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To End With All These Evils

Ethnic Transformation and Community Mobilization in Guatemala's Western Highlands, 1954-1980

by
Greg Grandin

Guatemala has suffered an intermittent civil war for over 30 years, yet it was not until the late 1970s that the rebels were able to mount sustained and powerful offensives that challenged the political and ideological assumptions governing national life. By the early 1980s guerrilla fronts were operating in 18 of Guatemala's 22 departments, and for the first time in the civil war's history Mayans participated on a mass scale.¹ Indian involvement, however, was not limited to armed resistance; for the first time they entered trade and campesino organizations in large numbers, forming the heart of a massive popular movement. That the armed and popular struggles were finally contained is less an indication of their weakness than testimony to the Guatemalan national security state's capacity for brutality and terror.² By the time it abated in the late 1980s, the counterinsurgency left over 400 villages destroyed or deserted and, by some estimates, up to 200,000 dead or disappeared (Jonas, 1991: 2). Most studies of this upheaval either place it within the larger context of revolutionary activity throughout Central America or focus on structural factors that prevented the dependent capitalist state from integrating all segments of society economically and politically (Williams, 1986: 174-187; Jonas, 1991: 3-9). Examinations that do incorporate the ethnic variable unique to Guatemala often view the struggle as one between a repressive ladino state and an indigenous majority or collapse ethnicity into class (Paige, 1983; Jonas, 1991; C. Smith, 1987).³

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Although ethnic identity has played an important role in the social upheavals of the late 1970s and early 1980s, little attempt has been made to examine the relationship between cultural change and resistance (for a recent exception, see Wilson, 1995). How was it that Guatemalan Mayans, long considered parochial and isolated not only from national culture but from each other, were able to forge transethnic alliances, lead organizations, and mount strategies that severely strained traditional methods of domination and exploitation? In what follows, I argue that over the past 50 years political, economic, and cultural factors both internal and external to Mayan communities have fashioned a more inclusive indigenous identity that significantly contributed to the ideological and political challenge mounted against the state from the mid-1970s on.⁴ The first section of this article will provide an overview of Mayan identity as it has been described by ethnologists and a discussion of how social changes contributed to an expansion of this identity. In the second section, I will focus on how this expansion manifested itself in the formation, organization, and strategies of the *Comité de Unidad Campesina* (Committee of Peasant Unity—CUC), a Mayan-formed and Mayan-led peasant federation at the forefront of the popular movement of the late 1970s and 1980s.

FROM NOT-SO-CLOSED CORPORATE COMMUNITIES TO A FRACTURED COMMUNITY

Early-20th-century ethnologists studied Guatemalan indigenous communities outside their historical and national context, focusing on the cultural and relational attributes that distinguished one community from another. There is debate among Guatemalanists regarding the origins and historical development of these communities, but most agree that they were the focal point of indigenous ethnic identity. This approach was sketched out early on by Sol Tax (1937), who contended that language groups such as Cakchiquel or K'iché, which encompass many communities, cannot be viewed in any sense as distinct cultural or social units. For Tax, the *municipio*, comprising a *cabecera* (municipio capital) and its surrounding *aldeas* (hamlets), was the analytic category to be examined; in a range of rituals, beliefs, and social relations “the municipios differ from one another in greater or less detail” (1937: 444). Much of the subsequent anthropological literature supported Tax’s assertion.⁵ Charles Wagley observed in 1937 that the *vecinos* (residents) of Santiago Chimaltenango believed themselves to be members of a singular community: “Most did not even know that they formed a segment of the nation. . . . They considered themselves as Chimaltecos, not Guatemaltecos.

. . . Through their localocentrism they had maintained their identity despite exploitation and domination by Spanish colonial and republican rule for four centuries" (quoted in Brintnall, 1979: ix).

Aside from cultural and religious attributes such as language, dress, and saint worship that symbolically isolate one municipio from another, each municipio was politically autonomous. Communal administration centered around a complex organizational hierarchy of civil and religious *cargos* (offices).⁶ Village leaders who ascended through the highest ranks of this hierarchy were known as *principales* (elders). The cost of holding office was substantial, involving financial sponsorship of fiestas and other events tied to the yearly village cycle. From these principales came the *costumbristas*, those who defended customs and beliefs regulating such economic and social practices as land inheritance, uses of communal property, and life-cycle rituals. These hierarchies were linked to *cofradías* (religious brotherhoods) that were often charged with carrying out specific village duties and rituals (Brintnall, 1979: 98).

Historians have examined how the municipio functioned as the administrative unit by which colonial and independent states extracted labor and revenue from their indigenous populations. Depending on the context, these external pressures contributed to a turning inward and formation of closed corporate communities of the kind described by Eric Wolf (1957, 1986).⁷ Yet the municipio was also the channel through which Indians made demands on the state. Following centuries of colonial rule that imposed a separate political and judicial structure to administer indigenous affairs, Guatemalan Mayans accustomed themselves to presenting and defending their interests collectively through their municipal authorities. This corporate representation, however, often covered multiple and contradictory interests and identities.

Recent studies of Mexican and Andean indigenous society have begun to examine power relations *within* the community in more detail (Mallon, 1995; G. Smith, 1991; Stern, 1995). The construction of communal identity is understood as an "argument" (Stern, 1995: 209) whereby individuals, in their struggle for control of communal resources and authority, contest the rights and obligations that ideologically bind the community together. This contestation takes place along class, gender, generational, ethnic, and regional lines and results in a "complex articulation of interests, discourses, and perspectives" that Florencia Mallon has called "communal hegemony" (Mallon, 1995: 65). This approach would be useful for understanding the formation and maintenance of Guatemalan indigenous communities.

Internal stratification, commerce, migration, and significant rates of exogamy, along with constantly changing municipal boundaries, suggest a more fluid and complex social and cultural identity than has so far been

allowed for in the historical literature.⁸ Following the Liberal revolution of 1871, the state, through a series of “reforms,” placed indigenous land and labor at the service of a rapidly expanding coffee capitalism (McCreery, 1994). The ensuing intracommunal social divisions took place along lines of fragmentation already in place: In the K’iché town of Cantel, for example, land reforms intensified long-standing conflicts between rival indigenous factions. In Zunil, by 1894, at least 25 Indians lived and worked on the land of a handful of village elites, owing them more than 30 pesos each.⁹ And as early as the 1890s it was common for Indians in and around Quezaltenango to mortgage their property to wealthy Mayans, which often resulted in foreclosure.¹⁰ The municipio should therefore be understood not as a crucible in which competing identities were dissolved but as an arena in which individuals pursued their often contradictory interests.

