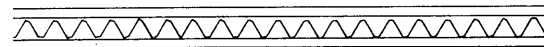




u: São Paulo's Flapper and More."
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THE HUMAN TRADITION IN LATIN AMERICA



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JUDITH EWELL

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The Rough-and-Tumble Career of Pedro Crespo

Gilbert M. Joseph and Allen Wells

Gilbert M. Joseph, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Allen Wells, who teaches at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, have made Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula their second home. Both men wrote dissertations, since published, on the political and economic development of the peninsula—Joseph's *Revolution from Without: Yucatán, Mexico, and the United States, 1880–1924* (1982) and Wells's *Yucatán's Gilded Age: Haciendas, Henequen, and International Harvester, 1860–1915* (1985). Their collaboration on articles and on *Henequen y la International Harvester* (1986) led to their election to membership in the Academia Yucatanese de Ciencias y Artes.

In the vignette that follows, the authors examine the career of one of Mexico's outstanding, yet little-known, local power brokers—Pedro Crespo of Temax, Yucatán. His career invites comparison with that of Juan Francisco Lucas, another Mexican who prospered through the opportunities created by the Mexican Revolution. In both cases, the high-and-mighty words of revolutionary idealism are translated into action by individuals variously motivated by a craving for adventure, by envy, by revenge, by social conscience, and by the courage and cussedness of ordinary human beings.

Temax is at the end of the road. A few blocks north of the weather-beaten plaza, the paved road from Izamal runs out; further on, *camino blanco* winds for about twenty kilometers through scrub, then mangrove swamp to the Gulf of Mexico. Eighty kilometers west of the town is the state capital, Mérida; en route one travels through the heart of the henequen (sisal) zone, glimpsing remnants of a more affluent past. Poorly tended henequen fields line both sides of the highway, which is crisscrossed here and there by the rusting and twisted rails of imported Decauville narrow-gauge tram tracks. Blackened chimneys and the ruins of once elegant haciendas similarly bear witness to the grandeur of a monoculture now in irreversible decline.

To the east of Temax, henequen's bluish gray spines soon give way to denser scrub and clearings of grazing cattle; beyond the neighboring village of Buctzotz there is little to see for another seventy kilometers, until Tizimin, cattle country's new boomtown. Hot, dusty, and unprepossessing to the casual eye, Temax appears to be just another desperately poor and sleepy municipal seat that time has long since passed by.

Current appearances, however, mask a turbulent and intriguing recent past. Indeed, Temax has figured prominently in Yucatecan history since the apocalyptic Caste War of the mid-nineteenth century. Poised as it is between the dynamic henequen zone and the marginal sparsely populated hinterland, between the settled plantation society and the zone of refuge for the rebellious Maya campesinos who resisted plantation encroachment on their traditional way of life, Temax has been a strategic periphery or frontier. Consequently, its control has posed a significant problem for Yucatán's modern rulers. And, for much of the first half of the twentieth century, Temax's political fortunes were closely linked to the career of an extraordinary rural insurgent and political boss, Pedro Crespo. State authorities came to realize that the price of peace in Temax was a certain degree of autonomy for Don Pedro. Like Carlos Fuentes's archetypal revolutionary cacique (boss), Artemio Cruz, Crespo knew how to survive. And, much like that of Cruz, Crespo's political career came to embody the achievements and contradictions of the larger revolutionary process.

We know relatively little about Crespo's prerevolutionary career, before he burst upon the local political scene in March of 1911. During the presidency of Porfirio Díaz, Temax was overwhelmingly rural—even today, 80 percent of the working population is employed in agriculture—with a small town-based commercial sector catering to nearby hacienda and peasant communities. Born about 1870, of humble village origins, like many campesinos on the fringes of the expanding henequen zone Crespo grew up determined to preserve the family's status as small but free cultivators. Quite likely, he chose to enlist in the state national guard, to avoid the mechanism of debt that tied an ever-increasing number of villagers as peons to the large and powerful henequen estates.

