“For the Purpose of Harmonious Development”: Salvador Alvarado’s Revolutionary Educational Reforms in Yucatán, 1915-1918

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the revolutionary education program of General Salvador Alvarado in Yucatán from 1915 to 1918. As governor of the state, Alvarado reformed the education system to ensure that children state-wide received free, secular primary education. The education program also aimed to reform secondary education, creating a series of agricultural and vocational training schools that would ensure the productivity of the working-class population. Alvarado's education policies were also accompanied by a series of moralizing and racialized reforms that aimed to ensure that the Indigenous population became de-Indianized, rational, sober, and hygienic. The assumption was that the Indigenous population was responsible for Yucatán's backwardness, and that education would transform them into proper citizens and valuable members of society.

Alvarado's education reforms faced opposition from the *hacendados* and the Catholic Church, both of which had differing opinions on how education should be implemented and the goals that it should achieve. There was disagreement about the role the Catholic Church should play in education, whether girls and boys should study in the same schools, and what kind of training the Indigenous population should receive. Yucatán's education system also struggled to survive as it lacked the necessary funds to ensure that all schools had supplies, equipment, and staff to run effectively. For these reasons, Alvarado's education reforms ultimately did not fully endure past 1918. Ultimately, these reforms did manage to resonate with the working-class population, who actively campaigned to remind the government of the promises it had made. Alvarado managed to create an education program that would be replicated at the federal level in the 1930s and 1940s with the consolidation of the Secretariat of Public Education.

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Introduction

A few years after his tenure as Governor of Yucatán ended in 1917, Salvador Alvarado was invited to give a lecture in New York City. Alvarado titled his 1920 lecture as "The Fundamental Problem of Mexico," and he sought to address some of the problems that continued to plague his country ten years after the revolution that ousted Porfirio Diaz from power. In this lecture, Alvarado addressed "the problem of education in Mexico, because in [his] opinion [it was] the most important of all, or rather it [was] the fundamental question, and without solving this problem, all efforts in other directions are altogether useless and sterile."[1] Alvarado was concerned in particular with the lack of a federal education program, and while he praised the states that had successfully implemented state-wide education, he still believed that the federal government should be responsible for "supplying the States with teachers, school material, propagandists, books and loans or financial assistance."[2] Alvarado also wanted states to retain some degree of independence in their educational ventures, as he felt that states had distinct education needs that had to be developed on a state-by-state basis. During his tenure as governor of Yucatán from 1915 to 1918, Alvarado had worked diligently to reform the state's education model, fascinated with the idea of learning beyond the classroom. The revolutionary government in Yucatán used education as a tool of state control to create a national culture imagined by a small elite in an attempt to claim hegemony by defining Indigenous cultures as obstacles to national development and integration.[3] The educational reforms promised by the government allowed the population to advocate for and demand teachers, schedules, and reforms that served

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[1] Salvador Alvarado. *The Fundamental Problem of Mexico: Lecture Given by General Salvador Alvarado in New York City, March 1920.* (San Antonio, Texas, 1920), 32.
[2] Alvarado, *The Fundamental Problem of Mexico*, 32.
[3] Marisol De La Cadena. *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919-1991.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 321.

their own needs and interests. Despite its eventual failure to achieve its stated goals, Yucatán's early investment in education laid the foundation for the creation of the nation's federal Secretariat of Public Education, which would attempt to create a Mexican nation with a shared history, language, and culture in the 1930s and 1940s.[4]

The education reform that Salvador Alvarado wanted to see implemented federally was inspired by his own earlier reforms as interim Governor of the State of Yucatán. This thesis explores Alvarado's educational reforms, which included free, secular primary schooling state-wide, as well as vocational and industrial schools for older children. Under his leadership, Alvarado also envisioned reforms that would address matters of morality, as well as the complicated issues of race and gender in the Peninsula. This education reform was also accompanied by judicial and institutional reforms, which were meant to bring Yucatán into a de-Indianized modernity. While Alvarado's tenure as governor was short, it was a period of rapid transition for the state. Although we can find evidence that the population supported his educational reforms, there was still considerable pushback from both the working class *campesino* population and the elites, as both tried to advocate for what they considered the *right* kind of education. In the end, Yucatán's Secretariat of Education failed to meet the demands of the population, and a lack of funding and elite support meant that many of the goals that Alvarado had wanted to achieve in his education reforms were not completed before he was ousted as governor. Alvarado's education reforms also demonstrate that state-level education reforms started at a much earlier stage during the revolution than had been previously explored by scholars, and they also demonstrate how Indigenous and non-Indigenous *campesinos* were invested in the state's education program.

[4] Shortened as SEP for the Spanish initials of Secretaría de Educación Publica.

Through the study of governmental records, we can glimpse the preoccupations of different agents who worked for the state. Official documents also reveal occasional communication between the government and the public. Through the use of official correspondence such as letters between members of the government, one can read the variety of concerns that different officials had about the education reforms, such as runaway students, the need for new supplies, and the challenges officials faced when they did not have the support of the *hacendados*. While less common, the population also wrote to the government for a variety of reasons. Often they were confirming that their children were enrolled at school, while at other times, they asked to be granted scholarships for their children to attend higher education. While the government strove to provide an often optimistic view of their educational program, documents such as school inspection reports reveal some of the cracks in these revolutionary reforms and help us understand why Alvarado's schools were not as successful as he expected them to be.

Some of the most distinctive sources are the independent magazines that were published by educators, which aimed to bridge the gap between educators and parents. These magazines, published in Yucatán, included pedagogical exercises and poems, as well as changes to legislation and suggestions for parents about how to continue improving the education of their children at home. These magazines seemed to embody Alvarado's call to "[ensure education] begin[s] from the day the child first sees the light, and even before, and for that reason, it is indispensable to educate the mothers."[5] These magazines were a civilian attempt to bridge the gaps not only between educators, but also between parents and teachers. Nonetheless, these magazines were not available to everyone. Some magazines like *Hogar y Escuela* were

[5] Alvarado, *The Fundamental Problem of Mexico,* 37.

published by S. Herrera, a private publisher, which encouraged teachers to send in articles for the magazine and translated pieces from foreign educators. Other magazines like *La Educación* were published by the Organo del Instituto Literario del Estado, a state-sanctioned post-secondary institution. Subscription fees and the fact that a vast majority of the Indigenous population was still illiterate after the revolution meant that the magazines were mostly available to the educated middle classes. It is also important to note that these documents provide an optimistic viewpoint of the revolutionary reforms through the eyes of the elite. However, they also expose the concerns and problems that emerged as the revolutionary government attempted to introduce a new education program.

The first chapter of this thesis will discuss the implementation of the education policies as envisioned by Salvador Alvarado and his Secretary of Education, Gregorio Torres Quintero. The revolutionary policy championed by Alvarado sought to ensure that the citizens of the state would be literate, vocationally trained, and loyal to the new Revolutionary Federal Government. This chapter also considers the civilizing efforts that were implicitly advanced by the government in their efforts to transform the Indigenous population into "*gente decente*". *Gente decente* were seen as those who could adhere to a series of de-Indianized middle-class values: citizens needed to be hardworking, thrifty, hygienic, entrepreneurial, and moral.[6] Alvarado saw education as a way to instill the values that he and his state government believed were essential to the formation of a nation, and was meant to combat the preoccupations of twentieth-century scientists who had seen degenerative effects in Latin America's racial hybridity.[7] Yucatán's education initiative preceded the national education program and introduced many of the reforms

[6] William E French. *A Peaceful and Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class Formation in Northern Mexico.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 64
[7] De La Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, 13

that would later be codified by the SEP. However, education throughout the country was uneven: some state schools, such as those in Tlaxcala, remained closed until the 1918, while others were at the mercy of the whims and interests of their particular state's governor.[8] In addition, Alvarado presented education to the country's elites as a way to create a racially homogeneous country and as a necessary step in order to create a new nation of like-minded individuals.[9] Through the creation of a national history that saw the composition of the Mexican population as mixed, Alvarado's government and the educated elite aimed to defuse some of the racial tensions that existed between the creole population and the Maya.

Alvarado and his government labelled the population as *mestizo* or mixed-race, which allowed the upper-class population to co-opt and appropriate the history and the cultural legacy of Yucatán's Indigenous population and, as such, transform themselves into the rightful heirs of the Peninsula's land and resources. In addition, this was not the first time a government had attempted to regulate the morality of the lower classes, and in fact, the policies that were promoted by Salvador Alvarado are reminiscent of the policies implemented by the Bourbons in their Spanish colonies. For example, Alvarado, like the Bourbon reformers, regarded taverns and drunkenness as the principal offences against public order as they led to an undisciplined workforce.[10] The emphasis on regulating the moral conduct of both the lower classes and the Indigenous populations in Yucatán, by making it part of the educational curriculum, both defined and policed the social boundaries between the elite and the middle classes in revolutionary Yucatán, just as it had done in colonial New Spain.[11] Education and morality campaigns aimed to

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[8] Elsie Rockwell. "Schools of the Revolution: Enacting and Contesting State Forms in Tlaxcala, 1910-1930," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 172.
[9] De La Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, 17.
[10] Pamela Voekel. "Peeing on the Palace: Bodily Resistance to Bourbon Reforms in Mexico City," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 5, no. 2 (1992): 187, doi:10.1111/j.1467-6443.1992.tb00161.x.
[11] Voekel, "Peeing on the Palace," 184.

create a new *mestizo* society, one that embodied uniform public behaviour loyal to Alvarado's revolutionary reforms.[12]

The second chapter focuses on some of the obstacles Alvarado faced from different sectors of the population when reforming education in Yucatán. Alvarado struggled, in particular, to provide the right kind of education for two vulnerable groups in the state: women and the Indigenous population. During Alvarado's tenure, Yucatán hosted two feminist Congresses in the region and championed women's need for education in order to free themselves from the traditional bonds of servitude, and to ensure that they could serve in appropriately female roles.[13] There seems to have been some debate about what appropriate female jobs and education would look like in the region. Women were encouraged to stay at home and be educated revolutionary mothers, and at the same time, many had to work in order to help support their families. Moreover, Alvarado's anti-clerical stance in the Peninsula lost him the respect of large sectors of the peasantry, urban elite, and the middle-class.[14] Alvarado's government appropriated Catholic Church property, turned some of the Church buildings into schools, and also displaced the Church as the main purveyor of education. In addition, Alvarado, a northerner from Sinaloa, was not a member of the insular Yucatecan elite, and *hacendado* opposition made it more difficult for him to implement any significant reform.

The third chapter of this thesis discusses Indigenous and the working-class interactions with Alvarado's educational system. Contrary to elite rhetoric, this chapter demonstrates the ways in which Indigenous citizens demanded the education that had been promised to them by

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[12] Voekel, "Peeing on the Palace", 185.
[13] Stephanie J. Smith. *Gender and the Mexican Revolution: Yucatán Women and the Realities of Patriarchy.* (Durham: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 25.
[14] Gilbert Joseph. *Revolution From Without: Yucatán, Mexico, and the United States 1889-1924.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 106.

Alvarado's government. They advocated in a myriad of ways. Some were able to write letters for themselves or their children asking to be admitted to school or to be given a scholarship to continue studying. Others protested to their municipal leaders about the quality of the teachers, the lack of teaching supplies, or the desire for altered school schedules for children who labored in the fields. However, the reforms proposed by the Secretariat of Education depended heavily on the contribution of the *hacendados,* both to support the building and running of schools on their estates, and, in some cases, for financial support for students. General Alvarado's revolutionary reforms also depended on the financial stability of the state. Without a stable revenue, it was harder to maintain the educational programs by the end of his tenure.[15] A year after Alvarado was ousted as governor, much of his reform program disappeared, including his most ambitious project: *La Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*, a boarding school built to provide Indigenous communities with de-Indianized educated leaders and teachers.

While no historians have detailed Alvarado's education reforms in Yucatán, Mary Kay Vaughn's *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940* explores the way state authorities and official party builders implemented "Socialist Education" as a way to reform the behavior of the Mexican people.[16] This thesis builds upon Vaughn's work, demonstrating how education was used as a tool of acculturation, and to consolidate the Revolution's reforms throughout the country. In addition, this thesis shows that there were vital precursors to the "Socialist Education" project that Vaughn so ably explores in her book. The chaos that accompanied the early revolutionary governments allowed Alvarado the freedom to

[15] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 163.
[16] Mary Kay Vaughn,. *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940.* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997), 5.

test many of the educational projects that would be incorporated into the Federal System in the 1930's and 1940's.

Vaughn also explores the ways in which the SEP's prescription for behaviour challenged ongoing tensions over familial gender and generational power, and over local knowledge and practice in peasant and Indigenous communities.[17] Alvarado's educational reform faced similar struggles, particularly in trying to meet and accommodate the needs of the Indigenous population and women, as well as the demands of the *hacendados* who exercised strict control over the economy. While Vaughn sees peasant absenteeism and Indigenous complaints as ways in which the Indigenous population resisted the state's attempts to acculturate them, the Yucatán case suggests another reason for peasant behaviour. Many of the complaints and requests which were made by peasants and *campesinos* demonstrate that they had a vested interest in the education promised by the government. They demanded better and more committed teachers, and the chance for older students to be allowed to finish their primary education. These were clearly not requests made by people who were indifferent to education. Vaughn acknowledges that before the 1930's there were attempts in different states to institute "Socialist Educational" programs, pointing to Alvarado's reforms in Yucatán as an early example of educational reform in Mexico. Yet, she fails to explore the ways in which the federal education policies borrowed from Alvarado's education reforms; Gregorio Torres Quintero, Yucatán's Secretary of Education, even worked for the SEP as a technical adviser. Alvarado's "Socialist Education" focused on instilling in children a sense of justice, solidarity, patriotism, and the desire to work hard in order to ensure the prosperity of the state of Yucatán. This is different than the meaning that socialism has come

[17] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 17.

to occupy in other countries, as Alvarado envisioned the community being educated and working towards the formation of a new Revolutionary order.

Alexander Scott Dawson's book *Indian and the Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* explores revolutionary indigenous education and the projects that were undertaken to convert Mexico into a modern nation between 1910 and 1940. Indigenous education in the country was a multifaceted endeavor as there were different actors such as social scientists, intellectuals, and *campesinos* who had different ideas about the place of Indigenous people in revolutionary Mexico.[18] This thesis engages with Dawson's work, as it demonstrates how Salvador Alvarado and his government also attempted to negotiate the role that the Mayan population was to play in state formation. Similar to the *Indigenistas* in the 1930's, Alvarado also saw education as a way to de-Indianize the Indigenous population and transform them into modern, hygienic Mexican citizens.[19] The *Secretaría de Educación Pública* also faced some challenges with the introduction of rural schools, and resorted to the creation of several Indigenous *Internados* [boarding schools] to provide Indigenous education throughout the nation in 1933.[20] The end goal was to create a new educated Indigenous elite, men and women who would return to their communities as teachers or leaders.[21] This was definitely a throwback to Salvador Alvarado's *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*, which had envisioned a boarding school for the Mayan population that would supply the communities with teachers who would be loyal to Alvarado's government. While Dawson does not mention Alvarado's earlier attempt at Indigenous residential education, it was clear that his ideas were widely adopted by the SEP.

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[18] Alexander S. Dawson. *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico.* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), xv.
[19] Dawson, *Indian and Nation,* 20. *Indigenistas* refers to a group of elite intellectuals who championed Indians' incorporation into a modern *mestizo* nation.
[20] Dawson, *Indian and Nation,* 37.
[21] Dawson, *Indian and Nation,* 53.

Stephen E. Lewis's book *The Ambivalent Revolution: Forging State and Nation in Chiapas, 1910-1945* explores the creation of a national identity in the outlying state of Chiapas, unique because as a largely Indigenous state it was believed by elites to be less likely to identify and have an allegiance to the Mexican nation.[22] In some respects, Chiapas was very similar to Yucatán; both shared a large Indigenous population and both had tried to separate from the larger Mexican nation in the nineteenth century. More importantly, Chiapas had also instituted the Socialist Party of the Southeast, funded by Alvarado's successor Felipe Carrillo Puerto, which would help bring to the southern Mexican states new and innovative socialist programs like the ones implemented in Yucatán.[23] Lewis explains that the SEP program introduced Chiapas to the new reforms and institutions implemented by the federal government after the revolution. Like Lewis's work, this thesis expands on the study of state-level education policies, recognizing that such policies were tailored to each state's unique demographics and climate. Similar to Chiapas, Yucatán's Maya and *mestizo* peasant population would use the education system to their advantage, adopting the language of the revolution to advocate for their own interests.

While Lewis explains that Porfirian Mexico had also attempted to transform the population culturally, in reality the push for transformation through education had begun much earlier. In her dissertation "El Colegio Seminario de Indios de San Gregorio y el desarollo de la indianidad en el valle de México, 1586-1856*,"* Ileana Schmidt-Diaz de León explores the creation of a school for young Indigenous men in colonial Mexico, which was designed to evangelize and change the customs of the Indigenous population. The school operated from the assumption that human beings imitate the behaviour of those who are in authority; therefore, it

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[22] Stephen E Lewis. *The Ambivalent Revolution: Forging State and Nation in Chiapas, 1910-1945.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), xvii.
[23] Sara Osten. *The Mexican Revolution's Wake: The Making of a Political System, 1920-1929.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, *2018*), 25.

was essential to educate the Indigenous population while they were children.[24] *El Colegio de Seminario de Indios* was also a residential school for the Indigenous elite, in the same vein as Alvarado's *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*, and both wanted to create Indigenous professionals who could continue reforming their communities with the knowledge they had gained from their schooling. The *Colegio* also provided education to young women through the *Colegio de Indias Doncellas de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, where Indigenous girls were taught Christian doctrine, how to read and write in Spanish. and other skills that would make them educated women of good conduct.[25] Colonial education for Indigenous women was also similar to what Alvarado envisioned for the education of women in post-revolutionary Mexico, demonstrating not only that women had received educational opportunities before the revolution, but also continuity in what the ideal woman should study.

While much has been written about Alvarado's social, economic, and judicial reforms, there has been no extensive scholarly research into his educational program or that of his successor, Felipe Carrillo Puerto. Although Alvarado was only in power from 1915 to 1918, the educational and economic reforms that he implemented in Yucatán were transformative and inspired the creation of the Secretariat of Public Education. Similar to Eugene Weber's argument in *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*, the Mexican revolutionaries seemed to understand that a common cultural understanding was essential to creating a Mexican identity. Weber explains that primary schools were seen as a way to civilize the peasant population and integrate them into the national society, economy, and culture.[26] This

[24] Ileana Schmidt-Diaz de León, "El Colegio Seminario de Indios de San Gregorio y el desarrollo de la Indianidad en el Valle de Mexico, 1586-1856" (PhD. diss., Tulane University, 2001), 31.
[25] Schmidt-Diaz de León, "El Colegio Seminario de Indios", 47.
[26] Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 15.

understanding can also be seen in the rationale of Alvarado's revolutionary government that saw the need to bring to modernity women, the indigenous population and the peasantry.

The study of educational policy in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Mexico needs to be further examined in order to understand the continuities in Mexican policies designed to change and "reform" the behaviours of the Indigenous population and women in order to make them better citizens. There is also a gap in the historiography of revolutionary Yucatán: although education was one of the socialist government's largest cultural initiatives, there has been no major study done on the topic. Scholars specializing in Yucatán's history mention education to different degrees. Gilbert Joseph explains that Salvador Alvarado was appointed as interim governor of Yucatán in 1915, and was committed to reorganizing the economic and social system of the Yucatecan Peninsula along more progressive and capitalist lines.[27] Alvarado was known to be one of the more progressive governors of the period, and he implemented progressive reforms that would earn the state the nickname of a "revolutionary laboratory".[28] Joseph offers an extensive account of the economic policies implemented by Alvarado's regime, and explains that although Alvarado considered himself a socialist, in reality he believed that while the demands of *campesinos* and workers were valid, they could be met through the capitalist system.[29] While Joseph only mentions the educational policies in passing, he does state that Alvarado expected education to provide solutions to Yucatán's most pressing social and economic needs, and he recognizes the significant change that Alvarado's policies brought to the state.

