

---

Special issue: *Histories of socialism and Indigeneity*

Research article

# 'For the government to become good': the political vision and national significance of Felipe Carrillo Puerto

Sarah Osten<sup>1,\*</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Department of History, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT, USA

\* Correspondence: [sosten@uvm.edu](mailto:sosten@uvm.edu)

Submission date: 23 October 2024; Acceptance date: 24 March 2025; Publication date: 14 May 2025

## How to cite

Osten, S. "'For the government to become good': the political vision and national significance of Felipe Carrillo Puerto'. *Radical Americas* 10, 1 (2025): 2.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ra.2025.v10.1.002>.

## Peer review

This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-blind peer-review process, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymised during review.

## Copyright

2025, Sarah Osten. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence (CC BY) 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited • DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ra.2025.v10.1.002>.

## Open access

*Radical Americas* is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

---

## Abstract

Socialist governor of the Mexican state of Yucatán Felipe Carrillo Puerto (1922–4) is legendary for his numerous, groundbreaking accomplishments. Even among revolutionaries of the era, he was radical in his commitment to the rights of Indigenous people, women and working people in general. During his leadership of the Socialist Party of the Southeast between 1918 and 1924, he created a critically important model for the implementation of an ambitious programme of reform, via a postrevolutionary political system that forged meaningful working relationships between political leaders and grassroots constituencies, one that was highly influential for other state and regional political parties across Mexico, and at the national level, to the institutional design of the party that would eventually become the Institutional Revolutionary Party. This article argues that Carrillo Puerto's legend overshadows some of his less celebrated, but important, plans and accomplishments. Carrillo Puerto was able to achieve much of what he did during his short time in power as Governor of Yucatán because he worked to build

the national political alliances that made it all possible. He also constructed a political party that was able to put his programmes into practice, well beyond what he could accomplish as an individual. Lastly, this article considers Carrillo Puerto's ambitions during his lifetime for this model to liberate Indigenous people and urban and rural workers well beyond Yucatán, in the larger southeast and in Mexico as a whole, as part of his political project.

**Keywords** Mexico; Yucatán; Felipe Carrillo Puerto; socialism; Mexican Revolution; Indigenous

## Introduction

On 3 January 2024, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador selected Felipe Carrillo Puerto as Mexico's person of the year. He announced this selection in Carrillo Puerto's hometown of Motul, Yucatán, on the hundredth anniversary of his assassination. This was López Obrador's last selection of a person of the year, in his sixth and final year in office. He made clear in his comments that this selection was not only a commemoration of Carrillo Puerto's assassination, but also the culmination of a series of his previous selections – Emiliano Zapata, Leona Vicario, the pre-Hispanic deity Quetzalcóatl (known as Kulkán among the Maya), Ricardo Flores Magón and Francisco Villa, in that order – since 2019. His reasoning for each choice also conveyed a clear political message, which was consistent with López Obrador's designation of his presidency as the 'Fourth Transformation' (4T) of Mexico (following independence from Spain, the liberal reform of the mid-nineteenth century and the Mexican Revolution). He thus presented himself as standing on the shoulders of the icons and leaders of Mexico's long-term struggles for independence, self-determination, democracy and social and economic justice, in direct confrontation with colonisers, foreign powers, conservatives, wealthy elites and dictators. The choice of Carrillo Puerto by López Obrador was therefore a statement of his own politics, and an example of his continued canny use of Mexico's history to bolster his own position, and to reinforce the historic nature of the 4T, the culmination of his own political career.

López Obrador's selection and celebration of Carrillo Puerto in 2024 is a timely invitation to reconsider the legacies and significance of Carrillo Puerto, including his mythology and its relevance to the present. It is also an opportunity to revisit Carrillo Puerto as a flesh-and-blood politician, both now and with the benefit of a century of retrospection. Carrillo Puerto was not just an idealist and a revolutionary martyr, but also a talented and pragmatic politician. These more prosaic characteristics of the so-called 'Abraham Lincoln of Mexico' are often almost entirely overshadowed by Carrillo Puerto's mythology, but, as I suggest here, are worthy of further consideration and recognition. Above all, despite being scarcely recognised in relevant scholarship, and even less so in popular mythologies, Carrillo Puerto was a skilled political operator with clearly defined near-, medium- and long-term goals not just for Yucatán, but for the larger southeast of Mexico, and arguably for the nation as a whole. At the time of his death in 1924, many of these plans were already in progress. In the years that followed, various attempts were made by different actors and organisations to pick up his projects where he had left them.

Carrillo Puerto's most famous phrase, 'don't abandon my Indians', said to have been his last, is most likely apocryphal. It is admittedly easy to succumb to hyperbole and counterfactuals when assessing his legacy, and many have done so. In my own case, my research on southeastern socialism has long left me speculating about what Carrillo Puerto could have achieved had he lived longer and I feel comfortable asserting that his assassination was a devastating loss for working people all over Mexico, including in the long term. Yet his own words and actions are invariably more illuminating than his posthumous mythology or any counterfactual speculation. For just one example, with the same general sentiment as above, and in what we know to be his own words, is in my view much more impactful: 'What has the Indian gained from the revolution in Yucatán? The answer to that question must be the basis of any honest judgment of our work.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in revisiting the career and politics of the so-called socialist martyr of Yucatán, I centre and emphasise his positions and plans, expressed in his own words, as frequently as possible. In doing so, even as I actively seek to demythologise Carrillo Puerto, I nevertheless accept López Obrador's idealised invitation, on the occasion of his selection of Carrillo Puerto as person of the year, to 'talk more about

his work [than about his death], about what he left us with his example of manifesting, of expressing, of sincerely having a deep love for the people and a deep love for the poor, for the dispossessed.<sup>2</sup> My objective here is exactly that: to talk more about Carrillo Puerto's work. As the programmes and initiatives of his Socialist Party of the Southeast (PSS) and his state government from 1922–4 have been intensively examined many times in the course of many decades and through multiple generations of scholarship, in this article I focus on a lesser-studied element of Carrillo Puerto's political thought and career: his vision for the political transformation of all of Mexico. This includes the concerted efforts in the last years of his life, and particularly in the months directly before his death, to build a multi-state political movement and socialist coalition across the larger southeast, with important national political consequences.

In the shorter term, many of Carrillo Puerto's national political projects were in service of giving himself the power and the political room to manoeuvre, once he became Governor in 1922, to oversee an ambitious set of reforms in Yucatán that enshrined socialist ideals. However, he also carefully considered and then tangibly addressed the real and immediate needs of his grassroots constituents, both urban and rural working people, men and women and, of course, Indigenous communities. In the longer term, Carrillo Puerto also had ambitions to spread his version of socialism to other parts of Mexico – across the larger southeast and beyond. This vision required years of alliance building and negotiation with a broad spectrum of stakeholders at state, local and national levels, simultaneously. Taken together, these elements of his career also get us closer to unravelling what is perhaps the greatest misunderstanding of Carrillo Puerto and the least appreciated of the characteristics that made him an extraordinary politician: he was a genuinely pragmatic leftist who became skilled at working the levers and networks of power, in Yucatán, but also in the larger southeast and just as importantly, on the national political stage. He did so to achieve and then to protect and defend much of the political work that has, ironically, contributed to his legend as an uncompromising idealist.