William Roseberry (1989) notes the tendency of some moral economists toward essentialism and cautions against uncritically using community-based theories to explain social tensions. Such theories, he contends, identify the locus of rebellion in networks of communal solidarity without examining the historical and social context of intracommunal relations. He stresses the need to develop a “historical understanding of tradition itself, an understanding which would draw our attention to the social and political processes through which ideas and images of community are constructed” (1989: 200). While Roseberry’s insights hold true regarding the development of Indian ethnicity in the past, they are particularly salient for the study of events as they have unfolded in the second half of this century.

In the years following the U.S.-backed counterrevolution in 1954, Guatemala entered what Arturo Arias (1990) has described as a “developmentalist stage,” in which local and foreign agencies promoted the development and diversification of the nation’s economy. Under the aegis of the Central American Common Market and the Alliance for Progress, the use of new technology and fertilizer, improvements in the country’s communication and transportation infrastructure, expanded availability of credit and capital, and the introduction of new, nontraditional export crops greatly increased the value of Guatemala’s exports. Between 1960 and 1974 coffee exports rose from US\$75 million to \$173 million, cotton exports from \$6 million to \$71 million, sugar from \$10,000 to \$50 million, and beef from \$20,000 to \$22 million (Davis, 1988: 15). Tourism and demand for artisan and textile products also increased.

Between 1950 and 1975, population growth increased the number of *minifundios* from 308,070 to 421,000, while their average size dropped from 8.1 to 5.6 hectares. While many Mayans, perhaps a majority, sought seasonal employment on coastal plantations to supplement their shrinking *milpas*

(corn plots), a significant number of Indians stepped up their nonsubsistence economic activities, such as labor recruitment, commerce, manufacturing, and specialized agricultural production (Davis, 1988: 14-15; Schmid, 1973). Studies conducted at this time describe increased social stratification and capital accumulation within communities (Falla, 1978; Brintnall, 1979; W. Smith, 1977).¹¹

Economic divisions within and among communities coincided with a cultural and political rupture. For centuries the Catholic Church in doctrine if not always in practice had advocated the abolition of pre-Christian or syncretic beliefs and rituals which centered religious authority around *cofradías* and Mayan priests, but no concerted effort was undertaken to establish orthodox Catholic hegemony in indigenous communities until the creation in 1948 of *Acción Católica* (Catholic Action—AC). *Acción Católica* became an effective vehicle for anticommunist propaganda as the ruling elite began to fear the reformist proclivities of President Jacobo Arbenz. Although a partial explanation for AC's anticommunism lies in the Catholic Church's then antipathy to any progressive social change, on a local level AC activists deftly used anticommunist hysteria to challenge the legitimacy of the *principales*, many of whom were sympathetic to the ruling party.

Acción Católica spread quickly throughout the western highlands, particularly in the departments of Quiché and Chimaltenango. It drew its early adherents from the new class of entrepreneurs mentioned above. Ricardo Falla (1978) describes how in San Antonio Ilotenango many of the new merchants embraced the movement because of both an expanded worldview and a desire to escape the onerous financial obligations of the *cofradía* system. The conflicts generated by the arrival of AC in communities moved quickly from the cultural sphere—debates surrounding syncretic icons and the right of catechists to participate in *cofradía* processions—to the economic and political sphere as AC activists organized cooperatives and ran for local political offices long the domain of the *principales*.

Arias argues that the emergence of a "new Indian bourgeoisie," along with the activities of *Acción Católica*, amounted to a frontal assault on the authority and legitimacy of traditional *municipio* institutions and leadership.¹² Accounts of this rupture too often present these new economic elites as foreign to indigenous communities, focusing on the methods of wealth accumulation rather than on the people doing the accumulating. Although the economic expansion following World War II did create new and (perhaps) alien opportunities to accumulate capital, it is important to keep in mind that members of this new indigenous bourgeoisie usually emerged from the same hierarchical networks of authority that for centuries had generated community leadership. Village elites have long lent money, hired labor, owned large

tracts of land, and engaged in regional trade. A combination of land pressure and new economic opportunities intensified these practices.

By the 1970s these conflicts took on a generational cast as a second wave of young indigenous community leaders nurtured by Acción Católica came of age. Through the work of catechists and other social activists, Spanish literacy in the countryside increased. The number of Mayans with university degrees, though still small, grew. Increased contact with ladinos, growing availability of national and global news, and new access to education combined to influence the life expectations and cultural values of the younger generation (Brintnall, 1979; Stoll, 1993). Tentatively trying to locate and understand the meaning of their ethnicity in a larger and rapidly changing world, these young leaders formed organizations and study groups.¹³ Pastoral Indígena, sponsored by AC, for example, held periodic *seminarios indígenas* that brought together Mayan leaders from different regions of the country (Arias, 1985: 76-77).

Following the collapse of the Central American Common Market in 1969 and a decline in global agricultural demand in 1973, export production decreased and Guatemala entered a period of economic stagnation. Many of the social initiatives of the developmentalist stage ended, and the country became increasingly polarized politically and socially. This crisis intensified communal stratification (Arias, 1990: 241). Many marginal farmers, now tied through debt and reliance on fertilizer to a cash economy, were forced to sell their land and become wage laborers. Communities found themselves divided between the newly economically empowered bourgeoisie and an impoverished campesino class.

Jeffery Paige has stressed the importance of class stratification in the revolutionary upheavals of the late 1970s and early 1980s. He argues that the growth of export agriculture combined with increased subsistence pressures effectively ended traditional agricultural life centering around the milpa and turned the indigenous community into a "temporary home for agricultural wage laborers" (1983: 731). Citing the class rhetoric of the revolutionary movement as proof that economic factors are central to the rebellion, Paige contends that it is the "class conflict generated by the collision between an agricultural proletariat and capitalist landowners in a peripheral export economy" which has created a "revolutionary conflict of explosive power" (1983: 733-734). By focusing exclusively on the class dimensions of the conflict Paige not only simplifies the complex structure of highland Indian society but misses an equally important aspect of the struggle. A closer examination of the language of the popular and revolutionary movement reveals a cultural struggle being waged not simply in the contested zone separating ladinos and

Indians but within the ideological boundaries that mark the essence of what it means to be Mayan.