To be sure, Joseph's study provides an excellent summary of the economic, geographic, and social conditions of revolutionary Yucatán. His study helps us understand Alvarado's

[27]Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 95.
[28]Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 100.
[29]Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 101.

commitment to ensuring that workers and peasants remained in jobs appropriate to their status, as he wanted to transform Yucatán economically and he needed peasants to continue working the large *haciendas* to do so. Joseph also explains that while the majority of the *campesinado* were of Maya decent and constituted the great bulk of the labour force, Yaqui Indian deportees, *mestizo* contract workers, Koreans, Puerto Ricans, and a small number of European immigrants also worked for *hacendados*.[30] This information is essential to understand who was receiving the education Alvarado was aiming to reform. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that education was part of a larger series of reforms in Yucatán's history at a period of economic boom. Henequen was a widespread market commodity during Alvarado's tenure, and many of Alvarado's policies could be implemented and were successful only for a short period of time due to a period of extraordinary economic prosperity.[31]

Inspired by European and North American pedagogues, the new education system would be equipped with gardens, workshops, and playing fields.[32] The education system ushered in by the revolution was meant to create productive citizens who would be loyal and committed to the ideals of Alvarado's revolutionary government. The education policies proposed for the Indigenous population, *campesinos*, and women was born out of the premise that they needed to be transformed into a modern, secular, sanitized, and de-fanaticized Mexicans.[33] In her book *Gender and the Mexican Revolution: Yucatán Women and the Realities of Patriarchy* historian Stephanie Smith provides an account of the educational policies geared towards Yucatán's women, and the role they played as educators in the Peninsula. Smith mentions that Alvarado "considered women's education to be crucial for emancipation" and argues that the rhetoric

[30]Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 79, 72, and 29.
[31] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 132.
[32] Vaughn, Cultural *Politics in Revolution,* 27.
[33] Vaughn, Cultural *Politics in Revolution,* 4.

promoted by the revolutionary government allowed many women to enter the teaching profession.[34] Smith's work helps us to understand how the other social reforms implemented in Yucatán changed the dynamics that existed in the state, and how middle-class women benefitted from the new education opportunities. Smith also explores the role that teachers played in *haciendas* as organizers and explains that Alvarado and his Secretary of Education, Torres Quintero did not agree with teachers acting as labour organizers and wanted them to "confine themselves to the classroom."[35] This allows us to understand the roles that the teachers believed they *needed* to fill, and this thesis will clarify the roles that the government and the workers *expected* teachers to fill. This provides us with a much richer interpretation of the diverse interests and ideologies that emerged in Yucatán during the revolution.

It is important to recognize that Yucatán's role as the laboratory of the revolution inspired many reformers to undertake similar initiatives to those that had been implemented in the Peninsula. Salvador Alvarado's education policies in Yucatán and his later work as a lecturer on the need to reform education policies across Mexico provided the socialist education components that would eventually become the federally funded Secretariat of Public Education. Although the education reforms in Yucatán were short-lived, the Yucatecan population was enthusiastic about the programs and schools the government had guaranteed and demanded that the Secretariat of Education meet what they had promised. Findings also show Indigenous interests in education, contrary to the belief the Indigenous population rejected the educational ideologies that were proposed by the government. This demonstrates not only that they wanted their children to be educated, but that they were also interested in what education reform could provide them. Ultimately, this thesis demonstrates that there were early attempts to instill cultural

[34] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution,* 32.
[35] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution,* 38.

and national values to create a uniform Mexican population at a time when there was no centralized education plan in Revolutionary Mexico.

Chapter 1: Yucatán's Revolutionary Curriculum

In 1916, only a year after taking power, Salvador Alvarado talked about his work in Yucatán. He explained to the Governor of Michoacán in 1916 that "as you can see, we have suppressed bullfights, the sale of alcoholic drinks, gambling...and above all we have provided instruction and education through the establishment of schools."[36] Although the Constitution of 1857 had codified compulsory primary education, there was no real push to ensure this directive had been achieved. However, despite the fact that education had not been prioritized by past governments it had remained a constant point of contention among governors and educators. In 1905, the pedagogue Justo Sierra launched a campaign for universal federal education, yet education continued to be provided unequally by different municipalities, parochial institutions, and private individuals. Even during the Porfiriato, educators such as Joaquin Baranda, founder of the Normal School for Teachers, advocated for the creation of a national primary education system.[37] Official standardized federal education throughout Mexico would not occur until the creation of the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (SEP) in 1921; before the establishment of the SEP many state governments attempted to implement their own educational systems. In 1915, revolutionary Yucatán led the nation in reforming education, using this period of transition to experiment with different models of primary education.

This chapter will discuss the educational policies implemented by Salvador Alvarado, particularly with regards to Indigenous education, women's education, and vocational training. Alvarado aimed to reform the Indigenous population and transform them into de-Indianized

[36] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, v. 215 exp. 21.

[37] Paul Eiss, "Deconstructing Indians, Reconstructing Patria: Indigenous Education in Yucatán from the Porfiriato to the Mexican Revolution," *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 9, no. 1 (2004): 119-150. Doi: 10.1525/jlat.2004.9.1.119, 121.

citizens of the state, creating a homogenous racial group of like-minded individuals. This would be accomplished through universal primary school education, health and vaccination campaigns, and the establishment of a boarding school to create Indigenous educators. Women's education was complicated as it had two competing aims: creating the ideal revolutionary mother who stayed at home, and creating an educated woman who would work in the appropriate feminine job. Overall, the government aimed to provide vocational instruction to workers so that they would continue to ensure the economic prosperity of the state and work in jobs that were appropriate to their social and racial station. Education, nonetheless, was meant to create a new *mestizo* society, one with a shared identity.

Yucatán's Political and Geographical Context

Yucatán was on the Republic's geographic periphery, and the lack of land access routes to the peninsula as well as the cultural dominance of Maya people, language, and traditions set the area apart from the rest of Mexico. The lack of access routes to the peninsula late into the nineteenth century and the distinct geography of the area created a society that did not identify with the rest of the Mexican Republic. In addition, the extreme heat in the peninsula would in fact affect some of the reforms that Alvarado attempted to implement in the region. The extreme ecological conditions in the area also affected the development of the population as well as the distribution of land and wealth as the peninsula began to develop in the late nineteenth-century.

During colonial times, the Spanish had found that the land was not suitable for most of their agricultural products. Combined with a lack of mineral deposits, this meant that the Maya population had not been forced to make many major shifts in some of their traditional customs.[38] This was particularly true for those who lived in areas far from the control of the Creole

[38] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 20.

(Spanish) population such as the city of Mérida or the port of Progreso. Throughout the late eighteenth century, however, the growth of the henequen industry of Yucatán brought some unprecedented changes for the *hacendados,* who became incredibly wealthy, and for those Maya communities whose agricultural lands were previously largely undisturbed.[39] Following independence, the government implemented land alienation policies inspired by the success of the henequen industry to transform unused land. These policies affected the Maya peasantry who worked on communal lands, as well as the leading Maya classes, who had been familiar with private land ownership and had possessed small ranchos and *haciendas* during the colonial period. The dismantling of this system led to the economic decline of the Maya elite, who lost on the revenue from their lands and who had claims but no titles to many of the village lands.[40]

The discontent experienced by the Maya population led to a fifty-year conflict between the Creole population and the rebel Maya, who would eventually found their own city, known as Chan Santa Cruz. During President Porfirio Diaz's regime in 1901, the federal government got involved in the conflict, helping the non-Indigenous population bring the Indigenous population under government control. In order to ensure a lasting peace, the government imposed a blanket subordination of the Indigenous population, which erased the relationship between the state and its citizens and made the Indigenous population vulnerable to exploitation.[41] The Caste War in Yucatán permanently changed the relationship between the Maya population and the government, exacerbating the ethnic differences in Yucatán and creating a constitutional

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[39] Terry Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War, (*Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 37.
[40] Rugeley, *Origins of the Caste War,* 20.
[41] Karen D. Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens: Local Liberalism in Early National Oaxaca and Yucatán,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 183.

distinction between the rights of Indigenous citizens in the peninsula and those of the non-Indigenous population.[42]

The Porfiriato was an intense period of repression for the working class and Indigenous populations, with the interests of economic production and foreign capital prioritized in order to bring Mexico into modernity. In contrast to the armed revolutionary peasants and *campesino* insurrections that characterized the diverse struggles of the Mexican Revolution elsewhere in the country, the revolution arrived from "without" to the Yucatán, brought in by the appointed Generals whom President Venustiano Carranza sent to the peninsula when he consolidated power in 1914. Carranza intended to consolidate power through the proclamation of a new Constitution, sending his proconsuls to Yucatán they were expected to bring the region into the revolutionary struggle. Carranza's generals would therefore, enact fiscal measures and ensure a constitutionalist military expansion in order to consolidate power for a new centralized state.[43] In 1915, Salvador Alvarado, a Sinaloan general from Carranza's Constitutionalist Army, was sent by Carranza to be interim Governor of Yucatán to pacify the population following a failed rebellion.

Under the banner of the "revolutionary laboratory," Salvador Alvarado introduced a series of labour and land reforms that aimed to free *campesinos* from the exploitation of debt peonage slavery, to establish better working conditions codified in labour laws, and to award small plots of land to *campesinos*.[44] In addition, Salvador Alvarado led one of the biggest pedagogical experiments in revolutionary Mexico during his time as Governor of the State of Yucatán (1915-1918) with the creation of different educational programs that encompassed not

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[42] Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens,* 191.
[43] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 94.
[44] , Ramon D. Chacon, "Rural Educational Reform in Yucatán: From the Porfiriato to the Era of Salvador Alvarado, 1910-1918," *The Americas* 42, no. 2 (1985): 215.

only primary education but also technical, vocational, and Indigenous curriculums. Alvarado envisioned numerous objectives in his educational reforms. A key priority was to make elementary schooling free, secular, and obligatory. To improve the quality of education in the state, Alvarado also promoted socialist education through the introduction of practical training which was meant to assist students in finding future employment opportunities.[45] Among his most ambitious reforms was the policy of making education available to agricultural labourers, which led to the construction of hundreds of schools across Yucatán's plantations.[46]

His various decrees were meant to bring all of Yucatán's citizens the benefits of the revolution. Alvarado stated that education "was the greatest and most noble freedom that had arrived under the banner of the Constitutionalist Revolution, as it will transform the illiterate race and make it apt to consciously exercise the rights to citizenship."[47] Like other politicians before him, Alvarado perceived a cultural crisis in Yucatán, where the Indigenous people were seen as unable to meet the challenges of nation building.[48] With this rationalist rhetoric, Alvarado envisioned a state wide educational system that was "national, free of charge, secular and mandatory."[49] These new reforms were meant to help all citizens become productive members of the new post-revolutionary state by offering citizens a pragmatic education involving manual and agricultural work, skills meant to ensure that the lower classes had the right training for their future work opportunities.[50] Despite the challenges, Alvarado believed that through education, cultural, and political reforms he would be able to de-Indianize the Mayan population and bring Yucatán into modernity.

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[45] Chacon,"Rural Educational Reform in Yucatán", 217.
[46] Chacon, "Rural Educational Reform in Yucatán", 217.
[47] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, LFR-C5-1915-003 Caja 5.
[48] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 26.
[49] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, LFR-C5-1915-003 Caja 5.
[50] Eiss, "Deconstructing Indians, Reconstructing Patria," 122.

Alvarado built primary schools in urban areas and forced rural proprietors to build schools for the children who lived and worked on their *haciendas* and ranches. Although there would be some debate about the "right" kind of education for women and men, as well as for urban and rural children, education was meant to be free, secular, and co-educational. Alvarado's reforms aimed to provide not only basic primary education for all children aged seven to twelve, but also specialized industrial and vocational education that would meet the professional needs of the broader society. Education for rural children was meant to be practical rather than intellectual, as it was meant to keep the rural population as a labourers and to ensure that agricultural production was expanded and natural resources were exploited.[51] Women were also expected to attend their vocational education programs and were particularly encouraged to attend normal schools to become teachers. In addition, as a way to ensure there were enough teachers during this rapid period of transition, state standards would only require teachers to attend school up to grade six, followed by a one-to two-year course to be certified as educators. This would all be supervised by a series of professionals: school inspectors who would ensure schools were operating and that students were attending school, as well as sanitation inspectors who encouraged vaccination and hygienic practices amongst the rural and Indigenous population.

Reforming Indigenous Education

Within Yucatán, Indigenous peasants still compromised the majority of the population; they lived outside the cities and their labour was the primary source of income for the non-Indigenous elite.[52] Salvador Alvarado would often claim that Mexico's Indigenous roots served

[51] Nancy Leys Stepan, "*The Hour of Eugenics": Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 40.
[52] Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens*, 2.

as the point of departure to an eventual modern citizen one who would align with the middle-class values of hard work, abstinence, and cleanliness.[53] In his decree of public education, he voiced the sentiment that other educational initiatives had simply been the "mere desires of well-intentioned men who saw in the culture of the Indian race the future growth of the Republic's social vitality."[54]Alvarado, like many men who belonged to the Latin American elite, rejected the European and North American theories that saw in Latin America's racialized hybridity degenerative effects.[55] Therefore, the key to nation building in the eyes of the country's elites was improving the educational level of the groups they deemed inferior.[56]

Under Alvarado's 1915 schooling decree, new rural inspectors would be in charge of ensuring that *hacendados* provided adequate schooling to their peons and that those "who resistor place any inconveniences upon the running of the rural school within their Hacienda will be penalized with a fine of two hundred to five hundred pesos; and if they continue to resist, will be arrested for three to six months."[57] Levying hefty fines and threatening incarceration if the *hacendados* did not comply went beyond what previous governments had done to ensure that popular education would finally reach the working classes. Whether these policies could be effectively applied, considering that the government also relied on the *hacendados* to fund many government policies, was another question.

One of the legacies that would colour the provision of Indigenous education in Yucatán would be the Caste War, as well as the abolition of debt peonage in a declining henequen industry. The revolution's reverberations had caused great fear amongst the *hacendados*, who

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[53] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 26.
[54] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, LFR-C5-1915-003 Caja 5.
[55] De La Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*,13.
[56] De La Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, 17.
[57] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, LFR-C5-1915-003 Caja 5.

saw the revolution's promises of land redistribution and the abolition of debt peonage as a threat to the peace and prosperity they had forcibly extracted from the Maya population. The *hacendados* had made sure that their workers received minimal education and were kept in ignorance, while families and communities were separated among different haciendas as a way to ensure that workforces were heterogenous and that no true communities could emerge.[58] Peons working on the *haciendas* were discouraged from fraternizing with or marrying members of different estates.[59] There was a fear amongst the *hacendados* that allowing the Maya peasantry to form community bonds might revive the tensions and violence that had been common place during the Caste War. Therefore, education seemed like a threat to the tenuous peace that reigned in Yucatán, one that would allow Indigenous citizens to better understand and articulate the persistent ethnic and cultural differences that co-existed in Yucatán.[60]

Building a Revolutionary Educational System: Inspectors, Textbooks, and Hygiene

In 1911, soon after President Porfirio Diaz had been ousted, *hacendados* created the Liga de Acción Social, an education model, that had attempted to prevent *campesinos* from coming into contact with revolutionary ideals by providing religious education and ensuring that workers remained Catholic and obedient.[61] Alvarado instead expected to create an efficient workforce literate in Spanish and knowledgeable about his constitutional ideals and the freedom that the revolution had brought them.[62] Alvarado still expected *hacendados* to provide the facilities, transportation, and the money for teachers' salaries; however, the state would be tasked with providing adequate educators as well as a statewide curriculum. Yucatán's model for primary

[58] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 84.
[59] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 85.
[60] Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens, 2.*
[61] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,*108.
[62] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution,*33.

education during this period of experimental transition, simply moved peasants and Indigenous citizens from being under the tutelage of *hacienda* workers to that of the state government.[63] In order to ensure that *hacendados* would comply with the requirement to provide education, through the General Director of Rural Education aided by a large number of rural inspectors.[64] Rural inspectors were also charged with the task of ensuring that primary education was being imparted as effectively as possible throughout the state.

One of the rural inspectors, Ms. Beatriz Orozco, wrote about the four months she spent visiting different municipalities in Yucatán, and provided her observations that she made for the improvement of primary education. Orozco seemed to have been hired as an elementary school inspector for primary education, and she reported back on the progress of the new curriculum's implementation and made suggestions for changes. Orozco explained that she believed the "instruction of Physical and Natural Sciences has been a failure in the majority of schools in our country because it has never been given the attention that it deserves."[65] Orozco was probably right in her observation, as teachers encountered barriers when educating rural populations for which they were unprepared. In many cases, language remained a barrier to schooling, as teachers did not know the Indigenous languages of their students. Thus, instructors would spend most of their time teaching students how to read and write in Spanish.[66] This meant that many students never received full exposure to the curriculum in the physical and natural sciences.[67] The inspector also explained that she believed that the curriculum for the teaching of physical and natural sciences "was not in accordance with the mental capacity of the student or with the

[63] Eiss, "Deconstructing Indians, Reconstructing Patria", 130.
[64] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, LFR-C5-1915-003 Caja 5
[65] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, v. 88, exp. 46.
[66] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 126.
[67] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 126.

natural spontaneity of the child as well the physical, geographical and economic conditions of the place....[this] made the teaching of the subject useless and tedious for the teachers and provided very few advantages for the student."[68] The Mexican government sought to accommodate children by giving them special instruction, as education was most efficient when tailored to a homogenous group.[69] But this accommodation reflected prejudice. Even though the government advocated for the education of all Mexican children, there were still race and class divisions that influenced the kind of education each student was to receive. This was particularly true for secondary education, as there were different expectations as to the roles that peasant and elite children would occupy in society. Education therefore had built-in contradictions that continued to reinforce class distinctions and limited the education opportunities for Indigenous children.[70] Indigenous students were not meant to aspire to be lawyers or doctors; they were meant to be farm and factory workers, or perhaps rural educators if they were deemed suitable by the government. Above all, the revolution hoped that education would channel students into their predestined social functions, so schools were set up to train people to perform productively in the class into which they were born.[71]

One of the tools the revolutionary government needed to ensure that the educational experience was uniform across the state was the creation of primary and vocational schools throughout the state. Although there were no official textbooks created until the 1930s, when the SEP created a federal curriculum, there seems to have been a set curriculum that instructors had to follow.[72] There is not much information about this curriculum in the sources I consulted, but

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[68] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, v. 88, exp. 46.
[69] Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, *The Science and Politics of Race in Mexico and the United States, 1910-1950.* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 52.
[70] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 20.
[71] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 27.
[72] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 40.

Orozco does mention in her letter to Alvarado that not allowing teachers to deviate from the study plan provided by the government "...is, was, and will continue to be responsible for the school to become simply a fabric of brains overwhelmed with scientific principles...."[73] This meant that there was some sort of uniform plan of standardized education across Yucatán at the primary school level. There were also many publications that were available to teachers and educators that provided ideas for exercises and ceremonies that could be adopted in class. For example, *Hogar y Escuela* [Home and School] was monthly magazine dedicated to "affirming the spirit of cooperation between teachers and parents," as the government expected both to work together to benefit Mexican children. Produced by Yucatecan editor S. Herrera, the magazine encouraged committed educators in the state to send in articles for publication.

Education was also seen by Alvarado and his supporters as a way to liberate the population from the negative effects of religion, which had kept the country from achieving modernity and progress.[74] This meant that anticlericalism became an essential aspect of revolutionary education, and the government sought to replace religious figures with new secular heroes.[75] The cover of the *Hogar y Escuela* shows a black and white lithograph of President Benito Juarez, who governed from 1858-1872 and became a popular secular figure and a national hero because of his reform laws. Benito Juarez was also seen as an important figure due to his Indigenous heritage, which served as a way for the government to demonstrate that education could modify supposedly inherited tendencies and transform the Indigenous population.[76] In the magazine there is a section that contains the "Illustrious Dates" that should

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[73] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917 V. 88 E. 46.

[74] Francisco Gurza Arce,"En Busca de una EducaciónRevolucionaria:1924-1934". In *Ensayos sobre historia de la Educación en México,* ed. Josefina Zoraida Vazquez, Dorothy Tanck de Estrada, Anne Staples and Francisco Arce Gurza (Mexico D.F.:El Colegio de Mexico, 2013), https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv26d8sv.7, 165.

[75]Gurza,"En Busca de una EducaciónRevolucionaria",166.