## Carrillo Puerto's politics

Carrillo Puerto was a political organiser, journalist and activist in Yucatán when the Mexican Revolution began in 1910. In 1914, he went to Morelos to join Emiliano Zapata's movement, where he worked as an agronomist. He returned to Yucatán soon afterwards to join the reformist movement there, led by the appointed Constitutionalist military governor of the state, General Salvador Alvarado, who formed Yucatán's first socialist political party, the Socialist Party of Yucatán, in 1915. Alvarado undertook a famously ambitious and influential project of land, labour and political reform in one of the most notoriously unequal parts of Mexico, where for decades the Maya majority had been subjected to a brutal regime of debt peonage on the henequen plantations of some of the wealthiest people in Mexico. Alvarado had much to say in later years about his own accomplishments (and published several volumes on the subject), but his claim that he liberated the Maya of Yucatán from slavery was not a substantial exaggeration. His labour law was particularly groundbreaking in terms of the rights and protections it offered working people, and it was later used as an important model for Article 123 of the 1917 federal constitution.<sup>3</sup>

Carrillo Puerto collaborated with Alvarado as a key local partner in this project, and he led the efforts to build a grassroots popular base for the state government and the Socialist Party of Yucatán. This was in the form of the storied *ligas de resistencia*, the local constituent organisations of the party that operated as labour unions, cooperatives and mutual aid societies for their members. By the early 1920s, many tens of thousands of Yucatecans were organised into *ligas*, and thus constituted the mass popular base for the socialist state government. As argued elsewhere, this was, in many respects, a groundbreaking and highly influential model for doing politics in Mexico that subsequently served as one of the most important institutional models for the design of Mexico's idiosyncratic single party-dominated political system.<sup>4</sup> In the immediate postrevolutionary period, including during Carrillo Puerto's lifetime, it was adopted outside Yucatán, particularly in other states in the southeast, as an adaptable blueprint for forging multi-class alliances, including well-organised grassroots constituencies that were incorporated into elite-led, reformist, corporatist political parties. Carrillo Puerto understood that his political project in Yucatán should not be singular, not least because he needed allies, but also because he rightly assessed that the socialist model of empowering and harnessing previously

disenfranchised mass constituencies was applicable to other, nearby states. Not coincidentally, they were also states with Indigenous majorities.

It is much easier to describe southeastern socialism by exploring its institutional forms and political practices, as I have done here. Meanwhile, to clearly define southeastern socialism in coherent ideological terms is a nearly impossible task, thanks in large part to how vaguely its own protagonists described it. Alvarado, not usually stingy with words, largely declined in any of his substantial written works to define what he meant by 'socialism', although he once offered that it was 'a new light in the midst of the confusion born of the failure of all of the systems that humanity has tested in search of happiness'.<sup>5</sup> The ideological ambiguity of southeastern socialism had the real advantage of offering flexibility to those who sought to apply it in practice in distinct local and regional contexts. In 1935, Tomás Garrido Canabal of Tabasco, who owed much in terms of his political formation as well as the design of his own formidable political party to Carrillo Puerto, defined it thus in an interview with a US socialist newspaper, providing what was perhaps the most essential definition of southeastern Mexican socialism that has ever been articulated publicly:

There are several concepts and numerous definitions. But my personal opinion is that Socialism is a movement of economic and social adjustment which leads, fundamentally, to raise the level in the standard of living of the working people. I understand that the mission of the true Socialist is not to destroy the nation's resources, but, on the contrary, to facilitate its development and to struggle for a fairer distribution of the profits attained. Socialism, in opposition to what its enemies affirm, is not a chaotic doctrine of social disjoining; on the contrary, it is aimed to unify and to direct the producing energies, within an ample concept of distributing justice.<sup>6</sup>

Reflected clearly here is that southeastern socialism, pioneered by Carrillo Puerto, was always more about political practice than a clearly articulated ideology, which meant that the model was unusually adaptable to other circumstances and contexts. Privileging practice over ideology also allowed for a degree of pragmatism, a relatively unique feature of southeastern socialism and something that the left has historically eschewed in favour of orthodoxy, often at great long-term cost. Carrillo Puerto, opening Yucatán's first socialist congress in Motul in 1918, had this to say regarding the privileging of practice over rhetoric:

I have the conviction and the firmest belief that here we are not going to spend our time with speeches full of meaningless words and vain literature, but that we come animated with the purpose of working for the betterment of all our fellow members and I hope that we will know how to fulfil our mission, working, while this Congress lasts, sixteen or more hours a day if necessary.<sup>7</sup>

Carrillo Puerto's 'liberation' of the working people of Yucatán famously involved sweeping, much-needed reforms such as land redistribution and a wholesale reformation of the relationship between workers and their employers; above all, on Yucatán's henequen plantations that John Kenneth Turner had helped to make deservedly infamous for their de facto enslavement of Indigenous workers. Less well recognised are the more prosaic ways in which Carrillo Puerto worked to address the real and pressing needs of working people in Yucatán (and elsewhere). These, I want to stress, were reforms that addressed the quotidian, allowing for a much more robust and ultimately a more meaningful fulfilment of socialist idealism for a much larger number of people. In Carrillo Puerto's own words, with his government's granting of *ejidos* each Thursday, 'The humble workers have become convinced that we will not betray them with promises and praise, but rather that the revolution concerns itself with them and does everything it can to favour them,' as he wrote to Minister of Government Plutarco Elías Calles in 1922.<sup>8</sup>

In practice, the liberation of working people in socialist Yucatán meant political organisation. This took the form of the *ligas de resistencia*, but also the powerful *Liga Central*, which operated as their institutional hub and coordinating body, and the renamed Socialist Party of the Southeast (PSS), which led the political programme of this statewide, multi-class coalition. Again, in Carrillo Puerto's own words:

The *ligas* are much more than a political party; they are more than an educational institution; they are more than an instrument for governing. They are all these combined. The *liga* is the instrument that is rejuvenating the Maya Indian and giving him the power he needs to carry

out a broad social program. Many of the Yucatecan cities have feminist leagues in addition to the men's organizations ... The leagues are Yucatán. Without them we would not be able to do any of the things we are doing for the Indians and they would not have the instrument of education and self-development. Because that is what a league is: an instrument for spiritual growth.<sup>9</sup>

This system allowed the socialist parties of the southeast to organise popular constituencies in their respective states based on employment, place of residence and sometimes interest groups or particular demographics (such as feminist *ligas*). In practice, workers and *campesinos* were organised into local unions and thereby also became members of a statewide organisation. Much like the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) and the National Campesino Confederation (CNC), created by the national ruling party in the 1930s, the *ligas* brought grassroots members, organised by their labour first and foremost, into the political system as members of the parties to which the *ligas* belonged. In 1918, socialist state legislators described their role as representatives of Yucatecan workers and *campesinos* twice over – as their elected congressmen, but also through their work in the *ligas*.<sup>10</sup>

This model allowed the socialist parties to forge institutionalised working relationships with well-organised and politically disciplined mass constituencies to an unprecedented degree in Mexico. It also allowed them to strike the difficult but necessary balance between centralised authority and local autonomy in order to craft the multi-class political alliances and working relationships that made all their political projects possible. The *liga* system, implemented across the larger southeast area by the mid-1920s, therefore established a critical precedent for mass politics, but also for state corporatism and particularly for the cooptation and control of organised labour by elite-led political parties. Once more, in Carrillo Puerto's own words, at the first Yucatecan socialist congress in his hometown of Motul in 1918: 'the current government has emerged from the leagues, and the League is also the Government'.<sup>11</sup>