While *principales* struggled to retain a community-centered worldview, younger leaders who in the past would have risen through traditional channels to positions of leadership and prestige were forced to search for new avenues to community power. In the years following the economic downturn, Mayan elites, which by the mid-1970s included an urban core of professionals, increasingly sought access to political power within the ladino political structure. In the 1974 elections many members of the indigenous bourgeoisie ran for municipal, departmental, and national offices on Partido Democracia Cristiana de Guatemala (Christian Democrat party—DC) and Partido Revolucionario (Revolutionary party, actually to the right of the DC) tickets. For the first time Mayan delegates won seats in the national assembly (Arias, 1990: 242). In a number of *municipios* Indians won election to offices traditionally dominated by ladinos. The increased willingness of Indians to align themselves with national political parties, however, furthered divisions within communities.¹⁴ Despite these electoral gains, growing disillusionment stemming from a combination of electoral fraud and racism pushed the indigenous elite to form its own political party, the Frente Integración Nacional (National Integration Front—FIN), in 1977. The class composition of the party combined with the fact that the army controlled the electoral process led the FIN to form a discrediting right-wing alliance with the military. Despite this alliance, the FIN failed to win a single deputy seat in the 1978 elections (Arias, 1990: 246). The inability of the regime to provide a political space for indigenous interests along with the worsening economic situation radicalized many indigenous activists.

TO END WITH ALL THESE EVILS: THE COMITÉ DE UNIDAD CAMPESINA

The CUC was Guatemala's first national peasant association organized and led by Mayans. Serving to coordinate peasant leagues and associations from different *municipios*, it was the first organization of any significant size to unite Indians of differing regional and language groups. Concentrating its demands on specific everyday issues such as access to credit, land titles, fair prices for both goods that campesinos bought such as fertilizer and agricultural products that they sold, adequate plantation wages, and an end to military repression, the CUC developed a revolutionary ideology that rejected the legitimacy of the state and placed a united Indian-ladino peasant movement squarely within the growing popular movement. The CUC orga-

nized and led some of the most important confrontations with the state, including the occupation of the Spanish embassy in 1980 and the largest strike in Guatemala's history, involving as many as 80,000 plantation workers on the Pacific coast. Going underground in 1982 as a result of the repression, the committee lay dormant until 1986. It resurfaced in 1987, and in 1988 it once again led a successful strike that more than doubled the minimum wage. It remains one of the most important organizations in Guatemala's popular movement, adopting new tactics to meet the country's changing social and political climate such as petitioning the U.S. trade representative to revoke Guatemala's most favored nation status for its continuing violation of human rights.¹⁵

No national campesino organization existed in Guatemala prior to the democratic revolution of 1944. Guatemala's new constitution in 1945 not only allowed but encouraged labor to organize. Between 1945 and 1954, 395 cooperatives, free peasant leagues, and plantation labor unions were formed, the vast majority in the western highlands and on the southern coast (Snee, 1969: 36). In 1950 a number of peasant leagues joined to form the Confederación Nacional Campesina de Guatemala (Guatemalan National Peasant Confederation—CNCG). Following the 1954 U.S.-sponsored overthrow of the Jacobo Arbenz government, union organizers and leaders were thrown in jail or murdered, and peasant organizing in the highlands came to a standstill. For the next decade and a half, nearly all developmental work and community organizing was carried out under the auspices of Acción Católica.

The overthrow of Arbenz and the continuing rule of right-wing repressive governments rendered the initial anticommunism of AC meaningless. Through its affiliation with the DC, in the late 1950s Acción Católica initiated community improvement projects such as the construction of schools, the repair of roads and bridges, and the creation of savings and loan cooperatives. In the mid-1960s catechists began to organize peasants in leagues affiliated with the DC. Gradually starting in the late 1960s, second-generation catechists, many just returning home after studying at the university on scholarships provided by AC and other organizations, began to develop a politicized analysis of the social problems ravaging their communities.

These catechists initiated literacy campaigns using the participatory methods of Paulo Freire, gave classes in community organizing and self-defense, offered study groups, and formed Christian base communities. José González, an early CUC leader from Chichicastenango, describes the radicalizing affect of liberation theology (interview, April 24, 1994, Retalhuleu):

In 1977 I attended a course offered by Acción Católica at the university in the capital. There the professor related the story of Moses and the liberation of the

Jews from the slavery of the Egyptians to what we *indígenas* have experienced here in Guatemala for centuries. It was there that I learned about the cause of our people's problems. We were not poor and hungry because God wants it that way, we are poor and hungry because of exploitation, because there are no jobs, because they pay us salaries of hunger.¹⁶

Following the rise in military repression and land expropriation that swept northern Quiché and Alta Verapaz in the mid-1970s, activists began to question the effectiveness of the AC's developmental work. Pablo Ceto, a CUC founder, describes the early years (Frank and Wheaton, 1984: 46):

We looked and looked. The co-ops didn't work, schools were no good, none of our projects had helped. What were we going to do . . . ? We began as reflection groups. We held Spanish literacy classes, always with the goal of coming to understand our reality. . . . Many different groups worked in my village. Catholic Action was the largest, but there were also community improvement committees, evangelical and Protestant organizations. When CUC was formed, we no longer talked about religion, but about exploitation, about the struggles for equality, freedom for workers, better wages. People from all the groups could relate to that.

Ceto is typical of many of the early leaders of the CUC. Educated and politically committed, he struggled to retain his cultural identity within an expanding world (Jones and McCaughan, 1984: 137):

After my primary education I received a scholarship and attended secondary school outside of my town and its mountains. . . . During those six years, I learned about Central America, America, the Old World, etc. But above all, I learned to ask about the causes of suffering. . . . Miserable wages. Kidnaping of peasant Indian youth so that they would serve as soldiers. . . . In 1974 I went to study at the university on a scholarship. I studied agronomy for five years, but the force of my people, of the Indians, of the peasants, was calling me. Every weekend I would go back to my town until I finally returned to my place of origin, my personal, cultural, and political reference point.

Exposed to the world outside of his "town and its mountains," Ceto could not have returned to his "place of origin" without a fundamental metamorphosis in the way he understood his culture. This cultural transformation would find expression in the rhetoric and ideology of the CUC.

The contrast between the CUC and the CNCG of the 1950s could not be greater. Both the national and the regional leaders of the CNCG were overwhelmingly middle-class ladino bureaucrats and professionals (Pearson, 1969: 350). In contrast, CUC leaders were all Mayan and if not engaged in agricultural work themselves were only a generation removed from it. All were educated either formally at the university or informally through religious and cultural study groups, and all were involved to some degree in the pastoral work of Acción Católica (Fernández, 1988: 4-16).

