

PREFACE

Between 1926 and 1929 thousands of Mexicans fought and died in an attempt to overthrow the government of their country, a government which itself had come to power through violence. They were the Cristeros, so called because of their battle cry, *¡Viva Cristo Rey!*—Long live Christ the King! Their saga is the central focus of this book, but the Cristero rebellion's significance lies in its relation to two other conflicts broader in scope and implication than the warfare that devastated large areas of Mexico during those tragic years. The first was the longstanding enmity between Mexican Catholicism and the Mexican state, which in 1926 reached a climax that triggered insurrection. The second was the division within the Mexican church caused by the determination of Catholic militants to destroy the regime created by the 1910 revolution. These two conflicts, rather than military exploits, form the major part of this work. United States intervention in the struggle, official and unofficial, also receives detailed attention. It decisively influenced events, and I have tried to clarify the nature of that involvement.

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D. C. B.

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