In short order, Crespo demonstrated his prowess as a soldier and was made an officer in the local guard. How did Crespo regard his duties, which included hunting down and returning runaway peons to their masters, quelling worker protests against brutal, slavlike labor conditions, and implementing the hated *leva* (conscription), which dragooned villagers and drifters into the guard? We'll never know.

No doubt Crespo came to know the social world of north-central Yucatán beyond the boundaries of the rural countryside. Temaxeños remember him as a man with a foot in both worlds: "un mestizo de buen hablar"—a Maya campesino who spoke Spanish well and could handle himself in town.¹ Through his work, young Crespo was introduced to the milieu of urban politics, to the ever-shifting layered networks of patronage and clientele, which tied the local *dzules*—powerful rulers of land and men in their own right—to even more powerful patrons in the state capital.

As an officer in the guard, Crespo was compelled to play this exacting, dangerous game of late Porfirian politics. Although he initially flirted with the intrigues of a disenfranchised faction of the planter elite in 1909, by the eve of the 1910 gubernatorial election, Crespo had allied himself with Enrique Muñoz Arístegui, the "official" candidate of the "Divine Caste," an entrenched oligarchy led by the state's most powerful planter, merchant, and politician, Don Olegario Molina.

Don Olegario was a formidable patron. He was a favorite of President Porfirio Díaz, and, following a term as governor of Yucatán, he served as minister of development in Díaz's cabinet (1907–11). Molina's relations and cronies filled the upper echelons of the state's bureaucratic machine. Indeed, the power of the "Divine Caste" radiated outward from the Molina *parentesco* (extended family), which, apart from its national connections, was greatly fortified by its partnership with the principal buyer of raw henequen fiber, the International Harvester Company. Under the terms of a secret arrangement between Molina's import-export house and the North American corporation, large sums of foreign capital were periodically placed at the oligarch's disposal, enabling Molina y Compañía to affect price trends, acquire mortgages, and consolidate its hold on fiber production, communications, the infrastructure, and banking in the region. Despite the fabulous wealth generated by the fin de siècle henequen boom, the first decade of the new century was a veritable summer of discontent for the vast majority of Yucatecan producers, merchants, workers, and campesinos, who found themselves personally indebted or subordinated, in one form or another, to the Molina *parentesco*.

Francisco Madero's national political campaign against the Díaz regime emboldened two disgruntled camarillas (political factions) of

¹In Yucatán the term *mestizo* differs from the standard usage. It indicates a person or attribute—that is, style of dress—which is at root Maya but has been influenced over time by Hispanic culture.

the Yucatecan planter class and their middle-class allies to organize parties for the purpose of challenging Molinista hegemony in the 1910 elections. Formed in 1909, these rather loose political coalitions, the Centro Electoral Independiente and the Partido Antireeleccionista, were known popularly as "Morenistas" and "Pinistas," after their respective standard-bearers, Delio Moreno Cantón and José María Pino Suárez, who were journalists. But they were financed by their planter supporters, and each faction hastily attempted to construct alliances reaching into the urban intelligentsia and small working class, and, perhaps even more tactically, into the large and potentially explosive Maya *campesinado*.

As a rising military leader able to bridge the cultural distance between *dzules* and campesinos, Crespo was a valuable asset in strategic Temax and was wooed by incumbents and dissidents alike. After testing the waters of Morenismo, however, he chose to stay with the Molinistas. Along with Temax's other prominent functionaries, Colonel Antonio Herrera, the *jefe político* (district prefect), and Nazario Aguilar Brito, the municipal tax collector, Crespo joined the local chapter of the Unión Democrática, the political club working for the election of Molina's puppet, Muñoz Arístegui.

It was not long before oligarchical repression foreclosed the electoral road to Maderismo nationwide and to the moderate political reformers in Yucatán who had affiliated with it. When Morenista and Pinista candidates and their supporters were harassed and jailed, these parties entered into a nominal alliance, plotted secretly, and ultimately rebelled against the established order. In June 1910, 1,500 insurgents—mostly peons led by a local property owner, an accountant, and a hacienda foreman—rose prematurely in the eastern city of Valladolid. Fueled chiefly by hatred of the abusive Molinista prefect, who was summarily shot, this rebellion held Valladolid captive for six days but, lacking effective leadership and focus, did not spread to other localities. While campesinos indulged themselves in celebration and *aguardiente* (the cane liquor of the masses), federal and state troops stormed the city. Justice was served in characteristically draconian fashion: public executions of the leaders, stiff jail sentences and penal servitude in the jungles of nearby Quintana Roo for the lesser lights. The oligarchical order stood firm.