[76] De La Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, 47.

be celebrated during each month, such as 17 July, which commemorated Benito Juarez's death.[77] This commemoration of so-called illustrious men seems reminiscent of the celebration of Catholic saints and martyrs, but in this case they had given their life for the freedom of their country. The creation of these new secular saints and martyrs was part of the wider regulation of public festivities as the government sought to replace religious celebrations with patriotic demonstrations in an effort to undermine religious influence.[78]

In addition to the creation of new secular dates and figures of worship, Yucatán's government attempted to capture the loyalties of the population through patriotic ceremonies. *Hogar y Escuela* also includes a section on civics, which recommends that every classroom should have a small flag so that "Every morning at the start of the work day, [a ceremony] that should never be delayed not even by a moment, the students are to stand and greet the flag militarily...."[79] This transfer of allegiance from the old systems of power was meant to ensure that the new citizens of the revolution were loyal to the state, which was modernizing and installing a new regime of law and order in Mexico.[80] The church presented a serious political and cultural threat to the revolutionary state. Women and the Indigenous population were seen as particularly susceptible because of their fidelity to the Catholic Church and were thus in need of liberation.[81] As a way to break down the loyalty to the Church, public schools hosted and organized spring and patriotic festivals, which were meant to replace religious holidays and celebrations. Many of

[77]Biblioteca Yucatánense, Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Reservado, Folleteria, Carpetas Blancas, Hogar y Escuela.
[78]Barbara Miller, *"T*he Role of Women in the Mexican Cristero Rebellion: Las Señoras y Las Religiosas,*" The Americas* 40, no. 3 (1984): 303. Doi: 10.2307/981116.
[79] Biblioteca YucatáNense, Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Reservado, Folleteria, Carpetas Blancas, Hogar y Escuela.
[80] Osten, *The Mexican Revolution's Wake,* 24.
[81] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution*,68.

these new celebrations, in particular sporting events, were amongst the successes of the revolutionary curriculum as they were well received by the population.[82]

The civilian population that supported Alvarado produced magazines like *Hogar y Escuela* to contribute to the revolutionary effort. These magazines contained several articles written by Yucatán's teachers which exemplifies how educators interpreted and implemented the state government´s recommendations. *Hogar y Escuela*, for example, published in one of their early issues "The Moral Code of Children," whose opening line states that children must first understand "the Law of Self-Control. Only those who practice self-control, will be able to best serve their country."[83] Children might be expected to repeat the code in class, chanting I should learn to "regulate my temperament and I will not become disgruntled when people or things are not to my liking. I will dominate my thoughts and I will not permit a foolish whim to destroy my noble purpose."[84] There was a racialized fear from the elite point of view that saw the Indigenous population as violent, undisciplined, and dangerous.[85] Therefore, educators used Alvarado's policies as a way to ensure Indigenous and peasant children learned self-control from a young age and to regulate their temperament in order to ensure that they did not pose a threat to the ideals of the elite. The price of the magazine might make us question its popularity, especially outside of a few wealthy educators. While the magazine implies that civic and moral education were expected within the school curriculum, *Hogar y Escuela* was a subscription civilian magazine that cost one peso per issue. Considering that a large majority of students and teachers would have found the cost of the magazine prohibitive, it is unlikely that it would have

[82] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 205.
[83] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, Folleteria, Carpetas Blancas, Hogar y Escuela.
[84] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, Folleteria, Carpetas Blancas, Hogar y Escuela.
[85] Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics,* 39.

circulated widely, making it hard to know to what extent these ideals really permeated amongst the population, and to what degree it resonated with the state government's actual curriculum.

These policies were designed to appease Yucatán's elites, who feared disgruntled Maya peasants might rise up against the *hacendados* once more. The threat of unrest allowed the government to take on a new role for the state in regulating and intervening directly on social life as a way to curb any uprisings.[86] The new moral and ethical responsibilities that were imposed on children were also part of the government's desire to create a like-minded population, one modelled after the middle-class values of decency and civility, which were meant to create a rational hardworking population. This was achieved through the regulation of cantinas, brothels, and leisure time, attempting to instill a middle-class mentality and to ensure that the new labourers were productive citizens.[87] These reforms were familiar to the Indigenous population, who had seen the Bourbon Crown attempt to implement similar measures in the eighteenth century. Similar to the Bourbon reformers, the revolutionary leaders justified these interventions into daily life by claiming to act in the best interests of the population.[88] This demonstrates the continuity in the ruling classes' belief that the population was in some way inferior and needed to be reformed. Simultaneously, the fact that similar concerns remained almost a hundred years later demonstrates the limits of these reforms as well as the agency and the resilience of the lower classes in maintaining their own cultural and religious interests. The success of this state-imposed hegemony would of course be challenged by those who could not live up to the impossible standards that the revolutionary government attempted to set for the population.[89]

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[86] Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics,* 39.
[87] French, *A Peaceful and Working People,* 120.
[88] Voekel, "Peeing on the Palace," 183.
[89] French, *A Peaceful and Working People,* 5.

A shared concern of both the state and educators was that of the hygiene of the population, which was an overall part of the state government's state-building program. Yucatán's climate made the population susceptible to tropical diseases; however, the medical campaigns that the government envisioned where also rooted in a need for a new social order, one that would bring Mexico into modernity and that would do away with the long held customs and rituals of the Maya population. [90] This was also tied to the eugenics movement, whose proponents were strong advocates of public health as a way to improve the demographic profile of Yucatán.[91] The chaos of the revolutionary period and the long Caste War had exacerbated the spread of diseases in particular among the Maya. Cholera, smallpox, and yellow fever epidemics were a constant concern for Yucatán's authorities.[92] Tropical diseases made it harder for the government to consolidate power and to ensure that students would be able to attend school. Through the formation of *Brigadas Sanitarias* [Sanitary Brigades] the government attempted to curb the spread of diseases through vaccination campaigns, hygiene campaigns, and the implementation of new funerary practices. Schools became a platform through which the government could implement their vaccination campaigns and teach students about the importance of health and sanitation. Health became a tool through which the Mexican state could be brought into modernity, as well as an apparatus of control, as students were given a medical exam and vaccinated before they could begin school. The immunization of vulnerable populations to suppress infectious diseases provided the government another "excuse" to interact with a Maya population that had previously been resistant to federal control.[93] The Caste War

[90] Heather L. McCrea, *Diseased Relations: Epidemics, Public Health, and State-building in Yucatán, Mexico 1847-1924,* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 5.
[91] Rosemblatt, *The science and politics of race*, 26.
[92] McCrea, *Diseased Relations,* 104.
[93] McCrea, *Diseased Relations,* 4.

had made it difficult for the government to interact with remote rebel Maya communities, so by branding itself as acting in the interests of the lower classes during this period of reform, the government in fact acted to control the Maya and promote the interests of the revolutionaries.

Schoolhouses served as an essential instrument and focal point through which health information could be disseminated and the population monitored. For the revolutionary government, this was particularly important as healthy children were a reflection of the state, so a supposed degeneration of the race manifested itself as sickly children.[94] When several children were reported ill on 29 March 1916 in the city of Peto, the school inspector found that "several of said children present[ed] eruptions on their bodies which look[ed] similar to pellagra." The school inspector then asked that the government send a medic so that "he could dictate the appropriate measures to implement so they could avoid the spread of the evil."[95] The incursion of the government into schools allowed it to monitor the overall health of the population and to control the spread of infectious diseases. However, there was a racialized aspect to these policies as well. There was a fear that those infected could contaminate the wider society and disease could spread into more respectable households.[96] The use of school inspectors to ensure that a reluctant population attended school allowed them to monitor the population's physical health at a more intimate level. Residents were often scared of the disruption brought about by the Sanitary Brigades, which separated families when quarantines were imposed, and fined those who hid sick family members.[97] The members of the Sanitary Brigades were also men and women of middle-class origins, who found it hard to relate to the population with whom they

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[94] Rosemblatt, *The science and politics of race*, 26.
[95] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Poder Ejecutivo. Libro de la Junta de Sanidad 1916, L 263.
[96] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 146.
[97] McCrea, *Diseased Relations,* 171.

were meant to work with. The *Brigadas Sanitarias,* therefore, often struggled to find patients hidden by family members. In contrast, the fear of being charged with truancy allowed school inspectors to report on the health of students and the families in general, ensuring that appropriate measures to contain diseases were implemented.[98]

Vocational Training and Women's Education

Salvador Alvarado's commitment to revolutionary education led him to pursue a similar educational model for Yucatán. This was meant to address the specific needs of everyone in the population, through the provision of secondary schooling designed to prepare future revolutionaries for the workforce. During the early twentieth century, the United States celebrated their newfound commitment to industrial preparedness and vocational training, through the implementation of new pedagogical techniques. In the United States, education and temperament tests were made to assess individuals' potential vocational utility.[99] Similarly, Yucatán's reformers recognized that rural education could not simply copy urban education, although both should emphasize the teaching of Spanish as a key tool of assimilation.[100] Educators had complained that "there were still many illiterate people who are incapable of stringing together at least one phrase in Spanish even in places where there have been schools for several dozens of years."[101] The shadow of the Caste War made it more important to attempt to erase the Maya identity and language that created friction among the *hacendados*. Instead, Yucatan's reformers sought to identify and preserve the aspects of Indigeneity and Mexicanness

[98] Michael Gardand. Carolun Pluim, *Schools and Public Health: Past, Present, Future*. (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014), 69.
[99] Rosemblatt, *The science and politics of race*, 68.
[100] Rosemblatt, *The science and politics of race*, 46.
[101] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado. Folleteria. Carpetas Blancas,La Educación, Revista Mensual de Pedagogia y letras. Organo del Instituto Literario del Estado.

they deemed positive, forging what would become a mythical mestizo identity that the SEP would later hold as a banner for the creation of a new Mexican society.[102]

Salvador Alvarado's revolutionary regime was recognized as well for its role in the First Feminist Congress, celebrated in January 1916. At the Congress women discussed the matter of female education and advocated for primary and vocational schools for women to ensure that education elevated the mission of motherhood and that motherhood could be understood in a rational and scientific manner. [103] While the First Feminist Congress set minimum education requirement for attendees, which excluded the largely Mayan population, news of the Congress engaged women outside of the Yucatán Peninsula. One of the unexpected debates that surrounded education was with regard to mixed education. While the educational reformers all seemed to agree that education needed to include women, as they were necessary to the advancement of the country and the success of the revolution, how the education was imparted seemed to be one of the main conflicts. Many educators who wrote for the magazine *La Educación, Revista Mensual de Pedagogia y Letras* [Education, A Monthly Magazine of Pedagogy and Letters] reported on a discussion at the National Congress of Primary Education:

> taking into account the psychological and physiological differences between men and women and the different purposes of each sex at home and in society, and lastly, in the not less powerful Mexican social environment,...[education]...cannot violate the sound principles of modern pedagogy by subjecting both sexes to the same education and under one disciplin[ary] regime...[This is the] reason why Mixed Schools are not tolerable or desired.[104]

While there seems to have been a push to educate women, most men were still not prepared to see them as equals, particularly with regard to their roles within society, which included the education opportunities they were meant to receive. While scholars have mentioned that rural

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[102] Rosemblatt, *The science and politics of race*, 31.
[103] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 33.
[104] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado. Folleteria. Carpetas Blancas, La Educación, Revista Mensual de Pedagogia y Letras. Organo del Instituto Literario del Estado.

and Indigenous communities offered the fiercest resistance to coeducation, in Yucatán it seems that it was educators and reformers who saw the biggest problem with coeducation.[105] Providing a "homogeneous education amongst students" was seen as "useless given that not all subjects are equally useful to both men and women."[106] Women were still expected under Alvarado's government to remain at home despite the new pedagogical ideology. Education was needed so women would be freed from their traditional bonds of servitude, but they were not to become so dangerously modern so that they would shun their appropriately female role as mothers.[107] Therefore their most important role as women was still to raise children who would eventually become allies of the Constitutionalist Revolution.

Despite the fact that Alvarado's educators saw the need to differentiate education between men and women, they understood that coeducation was necessary as Mexico was facing economic hardships as the federal government attempted to reunite the country following years of conflict. Alberto Vicate, a teacher who addressed the National Congress of Primary Education, mentioned that it made sense to have mixed schools in Mexico and in Yucatán in particular given that mixed schools were the most budget-friendly. Vicate stated that "Mixed Schools are not evil; the idea of evil is antagonistic to the idea of school....As such unisexual schools are not indispensable and Mixed Schools can be tolerated only for children younger than ten years".[108] There was a fear that children would be corrupted, if studying in a coeducational environment, particularly at an older age. However, the decision surrounding the establishment of primary schools in Yucatán would take the most cost-effective measures.

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[105] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 16.

[106] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado. Folleteria. Carpetas Blancas, La Educación, Revista Mensual de Pedagogia y Letras. Organo del Instituto Literario del Estado.

[107] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution,* 25.

[108] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado. Folleteria. Carpetas Blancas, La Educación, Revista Mensual de Pedagogia y Letras. Organo del Instituto Literario del Estado.

Since rural proprietors were providing schools on their ranches and haciendas, they could not be expected to support a school for each sex.[109] Therefore, schools would be "mixed when the number of girls and boys is not over fifty: unisex when the number is greater."[110] Educators had feared that parents would not send their daughters to schools if there was a male teacher, as they thought parents would be concerned their daughters would be molested.[111] Therefore, it was decided that in coeducational schools only women should teach, in the hopes that this would encourage more girls to be enrolled in school.[112] It seems that reforming the education curriculum was going to be harder than Alvarado had expected. It was not only necessary to build schools, but he also needed to convince educators of the most affordable course of action.

To transform female education, Salvador Alvarado believed that first he had to address the inequalities that women experienced that were rooted in law. In his decree of 14 July 1915, he stated that "There [was] no reason, neither natural nor legal, to stop women from the right to freely dispose of her person as soon as she [was] of legal age."[113] Under Article 597 of the Civil Code of Yucatán, women under thirty years old had been restricted in their activities as they could not "abandon the paternal home without permission from either her father or mother or whomever ha[d] guardianship over her."[114] These laws dictated what was morally acceptable for single women to do in society and cemented patriarchal power that was culturally prevalent.[115] This meant that most women were often at a disadvantage in terms of educational and career

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[109] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 16.
[110] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, XIV-1900-1/5-037.
[111] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 16.
[112] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 16.
[113] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 54, exp. 30.
[114] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 54, exp. 30.
[115] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 61.

opportunities. Many women could not decide freely whether they wanted to pursue higher education. Women particularly those of Maya ethnicity, were often hired out by family members to work as domestic servants or coerced into becoming unpaid servants.[116] Despite the fact that women were often unable to make decisions for themselves, under Article 597 women could be charged if they violated the decree. This meant that women were old enough to be tried under the law, yet still considered minors and not capable of deciding where they should live and what their future ought to look like.

The revolutionary government thought women remained in perpetual backwardness, tied to the Catholic Church, and aimed to improve women's status in education, law, family issues, health and sanitation, and freedom from control of the Church.[117] The education reform was meant to remake women in the interests of nation building and development.[118] Women's lack of education continued to place them at a disadvantage and Alvarado recognized that the current law "place[ed] obstacles to the free development and exercise of the personal faculties...[of women] preventing her in many cases from dedicating herself to the labour of culture and to modern advancement." Changes in Article 597 of the Civil Code would therefore allow women the same freedoms men had previously been granted when they entered legal adulthood.

Although Salvador Alvarado and his successor Felipe Carrillo Puerto have often been credited with providing education opportunities in Yucatán, there was already a long history of women's education in Mexico. In colonial times, Indigenous women had been identified as essential in ensuring the spread of Christianity. The education of Indigenous women in colonial times served as both a way to form Christian women who could teach their husband and children

[116] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 60
[117] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 4
[118] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*,11

the doctrine, as well as to educate them on European family life.[119] Yucatán had also had a long history of influential women who had championed women's education before the arrival of the revolution, including feminist Rita Cetina, who in 1870 created Merida's first private school for women.[120] Prior to the revolution, most education had been reserved for women who were part of the Indigenous elite or the wealthy white elite in Yucatán. The foundation of the Escuela *Vocacional de Artes Domesticás* [Vocational School of Domestic Arts] in 1915 was intended to "cultivate the vocation of students in the manual and industrial arts that are adequate to their sex."[121] This was meant to address the lack of higher education available to all women.

Education for women at the Vocational School of Domestic Arts was meant to "prepare the students, with the theoretical knowledge and the practice, necessary for the occupation they choose, which will be in accordance with their inclinations and needs both socially and economically."[122] Vocational training was from the beginning meant to provide education that stayed within the means of the population. It was meant to create better workers within their status, workers who knew how to be productive within the new society envisioned by the government but who did not necessarily aspire for anything outside of their social and economic limits. Education would therefore be imparted through a series of technical workshops that provided women with the skills to lead their everyday lives.[123] Through these workshops, students also had the "right to half of the liquid profits on the sale of any article in whose creation they have taken part," assuring that students could potentially earn an income while

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[119] Kobayashy,"La conquista educativa de los hijos de Asís," 20
[120] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 10.
[121] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán ,Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 136, exp. 40.
[122] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán ,Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 136, exp. 40.
[123] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 33.

studying at the school. [124] This also provided them with real life experience and skills that they would need in order to earn an income in the new post-revolutionary Yucatán. In addition, vocational education seemed to solve a problem with funding as students were able to make and sell items, which allowed the school to continue to operate.

When looking at the list of practical courses that were taught at the Vocational School of Domestic Arts, the list seems to limit women to a restricted range of practical classes in domestic economy, which included baking, cooking, embroidery, and sewing. These were tasks that one would expect women to know without having attended school, so in certain ways, the school seemed to be almost a propaganda tool for Alvarado's government. The school's main mission was to create accomplished wives and mothers.[125] These courses were meant to teach female students how "to be prepared to be the Defenders of a Home, [teach] them how to perform their role consciously so they will know how to educate their children to be strong, physically, morally, and intellectually"[126] Women were still expected above all else to become mothers well versed in the ideas of hygiene, sanitation, and revolutionary rhetoric that the government was promoting. However, the government did seem to recognize that for many women their economic realities did not allow them to be full-time mothers. For women who were expected to work outside of their homes, some of the subjects that were provided in the workshops were gardening, typing, and shorthand, as well as a "special class for telegraphy." Women were being streamed into the public space, in roles that seemed to mimic those that they had done within the confines of their homes. As such, women began to enter new roles as schoolteachers, technicians,

[124]Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán ,Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 136, exp. 40.
[125] *Smith, Gender and the Mexican Revolution,* 33.
[126]Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán ,Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 136, exp. 40.

and in some cases government inspectors.[127] Although they seem at odds with the ideas of motherhood that the government aspired to create, these schools gave Yucatán's urban women new spaces to aspire to attend, and many of these professions would eventually become largely female vocations in the twentieth century.

A woman named Maria Elena Ramirez wrote to Alvarado and congratulated him on the many successes of his policies in Yucatán. She also celebrated the creation of a socialist party in the state. In addition, Ramirez wanted to inquire about the state of vocational education in Yucatán; she mentions that "domestic economy has been taught in a way in which there is nothing scientific about it and has no relation at all with science." She explains that in the way these programs had been traditionally run,

> you look for a cook who is able to cook moderately well, you pay a chef who has a good reputation so he can come and teach how to make ornate dishes and cakes...This is unnecessary, what is the point of having students prepare luxurious dishes, when they do not know how to prepare simple, healthy and cheap food that can feed their family on a daily basis. [128]

Providing domestic education in schools arose out of the concern that by attending schools, girls were being removed from the home. They were not only unavailable to support their mothers by doing household tasks but were also prevented from learning important domestic and maternal skills.[129] The education that the government intended to provide for women was therefore heavily modelled on the middle-class ideals of femininity and continued to produce a gendered rhetoric of women's appropriate roles in society.[130] Yet, the revolutionary rhetoric wanted to see domestic economy education adapted to fit the needs of the poor and disadvantaged women in Mexican

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[127] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 11.
[128] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán ,Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 136, exp. 40.
[129] Vanessa Heggie,."Domestic and Domesticating Education in the Late Victorian City" *History of Education* 40, no. 3 (*2011):* 274.
[130] Heggie,"Domestic and Domesticating Education in the Late Victorian City," 285.

society. There was also a racial rhetoric that accompanied the need to provide the right domestic education for women. Indigenous working women were seen as the embodiment of filth and immorality, and their homemaking abilities were questioned by the upper classes.[131]

The education that was given to the lower classes was meant to be practical; they did not need to imitate the upper classes but needed to learn how to be good housekeepers and mothers. In response to Doña Ramirez's letter, Alvarado assured her that the government of Yucatán "ha[d] acted zealously with everything that refers to the advancement and liberation of women" and explained that the schools of Yucatán not "only t[aught] women's traditional work, they also t[aught] other trades."[132] Keeping in mind his push for a rational, all-inclusive social education, Alvarado wanted to be seen as a champion for women's education. Through this education, the government also wanted to target women's dependence on the Church and remedy their ignorance, which was seen as a result of inappropriate schooling or female employment.[133] Alvarado's commitment to the advancement of women as individuals can further be seen through his push to make women more visible in education, hiring them as teachers and directors in primary schools as well as having women participate as vaccinators and school inspectors.

However, while Alvarado might have been a vocal proponent of a more liberal women's education, on the reading list for the girls' schools in Yucatán was the *Catecismo de economía domestica para el uso de las escuelas de niñas* [Catechism of home economics for the use of girls' schools]. In this text, the author explains that the study of domestic economy was meant to

[131] De La Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, 79
[132] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 136, exp. 40.
[133] Heggie,"Domestic and Domesticating Education in the Late Victorian City," 285.