Many analysts, pointing to the class language of the CUC, have drawn a division between its radical leadership and the more conservative indigenous elites who did not support the revolution (Arias, 1990). A closer look, however, reveals notable similarities. Nearly all of the founders of the organization were from families of *principales*. Many of them had sufficient land for themselves and their children, and many were engaged in economic activity that would place them squarely within Arias's indigenous bourgeoisie.¹⁷ José González's father, for example, was a principal (interview, May 6, 1994, Retalhuleu). From the turn of the century until his death in the 1940s he traveled to the departments of Alta and Baja Verapaz selling clothes he purchased in the capital to laborers on the coffee plantations. When he died he left 600 *cuerdas* (10 *cuerdas* equals roughly 1 acre) of land to three sons. One of them, José, followed in his father's footsteps and became an itinerant merchant on the southern coast, arriving at the plantations on payday with clothes, radios, and cooking utensils. If money was short he would provide credit, returning the following week to collect a little above the selling price. He rented 40 *cuerdas* of land on the coast on which he grew corn that he would then sell in the highlands. At times he would hire day laborers to work his land both on the coast and in Chichicastenango. Yet unlike his father, José never held *cofradía* or municipal offices. At an early age he became involved in Acción Católica, eventually holding a number of important positions in community improvement programs and sitting on the AC's departmental board of directors. He never worked as a laborer on a plantation or had problems with his 250 *cuerdas* (the 200 he had inherited and 50 that he later purchased), which he has since given to his seven sons.¹⁸ Pedro Gómez, a CUC founder and classmate of Pablo Ceto, likewise came from a line of *principales* in the town of Santa Cruz del Quiché.¹⁹ His father, a Mayan priest, left him 250 *cuerdas* of land that supplemented his profession as a food merchant and part-time labor contractor. He never held a religious or municipal office but earned community and regional prestige as an AC *promotor social* in charge of training other catechists in the departments of Quiché and Chimaltenango.

From 1976 to 1978, the CUC organized in secret; local knowledge shielded its formation. Ceto states that "many elements of our culture and daily lives, such as our deep knowledge of the terrain, secrecy, solidarity, defense, have contributed to the strengthening of our organization" (Frank and Wheaton, 1984: 54). Activists built the organization behind traditional or seemingly innocuous masks such as *cofradías*, soccer teams, Catholic parishes, and evangelical churches. Menchú recalls that "fiestas of patron saints or markets became meeting places for militants from different areas and provided opportunities to spread propaganda in secret" (Menchú, 1992:

42). Merchant activists would use their commercial routes to spread news and win converts. José González continued to ply his wares on the coast until 1980, selling plates and organizing.

Organizers would travel from community to community explaining events in other parts of Guatemala. One woman from a village in southern Quiché relates the impact that the arrival of Vicente Menchú (Rigoberta Menchú's father) had on her town (Frank and Wheaton, 1984: 50):

The period when more people from La Estancia joined the CUC was when Don Vicente Menchú and one of his sons sought refuge with us. They told us that it was no longer possible to live in northern Quiché because of the repression. When the army of the rich arrived in the hamlets and the villages, it killed everyone. . . . They said this was war, that the war would not end until everyone became organized and began to struggle for their rights.

The early organizing language of the CUC leaders, in contrast with their secular public pronouncements, was strongly infused with biblical imagery and justification. Catechists-turned-peasant-organizers would travel from community to community linking local concerns and struggles to a political and moral economy reflecting their AC training. "Are you not God's children?" José González would ask organizing targets (interview, April 24, 1994, Retalhuleu):

If you are God's children, why do you not have a good house, a piece of land, good food? What do you eat? Green bananas. If we are God's children why do we not eat like the rich eat? Who were the owners of the land before the Spanish came? We were, Los Guatemaltecos. So when they come and say we are invading the land, we say no, you are the ones who invaded the land, the land is ours. Why do children die so young? Not because God calls them, but for malnutrition, for lack of land, for lack of jobs, for salaries of hunger. How long do campesinos live? 30, 40 years old. The Bible says we should live to be 100, 200, 300 years old. Who in Guatemala lives like this? The rich. Think about it.

No membership lists were kept, and no formal leadership was acknowledged. CUC activists went to ladino demonstrations and observed the organizations and listened to the slogans and speeches. They then met and discussed what they had heard (Arias, 1990: 248). Some of the leaders argued for an exclusively Indian organization. Yet as instances of Indian-ladino cooperation in the popular movement such as the successful 1977 Ixtahuacán miners' march became more frequent, it was decided that the Comité should be multiethnic (Black, Jamail, and Chinchilla, 1984: 104). Given the deep-seated distrust between Mayans and ladinos, this perhaps was the CUC's most radical and threatening aspect. It was not an easy decision to reach (interview, Antonio Chávez, May 1, 1994, Guatemala):

This was discussed and analyzed for a long time and it was not easy to accept them at first. . . . But discrimination is not just between ladinos and *indígenas*, at times it is between *indígenas* who don't respect the individual or collective rights of others. There is a reality that exists in this country and we needed to accept it. For years we discussed this until we arrived at the conclusion that we had to take ladinos into account in the struggle of the CUC, well, because Guatemala is made up of Indians and ladinos. On the southern coast the majority are ladinos and we can't say that we don't want them because the CUC is Indian. The ladinos are campesinos and they work the land, and it would be a contradiction of our principles to not accept them.

This class-based analysis of discrimination allowed the CUC to win strong support not only among poor ladinos on the southern coast but also in highland ladino communities and the Atlantic coast department of Izabal.

On April 15, 1978, the various committees and base communities decided on the name Comité de Unidad Campesina. CUC announced itself to Guatemalans on April 29, 1978, with a paid advertisement in the daily *El Gráfico*. Not limited to a series of mundane demands characteristic of peasant petitions, the ad placed immediate concerns within a larger socialist vision and critique. It was the product of educated leaders such as Ceto, Gómez, and González.²⁰ Three days later thousands of Mayans descended from the highlands to march behind CUC's banner in the May Day demonstration. Not since 1839, when Rafael Carrera's peasant army occupied Guatemala City, had this many Mayans gathered together *as Indians* in a show of oppositional force in the ladino capital. The impact on both indigenous consciousness and the ladino-dominated popular movement was great. As Ceto describes it (Frank and Wheaton, 1984: 54),

When we began to appear publicly as CUC for the first time in 1978, people in Guatemala City were taken completely by surprise. They had never seen anything like it. It wasn't just our level of organization, because we were very solid by this time. The surprise came from seeing *compañeros* from the countryside marching with their *trajes* [indigenous dress]: Quichés, Cakchiqueles, Tzutuhiles, Mames, Kekchis, all marched together. The Indian had begun to have a presence in the national political struggle.