Still Pedro Crespo stood with the establishment. What, then, turned this cautious policeman into a revolutionary? Quite likely he was unable to ignore ties of blood and a claim for vengeance. Like Pancho Villa, whose sister was raped, and countless others who joined Madero's national movement in 1910, a sense of deep personal outrage

set Crespo at odds with the Porfirian authorities. Sketchy press accounts and judicial proceedings, which here and there are corroborated by local tradition, shed light on the question of Crespo's motivation. Crespo had been left by Temax's corrupt prefect, Colonel Herrera, who also was Crespo's superior officer in the local guard detachment, to languish for thirty days in the notoriously unfriendly confines of Mérida's Juárez Penitentiary. Crespo would later speak vaguely of "differences he had [had] with the Temax authorities," and his lieutenants would cite the tyrannical abuses of Herrera's local rule. Some old-timers recall that Crespo had been openly critical of the *jefe político's* high-handed tactics in meetings with Temaxeño campesinos. But for Crespo, much more than *mal gobierno* or perhaps even personal rivalry was at issue here: Herrera had killed Crespo's father, Don Cosme Damían, under shadowy circumstances. Apparently, while Pedro was in jail, Don Cosme had balked at Herrera's arbitrary order that he do *fagina* (unpaid, forced road work), whereupon the *jefe político* had ordered his goons to gun the old man down in broad daylight.

Soon after his release from prison, Crespo sought revenge. He mustered up a small band of his kin and clients—most of them peasant villagers—and exploded into revolt. Operating in the chaotic political climate that was Maderismo in Yucatán, Crespo elected to burn his bridges behind him, joining his local vendetta to the larger regional movement against Díaz and the Molinistas. On March 4, 1911, he led his column in a lightning predawn raid on the county seat of Temax. The rebels easily overwhelmed the nine-man guard detachment of Temax's central plaza. (Later, the town police commander would charge that the *guardia* had been sleeping on the job.) Crespo immediately roused Colonel Herrera and the treasury agent Aguilar Brito from their beds and hauled them, clad only in their skivvies (*paños menores*), to the plaza. All the while, as members of his band shouted "Viva Madero!" and "Down with bad government!," Crespo vented his rage on the stunned Herrera: "You bastard, you killed my father! Before you were on top and screwed me, but now it's my turn!"²

The tables were indeed turned. Handpicked as district prefect by the great Molinista planters, Colonel Herrera was the dominant figure in Temax's political life, and his physical presence made him even more menacing to local campesinos. Hulking in stature, with his shaved

²Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Ramo de Justicia, "Causa seguida contra Pedro Crespo y socios por homicidio, rebelión y robo," 1911. Interview with Don Melchor Zozaya Raz, December 31, 1986.

head and long gray beard, Herrera often took on the dimensions of a mad monk or an avenging prophet. Only days before, during the Carnival revels of Shrove Tuesday, although too cowed to make a statement about their *jefe político*, Temaxeños had mocked his subordinate, Aguilar Brito, as "Juan Carnaval," shooting an effigy of the treasury agent in front of the Municipal Palace. Now, in the same central plaza in the wee hours of the morning, Pedro Crespo was cutting the despised prefect down to size. In a final act of humiliation, Crespo strapped Herrera and Aguilar to chairs and riddled them with bullets in the same spot in front of the town hall where Aguilar had been "executed" during Carnival. The bodies were piled into a meat wagon and then dumped at the gates of the town cemetery. (It was ghastly ironic that the treasury agent would later be interred in the same coffin that "Juan Carnaval" had occupied the preceding Shrove Tuesday.)

