

The pronunciamiento in independent Mexico, 1821-1876

A research project at the University of St Andrews

Acta de la guarnición de Mérida

18 February 1840

Mérida, Yucatán

Content:

Acta de la guarnición de Mérida, 18 de febrero de 1840

En la ciudadela de San Benito a los 18 días del mes de febrero de 1840, reunidas las tropas de la guarnición de esta capital acaudilladas por el Sr. Cnel. D. Anastasio Torrens a una inmensa mayoría del pueblo, considerando que los sentimientos de los yucatecos son los de proclamar y sostener a todo trance el sistema federal, por el que están pronunciadas otras secciones del ejército y la comisión que manda D. Santiago Imán, han acordado los artículos siguientes:

1° El departamento de Yucatán se erige en estado libre e independiente y en tal virtud restablece la constitución de 1824, con las reformas que un congreso general autorizado al efecto por los pueblos tenga a bien hacerle.

2° Las autoridades y funcionarios públicos que en 1834 regían los destinos del pueblo yucateco, serán repuestos y el E. Sr. gobernador de aquella época, reasumiendo el mando procurará ponerlos en ejercicio, haciendo que los muertos o impedidos física o moralmente sean sustituidos con arreglo a las leyes, todo provisionalmente respecto a los de elección popular, hasta que se verifique la nueva con la brevedad posible.

3° Se restablecen en todo su vigor y fuerza las leyes y decretos así generales como particulares del estado que regían a todos los ramos de la administración pública en mayo de 1834.

4° En virtud del artículo anterior cesan todas las contribuciones y gabelas impuestas por el gobierno central, cualquiera que sea su clasificación y los administradores de las aduanas se arreglarán para el cobro de los derechos de importación y exportación solamente al arancel, leyes y decretos y órdenes que estaban vigentes en mayo de 1834.

5° Los militares de cualquier clase que sean, así activos como permanentes que quieran voluntariamente separarse del servicio de las armas después de restablecido el gobierno federal, obtendrán su licencia absoluta, sin restricción ni obligación alguna ulterior.

6° El estado de Yucatán se declara independiente del gobierno de México, mientras que este no vuelva al orden del régimen federal en los términos que establece el artículo de esta acta.

Context:

The 1836 war between Texas and Mexico led to compulsory recruitment of the Yucatecan Third Active Battalion to fight the war in distant Texas, and in protest to Santiago Imán's soldiers being sent there (who also happened to be his plantation workers), he attempted to pronounce in Tizimín in June 1836, resulting in his two-year imprisonment. After being released, he pronounced once more in Tizimín on 29 May 1839, but government forces defeated him once more. Imán attempted to pronounce a total of four times in the eastern towns of Yucatán throughout 1839, only for his meagre pronunciado forces to be continually and easily defeated by much more powerful government troops. Finally, Imán decided to

coopt the Maya into his pronunciamiento. They were not allowed to possess arms, but Imán recruited them into his movement by offering them the abolition of their religious obvention tax (in previous years, Maya had been fleeing the towns to avoid paying this tax). Meanwhile, Imán's wife María Nicolasa Virgilio provided him with essential information and recruited leaders for his pronunciamiento. With her help, along with the manpower of thousands of Maya who had decided to take up arms with Imán, he finally triumphed on 12 February 1840 in the city of Valladolid, where he issued his pronunciamiento. He called for a national federalist system, the invalidity of the 1837 centralist government and consequently all its officials and decrees, the dissolution of the Third Active Battalion, the end of the indigenous obvention tax, and the creation of his title of General Commander of Arms of the Liberating Army, granting him extensive military and political control over Yucatán. The powerful Meridian federalists seconded Imán's pronunciamiento six days later, as may be seen here, with the added condition that Yucatán was to become independent from Mexico until a national federalist system was re-established. The rest of the region seconded Imán's movement, with the exception of the national army stationed in Campeche. After months of minor battles and negotiations between the supporters of Imán and the permanent army, the latter left Campeche in June 1840, defeated. The Yucatecan administration subsequently declared itself independent from Mexico, creating its own constitution in 1841. The Meridian federalists nevertheless refused to dissolve the Third Active Battalion, and although they abolished the obvention, they immediately replaced it with another religious tax for the Maya. Imán did not get his title or position, but instead was granted the almost useless rank of Brigadier General. He was forcefully persuaded to return to Tizimín in 1840, and was subsequently not invited to take part in any major military or political roles, despite his expressed desire to do so.

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