To make that work in practice, it meant dispatching an army of grassroots organisers to where the socialist party's constituents lived and worked to forge bonds between them and the party. Carrillo Puerto had done this kind of work himself for many years by the time he became governor. The job was to make clear to Yucatecans that socialism wasn't just vague promises of liberation, but that in practical terms it meant, among many other things: consumer cooperatives for goods like electricity and groceries to make, and keep, them affordable; financial training for the leaders of socialist cooperatives to help them to succeed in the long term; regulated work hours; night schools for workers where they could learn to read and write in Spanish; but equally, teaching the Maya language and Maya history in schools; indemnities, enforced by the socialist party, for unfair dismissal from a job, including for participating in strikes or becoming pregnant; dedicated breaks and spaces for nursing new mothers who returned to work; reduction of taxes on working people; rationalisation and local administration of matters like rubbish collection and public transportation; and public health projects and campaigns. In Carrillo Puerto's opening address at the 1921 socialist congress of Izamal, delivered in Maya, he reminded the gathered delegates in the simplest terms of what their wealthy, landowning opponents most feared: 'they are afraid that you will learn to read and write; they are afraid that you will receive lands.'<sup>12</sup> When it came to land, reform and redistribution were of course critically important, but Carrillo Puerto also emphasised the modernisation of agriculture and teaching new farming methods to make sure that any land people did receive was farmed as efficiently as possible. Lastly, joining the socialist party also meant new forms of recourse for issues workers were likely to face: illegal firing; eviction; political repression by local politicians and every other kind of abuse that working people in Yucatán had suffered for generations. Sometimes, this also meant the party dispatching mediators to resolve disputes within its own ranks.

Although the Yucatecan socialists had their own highly ambitious set of reform laws, recourse often meant the citing of federal law. By extension, part of the practice of socialism in Yucatán included training and educating local socialist politicians and labour leaders not just about new state laws, but about all the things promised to every Mexican by the 1917 federal constitution, and how to put all these new state and federal laws into practice. This was a continuation of work Carrillo Puerto had been doing as a political organiser in Yucatán going back decades, predating the ratification of the 1917 revolutionary federal constitution. As he described it to his colleagues in the Chamber of Deputies in September of 1920:

For at least twenty years I have been going from town to town, from hacienda to hacienda, trafficking with the Constitution of the Republic. I say trafficking, comrades, because I have

been going from town to town, as I say, teaching in the Mayan language the Constitution of 1857. For at least twenty years we have been dreaming of a social improvement like the one we are trying to implement today.<sup>13</sup>

The 1917 constitution empowered politicians and organisers like the Yucatecan socialists to go much further in terms of the reform initiatives they were already pursuing under federal law and the promises they made to their grassroots constituencies.

Yucatecan socialism also meant the liberation of women to an unprecedented degree, building on the previous work of Alvarado during his governorship, when he famously organised the first feminist congress in Mexican history in Yucatán in 1915. Carrillo Puerto's effort to secure political rights for women is arguably an instance in which history and substance match legend, perhaps more than is frequently recognised. It is true that Yucatán was one of the first states in Mexico to allow women to vote at the state level and that Carrillo Puerto's sister, Elvia Carrillo Puerto, was the first woman elected to statewide office, as a legislator in the state Chamber of Deputies for San Luis Potosí in 1925 (although she was not allowed to take her elected seat). Yet it is important to underscore that the expansion of women's political rights, as well as freedoms in their day-to-day lives, were goals woven into the fabric of Yucatecan socialism from a very early stage. In the words of Gonzalo Ruz, the secretary of Yucatán's Socialist Workers' Congress of 1918:

The Mexican woman, like the Russian woman, has sufficiently proved her ability not only to take care of her home, but also to understand socialist ideals, contributing not only in the field of ideas, but also in the field of battle. Regarding the Yucatecan woman and especially the woman worker, she has liberal ideas, and being intelligent and free of all prejudices of those rooted in the higher classes, she will be an effective collaborator in the implantation of the socialist systems. The man has suffered the tyranny of the laws and of the capital and the woman has not only suffered the tyranny of the laws and of the capital, but also the opprobrious tyranny of the husbands, of the parents and sometimes even of the children. In these times when even the firmest foundations of prejudice are being shaken, it is a responsibility of humanity to see that women take an active role in the cause of their revindication, and one of the means is that they take part in government administrations.<sup>14</sup>

Support for women's rights by the Yucatecan socialists took various forms in the state, such as guaranteeing spaces for new mothers to breastfeed at their workplaces in the state labour code and distributing pamphlets on birth control by Margaret Sanger, to give just two lesser-known examples.<sup>15</sup> Commitment to women's political rights was also embedded in Carrillo Puerto's and the PSS's national political project. In his role as one of Yucatán's elected legislators in the federal Chamber of Deputies, one of Carrillo Puerto's first proposed pieces of federal legislation was to amend the federal constitution to politically enfranchise Mexican women at the federal level.<sup>16</sup> Introduced to the larger Chamber of Deputies by the socialist members of the Yucatecan delegation in December 1920, this proposed suffrage amendment was one of the first attempts of its kind. It followed the demurral on the issue by delegates to the constitutional congress in Querétaro in 1917, who explicitly declined to politically enfranchise Mexican women. When it came to women's suffrage, Mexico as a country lagged far behind Yucatán, as well as other states in the larger socialist southeast which were at the very forefront of extending political rights to Mexican women in the late 1910s to the mid-1920s. Although women's suffrage was never formally inscribed into law in Yucatán in the postrevolutionary period, during Carrillo Puerto's governorship women's voting rights were recognised in practice, making Yucatecan women the first in Mexico to cast ballots in state-level elections, closely followed by women in San Luis Potosí in 1923 and then Tabasco and Chiapas in 1925 (not coincidentally, both governed by socialists and Carrillo Puerto allies). Mexican women's full citizenship rights would not be recognised at the federal level for another 33 years after the proposed suffrage amendment in 1920 by the Yucatecan legislative delegation, and Mexican women would not be granted the right to vote in a presidential election until 1958.<sup>17</sup>

While Carrillo Puerto's political achievements were not his alone, among them was his substantial effort to institutionalise socialism in Yucatán and then the larger southeast. This in and of itself was revolutionary and served as a critically important precedent for the nation. Carrillo Puerto was particularly well ahead of the curve of Mexican postrevolutionary political institutionalisation when it came to his understanding of a political party as the best vehicle for managing multi-class political alliances with large popular constituencies. Up to that point, political parties in Mexico were typically short lived,

personalist, only active during election cycles, purely local or, most often, some combination thereof. These were not enduring institutions organised around a group of commonly held political beliefs and/or long-term goals. Building on the foundations he inherited from Alvarado's Socialist Party of Yucatán, Carrillo Puerto's goals and vision for the PSS and what it could accomplish in both the near and long term were new, and groundbreaking.<sup>18</sup>

Carrillo Puerto described these goals in a private letter to Obregón in 1920 on the tenth anniversary of the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution:

The Socialist Party desires that its members provide a lofty example of fraternity that will be capable of mellowing our political opponents, for only equality, justice, peace, and respect for the rights guaranteed by both Law and civilization can quench their unjustified hatreds and welcome those who today fight against us to form part of our Socialist party, as the synthesis of the political evolution reached in our country.<sup>19</sup>

This was a call for postrevolutionary pacification via political institutionalisation; it is not markedly different in its substance to Calles's own assessment, nearly a decade later, that Mexico 'must become a nation of institutions and laws', his famous justification for the creation of the National Revolutionary Party (PNR), built on southeastern socialist foundations. I argue that the most important long-term contribution by Carrillo Puerto to Mexico's postrevolutionary political consolidation and state formation was the set of precedents he established in the southeast in service of these goals, enshrined in the design and practices of the PSS, which were later substantially adapted in the design of the PNR.<sup>20</sup> For my purposes here, and in the interest of disambiguating myth from history, it is important to underscore that this was also understood to be one of his greatest achievements during his lifetime – and by Calles specifically. In a visit to Yucatán in 1921, Calles said as much:

In Yucatán, the people have already achieved their liberties and its rights; the authorities are the legitimate representation of the people, and the new ones that will come will also be the result of the conscious vote of all of the citizens of the state. This beautiful feat that the people of Yucatán have achieved is because of not one man, nor myself, nor the President of the Republic, nor of any other official; this feat belongs exclusively to the Socialist Party of the Southeast.<sup>21</sup>

Calles was Carrillo Puerto's strongest ally and supporter in Mexico City, but even in an era in which Calles's enemies described him as a Bolshevik, he was substantially more moderate than Carrillo Puerto in most matters, save perhaps anticlericalism. Notably, what Calles was praising here was not ideological socialism at all, but rather, the groundbreaking achievements of Carrillo Puerto and the PSS in building viable, functional political institutions, led and organised by a powerful political party and using those tools to put the new revolutionary constitution into practice. It is an especially telling insight into the most important political alliance of Carrillo Puerto's career and the shared interests and goals that underwrote it.