"increase a family's resources to avoid pawning and provide comfort and enjoyment."[134] Textbooks were still preparing women to assume their rightful position at home, to learn mathematics and basic bookkeeping but only as a way to ensure their families were financially stable. This assumed that families were in financial strain not because of exploitation and minimal salaries, but because they lacked management skills. This also ignored the fact that most women were already working women. They were market sellers, domestic workers, and agricultural brokers and as such had experience with mathematics without formal education.[135]

In addition, the text instructed women on how to select furniture and children's schools, as well as how to manage house servants; they recommended hiring "female servants as [they were] more prone to withstand inspection ... and there [were] several domestic tasks that [could] only be completed by women."[136] The reality was that middle-class women who wanted or needed to work outside the home still needed to outsource their housekeeping. Without the use of paid housekeeping, chores in large middle-class homes would take most of the day, and this would not allow women to pursue other occupations outside of the home.[137] This also meant that most of the domestic work was still performed by young women as they were needed in order for middle-class women to maintain their lifestyle.[138] This meant that the education for women was still meant to support the old patriarchal, class, and racial hierarchies in which women would remain at home either as a housekeepers or as somebody else's domestic help. The textbook also advocated for different education to be provided to women and men as "women should have purer customs, colder manners, and softer occupations than men."[139] Another thing to consider is

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[134] Biblioteca Yucatánense, Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Reservado. Folleteria. FR-CCA-XLVI-1/2-02.
[135] De La Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, 60.
[136] Biblioteca Yucatánense, Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Reservado. Folleteria. FR-CCA-XLVI-1/2-02.
[137] Marie Eileen Francois, *A Culture of Everyday Credit: Housekeeping, Pawnbroking and Governance in Mexico City, 1750-1920.*(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 253.
[138]Francois, *A Culture of Everyday Credit,* 249.
[139] Biblioteca Yucatánense, Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Reservado. Folleteria. FR-CCA-XLVI-1/2-02.

the name of the book. By using the word "catechism," it invokes the Catholic instruction of religious doctrine, a set of tenets that must be followed and learned to be part of the larger society of believers. This religious connotation in the teaching of domestic economy can also be interpreted as a way to secularize the population and to replace the cult of saints with the cult of the state.[140]

Rural Education: Agricultural and Boarding Schools.

Alvarado also sought to provide vocational training and education beyond elementary school to the farmers and workers of Yucatán. The new agricultural schools of the province were meant to address growing concerns about the eventual decline of Yucatán's mono-crop industry. In the opening statement for the proposal of the new Agricultural Regional Schools, the Ministry of Education talked about the complexities arising from Yucatán's unique climate and regional diversity, as well as the threat to the economy posed by a misplaced reliance on henequen as a mono-crop. Therefore, they believed that "following the same blueprint for similar schools of this nature w[ould] only lead to failure because the agricultural procedures and the regional agronomy in Yucatán are completely distinct from those of the rest of the country and the world."[141] This was part of the larger socialist education program that wanted to see education adjusted to local circumstances and conditioned by local responses.[142] This was also meant to provide small-scale agricultural opportunities to peasants as farmers. This was due to the difficulties of running a henequen plantation, which was always a large scale operation that could not be profitable for small landholders.[143] A more thorough education for the agricultural

[140] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* xvii.
[141] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62, exp. 49.
[142] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62, exp. 49.
[143] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* xvii.

peasants of the nation would improve their work habits and productivity and help them move beyond subsistence levels and supposedly bring the Indigenous population into modernity. This would also ensure that students would be able to find and define the most appropriate career based on their skills.[144]

Through vocational training, the government sought to provide instruction that would prepare students for their future careers without burdening them with seemingly excess knowledge. Mathematics would be taught so that students "had the aptitude to solve all the little problems that occur[ed] daily in work life, without this skill young workers were vulnerable to the vicissitudes of life and open to eternal failure."[145] Reformers therefore sought to train professionals who could carry forward state-sponsored social reforms.[146] There were no unnecessary subjects that would be taught in these rational schools, such as literature. Instead, they would prepare peasants to live within their means and in a way provide them with the necessary tools so that they would not be exploited and would be less prone to fall into the patterns of servitude that had previously kept them oppressed when working under the *hacendados.* Government opinion seemed to fall into two categories when dealing with their Indigenous and peasant populations: the authorities wanted them to be productive and active citizens, but they also wanted to protect them from others within the population.[147] They were seen almost as children in need of surveillance and protection.

Additionally, these schools were also focused on teaching mechanical and technical aspects of agriculture, as these would move Yucatán into modernity. The description for the

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[144] Victoria Lerner, *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana, periodo 1934-1940: La educación socialista.* (Mexico D.F.: Colegio de Mexico, 1979), 172.
[145] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62, exp. 49.
[146] Rosemblatt, *The Science and Politics of Race*, 141.
[147] Rosemblatt, *The Science and Politics of Race*, 14.

course on rational mechanics, for example, explained that it would be "purely practical, students will visit different sites in different industrial installations, decortication facilities, railway workshops and on the land they will be able to work with distinct [farm] equipment and we will ensure each student takes a turn operating the machinery."[148] The government had to provide concrete measures on how to improve the situation of their workers, and unify them so it could redistribute land, including *ejidos*, for small-scale farming.[149] This meant moving peasants out of subsistence. The Alvarado government wanted a workforce that was comparable to the idealized farmer that they saw in other countries, the proud landowner who would bring the crops to market. The government wished to create a type of farmer that existed only in their imagination, as the Indigenous population continued to own and work land communally. In the end, the government had to compromise by recognizing the rights of communities to continue practicing *ejido* farming and by recognizing the rights that some communities had fought for since colonial times. Additionally, as in many vocational schools created in the twentieth century, there was also a physical education component. In particular, students were required to learn how to "handle weapons and firearms. These are rational activities that are healthy for the body and they place man in a position where he will be useful to their nation and to its institutions when there is need."[150] Peasants were also expected to be healthy and prepared to defend the nation if the situation arose once again.

The new agricultural schools were meant to function as boarding-schools. Children lived at the school during the term much like the residential schools of the rest of North America. In

[148]Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62, exp. 49.
[149] Lerner, *Historia de la revolución mexicana,* 161.
[150] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62, exp. 49.

these schools, all of the students' time was meant to be accounted for and they were molded to fit the ideals of middle-class society. Boarding schools were meant to de-Indianize, to eradicate cultural differences and ensure the population would be efficient members of the emerging Mexican society.[151] The students were supposed to rise early every morning and promptly "take a regulative bath, clean their bedrooms, brush their clothes and polish their shoes, they will brush their teeth and comb their hair," all before they were allowed to have breakfast.[152] The martial regulation and precision with which students' time was accounted for, from the food that would be served to the activities in which they were allowed to participate, was also an attempt to ensure that Indigenous populations were de-Indianized. This was also based on a notion of racialized differences between *campesino* and Indigenous children, the latter of which needed to be instructed on the basic tenets of cleanliness. The Alvarado Government saw the majority of the population as inherently dirty and backwards, and it therefore argued that education needed to address physical, intellectual, and moral development to ensure Mexico produced a strong and healthy race.[153] In contrast to the residential schools of Canada and the United States, Mexico recognized that the majority of their population was Indigenous and would be needed to lift their country out of poverty.[154] Evidence that they were inspired by the residential schools of Canada and the United States can be seen in the correspondence between the government of Yucatán and

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[151] Derek G. Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization' and Projects of Governance in Roman Catholic Industrial Schools for Native Peoples in Canada, 1870-95." *Anthropologica* vol. 43, No. 2 (2011): 253- 271. John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential System, 1879-1986.* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 2006). J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). Peter Mauro Hayes, *The Art of Americanization at the Carlisle Indian School.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011).

[152] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62, exp. 49.

[153] Rosemblatt, *The science and politics of race*, 54.

[154] Alexander S. Dawson, "Histories and Memories of the Indian Boarding Schools in Mexico, Canada, and the United States" *Latin American Perspectives* 39, no. 5 (2012): 83.

Professor Gregorio Torres Quintero, who was sent to the United States to learn how Indigenous education was being imparted.

Gregorio Torres Quintero, was a professor who had been actively campaigning for new pedagogical instruction since before the revolution.[155] Having worked to reform the educational curriculum in his native Colima, Quintero had also worked for the Mexican government during Joaquin Baranda's tenure and published his own education manual inspired by the ideas of Justo Sierra.[156] Under Salvador Alvarado, Torres Quintero was invited to serve as the head of the Department of Public Education, and during his first years he traveled throughout the peninsula and held conferences with parents and teachers about the new education reform.[157]

During his time in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Quintero sent a letter to Alvarado with regards to the state of the education provided at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in which he mentioned that the school "was not really a school for Indians, as I said in the interview but rather a school for American citizens....the school is organized like any other school for whites."[158] While this was probably what Torres Quintero witnessed during his visit, we know that Indigenous students' experiences in residential schools were very different from what their white counterparts experienced in private boarding institutions. American and Canadian residential schools were known for the violence they had inflicted on Indigenous children and the strict assimilatory practices designed to eradicate Indigenous knowledge and culture in younger generations.[159] In addition, Torres Quintero had an ulterior motive when he mentioned that the

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[155] Genaro Hernández Corona, *Gregorio Torres Quintero: su vida y su obra (1866-1934)* (Colima: Universidad de Colima, 1955), 15.
[156] Maria de los Angeles Rodriguez Alvarez, *Escenarios, actores y procesos: la educación en Colima durante el siglo XIX y primeras decadas del XX.* (Colima: Universidad de Colima, 2007), 312.
[157] Hernández Corona, *Gregorio Torres Quintero,* 109.
[158] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62, exp. 49.
[159] Milloy, *A National Crime,* 165.

school was "open to all of the Indians of the Americas" and that the "Director of the School wanted to invite two Maya Indians to attend it."[160] He explained in his letter there would be no need for the students to know English, as the director of the school usually received many Indigenous students who were unable to speak English when they had first arrived. The idea that these students were still not fluent in English probably resonated with the situation in Mexico, where despite the fact that many churches and schools had made incursions into Indigenous communities, there were still many places in Yucatán where Spanish was not spoken.

The issue of race and who was an Indigenous citizen also came up in Torres Quintero's letters, especially with regards to who was or was not considered Indigenous in the United States. He stated that "Here they call Indians not only the purebred ones but also those who are Mestizos ... in order to be admitted they need only to have 1/4 Indigenous blood so it is not necessary for them to be pure blooded."[161] In the case of Mexico, these same parameters would have meant that most of the population would be considered Indigenous, which did not fit the way many Mexicans identified, particularly as there was a growing ruling class made up of *mestizo* citizens. For this reason, the letter stated that the Mexican government should be careful about whom they chose to send to Carlisle, ensuring that they were "intelligent, well mannered, and that they have completed well their primary education."[162] Quintero wanted to ensure that the Indigenous students chosen to go to the United States would represent the Mexican Indigenous population in a positive light. In addition, he mentioned that, most importantly, they should

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[160] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62, exp. 49.

[161] In the United States, population and culture had been homogenized through mechanical civilization, where the problematic minorities did not pose an ethnic problem as they had been excluded from the white European community. The question of blood quantum and who was or was not considered a minority in the United States was also tied to the question of eugenics and had a significant impact on who could or could not access certain resources or inhabit in certain spaces.

[162] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62, exp. 49.

choose a student or two "wisely amongst those whom we call Indians". While any student they would have sent to Carlisle Indian School would probably have met the criteria, the fact that Torres Quintero made this distinction shows some of his own bias against the Indigenous population in Mexico. It seems that the idea of a *mestizo* being mistaken for an Indian was almost inconceivable to the professor. If natives spoke Spanish and participated and lived in urban areas and possessed the characteristics of modern culture, they were in fact *criollos,* even if they were by other measures Indigenous.[163] Anti-Indigenous racism was adapted in Mexico to fit the reality of the population, where there was a sliding scale of Indigeneity.[164] This would theoretically provide a way for education to replace the racialized components that defined whether one was *mestizo* or Indigenous, and allow many men to pass as white due to their education despite their physical appearance.

However, Torres Quintero had an ulterior motive, which explains why he was so insistent on sending two Indigenous citizens to Pennsylvania. He mentioned that sending two Maya men would be convenient as "politically it would be an important step" for Mexico, and in doing so "it would be well received as a gesture of friendship."[165] The political relationship between Mexico and the United States had cooled down considerably during the Revolutionary War, and had eventually led to a diplomatic break. Conflicts over land ownership and land redistribution loomed in the background of revolutionary policy, which was bound to create more conflict with the United States. Mexican *hacendados* would not be the only ones affected by the new land redistribution policies and talk about land expropriation worried many foreign landowners. Mexico, in the eyes of the United States, was not seen as a nation, as they were unable to protect

[163] Rosemblatt, *The Science and Politics of Race*, 50.
[164] Rosemblatt, *The Science and Politics of Race*, 50.
[165] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62, exp. 49.

the lives and the property of resident foreigners. At times, there was talk that the only way to ensure Mexico would fulfill their obligations was through the threat of force.[166] As a way to temper growing tensions, Torres Quintero recommended sending some students to Carlisle Indian School as a gesture of good will from the Mexican government. This makes Torres Quintero's description of the way in which the school was ran dubious, as he had an ulterior motive to convince Alvarado to send students to Pennsylvania. In addition, he mentioned that the cost of sending students would be around "200 dollars a year more or less," which was a big sum for the government to cover. This could explain why no Maya students were ever sent to Carlisle despite Torres Quintero's various letters to different people in Alvarado's government.

In addition, Yucatán also had its own short-lived residential boarding school, the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* outside of Merida. There is very little historical information about *La Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*, and this might be due to the fact that the project was very short-lived, and the school closed its doors in 1918 only three years after opening. The school was meant to make Indigenous youth into rural teachers and productive agricultural workers.[167] Similar to the residential schools of the US and Canada, the *Ciudad Escolar* was viewed by Alvarado's Government as an opportunity to transform Indigenous peoples into modern citizens.[168] The *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* was meant to be

> a normal rural school from which future teachers must emerge, and who will be entrusted with the education of the aborigines from the different regions in the state, amongst the principal functions of the Normal Rural School was above all to serve as a model for the organization of schools established in the estate and ranches of our Federal Entity. [169]

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[166] Paul Sullivan, *Xuxub Must Die: The Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatan* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), 59.
[167] Bianet M. Castellanos, *A Return to Servitude: Maya Migration and the Tourist Trade in Cancún.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 45.
[168] Castellanos, *A Return to Servitude,* 44.
[169] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 216, exp. 27.

Unlike the residential schools of their North American counterparts, the school in Yucatán was not meant to educate all of the Indigenous children of Yucatán but instead provide education to a select few. These young students who would graduate would be the "redeemers of their race," who would in turn provide primary education to their communities.[170] Mexican educators did not want to emancipate individuals from their communities; instead, they wanted to create new leaders who through their own educational experiences would bring customs, hygiene, and the Spanish language to their own communities.[171] One of the reasons why Yucatán might have had a smaller residential school program might have been because of the more limited capabilities of the Mexican government and the larger proportion of Indigenous citizens. There was also a difference in the ideological considerations of the Mexican educators. The Mexican government did not necessarily want to erase the histories of their indigenous populations, instead they wanted to adopt and adapt these cultures and add them to their own origin story one that had evolved into the modern Mexican nation.

The students who attended the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* were not selected at random or from the same communities. Instead, "All the Haciendas in the State needed to support one or two students at the 'Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas' depending on the importance of each [hacienda] and those who do not have any school-aged children must in turn support one or two children who live in the towns nearby."[172] Forcing *hacendados* to pay for the education of the Maya population was one way the new government tried to assert its power over the old ruling classes of Yucatán. Before, the *hacendados* had often undermined the regulations of the state by

[170] Wolfgang Gabbert, *Becoming Maya: Ethnicity and Social Inequality in Yucatán since 1500.* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2004), 103.
[171] Dawson, "Histories and Memories of the Indian Boarding Schools", 84.
[172] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 216, exp. 27.

hiring their own teachers and creating their own schools, contrary to the curriculum and the recommendations of the state. Sending students to attend secondary education outside of the *haciendas* also meant that *hacendados* would have less control over the curriculum and the level of education students could achieve. The state tried to make it seem like the *hacendados* had generously offered to support these students by mentioning that the government and its citizens,

> having lost almost all of his capital, due to the different changes in currency, we have resolved to address you, exalting your patriotism and the knowledge that the work that will be carried out is entirely beneficial and illuminating, as it aims to the assist the quick regeneration of the Indigenous race of this state.[173]

The government attempted to solve their financial troubles by incentivizing the *hacendados* to cooperate in the provision of education for the Indigenous population. The government also appealed to the belief that they needed to ensure the regeneration of Indigenous communities and reminded them that education could avoid wars as it would transform the population into modern citizens loyal to the Mexican state.[174] This was a reminder that the Maya population had once posed a threat to the stability of the peninsula when they had decided to move against the *hacendados* during the Caste War. There was also an appeal to the elites' notion of "*buenas costumbres*," of their duty to act as benefactors to those less fortunate in their communities. There had always existed an informal asymmetrical relationship between patrons and their workers; workers received protection and assistance, and in return they owed labour.[175] Therefore, having the *hacendados* pay for the education of their workers did not seem to be out of character for the educators. For the government, having a steady funding source solved some of the financial trouble that went with providing universal education to the population of

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[173] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 216, exp. 27.
[174] Castellanos, *A Return to Servitude,* 44.
[175] Francois, *A Culture of Everyday Credit,* xvii.

Yucatán. As Yucatán's government identified as a socialist government under the rule of Alvarado, having the *hacendados* pay for the education of their employees could be seen as in line with their beliefs of wealth and redistribution to the working classes.[176] However, most of Alvarado's policies were more capitalist, as he was a great proponent of the market economy rather than one socialist in nature.

In addition, *La Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* would provide adjacent education to younger children through the foundation of the "*Casa dei Bambini* [Children's House]." Inspired by the work of Maria Montessori in Italy, *La Ciudad Escolar* wished to implement new pedagogical methods in the instruction of children. Elena Torres, a typist and educator from Guanajuato who had participated in Salvador Alvarado's First Feminist Congress, was the school's first director.[177] Torres's experience as an educator and revolutionary campaigner had caught Alvarado's attention in Guanajuato, and she had been invited to participate in Yucatán's constitutionalist reform.[178] According to the letters sent to the Secretary of Education, the school was meant to serve young children who would benefit from the Montessori Method, as well as be a place where students from the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* could practice the new pedagogical methods that they could later replicate in their own communities.[179]

In the beginning, there were some questions over who should be allowed to attend *Casa dei Bambini*. In 1917, when the school was about to be established, the school inspector of Itzimná wrote to the government asking "if the students have to come from the same Haciendas as the rest of the Students in the school [Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas] or if they could bring in

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[176] Sally M. Miller, *Race, Ethnicity and Gender in Early Twentieth-Century American Socialism.* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 4.
[177] Stephanie Mitchell and Patience Schell, *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953.* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefields Publishers, Inc.,2007), 17.
[178] Mitchell, *The Women's Revolution,* 25.
[179] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 216, exp. 27.

students who reside in the suburb of Itzimná,".[180] The decision was made that students who attended the Montessori school should come from the suburb of Itzimná, and the program would only operate as a day school. This was because students who would attend boarding school at the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* "had to be older than twelve years old, and should also meet all other aptitude requirements and possess a strong constitution."[181] While some scholars have mentioned that students as young as five years old were sent to study at the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*, student lists show that children tended to be older than twelve when they attended the school and I could not find any students younger than fourteen.[182] While the government was willing to educate some students away from their communities, they were not willing to separate younger children from their families. This was another way in which Mexican residential schools would differ from their North American counterparts. They took children at an older age and were looking to provide an education that could be replicated at the community level.[183]

Revolutionary Teachers: Educators, Vaccinators, and State Agents

Teachers were also expected to play a role in guaranteeing the health of the population. School directors in particular would play an essential role ensuring that the population complied with vaccination. Vaccination had been a contested issue between the government and the Maya population, in particular because vaccination did not resonate with Maya understanding of illness at the time. This had made it hard for the government to justify their earlier vaccination campaigns.[184] In addition, earlier health campaigns during the Caste War had also served as a

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[180] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 216, exp. 27.
[181] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 216, exp. 27.
[182] Castellanos, *A Return to Servitude,* 45.
[183] Dawson, "Histories and Memories of the Indian Boarding Schools," 84. Because there is very little information on the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*, scholars might also be influenced by the scholarship on residential schools in the United States and Canada
[184] McCrea, *Diseased Relations,* 31-32.

mechanism to separate families and communities into different *haciendas* throughout the peninsula as a way to suppress the conflict. This meant that the population was suspicious of the revolutionary government's intentions.

This complicated history often meant that teachers had to serve a dual role within their communities. For example, in the town of Espita where "no doctor wants to take the title of official vaccinator," the military commander stated that "sending a medical practitioner to establish [a clinic] in Espita with only a $63 monthly allowance was materially impossible .... and therefore he personally appointed the Director of the School of the Village to this job."[185] Forcing teachers to participate in the state's vaccination campaigns meant that teachers were not only attempting to educate the revolutionaries of the future, but they were also involved in ensuring village compliance with health ordinances.