Organizing work in the highlands continued. Distinct Mayan communities traditionally united by trade but separated by language joined together politically. Rigoberta Menchú describes the irony of relying on a colonial language to defend indigenous culture (1984: 161-162):

I traveled to different areas and slept in the houses of different *compañeros*, and what I found most distressing was that we couldn't understand each other. They couldn't speak Spanish and I couldn't speak their language. I felt so helpless. . . . I began learning Mam, I began learning Cakchiquel and Tzutuhil. . . . Learning to read and write, learning Spanish and three other languages—

and my own as well—was all very confusing. . . . Since Spanish was a language which united us, why learn all the twenty-two languages in Guatemala? It wasn't practical, and anyway this wasn't the moment to do it.

Solidifying its base in the highlands, the CUC began to work on the plantations of both the Pacific and the Atlantic coast, which were notoriously hard to organize because of their use of large numbers of seasonal workers. Working closely with established agricultural unions of permanent plantation laborers, CUC activists organized the seasonal workers both in their communities of origin and on the plantations (Fernández, 1988: 19).

CUC activists found effective and innovative ways to communicate with their members outside the military-controlled media. Simple word of mouth from community to community was often the fastest method of relaying information. Activists also used local radio stations such as Radio Quiché and Voz de Atilán to broadcast messages in Mayan languages. Plantation organizers overcame a shortage of walls for their graffiti by painting their slogan—¡Viva el CUC!—on cattle. When landlords slaughtered the didactic cattle, activists painted the cry on dogs (Black, Jamail, and Chinchilla, 1984: 105). The CUC produced a number of newsletters in different regions of the country. The *Voz del Comité de Unidad Campesina* informed peasants in the highlands of events in other regions, and *El Combativo* kept seasonal migrants on the southern coast abreast of news from the highlands. These newsletters often ran simple cartoons in either Spanish or Indian languages explaining strategies or demands to their largely illiterate audience (see Figure 1).

Whole extended clans joined, and for active members resistance became a way of life. Entire families attended meetings and demonstrations, and women activists organized with babies strapped to their backs. This lack of division between public and private spheres, in contrast to the situation in male-dominated ladino unions and political parties, contributed to the important role played by women. While the CUC emerged through channels of patriarchal village leadership reconfigured through Acción Católica, familial organization and participation allowed women such as Rigoberta Menchú and Juana Gómez to rise to positions of leadership. This explains the resilience of the organization despite the decimation of its early leadership. By 1982 almost all of the founders were either dead or in exile. In 1986 many of the members who attended the first reorganizing meeting in Mexico were the daughters, sons, and cousins of the original leaders (interview, Juana Gómez, May 6, 1994, Guatemala). Yet despite the fact that for many of its most active members CUC became a way of life, for the vast majority of its constituency the organization was not a union or party that one joined but more of an advocacy group that they flocked to during specific moments of



Figure 1. A cartoon from *Voz del CUC* (August 1979).

crisis and struggle. Many did not share either the commitment or the larger social vision of its leadership.

In the wake of escalating repression and the state's unwillingness or inability to satisfy campesino demands, the CUC's actions grew increasingly militant and confrontational. Following the firebombing of the Spanish embassy in 1980 by the Guatemalan government which left scores of CUC members and their supporters dead (among them Vicente Menchú), the CUC called a meeting at the symbolically charged Iximché ruins, the former capital of the Cakchiquel kingdom. Representatives from nearly every ethnic group attended. The unprecedented meeting issued a declaration which linked mythic symbols of a pan-Indian past with class-based interests of a brutal present:

To end with all of these evils the invaders' descendants and their government, we must struggle allied with the workers, peasants, students, settlers, and other democratic and popular sectors. We must strengthen the unity and solidarity between Indians and Ladinos. . . . For a society based upon equality and respect; that our Indian people, as such, be able to develop their culture, broken by the criminal invaders; for a just economy in which no one exploits others; that land be communal as our ancestors had it; for a people without discrimination, that all repression, torture, kidnapping, murder and massacres cease; that forced recruitment by the army cease, that we all have the same right to work, that we not continue being utilized as objects of tourism; for the just distribution and utilization of riches as in the times during which the life and ancestors flourished.²¹

Filtering images of a just and noble society through its daily experiences of cultural and class oppression, the CUC was able to create both an

integrative and inclusive strategy in the present and an ethical and egalitarian vision of the future. Thus, while the appeal of the manifesto was obviously twofold, economic and cultural, its strength lay in the interplay between the two: Class-based economic demands allowed for a strategically important alliance with ladinos, while evocations of past traditions and rights justified those demands in the present.

FROM A MORAL COMMUNITY TOWARD A MORAL NATIONALISM?

In examining the applicability of community-based-resistance theories to the study of the events so far described, Douglas Kincaid provides us with a useful summation (1987: 466):

Despite differences among theorists . . . a general model of community-based peasant rebellion can be fairly simply stated. The traditional bonds of kinship, culture, and communal economy provide at once a shared identity and definition of outsiders. In the event of external pressure, such as attempts to expropriate peasant lands, mobilize peasant labor, or integrate the community into wider market or political systems, community solidarity can provide the organization, leadership, and objectives around which resistance will be mounted.²²

In applying this model to three rebellions in El Salvador, Kincaid concludes that community mobilization generated by close social cohesion led to rebellion: "In each case the analysis has tended to confirm a fundamental hypothesis of the model: Higher levels of community solidarity are associated with a greater likelihood that, given sufficient cause, particular peasant villages will be mobilized for rebellion" (1987: 491).

Mobilization in Guatemala did indeed take place on a community level, but it was a community both real and imagined. It was real in the sense that the political mobilization carried out by the CUC was consolidated around established networks of communal authority. The CUC's founders were essentially middle peasants with enough strategic mobility to identify and respond to threats to their community. Within the community, these early leaders used their positions of patriarchal power to insinuate the CUC into extended families, community-improvement organizations, *cofradías*, and local municipal governments. Outside the community, they used their newly expanded commercial and religious (AC) networks to link isolated villages and regions. That these networks were largely outside the purview of the state's repressive apparatus explains the formation, leadership, and endurance of the organization. Whether it be over mountainous footpaths connect-

ing towns and hamlets to which no road reached, over radio frequencies broadcasting messages in Mayan languages, in seminars sponsored by Acción Católica, or through the social connections maintained between highland villages and coastal plantations, Mayan society mobilized.

