terry Rugeley, *Maya Wars: Ethnographic Accounts from Nineteenth-Century Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 148-50.
152. AGEY, PE 138, Gobernación, Guardia Nacional, October 21, 1864.
153. AGEY, PJ, box 04-C, March 5, 1865, Tekax.
154. AB, Records 92, April 6, 1865, 18-20. The consul happened to be passing through Belize City at the time that he wrote this comment.
155. CAIHY, Books, José Fernando Ramírez, *Viaje a Yucatán del Lic. José Fernando Ramírez, 1865*, ed. Carlos R. Menéndez (Mérida: Compañía Tipográfica Yucateco, 1926), 30-31.
156. Canto Zozaya, brother-in-law of the controversial Padre Amado Belizario Barreiro, last Yucatecan vicario of the Petén, published his complaint in HPS, *Periódico oficial*, February 8, 1865, 2-3.
157. ANEY, September 15, 1865, 250-52.
158. A more detailed account of this unusual individual appears in Terry Rugeley, "The Forgotten Liberator: Buenaventura Martínez and the Republican Restoration in Yucatán," *Mexican Studies / Estudios Mexicanos* 19, 2 (2003): 331-66.
159. AGEY, *Espíritu del pueblo*, #451, September 10, 1863.
160. AGEY, PE 136, 6, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, March 13, 1863; Jefatura Política of Izamal, March 12, 1836; Jefatura Política of Espita, October 20, 1863.
161. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Tizimín, 1866.

162. AGEY, PE 138, Gobernación, Guardia Nacional, September 22, 1864, Mérida. There is some doubt about this report. May disappears from Santa Cruz documentation after 1858, but perhaps merely assumed a secondary role under Venancio Puc. This same report claims that Crescencio Poot also perished, a clear mistake. The final truth of May's fate remains uncertain.

163. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Maxcanú, April 17, 1865.

164. AGEY, PE 139, Gobernación, May 10, 1864.

165. CAIHY, Manuscript Books, "Libro copiador de cartas de la comandancia superior de la séptima division military en Yucatán," May 21, 1866, 4-7.

166. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Mérida, August 1, 1865.

167. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Prefectura Política of Campeche, July 21, 1865.

168. AGEY, PE 150, Gobernación, Milicias, October 18, 1866.

169. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Ticul, January 28, 1865.

170. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Ticul, January 28, 1865.

171. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Mérida, July 14, 1865.

172. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Ticul, June 2, 1866.

173. AGEY, PE 162, Gobernación, Prefectura Superior Política, August 30, 1866.

174. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Bécal, June 4, 1866; José Manuel Alcocer Bernés, Ernesto Alonso Encalada Cardoso, and Martín Enrique Rodríguez Mendoza, "Los centralistas de México contra las reformas de Gómez Farías," in *Enciclopedia histórica de Campeche*, ed. Román Piña Chan, vol. 3 (Mexico City: Gobierno Constitucional del Estado de Campeche, 2003), 126-28.

175. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Hunucmá, May 8, 1866.

176. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Prefectura de Tizimín, January 20, 1865.

177. AGEY, PE 153, Gobernación, Comandancia Superior, March 11, 1866.

178. AHAY, DO, July 15, 1865, Hopelchén.

179. AGEY, PE 150, Gobernación, Milicias, October 8, 1866.

180. AGEY, PE 153, Gobernación, Comandancia Superior, October 27, 1866.

181. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Maxcanú, January 16, 1865.

182. AGEY, PE 153, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Maxcanú, various dates, 1865; see also Subprefectura Política of Motul, April 27, 1865.

183. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Peto, January 17, 1865.

184. AGEY, PE 150, Gobernación, various dates, 1866.

185. AHDN, xi/481.4/9185, July 20, 1865.

186. CAIHY, Manuscript Books, "Libro copiador," May 21, 1866, 4-7; May 23, 1866, 14-15; June 1, 1866, 44-47.

187. AGEY, PE 144, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Ticul, April 12, 1865.
188. To take only a few examples, see AGEY, PE 148, Jefatura Política of Hocabá, November 28, 1865; AGEY, PE 162, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Solicitudes," January 11, 1866; and AGEY, PE 164, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Solicitudes," various dates, 1866.
189. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Tecoh, September 5, 1866.
190. AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, Comisario Imperial, July 1, 1866.
191. AGEY, PE 138, Gobernación, Guardia Nacional, August 3, 1864, Sisal.
192. AGEY, PE 149, Justicia, Tribunal de Vagos, various dates, 1865.
193. AGEY, PE 164, Justicia, "Lista de presos," April 1, 1866. Numerous other such cases appear in AGEY, PE 166, "Relación de presos," miscellaneous dates, 1866.
194. AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, "Suspensión," November 1, 1866.
195. AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, January 19, 1866.
196. AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, Comisario Imperial, July 4, 1866.
197. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Milicias, September 10, 1866.
198. AGEY, PE 153, Gobernación, Comandancia Suprema, February 14, 1866.
199. AGEY, PE 153, Gobernación, Comandancia Suprema, May 22, 1866, 7-8.
200. AGEY, PE 152, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar, Peto, September 12, 1866.
201. AGEY, PE 150, Gobernación, March 7, 1866.
202. AGEY, PE 155, Gobernación, Campeche, February 27, 1866.
203. AGEY, PE 151, Gobernación, September 19, 1866.
204. AGEY, PE 151, Gobernación, September 19, 1866.
205. AGEY, PE 151, Gobernación, September 4, 1866.
206. AGEY, PE 162, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Valladolid, February 15, 1866.
207. ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 16, April 5, 1866, 73.
208. AGEY, PE 160, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Valladolid, February 20, 1866.
209. AGEY, PE 162, various dates, 1866. This box alone contains twenty-one resignations; others are to be found in the remaining documents of 1866.
210. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Maxcanú, July 27, 1866.
211. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Mérida, September 15, 1866.
212. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Mérida, September 8, 1866.
213. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Mérida, November 15, 1866.
214. See, for example, AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Tizimín, February 20, 1866; and PE 155, Gobernación, Valladolid, February 21, 1866. Additional resignation letters also appear in AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Tekax, October 15, 1866.
215. AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, January 29, 1866.
216. AGEY, PE 163, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, September 6, 1866.
217. Ancona's report on Maya folk beliefs appears in CAIHY, Manuscripts, XLVIII, 002, 1865; for an English translation, see Rugeley, *Maya Wars*, 146-47. On the Noh Balam controversy, see AGEY, PE 155, Gobernación, Comisario Im-

perial, October 9, 1866; and AGEY, PE 156, Gobernación, Comisario Imperial, October 5, 1866.

218. AGEY, PE 163, Gobernación, Prefectura Política of Izamal, March 19, 1866; March 22, 1866; April 14, 1866.

219. AGEY, PE 163, Gobernación, Prefectura Política of Mérida, April 9–10, 1866.

220. Demographic information appears in Antonio G. Rejón, *Memoria del Estado que guarda la administración pública de Yucatán* (Mérida: José Dolores Espinosa, 1862), found in CAIHY, Libros, “Documentos interesantes del Estado de Yucatán, 1851–1902,” compiled by Crescencio Carrillo y Ancona.

221. HPS, *El regenerador*, February 17, 1853, 2.

222. On family genealogy, see AHA, Mocoohá, Matrimonios, vol. 9, January 28, 1854, 69; AHA, Mocoohá, Bautismos #24, June 13, 1855, 71. Several details argue that Buenaventura was the more responsible and respected of the two siblings. Although younger than Francisco, it was the former who became executor of his mother’s will. Moreover, Buenaventura Martínez was promoted to captain in late 1860, after what was described as a long period as lieutenant, with Francisco serving as his subordinate. See AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Milicias, December 22, 1860, Motul.

223. To take only one example, María Inez Pasto married Leonardo Pech; see AHA, Mocoohá, Bautismos, vol. 31, July 24, 1834, 23–24. Apolonia herself represented the most successful of the Bastos, and her 1862 will seems to indicate that haciendas K’uxub and Collí in fact belonged to her, rather than coming from patriarch Santiago Martínez; see ANEY, Protocols of Motul, April 10, 1862, 126, will of Apolonia Basto.

224. Evidence regarding patterns of compadrazgo comes from AHA, Mocoohá, Bautismos, vol. 25–26, various dates and pages. Again, elder brother Francisco assumed no such role in the same time period, or any other; the probable explanation is that elements of personality overrode customs of primogeniture to make Buenaventura the preferred choice as leader and patrón.

225. AGEY, FJ-Penal, 89, expediente 62, “Causa instruida a Buenaventura Martínez por desacato a la autoridad,” March 17, 1859; and expediente 72, “Estado de causas criminales de Izamal correspondientes al primer trimestre del año,” April 3, 1859. Martínez’s grievance appears to have been with the local juez, not with Irigoyen.

226. AGEY, FJ-Penal, 11, September 27, 1855, Baca.

227. AGEY, PE 159, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Baca, February 1, 1859, from a petition of the creole townsfolk of Baca, including José Isidro Martínez as signatory.

228. AGEY, PE 138, Gobernación, Guardia Militar, September 3, 1864; AGEY, PE 144, Subprefectura Política of Motul, undated list of deserters, 1865.

229. AGEY, PE 144, Subprefectura Política of Motul, June 8, 1865.

230. AGEY, PE 144, Subprefectura Política of Motul, April 12, 1865.

231. AGEY, PE 144, Subprefectura Política of Motul, January 18, 1865.

232. AGEY, PE 148, Justicia, January 4, 1865, Baca.

233. AGEY, FJ-Penal, January–March 1862, February 21, 1862, Yaxkukul.

234. AGEY, PE 162, Gobernación, Prefectura Política of Mérida, June 17, 1866.
235. AGEY, PE 152, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar, June 16, 1866.
236. AGEY, PE 161, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Motul, July 11, 1866.
237. AGEY, PE 161, Gobernación, Subprefectura Política of Motul, July 21, 1866.
238. AGEY, PE 159, Gobernación, Prefectura Política of Campeche, August 31, 1866.
239. CAIHY, Book Manuscripts, vol. 162, pages 29–32, 64, 171–79.
240. CAIHY, Book Manuscripts, vol. 162, August 17, 1866, 383. A combined infantry-cavalry force of some forty-five men was currently hunting Martínez.
241. This is the poetry reading described in the opening pages of Rugeley's *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*, ix–x.
242. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, October 1, 1866.
243. AGEY, PE 155, Gobernación, October 16, 1866.
244. John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico Since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 9–17.
245. AGEY, PE 159, Gobernación, Prefectura Política of Laguna, October 21, 1866.
246. AGEY, PE 150, Gobernación, Milicias, November 2, 1866.
247. AHAY, DO, October 26, 1866.
248. AHAY, DO, October 30, 1866, Hopelchén.
249. DHP, vol. 1, 11–12, “Expulsion del súbdito español D. Juan Planas, comerciante de Mérida, por negarse a cubrir una contribución impuesta por el comisario imperial,” April 20, 1867.
250. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Tekantó, March 3, 1866.
251. AGEY, PE 155, Gobernación, Valladolid, February 21, 1866.
252. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Mérida, May 14, 1866.
253. AGEY, PE 154, Ayuntamientos, Tekax, October 15, 1866.
254. AGEY, DO, September 19, 1866, Hopelchén.
255. AGEY, PE 164, Iglesia, October 1, 1866.
256. Salazar Ilarregui Papers, University of Texas at Arlington (SI), GA210, folder 27: “Criminal contra los sargentos segundos del noveno Batallón de Lima, Pablo Servian y Leonido Vázquez, cabos Fulgencio Zapata, Margarito Delgado y Felipe Chávez, acusados de haberse sublevado en marcha, en la villa de Hunucmá el treinta de diciembre último en la madrugada, dando muerte al subteniente del mismo cuerpo Segut,” January 3, 1867, 62ff.
257. SI, GA209–25, January 1, 1867.
258. SI, GA209–25, January 3, 1867.
259. One sample of these letters is reproduced in DHP, II, 5, “Informe de las victorias de las tropas imperiales sobre las republicanas en Calkiní,” January 17, 1867.
260. Martínez's plan appears in AHDN, xi/481.4/9834, January 14, 1867, 20f.
261. SI, GA210, folder 27: “Criminal contra los sargentos segundos,” January 3, 1867, 62ff.