## **Southeastern socialism on the national political stage**

Calles's strong support of Carrillo Puerto in this period was notorious, and controversial enough in Mexico City that legislators in the federal Chamber of Deputies formed a special commission in 1921 to investigate Calles's alleged illegal shipments of arms to the socialists of Yucatán, via Belize.<sup>22</sup> Ben Fallaw has argued that Calles valued Carrillo Puerto as an ally, partly because of his independence from Obregón and that Calles protected Carrillo Puerto from Obregón as part of their political contract.<sup>23</sup> From the outset, this relationship was fundamentally about national politics as much as it was about regional politics. By the early 1920s, Carrillo Puerto and the PSS were collaborating closely with key Calles allies, particularly the leaders of the Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) and with one of Calles's political advisers, Robert Haberman. These collaborations were meant to help the PSS to consolidate its political gains at the state and regional levels, but also to build a national network of Calles allies well in advance of his presidential campaign in 1924. It was not for nothing, then, that aggrieved federal legislators also complained in 1921 that Calles was already campaigning for the presidency in Tabasco, Yucatán and Campeche.<sup>24</sup>

Carrillo Puerto's national political relationships were the product of years of careful alliance-building, negotiation and experience in the national capital and part of carefully laying the groundwork for putting his long-term political vision into practice. This began well before his governorship, when in 1919 Carrillo Puerto committed the Yucatecan socialists to delivering the entire southeast for Obregón's presidential candidacy. Carrillo Puerto and the Yucatecan socialists impressed Calles, Obregón and others as they did because this was a credible claim. The socialists had pioneered a way to build substantive relationships between local, state and national politics and between national politicians and local constituencies, managed and moderated by an unprecedentedly powerful, well-institutionalised political party. The PSS's relationships with communities at the grassroots level and with power brokers in Mexico City thus became equally important elements of Carrillo Puerto's socialist regime once he came to power in 1922. His close working relationship with Calles was most important, but it was only part of a broader network of carefully crafted alliances that facilitated Carrillo Puerto's status as a national political figure by the early 1920s.

Although very little has been made of it in the many works dedicated to Carrillo Puerto's career, in 1920–2, while he was busy building the PSS into a genuinely regional organisation, Carrillo Puerto additionally served as one of Yucatán's federal legislators in the Chamber of Deputies. Indeed, a common complaint among his fellow legislators was how frequently he was absent from the Chamber, on urgent business in Yucatán. Carrillo Puerto's understanding of local and regional politics as governor were necessarily coloured by his previous political experience at the national level.

In these years, Yucatán's federal legislative delegation was distinguished by having two opposing local political party presidents elected as federal legislators in 1920: Carrillo Puerto of the PSS, and the president of the Liberal Party of Yucatán (PLY), Miguel Alonzo Romero, who also served Yucatán as a federal legislator in this period.<sup>25</sup> The PLY was founded in Mexico City in the mid-1910s by exiled members of the hyper-wealthy Yucatecan planter class in response to Alvarado and Carrillo Puerto's growing influence and power in the state.<sup>26</sup> These political adversaries were both in Mexico City at the same time, actively helping to craft national legislation and further the interests of their state, as well as their respective parties. They both also had unsurpassed access to other national power brokers and the national political stage from within the Chamber of Deputies and unparalleled national exposure for their respective parties and political platforms at home.

One of the first debates in the Chamber of Deputies in which Carrillo Puerto and Alonzo Romero were involved was over the certification of the recent legislative elections in Yucatán.<sup>27</sup> It became an opportunity for both sides to articulate what they believed was at stake in Yucatán for an audience of national lawmakers. During a debate over the validity of his own election that ran late into the evening, Carrillo Puerto did not hesitate to use the opportunity to attack his political adversaries and simultaneously, to publicise his own political programme for Yucatán. His attacks against the Yucatecan Liberals were both political and *ad hominem*, including the accusation that Alonzo Romero kept slaves on his hacienda in Yucatán. Romero responded with a series of equally sharp counter accusations. During this debate, Carrillo Puerto also launched into a lengthy historical exegesis of the state's revolutionary history from the socialist perspective, followed by a passionate defence of the PSS's achievements and of his political programme for the benefit of all his fellow legislators – and undoubtedly for the benefit of the national press and the powerful contemporary political grapevine. He also wrote to Calles to complain about Alonzo Romero's attacks against the PSS within the Chamber, and to decry Romero's request that more federal troops be sent to Yucatán.<sup>28</sup>

It is notable that the perception of the PSS in Mexico City was consistently a point of considerable consternation for the Yucatecan socialists. This was raised repeatedly at the Congress of Izamal in 1921, including by Carrillo Puerto himself. As he put it to the delegates in Mayan: 'if you all knew how to read and write, you'd read the insults that are foisted upon us by paid, mercenary journalists in the Capital.'<sup>29</sup> Later the same day, the congress sent a telegram to Calles asking for his support and to intervene with President Obregón to prevent attacks against workers by federal forces, both in Yucatán and nationwide, and to emphasise to Calles that they were under attack in Mexico City by dishonest journalists who sought to discredit them.<sup>30</sup> This further underlines that Carrillo Puerto and his associates, but also their antagonists, understood Mexico City to be an important theatre of their political struggle against each other at the state level. Conversely, at the same time, they hoped that their allies in the national capital would protect them at the local level, including in the media. Carrillo Puerto repeatedly sought to counteract the bias of the Yucatecan press by reporting crimes committed against socialists directly to Calles, bemoaning that they received no coverage in the state's Liberal-owned newspapers.



This correspondence comprised a litany of crimes and abuses at the local level across the state, from the theft of crops and livestock, to arson, to the drowning of socialists in cenotes.<sup>31</sup> In nearly all of these examples, it is clear that by this time the socialists understood Calles to be their protector and most important ally.