This community was imagined in that the rhetoric and ideology of the CUC expanded the boundaries of what it meant to be Indian in Guatemala. By incorporating elements of liberation theology, marxism, and Guatemalan nationalism into its definition of Indianness, the early CUC created a pan-Indian identity from which it drew strength and legitimation. Yet while it appears that this mobilization was a reaction to integration, it also seems to have been strengthened as a *result of integration*, contradicting Kincaid's evocation of "community solidarity." Twice this century, the first time internally directed (with Acción Católica) and the second time externally directed (with the CUC), a challenge to the status quo was mounted as a result of integration. Over the past 50 years, as a result of increased incorporation into the national and international economy, Guatemalan Indians have interacted to an ever-greater extent with society outside their communities, both socially—through trade, extracommunal wage labor, and politics—and discursively—through religion, education, literacy, and political and cultural ideology. As we have seen, this interaction made possible the spread of the CUC among relatively isolated communities and its success in organizing both peasant freeholders in the highlands and seasonal migrant workers on the coast. It also allowed for an expansion of Indian identity that led to effective alliances with non-Indian sectors of Guatemalan society.

The multiple meanings of ethnicity produced by this integration have had a profound impact on Guatemalan social and political life. Kept isolated and discrete, Indian ethnicity placed little brake on the national projects imposed by first Spanish and then Guatemalan governments, but integrated and inclusive these new articulations of ethnicity clashed with national economic, political, and ideological practices of domination.

In challenging theories that view nationalism as a "positivist, unilinear" process of historical development that "assigns no creative role to nonbourgeois classes," Mallon (1987: 234) has suggested a more fluid, dynamic model. In her view, nationalism needs to be studied as a changing and evolving form of human consciousness emerging from "actual human experience and conflict, in relation to other forms of ideology or perception, in the context of particular material and political conditions" (1987: 233, 1995: 2-5) In studying the development of nationalist consciousness among Peruvian and Mexican peasants, she raises two questions that are pertinent to the study of Guatemala: To what degree can nationalism vary according to class? And to what extent do certain forms of nationalist consciousness develop in

conflict and contradiction to the process of national unification? It is the latter question in particular that provides us with a useful analytic distinction for studying ethnicity's link to the development of nationalism. By separating feelings and expressions of nationalist consciousness from the process of national unification, we can examine how in Guatemala the transformation and expansion of ethnic identity came into conflict with the national projects of elites.

Throughout the colonial and the later republican period, class relations, as usually expressed along ethnic lines, were essentially mediated and determined by the state. In various forms depending on the economic activity of the period, the state assumed the role of labor broker, ensuring a captive and inexpensive workforce (MacLeod, 1983: 192; Carmack, 1983b: 215-224). Deborah Levenson-Estrada (1994: 2) has pointed out that the Guatemalan state from independence through present times, except during the Ten Years of Spring (1944-1955), never made any real effort to incorporate either Mayans or any of the popular classes. No attempt to create a national culture, build a national economy with an internal market, or establish ideological hegemony was ever seriously undertaken. Nevertheless, in the years following independence the state's relationship with its indigenous populations transcended the need for cheap labor and went to the heart of what it meant to be Guatemalan. Since then the ladino-asked "Indian question" has been at the center of Guatemalan national discourse.

Consistently from independence forward (except for the Carrera period), official government rhetoric with regard to Indians was concerned with how best to integrate them into larger national political and economic structures (Carmack, 1983b: 219). Influenced by 19th-century positivist ideals, fetishes for things European, and an export-driven economy based on a coerced workforce overwhelmingly made up of Mayans, Guatemalan coffee liberals had little incentive to develop a national myth of *mestizaje* or of a *raza cósmica* as did post-1910 Mexican elites. Even during the reform years of 1944 to 1954, intellectuals such as Miguel Angel Asturias argued for miscegenation and cultural assimilation as ways to modernize the Indian (Handy, 1989; Adams, 1990).

Yet national ideals often ran head on into the realities of both indigenous and ladino society. Despite lip service paid to assimilation, economic and cultural reality dictated the perpetuation of a biethnic society. Mayan communities employed a number of tactics to maintain their autonomy and resist assimilation, ranging from quiet, passive resistance to open rebellion (Scott, 1986; McCreery, 1990). Further, successive Guatemalan states could not afford to back up their nationalist rhetoric, and the existence of highland indigenous communities, by providing a subsistence base apart from wage

labor, underwrote a dependent plantation economy unable to support a full-time workforce. Finally, a bitter ladino racism continues to divide Guatemalan society.

Although the elite viewed Mayans collectively as a subordinate group, politically the government dealt with them on a *municipio* basis, thus fostering isolation and separation. Predicated on these antiquated notions of ethnic division, traditional elite strategies of domination could not adjust to the ideological, political, and economic expansion that took place in the second half of this century. This expansion generated a nascent nationalist consciousness that for the first time in the history of Indian-state relations was capacious enough to transcend real and imagined divisions separating the indigenous population from itself and other segments of Guatemalan society.

The integrative potential of this new worldview manifested itself in a popular form of protest of the 1970s. Often demonstrations or strikes would include a march from the highlands or the coast through *municipios* and *aldeas* to Guatemala City. One of the largest and most important, the Ixtahuacán miners' march, took place in November 1977. From the northwest of the department of Huehuetenango, the miners marched 351 kilometers through the Mayan zone of the western highlands to Guatemala City demanding better working conditions. By the time they entered the capital they were 150,000 strong. As they passed through villages the miners would hold organizational meetings in which members of the community participated. Arias writes that the miners' march "forced the Indians to take another organizing step. There were, at the time, various groups in Santa Cruz del Quiché, in Chimaltenango, and on the southern coast. . . . Until the miners' march, those groups had only maintained slight coordination, but in order to give the miners the support they needed it became obvious to coordinate on a broader scale" (1990: 249). To borrow from Gramsci, the strikers literally marched through the institutions—the *municipios*—of ethnic fragmentation and in so doing transformed them.²³

The reorientation of ethnic identity that has transpired over the past 40 or so years has not produced a coherent or unambiguous nationalism. The emergent identities, encompassing newly formed interests and divisions, conflict in both ideological and political arenas. Many of the attempts to articulate an expanded indigenous identity are politically charged, involving issues of alliance with or opposition to the revolution. Yet it is important to keep in mind that the dichotomy separating a class-based pan-Mayanism, here represented by the rhetoric of the CUC, from a conservative cultural nationalism articulated by noncampesino "bourgeois" Mayans is extremely simplified. This dichotomization overlooks the importance of communal

bonds and misses the radicalizing potential of the cultural critique offered by the indigenous bourgeoisie. At times correlations can be found between class interest and vision, but these connections are often murky. Whereas urban indigenous doctors, lawyers, and other professionals tend to be conservative in their attempts at cultural renewal, the class and ideological linkage of community leaders in rural municipios is less direct. Many of the spokespeople at both ends of the spectrum have the same cultural and economic background and have been politicized by the same social and political processes. The *seminarios indígenas* produced both future revolutionaries and future conservative cultural elites, and, as we have seen, many of the early leaders of the CUC were themselves well-off merchants or labor contractors.