262. AGEY, PE 167, Subprefectura Política of Maxcanú, January 21, 1867; Subprefectura Política of Espita, January 25, 1867.
263. AGEY, PE 167, Comandancia Militar, July 4, 1867.
264. AGEY, PE 167, Subprefectura Política of Sotuta, January 26, 1867.
265. AGEY, PE 167, Subprefectura Política of Maxcanú, January 20, 1867.
266. AGEY, PE 168, Comandancia Accidental de Río Lagartos, January 31, 1867.
267. AHDN, xi/481.4/9834, January 14, 1867, 20f.
268. Manuel Cepeda Peraza's lengthy report on the fall of the empire in Yucatán remains an important source on the events of 1866 and 1867; see xi/481.4/9834, July 1, 1867, 3-18ff.; a published version of this appears in *Historia documental militar de la intervención francesa en México y el denominado segundo imperio*, ed. Jesús de León Torrel (México, DF: Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, 1867), 799-809.
269. AGEY, PE 123, Gobernación, Guardia Nacional, December 22, 1860.
270. AHAY, DO, January 22, 1867, Izamal.
271. AHAY, DO, June 21, 1867, Izamal.
272. EA, vol. 3, January 27, 1867, 142-43.
273. AGEY, PE 167, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, January 3, 1867.
274. AGEY, PE 154, Gobernación, Teya, December 18, 1866.
275. AHAY, DO, December 17, 1866, Tunkás.
276. AGEY, FM-Ticul, vol. 16, expediente 2, December 10, 1866.
277. ANEY, February 21, 1867, 33-34.
278. AHAY, DO, January 3, 1867, Mérida.
279. AHAY, DO, April 5, 1867, Mérida.
280. AHAY, DO, April 10, 1867, hacienda Kilinché.
281. ANEY, Oficio #5, April 17, 1867, 57-58. The general absence of notarized documents between mid-April and mid-June of 1867 presumably reflects the city's political chaos.
282. ANEY, May 22, 1867, 1. As a note makes clear, no one could get a document notarized "by virtue of the fact that no escribanos exist in this plaza, which is besieged by the troops of Don Manuel Cepeda."
283. AGEY, PE 167, Campamento de Mejorada, no date.
284. This argument is advanced in John H. Coatsworth, "Patterns of Rural Rebellion in Latin America: Mexico in Comparative Perspective," in Friedrich Katz, ed., *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 21-62.

CHAPTER SIX

1. AGEY, PE 167, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, June 15, 1867.
2. AGEY, FM-Espita, box 1, vol. 15, expediente 1, 1875, "Ejercicios de Alumnos, 1875."
3. This view emerges in Daniel Cosío Villegas's monumental, multivolume *Historia moderna de México* (México: Editorial Hermes, 1955), and particularly in volume I, *La república restaurada: La vida política*.

4. The more skeptical reading appears in Laurens Ballard Perry, *Juárez and Díaz: Machine Politics in Mexico* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1978). Regarding the Yucatecan scene, see pages 101–6.

5. HPS, *Album meridano*, March 14, 1869, 16.

6. Francisco Gómez Flores's brief biography reports that Cepeda died "de una antigua enfermedad de pecho," a phrase that might indicate heart disease, but also tuberculosis or pleurisy; see Gómez Flores, "Manuel Cepeda Peraza," in *Liberales ilustres mexicanos*, ed. Daniel Cabrera (Mexico City: Editorial "El Hijo del Ahuizote," 1890), 187–91, in CAIHY, Books. It is also a known fact that Cepeda Peraza lived much of his life in rural campaigns and was known to fall into incapacitating illnesses from time to time, facts that suggest malaria, which was endemic in those days.

7. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, March 3, 1869, 1. Encomiums to Manuel Cepeda Peraza continue for several numbers thereafter.

8. AGEY, PE 192, Gobernación, 1875; the cover sheet of this funeral march survives as the wrapping for certain Gobernación papers for that years.

9. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 61, expediente 56, April 14, 1867, Conkal. The news was carried here by the cura of Mocochoá, who had just come from Baca.

10. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, April 8, 1868, 2.

11. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, January 10, 1870, 1, 4.

12. ANEY, December 31, 1867, 149.

13. AGEY, PE 186, Milicias, July 24, 1874.

14. AGEY, PE 186, Hacienda, July 1, 1874.

15. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia de Gobernadores, vol. 29, June 18, 1875, 32.

16. AGEY, PE 190, Hacienda, March 12, 1875, Tekit.

17. AGEY, PE 173, Gobernación, Izamal, August 15, 1869.

18. AGEY, PE 189, Milicias, November 26, 1875, Maxcanú.

19. AGEY, FM-Espita, box 3, vol. 16, December 27, 1877.

20. AGEY, PE 190, Ayuntamientos, April 21, 1875, Mérida.

21. ANEY, Oficio #5, no volume number, June 24, 1867, 60–62.

22. ANEY, Oficio #5, no volume number, August 16, 1867, 99–100.

23. A number of these turn up in the notary papers of early 1868; see ANEY, January 9, 1868, 7–8; January 23, 1868, 17; January 31, 1868, 9–10; Protocols of Izamal, vol. 17, February 24, 1868, 25; and Protocols of Izamal, vol. 17, March 3, 1868, 119. Personal bondings for ex-imperialists ran around one thousand pesos apiece.

24. AGEY, PE 169, Gobernación, Correspondencia, July 6, 1868.

25. AGEY, PE 173, Gobernación, August 2, 1869.

26. Complaints against jueces dominate the Restoration's Justicia-Penal papers. For some sample cases, see AGEY, FJ-Penal, January 28, 1868, Progreso; July 1, 1868, Chocholá; July 7, 1868, Maní; July 13, 1868, Kinchil; July 21, 1868, Ticul; April 6, 1868, Hunucmá; April 13, 1868, Santa Elena; October 13, 1868, Dzitás; November 6, 1868, Dzilam; November 14, 1868, Sisal; November 25, 1868, Tixkokob; January 11, 1869, Hocabá; January 21, 1869, Dzitás; February 10, 1869, Sinanché; March 12, 1869, Tecoh; April 29, 1869, Mocochoá;

May 4, 1869, Sisal; July 20, 1869, Mérida; August 16, 1869, Mérida; August 23, 1869, Tecoh; February 22, 1870, Ticul; April 8, 1870, Huhí; November 9, 1870, Hochtún; December 10, 1870, Valladolid; January 25, 1872, Sotuta; February 9, 1872, Temax; March 13, 1872, Abalá; May 2, 1872, Tekax; May 29, 1872, Mérida; October 1, 1872, Mama; October 30, 1872, Cacalchén; November 12, 1873, Ticul; October 8, 1874, Mérida; December 14, 1874, Halachó; December 23, 1874, Motul; May 31, 1876, Maxcanú. Executively reviewed cases also appear in such collections as AGEY, PE 167, Jefatura Política of Hunucmá, Correspondencia, November 27, 1867.

27. AGEY, PE 168, Jefatura Política of Mérida, October 18, 1867; AGEY, PE 168, Gobernación, Correspondencia, October 10, 1867.

28. ANEY, December 5, 1867, 138; ANEY, Protocols of Izamal #17, July 1, 1868, 58–59.

29. AGEY, PE 191, Gobernación, June 9, 1875, Mérida.

30. In 1867, we find José Cortés Acereto selling urban real estate in one of the city's southern barrios; see AGEY, PE 168, Gobierno del Estado, October 8, 1867.

31. AGEY, PE 187, Gobernación, August 15, 1874, Valladolid. Information on the family tree of Francisco Cantón appears in AGEY, PE 41, Censos y Padrones 6, #75, May 18, 1841, Valladolid.

32. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, expediente 2, June 2, 1874.

33. AGEY, FJ-Penal, November 20, 1873, Acanceh/Mérida.

34. AGEY, FJ-Penal, August 25, 1873, Mérida. Sadly, the case includes no details.

35. AGEY, PE 168, Gobierno del Estado, December 5, 1867.

36. This unusual episode appears in CAIHY, Manuscript Books, vol. 40, Actos del Cabildo de Mérida, December 23, 1872, 119.

37. AGEY, FM-Abalá, box 1, expediente 2, February 9, 1878.

38. ANEY, June 23, 1868, 148. The nearby house of José Isidro Martínez, located on the north side of the same block, served as the reference point for Gamboa's title of purchase.

39. EA, vol. 3, June 29, 1869, 345.

40. AGEY, FJ-Penal, May 12, 1873, July 16, 1873, Baca.

41. AGEY, FJ-Civil, April 9, 1876, Baca.

42. AHAY, DO, September 18, 1870, Ticul.

43. AGEY, PE 164, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Excepciones a la contribución personal y de tequios vecinales," December 9, 1866. The stories included here were verified by a creole administrator and were not simply the blarney that petitioners were known to spin.

44. AGEY, PE 164, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Excepciones a la contribución personal y de tequios vecinales," December 9, 1866.

45. AGEY, PE 164, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Excepciones a la contribución personal y de tequios vecinales," November 8, 1866.

46. AGEY, PE 164, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Excepciones a la contribución personal y de tequios vecinales," June 3, 1866.

47. AGEY, PE 164, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Excepciones a la contribución personal y de tequios vecinales," July 23, 1866.