Before he left town the next morning, Crespo emptied the municipal jail, freeing some campesinos who had been imprisoned for refusing to do *fagina* ordered by the deceased *jefe político*. Crespo armed his new recruits and then, in the manner of the Valladolid rebels, requested food, drink, and "contributions" from local merchants, and took the 300 pesos (one peso equaled fifty U.S. cents) in the municipal treasury. Yet Crespo had learned some valuable lessons from the Valladolid debacle: He made sure that Temax's prominent families were not physically harmed, and he strictly limited his men's intake of *aguardiente*. There would be no premature celebrations in Temax; Crespo saddled up his force—now swollen to about eighty—and divided the men into two mobile bands, one to head west toward Cansahcab, the other east, under his direction, toward Buctzotz. All wore red bands on their hats.

In the weeks and months that followed, Pedro Crespo became Yucatán's most successful insurgent. His hit-and-run tactics, based on an intimate knowledge of the local terrain, were celebrated in the pueblos and hacienda communities of north-central Yucatán, and his ranks continued to multiply. One week after his raid on Temax, his troops mushroomed to 200; by mid-April some estimates placed his strength at 400, in May, close to 1,000. Many free villagers and some hacienda peons joined his campaign willingly, eager to strike a blow against the *dzules*, particularly the despised *jefe políticos* and hacienda overseers who symbolized the encroachments and abuses of the oligarchy. In Buctzotz, a group of villagers rose up upon Crespo's arrival, took the National Guard barracks, and cut out the tongue of the

municipal president before executing him. In Dzilám González, dozens of campesinos, including the town's band, defected en masse to the rebellion. The musicians brought their instruments and enlivened the guerrilla campaign in the weeks ahead with a series of impromptu Saturday night *jaranas* (folk dances) in remote backcountry hamlets.

Although many hacienda peons were recruited at gunpoint by the rebels, Crespo sought to erode planter paternalism and social control with clientelist measures of his own. At the Cauacá, Chacmay, and San Francisco Manzanilla haciendas—the estates of the largest henequen planters—he decreed "liberation," canceling all of the peons' debts. Moreover, Crespo provided amply for his recruits, derailing trains, raiding *cuarteles* (barracks) for munitions, and levying forced loans on local planters and merchants. At Cauacá, 150 peons joined Crespo, and suddenly Maya surnames were greatly outnumbering Spanish ones in his ranks. Many planters, hoping to avoid the total loss of their work force, immediately ordered the temporary evacuation of their *servientes* to nearby county seats, where they would wait out the rebellion.

Crespo's guerrilla campaign forced the Molinista regime to expend great amounts of time, money, and manpower in a futile effort to pin down the rebels. Soon other risings against government installations and officials—like Crespo's, nominally Maderista—spread throughout the countryside. During the spring of 1911 the Mérida government found itself unable to do more than hold the county seats, leaving the hinterland to the insurgents. Moreover, village-based campesinos increasingly resisted government attempts to recruit them to fight against the rebels, or mutinied following recruitment. Finally, Muñoz Arístegui was compelled to resign, and the new military governor issued an amnesty for all disaffected rebels designed to coax rebel leaders like Crespo to lay down their arms, a desperation move that did little to quell rural unrest throughout the state.

All the while, Crespo moved at will throughout the Temax district and penetrated into neighboring Izamal, Espita, and districts farther east. Early on, he reached an understanding with Juan Campos, a popular insurgent who also had risen against local abuses and later conveniently labeled himself a "Maderista." Campos already was carving out a power base (*cacicazgo*) north of Temax, in the area around Dzidzantún and Dzilám González. In the months and years ahead, Crespo and Campos would wage a number of joint operations and together come to control all of north-central Yucatán for over two decades. *Ancianos* still recall the two chiefs as local instruments

through which the revolution put an end to "la época de esclavitud" (the age of slavery). Campos was even more audacious than Crespo in his dealings with the planter class. Local lore has it that he would arrive at an estate, hear the grievances of the peons, and then mete out the appropriate number of lashes to the hacendado or his administrators prior to distributing merchandise from the hacienda's store (*tienda de raya*).