Despite the government's expectation that teachers were meant to be well versed in questions of public health and how to avoid the propagation of illnesses, the reality was that many teachers had just as little experience with illness as the rest of the population. The government kept records of all hygiene measures taken, including information about towns, schools, and *haciendas* where outbreaks of illnesses had occurred, in *Libros de Sanidad* (Hygiene Books). Throughout the *Libros de Sanidad* there are several reminders for teachers stating that "although chickenpox was benign, all children affected by chickenpox and those who came from households infected by it should not be accepted in classes, until after the peeling period of the illness has ended".[186] The reality was that many of these teachers lacked the necessary public health education to complete the duties demanded of them. State standards

[185] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Poder Ejecutivo. Libro de la Junta de Sanidad 1916, L 263.
[186] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Poder Ejecutivo. Libro de la Junta de Sanidad 1916, L 263.

required teachers to attend school to at least the sixth grade; however, many of the early educators had not even completed this requirement.[187] This was not true of all teachers, though, as the preparation to become an instructor required two to five years of additional schooling.[188] Still, the preparation for those early educators was much less complete and many teachers had only received three months of training.[189]

Many of these early instructors also hailed from much more urban areas, which meant that it might have been uncommon for them to witness the higher rates of infection that were more common in small villages and towns.[190] Teachers were expected not to be afraid of these illnesses that had decimated populations. In state memoranda teachers were accused of "not procuring vaccinations actively" as well as "abandoning their posts as soon as a smallpox case is confirmed, instead of practicing the prophylactic measures they [were] instructed on, that [were] put in place to avoid the propagation of this terrible evil that is easy to spread among the poor illiterates."[191] The role of teachers went far beyond instruction. Through their supposed educated moral superiority, these teachers were encouraged to demonstrate to the population they served what was necessary for a healthier life. The reality was they were not more knowledgeable than the population they were serving. In a state memorandum, the government reminded teachers that smallpox was "easily spread amongst the poor illiterates" and reminded them of the role they were expected to play in containing infections. This statement also reflected some of the mentality of the revolutionary period, when addressing these educational and moral failures

[187] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 160.
[188] Mitchell, *The Women's Revolution in Mexico,* 43.
[189] Mitchell, *The Women's Revolution in Mexico,* 43 .
[190] McCrea, *Diseased Relations.*
[191] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Poder Ejecutivo. Libro de la Junta de Sanidad 1916, L 263.

seemed to provide an answer to the health, economic, and political problems that continued to arise during this period of transition.

Health, in the eyes of the Revolutionary government of Salvador Alvarado, was also tied to the eugenics movement of the early twentieth century. Morality and hygiene went hand in hand. Educational magazines such as *La Educación,* produced by the Literary Institute of the State of Yucatán, reminded teachers:

> Let's not forget to talk about the home, of the great inconvenience from a hygienic point of view of the classic and ill-fated hay house of our people ... It is necessary to teach children that it is worth more to have a hygienic house that costs more than one that is cheap and unhealthy. Therefore, ventilation and illumination are essential in every house that wishes to call itself one.[192]

This critique on the population was rooted in the racialized belief that Yucatán's Indigenous population was inherently dirty and lazy. Assuming that they lived in hay or straw housing was based on the stereotype that the indigenous population was lazy and cheap and did not wish to spend money on proper housing. This ignores the reality that, in the period shortly after the revolution, the Maya people had lived and continued to live in a condition of near slavery, receiving little to no money for their work and living in *haciendas* where the housing and the land did not belong to them. State control extended into the houses of peasants, as there was a view that environments also shaped an individual's bodily health and development, and a student's ability was reflected in their living conditions.[193] Therefore, for the Alvarado government, there was a right way to live, build, and maintain a home, which might also explain the emphasis that was placed on women to be educated to be good homemakers. The text that appeared in this magazine with regard to the house was adapted and translated from the recommendations made by Edith Shepard, Director of the Schools of Warren and Avalon Park in

[192] Biblioteca Yucatánense, Merida, Yucatán , Fondo Reservado, Folleteria, Carpetas Blancas, Hogar y Escuela.
[193] Rosemblatt, *The Science and Politics of Race*, 53.

Chicago. The revolutionary reforms and the international nature of the eugenics movement gave Mexico a space to participate in a wider discussion that aimed to create strong and productive citizens.

Alvarado's eugenic beliefs and moral movement also targeted the celebrations and the behaviour of the common people and encouraged teachers to actively police the population and help transform them into a reliable and punctual working class crucial to national progress. Alvarado closed bars and cantinas, abolished gambling, and attempted to replace pastimes with school festivals and celebrations. For example, the Vocational School of Domestic Arts celebrated two big events in 1916, a theatrical performance to celebrate the end of the year in July, and a town dance to celebrate the school's one-year anniversary in October.[194] These efforts to reform popular culture were similar to those that had been implemented in the eighteenth century, as the government expected the population to conform to the ideals of the reformers.[195]

In schools, festivals and sports were part of the anti-alcohol efforts of Alvarado's government, serving as alternative pastimes for the population, and were meant to reinforce in children the behaviour that was expected of them. They were meant to be the productive citizens that their parents were not. While sport tournaments and school festivals would become very popular among the villages, these school-sponsored events were not sufficient to curb the vices the government wanted to see eliminated in the population. Although anti-alcohol campaigns would also be adopted by the federal school program under the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* [Secretariat of Public Education] in the 1920s and 1930s, this would be one of the least successful policies that educators tried to enforce both in Yucatán and nationwide.[196]

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[194]Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán , Merida, Yucatán , Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 185, exp. 29.
[195]Voekel, "Peeing on the Palace," 185.
[196] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 204.

Additionally, schools would offer sporting events, hobbies, and celebrations that were meant to provide the population with more appropriate and productive pastimes than drinking. One of the more popular activities was school orchard competitions, which were mentioned throughout different memoranda in government correspondence. School directors were reminded to encourage participation in the contest as part of their duties. Schools also seemed to have embraced the competition, and there are several requests for seeds and materials to participate in the contest. The establishment of orchards seems in line with revolutionary ideals of productivity and a step towards the eventual land redistribution policy that Alvarado and his successor Felipe Carrillo Puerto would attempt to impose in Yucatán. In addition, these orchard competitions would inculcate in peasants the love of the soil and allow them to stay rooted to the land.[197]

Conclusion

Yucatán's extensive social reforms extended to the everyday lives of citizens in the peninsula. Education was a major component of these reforms and was meant to address many of the social problems present in the population from an early age, ensuring that the new revolutionary citizens would be literate, hardworking, and loyal to the state. The revolutionary reforms had different aspects. On the one hand, they were born out of racialized fear of the Indigenous population and the memories that persisted of them fighting the *hacendados*. Ensuring the Indigenous population spoke Spanish and assimilated into the new state was essential to long-term peace and prosperity. Moreover, education extended outside of the realm of primary education as the government strove to provide vocational training to children as well. Vocational training was geared towards ensuring the population was employable in a trade suitable to their racial and economic background. Gender also played an important role in

[197] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 36.

determining the type of education men and women were to receive and the roles they would play in the new revolutionary society. Above all, the government would employ all tools at their disposal: teachers, educational magazines, vaccinations, and new holidays were ways to police morality and create citizens who conformed to the standards of the ruling classes.

Chapter 2: Not the Archbishop's Palace: Problems with Religion, Women, and Indigenous Education

There is no question that Salvador Alvarado was a stranger to the tight-knit communities of the Yucatán. As a northerner and an interim governor of the peninsula, it was clear that he would face some backlash from different sectors of the population. Yucatán's ruling class believed that the state was a world apart and it had in fact seceded from the Mexican State twice in the late nineteenth century. For the wealthy *hacendados* who had benefited from the labour of debt peonage, Alvarado's revolution felt like an imposition. Salvador Alvarado had seen the failures of the two previous interim governors, so he formed a local committee to provide Yucatecans the opportunity to suggest recommendations that were needed for reform.[198] However, Alvarado's reforms and his tendency towards authoritarianism did not endear him to the *hacendado* oligarchy, and he received pushback from various groups in the population. Among his most unpopular reforms was his move against the Catholic Church, which on occasion cost him the support of both the *hacendados* and religious *campesinos*.[199] This chapter explores the opposition the education reforms faced in terms of three different topics—religion, women, and Indigenous schooling—and the ways in which Alvarado attempted to address the diverse concerns of the parties involved.

Among his plans for reform, Salvador Alvarado had envisioned a "secular heaven" for the state of Yucatán, one that would free the citizens from the oppression that the Catholic Church had exerted upon their lives, not allowing them to move towards modernity.[200] The crusade against the Catholic Church had been intermittent even before the arrival of Salvador Alvarado to Yucatán, and President Ignacio Comonfort had in fact enacted the Ley Lerdo in

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[198] *Joseph, Revolution From Without,* 97.
[199] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 106
[200] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 106

1856, which confiscated and redistributed ecclesiastical holdings throughout Mexico. There was a belief that without the destruction of ecclesiastical power, no meaningful reform could be made.[201] Although the Ley Lerdo was not as far reaching as the government would have expected, anti-clericalism was very much alive in the revolutionary period and Alvarado similarly thought that secularization was important for reform. The government wanted to create a population that was loyal to the state: this meant that old allegiances needed to be redirected from the Catholic community to the new Mexican nation. In a letter, Salvador Alvarado addressed some concerns from the Catholic community in Merida: "....I want to start, not without first expressing my most sincere respect to the ladies (mestizas and arropadas) who have had the kindness to come all the way to the palace to give me their memorial in their own hands."[202] He also mentioned that he was thinking about the women's requests to temper his "military character" and to think about what was best for the pueblo at large.[203] Women in particular were seen as susceptible to the influence of the Church, and while there were some women who were ready to participate in the new revolutionary order, others preferred to uphold more traditional ties to conservative ideals.[204] Salvador Alvarado likely wanted to be seen as a paternalistic figure in the eyes of these women and justified the actions of his government by reminding those who opposed him that the revolution had arrived to transform the Mexican nations. Alvarado's policies often turned towards the authoritarian, and because he fancied himself an intellectual, he used every opportunity to share his thoughts on the direction of the revolution.[205]

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[201] T.G. Powell, "Priets and Peasants in Central Mexico: Social Conflict during 'La Reforma'*" The Hispanic American Historical Review* 57, no. 2 (1977): 296. Doi: 10.2307/2513776.

[202] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 63, exp. 13.

[203] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 63, exp. 13.

[204] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 26.

[205] *Joseph, Revolution From Without,* 101.

In the letter, he addressed some of the complaints that he faced with regards to this anti-Catholic policies in the state of Yucatán:

> Effectively rebuilding and knowing how to preserve the social order that is the most transcendental purpose of the revolution. How is this built? ...It is built and ordered to preserve all factors and politics, which are multiplied to solve the problems of the forces that assault life. The school is the topic of problem, the base for generations who have lacked the stability of social order.

In this long preamble, the General wondered why the women were opposed to the betterment of other women and were protesting something as essential to their liberation as the *Escuela Normal de Señoritas* [The Normal School for Women]. Alvarado explained that the current education system lacked the stability needed for reform in two ways. First, education, which had been in the hands of the Church, had previously focused not only on teaching the population how to write and read, but they had also served to indoctrinate the population into the Catholic faith.[206] Though Catholic run education had been lacking according to the government, there was no denying that it had successfully indoctrinated the population into the Catholic faith. Second, the need to eradicate Catholic fanaticism was not without an ulterior motive, as the state planned to use similar methods to create nationhood.[207] Alvarado believed that the government needed to win over the population's consciousness in the same way the church had, in order to ensure their there would be no further violent insurrections.[208]

This preamble was necessary as Salvador Alvarado was not being attacked for building a teachers' school for women. Instead, the parishioners were upset about the building that would house the school. Alvarado explained that "The Archbishop would surely say that for the

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[206] Jose Maria Kobayashy Kazuhiro,"La conquista educativa de los hijos de Asis" *Historia Mexicana* 22, N0. 4 (1973): 457. www.jstor.org/stable/25135375.
[207] Jean Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People between Church and State 1926-1929*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 21.
[208] Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion,* 31.

enclosure that his minister inhabit[ed], it [was] more convenient to move his home away from the centre of the busyness as it is without a doubt the Main Plaza, and that he does not need to live in a Palace in order to fulfill his mission as a representative of Christ."[209] Although the original letter of complaint was not available in the archives, it seems that many women and men in Yucatán's community were upset about the school being built in the Archbishop's house and reminded the general that other governments had always previously respected the house of the Archbishop. While it was true that other governments had previously respected the homes of the clergy, the new Yucatán Constitution imposed in 1915 stripped the Church and the clergy of the right to own property, teach, or vote.[210] It soon became clear that the new revolutionary government was not willing to make any concessions to the clergy.

Alvarado was not ready to submit to the demands of the Catholic Church, and in fact he did not envision that the Church would survive for long when he stated, "All governments have fallen, all laws have been replaced and all the Gods are dead and there is no temple that does not turn into ruins, nor religion that is not lost."[211] There was no space for religion in the mind of the revolutionary government. However, officials failed to consider the hold that religion continued to have on the population. Catholicism in Yucatán had evolved from the faith that had been brought by the Spanish missionaries and had mixed with elements of Indigenous knowledge to create folk Catholicism.[212] This was true for many of the Maya *campesinos* who had lived far away from major cities and had subscribed to the cult of the Chan Santa Cruz, an important

[209]Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 63, exp. 13.
[210] Julia G. Young, *Mexican Exodus: Emigrants, Exiles, and Refugees of the Cristero War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 14.
[211] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 63, exp. 13.
[212] Young, *Mexican Exodus,* 73.

figure for the rebel Mayas of the Caste War.[213] This meant that support for Catholicism was not only an elite concern, but also a matter of preserving customs and a form of resistance by the Maya population, as many of these communities had operated without a priest for a number of years. Whether or not the government really thought they could secularize the population is unclear, but education would allow the government the opportunity to limit Church power.[214] Although it has been said that Alvarado's stance against the Catholic Church was one of his most unsuccessful policies, unlike other states in Mexico where the population rose in defense of the Catholic Church, this did not occur in the Yucatán.

Alvarado's education policy might have also appeared to have been anti-Catholic because many schools had been under the control of the Catholic Church. Therefore, he was not only trying to use the Church buildings to house state schools, but he was also trying to take over a service the Church had once been in charge of providing. Yet, this was the first time that the government had attempted to secularize education, and as such revolutionary education was a renewal of the liberal commitment to public, secular, primary education.[215] The letter written by Alvarado also mentioned that those who opposed the school felt there were not enough students to warrant the relocation of the Normal School for Women to a new building, and it mentioned that the building where the school was currently housed was sufficient.[216] As such, many of the members of the Catholic congregation of the city of Merida saw the use of the Archbishop's palace as a personal affront to the Catholic Church, and they employed common patriarchal rhetoric to remind the governor to "Consider how sad, bitter, and painful it is for a town's

[213] Young, *Mexican Exodus,* 197.
[214] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 71.
[215] Rockwell, "Schools of the Revolution,"173.
[216] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 63, exp. 13.

religious sentimentality to be injured, because religiosity is the treasure and the fundamental virtue of the weak sex and the most persistently loyal to it."[217] This provided Alvarado with the perfect opportunity to extol the new revolutionary plan for women. He responded that religiousness should not be the only virtue of the weaker sex and invited them to consider how education for all women should replace their dependence on religion.[218] This letter not only demonstrates the church's influence over the population, but it also served to provide Alvarado with the perfect platform to talk about his ideals. While there was no armed conflict to defend the Catholic Church of Yucatán, it was clearly still a unifying issue for the people in the peninsula, one of the only common elements the elite shared with the lower classes. His inability to recognize the power exerted by the Church probably cost Alvarado re-election as governor of the state.

Despite Alvarado's staunch anti-Catholic rhetoric, the Church continued to provide private education throughout the state, and in contrast to the state, Church leaders produced their own educational material. It seems that despite their new educational measures, the state would continue to face pressure in their attempts to create a new secular Mexican identity. In a manual written by Father Carlos de Jesus Molina Castillo for the education of young women, *La Academia Teresiana Su Fin: La Educación Superior De La Mujer y Su Completa Preparacion Para el Hogar* [The Tersiana Academy: Women's Secondary Education and their Preparation for Housework], the author talks about a persistent problem in the education of upper class women. The book seems to have been published in 1917, towards the end of Salvador Alvarado's regime, when his stance against the Catholic Church had relaxed. His intense anti-clericalism and closing

[217] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 63, exp. 13.
[218] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 63, exp. 13.

of churches had made him unpopular among large segments of the urban elite and middle class, and as the race for Governor approached, Alvarado had softened some of his previous anti-clerical policies.[219] Father Molina Castillo talked about young women being removed from school at the age of 12 or 15 after their elementary education and stated that:

> it [was] not enough [to provide young women] with the so-called extra-curricular classes when they are forced to dedicate themselves as they are to music, painting, and domestic labour, because instead of refining them, the[se classes] can give free reign to the follies of the imagination...these classes carry the inconvenience that by themselves perhaps they contribute to instilling in young women the idea that the main role of women is to have fun and to please ...[220]

The priest was concerned about young elite women, who were receiving only elementary education and were then schooled at home in what he called extra-curricular classes. This is evidence that upper-class women were still being largely relegated to the home. In particular, it seems that upper-class parents tended to entertain their daughters with small lessons that provided them with talents to entertain in society and which would eventually lead to them marrying into a good family. For women, there were still limited economic possibilities outside of marriage, as few schools existed where women could acquire training for a profession that was not teaching.[221] Since only primary education was compulsory in Yucatán, it was up to parents to make the decision to allow their daughters to attend school after their essential education had been completed. The information in this manual also provides some insight into the people who were attending Alvarado's schools for women, which was probably middle-and lower-class women, who had always had to work outside of the home. Therefore, there was no real transformation in the role of women despite the government's intentions.

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[219] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 106.
[220] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, Folletería, FR-CCA-FOLL-CI-1921-16, 6.
[221] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 107.

The aim of this manual went beyond denouncing the lack of education for young women; it also meant to offer a "new domestic economy" for the women in Yucatán. This time it was the Catholic Church that wanted to provide their own vocational education as an alternative to the secular education of the state. According to Father Molina, girls "have been removed from school when they had just started their education, when the upright principles necessary to character formation had yet to be rooted in their tender hearts and in their weak intelligences, when they had not yet come to acquire dominion over themselves."[222] The revolutionary government had a similar view that prioritized education as a way to ensure women lived an honest life, one that would help build a moral society and protect them from superstition and corruption.[223] The Church had a similar moral code to the revolutionaries, insomuch as they advocated for a sober population and still imagined women's greatest labour as that of a wife and mother. The manual also reminded students that other mothers "h[ad] forgotten and defend their reasons for neglecting their children, they leave their children in the hands of their maids, as well as leaving them to deal alone with car drivers and the rest of the servants."[224] The assertion that leaving children in the care of the servants would morally corrupt them also spoke to the anti-Indigenous sentiment of post-revolutionary Yucatán. Children left at home in the care of maids, instead of attending schools, were supposedly at risk of being morally contaminated by the nature of those who were considered to be lazy, immoral, and in need of reform. How could parents expect their children to succeed when they were left without the proper education role models at home?

[222] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, Folletería, FR-CCA-FOLL-CI-1921-16, 7.
[223] Mitchell, *The Women's Revolution in Mexico,* 39.
[224] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, Folletería, FR-CCA-FOLL-CI-1921-16, 16.

The manual written by Father Molina was meant to be used at *La Academia Teresiana*, a private school that provided a religious alternative to women's education. Many schools that had once been public transformed themselves into private schools as a way to avoid federal and state control, which was probably the case with *La Academia Teresiana.*[225] Religious schools survived this period of anti-clericalism not only by converting schools into a private institutions but also by following the curriculum promoted by local leaders, which might be the reason why the manual shares some similarities with Alvarado's call to educate women.[226] The fact that students had to pay for their education meant that the school was geared to women in Yucatán's upper classes. *La Academia Teresiana* required students to pay for the classes they took, "$10 for one or two subjects, and $20 for all of them." While the class for Christian morality was free and open to the public, there was also an extra cost for "extra-curricular classes ... $6 for piano. $2 for solfége, $4 for painting and $3 for domestic labours, knitting and embroidery."[227] The cost of classes at the Teresiana Academy was quite considerable, which meant that they were targeting upper-and middle-class families that could afford to pay for education. However, by making the Christian morality class free and open to anyone, it can be seen as a counter protest, as a way to continue to provide Catholic services and education despite the anti-Catholic hostility and persecution practiced by the government of Yucatán. This was a hurdle that the government of Yucatán had not expected to encounter as they sought to unify the state under a single nationalistic banner.

A Woman's Place: The Debate Surrounding Women's Education

[225] Gurza Arce, "En Busca de una Educación Revolucionaria:1924-1934", 161.
[226] Gurza Arce, "En Busca de una Educación Revolucionaria:1924-1934", 162.
[227] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, Folleteria, FR-CCA-FOLL-CI-1921-16, 10.

The Catholic schools that emerged in Yucatán were probably a reaction to the more visible roles that Alvarado envisioned for women in society. The feminist congresses organized in Yucatán, as well as the schools for teachers both male and female, and their roles as inspectors, were clearly different from the more traditional roles women had been expected to undertake before. When looking at the classes offered at this Catholic alternative, the curriculum seems much lighter and much more focused on a few simple courses meant simply to create the perfect homemaker. The few courses taught at the Teresiana Academy seem similar to the ones Father Molina Castillo had criticized in his text. Students were offered classes in English, literature, math, and a few extracurriculars. There was not much substance to the kind of education the church was offering.