After years working to build the PSS, first in Yucatán and then beyond it, Carrillo Puerto assumed power in his home state as its governor in 1922. In his own words, delivered in Mayan after his inauguration, Carrillo Puerto pronounced that it was 'the end of the era of propaganda for the Socialist Party, and the beginning of the era of work', when the party would no longer be actively impeded by political enemies in its efforts to govern for the benefit of the workers of Yucatán.<sup>32</sup> In rhetoric far more recognisably socialist than anything Salvador Alvarado had ever articulated, Carrillo Puerto declared:

It is necessary for us to tell the all-powerful [*todopoderosos*] that we know well that work existed before capital; because of that, it is only just that those who produce everything have a right to everything that exists, not just a minority, which absorbs everything without any effort to develop anything ... We must plant all of the lands in Yucatán; we will plant all that we can; We will plant henequen, which produces great riches, so that this reaches the hands of the people, that have the indisputable right to enjoy that wealth ... You being of the land, and you being the ones that work the land, it is natural that the harvests also belong to you.<sup>33</sup>

Although he was now closely allied with the Sonorans, who had belonged to the revolutionary faction that had defeated the forces of Emiliano Zapata in Morelos in 1919, here Carrillo Puerto echoed the Zapatistas, with whom he had worked as an agronomist for a time during the revolution, in his insistence that the land and the wealth it produced rightfully belonged to the people who worked it. Strikingly, Calles strongly endorsed this project in Yucatán, despite his own clear reservations in other contexts about long-term land redistribution and collective landholding in the form of *ejidos*. 'I will never cease giving *ejido* lands to the pueblos,' Carrillo Puerto boldly declared in 1922 to his most important ally.<sup>34</sup>

A critically important backdrop to all of this was Yucatán's economy, which was faltering badly at this time. This caused Carrillo Puerto and the socialist state government to become even more reliant on their relationships with Obregón and Calles. In 1921, when annual henequen revenues dropped precipitously by 55 per cent, Carrillo Puerto was forced to plead for emergency loans from the federal government.<sup>35</sup> The federal government was deeply invested – literally as well as politically – in Yucatán's economic stability to the tune of millions of pesos.<sup>36</sup> The crisis was severe enough for President Obregón to authorise the federal government to cover the state's public education budget and pay its teachers for as long as was necessary.<sup>37</sup>

Obregón wasn't a radical, and he seems to have been substantially more ambivalent about southeastern socialism than Calles, but as president, he needed allies he could trust at the state level who were capable of ensuring political order, and in this case, who could steer an important state away from the brink of economic collapse.<sup>38</sup> His relationship with Carrillo Puerto and the PSS must be understood in this light: Obregón's support of Carrillo Puerto's ascent to power was not simply a matter of political alliance, it was also a vote of confidence for Carrillo Puerto's ability to handle the state's economic crisis in a manner that was favourable to the federal government. Carrillo Puerto understood this, and the stakes. He pleaded with Calles to explain to Obregón and Minister of Finance Adolfo de la Huerta that he and the other politicians in the state were doing everything they could to solve the economic crisis in which they found themselves and in no way intended or desired the negative impact that faltering henequen revenues had on the nation.<sup>39</sup> But he also protested to Obregón that Yucatán deserved special consideration and assistance from the federal government after so many instances of the state financing Venustiano Carranza's government during the 1910s, often prejudicially to Yucatán itself.<sup>40</sup>

## The Socialist Party of the Southeast

Perhaps the most underappreciated element of Carrillo Puerto's politics is his regional and national ambitions for the application of his socialist model outside Yucatán. During his lifetime, his power, influence and example extended far beyond the state's borders; he didn't just want to liberate the Mayas of Yucatán, but also the Mayas of Campeche and Chiapas and then onwards from there. Carrillo Puerto's re-naming of his party as the PSS in 1921 was a very sincere and serious statement of intent (and not just purely aspirational) and a plan that was already in action at the time of his death. From the time the party

was renamed, the Yucatecan socialists worked assiduously to build their state party into a multi-state regional organisation across the larger southeast, beginning with neighbouring Campeche. Critically, especially for understanding the national significance of the PSS, this was a project undertaken in active collaboration with national labour leaders and close allies of Calles and Obregón. This regional political project was therefore also a national one.

The Second Workers' Congress of Izamal in 1921 was the most important step taken by the southeastern socialists to formalise the party's regional expansion. It included delegates that represented *ligas de resistencia* in Campeche, but also in the territory of Quintana Roo, as well as a few from national organisations like the CROM. It formalised the working relationship between the socialist parties of Yucatán and Campeche and by extension, gave real institutional substance to the renaming of the PSS earlier that year. At the same time, it formalised the subsidiary relationship between the socialist parties of Yucatán and Campeche. From the outset, before the congress even happened and as the delegates were formally convened, the *Liga Central de Resistencia* of Yucatán was allowed to send ten representatives to the Congress, while its counterpart in Campeche was only invited to send five.<sup>41</sup>

Socialists from Campeche duly participated in the Congress, including in the critically important debates about whether the southeastern socialists should formally join the Third International.<sup>42</sup> Significantly, the first topic under consideration for the newly united socialists of Yucatán and Campeche at Izamal was the creation of a federal council of *ligas de resistencia*.<sup>43</sup> This was formed at the Congress in September 1921, again underscoring the ambitions and national vision of Carrillo Puerto and his allies. Yet, it was always the Yucatecans that were meant to lead the larger project. It was agreed by the delegates that all member *ligas* from all states were subject to the principles agreed upon at the congresses of Motul and Izamal – although the former, three years earlier, consisted of only the Yucatecan socialists and their allies. And, the delegates agreed, the head of the federal council of *ligas de resistencia* would be the president of the PSS.<sup>44</sup>

Just as critically, leaders of the CROM were also present and played an active role at the Congress of Izamal – Juan Rico and Samuel Yúdico, with the former elected by the delegates as the vice president of the Congress. Thus, although the Congress was a touchstone event for the PSS, it was also one that was fundamentally concerned with the party's national relationships, alliances and national profile, with the CROM given a prominent leadership position at the seminal gathering of the PSS.<sup>45</sup> For Rico, the stakes of this relationship were high: as a representative of the CROM he understood the centrality of the PSS as a bulwark against reactionary capitalism and its attacks against working people on a national scale. As he pronounced to the delegates at Izamal, moments after being sworn in as their vice president:

You must never for an instant lose sight, comrades, that your responsibility is not limited to the narrow stretch occupied by southeastern Mexico. Something else must be borne in mind. We refer to the organized workers of the entire Mexican region. They can resist the furious onslaughts of capitalism, because they have faith in the firmness of the constitution of each of the groups that together form the great body of the Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana. And if a strong nucleus such as the one you have formed in the Southeast of Mexico, due to low unconscious opportunist passions or too much confidence, or for any other reason, ceases at any given moment to present a solid front against the enemies, we will have the misfortune of contemplating once again the bitter days when praetorianism was rampaging against our defenceless brothers.

Rico went on to emphasise that a critical part of the alliance between the PSS and the CROM was that every member of the southeastern *ligas de resistencia* now belonged to the national labour confederation too.<sup>46</sup>

At least on paper, if not in practice, following the Congress of Izamal, the Socialist Agrarian Party of Campeche, led by Ramón Félix Flores, was formally known as the *Liga Central de Resistencia* of the PSS in Campeche. What's more, the new organisational structure that emerged from the Congress made all the *ligas de resistencia* of all the socialist parties of Yucatán, Campeche and the territory of Quintana Roo constituent parts of the *Liga Central de Resistencia* of Yucatán. In accordance with the balance between local autonomy and centralised authority that characterised the basic southeastern socialist political model, all member *ligas* in the larger confederation maintained their local autonomy, but all presidential nominations were to be made through the *Liga Central* in Mérida, which was led and controlled by Carrillo Puerto.<sup>47</sup> As Ángel Omar May González highlights, in practice, this did mean

substantial interference in Campeche state politics by the Yucatecan socialists.<sup>48</sup> This was not always well received by President Obregón, who, with evident annoyance, asked Flores in 1922 to cease involving Carrillo Puerto in matters that did not concern him. In some cases, this also involved Carrillo Puerto's meddling in the naming of federal authorities in Campeche, a clear usurpation of the federal government's role and power at the state level.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, in the years that followed, Carrillo Puerto persisted in giving active political support to Flores and the socialists of Campeche at both the regional and national levels. As May González puts it, 'Campeche participated in national politics as a chess piece that moved in favour of or against the federation, and/or Yucatán.'<sup>50</sup>