48. AGEY, PE 164, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Excepciones a la contribución personal y de tequios vecinales," November 25, 1866.
49. AGEY, PE 164, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Excepciones a la contribución personal y de tequios vecinales," June 28, 1866.
50. AGEY, PE 164, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Excepciones a la contribución personal y de tequios vecinales," September 15, 1866.
51. AGEY, PE 164, Gobernación, Prefectura Política, "Excepciones a la contribución personal y de tequios vecinales," October 21, 1866.
52. AGEY, FM-Valladolid, census of Chichimilá, 1883.3. AGEY, FM-Ticul, vol. 15, expediente 1, November 18, 1867.
53. AGEY, FM-Ticul, 15, 1, November 18, 1867.
54. AGEY, PE 169, Ayuntamientos, Ticul, July 19, 1868.
55. AGEY, PE 187, Gobernación, September 17, 1874, Tepakam.
56. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, December 29, 1880, 3.
57. AGEY, PE 198, Gobernación, August 21, 1878, Cuncumil.
58. AGEY, FJ-Civil, December 13, 1872.
59. AGEY, PE 186, Milicias, November 15, 1874, Acanceh.
60. See, for example, elections for batab and república in such documents as AGEY, PE 168, Jefatura Política of Sotuta, December 9, 1867; and Jefatura Política of Motul, December 5, 1867.
61. AHAY, DO, July 2, 1867, Bécal.
62. AGEY, PE 170, Hacienda, various dates, 1868.
63. AGEY, PE 169, Gobernación, Mérida, 1868.
64. Wolfgang Gabbert, *Becoming Maya: Ethnicity and Society in Yucatán Since 1500* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 73.
65. AGEY, PE 192, Gobernación, October 22, 1875, Hunucmá.
66. See the brief item from Iturbide pueblo in HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, October 24, 1870.
67. On the transition from cofradías to gremios, see Terry Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men: Religion and Popular Cultures in Southeast Mexico, 1800–1876* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 144–50.
68. AGEY, PE 349, Gobernación, February 11, 1901, Valladolid; AGEY, PE 483, Gobernación, July 14, 1905, Valladolid.
69. AGEY, PE 205, Ayuntamientos, circa August 15, 1878, Sitalpech.
70. AGEY, PE 167, Jefatura Política of Hunucmá, Correspondencia, November 6, 1867; AGEY, PE 187, Milicias, various dates, 1875, Valladolid.
71. AGEY, PE 197, Ayuntamientos, July 8, 1877, Izamal. Mayas appeared on the town's elector list.
72. For a rundown of some of these communities, see AGEY, PE 215, Gobernación, various dates and towns, 1880.
73. AGEY, PE 238, Milicias, May 8, 1885, Chichimilá; AGEY, PE 239, Gobernación, various dates and places, 1886; AGEY, PE 211, Ayuntamientos, November 9, 1880, Chichimilá; November 9, 1888, Tinum.
74. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, expediente 8, December 18, 1875, Ekmul.

75. AGEY, FM-Espita, box 3, vol. 13, February 11, 1871.
76. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, October 7, 1877, 1; see chapter 7, "For the Caste War Dead," for Kuyoc's leadership in retaining Maní's control of its historical treasures.
77. AGEY, PE 209, Ayuntamientos, March 30, 1879, Uayma; AGEY, PE 199, Milicias, September 12, 1878, Cenotillo.
78. AGEY, PE 187, Gobernación, September 5, 1874. Koyoc was called to testify to the military service of one Vicente Cauich.
79. AGEY, PE 221, Gobernación, April 19, 1882, Tixmeuac.
80. AGEY, PE 199, Milicias, August 6, 1877, Mérida.
81. AGEY, PE 228, Gobernación, Jefatura Política de Espita, March 14, 1884.
82. AGEY, RPP, vol. 1463, various dates and pages, 1872-78. The register of transactions for rural properties (*fincas*) for the years 1872-78 reveals that of the 503 sales of *fincas* under two hundred pesos, forty-nine were purchased by individuals of Maya surname.
83. AGEY, PE 173, Gobernación, October 19, 1869.
84. I refrain from summarizing every such case. For the composite sketch given in the text, I have drawn from the wills of Pablo Can of Umán, in ANEY, July 10, 1847, 80-81; Patricio Cab of Kinchil, in ANEY, September 22, 1847, 61-62; Domingo Canché of Mocochoá, in ANEY, January 1, 1851, 1-2; Hermenegildo Pech of Muxupip, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 11, February 7, 1854, 12-13; Cerefino Huchim of Huhí, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 11, December 7, 1854, 119-20; Baltazara Pech of Mérida, in AGEY, FJ-Civil, box 10, June 1, 1855; Juan Pablo Canché of Sicpach, in AGEY, FJ-Civil, box 11, October 9, 1855; Clemente Tec of Mérida, in AGEY, FJ-Civil, box 11, December 24, 1855; Paula Tsul of Huhí, in ANEY, June 5, 1858, 87-88; Juana Na of Dzidzantún, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 13, February 28, 1861, 18-19; Lauriano Kuk of Sanahcat, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 13, July 20, 1861, 117-18; María Isidora Pech of Tixpeual, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 13, August 13, 1861, 98-99; Bernardo Tun of Izamal, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 13, October 28, 1861, 222-25; María Ana Coyí of Teya, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 14, May 16, 1862, 99-105; Luis Chim of Hocabá, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 15, November 19, 1863, 83-84; José Benito Dzib of Cantamayec, in AGEY, PJ-Civil, April 1, 1864; Juana Dzib of Hocabá, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 16, February 18, 1866, 19-22; José Pech of Sudzal, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 16, April 12, 1866, 29-30; Narciso Moo of Maxcanú, in ANEY, May 4, 1866, 104-8; Petrona Cauich of Dzonotchel, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 16, July 14, 1866, 65; Apolonia Noh of Muxupip, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 16, July 17, 1866, 68-69; Manuel Cob of Motul, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 16, November 26, 1866, no page numbers; María Inez Yuit, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 18, November 29, 1866, no page numbers; José Justo Pech of Seyé, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 16, December 20, 1866, 106-7; Juan Santos of Chapab, in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, vol. 1, January 5, 1869, no page numbers; Francisco Uc of Tekax, in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, vol. 1, June 21, 1870, no page num-

bers; José Sulú of hacienda San José, Tekax, ANEY, in Protocols of Tekax, Book 1, April 5, 1871, no page numbers; María Buenaventura Noh of Bokabá, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 19, June 14, 1871, 105–6; Manuel Cutz of Cansahcab, in ANEY, Protocols of Izamal, vol. 19, June 22, 1871, 117–18; Rafaela Mex of Baca, in ANEY, “Protocolos de Pueblos,” Book for 1869–75, July 28, 1871, 68–69; José Remigio Sulú of Tixmeuac, in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, vol. 2, October 13, 1872, no page numbers; Luis Poot of Baca, in ANEY, “Protocolos de Pueblos vol. for 1869–1875, March 2, 1873, 123–24; Juan Nic of Akil, in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, vol. 2, April 19, 1876, no page numbers; Casimiro Canché of Tekax, in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, vol. 3, June 24, 1876, no page numbers; Bernardo Chay of Seyé, in ANEY, “Protocolos de Pueblos,” vol. 2, Oficio #8, November 1, 1876, 8–9; Anselmo Chay of Celestún, in ANEY, “Protocolos de Pueblos,” vol. 2, Oficio #8, March 6, 1877, 13–14; Marcelina Cituk of Tekax, in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, Book 4, February 7, 1878, 3–5; María Ucán of Tekax, in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, Book 4, October 28, 1878, no page numbers; Gregorio Cocom of Tekax, in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, vol. 4, May 22, 1879, 9–40; Simona Uc of Tekax, in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, vol. 4, March 1, 1881, 12–13; Simona Bacal of Tekax, in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, Book 4, July 30, 1881, 52–55; Felipa Canul of Kinchil, in ANEY, “Protocolos de Pueblos,” Oficio #8, vol. 7, March 6, 1882, 130–31; Anseto Poot, in ANEY, “Protocolos de Pueblos,” Oficio #8, vol. 7, September 13, 1882, 97; Tomasa Pech of Kinchil, in ANEY, “Protocolos de Pueblos,” Oficio #8, vol. 7, September 28, 1882, 99–100; and José María May of Umán, in ANEY, “Protocolos de Pueblos,” Oficio #8, vol. 7, October 29, 1882, 126–27.

85. ANEY, Protocols of Valladolid, vol. 2, July 1, 1883, no page numbers.

86. Tzuc’s detailed will appears in ANEY, Protocols of Tekax, Book 1, July 15, 1870, no page numbers. A translated version of this document appears in Terry Rugeley, *Maya Wars: Ethnographic Accounts from Nineteenth-Century Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 155–58.

87. Registers of cattle brands on Maya-owned small properties can be found in assorted papers of AGEY, PE 245 and 246, Milicias, various dates and places, 1887. As the foregoing reference suggests, archival sections such as “Milicias” and “Gobernación” are apt to contain heterogeneous materials.

88. See, for example, the role of Santos Chalé and (no relation) Rogerio Chalé in Ben Fallaw, *Cárdenas Compromised: The Failure of Reform in Postrevolutionary Yucatán* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 29–33, 47–52.

89. I advance this point with a certain caution. Little is known about porfirian tax collection in Yucatán, and it is altogether possible that district and town officials continued to rely on Maya employees to do much of the work. The subject remains open to further investigation.

90. AHAY, DO, May 16, 1872, Ixil.

91. AGEY, PE 187, Gobernación, November 20, 1874, Mérida.

92. Novelo’s death is known only through a brief mention in the papers of Belizean officials; see AB, Records 102, June 19, 1868, 118; they claim that he died “three or four weeks ago,” thus dating his passing at early May.

93. AGEY, PE 173, Gobernación, August 12, 1869.

94. As revealed in a memo from the jefe político of Valladolid to Irigoyen, in AGEY, PE 126, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, August 13, 1861.
95. EA, vol. 4, various dates and pages.
96. EA, vol. 5, November 10, 1875, 104–9.
97. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, February 27, 1874, Ekmul.
98. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 1, expediente 3, January 24, 1873.
99. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 3, expediente 5, October 8, 1877, Euán. Mojonero quarrels of various sorts abounded; see, for example, the pueblo of Opichén accusing Felipe Peón of destroying mojoneros in ANEY, December 7, 1867, 139–49.
100. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, expediente 2, May 11, 1874, Tixkokob.
101. AGEY, FM-Ticul, book 5, August 4, 1868, 35; AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 1, expediente 10, December 24, 1872.
102. ANEY, November 27, 1875, 34.
103. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, December 12, 1874.
104. AGEY, PE 209, Ayuntamientos, May 7, 1879, Tekax.
105. As happened when the ayuntamiento of Hunucmá set about trying to construct a school; see AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Hunucmá, September 4, 1876.
106. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, December 26, 1874.
107. The case in point, Pedro Macial Hernández, owed three pesos; see AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, expediente 2, December 7, 1874.
108. On the Campeche properties, see Gabbert, *Becoming Maya*, 72.
109. Herbert S. Klein, *Haciendas and Ayllus: Rural Society in the Bolivian Andes in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 58–62, 95–100.
110. Sometimes he said no, sometimes yes. See, respectively, AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 24, legajo 38, expediente 1, April 29, 1876, Mérida; and AGEY, FM-Ticul, 24, 37, 2, May 28, 1876, Mérida.
111. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 24, legajo 37, expediente 3, May 17, 1876, Mérida.
112. AGEY, FM-Ticul, vol. 5, July 3, 1856, 79.
113. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Ticul, August 22, 1877.
114. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 1, expediente 5, September 22, 1873, Ekmul.
115. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 24, vol. 37, expediente 3, August 6, 1876, Dzan.
116. Guy P. C. Thomson with David LaFrance, *Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Juan Francisco Lucas and the Puebla Sierra* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999).
117. AGEY, PE 221, Hacienda, October 31, 1882, México; the resolution to the case is unknown.
118. EA, vol. 5, November 10, 1875, 104–9.
119. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, expediente 8, November 23, 1875.
120. AGEY, PE 188, Milicias, December 20, 1874, Tixkokob.
121. AGEY, PE 203, Gobernación, November 17, 1878, Tekax.
122. AGEY, PE 191, Gobernación, Milicias, April 16, 1875, Maxcanú.