Alvarado also faced pressure from educators who did not want to see mixed schools spread throughout Mexico. A professor named Gonzales wrote that while he was in fact in favour of the education of minors in mixed schools while they were in kindergarten, "schools must be and [are] everywhere, a reflection of society." The Revolutionary rhetoric that pushed women towards equality in Mexican society, was still far from commonplace amongst the population. Separate and unequal gender spheres continued to be upheld in Yucatán.[228] Gonzales also expressed concern about

> the great age heterogeneity of those who attend[ed] the schools. I have frequently had children in the same class who are 9 as well as 19 or 20. What type of care will the maestro or the maestra (which is a new problem) have if together they had one or more students of a certain age given our disposition, our tropical climate, our food always full of nibbles, our nature impulsive and a bit quixotic, and at an age when all the passions arise in a violent way, I will not call them insane but they can give rise to a little scandal? [229]

[228] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 3.
[229] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado. Folleteria. Carpetas Blancas, La Educación, Revista Mensual de Pedagogia y letras. Organo del Instituto Literario del Estado.

This was, moreover, not only a matter of whether or not women should receive the same education, but also a matter of racialized fear. The Indigenous population and the urban and *campesino* working-class males were seen as prone to sexual promiscuity, unable to control their urges.[230] Therefore, the government worried that having both young men and women in the classroom could be scandalous for the middle-class morality of the population. However, this also seemed not simply a question of gender, as they blamed heightened sexual activity on the food and weather as well. In this statement, Professor Gonzales also identified female teachers or *maestras* as "a new problem" for schools, although he did not elaborate further on the reasons why he considered this to be so. Teaching had slowly been transformed into an acceptable middle-class profession for women and had been the backbone for women's organizing efforts in Yucatán since the Porfiriato.[231] However, women had been responsible for teaching in schools where they were responsible for girls only; seeing them as teachers in a co-educational environment was unnerving to the old regime. Despite Professor Gonzales's complaints about female teachers, women would become essential to Alvarado's revolutionary regime. They received job security and salaries by accepting jobs as teachers, and the government ensured that its priorities were promoted. [232] Encouraged by the feminist congresses of Yucatán, women signed up to teach in the countryside in large numbers, with many of them traveling from central Mexico and the United States to be part of this women's liberation.[233]

Despite women's success and their enthusiastic support for Alvarado's education reforms, he remained concerned about the reputations of the female teachers who had been hired to work

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[230] Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics,* 93.
[231] Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Post- Revolutionary Mexico.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 208.
[232] Olcott, *Revolutionary Women,* 208.
[233] Mitchell, *The Women's Revolution in Mexico* 43.

at the schools on the *haciendas*. In a letter written to his Minister of Education, he explained that "I have come to know that the female teachers in the haciendas are of doubtful behaviour or are prostituted by the owners or managers of the plantations. This crime is a result of scams and perfidy, and it has dire consequences for childhood."[234] This statement by Alvarado seems to provide a different account of female teachers than what has been described by other scholars of revolutionary Mexico. Female teachers have often been described as great organizers and crusaders, essential supporters of the revolutionary cause. They have been seen as important political organizers and crucial to the education campaigns in rural Mexico. They organized women's leagues and championed women's rights, transforming peasant women into healthy hygienic mothers.[235] This statement seems to suggest that women were still not seen as the ideal candidates for rural education, as Alvarado seems to suggest that they were susceptible to the influences of powerful men. Although allowed to work in the school system, women seem to have been subjected to higher standards of morality, and their conduct was seen as suspicious, as women who were alone were considered a liability in the workplace. We could consider that because many of the young women who worked as teachers came from the middle class, the elite *hacendados* might have pressured the young teachers or tried to seduce them with promises of marriage. Women educators were also very isolated in these rural *fincas* and often were at the mercy of the *hacendados*, who were their employers. Therefore, this created a conflict for teachers between the state curriculum they were there to provide, their personal safety and

[234] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 9, exp. 1.
[235] Olcott, *Revolutionary Women,* 97.

security, and the interests of the *hacendados*.[236] However, it is hard to corroborate this information, as my research did not unearth further mention of similar incidents.

It was true that women were held to higher standards than men when employed to work in Yucatán's education system. Government regulations required them to undergo medical testing, as they needed to be free from contagious diseases and physical or moral impediments, and of good social standing.[237] Salvador Alvarado recommended that the Minister of Education "Make sure that when women are employed for these [teaching] positions, they take their parents and the rest of her family with her, this will avoid the inconveniences mentioned above ..."[238] Alvarado's recommendation would have placed women at a disadvantage when it came to holding positions that were open to their male counterparts without restrictions. If enforced, this regulation would have required women to convince their whole families to move and uproot their lives so that they could work as rural teachers on *haciendas*. This would have prevented a large majority of the women from working in these positions unless they were the primary providers or caregivers for their families. This again seems at odds with the scholarship that has been written about teachers. Scholars have noted that a majority of women became teachers as a way to escape the limitations and restrictions imposed on them because of their gender.[239] In addition, limiting women's employment does not seem to be in line with Alvarado's policies, as he had changed articles in Yucatán's Constitution to allow women to enjoy the same freedoms as men when they reached the age of majority. While it was probably hard for the government to enforce

[236] Kevin Young, *Making the Revolution: Histories of the Latin American Left.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 36.
[237] Young, *Making the Revolution,* 44.
[238] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 9, exp. 1.
[239] Olcott, *Revolutionary Women,* 31.

such regulations, they might have discouraged many more women from participating in a career if they did not have the support of their family or the means to circumvent them.

Elites and Education

Alvarado's education programs also encountered some resistance from the *hacendados*. Even before Alvarado became governor, *hacendados* had attempted to civilize their workers through the creation of their own schools provided by the Ligas de Acción Social. These schools had sought to shield peons from revolutionary ideals and to ensure that the workforce of the future was more obedient and efficient.[240] The education had been basic at best and had emphasized loyalty and religion. Many *hacendados* also failed to provide the required schools.[241] Despite the schools no longer being under *hacendado* control, Salvador Alvarado expected them to provide some sort of monetary support for his education scheme. For example, in the case of the boarding school *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*, each *hacendado* was required to pay for the tuition and maintenance fees for two students who lived on their plantations. In addition, primary schools would be funded on each *hacienda*, as the Rural Education Law now required *hacendados* to provide a school for the workers' children to pay teachers' salaries. In exchange, the state would be responsible for appointing teachers and providing the curriculum.[242] However, workers' children on *haciendas* that did not have enough students to warrant a school would have to travel to the nearest town school. Despite this arrangement, it seems that Alvarado still struggled to obtain support from the *hacendados*.

In a letter dated 20 September 1915, Alvarado explained that "it is with increased frequency that [it is] the owners of plantations who are really appointing teachers rather than the

[240] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 108.
[241] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 108.
[242] Young, *Making the Revolution,* 35.

board of education as it should be done."[243] As the *hacendados* continued to appoint teachers, this allowed them to continue to control the school's curriculum, as plantation owners worried that an educated laborer would eventually leave the *haciendas* and look for other job prospects.[244] Acting against state regulations by appointing their own teachers, the *hacendados* demonstrated to Alvarado that they were not willing to submit to his education reforms and that they rejected his attempts to educate their workforce. Although these instances seem to have been more common at the beginning of Alvarado's tenure, having the elite appoint teachers was definitely an affront to the new system the state was trying to create. In addition, having the ability to control teachers gave the *hacendados* the right to set teaching hours and even dictate who could or could not attend the school. The governor wanted to ensure rural educators were not only appointed by the government but also to "have these appointments fall on liberal people and most of all, ardent enemies of oppression, slavery and servitude," people who were friendly to the revolution and its new ideas, which would eventually be consolidated in the Constitution of 1917.[245] It seems that there was a new divide in Yucatán. Social privilege was not simply based on being non-Indigenous as opposed to Indigenous, but rather whether or not you had been loyal to the revolutionary cause. Alvarado had been such a zealous defender of the revolutionary principles that his new policies and martial attitude probably antagonized the old ruling classes, as he was not prepared to compromise in many situations where other governors had.

Despite requiring *hacendados* to send one or two students to the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* as part of the educational program for Indigenous citizens, the government seemed to be

[243] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 9, exp. 1.
[244] Mitchell, *The Women's Revolution in Mexico,* 37.
[245] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 9, exp. 1.

struggling with ensuring the *hacendados* co-operated. A few years after the school opened in September 1917, a government memorandum stated that the school was "Prepared to accept more students even from those *fincas* that have already given their quota [with the fees] charged to the property owners that have yet to do so."[246] The government's idea to have *hacendados*' pay for the living expenses and tuition of students who would attend the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* was against the interests of the *hacendados*, who were struggling to maintain their privileged place in society. The government mentioned that they "deem it convenient and prudent, given the spirit of resistance with which the hacendados look at development for the time being, and their views towards the school and the obligation that they have to pay the living expenses for the students, even those who do not come from their fincas." [247] Forcing *hacendados* to pay the tuition for students from other *fincas* when they refused to send students of their own was a way to pressure the *hacendados* into compliance.

Alvarado and his government were trudging forward with the belief that everyone would come to accept the need for revolutionary reform. The unwillingness of the *hacendados* to even follow the direction of the government and send at least one or two students to study at one of the new revolutionary schools, shows the tenuous grasp that the revolutionary government held on Yucatán. The new government had been imposed from outside and as such they had little power to enforce their plans against those who really held power on the peninsula. Forcing *hacendados* to pay for the fees of other students despite refusing to send children from their own *haciendas* was one way in which the government could combat their unwillingness to comply with the new education decree. However, through the formation of a new Secretary of Education

[246]Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 273, exp.31.
[247] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 273, exp. 31.

in Yucatán, the government started to formalize administrative structures that would eventually replace the need for *hacendado* support.[248] Having to ensure the *hacendados* would pay for the living expenses and send students meant that Alvarado's government was waging a second campaign to enforce these rules and convince the rural elites that the education of their workers was necessary.

While *hacendados* attempted to block educational initiatives, there were also other members of the elite who wanted to use the revolutionary momentum to create their own private schools. Francisco Ascanto wrote to the Secretary of Education on 8 January 1917 to complain about the government relocating the *Girls School of Hunucmá* to a location that he had requested several times be used to build a private "Farm and Home School" that would educate about twenty or thirty young women. Ascanto believed his project was viable and asked for the government to grant him "the locale and the sum of 10,000" pesos to start the school, as well as additional sums to pay for salaries until the school became self-sustaining.[249] Ascanto's proposal seemed to come at a time when Alvarado's regime was struggling to finance their broader education program. The government was not only considering allowing private investors to participate in the provision of education, but it also wanted to control the provision of private Catholic education.[250] Private schools were therefore required to obey the directives from the Ministry of Education and needed to provide the same curriculum as public schools.[251] Ascanto seemed to think that the new laws were the perfect opportunity to establish his own technical school, one that would "charge the students a stipend of $10 pesos on a monthly basis with the

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[248] Rockwell, "Schools of the Revolution", 184.
[249] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol.167, exp. 28.
[250] Hilton Stanley, "The Church-State Dispute over Education in Mexico from Carranza and Cárdenas," *The Americas* 21, no. 2 (1964): 163-183, 173.
[251] Stanley, "The Church-State Dispute Over Education", 172

state government supporting education by paying the same amount for each student that attends."[252] Despite it being a private school, he expected the government to provide some sort of payment to fund his educational venture. Ascanto provided no further plans or recommendations on what the school was supposed to look like. Unlike others, he did not provide a subject list or go into further detail as to how his school was meant to differ from those that had been set up by the state government.

The government also seemed to disagree with Ascanto's view on how profitable his school really was, and the Secretary of Education wrote to Alvarado stating that "with regards to the project in reference, I must manifest to you that I find it very deficient, in reality I find the author quite ignorant about the matter at hand."[253] Despite the fact that the government was trying to find additional funding for their education program, Ascanto did not seem to have any idea about what his school was supposed to look like or how it would run, providing only a few details about his financial needs. The letter ends with the Secretary of Education mentioning to Alvarado that "as you have the ability to propose the establishment of these schools for when we can do it properly, we should not act on the plan proposed by Mr. Ascanto and [we should] hold out for a better opportunity."[254] The Secretary of Education, better versed at spotting who really had a viable plan to create a school, warned Alvarado about waiting for the right opportunity to come around, suggesting they stick to the plan and not act impulsively to fund the proposed school. The Secretary seemed concerned that Alvarado's zealous commitment to reform and creating education opportunities might in fact lead him to fund schools impulsively, even those

[252] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 167, exp. 28.
[253] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 167, exp. 28.
[254] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 167, exp. 28.

that seemed to be ignorant of the necessary steps to create a profitable school. It seems that there were many people who were ready to exploit his keenness to create a new revolutionary Yucatán.

As Alvarado launched a campaign against Church-directed schools, upper-class parents looked into hiring their own teachers to provide the educational requirements at home.[255] On 6 September 1918, Jose Espinosa wrote to the Head of the Ministry of Education to express that:

> In compliance with the third article of the Regulation of Public Education, I have the honour to communicate to the H. Corporation that my children Maria Teresa and Alfredo Espinosa Pasos of 13 and 11 years of age respectively, will study the first year of Upper Education, under professor Lic. Don Benito Ruiz y Ruiz, from nine thirty to eleven a.m in house number 453 on street 62 in this city. [256]

There are several more requests like this. While these children were receiving the equivalent of a high school education at home, there were others who were receiving their primary education at home. These children were also studying fewer hours a day than they would be required to do in school, only receiving two and a half hours of schooling as opposed to the six to eight hours that students were meant to receive at a public primary school. While there is not much information on the number of private schools that closed in Yucatán, we can look at the patterns in the rest of Mexico to try to understand what was happening with the education of elite children in Yucatán. With the closing of private schools, many elite children had stopped attending official schools, and parents had set up their own schools at home.[257] With regard to the number of hours of education the children were receiving at home, they might have been getting fewer hours of schooling due to the financial costs associated with having to hire a private teacher. When we look at the petitions, most students at home seemed to have been schooled between two and a half to three hours a day, and sometimes they even received as little as one. This might have been

[255] Stanley, "The Church-State Dispute Over Education", 170.
[256] Biblioteca Yucatanense, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Reservado, Folleteria, xiv-1900-3/5-022.
[257] Gurza Arce, "En Busca de una Educación Revolucionaria:1924-1934," 169

because students were getting additional education that was not part of the revolutionary curriculum; children were probably receiving additional Catholic education that went against the ideals of the state institutions.[258] The presence of home-schooled students would prove to be a setback for the unified education system the government wanted to achieve.

Yucatán's post-revolutionary government also faced opposition from the *hacendados* with regards to children working in their homes instead of attending school as the law required. On 14 July 1915, Alvarado introduced a reform with regards to existing guardianship orders in the state of Yucatán. He acknowledged that "these have not been adequate, for tutors have not been worried about the instruction and the education of their pupils. These have remained in such a total state of ignorance that the fatal results of guardianship are public and notorious."[259] Alvarado talked about *hacendados* using their privileges as guardians or forcing children into guardianship in order to exploit them as servants rather than acting as caregivers for these children. In order to explain why *hacendados* had these children under their care, it is important to note that it was common for the elite to gain the guardianship of Indigenous or lower-class children through different means. In most cases, children were adopted from foundling homes by members of the elite, and although children were meant to become members of the family, the reality was that children were adopted to labour as servants.[260] Custody was also awarded through informal ties of kinship such as godparentage, as many servants appointed their employers as godparents for their children as a way to ensure their financial future.[261] These relationships also placed the children of servants in a precarious position. This custody

[258] Gurza Arce, "En Busca de una Educación Revolucionaria:1924-1934," 169
[259] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 54, exp. 30.
[260] Ann S. Blum, *Domestic Economies: Family, Work, and Welfare in Mexico City, 1884-1943.* (Limcoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 45.
[261] Blum, *Domestic Economies,* xxxi.

arrangement obligated children to remain with their employers until they reached the age of majority, and probably even further, as this was the only family they had ever known. In order to fix the situation, the government decreed that "all guardians will give [guardianship] to the Military Commanders of the Parties where the students reside[d], who will conduct a thorough evaluation of these, with an explanation of dates and circumstances that led to the guardianship."[262] This was also a way to combat the economy of child circulation that existed in Mexico; because employers preferred to hire childless women to work in their homes, parents who worked in the domestic service were forced to leave their children in the care of orphanages. While some children were later taken out of the orphanages to look after younger siblings once they were older, this was not the case for most Indigenous children.

There is not much information on how many of these guardianship orders were or were not returned to the *hacendados*, which makes it hard to know if these children continued to be under the *hacendados*' care. However, there were some instances in which *hacendados* were discovered keeping children under their care out of school, which suggests the guardianship orders were not as successfully reviewed as the government had intended. For example, the military commander found that in Galdino Rivero's house "there were several women in his service ... amongst them there were two minors Emilia Chan and Concepcion Basas that have no family or representation of any kind that is known to this day, and they do not attend school, despite having told Mr. Rivero energetically of their wish to do so."[263] Despite the government's attempt to regulate guardianship and ensure children were attending school, it seems like they were still facing some opposition by the *hacendados*. The government was unable to regulate the

[262] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 54, exp. 30.
[263] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 62 exp. 19.

guardianship in all of the *haciendas* in particular because many of the children had been adopted when they were young and did not have any other relatives who could have taken them in despite the government's best efforts.[264] It would have been impossible for the government to keep track of all the formal and informal guardianship orders that existed throughout the region, unless *hacendados* self-reported the children under their care. This was a setback for Alvarado's program, and for his promise that all citizens would be allowed to pursue an education.

Conclusion

There was no doubt that Alvarado's status as an outsider made it hard for him to institute his education program. The reality was that he was replacing old systems of power, which made it harder to sell his plans for reform, in particular when institutions like the Catholic Church had so much popular support. Alvarado would not be the only governor who challenged the authority of the Catholic Church, and in fact it became common across Mexico to use churches as spaces for education. While communities sometimes resented the official schools for taking over church buildings, state governments rationalized it as a secular crusade to re-educate the masses, to impose a new kind of education.[265] The population was not ready or willing to accept all of the states' demands and this would spark a religious conflict in central Mexico in the late 1920s. The attack on religion also created a disconnect between the values and education that people wanted to see for their children or employees and the education that the state was offering as an alternative. Elites were not ready to concede their power to ensure their workers were educated or to provide them with the right education, as they feared doing so would give the peasant population the vocabulary to oppose *hacendado* power. Although it would take Alvarado longer than expected, the introduction of a state education program was the beginning of a new national

[264] Blum*, Domestic Economies,* 45.
[265] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,*127.

myth and identity to which the people of Yucatán could relate. Yet, many aspects of his transformation would include elements the state had tried to eliminate, in particular the survival of the Catholic Church.

Chapter 3: "Muy Respetable Señor Mío": Revolutionary Education in the Eyes of the Population

Alvarado's policies were of course not without controversy among the population he wanted to serve. He saw himself as a champion for the downtrodden, and his radical revolutionary laws had positioned him as an ally of the proletariat. Alvarado created a series of institutions that allowed the citizens to interact with the revolutionary government, and a number of letters provide a glimpse into the way the population felt about the education reforms. The letters written by the *campesinos* demonstrate their vested interest in the quality of schools, teachers, and education that had been promised by the revolutionary government. Contrary to the narrative that has been created about the *campesino* and Indigenous classes who are said to have rejected and opposed the educational program of the government, evidence seems to suggest that in Yucatán they accepted it and held the government accountable for their promises.[266]

The quality of teachers was a main source of concern for parents, as many teachers had been tasked with a dual mission of being both an educator and moral reformer for Indigenous and rural citizens. This created tensions between the citizens and the teachers who wanted to reform the habits and customs of a population without really getting to know or understand the reasoning and values behind many of the practices they wanted to see changed.[267] There was also a problem with the quality of educators who were hired by the government; many teachers drank too much, were illiterate, or took other positions within town, neglecting their duties.[268] A letter sent by the parents from the town of Chablekal to the Executive Office of the State of Merida expressed the parents' dissatisfaction with primary school teacher Don Juan E. Carrillo.

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[266] See Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution*, Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution* and Dawson, *Indian and Nation.*
[267] Gurza Arce, "En Busca de una Educación Revolucionaria: 1924-1934," 157.
[268] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 19.

The parents explained that

> their children in their understanding did not advance and recall their scholarly labours with satisfaction ... the teacher [Juan Carrillo] had removed a student under the pretext that he was older than fourteen, despite the fact that the young man had manifested his desire to learn; that on occasion of Mr. Carrillo and his daughter, also a teacher at the school of the Hacienda Kinche of Don Fernando Barbachano, had changed class hours to give them in the morning, which makes it impossible for their children to attend classes as they are all farmers, and take their kids to till the earth to increase their wages and help support their families.[269]

Despite the fact that the revolutionary government wanted to ensure that children attended school to prepare them to be a more productive and educated workforce, the economic realities of many families meant that many children had to labour with their parents in order for families to survive, and school became a secondary priority. Vaughn has mentioned that children attended school irregularly because they preferred to accompany their parents to the fields or distant markets.[270] However, the parents' request to change school hours suggests children were not necessarily accompanying their parents as a way to miss school, but because the families depended on the extra income for their survival. Despite the fact that the revolution had arrived in Yucatán, a large majority of rural families were still struggling to survive.