Although there were no delegates from Chiapas or Tabasco at the Congress of Izamal, the planned expansion of the PSS included those two states, plus the territory of Quintana Roo. This part of the PSS expanding its reach and increasing its alliances is less well documented, but telling pieces of evidence exist to show that this expansion was in progress at the time of Carrillo Puerto's death in 1924 and indicate the national alliances embedded within it. For instance, in 1923, representatives of the CROM-allied local Socialist Party of Soconusco, Chiapas, wrote to Calles, describing their party as a PSS subsidiary and themselves as representatives of their 1,000 members, whose votes they promised to deliver for him in the upcoming presidential election. They took the opportunity to request some photographs of Calles for use in their local newspaper, along with 5,000 buttons with his photograph inside their black and red circle logo.<sup>51</sup>

Contemporary accounts also give credence to how the pan-southeastern expansion of the PSS had progressed or, at the very least, how the party was understood on the national political map in the last years of Carrillo Puerto's life. At the time of his death, including in posthumous tributes, he was commonly described as presiding over a party that represented Yucatán, Campeche, Chiapas and Tabasco.<sup>52</sup> Carrillo Puerto himself had staked this claim as early as 1919, when he already had an eye on the national political stage and promised to deliver the southeast for Obregón's presidential campaign. Four years later, he was substantially closer to achieving this kind of regional political power over an expanse that comprised roughly 12 per cent of the national territory.<sup>53</sup> What's more, he had done it in a region that no national politician had previously been able to credibly claim as political territory. Carrillo Puerto thus put the southeast on Mexico's political map in a new way. In journalist Alonso Capetillo's 1925 account, by 1923, the southeastern socialists, led by Carrillo Puerto, also constituted an important element of a three-way alliance, along with the CROM and the *agraristas*, within the federal Chamber of Deputies, which gave the PSS, and by extension Carrillo Puerto himself, even more political power and importance in Mexico City.<sup>54</sup> It also had important consequences in Yucatán, and for the socialists' political practices: as Pedro Castro emphasises, the PSS, with collaboration from the CROM, repressed the railroad strike of 1922 that threatened the already fragile regional economy.<sup>55</sup>

The southeastern socialists' relationships to national politics, and the regional scope of the PSS as it existed by 1923, were both made especially clear during Calles's presidential campaign that year. In Yucatán, when the PSS convened delegates in Mérida to offer their presidential nomination of Plutarco Elías Calles that August, those delegates came from across the larger region, representing socialist parties and their *ligas de resistencia* across the neighbouring states of Campeche and Chiapas. In Mexico City, it was the socialist-laborista-agrarista legislative bloc that supported Calles's nomination to the presidency within the Chamber of Deputies, in contrast to the majority bloc of the National Cooperatist Party, which supported Adolfo de la Huerta's insurgent candidacy.

## Final days

Perhaps nothing else about Carrillo Puerto has been subject to more scrutiny than his tragic death in January 1924 when he was assassinated by rebel soldiers who supported the armed rebellion of former Minister of Finance Adolfo de la Huerta. This is well-covered ground, yet there are a few relevant points to be made about how we understand what happened to Carrillo Puerto but, above all, about how he responded.

For months, Carrillo Puerto had feared that the political rebellion brewing in Mexico City as de la Huerta split with Obregón and Calles could have terrible consequences for Yucatán and he repeatedly begged Calles for arms and troops to defend his state government.<sup>56</sup> When the de la Huerta rebellion drew closer to Yucatán, Carrillo Puerto convened a meeting with Ramón Félix Flores, the socialist governor of Campeche, and the federal military commanders of both states, as well as the leaders of

the PSS, to plan a defence strategy.<sup>57</sup> Nearly a month before Carrillo Puerto's death, Flores telegraphed him to assure him that as part of the PSS, the Campeche socialists would continue to support the federal government and President Obregón. And, like Carrillo Puerto notoriously did, Flores also suggested to Obregón that, given the level of popular support for his state government in Campeche, the federal forces in Campeche could be safely dispatched to combat the rebellion in Veracruz, a recommendation that Obregón followed.<sup>58</sup>

Carrillo Puerto's decision to send Yucatán's garrison to defend Campeche from the rebels was therefore not a poorly considered act, as it is sometimes described, but a strategic one, grounded in the importance he gave to his multi-state political coalition which was consolidated within the PSS. Indeed, according to one contemporary source, Carrillo Puerto urgently reached out to the presidents of the *ligas de resistencia* across the entire southeast, as well as those states' civil and military authorities, to join him and the PSS in combatting the rebellion.<sup>59</sup> He was also in communication with Tomás Garrido Canabal in Tabasco to plan their shared defence, as well as mutual combat against rebel forces.<sup>60</sup> Carrillo Puerto correctly assessed this to be an insurgency that threatened all of the southeast and with it, the socialist project he had worked to cultivate across the larger region. He seems to have done so before Calles and Obregón came to a similar conclusion. Their failure to send much-needed arms and troops to Yucatán, despite Carrillo Puerto pleading with Calles for defensive reinforcements for months, was not, as has sometimes been suggested, a purposeful abandonment of Carrillo Puerto, but rather a strategic error driven by logistical and supply challenges, including the lack of available troops and weaponry at a critical moment in December 1923.<sup>61</sup> Calles and Obregón also very likely made these difficult decisions about where to send available military resources partly based on Carrillo Puerto's long-standing assurances to them that the *ligas de resistencia* could defend the entire region – perhaps true politically, but not militarily, as it turned out. As Castro Martínez emphasises, the rebels' first target in Mérida was a telling one, in terms of what it reveals about the political motives of the rebellion and its supporters in Yucatán: they set fire to the office of the *Liga Central de Resistencia*.<sup>62</sup> Carrillo Puerto himself was a threat to the interests that supported the rebellion, but the spread and consolidation of his socialist political model was an even bigger one.

In the days and weeks after his death, Carrillo Puerto was eulogised by many people as an apostle and martyr of socialism, including by Calles and the leadership of the CROM's Labor Party as a 'gladiator'.<sup>63</sup> But a less flowery tribute is perhaps more apt and more eloquent in its accuracy. Several weeks after Carrillo Puerto's murder, organised workers in the state of Tamaulipas published an open letter, which read in part:

It would be very difficult for us to resign ourselves to leave without due and justified vengeance the death of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, that generous, prodigal, liberal and disinterested man, who dedicated his best energies in developing his humanitarian feelings, redeeming from slavery thousands of compatriots who groaned under the iron and iniquitous power of those enriched with the sweat and blood of the workers, and who, *abandoning useless utopias, worked energetically and decisively for socialism well understood and better practiced*.<sup>64</sup>

After Carrillo Puerto's death, his broader regional and national vision for socialism was sometimes invoked. At the Alliance of Socialist Parties of Mexico in 1926, convened to support the re-election bid of former president Alvaro Obregón, Luis Torregrosa of Yucatán proclaimed as much: 'Who is going to attack this Alliance? Because it is no longer the Socialist Party of Mexico, it is no longer the Socialist Party of Tamaulipas, it is no longer the Radical Socialist Party of Tabasco; now it is going to be the whole Republic.'<sup>65</sup> Three years after his death, at least eight Mexican socialist parties and political clubs named after Carrillo Puerto attended the Socialist Alliance's only meeting: they hailed from the states of Hidalgo, Michoacán, Morelos, Nayarit and San Luis Potosí.