By late May 1911, Díaz had fallen, and Pedro Crespo had disbanded his forces. But, far from being finished, his career was just beginning. For the next thirty years, Crespo arbitrated the political fortunes of Temax, brokering power between elites, villagers, and peons during the most volatile juncture of the revolutionary period.

In the political vacuum that resulted in Yucatán from Díaz's defeat, Morenistas and Pinistas vied for leadership, and rural violence reached dangerous new levels. But, under Crespo's sway, Temax remained relatively calm. The cacique had only contempt for noncombatant civilian politicians like Pino Suárez—soon to become Yucatán's Maderista governor and then vice president of Mexico—who during the insurrection had called upon Yucatecos to join Madero but to avoid acts of vengeance such as those committed at Temax. Unfortunately, once in power, Madero and Pino seemed intent upon employing the same nefarious "bola negra" tactics of political imposition that they had deplored during the Porfiriato. Crespo's sympathies lay with the more popular Morenistas, who now intrigued throughout the state with their former Molinista foes against the ruling Pinistas. At no point, however, during the short-lived Madero regime (1911–13) did the Pinistas feel strong enough to move against Crespo in Temax. Following Díaz's ouster, Crespo had sent his lieutenants to Mérida to serve Pino notice that, although they had been disbanded, his followers remained armed and could be activated at his command on short notice.

Like Maderista liberals, the neo-Porfirian Huertista military leaders who would supplant them (1913–14) saw the wisdom of accommodating the Crespo *cacicazgo*. Nor did the pattern change significantly when the Mexican Revolution in Yucatán moved dramatically left under the socially active administrations of Constitutionalist General Salvador Alvarado (1915–18) and the Marxist Felipe Carrillo Puerto (1921–24). These progressive caudillos also found it wiser to court rather than wrangle with the powerful Crespo as they sought to mobilize campesinos behind their agrarian, labor, and educational reforms between 1915 and 1924. For his part, Crespo was a political pragmatist; he could live with—even actively support—regimes of widely

varying ideological coloration, provided they favored, or at least did not intrude upon, his *cacicazgo*.

Particularly interesting is the nature of Crespo's collaboration during the twenties and thirties with the Socialist Party of the Southeast (PSS), led by Carrillo Puerto (1915–24) and his successors. Whereas General Alvarado had brought the Constitutionalist revolution to Yucatán in March 1915 with eight thousand troops, the civilian governor, Carrillo Puerto, was not always able to count on the support of a loyal, progressive military and, consequently, had to rely more heavily on the muscle of local power brokers like Crespo. Moreover, in case of hacendado-backed insurrection against the socialist revolution (a very real possibility), the geopolitics of Crespo's *cacicazgo* were critical: Temax was located on the rich eastern fringes of the henequen zone, astride the Mérida-Valladolid Railroad. Its proximity to the *comunero* hinterland made it essential that Temax be secure since, if it fell into hostile hands, Valladolid and the southeastern part of the state—the base of rebel operations during the nineteenth-century Caste War—might once again be cut off from the state capital in Mérida.

To ensure Crespo's loyalty, Carrillo Puerto awarded him the plums of civil government and agrarian office, either to hold himself or to dispose of as he saw fit. Like other powerful caciques, Crespo combined the municipal presidency with leadership of the local resistance league (*liga de resistencia*), the PSS's constituent unit in Temax. Upon Crespo's recommendation, his ally, Juan Campos, was chosen as the district's federal deputy. Several years later, Crespo succeeded Campos in the Chamber of Deputies.

Generally speaking, Governor Carrillo Puerto was careful not to impinge upon the establishment of economic preserves by such local bosses. During the early 1920s the socialist government was inundated with petitions from campesinos protesting against abuses that, in most cases, were explicitly linked to individual caciques. A sampling of the complaints registered includes: irregularities in the implementation of agrarian reform, as bosses obtained personal control of the best *ejido* (communal lands); violation of landlord-tenant agreements; the use of unpaid communal labor; and the embezzlement of resistance league dues. Carrillo Puerto's response invariably was to promise redress, and, in many cases, he made good on his promises. Yet the frequency of such petitions suggests either an inability or, in certain situations, an unwillingness to act.