It is also interesting to note that in the statement above, one of the students was not permitted to attend the school in the *hacienda* as he was "over the age of fourteen." While none of Alvarado's reforms had specified an age at which children could no longer attend school, there seemed to be a consensus with regards to age limits. It is difficult to understand why the Secretary of Education would attempt to impose an age limit on children attending school when we consider that many students' education was disrupted before the arrival of Salvador Alvarado. Parents urged teachers to offer classes at different times. In the morning, classes should be given to young children and girls in the *hacienda*; in contrast, classes should be taught later in the day

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[269] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo A-1910, c 672.
[270] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 96.

for the "young men, as they help their parents to fulfill their agricultural jobs."[271] For *campesino* parents and children, the universal educational policy set by the government, which dictated that children should attend classes in the morning, was unworkable and seemed to be more important than the educator's objection to having children attend mixed schools. For the agricultural workers of the state, it was not about whether or not their children were studying with girls, but whether their children could fulfill their familial work responsibilities or not. Many teachers would come to recognize this and adjust the pedagogy, curriculum, and class times to suit the children's schedules and ages, as they sought to reduce the number of absent students.[272] As teachers began to interact more intimately with the communities, it seems that there was a mutual understanding between educators and their students. In the long run, school would change the organization of communities, as the time children had spent elsewhere would come to be devoted to their schooling. [273]

Educators also faced their own financial barriers with regard to their ability to adjust their schedule and curriculum. The Secretary of Education carried out an investigation into the parents' allegations. When he interviewed Don Carillo's daughter, she explained that the government had only allotted enough money to teach a certain number of hours. This might explain why Mr. Carrillo was unable to provide different class schedules for young children and those who had to work for a living. The inability of the teacher to provide different education schedules to students might also explain some of the budget constraints the government was facing when it came to supplying teachers with a salary. Teachers in revolutionary Mexico were poorly paid and were often dependant on villages or *haciendas*, which proved problematic as it

[271] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo A-1910, c 672.
[272] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 97.
[273] Rockwell, "Schools of the Revolution," 200.

created alliances with the same institutions teachers were trying to reform.[274] In addition, this letter also addressed the earlier issue of women being accompanied by men when working in rural schools. In this case Mr. Carrillo and his daughter were both educators working together for the same town and for the same *hacienda* school. Teaching would eventually become a family trade, and jobs would come to be passed down through networks of relatives and former teachers.[275] This was a problem that continued to plague the SEP, as many positions continued to be sold or passed down to others without teachers having necessarily attended Normal School.

The conflict between the Mr. Carrillo and the parents of Chablekal seems to have been resolved peacefully. The Secretary, after having conducted an investigation, reminded the *campesinos* that the teacher "was quite competent to fill the position that had been entrusted to him. Proof of this was the result of the last general test scores, in which their children demonstrated improvement."[276] It seemed that the government also recognized that the problem between the teacher and the parents was thinly veiled in a rhetoric the government could understand: the teacher was not doing his job and the students were not learning. The government recognized that students were more likely to attend school if teachers were well liked by the community.[277] Teachers often disrupted the economic interests of the region and challenged the pre-existing status quo.[278] On this occasion, the teacher was in fact competent, as evidenced by improved test scores. However, this seemed to be a way in which parents could address personal grievances with an educator and enact change. The government also understood that the teacher could have offended the town's interests and customs, and reminded parents that

[274] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 13.
[275] Rockwell, "Schools of the Revolution," 194.
[276] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo A-1910, c 672.
[277] Lewis, T*he Ambivalent Revolution,* 89.
[278] Lewis, T*he Ambivalent Revolution,* 90.

"The teacher like all men can make mistakes ...."[279] However, the situation between the parents and Mr. Carrillo and his daughter was beyond repair, and he decided to trade positions with the teacher in another town as a way to appease the people in Chablekal.

Parents also wrote to the government when they were concerned about a teacher's conduct. Parents accused teachers of being morally corrupt and drinking too much, the same arguments that were used by elites to describe the population. Schools created a new culture of surveillance: not only were students and their parents monitored by teachers, but teachers were also monitored by the parents and students. Schools became a place where new and unforeseen spaces and relationships were created, and state hegemony was acknowledged and transformed.[280] Military commandant Juan Joachim wrote in 1916 that in the town of Sinanché, the municipal president and the trade union general secretary were struggling with the demands of the population, who "have been without teachers for the past two months, and this naturally hurts the studious children, given that their teacher is prone to wasting their time."[281] Joachim then went on to mention that the teacher was accused of being a drunkard and getting involved in politics, but above all else, "in the time before the current worthy government, he was preparing to fight against the constitutionalist forces."[282]

The accusations against the teacher in the town also show the behaviours that the parents wanted the teachers to uphold: they did not want educators to be involved in local politics. In addition, the population used revolutionary rhetoric in order to support their complaints. The parents stated that the teacher was untrustworthy as he had fought against Alvarado's

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[279] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo A-1910, c 672.
[280] Rockwell, "Schools of the Revolution," 199 .
[281] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 162, exp.11.
[282] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 162, exp.11.

constitutionalist reforms, a movement that had probably been unfamiliar to most Indigenous citizens until Alvarado started to promote it. However, this was a tactic that had been used by many Indigenous towns since colonial times, adopting and adapting the hegemonic discourse in a way that served their interests.[283]

School Infrastructure: The Challenges of Maintaining the Revolutionary Program

Parents were advocates for their children's education in other ways, as well. In 1915 the town of Uayma wrote to Salvador Alvarado first to congratulate him and to state that "they have seen in such a short period of his administration that he has demonstrated as every good ruler should aspire to, great advancement in the branch of Public Instruction."[284] Upon congratulating Governor Alvarado, the citizens had already adapted the language to serve the principles of Alvarado's movement. They mentioned the importance of serving his constituents and reminded him of his commitment to public education. Later in the letter, the people of Uayma talked about their commitment to the goals of the Constitutionalist Revolution. The letters seems to harken back to colonial times, when the population had been accustomed to confronting the Spanish crown over matters relating to their power and authority.[285] The *campesinos* addressed Alvarado on many occasions through the phrase "Muy Respetable Señor Mío" and talked about the virtues of the general before listing their concerns. This was very reminiscent of the ways in which the King had been addressed.[286] The formulaic manner in which this letter was written also suggests there was a continuity in how Indigenous citizens viewed and understood the government's

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[283] Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation*: *The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru.* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 140 (discourses evolving through a mutual process of interrogation).

[284] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 94, exp. 37.

[285] Ethelia Ruiz Medrano, *Mexico's Indigenous Communities: Their Lands and Histories,1500-2010*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado,2010, 152

[286] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 167, exp. 28.

responsibilities towards its citizens. Citizens were agents furthering their own interests, and it was clear that through their writing and petitions they wanted to influence the reader. [287] This means that one has to be careful when interpreting the situation, as petitioners might have exaggerated the problems with their schools as way to ensure the Minister of Education would remedy their situation more quickly.

Through this letter, the town of Uayma wrote about the problems with their two schools, both of which lacked their own dedicated spaces.

> The boys' [school] occupies a department within the municipal house, inadequate for its purpose, given that it did not require the necessary conditions that are needed for pedagogy. In addition, in the present space there can only be about fifty students and for this single reason it results in complete inefficacy, every time that the kids in this year want to attend the classrooms to receive the bread of instruction it is not limited to this number, but rather it exceeds [the number of students] in a significant manner.[288]

Due to this excess number of students, and the small and cramped conditions where the boys were forced to attend school in Uayma, the residents were asking for the government for help in funding the construction of a new school. Parents in the school even offered to find some money to help buy the materials that were needed for its construction. It seems that communities and parents were willing to spend their own limited resources to make sure their children had the right environment in which to learn, which shows enthusiasm for education.

Campesino letters also revealed that Alvarado's government was breaking the pact it had made with the population, as it could not adjust the budget to fund the modernization project it had promised, particularly in smaller communities.[289] The government seemed to have been unaware of what was really needed in each town; some places were clearly in dire need of the

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[287] Burns, Kathryn. *Into the Archive: Wrting and Power in Colonial Peru*. Durham:Duke University Press, 2010, 135

[288] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, v. 94, exp. 37

[289] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 24

necessary infrastructure for schools to be built, yet the government seemed to pick and choose which projects they would fund and which they would not. However, it was not uncommon for towns to build their own schools, particularly when students needed to attend schools in other towns.[290] This might be the case for the town of Uayma, as the school was meant to house only fifty students, and as such students might have been expected to travel to a bigger town. However, given Alvarado's commitment to education, it seems that he was unwilling to have *haciendas* provide inadequate buildings for schools on their plantations, yet when it came time to fund smaller schools for towns, citizens were forced to bargain with the government in an attempt to get an adequate school building for their children.

Regulating School Attendance

Despite the apparent support that education seemed to enjoy in some communities, there are records that demonstrate some ambivalence towards the education program. Early on there were several reports that children were not attending school and that it was "imperative that the government concentrate all their efforts in ensuring that all children attended school."[291] While in 1915 this was probably a necessary statement due to opposition from wealthy *hacendados* who might have tried to keep students from attending schools, or parents who might have been unaware of the new education reforms. One would expect school attendance would have improved significantly afterwards, but this was not the case. Poverty, social relations, and cultural mores continued to limit children's school attendance a few years after the introduction of the education reform.[292] In April 1917, the municipality of Ticul received a letter from the

[290] Gurza Arce, "En Busca de una Educación Revolucionaria:1924-1934," 155.
[291] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán. Fondo Municipios 1803-1980, Sección Ticul Caja 7, vol. 21, exp. 2.
[292] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 51.

government asking them to look into the number of unexcused absences. The letter mentions that Ticul had not been effective in ensuring all children were attending school. In fact,

> This government has observed that some of the municipal authorities have not given full enforcement to the circular number 885 ... omitting as a result, monthly communication with regards to warnings, fines or detentions that have been imposed on parents or tutors in accordance to the Regulation for Primary School Education in the State.[293]

Despite many parents clamouring for new schools and education for their children, in many municipalities in Yucatán it is clear that there was an underlying issue with many children still failing to show up to school regularly. One of the reasons students might have failed to show up at school was that in some places, communities were so far removed from urban areas that there was no schooling tradition and parents saw schools as unnecessary.[294]

In addition, the government seems to have implemented a financial measure as way to discourage school absences. The records for the municipality of Tixkokob show a June 1917 list of students who had missed school more than twice in the month of May. In the Mixed School Number 289, the record sent by the school principal showed the number of missed school days, the child's tutor, home address, and the punishment that was being applied for missing school. For example, Tomás Chable, son of Timoteo Chable, had eleven unexcused absences in the month of May and was being fined five pesos, to be paid to the "official improvement" fund.[295] The government resorted to punishing parents by imposing a progressive fine system as a way to ensure school attendance: parents received a warning if a child missed more than two days, and an increasing fine after seven absences.[296] A five peso fine would have been a burden for many

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[293] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán. Fondo Municipios 1803-1980, Sección Ticul Caja 7, vol. 21, exp. 2.
[294] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 154.
[295] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán. Fondo Municipios 1803-1980, Sección Ticul Caja 7, vol. 21, exp. 2.
[296] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán. Fondo Municipios 1803-1980, Sección Ticul Caja 7, vol. 21, exp. 2.

families in 1917 Mexico, so parents in smaller and rural communities such as Tixkokob must have had very good reasons for keeping their children away from school in light of the steep fines. One reason might have been, as explained previously, that the school hours were inconvenient for many children, particularly boys, as they were usually expected to work with their parents before attending school. As a way to avoid fines, many parents would actually keep their children's names off of school rosters.[297] This means that there might be many more children who are not accounted for in the school records who were also missing classes. It is also important to note that despite the school absences, there was still a large majority of students still attending school in most places.

Given that there were also female students on the list of those who had not attended school in Tixkokob, we might consider that there were other underlying issues that led students and parents to keep their children away from schools. Among some of the trial records found for the municipality of Motul, Domingo Palomo attended court to file a complaint against Jose Aké for seduction, that is, lying to his fifteen-year old daughter Graciliana with false promises of marriage. Aké explained that two years earlier, he had taken his daughter "to work as a salaried employee to the house of Dona Gordiana Meceta wife to Don Ladislao Campos."[298] The evidence in this trial shows that girls, just like their male counterparts, were expected to contribute to the family economy at a very young age. This meant that many parents were not sending their children to school not out of neglect but because older children's incomes were needed for the survival of the family economy. School simply did not fit the economic realities of families, as continuous hours of instruction and the school schedule did not reflect peasants'

[297] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution,* 115.
[298] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán. Municipios 1914-1925, vol. 61, exp. 5.

realities.[299] It seems that it was easier for younger children to attend school, but once they were old enough, families needed them to work the land or as domestic servants instead of attending schools. Alvarado's education reform program, therefore, missed the economic realities of his citizens and failed to adjust to them, which might explain why the Department of Education was still struggling to ensure children were attending school despite the introduction of fines and warnings.

Another project that was struggling to retain students only a few years after its founding was the Indigenous boarding school, *La Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*. The Government conducted an inspection of the school nearing the end of Alvarado's term as governor in October 1917. One of the main problems that the inspector identified was the fact that the school had lost many students over the course of a year. The school consisted of three grades, and the government inspector made a similar note about the state of all three school grades. For example, the second grade "consisted of 24 students during this year, instead of the 50 students it used to have before, that is to say 26 students less than the year before. The students are very advanced in all the courses that are imparted within the establishment."[300] It seems that while the school had been successful in enrolling students, it was having a harder time retaining them. Some scholars have speculated that throughout Mexico, state boarding schools had acted with a high degree of coercion, and this was probably why they found it hard to retain students.[301] However, the report does note that even with the missing students "The number [of children attending was] not even 9% of the *haciendas* in the State."[302] This means that overall the project was not

[299] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 96.
[300] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 296, exp. 13.
[301] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution*, 125.
[302] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 296, exp. 13.

targeting the number of students it had originally intended, and with the rate at which it was losing students, the school was bound to fail within a short period of time.

The inspector noted that,

> Inquiring into the reason why the School does not have a greater number of students, we have come to the conclusion that with the exception of a few honourable ones, the hacendados spend their time and their efforts to make the noble prospects of the State fail, for they oppose the children of the Haciendas entering La Ciudad Escolar as they do not wish to pay the fee required per student.[303]

One of the main mistakes the government had made in its plan to fund the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* was the expectation that *hacendados* would provide the needed revenue for their schooling project. Despite Alvarado's utopian view that Yucatán's population all wanted to see a revolutionary transformation, he constantly lamented that the reality was far from what he had envisioned. When addressing the complaints of the *hacendados*, Alvarado challenged them to "Close the schools and libraries if they are as harmful as you say and then to be sure reopen the bars, the bullrings, the whorehouses and the gaming dens ... Do all this and in one year I challenge the people of Yucatán and the entire nation to consider the results and compare them with the situation that exists today."[304] The prosperity of the henequen trade and the revenue it provided for the state made it impossible for the government to move against the *hacendados* and to provide any real reform for those who worked under them. Even though Alvarado had promised to ensure *hacendados* provided education for their workers, the reality was that he had little influence over the ruling classes in the peninsula and there was little he could do to ensure they sent either children or the payment necessary for those who wanted to attend *La Ciudad Escolar de Los Mayas*. However, without their support it was much harder for Alvarado to fund

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[303] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 296, exp. 13.

[304] Joseph, *Revolution From Without,* 150.

and maintain such an ambitious program, especially as the price of henequen began to plummet with the end of the Great War in Europe.[305] Unfortunately, these schooling programs were clearly only viable and possible to maintain when the state was in a relatively prosperous economic situation.

Even when students managed to attend *La Ciudad Escolar*, *hacendados* used many tactics to avoid paying the school fees. For example, a student mentioned to the school director that "his father had been removed by the owner of the plantation because it was not worth paying for La Ciudad Escolar. He added that no other owner would hire his father on another plantation in order to avoid paying the tuition fee to said school. The student will not continue the year in this establishment because nobody will pay for him."[306] Having to rely on the *hacendados* for the survival of the school also placed parents and students in a precarious situation: as being forced off of the *hacienda* also meant that farmers lost their homes and their communities. Forcing the students to leave school after only a year of study, was also a blow to the government's efforts to transform the population, as students were not completing the program. Without a more stable income, it was clear that the school would have struggled to survive. There were clearly different political, economic, and cultural factors that hindered the spread of socialist education in Yucatán and the ability of the students to participate in it.[307] That said, the government did attempt to address the problem of funding *La Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*. In a document written in August 1916, the government submitted a motion to tax henequen producers an extra percent in order to account for the necessary payments the school needed. This was unsuccessful as many

[305] Joseph, *Revolution From Without*, 150.
[306] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 296, exp. 13.
[307] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution*, 63.

constituents did "not want to jeopardize henequen production."[308] Despite Alvarado's wish to transform the power structure in Yucatán, he had to learn to co-exist with the *hacendados*, as he needed the *haciendas* to survive in order to ensure henequen was produced, which was essential to the finances of the state.[309]

The inspector's report also failed to note that the Government constantly had to turn away students who wanted to attend *La Ciudad Escolar*. For example, in a letter written to Salvador Alvarado, "Señora Higina Ortiz, mother of one of the students of this Institution, expressed the wish that two of her daughters be accepted as students. The issue was that the plantation from which they come already funds the two students that satisfy the Law."[310] Having to turn away capable students because a small quota had been met meant that even students who would have liked to attend the school were unable to do so. Parents also sent their children to Indigenous boarding schools as they provided food and clothing, which probably meant that parents also saw economic advantages in sending their children to school.[311] The letter even "claims that at the same time, they are looking for students, and that it is necessary to increase enrolment."[312] Once again, this was proof that the school was struggling to survive without adequate funding. Having only two students attend per *hacienda* also limited student's ability to attend the school as, once the quota was filled, other students who might have been just as interested and qualified to study at the *Ciudad Escolar* would be unable to do so.

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[308] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 296, exp. 13.
[309] Joseph, *Revolution From Without* 132.
[310] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 275, exp. 14.
[311] Castellanos, *A Return to Servitude*, 30.
[312] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 275, exp. 14.

The report also brushed over another issue that was affecting school attendance, the matter of runaway students. While the report does note that there were a few students who were currently "fugitives," it does elaborate on the extent of the problem. Other reports that talk about missing students contain lists that show a constant turnover in the students who attended *La Ciudad Escolar*, with many of them seemingly not completing the necessary three years of study. Reports by the Secretary of Education Gregorio Torres Quintero consistently found that inspectors located runaway students back at their original *hacienda* schools. For example, Quintero mentioned that "on a visit conducted to the Rural School of the *finca* of Xuech from a Municipality of this Cabecera they found the girl Tomasa May, a student from La Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas."[313] In studies of other boarding schools in Mexico, students were not allowed to visit their home villages until they had been enrolled in school for two years.[314] Although I could not find information about whether or not this was the same at the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*, this was something that could have contributed to the number of runaway students. Failing to ensure students remained at the school defeated the purpose of the school, as students did not receive the level of acculturation the government wanted to instill. In addition, even when reporting that students were running away, government officials did not seem to ask what could be done to improve the situation and prevent fugitive students. As mentioned in Chapter One, students could be as young as ten years old when they attended the school, and in some cases students might have simply been homesick. Moving to a different city in a very strict regimented environment where they were meant to stay for a minimum of three years could have been difficult for a small child. Documents do show that when children were allowed to go back

[313] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vOL. 275 exp. 14.
[314] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution,* 21.

home, they needed government passes and permission to return to their *haciendas*. The Secretary General of Education wrote on 9 August that "[the government] has agreed to concede to the students at the Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas the following vacations from 21 to 31 of the present month … with the obligation to return to said campus after said period has expired."[315] The document then includes a list of the eleven students allowed to go on holiday with the name of the *hacienda* where they could be found. These meant that there were probably few opportunities to go back home for students, as holidays apparently had to be approved by the government beforehand. This is also reminiscent of residential schools in Canada, where children where purposely kept at school in order to ensure they did not lose the supposed progress in acculturation that they were making at the school. [316] The government also failed to address the ways in which these children often provided more valuable services to their parents, either working on the farm or looking after younger siblings, helping provide income that was lost when these children were sent away to boarding school.

The legacies of the Caste War could also explain the large number of fugitive students. As a way to pacify the Maya population in Yucatán during the Caste War, families and communities had been forcibly separated onto different *haciendas* and many families had dispersed during the years of fighting.[317] Having their children removed and sent to schools away from their families might have triggered some of the historical trauma of separation that these communities had endured only a few years before. Additionally, the inspector tried to mask some of the problems *La Ciudad Escolar* was having, and which could have contributed to student desertion rates. The inspector explained that "Everyday attendance is normal, as all students attend their respective

[315] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán. Fondo Municipios 1803-1980, Sección Izamal, Caja 10, vol. 21, exp. 13.
[316] Milloy, *A National Crime*, 30.
[317] Nelson Reed, *The Caste War of Yucatán: Revised Edition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 172.

classes: because every one of the three groups provides students for the carpentry shop on a daily basis, so that of the 71 students with which the school counts, only 41 students are taught in the first two groups and 21 in the second."[318] As a way to save money, the school had shifted away from hiring employees for certain tasks and hired students instead. At the *Ciudad Escolar*, for example, the School Director talked about "finding it easier to complete the janitorial work with the janitor, the Mozo Villamil, who is in charge of the barbershop, the Mozo Coral, and a number of students from within the institution, dismissing three janitors ... and creating a savings of 161 pesos."[319] They justified this not only as a way to save money for the struggling institution, but also because "it is convenient, for there is a need to stimulate work in said students."[320] There was a racialized belief that the students' Indigenous heritage provided them with a poor work ethic, and engaging in cleaning tasks for the school would therefore provide them with useful skills beyond the education they were receiving.[321] Given that the institution was meant to be creating new educators for Maya communities, who would in turn impart classes and workshops within their communities, cleaning the school does not seem like an essential part of a curriculum.