123. AGEY, PE 204, Milicias, March 27, 1878, Halachó.
124. Aldo A. Lauria-Santiago, *An Agrarian Republic: Commercial Agriculture and the Politics of Peasant Communities in El Salvador, 1823-1914* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), particularly chapter 7. A similar pattern of varied responses to land privatization, or *reparto*, emerges in Liberal-era Michoacán; see Jennie Purnell, *Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: The Agraristas and Cristeros of Michoacán* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), chapter 2.
125. AGEY, PE 168, Gobierno del Estado, various dates, late 1867.
126. A thorough history of the Maya freeholders *outside* the porfirian henequen zone remains to be written, but considerable evidence already exists to make the case. For the Chenes region, see Gabbert, *Becoming Maya*, 84. For the Oxkutzcab region, see Margarita Rosales González, *Oxkutzcab, Yucatán, 1900-1960: Campesinos, cambio agrícola y mercado* (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1988), 77-84.
127. AGEY, PJ, box 20, expediente 012830, October 8, 1877, Tekax.
128. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 24, legajo 38, expediente 1, April 11, 1876, Mama.
129. See AGEY, FM-Ticul, vol. 5, various dates and pages, 1868.
130. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, expediente 8, 1875, Ekmul.
131. As happened in Samahil; see AGEY, PE 167, JP-Hunucmá, Correspondencia, November 11, 1867.
132. Statistics on the palo de tinte exporters can be found in AGEY, PE 203, Gobernación, various dates, 1878, Mérida; and in AGEY, PE 203, Milicias, June 2, 1878, Hunucmá. On the violence related to forest usage in the Hunucmá area, see Paul Eiss, *In the Name of El Pueblo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming), chapter 3.
133. AGEY, PE 203, Gobernación, March 20, 1878, Mérida.
134. AGEY, PE 203, Gobernación, March 26, 1868, Tizimín.
135. See, for example, AGEY, PE 168, Gobernación, Correspondencia, various dates, 1867.
136. EA, vol. 5, March 24, 1875, 58-59.
137. AHAY, DO, February 13, 1887, Peto.
138. AGEY, PE 189, Milicias, April 28, 1875, Motul.
139. AHAY, DO, May 26, 1875, Izamal/Tunkás.
140. AHAY, DO, June 29, 1870, Izamal.
141. AHAY, DO, August 6, 1867, Ticul. On the history of the archicofradías, see Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 77-79.
142. AHAY, DO, May 5, 1870; the town under discussion was Hocabá, but the letter comes from nearby Halachó.
143. CAIHY, Manuscript Books, vol. 40, Actos del Cabildo de Mérida 1872-74, October 25, 1872, 63. On the protests surrounding the exclaustation, see Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 85-86.
144. These were Valladolid, Chichimilá, Chemax, Tixcacalcupul, Uayma, Izamal, Tekantó, Sotuta, Hunucmá, Tizimín, Calotmul, Kikil, Panabá, Temax, Dzidzantún, Mocochoá, Yaxkukul, Nolo, and of course Mérida itself. See AGEY, PE 185, Gobernación, Correspondencia, June 22, 1870.

145. AGEY, PE 185, Gobernación, Correspondencia, November 25, 1869; December 30, 1869; July 26, 1871; and December 18, 1873.
146. AHAY, DO, February 13, 1872, Tunkás.
147. AHAY, DO, September 18, 1867, Chiná.
148. AGEY, PE 191, Gobernación, July 28, 1875, Hunucmá.
149. AHAY, DO, February 8, 1870, Tizimín.
150. AHAY, DO, April 3, 1870, Kopomá.
151. AHAY, DO, February 2, 1870, Uayma.
152. AHAY, DO, April 3, 1870, Kopomá; April 11, 1870, Sacalum; April 12, 1870, Cozumel; August 9, 1870, Uayma; October 21, 1870, Tizimín; October 21, 1872, Panabá; August 17, 1872, Hocabá; and March 5, 1873, Izamal.
153. AHAY, DO, February 18, 1870, Mérida.
154. AHAY, DO, November 22, 1870, Hocabá; AHAY, DO, October 16, 1872, Seyé.
155. AHAY, DO, September 26, 1870, Tecoh.
156. AHAY, DO, October 21, 1870, Tizimín; October 21, 1870, Kopomá.
157. AHAY, DO, September 1, 1870, Mérida.
158. AHAY, DO, July 29, 1870, Tekax.
159. AHAY, DO, October 5, 1870, October 28, 1870, December 14, 1870, Halachó.
160. AHAY, DO, November 27, 1870, Seibaplaya.
161. AHAY, DO, January 15, 1870, Campeche.
162. AGEY, FM-Espita, box 3, vol. 13, expediente 1, June 22, 1871.
163. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, expediente 9, May 27, 1876, Ekmul.
164. In Temax, Tizimín, and Ticul, among other locations; see AGEY, PE 189, Milicias, April 16, 1875, Temax; April 26, 1875, Tizimín; April 18, 1875, Ticul.
165. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, book 29, February 26, 1875, 8–9.
166. Oratories proliferated from 1870 onward, a way for estates to internalize old features of village life; see Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 149. See also AHAY, DO, November 27, 1872, Temax; July 16, 1872, Calkiní; and December 21, 1873, Chiná.
167. AHAY, DO, February 13, 1872, Tunkás.
168. AHAY, DO, March 9, 1872, Espita.
169. AHAY, DO, February 27, 1872, Tunkás.
170. AHAY, DO, June 29, 1872, Sotuta.
171. AHAY, DO, circa July 17, 1872, Tekax.
172. AHAY, DO, May 25, 1872, Peto.
173. AHAY, DO, January 12, 1870, Hocabá; February 12, 1870, Hocabá.
174. Assorted numbers of *La caridad* (1868–70) survive in HPS.
175. HPS, *La caridad*, March 10, 1871.
176. This intriguing document is buried at the conclusion of the wholly unrelated papers of AHA, Mocochá, Bautismos, volume 26, April 27, 1869.
177. In *Juárez and Díaz*, Laurens Ballard Perry argues that chronic local infighting essentially led to the construction of a political machine under Benito Juárez; regarding the Yucatecan scene, see pages 101–6. The book basically concentrates on

how high-level political actors such as Juárez were forced to construct machines. Though lacking in information on Yucatecan politics and society, Perry's vision of Restoration chaos is essentially correct.

178. AHAY, DO, September 16, 1870, Mocoohá.

179. AHAY, DO, July 1, 1867, Sotuta.

180. AGEY, Congreso del Estado (CE), Dictámenes, July 8, 1871.

181. As is brilliantly described in Paul Sullivan, *Xuxub Must Die: The Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatan* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004).

182. AGEY, PE 188, Milicias, August 26, 1874, Tixkokob; AGEY, PE 202, Guerra y Marina, February 1878, Izamal.

183. AGEY, PE 186, Milicias, August 3, 1874, Valladolid; January 3, 1874, Tekax.

184. AGEY, PE 186, Milicias, September 3, 1874.

185. AGEY, PE 191, Gobernación, April 5, 1875, Mérida.

186. AGEY, PE 186, Milicias, September 3, 1874.

187. AGEY, PE 189, Milicias, February 25, 1875, Tixkokob.

188. AGEY, PE 202, Guerra y Marina, October 1878, Sotuta.

189. AGEY, PE 202, Guerra y Marina, February 28, 1878, Mérida.

190. The foregoing review of militia problems in the Sotuta area appears in AGEY, PE 186, Milicias, July 26, 1874, Izamal; AGEY, PE 186, Milicias, August 18, 1874, Valladolid; and AGEY, PE 187, Gobernación, November 25, 1874, Izamal.

191. AGEY, PE 188, Milicias, August 1, 1874, Izamal.

192. AGEY, PE 189, Milicias, March 30, 1875, Tizimín.

193. See, for example, AGEY, PE 184, Milicias, various dates, 1873.

194. AGEY, PE 186, Milicias, August 18, 1874, Valladolid.

195. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Tizimín, June 17, 1876.

196. That, at least, is how Peto's cura Robert Domínguez reported it; see AHAY, DO, October 1, 1870, Peto.

197. AGEY, PE 189, Milicias, April 26, 1875, Temax.

198. AGEY, PE 198, Gobernación, August 25, 1877, Oxtutzcab.

199. As happened in Mama in 1874; see AGEY, FJ-Penal, October 4, 1874, Tekax/Mama.

200. EA, vol. 5, March 27, 1878, 300–308.

201. This effectively removed the communities of Uayma, Cuncunul, Tinum, Chichimilá, Chemax, and Tixcacalcupul from the recruiting rosters; see AGEY, PE 186, Milicias, August 4, 1874, Valladolid.

202. AGEY, PE 199, Milicias, February 13, 1878, Maxcanú.

203. CAIHY, Manuscript Books, vol. 40, Actos del Cabildo de Mérida, January 7, 1874, 363; this particular entry reproduces the report of Mérida's own jefe político regarding colonia abuses in the pueblos.

204. AGEY, PE 184, Milicias, Correspondencia, January 11, 1873.

205. AGEY, PE 187, Gobernación, August 11, 1874, Tunkás.

206. As happened, for example, when a milpero tipped off authorities regarding rebels prowling around Peto in 1875; see AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 29, October 12, 1875, 62.