Nor are the rhetorics of the two approaches mutually exclusive. If we allow for this simplified dichotomy, it could be argued that both sides have had an ongoing influence on each other. By the very nature of Mayan culture and Guatemalan society, both agriculturally based, ethnic nationalism has had to take into account questions of land and labor. And as the repression mounted and the rebels lost ground, class-based Mayanism has increasingly sought legitimation by presenting the struggle in cultural terms, supported by increasing international attention to indigenous rights. In towns such as Todos Santos Cuchumatán and Santiago Atitlán, the argument "Ni el ejército, ni la guerrilla" articulated by a new generation of postcounterinsurgency community leadership (which notably avoids directly addressing social problems such as land shortage or endemic poverty) has kept the army at bay to differing degrees. Currently, as Indians become organized and represented in nearly all sectors of society, Guatemala is awash in competing definitions of what it means to be Mayan.²⁴

Following Mallon's lead, these new worldviews, of which the CUC's class-based pan-Indianism is but one, can be seen as a type of nationalist consciousness developed in conflict and contradiction with other perceptions and ideologies and capable of presenting alternatives to elite goals of national unification and domination. It is now Mayans themselves who are asking the "Indian question."

CONCLUSION

Manifestations of ethnic identity are complex processes that cannot be reduced to class or political determinants or be captured in revolutionary slogans. The divisions and changes continuing to affect municipio life are intricate and often paradoxical. Although a minority of educated Mayans may

have been able to frame resistance in larger terms, the vast majority of Indians still center their lives and their day-to-day struggle to survive around the *municipio*. It is unlikely that Indians stopped considering themselves Chimaltecos, Aguacatecos, or Cantelenses. But competing identities are not mutually exclusive. Tensions exist in all communities, real and imagined. Old worldviews maintain their vitality and meaning-giving potential long after the social situation in which they formed has been changed or destroyed. They often exist not side by side with new inchoate identities but within and around them, mediating and conditioning their emergence. Integration and incorporation into larger national structures created a potential for cultural expansion and redefinition that became manifest within a particular historical conjuncture. It is unlikely that the majority of CUC members ever shared the cohesive ideology of the leadership, but the expanded worldview of a handful of community leaders can have an inordinate influence on social relations that have historically been based on exploitation.

Explanations and reasons for the rebellion are likewise complex. By focusing on the implications of indigenous participation in the oppositional movement, I have ignored larger structural or political causes of the revolt. Indians participated reluctantly in the armed movement.²⁵ Many of the demands that emerged as a result of indigenous integration were explicitly reformist in nature, such as access to political power, adequate wages, civil and political rights, or more equitable land distribution. Since independence the state, at least rhetorically, has promoted the incorporation of Indians into larger national and political structures. Yet when integration did occur on a significant level, the state was structurally unable to adjust to its consequent tensions. As a result it resorted to mass repression and terror that blurred the always somewhat arbitrary line between reform and revolution, forcing thousands of Mayans to take up arms.

Because of the inability of early marxist theory to explain the inescapable fact that the peasantry rather than the industrial proletariat has been the major revolutionary force of the 20th century, there has been a tendency by some scholars to locate peasant society outside the economic and social processes that have contributed to proletarianization. Scott (1977: 271) writes that the

precapitalist moral-economy of the peasantry . . . constitutes a decisive advantage for the revolutionary potential of the peasantry. As an old class, the peasantry falls heir to a rich and nearly ageless set of values it has historically defended. By contrast, the proletariat is a new class that must socially construct its subculture and shared values in an historically new environment. That the social values of the peasantry are precapitalist may give its rebellions a quality of tenacity and moral cohesion.

Pointing to precapitalist networks of social and cultural ties formed outside the hegemonic powers of the state, Scott challenges Karl Marx's assertion that "in so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class" and hence tend to reaction rather than revolution (1977: 269).

Appeals to a moral and just society can mobilize communities to resistance, but they cannot be removed from the political and economic processes that create them. The class-based pan-Indian ethnicity articulated most forcefully by the CUC provided an ideological foundation for Indian resistance rooted in the quotidian experience of its members. Formed as a result of integration into larger social and discursive processes, the networks and values that Scott quite correctly identifies as essential to communal resistance cannot, at least in the case of Guatemala, be considered precapitalist in any meaningful sense of the term. Guatemala's Mayan campesinos lie somewhere between Marx's discrete peasants unable to forge communities, national bonds, or political organizations and Scott's ageless peasantry.

POSTSCRIPT, 1996

As this article was being prepared for publication, peace talks between the rebels and the government inched forward. It seems increasingly likely that the hemisphere's longest running civil war will soon officially come to an end. Despite the recent signing of a number of accords protecting indigenous culture, it is not clear what role Mayan ethnicity will have in postwar reconstruction. Will it provide a collective vision of an economically, politically, and culturally just society capable of uniting diverse sectors of Guatemalan society in opposition to neoliberal restructuring, as the Zapatistas in Mexico are trying to do? Or will it become the cultural property of a select few and further the fragmentation that has been central to the Guatemalan state's project of domination?

NOTES

1. Although there is debate concerning the degree of indigenous participation, it is clear that large numbers actively supported the rebels not only by taking up arms but also by providing a sympathetic and sustaining medium in which the rebels could operate. Adams (1988: 286) estimates Indian participation at 500,000. For differing interpretations of the war, compare Grandin (1995) with Stoll (1993), who spends a good portion of his book arguing that the war

was not a true social revolution because the Mayan rebels did not exhibit an unambiguous class or ethnic consciousness.

2. For a case study on the nature of the terror see Falla (1992).

3. Guatemala's population of 9,000,000 is made up of 22 indigenous ethnic groups that constitute 50-65 percent of the population.

4. Arias (1990) provides the basic foundation for the ensuing description of community change. Carmack (1988), Ebel (1988), and Stoll (1993) supply case studies of the political ruptures in traditional life; Brintnall (1979) gives a close description of generational, political, economic, and cultural change in Aguacatán; Warren (1978) and Falla (1978) provide detailed descriptions of Acción Católica's challenge to village authority.

5. Even when ethnologies moved beyond functionalist approaches, they still described Mayan identity as municipio-based (Warren, 1992). For other ethnologies that analyze and describe community structures see Brintnall (1979), Bunzel (1959), Colby and van den Berghe (1969), Gillin (1951), Nash (1958), Tedlock (1982), Watanabe (1992), W. Smith (1977), and Warren (1978).

