

Indigenous Revolts in Chiapas and the Andean Highlands

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Indigenous Revolts in Chiapas
and the Andean Highlands

A CEDLA Publication

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ISBN 90 70280 56 6

NUGI 641, 649, 659

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Acknowledgments

This book is the end product of the 1994 CEDLA ONE-DAY SEMINAR which took place at CEDLA Amsterdam, November 18. The general aim of this multi-disciplinary seminar was to develop a comparative, historical understanding of the much discussed phenomenon of *indigenous revolts*. Because the Senderistas in Peru and the Zapatistas Chiapas had been in the spotlights during the late 1980s and the year 1994 respectively, I decided to invite specialists on Chiapas and the Andean highlands, addressing to the questions:

- What had 'happened' in both areas during particular periods of revolt?
- Could the revolts be labelled 'indigenous'?

The seminar provided the opportunity for anthropologists Gary Gossen and Jan Rus, for sociologists Lewis Taylor and Dirk Kruijt, and for historians Michiel Baud, Kevin Gosner, Ward Stavig and Jan de Vos to exchange ideas on the historical anthropology or the anthropological history of some of the native peoples of Latin America. The seminar was well attended, helping thus to spark off a fruitful discussion between participants, graduate and post-graduate students and colleagues like Geert Banck, Raymond Buve, Maarten Jansen and Kees Koonings. In fact, the CEDLA was somewhat overcrowded by people. Not unlike the indigenous highlands nowadays.

Personally, I like to see this volume as a companion to two other volumes on the history of indigenous communities, one edited with Simon Miller, *The Indian Community of Colonial Mexico. Fifteen Essays on Land Tenure, Corporate Organizations, Ideology and Village Politics* (CLAS 58, 1990), and one edited with Wil Pansters, *Region, State and Capitalism in Mexico. Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (CLAS 54, 1989). The first volume is a compilation of articles by U. Dyckerhoff, R. Hoekstra, M.C. Torales, B. García Martínez, S. Wood, R. Haskett, W.S. Osborn, D. Dehouve, D.A. Brading, S. Gruzinski, A. Lavrin, L. de Jong, W.B. Taylor and E. Van Young. The volume offers useful background information to the problem of the political and cultural leadership of indigenous communities. The second volume contains work by S. Miller, R. Rendón, M. Cerutti, G.P.C. Thomson, P. Garner, R. Falcón, R. Buve, W. Pansters, F.J. Schryer, C. Alba Vega, D. Kruijt and M. Vellinga and concentrates above all on the Mexican Revolution and its aftermath.

The essays now collected present the results of original research not hitherto reported, with the exception of an up-to-date of Jan Rus' article. The substantive topics and discussions are current, given the salience of ethnic politics in contemporary Latin America and ongoing debates among anthropologists, sociologists and historians. The essays in the prevailing volume are in general directed towards the past and they are interdisciplinary. Due to conference circumstances, it is not an ideal mix between Mesoamerica and the Andean region because while the latter encompasses three different countries, the former focuses exclusively on Chiapas. Above all Mexico is missing. Therefore, I like to see this volume also as a companion to for example Frans J. Schryer's *Ethnicity and Class Conflict in Rural Mexico* (Princeton, 1990), who discusses the nature of indigenous revolts in other areas of Mexico, with many cross-references to studies dealing with the politics of resistance in other ethnically diverse regions of Latin America. Despite this lacuna, I hope the reader will find enough of a common threat to hold the volume together.

The financial support necessary to bring the mentioned specialists from the United States, Mexico, England and the Netherlands together in Amsterdam was made available by CEDLA. With regard to the planning and organization of the seminar we benefited greatly from the capable assistance of María José Ramírez and Ton Salman. Kees de Groot was willing to preside over the sessions, leaving me free to attend the discussions without looking at the clock continuously. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Christopher Lutz for mailing me addresses and telephone numbers indispensable to invite the participants.

Arij Ouweneel
March 1996