207. AGEY, PE 209, Ayuntamientos, March 26, 1879, Santa Elena.
208. Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Lords of the Mountain: Social Banditry and Peasant Protest in Cuba, 1878–1918* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 112–18.
209. José Arturo Güémez Pineda, “Everyday Forms of Mayan Resistance: Cattle Rustling in Northwestern Yucatán,” in *Land, Labor, and Capital in Modern Yucatán: Essays in Regional History and Political Economy*, ed. Jeffery T. Brannon and Gilbert M. Joseph (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 18–50.
210. AGEY, FJ-Penal, January 12, 1850, Mérida. There is no record of the group ever being brought to justice. Their practice of dressing as mayeros—nothing more than a shirt and short pants—suggests that they were in fact Maya, and indeed, victims initially took them for arrieros.
211. AGEY, PE 103, Gobernación, “Comandancia de la línea de Hopelchén,” October 20, 1856; AGEY, FJ-Penal, August 19, 1854, Mérida.
212. AGEY, PE 136, Gobernación, Jefatura Política of Tizimín, July 18, 1863.
213. AGEY, PE 167, Jefatura Política of Tixkokob, November 24, 1867.
214. AGEY, PE 167, Subprefectura Política of Maxcanú, January 4, 1867. He was captured during a stickup between Kopomá and Chocholá.
215. AGEY, PE 152, Gobernación, Comandancia Militar, June 8, 1866.
216. AGEY, PE 162, Gobernación, Prefectura Política of Izamal, May 16, 1866.
217. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Acanceh, September 6, 1876.
218. I have only found said decree mentioned after the fact; see AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, July 24, 1877.
219. AGEY, PE 167, Subprefectura Política of Espita, January 25, 1867.
220. AGEY, PE 184, Milicias, Correspondencia, various dates, 1873.
221. Erosa, a widower with a large household, appears in the 1878 census of Espita; see AGEY, FM-Espita, box 3A, vol. 17, expediente1, February 26, 1878.
222. AGEY, PE 171, Milicias, Tekax, miscellaneous dates, 1868.
223. AGEY, PE 183, Ayuntamientos, Motul, September 5, 1873; September 20, 1873, September 22, 1873.
224. Within the space of a few months, political roles had reversed themselves, with former prefects stigmatized as “perturbers of order,” and Buenaventura Martínez leading detachments of soldiers in a prolonged hunt to bring those perturbers to justice; see AGEY, PE 168, Comandancia Militar, Motul, various dates, October 1867.
225. The vallasolitanos’ florid plea is to be found in AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 1, expediente 4, January 31, 1878, Valladolid.
226. AGEY, PE 183, Ayuntamientos, Motul, September 20, 1873.
227. AGEY, FJ, February 7, 1854.
228. Salazar Ilarregui sent the first telegraph message, from Mérida to Sisal, on November 12, 1865; see Paulo Sánchez Novelo, *Yucatán durante la intervención francesa (1863–1867)* (Mérida: Maldonado Editores, 1983), 103.
229. AGEY, PE 189, Milicias, February 17, 1875, Ticul.
230. AGEY, PE 372, Fomento, March 6, 1902, Mérida.
231. AGEY, PE 188, Milicias, August 11, 1874, Izamal.

232. AGEY, PE 186, Milicias, August 2, 1874.
233. AGEY, PE 167, Guerra y Marina, November 8, 1867; AGEY, PE 168, Jefatura Política of Ticul, November 24, 1867; AHAY, DO, December 2, 1867, Peto.
234. AGEY, PE 168, Gobierno del Estado, November 22, 1867.
235. AGEY, PE 171, Milicia, Correspondencia, July 25, 1868.
236. Regarding the involvement of the military caudillos, see AGEY, PE 167, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, November 16–28, 1867; and AGEY, PE 168, Guerra y Marina, November 15, 1867. On the role of some twenty-five civil servants, see AGEY, FJ-Penal, February 7, 1868, Mérida.
237. Carlos R. Menéndez, ed., “El motín de la ciudadela de San Benito del 31 de enero de 1869,” *Cuadernos de historia: Hombres y sucesos de otros tiempos*, I (Mérida: Compañía Tipográfica Yucateca, 1943), 21–27, in CAIHY, Books.
238. AHAY, DO, January 28, 1870, Mochá.
239. Court records make reference to a wave of highway robberies near Izamal, but give no details; see AGEY, FJ-Penal, August 24, 1868, Izamal.
240. For an overview of the 1872–73 revolt, see Perry, *Juárez and Díaz*, 101–6.
241. AHAY, DO, June 6, 1872, Tunkás; AHAY, DO, July 19, 1873, Temax.
242. AGEY, PE 187, Gobernación, July 30, 1873.
243. AHDN, Cancelados, “Guillermo Palomino,” xl/iii/2–250, various dates and pages. For details on his campaign, see AHDN, xi/481.4/9204, 1873.
244. AHAY, DO, July 29, 1873, Dzitás.
245. Francisco Cantón Rosado, *Datos y documentos relativos a la vida militar y política del Sr. General Brigadier Don Francisco Cantón*, ed. Carlos R. Menéndez (Mérida: Tipográfica Yucateco, 1930), 158–65.
246. AGEY, PE 190, Ayuntamientos, July 11, 1875, Valladolid.
247. The tragic story of Lavalle’s death is found in AGEY, FJ-Penal, no box number, February 27, 1874, Mérida-Izamal. Many questions still surround this murky episode, the most important being the treatment of Castro himself. He was quickly brought to trial for illegally occupying the house of Gamboa, and more important, for giving orders for the ley fuga, whose application, at least in the formal sense, does not appear to have been common in the days before Porfirio Díaz. Why the prosecution of Castro, who had done the current regime an immense favor? And why the sudden concern over the ley fuga in an era of continuous revolts and assassinations? Perhaps the Black Decree was still fresh enough in the minds of Mexicans that many felt it necessary to avoid such extremes, regardless of the political cost.
248. AGEY, PE 188, Ayuntamientos, January 16, 1874, Mérida.
249. AGEY, PE 187, Gobernación, August 15, 1874, Valladolid.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. AGEY, PE 204, Gobernación, April 18, 1878, México. The note comes from the Minister of Development, Colonization, Industry, and Commerce.
2. AGEY, PE 187, Gobernación, July 17, 1874. The letter came from a certain Enrique Cerruli, of San Francisco, California, attempting to interest Governor Ancona in Bancroft’s work, particularly *The Native Races of the Pacific States*.

3. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, November 3, 1880, 4; the “new Tasmanian” comment appears in an article from the Mexico City periodical *Siglo XIX*, reproduced in HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, February 14, 1881, 3-4.

4. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, November 8, 1874, 1.

5. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, January 21, 1876, 3.

6. For an example of one of Díaz’s many “defeats,” see HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, June 12, 1876, 3.

7. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, June 19, 1876, 3-4. No copy of *El artesano católico* has turned up, and its contents can only be surmised by the brief description given in the unsympathetic *Razón*.

8. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, January 31, 1876, 3-4.

9. See Eligio Ancona’s address to the legislature in HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, July 3, 1876, 1-2.

10. Almost nothing is known of the González revolt; our only report exists because Eligio Ancona briefly mentioned it to the state legislature during his July 1876 address, some half year after the fact; see HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, July 3, 1876, 1-2.

11. “Teodocio Canto y Aguilar,” in *Yucatán en el tiempo*, vol. 2, 1998, 67.

12. See Cantón’s unctuous letter to Díaz in Alberto María Carreño, ed., *Archivo del General Porfirio Díaz: Memorias y documentos* (APD), vol. 15 (Mexico City: Editorial Elede, 1952), December 23, 1876, 145-46.

13. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, February 7, 1876, 3-4; February 14, 1876, 1.

14. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, February 2, 1876, 1-2.

15. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 24, vol. 37, expediente 1, February 8, 1876, Muna.

16. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Izamal, May 31, 1876.

17. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Peto, June 13, 1876.

18. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Tixkokob, June 14, 1876.

19. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Peto, June 5, 1876.

20. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Espita, June 6, 1876.

21. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Motul, June 17, 1876; June 23, 1876; AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Temax, June 13, 1876.

22. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Temax, June 13, 1876.

23. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Hunucmá, June 1, 1876; June 6, 1876.

24. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Hunucmá, June 26, 1876.

25. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Temax, June 19, 1876.

26. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Hunucmá, June 29, 1876.

27. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Motul, June 23, 1876.

28. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, July 10, 1876, 4; July 14, 1876, 4; July 19, 1876, 3; July 24, 1876, 3-4; August 9, 1876, 1.

29. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, July 31, 1876, 4.

30. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, November 29, 1876, 1.

31. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 24, vol. 37, expediente 1, February 17, 1876, Chab.

32. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 24, vol. 37, expediente 1, February 19, 1876, Muna.

33. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, November 20, 1876, 1.

34. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, November 29, 1876, 1; Juan E. Díaz assumed power on November 18.
35. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 29, December 15, 1876, 154.
36. Francisco Cantón Rosado, *Datos y documentos relativos a la vida militar y política del Sr. General Brigadier Don Francisco Cantón*, ed. Carlos R. Menéndez (Mérida: Tipográfica Yucateco, 1930), 63–67.
37. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, January 15, 1877, 4.
38. EA, vol. 5, January 13, 1877, 174–76.
39. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, April 23, 1880, 4.
40. Charles A. Hale, “The Structure of Scientific Politics,” in *The Transformation of Mexican Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 25–63; John F. Chuchiak IV, “Intellectuals, Indians and the Press: Polemical Journalism of Justo Sierra O’Reilly,” *Saastun: Revista de la cultura maya* 2 (1997): 6–16.
41. *Yucatán en el tiempo*, 4, 1999, 149–53.
42. HPS, *La burla*, January 20, 1861, 96.
43. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, March 15, 1878, 3.
44. Allen Wells, *Yucatán’s Gilded Age: Haciendas, Henequen, and International Harvester, 1860–1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), 29–47.
45. Accusations against Canto went on and on; see AGEY, PE 283, Gobernación, August 15, 1893, Cansahcab.
46. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, May 1, 1878, 4.
47. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, June 4, 1877, 3.
48. See Gilbert M. Joseph, *Revolution from Without: Yucatán, Mexico, and the United States, 1880–1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Wells, *Yucatán’s Gilded Age*; and Allen Wells and Gilbert M. Joseph, *Summer of Discontent, Seasons of Upheaval: Elite Politics and Rural Insurgency in Yucatán, 1876–1915* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996). One underlying argument in those works is that wealthy henequen planters, though indisputably wealthy, nonetheless resented the purchasing monopoly and political stranglehold of the Molina-Montes clique and saw the early revolutionary ferment as their chance to unseat that clique.
49. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, December 11, 1878, 3.
50. Javier Rodríguez Piña, *Guerra de castas: La venta de indios mayas a Cuba, 1848–1861* (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1990), 181. His source on this point is Cuban author Jaime Sarusky’s *Las fantasmas de Omaje* (Havana: Unión de Artistas y Escritores de Cuba, 1966), 105–13.
51. Terry Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men: Religion and Popular Cultures in Southeast Mexico, 1800–1876* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 118.
52. AGEY, PE 203, Gobernación, various dates and locations, 1878.
53. AGEY, PE 197, Milicias, July 16, 1877, Tixkokob.
54. AGEY, PE 246, Milicias, May 11, 1887, Valladolid.
55. As happened with Maya residents of Teabo; see AGEY, PE 268, Gobernación, April 9, 1891.

