In what is sometimes called the age of absolutism, Castilian nobles and commoners, tribunals and towns, were to a considerable degree able to resist and shape royal commands. Whilst there was little open conflict, there was sometimes a surprising amount of autonomy, rights, and reciprocity on the part of the king’s vassals. This is a study of one such form of resistance: the opposition to military levies.

This opposition took place during a period of crisis, during the 1630s and 1640s, when the crown’s need to raise an army came into conflict with a notion of kingship that was far from absolute. From the king’s advisory councils to the Cortes, from city councils and seigneurial estates to the most humble villages, Castilians had recourse to a wide range of political and jurisdictional means with which to dispute the king’s claims and avoid conscription. They were not always successful, but the assurance with which they addressed the Crown reveals a society in which many people had a great deal to say about the definition and use of political power.

**Ruth MacKay** was educated at the University of California, Santa Cruz, at Stanford University, and at the University of California, Berkeley. This is her first book.
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## Contents

*Acknowledgments*  \hspace{1cm} page xi

Introduction  \hspace{1cm} 1

1 Recruitment and royal authority  \hspace{1cm} 21
2 Making soldiers of townsfolk  \hspace{1cm} 61
3 War, lords, and vassals  \hspace{1cm} 99
4 Common claims  \hspace{1cm} 132

Conclusion  \hspace{1cm} 173

*Glossary*  \hspace{1cm} 178

*Bibliography*  \hspace{1cm} 181

*Index*  \hspace{1cm} 191
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