

**THOMAS GAGE (1597–1656)**  
***A NEW SURVEY OF THE WEST INDIES (1648)***

The Spaniards that live about that Country (especially farmers of the valley of Mixco . . .) allege that all their trading, and farming, is for the good of the Commonwealth, and therefore whereas there are not Spaniards enough for so ample and large a Country to do all their work, and all are not able to buy slaves . . . they stand in need of the Indians help to serve them for their pay and hire; whereupon it hath been considered, that a partition of Indian labourers be made every Monday, or Sunday in the afternoon to the Spaniards, according to the farms they occupy, or according to their several employments, calling, and trading with Mules, or any other way. So that for such and such a district there is named an officer who is called *Juez Repartidor*, who according to a List made of every farm, house, and person, is to give so many Indians by the week. And here is a door opened to the President of Guatemala, and to the Judges to provide well for their menial servants, whom they commonly appoint for this office, which is thus performed by them.

They name the Town and place of their meeting upon Sunday or Monday, to which themselves and the Spaniards of that district do resort. The Indians of the several Towns are to have in a readiness so many labourers as the Court of Guatemala hath appointed to be weekly taken out of such a Town, who are conducted by an Indian officer to the Town of general meeting; and when they come thither with their tools, their spades, shovels, bills, or axes, with their provision of victuals for a week (which are commonly some dry cakes of Maiz, puddings of frijoles, or French beans, and a little Chile or biting long pepper, or a bit of cold meat for the first day or two) and with beds on their backs (which is only a coarse woolen mantle to wrap about them when they lie on the bare ground) then are they shut-up in the Town-house, some with blows, some with spurnings, some with boxes on the ear, if presently they go not in.

Now all being gathered together, and the house filled with them, the *Juez Repartidor* or officer, calls by the order of the List such and such a Spaniard, and also calls out of the house to many Indians as by the Court are commanded to be given him (some are allowed three, some four, some ten, some fifteen, some twenty, according to their employments) and deliverth unto the Spaniard his Indians, and so to all the rest, till they be all served; who when they receive their Indians, take from them a tool, or their mantles, to secure them that they run not away, and for every Indian delivered unto them, they give unto the *Juez Repartidor* or officer half a Real, which is three pence an Indian for his fees . . . The wages appointed them will scarce find them meat and drink, for they are not allowed a Real a day, which is but sixpence, and with that they are to find themselves, but for six days work and diet they are to have five Reals, which is half a Crown. This same order is observed in the City of Guatemala, and Towns of Spaniards, where to every family that wants the service of an Indian or Indians, though it be but to fetch water and wood on their backs, or to go of errants, is allowed the like service from the nearest Indian Towns.

Take from Thomas Gage, *A New Survey of the West Indies* (London: A. Clark, 1677), 312–314.