56. AGEY, PE 199, Milicias, September 7, 1878, Mérida.
57. AGEY, PE 149, Milicias, August 4, 1878, Hunucmá.
58. AGEY, PE 198, Gobernación, July 4, 1877, Mérida.
59. For complaints against debt-dodging hacendados of the Tixkokob region, see AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 2, expediente 10, July 11, 1875, Tixmeual.
60. EA, vol. 5, January 14, 1877, 1878.
61. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Espita, January 13, 1877.
62. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, February 4, 1876, 3-4.
63. AGEY, FM-Espita, box 1, vol. 16, August 14, 1877.
64. AGEY, PE 221, Gobernación, November 4, 1882, Mérida.
65. AGEY, PE 221, Justicia, November 9, 1882, Mérida.
66. Allen Wells, "All in the Family: Railroads and Henequen Monoculture in Porfirian Yucatán," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 72, 2 (1992): 172.
67. See discussion of Oxcutzcab ejido land in Chapter 6.
68. AGEY, PE 268, Gobernación, January 1, 1891, San Felipe.
69. AGEY, PE 268, Gobernación, April 17, 1891, Maxcanú.
70. AGEY, PE 248, Gobernación, November 18, 1888, Kimbilá.
71. This little-studied document appears in AGEY, PE 520, Fomento, 1905. It includes most partidos, but unfortunately lacks information from Valladolid.
72. AGEY, PE 221, Justicia, February 25, 1882, Mérida.
73. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Maxcanú, December 14, 1877.
74. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Acanceh, August 12, 1877; Jefatura Política of Maxcanú, December 10, 1877.
75. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Acanceh, January 21, 1877.
76. AGEY, PE 215, Gobernación, January 16, 1880, Mérida.
77. AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 3, expediente 2, March 12, 1877.
78. AGEY, PE 199, Milicias, January 16, 1877, Espita.
79. In the original Spanish the line runs, "Al imperio no sirvieron sino aquellos que no sirvieron." I came across this typically porfirian witticism in Hernán Menéndez Rodríguez, *Iglesia y poder: Proyectos sociales, alianzas políticas y económicas en Yucatán (1857-1917)* (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1995), 183.
80. AGEY, PE 217, Milicias, July 17, 1881, Acanceh.
81. AGEY, PE 217, Gobernación, various dates, 1881, Valladolid.
82. AGEY, PE 203, Gobernación, September 25, 1878, Hunucmá.
83. AGEY, PE 204, Gobernación, September 5, 1877, Mérida. In fact, Molina never stopped working, but rather was in high demand even in the early months of the Restoration; see ANEY, Oficio #5, various dates, June-July 1867.
84. *Yucatán en el tiempo*, vol. 4, 230. The Hospital O'Horan is an institution familiar to researchers, since the state archive is housed in an outlying building of the complex.
85. The earliest mention I have been able to find appears in AGEY, FM-Tixkokob, box 1, vol. 1, expediente 6, March 10, 1872. Collection problems persisted through 1876; see AGEY, PE (reclassification series), Jefatura Política of Acanceh, June 21, 1876.

86. AGEY, FM-Valladolid, book 1, various dates, 1881–84; AGEY, PE 221, Gobernación, September 26, 1882, Valladolid.

87. AGEY, PE 199, Milicias, September 12, 1878, Cenotillo.

88. AGEY, LPCE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 29, February 10, 1877, 196, Sotuta; February 13, 1877, 169, Peto.

89. AGEY, PE 483, Gobernación, “Ley constitucional para el gobierno interior de los pueblos del estado,” 1905. Specifically, the laws regarding the jefe’s purview contained seventy-two articles and subarticles.

90. For a list of jefe-supervised fagina projects, see HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, February 19, 1879, 2–3; and February 24, 1879, 2. Information on the dredging operations comes from AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Tizimín, September 29, 1877.

91. AGEY, PE 221, Justicia, September 2, 1880, Ticul.

92. AGEY, PE 125, Benefencia, June 14, 1881, Dzitás.

93. AGEY, FM-Ticul, box 24, vol. 38, expediente 3, May 28, 1875, Mérida.

94. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Peto, July 3, 1877.

95. AGEY, PE 211, Justicia, November 18, 1879, other dates, Peto.

96. We only know of the episode through the petition of one Manuela Coronado, asking a pension for her husband, Fabián Gamboa, who had perished in the skirmish; see AGEY, CE, 87, Comisiones, I, 5, February 11, 1884, Mérida.

97. AGEY, PE 187, Gobernación, September 14, 1874, other dates, Acanceh.

98. AGEY, PE 189, Milicias, February 29, 1875, Tizimín.

99. AGEY, PE 191, Gobernación, April 3, 1875, Valladolid.

100. AGEY, PE 216, Ayuntamientos, May 29, 1880, Valladolid.

101. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Izamal, May 30, 1876. Izamal’s jefe político denied Amado Domínguez’s request to resign, but did allow him a six-month leave of absence.

102. AGEY, PE 199, Milicias, November 5, 1878, Oxxutzcab.

103. On demands for the abolition of jefaturas in Morelos, see John Womack, Jr., *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1968), 122–23.

104. AGEY, PE 203, Gobernación, October 16, 1878, Isla Mujeres. On this second Darío Galera, see note 86, Chapter 5.

105. Rodríguez Piña, *Guerra de castas*, 126.

106. See August 31, 1855, 42, in which Anduze repaid Galera a 1,069-peso loan; and AGEY, PE 168, Gobierno del Estado, November 20, 1867, Cozumel.

107. AGEY, PE 227, Milicias, June 27, 1883, Cozumel; July 1, 1883, Cozumel.

108. AGEY, PE 227, Milicias, December 30, 1884, Progreso.

109. AGEY, PE 197, Milicias, July 19, 1877, Kinchil.

110. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, March 19, 1877, 1; March 26, 1877, 4.

111. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, January 20, 1879, 3.

112. On hard times in the Línea parishes, see AHAY, DO, January 7, 1887, Sotuta.

113. An overview of the porfirian-era war of words appears in José E. Serrano Catzim, “Educación e ideología: El Instituto Literario de Yucatán como un espa-

cio de confluencia de ideologías en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX,” *Chacmool: Cuadernos de trabajo cubano-mexicanos* III (2005): 61–72.

114. AHAY, DO, December 27, 1979, Mérida.

115. Regarding Oliver de Casares’s unpublished account, see Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, chapter 3.

116. AGEY, PE 215, Gobernación, January 7, 1880, Mérida.

117. AHAY, DO, December 14, 1876, Halachó (the actual date of Nuestra Señora’s establishment was July 4, 1875); Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 97–99; AHAY, DO, June 21, 1879, Izamal.

118. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, November 24, 1879, 3–4.

119. ANEY, April 7, 1880, 41; AGEY, RPP, vol. 1567, various dates and pages, 1868.

120. AGEY, PE 214, Hacienda, November 4, 1880; ANEY, June 29, 1886, 326–32.

121. Studies of religious life in the porfirian southeast (and of its cultural life in general) are few and of somewhat uneven quality. Clearly most of the folk features described in *Of Wonders and Wise Men* continued to flourish here; they included an almanac of folk literature, the multifaceted (if narrowing) role of the village priest, the heterogeneous manifestations of urban piety, the culto of santos and the village ceremonial life, later versions of the *cofradía*, and the old problem of anticlericalism. Two somewhat more institutional studies of the time and place are Menéndez Rodríguez, *Iglesia y poder*; and Franco Savarino Roggero, *Pueblos y nacionalismo, del régimen oligárquico a la sociedad de masas de Yucatán, 1894–1925* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1997).

122. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Espita, July 24, 1877; Jefatura Política of Valladolid, July 24, 1877; AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Peto, August 11, 1877.

123. AGEY, PE 217, Milicias, July 20, 1881, Mérida.

124. AGEY PE 286, Guerra y Marina, February 1, 1894, Mérida.

125. AGEY, PE 205, Hacienda, February 27, 1878.

126. AGEY, PE 210, Milicias, February 25, 1879, Tekax; AGEY, PE 209, Ayuntamientos, March 26, 1879, Santa Elena.

127. AGEY, PE 203, Gobernación, September 27, 1878, Tinum-Pisté.

128. AGEY, 202, Guerra y Marina, February 1878, Izamal; February 1878, Mérida; March 2, 1878, Sotuta; March 17, 1878, Ticul; September 27, 1878, Tizimín; October 1, 1878, Sotuta; October 1, 1878, Tekax; October 2, 1878, Tekax; October 10, 1878, Mérida. See also AGEY, Milicias, September 4, 1878, Mérida, and October 19, 1878, Acanceh; Gobernación, October 22, 1879, Tecoh, and December 23, 1879, Kinchil; and Ayuntamientos, August 28, 1879, Timucuy.

129. That is, until the 1898 campaign against Chan Santa Cruz, in which peninsulars supplied the majority of mules and manpower, whether they liked it or not.

130. AGEY, PE 197, Milicias, July 28, 1877, Tekax; for another such case, see AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Izamal, June 28, 1876.

131. For better or worse, bombas remain an emblematic feature of Yucatán. For example: “Un yucateco cayó / de lo alto de una iglesia / pero un hueso rompió /

porque cayó de cabeza”; roughly translated, “A Yucatecan fell / from the top of a church / but he broke not a bone / for he landed on his head.”

132. Evidence regarding poor pay abounds in the early porfirian years. To take only a few examples, see AGEY, PE 202, Jefatura Política of Espita, January 20, 1877; Jefatura Política of Hunucmá, October 8, 1877; and HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, February 7, 1881, 3. Regarding beans and chaya, see AGEY, PE, Milicias, October 1, 1878, Acanceh. However, the situation stabilized considerably with the coming of henequen money in the 1890s.

133. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, October 1, 1880, 3.

134. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Tixkokob, August 5, 1877.

135. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, October 22, 1877, 4.

136. As happened in Muna; see AGEY, PE 199, Milicias, January 1, 1877, Muna.

137. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Tixkokob, July 1, 1877, July 2, 1877, July 4, 1877, July 5, 1877; AGEY, PE 197, Milicias, July 5, 1877, Tixkokob.

138. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, September 7, 1877, 4.

139. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Espita, December 15, 1877.

140. AGEY, PE 204, Milicias, November 6, 1878, Tepekan.

141. AGEY, PE 199, Milicias, November 6, 1878, Tixmeuc.

142. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, November 7, 1879, 1-4; AGEY, PE 209, Ayuntamientos, November 15, 1879, Kinchil.

143. AGEY, PE 2, Ayuntamientos, volume IV, expediente 30, May 4, 1840; AGEY, PE 198, Gobernación, August 21, 1877, Xocchel/Tahmek.

144. As in Cenotillo; see AGEY, PE 277, Gobernación, November 21, 1892.

145. A long series of reports detail the confusing events of the Coronado uprising; in particular, see AGEY, PE, Milicias, December 25, 26, 28, and 30, 1979, Merida.

146. Governor Canto's State of the State speech appears in its totality in HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, January 3, 1881, 1-2.

147. AGEY, PE 197, Milicias, July 16, 1877, Tixkokob. They appear to have had some connection to the anconistas of Tixkokob, since they emerge as part of the same investigation.

148. AGEY PE 199, Milicias, March 2, 1878, Progreso.

149. As Ward Stavig argues for the colonial Andes; see *The World of Tupac Amaru: Conflict, Community, and Identity in Colonial Peru* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 58-83.

150. As argued in Paul Garner, *Porfirio Díaz* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 72-73.

151. AGEY, FJ-Civil 101, April 22, 1875, Mérida.

152. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, March 24, 1876, 4.

153. AHDN, xi/481.3/4277, April 30, 1860; xi/481/3/7810, no date, “Libro índice con anotaciones negras y rojas, donde constan los nombres de algunos servidores del imperio y el empleo que desempeñaban.” Rómulo Díaz de la Vega served as general of the fifth division, his brother Manuel as infantry general.

154. *Grandes biografías de México*, 298; AHDN, Cancelados, “Díaz de la Vega, Rómulo,” xi/iii/1-65, April 24, 1884, 359f.