In Crespo's case, irregularities were alleged in the press and in petitions to the governor; indeed, some of them are still heard in

Temax. Powerful hacendados like Pastor Castellanos Acevedo, a former *jefe político*, accused Crespo of forcibly removing peons from the large estates and exploiting them as his personal servants. On the other hand, there are some old-timers who claim that Crespo actively colluded with planters to impede the agrarian reform process. In June 1918, Temaxeños petitioned for land, originally belonging to the old Temax *ejido*, which was under the control of neighboring estates. Ordinarily, Carrillo Puerto's PSS was particularly well-disposed to requests for *ejidal* grants from the villages of influential chiefs like Crespo. Critics charge, however, that because of Crespo's alliance with the planters, restitution of the traditional lands was delayed until June 1925, after Carrillo Puerto's fall from power. Even then, the size of the grant was thousands of hectares (1 hectare equals 2.47 acres) less than the area to which the Temaxeños were entitled.

Such allegations are difficult to verify; moreover, there is no shortage of partisan advocates on either side of the question. Certainly Crespo's personal land holdings increased during the twenties and thirties, but not excessively, according to most accounts. We know that, in addition to his membership in the Temax *ejido*, he was granted a medium-size plot ("un terrenito") and one dozen head of livestock by Carrillo's government. In his last years, Don Pedro would donate a piece of this land in Temax for a federal primary school that he named after his father. Despite the charges of economic impropriety, no indictments were lodged, nor was redress ordered by Carrillo's government or by any subsequent PSS administration.

To the day he died, Pedro Crespo lived in much the same manner as his campesino followers: He spoke Maya among friends, wore the collarless white *filipina*, and lived in the *kaxna*, the traditional wattle-and-daub cottage with thatched roof. What interested him most was political power, not wealth. The revolution had offered him a chance and he had seized it. No doubt he viewed himself and came to be regarded in Temax as a *líder nato*—a born local leader, a chief. As such, he did what was necessary to preserve, even extend, his *poderío*, or his local power base. This entailed constant political vigilance and negotiation; deals might be made with powerful planters and bargains struck with the emerging revolutionary state, but it never called upon Crespo to sell out his clientele, to accumulate great wealth and leave Temax for Mérida. Indeed, precisely because he was a *líder nato*, he was incapable of transcending his locality and breaking with the political culture that had produced him.

In return for Carrillo Puerto's preferment and patronage, Crespo performed a variety of services for the PSS. Not only did he selectively

bring violence to bear against local opponents of the party to ensure it a political monopoly within the state, but Crespo also doubled as an informal ward boss, guaranteeing, through a variety of incentives, the enrollment of local campesinos in Temax's *liga de resistencia*. Like other loyal party officials, Crespo scheduled weekly cultural events and frequent recreational activities.

Although few in the region appreciate it today, under Carrillo Puerto baseball became a strategic component of the PSS's campaign to mobilize its rural-based revolutionary regime. The sport already was rooted in the regional environment. In addition to its incredible popularity among all classes in Mérida and Progreso, the principal port, campesinos in the larger rural towns had demonstrated a particular fascination with it. Now, the party's goal was to mount a statewide campaign to organize baseball teams "hasta los pueblitos"—in even the most remote interior Maya communities. Such a program would enhance the popularity and morale of the PSS, which might then be parlayed into other programs for social change. It would strike at traditional rural isolation, which impeded the socialist tradition, and would immediately contribute to the party's goal of social integration, even in advance of longer term efforts to improve regional communication and transportation. Carrillo Puerto had no way of knowing it at the time, but his campaign also would have the effect of institutionalizing *béisbol* as the regional pastime, an anomaly in a nation where elsewhere *fútbol* became the people's game.