## Conclusions

This is not a comprehensive re-evaluation of Carrillo Puerto's career, nor of its significance. Rather, my principal goal is to give those the national context they have rarely received and to highlight some less well-known features of the practice of Yucatecan socialism and its contemporary national significance. All of this is important to us now because Carrillo Puerto's legacy is critical to explaining how a political project in a region of Mexico that has long been considered exceptional and relatively marginal to

national politics in this period had such an outsize influence on the design of the postrevolutionary political system. Southeastern socialism was a vital precedent for Calles's subsequent founding of the PNR a few years later, which was organised along very similar lines in its early years as a network of pre-existing parties that would eventually be absorbed into the national party. It began by giving a lot of autonomy to its constituent organisations, moving towards greater centralisation by the early 1930s. The demonstrable advantages of Carrillo Puerto's basic model were obvious and had already been proven by the southeastern socialists at the state and local level.

By the time of his assassination in January 1924, Carrillo Puerto had worked for the better part of a decade to build the PSS and its *ligas de resistencia* into a formidable political machine, strongly supported by a well-organised and disciplined grassroots base which largely consisted of previously disenfranchised Indigenous workers and *campesinos*. For these reasons, he was in some senses rightly regarded as the singularly most important politician of the southeast in these years. Yet, Carrillo Puerto himself spent most of those years building a political project in which he did not stand alone, including at the local, regional and national levels. The least well known of these is the history of his extensive efforts during the final years of his life to expand his socialist political project and the scope of the PSS to the regional level, across the larger southeast and with national political goals very much in mind. As I have shown here, this plan was well advanced by the time Carrillo Puerto was killed and it was continued in the following years for their own political purposes and most likely not always in ways that Carrillo Puerto would have envisioned or supported.

In the spirit of foregrounding the politician over his mythology, one hundred years after his death, I give Carrillo Puerto the last word on his political vision for Yucatán, for all of Mexico and 'even for the world':

With their own communal lands, with good roads, with schools in all neighbourhoods, with diversified agricultural products for self-sustainability, with social organization in each village to attend to the spiritual and social needs of the population, with the cultivation of more than one product for export, with cooperative organizations of production and consumption – because when the large haciendas are deprived of slave labour they cannot continue to subsist except on a cooperative basis, with the production of native crafts, music and dances and the deliberate introduction of scientific advances into our lives, we will have, in a single generation, a new Yucatán. We will have a Yucatán that will preserve all that is rich, beautiful and useful in the tradition of the Maya and, at the same time, a Yucatán that can absorb all the new uses that modern science provides. We will be able to caress our soil, to foster the life of our own group, to grow and develop as free and strong men who will be an example for the rest of Mexico and even for the world. All this and more we will be able to do thanks to the characteristics of our people. The future of Yucatán belongs to the Maya.<sup>66</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Paoli Bolio and Montalvo Ortega, *El socialismo olvidado de Yucatán*, 218. All translations from the Spanish are the author's own.
- <sup>2</sup> Andrés Manuel López Obrador, 'Centenario luctuoso de Felipe Carrillo Puerto', Motul, Yucatán, 3 January 2024.
- <sup>3</sup> On local implementations of these reforms, see, in particular, Eiss, *In the Name of El Pueblo*.
- <sup>4</sup> Osten, *The Mexican Revolution's Wake*.
- <sup>5</sup> Alvarado, *Actuación revolucionaria del General Salvador Alvarado en Yucatán*, 55.
- <sup>6</sup> 'Mexican 6-Yr. Plan to Change Social Set-Up', *The Milwaukee Leader*, 21 March 1935, 4. For a more in-depth analysis of this interview and of Garrido's politics and adaptation of Yucatecan-style socialism, see Osten, 'Lawyers, guns and money'.
- <sup>7</sup> *Tierra y libertad*, 3.
- <sup>8</sup> Fideicomiso Archivos Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca, Fondo Plutarco Elías Calles (hereafter FAPECFT-PEC), expediente: 25, CARRILLO PUERTO, Felipe, legajo 3/7, fojas 151–5, inventario 830. Carrillo Puerto to Calles, 3 April 1922.
- <sup>9</sup> Paoli Bolio and Montalvo Ortega, *El socialismo olvidado*, 103.
- <sup>10</sup> Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Fondo Ejecutivo, Gobernación, c. 645, 1918. Representative of District 10 to Carlos Castro Morales, 30 November 1918.
- <sup>11</sup> *Tierra y libertad*, 23. Capitalisation in original.

- Congreso Obrero de Izamal, 23.
- 'Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados', Legislatura XXIX – Año I – Período Ordinario – 2 September 1920 – Número de Diario 11.
- Tierra y libertad*, 60.
- FAPECFT-PEC, expediente: 25, CARRILLO PUERTO, Felipe, legajo 3/7, fojas 140–1, inventario 830. General Alejandro Mange to Plutarco Elías Calles, 14 March 1922.
- 'Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados'. Legislatura XXIX – Año I – Período Ordinario – 24 December 1920 – Número de Diario 97.
- See Osten, 'A crooked path to the franchise'.
- See a discussion of this by Moreno, who argues that the PSS represented the first modern political party of the postrevolutionary era, explicitly opposed to the older Porfirian conception of party politics. Moreno, *Los partidos políticos del México contemporáneo*, 88–9.
- Fideicomiso Archivo Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca, Fondo Alvaro Obregón, fondo: 11, serie: 30400, expediente: 135: CARRILLO PUERTO, Felipe, fojas 31–5. Felipe Carrillo Puerto to Alvaro Obregón, 20 November 1920.
- Osten, *The Mexican Revolution's Wake*.
- The speech is reproduced in Calles, *Pensamiento político y social*, 57–9.
- Mantilla, *Hombre nuevo, mundo antiguo*, 141.
- Fallaw, 'Los Límites de la Revolución', 3.
- 'Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados'. Legislatura XXIX – Año I – Período Extraordinario – 17 February 1921 – Número de Diario 8.
- 'Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados'. Legislatura XXIX – Año I – Período Ordinario – 2 September 1920 – Número de Diario 11.
- Joseph, *Revolution from Without*, 116.
- 'Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados'. Legislatura XXIX – Año I – Período Ordinario – 2 September 1920 – Número de Diario 11.
- FAPECFT-PEC, expediente: 25: CARRILLO PUERTO, Felipe, legajo 1/7, fojas 57–60, inventario 830. Felipe Carrillo Puerto to Plutarco Elías Calles, 24 July 1921.
- Congreso Obrero de Izamal, 24.
- Congreso Obrero de Izamal, 43.
- See, for example, FAPECFT-PEC, expediente: 25, CARRILLO PUERTO, Felipe, legajo 1/7, fojas 56–60, inventario 830. Felipe Carrillo Puerto to Plutarco Elías Calles, 24 July 1921.
- Rico, *Yucatán: La huelga de junio*, vol. 1, 55.
- Rico, *Yucatán: La huelga de junio*, vol. 1, 55–6.
- Calles, *Correspondencia personal*, vol. 2, 474–5. Felipe Carrillo Puerto to Plutarco Elías Calles, 8 February 1922.
- FAPECFT-PEC, expediente: 25, CARRILLO PUERTO, Felipe, legajo 1/7, foja 55, inventario 830. Felipe Carrillo Puerto to Plutarco Elías Calles, 21 July 1921.
- Archivo General de la Nación de Mexico, Fondo Obregón-Calles (hereafter AGN-OC), 424-H-2, Leg. 1. P. Ayuso y Oribe to Alvaro Obregón, 28 January 1921.
- AGN-OC, 424-H-2, Leg. 1. Alvaro Obregón to Felipe Carrillo Puerto, 4 January 1921.
- On the henequen economy in this period, see, in particular, the classic work on the subject: Joseph, *Revolution from Without*.
- Calles, *Correspondencia personal*, vol. 2, 470–3. Felipe Carrillo Puerto to Plutarco Elías Calles, 21 August 1921.
- AGN-OC, 424-H-2, Leg. 1. Felipe Carrillo Puerto to Alvaro Obregón, 26 January 1921.
- Segundo Congreso Obrero de Izamal*, 10.
- May González, *Los primeros años de la posrevolución en Campeche*, 131.
- Segundo Congreso Obrero de Izamal*, 10.
- Congreso Obrero de Izamal*, 108–9.
- Congreso Obrero de Izamal*, 34.
- Congreso Obrero de Izamal*, 36–7, 41.
- May González, *Los primeros años de la posrevolución en Campeche*, 107–8.
- May González, *Los primeros años de la posrevolución en Campeche*, 132.
- May González, *Los primeros años de la posrevolución en Campeche*, 137–8.
- May González, *Los primeros años de la posrevolución en Campeche*, 131.