6. In many municipios the hierarchy is now defunct (Warren, 1992). Specifics of the cargo system vary according to local particularities. For a more detailed description see Tax (1937). For descriptions of this system in a town with a large number of ladinos, see Gillin (1951). For various interpretations regarding the system's significance, see W. Smith (1977: 9-19), and for an attempt to historicize often static examinations of the hierarchy, see Chance and Taylor (1985).

7. See Solórzano Fonseca (1985) for the colonial era. Throughout the republican period municipal authorities were responsible for collecting assorted taxes and providing men for both public works projects and Barrio's 1877 restoration of the labor *mandamientos*, returned to benefit the expanding coffee economy. On the application of Wolf's model to Guatemala, see Lutz and Lovell (1990).

8. See McBryde (1947) for descriptions of commerce and migration. According to a 1743 *Relación Geográfica*, out of 127 marriages in Cantel, 75 were with men or women from other villages, a rate of exogamy of close to 60 percent. Rates for indigenous communities in the region of Quezaltenango were as follows: Concepción, 62 percent; San Martín, 21 percent; Almolonga, 31 percent; and Zunil, 28 percent (Archivo General de Centro América, hereafter AGCA, A-1217 210, 5009). In Cantel, with a population under 500, it is doubtful that this high rate of exogamy was due to land pressure; it suggests that Cantel, surrounded by other K'iché towns, engaged in routine and accepted social relations that transcended municipio boundaries. The 19th century was a time in which a number of new municipios formed from the territory and population of existing ones. See McCreery (1990) for the case of Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán and Nahuala.

9. Archivo de Gobernación de Quezaltenango, "Listas de mozos colonos," bulto 1894.

10. AGCA, "Libros de protocolos," Remigio Sausñava, 1886, folio 108v and *Segundo Registro de la Propiedad*, 1885, vol. 2 (*diario*), folio 205, no. 385.

11. Wealth differentiation took place not only within communities but between highland regions as well. Many villages in what Carol Smith (1978) has dubbed the "core" highlands became more deeply involved in nonagricultural occupations. Prior to the 1950s, many Indians in this region were involved in highly specialized production of goods such as furniture and wool clothing. Increased currency circulation and product demand allowed indigenous artisanry to keep pace with population pressure, thus providing for many an alternative to agricultural proletarianization. Indians in the "peripheral" highlands, in contrast, relying on basic food cultivation and low-specialization craft production, were more vulnerable to the pressures brought about by a shrinking land base. This region sent a disproportionately greater number of migrants to the coast in search of work (Schmid, 1973: 44-45).

12. Arias (1990) never defines exactly what he means by this term, but we must assume that it encompasses more than objective relationships to the means of production. Throughout the period of integration, Indians managed to remove themselves, either through capital accumulation, education, or professional occupations such as law or teaching, from productive and social relations generally associated with Indian life. W. Smith (1977: 83) describes this differentiation in terms of *civilizados*, those Mayans who have become more worldly either as a result of education or wealth accumulation yet have retained their cultural identity, and *naturales*, mostly illiterate, impoverished peasants or seasonal wage laborers, who are still engaged in "traditional" lifeways. Carmack (1983a: 52) gives this open definition: "In all Central Highland townships, there exists a substantial town Indian 'Bourgeoisie.' It tends to support military governments, sees guerrillas as bandits and as a threat to its interest."

13. This reevaluation of Mayan ethnicity took place in Guatemala's then ladino-dominated left as well. For the first instance of this, see Guzmán and Herbert (1970).

14. See Carmack (1988), Ebel (1988), and Cabarrús (1982) for in-depth treatments of Mayan entry into local and national politics.

15. The following discussion comes from a series of formal and informal interviews that I conducted in the spring of 1994 in Guatemala with long-time CUC activists. For a more complete history of the CUC, see Fernández Fernández (1988) and Menchú (1992).

16. As throughout the rest of the article, the informant's name has been changed.

17. The famous exception to this was Vicente Menchú, who nonetheless came from a principal family in his community.

18. His seven sons have established a prospering tailoring business in Chichicastenango and use their land, 35 cuerdas each, to supplement their business earnings.

19. Information on Pedro Gómez comes from two interviews with his daughter, Juana, in Guatemala City on May 1 and 6, 1994. He was disappeared in 1982.

20. Some writers, such as Stoll, who calls the CUC the Jesuits' "most well-known achievement" (1993: 88), emphasize foreign influence, both national (that of ladino marxists) and international (that of radical Spanish priests), in its formation, thus suggesting that it was not a true Mayan enterprise. Although it is clear that there was assistance from both these sources, only its indigenous roots can explain its early strength and continuing tenacity in the face of the state's violent onslaught.

21. This translated excerpt is from Arias (1990: 257). For the complete original see the Mexican journal *Cuicuilco*, July 1, 1980.

22. See also Calhoun (1983: 886), who argues that "commitments to traditional cultural values and immediate communal relations are crucial to many radical movements, (a) because these commitments provide populations with the extent of internal social organization necessary to concerted, radical collective action, and (b) because the largely defensive goals of these movements must be radically incompatible with the introduction of modern capitalist-dominated social formations."

23. Interestingly, the agreement regarding the repatriation of the refugees from Mexico ran into a problem over the route of the first return in 1992. While the Guatemalan government insisted that the refugees return in small groups that passed through the nearly deserted jungle of the Petén in northern Guatemala, representatives of the refugees demanded a large-scale collective return that would circuitously pass through many municipios on the way to Guatemala City, where they would hold a rally before heading to their final destination. One representative stated, "We want the people of Guatemala to know we are back" (*Christian Science Monitor*, December 8, 1992). In January 1993 the government gave in, and 2,400 refugees made their way from the Mexican border to Guatemala City, stopping on the way in different towns to hold celebrations and meetings. In Guatemala City they were greeted by thousands of national and

international supporters and welcomed by Rigoberta Menchú. On the front of the lead bus in the returning caravan read a sign, "Refugees we were, Guatemalans we are" (*Report on Guatemala*, Spring 1993).

24. For a description of how this played out in the popular movement and the politics surrounding the nomination of Rigoberta Menchú for the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize, see Bastos and Camus (1993); on Mayan influence on Guatemalan and U.S. anthropology and linguistics, see Warren (1992); on interethnic relations, see Solares (1993).

25. Carmack writes that Indians "tend to respond more favorably to expanded commercial opportunities than to socialist or revolutionary doctrines" (1983a: 52).

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