Pedro Crespo and Juan Campos became energetic promoters of the game in north-central Yucatán. In 1922 these *beisbolistas* petitioned the Liga Central de Resistencia in Mérida for money for gloves, bats, balls, and uniforms, and personally organized ballclubs in Temax, Dzilám González, and surrounding pueblos and hacienda communities. Once this rudimentary infrastructure was in place, Crespo and Campos worked with the presidents of other interior *ligas de resistencia* to schedule country tournaments and leagues and, later, to arrange for tours by the more experienced Mérida and Progreso clubs. To this end, they frequently petitioned Governor Carrillo Puerto for free passes for ballplayers on the state-controlled railroads.

It is not surprising, then, that local nines still bear their names, or that Temax has become synonymous with high-quality baseball, periodically producing bona fide stars for the Mexican League. The backcountry ballgames that these caciques promoted in the twenties and thirties likely echoed with the same patois of Maya and Spanglish that one hears on hacienda and pueblo diamonds today: "Conex, conex jugar béisbol. . . . ten pitcher, tech quecher, tech centerfil!"

("Come on, let's play ball. . . . I'll pitch, you catch, and you play centerfield!")

Carrillo Puerto's socialist experiment ended suddenly and tragically in January 1924, when Yucatán's federal garrison pronounced in favor of the national de la Huerta rebellion and toppled the PSS government, which had remained loyal to President Alvaro Obregón. Carrillo Puerto and many of his closest supporters in Mérida were hunted down and executed by the insurgent *federales*, who had the financial backing and encouragement of Yucatán's large planters, whom Carrillo Puerto had threatened with expropriation. When push came to shove during the de la Huerta revolt, the majority of the irregular bands led by Carrillo Puerto's cacique allies proved unreliable; in fact, remarkably few of them mounted even token resistance against the *federales*. The truth is that few of these local bosses were ideologically motivated or were organizationally prepared to become dedicated socialist revolutionaries committed to a defense of the PSS regime.

Pedro Crespo was one cacique who did not desert his *patrón*. In Carrillo Puerto's vain attempt to elude the Delahuertistas in December 1923 and, ultimately, to gain asylum in Cuba, he stopped in Temax, where he was received by Don Pedro and his intimates. One eyewitness graphically recalls the brief, poignant exchange between the two socialist leaders:

Carrillo Puerto: "We're lost."

Crespo: "Where will you go? You can't leave. Wait this thing out here with us. I held out for months in the bush (*en la montaña*); I can do it again. We can survive."

Carrillo Puerto: "It's over. I can't compromise you and your people."³

Crespo could not persuade his *patrón*, who continued his flight eastward across the peninsula, a journey that soon ended in his capture and execution.

By April 1924 the de la Huerta revolt had been quelled and the PSS returned to power in Mérida but now with a social program more in tune with the moderate politics of national leaders Alvaro Obregón and Plutarco Calles in Mexico City. The next decade (1924–34) witnessed a decline in the membership and organization of the resistance leagues, a reconsolidation of the power of the peninsular bourgeoisie, the infiltration of the PSS by that group, and a sharp falloff in the

³Interview with Don Melchor Zozaya Raz, December 31, 1986.

agrarian reform, especially in the henequen zone. As the Yucatecan revolution reached its Thermidor, Crespo, now in the autumn of his years, adjusted with the times. In 1930 he was still president of the local resistance league, but now, more than ever, "Yucatecan socialism" was a matter of form, not substance. Led by their patriarch, Temaxeño socialists wore red shirts, spouted revolutionary slogans, and invoked their martyred Don Felipe Carrillo on appropriate public occasions. Yet few serious agrarian or labor demands emanated from Temax's *liga de resistencia*.

Apart from the revolution's ideological drift to the right, the economics of the period left Don Pedro and the socialists little room to maneuver. The henequen boom had crashed on the rocks of world depression and foreign competition. Temaxeños, like other Yucatecan campesinos, were experiencing severe privation and were glad for even the reduced workload that the henequen estates provided. Like most of the PSS' rural chiefs, Crespo was forced to seek an accommodation with the most powerful planters during the Great Depression in order to keep fields in production and minimize layoffs. Indeed, it was his ability to balance and play off the hopes and fears of both *dzules* and campesinos amid the roller-coasterlike political economy of the twenties and thirties that preserved his *cacicazgo* until his death in November 1944.