The school was also struggling in other ways, according to the inspector's report. The administration needed better organization. In particular, the administrator "lack[ed] initiative," and programs such as "agriculture were neglected"; the animals were skinny and at times there were not enough animals to run a sustainable farm.[322] While *La Ciudad Escolar* was one of the

[318] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 296, exp. 13.
[319] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 276, exp. 49.
[320] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 276, exp. 49.
[321] Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens*, 207
[322] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 296, exp. 13.o

most ambitious schooling ventures for the state, it was not the only school that was having trouble with its funding. The Director of the Vocational School of Arts and Trades, Toribio Velasco, wrote a report on the state he found the school when he assumed his new post. He mentioned "That the number of students enrolled was forty-eight of which only seven on average attend, these students only receive classes on basic subjects."[323] In addition, he complained that "The carpentry, blacksmithing and mechanics workshop are incomplete missing what is most in need in a school of this kind."[324] This meant that other schools—even those meant to be funded by the government—were struggling to provide the necessary equipment to shape the future workers they had envisioned. It seems that these programs were starting to collapse as the lack of resources became more evident. These became impediments to the Secretary of Education's mission and jeopardized his ability to provide rural education effectively.[325]

Other schools were struggling to provide more than just basic education. For example, the School of Fine Arts "found themselves needing to reduce the classes to the number and form expressed in the attached program."[326] Due to a reduced state grant, the director of the school explained that "Although the quantities assigned to the professors who impart the free classes are negligible, we will all fulfill the duty that we have imposed upon ourselves to sustain the life of our dear School; these are the classes that are absolutely indispensable for free education to be sufficient."[327] In the case of the School of Fine Arts, students who wanted to take any extra courses would have to pay an additional fee of $5 per month. This tension that had previously

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[323] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 204, exp. 9.
[324] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 204, exp. 9.
[325] Gurza Arce, "En Busca de una Educación Revolucionaria:1924-1934", 156.
[326] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 508, exp. 12.
[327] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 508, exp. 12.

existed between the elites and the other classes, due in part to their access to schooling, meant that there was limited hope for economic mobility in the region for those who did not have access to education.[328] Therefore, students who could not afford to pay for extra courses were at a disadvantage, creating second-class students. This was because students who could not afford to pay for the advanced classes would lack the more specialized skills and knowledge that others could obtain.

Citizens' Demands for Education, Night Schools, and Scholarships

Salvador Alvarado's free education goals for Yucatán were curtailed by the lack of available funding that could support such an ambitious reform. In addition, without the support of the elite and the Church, Alvarado lacked the backing and finances to ensure his programs were successful and well-funded. Additionally, the government was also failing to provide the adequate education programs that were suitable for the population's needs. Parents and students constantly demanded that night schools be built in different towns, as it was easier for many to attend school after working hours. In the villa of Cenotillo, they reported that because the young men in town always had to work in order to help provide for their families, the inspector "...begs that the government make a gesture towards this town through the creation of a Night School for adults, given that there [were] a number of young men within the population who d[id] not know how to read or write and that are now already out of school age."[329] This was not an uncommon situation even among middle-class workers, who often had to sacrifice their education at a very young age, but who strived to continue studying once they were older.[330] In addition, there were also constant reminders from the Secretary of Education that state "Night Schools should only be

[328] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*,116
[329] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Poder Ejecutivo1886-1914, caja 857
[330] Mitchell, *The Women's Revolution*,18

used by adults and that children's attendance in day schools [was] mandatory and should be enforced effectively."[331] In a place like rural Yucatán, where children from a very young age where expected to help support the parents, day schools were inconvenient for a large majority of the rural population. While the government was successful in promoting the development and goals of their education program, they were less prepared to meet the demands of the rural society.[332] Parents and children clearly wanted to receive an education and sought to find a more convenient time to receive their primary schooling, yet the government did not allow for children to attend night schools. This meant that children were left without an education, despite the Government's compulsory education law.

The government also failed to recognize the needs of the population. With regards to the school requested by the town of Cenotillo, the government responded,

> while it is true that our schooling has not reached the regularity and the perfectionism that it ought to aspire to, it is more convenient to place all of the Government's resources and efforts to the accomplishment of this goal, without distracting them with other matters that like Night Schools, have proved to be ineffective. [W]ell one can assure that in general they have had almost negative results and have only served as a means to increase the pay for some teachers.[333]

The response by the government seems to imply that it had simply given up on the older population who did not have the opportunity to learn to read and write. Government officials stated that instead of spending money on night schools, they should just focus all their time and resources on days schools, which would ensure that night schools would cease to be necessary in the future for the state of Yucatán. This would likely have created problems by producing yet another generation that was forced to forego school in an effort to survive economically. Additionally, this statement also ignored the realities and the needs of the working population.

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[331] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Poder Ejecutivo1886-1914, caja 801.
[332] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 201.
[333] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Poder Ejecutivo1886-1914, caja 857.

The weather in Yucatán also tends to be extremely hot and humid for most of the year, which might have also impacted students' ability to attend poorly built schools during the hottest months of the year.

Parents, in particular those who could afford to send their children to pursue higher education, also engaged with the government in other ways. In many cases they wrote to Salvador Alvarado requesting scholarships for their children to complete their studies. For example, Francisca Lopez de Lopez explained to Alvarado that "[her] son Ernesto Lopez who was a student at the School of Agriculture … would be forced to leave his studies as he d[id] not have the necessary resources to stay in this city."[334] One of the most interesting details to note about the letters written to the government to request scholarships was that they were mostly written by mothers. It seems that it was mothers who took it upon themselves to ask for funding for their children. It might be that having to request funding for their children was probably more in line with what was considered to be a women's duty than what was expected of middle-class men. However, it was not uncommon for women to participate in different petitions, and their signatures and requests can be found in demands for the reopening of churches, in land requests, and in court cases.[335]

On occasion, students wrote to the government themselves to inquire about scholarship opportunities, especially at the post-secondary level. On 17 December, Evelina Arroyo wrote to the Department of Education stating that she was a student in her first year at the Normal School for Teachers and that "her parents finding themselves in financial trouble were unable to finance her education." In order to be able to continue studying, "[she] asks this government that is always so concerned for the education of the humble, a pension or a scholarship in order to finish

[334] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Fondo Poder Ejecutivo1886-1914, caja 857.
[335] Smith, *Gender and the Mexican Revolution*, 87, 96-97.

her education as a teacher."[336] Parents who could read and write would have probably written the government themselves to request help in funding their children's education as a way to give their petition some sense of formality or authority. Those students whose parents were unable to read or write probably had to make these requests for themselves. Yucatán's population participated in the creation of a shared vocabulary through the educational institutions, which allowed them to make demands, submit petitions, and address grievances in a language the government was familiar with.[337] This in turn demonstrates the increased demands the population made to ensure they were given the education they had been promised by Alvarado's revolutionary government.

Importing Revolutionary Educators

Yucatán's schools were not only having problems with regards to funding and providing the necessary programs in ways that were convenient for the population. Alvarado had sent his Secretary of Education, Gregorio Torres Quintero, to the United States in search of new programs, techniques, and even educators who could teach in the new revolutionary education program.[338] The Alvarado government seems to have had very little confidence in its teachers. In a series of letters sent in 1917 to Alvarado's government, Quintero explained his plan to hire experts for the Department:

> ...capable experts who are knowledgeable in the matters of general education, whom we could find technical jobs in the cabinet, conferences ... temporary appointments as Directors of some important schools or as councillors to some of the actual Directors, in a word organizers of educational institutions. In this way, Yucatán will assuredly resolve the primary problem of school reorganization. If we add a few regular schoolteachers, the plan will be more complete.[339]

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[336] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 752, exp. 34.
[337] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 195.
[338] Hernández Corona, *Gregorio Torres Quintero,*164.
[339] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 289, exp. 7.

The government had realized that aspects of its education program were failing by the end of Alvarado's tenure as governor, and Quintero was seeking to redesign a program that was only two years old. Teachers were often seen as neglectful, abandoning their posts to pursue local politics and neglecting their teaching duties.[340] So, despite their commitment to the education of Yucatán's new generation of teachers, Quintero and Alvarado decided that they needed to bring in immigrants to oversee their Mexican educators. While bringing in educators from the United States might have been a temporary measure to train new and better Mexican educators, there was also a racialized component to the practice. The ruling classes saw teachers and educators as inferior. They were part of a *mestizo* majority who had not been part of the ruling class, and they still lacked full support from the *hacendados*, who held on to power due to the prosperity of the henequen trade; this therefore made them susceptible to being bullied and manipulated by elites. In fact, teacher incompetence was more a product of poor training and supervision than of willful negligence.[341] However, by placing white Americans in positions of power above their educators, the Alvarado government conveyed the message that while it was fine for the *mestizo* population to be teachers, they were not prepared enough to assume positions of power.

In his letter, Torres Quintero stated that "in order to have good teachers (otherwise it would not be right to import them), it is necessary to pay annual salaries of three thousand dollars for those who have the capacity to be Directors or establishment organizers or even experts for the Department of Education."[342] Instead of spending government money on ensuring that programs had the right equipment or even, in some cases, that schools were housed in safe buildings, the Department of Education was spending a very large amount of money on

[340] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 68
[341] Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution*, 89
[342] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, v. 289, exp.7

importing "experts," money that could have been used to reform the education program. Despite the fact that the need for expensive experts was most likely the least important factor in restructuring Yucatán's educational program, Torres Quintero was convinced that imported teachers would transform it. Throughout his letters he emphasized that "Above all else, we really need someone who understands Kindergarten well. Our Miss. Juana Figueroa is extremely deficient," and he spoke about hiring someone knowledgeable in the Montessori Method. It seems that Torres Quintero had his own agenda and was more concerned with having the newest, most modern educational methods, as opposed to supporting the long-term growth of his own programs and teachers. In a subsequent letter, the Secretary of Education confirmed the government's approval to hire "4 to 6 teachers for the industrial schools in general and two experts for the Department of Public Education."[343] He also reminded government officials that, as he had previously noted in his letters to Alvarado, "it is during vacation time when it is common to sign contracts. It is almost certain that most applicants would have signed theirs [contracts], and because of this it would be hard to hire anyone for September."[344] This meant that even though Alvarado's officials were planning to implement a very expensive plan to import teachers, the government had failed to consider timelines and the bureaucratic processes that would lead to the approval of these new hires.

While Torres Quintero was extremely critical of his teachers, the amount of extra work teachers were expected to perform might explain why they were not meeting expectations. There were several instances in which teachers in revolutionary Yucatán were expected to perform duties outside of their job description. In July 1915, in the town of Acanceh, Modesto and Maria

[343] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 289, exp. 7.
[344] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 289, exp. 7.

de Lourdes Flores, two minors, were at the center of a custody battle. They had been residing with their grandmother after their mother had taken up residence with another man and started a family with him. Their father believed that his children should not live with his "mother in law who does not set a good example,"[345] and instead he requested to a Military Tribunal that his children be placed with a "person of recognized morals, like, for example the teacher of the school of this town."[346] After conferring with Miss Salome Espinosa, the teacher in the town of Telchaquillo, where the *hacienda* was located, she agreed to take custody of the children with "the father of the two minors gladly committing to pay maintenance and attention to these [children]."[347] Having to raise two children aged seven and nine, even with the expectation that the parents would pay the needed child support, went above and beyond the responsibilities of an educator. This does not seem to have been an isolated case, and although the majority of the children were placed in the care of *hacendados*, the revolutionary tribunals were also placing children in the care of these young unmarried female teachers. Teachers were seen as examples of moral revolutionary women, secular participants of modern life, organizers of family life, and experts in hygiene and nutrition.[348] Placing children under the care of these female educators seems to conform to gendered expectations that women—even when holding a job—were the ideal guardians for minors, as opposed to the male *hacendados* who were typically in charge of these guardianship orders. In addition, prioritizing teacher guardianships was a way in which the revolutionary government sought to undermine the power that the *hacendados* had previously wielded when they had been entrusted with the tutelage of minors.

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[345] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 65, exp. 47.
[346] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 65, exp. 47.
[347] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Poder Ejecutivo Salvador Alvarado 1915-1917, vol. 65, exp. 47.
[348] Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 95.

It is also important to note that these new state-sponsored educators were acting as agents of the state. Entrusting parenting jobs to a newly created education work force definitely caused problems for Yucatán's education program, creating financial and mobility burdens for these young female educators. It was no wonder that Torres Quintero felt that the current teachers hired by the department were not performing to his expectations. There also seemed to be low morale among the teachers in rural locations. For example, in June 1916, the inspector for the municipality of Tixkokob mentioned that it had come to his attention that "A lot of Teachers, without the permission of the corresponding authorities, frequently missed their work to the detriment of childhood."[349] The geography of the state of Yucatán and the indifference of *hacendados* made it hard to ensure rural educators were indeed fulfilling their obligations. In defense of rural educators, we should note that the hostile weather, small municipalities, inadequate school buildings, and shortages of teaching materials made it extraordinarily difficult to fulfill the expectations of the Secretary of Education and the mission to transform people into citizens.

Conclusion

While the revolutionary government's education program had started to run into problems by the end of Alvarado's tenure as governor, many of these problems were in fact rooted in how the program had been managed. The education program depended on the financial support of the elites in the region and the stability of the market for Yucatán's henequen, neither of which was a sustainable. In addition, the rate at which the program had grown meant that there were sure to be problems. It would have been difficult for any state-wide education program to train and find qualified socialist educators in the four years of Alvarado's regime.

[349] Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida, Yucatán, Municipios 1803-1980, caja 6, vol. 19, exp. 2.

However, the education program also benefitted a large number of Yucatán's residents. It provided them with the language they needed to ensure the government met their needs and demands, and informed them of the new revolutionary order. Schooling and education were also important for the population, and while many of their demands and needs were not met by the Ministry of Education, they wrote and asked the government to consider their unique cultural, financial, and social circumstances when providing education.

Conclusion

Despite the struggles they faced in later years, the education programs and reforms of revolutionary Yucatán provided the federal government a blueprint for how a socialist education model could work. Alvarado's education program aspired to implement a wide variety of education initiatives in a short period of time. He had established free, primary co-educational schools throughout most of the state, built vocational training centers for both men and women, and even created an Indigenous Boarding School inspired by the Canadian and American models. This was all at a time where the federal government had yet to centralize education, and when each state was responsible for organizing its own education programs.[350] Among the different education programs that arose in this early revolutionary period, Alvarado's was one of the most complete. He tried to transform the citizens of the state of Yucatán into a cohesive unit, one that shared the history, values, and hygiene ideals that the government determined were important in creating the new revolutionary citizen.

Through his 1915 educational reform, Alvarado introduced a series of changes that dismantled the education system that had existed under President Porfirio Diaz and which had been led by the elite in the state. Education was meant to be free, secular, and above all useful to the population it was going to serve. Previous scholarship on education in Mexico has focused on the later attempts by the federal government to consolidate education in the post-revolutionary period of the 1930s and 1940s.[351] This has made it seem as if the revolution in Mexico created an education vacuum, similar to the political one that Mexico was experiencing at the time. This thesis demonstrates there were indeed early attempts to create education programs, and that these did not necessarily originate from the federal government to the Mexican states. Alvarado's

[350] Rockwell, "Schools of the Revolution,"183.
[351] See Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution* and Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution.*

education program was one of the first attempts to implement statewide education reform in Mexico, one that would inspire the federal government as they adopted many of the elements that were tested in Yucatán. Alvarado's Minister of Education envisioned a society that would be well versed and educated in the roles they were born to perform. Peasants would therefore not be trained to be lawyers, for example, but would be educated in agricultural schools to make them efficient and modern workers.

Additionally, there was a moralizing and racialized component to the reforms the government carried out in Yucatán. The reformers wanted to de-Indianize the Maya population of the state through the creation of a culture that would be shaped by the prescribed education that people of different rank and status would receive.[352] This also included the desired transformation of the population into sober, clean, healthy, and hardworking individuals. Evidence of this can be seen in the creation of the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas*, a boarding school for Indigenous students that was meant to transform these students into model citizens, with the expectation they would in turn return to their communities to transform and de-Indianize their fellow villagers.

This thesis's examination of *La Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* advances the historiography of Yucatán, as the boarding school project has been largely absent from the available scholarship of the area. While the subsequent boarding school projects pursued by the Mexican government may have been inspired by residential schools, there were no real links that tied the Mexican efforts to those in the Unites States and Canada.[353] The letters of Torres Quintero—the official who was sent by Alvarado's administration to study residential schools in the United States—demonstrates that there was a direct link and intention to create similar

[352] Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens*, 7.
[353] Lewis, T*he Ambivalent Revolution,* 122.

schools in Yucatán. This is particularly true when we consider that Torres Quintero later worked for the *Secretaría de Educación Pública*. This also demonstrates that there was a direct link between Yucatán's education programs and the SEP.

Of course, Salvador Alvarado's education program was not without its problems and opponents. Yucatán had always considered itself different from the rest of Mexico, and its plantation economy had created a strong *hacendado* class who controlled most of the land and money in the peninsula. The elites attempted to circumvent state education by creating their own schools or homeschooling their children. Alvarado also struggled with ensuring plantation owners paid the education fees that were required of them—fees that were meant to help fund school infrastructure in *haciendas* and send children to the *Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas.* Among the most unpopular policies implemented by Alvarado were his policies against the Catholic Church, policies that would cost him the support of many of the elites as well as peasants throughout the state. The Catholic Church tried to revive the education provided by the state by creating their own education institutions. However, the Church suffered as well, as education was publicly mandated to be secular throughout the state, and many Church properties were confiscated and used as schools for children. In addition, there was a debate surrounding the instruction of women, in particular the practice of co-education. Some educators believed that women should not receive the same education as men, while others believed there was a risk of sexual promiscuity in particular amongst peasants and Indigenous students. This complicated the delivery of education, as it was easier and more cost effective for the government to build co-educational schools.

The policies of the revolutionary government were also scrutinized by the peasants and the Indigenous population. Contrary to the assertions of other scholars, Yucatán peasants seem to

have been heavily involved in educational reform.[354] This thesis demonstrates that while peasants and the Indigenous population in Mexico sometimes resisted the educational efforts of the state, many actually actively demanded the government meet the promises it had made with regards to education. Parents interacted with school inspectors and the Minister of Education, as they wrote to the government reminding them of its promises. *Campesino* parents wanted schools built, better teachers hired, and an adjusted schedule for those children who had to work in the mornings. These interactions demonstrate that there was a desire to participate in the state's education initiatives, and that peasants were more than indifferent or resistant to state education.

The government struggled with the number of absent students, and despite the introduction of fines and punishments, the number of absences did not decrease. *La Ciudad Escolar de los Mayas* struggled as well only a few years after its inception; there were not enough students attending, and those who did often did not last long, as the school had a huge runaway problem. Educators were also expected to take on roles that were outside their training; in some cases teachers became legal guardians to students in towns and were expected to advocate on behalf of the population. This also complicated the government's delivery of effective education.

Education reform in revolutionary Yucatán has been largely unstudied, as the political, economic, and social reforms have been prioritized in the historiography of the region. This is a major gap in the extensive historiography of Yucatán, as schooling reforms were comprehensive and unprecedented during the early years of the revolution. State education was essential in creating a lasting narrative and myth of what the revolution had changed and accomplished for

[354] See Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution*, Vaughn, *Cultural Politics in Revolution* and Dawson, *Indian and Nation.*

the population. Education was also essential in the creation of a national myth that celebrated a Mexican heritage, illustrious dates, and historical actors who were seen as heroes leading Mexicans on the road to modernity. Many of these narratives continue to dominate celebrations in Mexico and were perpetuated in the history textbooks produced by the SEP. This study of Alvarado's education reforms demonstrates early attempts at building a socialist education curriculum, which allowed the federal government to adopt and adapt the policies that could establish a nationwide education program. Recognizing the education efforts of Mexican states also allows us to understand more clearly the different responses the population had towards schools and moves us past an understanding of the Indigenous and peasant population as a uniform mass. Alvarado summed up his education program best when he called for the closing of all professional schools and mentioned that "We should devote all our energies to industrial and vocational education."[355] This would ensure "the physical development and of those faculties that induce the child to those labors, which, when a man, he may be considered a factor of production in in agriculture, in industry, in commerce, in science or in arts."[356]

[355] Alvarado, *The Fundamental Problem of Mexico*, 38.
[356] Alvarado, *The Fundamental Problem of Mexico*, 38.

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