- 51 FAPECFT, APEC anexo, Fondo 3, serie 401, expediente 5: ADHESIONES A LA CANDIDATURAPRESIDENCIAL DEL GRAL. PLUTARCO ELIAS CALLES. CHIAPAS, legajo 1/1, foja 12, inventario 1198. Partido Socialista de Soconusco to Plutarco Elías Calles, 2 October 1923.
- 52 Capetillo, *La rebelión sin cabeza*, 15–16.
- 53 Osten, *The Mexican Revolution's Wake*, 87.
- 54 Capetillo, *La rebelión sin cabeza*, 78.
- 55 Castro Martínez, 'Felipe Carrillo Puerto', 194.
- 56 Osten, *The Mexican Revolution's Wake*, 115–17.
- 57 Castro Martínez, 'Felipe Carrillo Puerto', 196–7.
- 58 Original telegrams reproduced in: Monroy Durán, *El último caudillo*, 202.
- 59 Duarte, *Fatalismo*, 10.
- 60 Monroy Durán, *El último caudillo*, 464.
- 61 Osten, *The Mexican Revolution's Wake*, 119–20.
- 62 Castro Martínez, 'Felipe Carrillo Puerto', 197.
- 63 Protesta del Partido Laborista Mexicano, 5 January 1924. Reproduced in Lacroix Macosay, *Felipe Carrillo Puerto*, 141.
- 64 'Protesta de los Obreros de Tamaulipas', 23 January 1924. Reproduced in Lacroix Macosay, *Felipe Carrillo Puerto*, 147–51. Emphasis added.
- 65 Alianza de Partidos Socialistas de la República, *Alianza de Partidos Socialistas de la República*.
- 66 Paoli Bolio and Montalvo Ortega, *El socialismo olvidado*, 223.

## Declarations and conflicts of interest

### Research ethics statement

Not applicable to this article.

### Consent for publication statement

Not applicable to this article.

### Conflicts of interest statement

The author declares no conflict of interest with this work. All efforts to sufficiently blind the author during peer review of this article have been made. The author declares no further conflicts with this article.

## References

- Alianza de Partidos Socialistas de la República. *Alianza de Partidos Socialistas de la República, primera convención, 'unión, tierra y libertad'*. Mexico: La Alianza, 1926.
- Alvarado, Salvador. *Actuación revolucionaria del General Salvador Alvarado en Yucatán*. Mexico: B. Costa-Amic, 1965.
- Calles, Plutarco Elías. *Correspondencia personal (1919–1945)*, edited by Carlos Macías, 2 vols. Mexico: Fideicomiso Archivos Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca, 1991.
- Calles, Plutarco Elías. *Pensamiento político y social: Antología (1913–1936)*, edited by Carlos Macías. Mexico: Fideicomiso Archivos Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca, 1994.
- Capetillo, Alonso. *La rebelión sin cabeza: Génesis y desarrollo del movimiento delahuertista*. Mexico: Imprenta Botas, 1925.
- Castro Martínez, Pedro. 'Felipe Carrillo Puerto: La muerte del dragón de los ojos verdes'. *Iztapalapa Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* 35, no. 76 (2014): 189–208. [CrossRef]
- Congreso Obrero de Izamal: *Segunda gran convención de trabajadores convocada por El Partido Socialista del Sureste de México*. Mérida: Compañía Tipográfica del Sureste, 1922.
- 'Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados'. H. Congreso de la Unión. Accessed 10 October 2024. <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDEBates/index.html>.

- Duarte, José D. *Fatalismo? Obra histórica que contiene: El movimiento de la Huertista en Yucatán; salida del gobernador Carrillo Puerto y compañeros; captura de estos; consejo sumariísimo, sentencia y ejecuciones*. Mérida, Yucatán, n.p., 1924.
- Eiss, Paul K. *In the Name of El Pueblo: Place, community, and the politics of history in Yucatán*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Fallow, Ben. 'Los Límites de la Revolución: Plutarco Elías Calles, Felipe Carrillo Puerto y el Socialismo Yucateco, 1921–1924'. *Boletín* 52 (2006): 1–31.
- Joseph, Gilbert M. *Revolution from Without: Yucatán, Mexico, and the United States, 1880–1924*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988.
- Lacroix Macosay, Berenice, ed. *Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Conciencia Cívica Nacional*. Mexico: Departamento del Distrito Federal, 1985.
- Mantilla, Jorge. *Hombre nuevo, mundo antiguo: Felipe Carrillo Puerto*. Mérida: Secretaría de Educación Pública del Estado de Yucatán, 2012.
- May González, Ángel Omar. *Los primeros años de la posrevolución en Campeche (1921–1929)*. Mexico: Instituto Mora, 2013.
- Monroy Durán, Luis. *El último caudillo: Apuntes para la historia de México, acerca del movimiento armado de 1923, en contra del gobierno constituido*. Mexico: J. S. Rodríguez, 1924.
- Moreno, Daniel A. *Los partidos políticos del México contemporáneo*, 8th ed. Mexico: B. Costa-Amic, 1982.
- Osten, Sarah. 'A crooked path to the franchise: The historical legacies of Mexico's failed 1937 Women's Suffrage Amendment'. *The Latin Americanist* 58, no. 2 (2014): . [CrossRef]
- Osten, Sarah. 'Lawyers, guns and money: Revolution, religion and authoritarianism in Tabasco, Mexico, 1920–1936'. In *Anti-Catholicism in the Mexican Revolution, 1913–1940*, edited by Jürgen Buchenau and David S. Dalton. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2024.
- Osten, Sarah. *The Mexican Revolution's Wake: The making of a political system, 1920–1929*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Paoli Bolio, Francisco José and Enrique Montalvo Ortega. *El socialismo olvidado de Yucatán: Elementos para una reinterpretación de la revolución mexicana*. Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1977.
- Rico, Juan. *Yucatán: La huelga de junio*, 2 vols. Mérida, n.p., 1922.
- Segundo Congreso Obrero de Izamal: Convocatoria a las ligas de resistencia por el Partido Socialista del Sureste*. Mexico: Centro de Estudios Históricos del Movimiento Obrero Mexicano, 1977.
- Tierra y libertad; bases que se discutieron y aprobaron en el Congreso Obrero celebrado en la ciudad de Motul para todas las ligas de resistencia del partido socialista de Yucatan*. Mérida: Talleres Tipográficos del Gobierno del Estado, 1921.