155. ANEY, Oficio #8, vol. 4, September 1878, 18–19. By the time of his death, his wife, Encarnación Sánchez y Crespo, had been dead for some seven years. Nine of their children were living, one with a mental disability; an unknown number of others had died in childbirth.
156. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, March 5, 1879, 4.
157. AHDN, Cancelados, “Guillermo Palomino,” xl/iii/2–250, 177f.
158. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, June 4, 1877, 4.
159. *Yucatán en el tiempo*, vol. 3, 1998, 420–21; AGEY, RC, Difunciones-Mérida, March 25, 1890, 196–97.
160. *Yucatán en el tiempo*, vol. 2, 1998, 239.
161. Luz María Oralia Tamayo Pérez, “La frontera México-Estados Unidos: La conformación de un espacio durante el siglo XIX” (Ph.D. diss., Mexico City, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1999), 236–37; AHDN, Cancelados, D/1114/5767, September 13, 1888, 20f. Special thanks to Harry Hewitt of Midwestern University for directing me to these sources.
162. Andrew Grant Wood, *Revolution in the Street: Women, Workers, and Urban Protest in Veracruz, 1870–1927* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001), 3.
163. Wells, “All in the Family,” 169, 179–85.
164. Carlos Macías Richard, *Nueva frontera mexicana: Milicia, burocracia y ocupación territorial en Quintana Roo* (Mexico City: Universidad de Quintana Roo, 1997); Wells and Joseph, *Summer of Discontent*; Wells, “All in the Family,” 184.
165. AGEY, PE 265, Gobernación, November 17, 1892, Mérida; PE 277, Gobernación, October 10, 1892, Mérida.
166. ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 23, February 26, 1875, 12–14, will of Francisco Martínez de Patrón.
167. The unusual story of the Sociedad Patriótica Yucateca appears in AGEY, PE 265, Gobernación, various dates, 1891, Mérida.
168. AGEY, PE 450, Gobernación, April 12, 1904, Mérida. Arteriosclerosis and lung disease appear to have taken Navarrete away shortly after his final resignation on the above date.
169. In his case, two: Tixcaltuyú in 1864, Tiholop in 1866. See AHAY, DO, September 8, 1867, Sotuta.
170. AGEY, PE 242, Milicias, March 17, 1887.
171. José María Rosado, *A Refugee of the War of the Castes Makes Belize His Home: The Memoirs of J. M. Rosado*, ed. Richard Buhler (Belize: Belize Institute for Social Research and Action, 1970); for a partial reproduction of this document, see Terry Rugeley, *Maya Wars: Ethnographic Accounts from Nineteenth-Century Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 68–78.
172. What survives from both these towns was what was forwarded to Mérida; but valuable ayuntamiento and notary papers, along with the church registries of Tihosuco and Tepich, are lost forever.
173. As documented in a government investigation; see AGEY, PE, Junta Municipal of Dzilam, August 17, 1877.
174. ANEY, Protocols of Ticul, vol. 15, December 26, 1898, 1–4.

175. AGEY, PE 227, Milicias, November 19, 1884, Izamal; Pool would have been 54 to 55 years old at the time of his request.

176. AGEY, PE 203, Gobernación, September 7, 1878, Mérida.

177. AGEY, PE 217, Gobernación, February 15, 1881, Mérida.

178. AGEY, PE 305, Gobernación, January 18, 1897, Mérida. One of the factors that makes it impossible to evaluate the legitimacy of these claims is that the originals no longer exist, only typescripts of the more critical documents.

179. EA, vol. 3, May 21, 1869, 333-34.

180. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, March 17, 1880, 4; and April 30, 1880, 2. The other honorees of this (ultimately aborted) plan were Francisco de Montejo, Fray Luis de Lillalpando (the friar who had accompanied Montejo), Lucas de Gálvez (murdered Bourbon-era governor of Yucatán), and Mariscal Figueroa y Silva (who had led the Yucatecans in the failed Battle of St. George's Cay). In reality, the Ciudadela, whose construction began in 1667, had been deteriorating since the beginning of the nineteenth century, was partially restored as a prison in 1843, then was slated for destruction once more in 1867, doubtless as a hedge against future militarist empires. Its last remains were finally removed in 1966. For a review of San Benito's history, see *Yucatán en el tiempo*, II, 1998, 249-51.

181. See pension request of Lorenza Navarro, in AGEY, CE, 87, Comisiones, I, 13, July 27, 1886, Tizimín; other petition requests exist, but not at the same level of detail.

182. AGEY, CE 87, I, 23, August 5, 1887, Mérida.

183. AGEY, FJ-Civil, July 15, 1872; HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, August 6, 1880, 4.

184. The activities of the Junta Calificadora remain elusive. I have only unearthed two Junta authentications, the first an 1894 certificate to ninety-three-year-old Pantaleón Bermejo for having served in the Caste War's early years (AGEY, PE 579, Gobernación, May 1, 1894, Mérida), and the second, a somewhat later reference to the case of one Manuel Pérez Marín, former colonel (AGEY, PE 443, Guerra y Marina, March 15, 1904, Mérida). But presumably the Junta handled other cases as well.

185. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, January 11, 1869, 1.

186. AGEY, Registro Civil, Baca, Nacimientos #1, July 23, 1868, 19; HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, October 21, 1881, 3-4.

187. ANEY, Protocols of Motul, October 24, 1888, no page numbers.

188. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, December 29, 1970, 1.

189. AGEY, Registro Civil, Baca, Difunciones, volume 6, August 9, 1885, 35. This brief entry actually reports the death of Francisco's son Benjamín, age five, but also includes a few useful details on the father himself.

190. ANEY, Protocols of Motul, August 24, 1887, 70-71.

191. AGEY, PE 907, Milicias, July 29, 1913, Mérida; PE 484 (1915 series), Guerra y Marina, various dates and places, 1915.

192. As Thomas Carlyle put it, "Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here." See *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993, orig. 1840), p.3.

193. AGEY, PE 195, Jefatura Política of Hunucmá, September 4, 1876; Jefatura Política of Peto, September 17, 1876. Promotion of this particular holiday actually began in the pre-Caste War period.
194. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, July 30, 1877, 3-4.
195. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, January 29, 1877, 1.
196. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, April 1, 1878, 4; May 3, 1878, 3-4; July 31, 1878, 1-2; HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, March 31, 1879, 3-4.
197. Little is known of José Apolinar's political activities; his office as vice-governor is mentioned in HPS, *Periódico oficial*, various dates, 1877.
198. CAIHY, Manuscript Books, vol. 40, Actos, March 6, 1878, 371. For other examples, see also AGEY, PE 214, Jefatura Política of Valladolid, March 2, 1880; and HPS, *Periódico oficial*, February 22, 1878, 4.
199. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Tizimín, March 2, 1878.
200. AGEY, CE 87, volume I, expediente 24, January 17, 1898, Mérida.
201. Other national secular holidays that failed to catch on are analyzed in Thomas Benjamin, *La Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 101-16.
202. Francisco Gómez Flores, "Manuel Cepeda Peraza," in *Liberales ilustres mexicanos*, ed. Daniel Cabrera (Mexico City: Editorial "Hijo del Ahuizote," 1890), 187-91.
203. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, June 15, 1868, 1.
204. Manuel Cepeda Peraza's lengthy report on the fall of the empire in Yucatán, dated July 1, 1867, remains an important source on the events of 1866 and 1867; see Jesús de León Torrel, ed. *Historia documental militar de la intervención francesa en México y el denominado segundo imperio* (México: Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, 1867), 799-809.
205. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, July 29, 1881.
206. See Samuel Brunk and Ben Fallaw, eds., *Heroes and Hero Cults in Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).
207. AGEY, PE 211, Ayuntamientos, November 9, 1880, Uayma.
208. AGEY, PE 192, Gobernación, October 22, 1875, Chichimilá. Municipality status depended on population, not absence of criminal record, but who could be certain?
209. AGEY, CE 87, Comisiones, I, 14, August 2, 1886, Mérida. For a more extensive discussion of Yucatán's patrician historians, see Allen Wells, "Forgotten Chapters of Yucatán's Past: Nineteenth-Century Politics in Historiographical Perspective," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 12, 2 (1996): 195-229. As Wells notes, these writings tended to follow the Liberal line, though modified slightly to accommodate the political detente of the porfirian era.
210. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, July 23, 1877, 4.
211. The *Diario de Yucatán* serialized Cámara's "Account of General Rómulo Díaz de la Vega's Expedition Against the Indian Rebels in the Interior of Yucatán, with Other Recollections of the Author, Beginning on December 15, 1851," August 19, 1928, September 2, 1928, September 23, 1928, September 30, 1928, October 7, 1928, October 14, 1928, October 16, 1928, and October 21, 1928.

212. “La expedición militar del coronel Don Daniel Traconis contra los indios rebeldes, al oriente de la península, en 1871,” *Diario de Yucatán*, April 28, 1835, 12, reprinted from *Revista de Yucatán*, #22, February 24, 1871.

213. Rodolfo Menéndez, “30 de julio: Homenaje a los héroes de la guerra social” (Mérida: Tipografía Guttenberg, 1908), in CAIHY, Pamphlets, vol. 76, expediente 13, 1908.

214. HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, April 17, 1878, 4. Felipe de la Cámara Zavala, it will be recalled, had led one of the first military entries into Chan Santa Cruz, and his memoir of that event remains an important source of the place and time: see Cámara Zavala, “Relación circunstanciada de la expedición practicada por el Gral. D. Rómulo Díaz de la Vega contra los indios sublevados en el interior de Yucatán, con otras memorias particulares del que escribe, que comienzan desde el 15 de diciembre de 1851,” serially reprinted in HPS, *Diario de Yucatán*, August 19, 1929, August 26, 1929, September 2, 1929, September 9, 1929, September 23, 1929, September 30, 1929, October 7, 1929, October 16, 1929, and October 21, 1929. Following the end of the wars, Zavala had entered politics, and had also developed a passionate interest in spiritualism, the petit bourgeois’s dissident ideology.

215. Pablo Ovieda and Pedro Ildefonso Pérez, “Composiciones pronunciadas el día 12 del corriente por los Sres. Oviedo y Pérez, a la memoria del inclito coronel D. Sebastián Molas, martir de la libertad” (Mérida: Mariano Guzmán, 1858), in CAIHY, Books.

216. The summary accounts of Molas’s reinterment appear in HPS, *Periódico oficial*, October 17, 1877, 4; January 18, 1878, 4; and March 22, 1878, 4.

217. *Yucatán en el tiempo*, vol. 2, 1998, 190.

218. AGEY, PE 247, Gobernación, May 21, 1887, Mérida.

219. Regarding the porfirian era’s penchant for monuments, I draw on Benjamin, *La Revolución*, 119–23.

220. AGEY, PE 849, Guerra, August 7, 1913, Mérida.

221. See Terry Rugeley, trans. and ed., *Alone in Mexico: The Astonishing Travels of Karl Heller, 1845–1848* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007), 159.

222. On the origins of the Museo Yucateco, see Fausto Sánchez Novelo, *Yucatán durante la intervención francesa (1863–1867)* (Mérida: Maldonado Editores, 1983), 134–35; and CAIHY, Manuscript Books, vol. 190, “Libro con documentos relativos al Museo Yucateco,” various dates. Carrillo y Ancona served as director until 1875.

