

Origins of the Caste War

The capitalist economic and political system was one of the principal reasons for the beginning of the caste war. The community members (Maya) began to lose power over their social, political and economic sectors. So they began to revolt this was primarily as a result of the pressure for higher production. Overall capitalism places strains that create an arena for revolt they include:

1. **Modernization is began to be destructive of traditional Maya communities.**
2. **The economic system of capitalism focused primarily on profits regardless of lands and people. Class differences between rich and poor begin to deteriorate society and wealth is not distributed evenly.**
3. **Agrarian crises are resolved, either by conflict or diplomacy, this affected the history of the capacity of the country to develop.**
4. **The oppressed are political actors who operate at the local level. Their power was great once they gained the confidence of their people.**

Capitalism- A system of economics based on the private ownership of capital (resources & wealth) and production input (labour & labourers



What is a Caste System? A class structure that is determined by birth. Loosely, it means that in some societies, if your parents are poor, you're going to be poor too. Same goes for being rich.

Two explanations for the origins of the Caste War have long held gained support in history and anthropology. The Maya view of outsiders as oppressors and the oppression of the Maya by non-Mayan elite, done by both the Catholic Church and the state, in the manner in which taxes were imposed, labor was extracted, and land was removed from the control of indigenous communities. Studies suggest that Maya revolts and revitalization movements are deep seated phenomena and share key cultural characteristics among regions and over time. Indeed, hostility toward outsiders, resistance to state oppression, and self-determination are hallmarks of the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas. To understand completely the character of the Caste War in Yucatan it is impossible to not mention the exploitation of the peasant workers. This was primarily done through extreme taxation, the removal of lands, and the political aims of the elite classes. In terms of taxes, the church pressured the government for them to continue charging the "indios" taxes, hence, the natives had to pay taxes to the church and to the government. In the agricultural sector, Henequen which was used for the creation of rope began to be in high demand in the world markets. For that reason the elites began to have a large need for land (for the planting and growing of Henequen), they began to remove indigenous lands.



Maya men working on the haciendas harvesting Henequen



Modern day recreation of old style preparation of Henequen

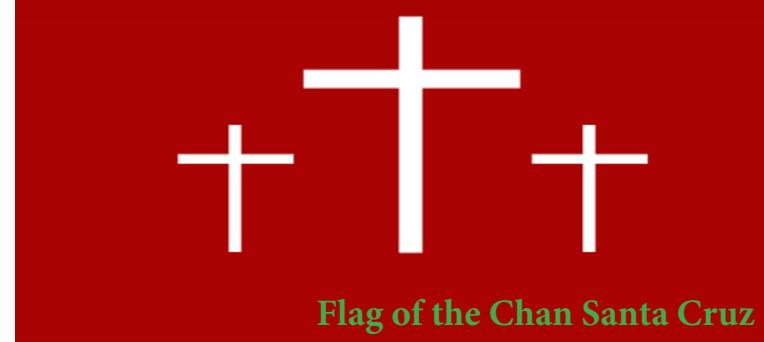
The Maya of Yucatan

The Maya people of Yucatan were living in an area south of Merida. They were living under their own systems of government and had formed independent states that had power in their people. They had systems of government and were living primarily as farmers. There were two Maya groups the Santa Cruz Maya and the Icaiche Maya. According to Santa Cruz Maya oral histories. In the beginning the gods had instructed them to find a home. While wondering they found a talking cross and there they created a city called Chan Santa Cruz. For that reason they were known as the Cruzob Maya, they were the Maya of the east who were the most rebel group in Yucatan. The Icaiche maya the group of the West were known as the Pacificos since they were not primarily warriors but did react when attacked. Before the caste war began the Santa Cruz would attack the Icaiche Maya constantly, for that reason they were enemies. But seeing that their lands were threatened they united to fight against the Yucatec elites. However, as the war progressed the Icaiche betrayed the Santa Cruz and that became a big role in the development of the caste war.

The primary reason as to why the Maya united was because within the caste system of the Europeans the Maya were at the bottom. There was a social, political, and economic tag and privilege that came with the social position in the caste system. The Maya were being oppressed just for being Maya, their race provided for their position in society.



Abandoned church



Flag of the Chan Santa Cruz



Valladolid