Even the renewed populist groundswell of Cardenismo, which unleashed a fury of riots and political assassinations throughout the state during the late thirties, could not topple Crespo. Newly formed radical mass organizations like the "Juventudes Socialistas" denounced Crespo and the larger evil of "revolutionary caciquismo," but Don Pedro's alliances within the party and provincial society allowed him to hang on. In fact, it was Melchor Zozaya Raz, perhaps the most vocal of the young firebrands in the Juventudes Socialistas during the late 1930s, who would become Don Pedro's protégé in the early 1940s and ultimately inherit the Temax *cacicazgo* upon Crespo's death.

Now properly reverential of Pedro Crespo's "revolutionary legacy," Don Melchor Zozaya ruled the district into the 1970s, until diabetes and blindness weakened his political grip. Although no powerful individual boss has emerged since, *caciquismo* as an informal institution of power and patronage has endured in Temax. Municipal government, *ejidal* office, and access to work on private sector estates are in large part controlled by a camarilla, which corporately functions as a cacique. A favored few are endlessly recycled through the same offices, thereby assuring the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI) a large majority at all levels of government. And, while the PRI periodically

excoriates bossism in the abstract, the national regime seems reluctant to tamper with the political culture of the institutionalized revolution—in Temax or anywhere else. This is because the Mexican state rests upon a multitiered system of patronage and clientele that always finds new aggressive, upwardly mobile elements to sustain it.

In the Temax of the 1980s, Pedro Crespo also has been institutionalized; Yucatán's branch of the PRI has duly incorporated him into the revolutionary pantheon alongside more famous regional icons like Salvador Alvarado and Felipe Carrillo Puerto. Temaxeño popular tradition, however, has reached a more ambiguous verdict regarding Crespo's *actuación revolucionaria*. "Era cacique . . . gran cacique," old timers pronounce, often with raised eyebrows or a wry smile. ("He was a boss . . . a very great boss.") This rather terse depiction reflects admiration for Crespo's courage, resoluteness, and shrewdness but also registers a sardonic appreciation of his surmounting ambition to control and dispense power.

4

Marmaduke Grove

Frederick M. Nunn

Latin American history and the students at Oregon's Portland State University gained significantly when Fred Nunn decided on graduate study with Edwin Lieuwen at the University of New Mexico rather than pursuing a basketball career. And, despite his protestations, basketball is none the poorer. As a historian, Nunn has examined the soldier-politics in *Chilean Politics, 1920–1931: The Honorable Mission of the Armed Forces* (1971), *The Military in Chilean History: Essays on Chilean Military Relations, 1810–1973* (1976), and *Yesterday's Soldiers: European Military Professionalism in South America* (1983), for which he received the 1985 American Historical Association's C. H. Haring Prize. Nunn spent the 1985–86 year as a Guggenheim Fellow. He is now dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Portland State.

Marmaduke Grove's unusual name has always added to the fascination of this colorful Chilean military leader. In the following essay, Nunn examines Grove's career in the tangles of Chile's civil-military politics, his role in the "red airplane affair," his exiles to Easter Island (Pascua), and his participation in the short-lived Socialist Republic in 1932. His career serves in many ways as a prism through which to contemplate how soldiers become involved in politics, especially as happened in Chile during the decades between the world wars.

Marmaduke Grove Vallejo was born on July 6, 1878, in the town of Copiapó, Chile. The son of Marmaduke Grove and Ana Vallejo de Grove, he studied at the Liceo de Hombres in Copiapó. In 1890, just one year after his father had returned from exile for antigovernment activities during the Civil War of 1891, Grove entered the Escuela Naval at Valparaíso. Grove was expelled from the Escuela in 1894 and returned to Copiapó for further schooling. In 1896 he entered the Escuela Militar, from which he graduated two years later.

Grove's political career spanned the interwar years and lasted until 1949, five years before his death. He was a contemporary of some of Chile's most important civilian leaders. He was soldier, rebel, dissident; he was exiled and relegated; he was a senator, *golpista* (rebel).