223. Regarding the opening, see AGEY, PE 344, Fomento, circa March 25, 1900, Mérida HPS, *Periódico oficial*, November 5, 1877, 4; this article reports contributions from haciendas/ruins such as Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, Tabi, Cuzamal, and Kabah; these remarkable pieces form the core of the museum’s modern-day collection. See also AGEY, PE 215, Beneficios, August 12, 1881, Mérida; this particular document concerns the transfer of a piece of carved wood, “with vestiges of antiquity,” taken from the ruins of Nohpat, outside of Ticul.

224. CAIHY, Manuscript Books, vol. 190, “Libro con documentos relativos al Museo Yucateco,” April 24, 1886, 117–23.

225. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, October 5, 1877, 3–4.

226. AGEY, PE 199, Milicias, October 31, 1877, Ticul.
227. HPS, *Periódico oficial*, October 7, 1877, 1.
228. This was apparently a statewide program, although I have only unearthed related correspondence in one municipio; see AGEY, PE 245, Milicias, July 30, 1887, Peto.
229. AGEY, PE 196, Ayuntamientos, September 19, 1876, Peto.
230. AGEY, PE, Jefatura Política of Tizimín, September 17, 1878.
231. AGEY, FM-Ticul, vol. 5, April 27, 1868, 2.
232. AGEY, PE 205, Ayuntamientos, September 25, 1878, Hunucmá.
233. AGEY, PE, Junta Municipal de Baca, September 16, 1878. This document, together with the Poder Ejecutivo papers from the 1870s and 1880s, was among documents being reorganized at the time of this writing; hence, no box number.
234. Paul Sullivan, *Xuxub Must Die: The Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatan* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004).
235. This intriguing document survives in its totality in CAIHY, Libros Manuscritos #198, “Relación del viaje a Veracruz el año de 1847 emigrando de Yucatán su patria por la rebelión indígena, la Sra. Doña Dolores Campos y Montero con toda su familia.”
236. See the very handsome volume titled *Los primeros insurrectos de la guerra social maya de 1847* (Chetumal: Instituto para la Cultura y las Artes de Quintana Roo, 2000).
237. This prophecy appears in Santiago Domínguez Aké’s outstanding collection, *Creencias, profecías y consejas mayas*, Colección Letras Mayas Contemporáneas, No. 20 (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, Secretaría del Desarrollo Social, 1993, 40).
238. Samples and discussion of the Maya prophetic genre appear in Paul Sullivan, *Unfinished Conversations: Mayas and Foreigners Between Two Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991; orig. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 160–81; and Jesús J. Lizama Quijano, “Las señales del fin del mundo: Una aproximación a la tradición profética de los cruzoob,” in *Religión popular de la reconstrucción histórica al análisis antropológico (aproximaciones casuísticas)*, ed. Genny Negroe Sierra and Francisco Fernández Repetto (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2000), 133–62.
239. Before closing on the matter of memory, it is worth mentioning that terminologies proved fickle and changing as memories. Over time the term “guerra de castas” won the day, but for some fifty years it competed with other historical tags. These included “la guerra social” (“social war”), “la guerra de los rebeldes” (“war of the rebels”), “la guerra de los indios bárbaros” (“war of the Indian barbarians”), and “la guerra de los indios sublevados” (“war of the Indian rebels”), all of which competed in ordinary usage when reflecting on the great events of the central nineteenth century.
240. AGEY, PE 245, Milicias, August 1, 1887, Valladolid. No record of the day’s ceremonies survive, other than that they were to involve acts of mourning. Caste War Day appears to have been little observed even in porfirian times.
241. CAIHY, Manuscripts, vol. 44, expediente 25, March 8, 1851. José Eulogio Rosado to José Canuto Vela.

CONCLUSION

1. William S. McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 28–40, 487–88.

2. Details of this charming anecdote are found in HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, February 13, 1880, 1, 4; February, 16, 1880, 4; February 18, 1880, 3–4.

3. The role of church and religion in post-1880 society remains unexplored. The only attempt thus far has been Hernán Menéndez Rodríguez's *Iglesia y poder: Proyectos sociales, alianzas políticas y económicas en Yucatán (1857–1917)* (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1995), which tends toward high-level power struggles between church and state and within the church itself. Menéndez's sudden and unexpected death in 2001 means that his much-anticipated and much-needed successor volume, *El retorno de los dioses*, will never be completed.

4. Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 996–1004; John A. Booth, *The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), 170–80; and Hugh Byrne, *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996), 78–88.

5. Hanna Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969).

6. AGEY, PE 344, Fomento, circa March 25, 1900, Mérida.

7. Maya memories of the Caste War are best treated in Paul Sullivan's *Unfinished Conversations: Mayas and Foreigners Between Two Wars* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989); Allen F. Burns, *An Epoch of Miracles: Oral Literature of the Yucatec Mayas* (Austin: University of Texas, 1983), 82–92; Jesús J. Lizama Quijano, “Las señales del fin del mundo: Una aproximación a la tradición profética de los cruzob,” in Genny Negroe Sierra and Francisco Fernández Repetto, eds., *Religión popular de la reconstrucción histórica al análisis antropológico (aproximaciones casuísticas)* (Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2000), 133–62.

8. On the history of muddled attempts to turn a people inside out, see Alan Knight, “Popular Culture and the Revolutionary State in Mexico, 1910–1940,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 74, 3 (1994): 393–444; Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930–1940* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997); Adrian Bantjes, *As if Jesus Walked on Earth: Cardenismo, Sonora, and the Mexican Revolution* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1998); and Ben Fallaw, *Cárdenas Compromised: The Failure of Reform in Postrevolutionary Yucatán* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

9. We can only place his demise by the two bookend dates that surround it: his last known letter and the legal actions of his son in executing the now-lost will. Respectively, those documents are AHAY, DO, April 18, 1854, Tizimín; and ANEY, Oficio #5, vol. 8, August 11, 1855.

10. AGEY, FM-Izamal, vol. 3, January 9, 1847, 196. Information on Imán's involvement in repelling the Mexican invasion—and indeed, an excellent and completely overlooked source on that invasion—is found in AGEY, LCPE, Correspon-

dencia del Gobernador, vol. 12, various dates and page numbers, 1841-43. This book contains summary entries of the correspondence from the governor of what was then the Yucatecan Republic. Many of the entries, however, are exceedingly difficult to read.

11. ANEY, October 8, 1844, 250.

12. CAIHY, Pamphlets, vol. 73, expediente 16, "El coronel D. Juan José Méndez. Estudio biográfico por Pablo Bolio" (Mérida: La Crónica Yucateca, 1907). No battle took place, for the simple fact that sublevados evacuated Izamal before government troops could arrive.

13. AHAY, DO, March 3, 1848; AB, Records 28, April 23, 1849, 223. This latter document, which denounces Imán's perceived misdeeds, carries the name of Cecilio Chi, who had been assassinated the previous December. Either its date is incorrect, or else Chi's lieutenants used their fallen leader's name for its political value.

14. AHDN, xi/481.3/3111, July 7, 1850. Imán received fifty pesos for his services, a generous salary in those days.

15. AGEY, LCPE, Correspondencia del Gobernador, vol. 23, January 20, 1852, 125.

16. AGEY, PE 105, Gobernación, "Fincas Rusticas, Tizimín," 1856.

17. They were Juan, Marina, Inez, Leonarda, Martín, Eligio, and José Jesús.

18. AGEY, PE 59, Gobernación, "Disposiciones testamentares," May 16, 1854.

19. AGEY, PE 59, Gobernación, "Disposiciones testamentares," May 16, 1854.

20. AGEY, FM, Ticul, vol. 6, expediente 4, September 20, 1855.

21. AGEY, PE 159, Gobernación, "Solicitudes," March 9, 1866.

22. AGEY, FM, Ticul, box 5, legajo 6, July 6, 1845.

23. AHA, Defunciones de Panabá, February 9, 1864, 434.

24. AGEY, FM, Ticul, vol. 5, March 6, 1865; HPS, *Razón del pueblo*, October 31, 1870.

25. AGEY, PE 111, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, Tizimín, December 30, 1855.

26. A certain Pablo Imán, for example, living in Mérida four years before the Caste War, eludes identification. José María Imán, a Mérida resident and for a long time active in urban real estate, was neither brother nor son, although he clearly enjoyed connections to Santiago Imán, since the latter gave him power of attorney on various occasions. This same José María served as "block commissioner" of a Mérida barrio during the Mexican invasion of 1842-43. See AGEY, PE 53, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, November 28, 1843; and AGEY, PE 53, Gobernación, Ayuntamientos, June 2, 1843.

27. AGEY, PE 192, Gobernación, September 30, 1875, Tizimín.

28. AGEY, PE 217, Gobernación, May 28, 1881, Mérida; the Shakespearean allusion presumably refers to the ghost of Hamlet's father, not to the Prince of Denmark himself.

29. Special thanks to the good folks of Tizimín for showing me around the Imán home and sharing its legends. They live in the crossroads of southeast Mexican history.

Bibliography

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

AB	Archives of Belize
AGCA	Archivo General de Centroamérica
AGEC	Archivo General del Estado de Campeche
AGEY	Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán
	CE Congreso del Estado
	FC Fondo Colonial
	FJ Fondo Justicia
	FM Fondo Municipios
	LCPE Libros Copiadores del Poder Ejecutivo
	PE Poder Ejecutivo
	PJ Poder Justicia
	RC Registro Civil
	RPP Registro Público de Propiedad
AGNM	Archivo General de la Nación de México
	BN Bienes Nacionales
	G Gobernación
	J Justicia
	JE Justicia Eclesiástica
AHA	Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado
AHAG	Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guatemala
AHAY	Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán
	AT Asuntos terminados
	CC Concursos a curatos
	CF Cuentas de fábrica
	DO Decretos y oficios
	OC Oficinas de cofradía
	VP Visitas pastorales
AHDN	Archivo Histórico de la Defensa Nacional
ANEY	Archivo Notarial del Estado de Yucatán
APOC	Archivo Parroquial del Obispado de Campeche
BFO	British Foreign Office (accessed through microfilm in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California)

- CAIHY Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán
Books
Decreets
Manuscript Books
Manuscripts
Pamphlets
- CLE Clements Library, University of Michigan
- HPS Hemeroteca José María Pino Suárez
- SI Salazar Ilarregui Papers, University of Texas at Arlington
- TUL Latin American Library, Tulane University
- UTA Nettie Lee Benson Library, University of Texas at Austin
- WMMSA Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Archives

PRINTED COLLECTIONS OF DOCUMENTS

- AAP *Colección de leyes, decretos, órdenes o acuerdos de tendencia general del poder legislativo de estado libre y soberano de Yucatán*. Edited by Alonzo Aznar Pérez. 2 vols. Mérida: Rafael Pedrera, 1849.
- APD *Archivo del General Porfirio Díaz: Memorias y documentos*. Edited by Alberto María Carreño. Mexico City: Editorial Elede, 1952.
- DHP *Documentos Históricos Peninsulares*. Edited by Michel Antochiw. Mérida: Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórico de Yucatán.
- EA *Colección de leyes, decretos, ordenes y demás disposiciones de tendencia general, expedidos por el poder legislativo del Estado de Yucatán*. Edited by Eligio Ancona. 5 vols. Mérida: El Eco del Comercio, 1882.
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