

Work, Protest, and Identity in Latin America

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6

Race, Gender, and Protest in Ecuador

Marc Becker

Ecuador is among the Latin American nations given the least attention by scholars outside the country. Dominated by a small white elite, its economy was characterized by sharp contrasts in the size of landholdings, fierce competition to control scarce good lands, and domination by the United Fruit Company. Native American ethnic groups, themselves engaged in rivalries that had waxed and waned since the Inca conquest of the region, proved difficult to organize.

This selection by Marc Becker raises issues that bore heavily on the life of workers in the 1930s. He highlights cases of women from both the upper-class and popular sectors who worked to organize against the male-dominant political culture of the country. As Becker points out, many of the problems of class, race, and gender were embedded in the question of citizenship and citizens' rights. Although Ecuador was the first country in Latin America to extend suffrage to women (1929), this gesture was meaningless as long as it was not accompanied by a wider set of rights. If successful, a campaign to secure those rights would have given women access to privileges held exclusively by white men: to organize socially, to gain access to a bilingual education, and to bargain for labor. In reading the Becker selection it becomes clear that elite and Indian women in Ecuador were not interested in pursuing bilingual education to undermine Indian culture but rather to provide a vehicle for the rights of labor; women, and Native Americans. The dynamic women from the white and Indian sectors highlighted here overcame separate ethnicities in an effort to create new cultural identities.

On May 28, 1944, women and Indians joined with workers and students in a popular revolt that ousted the government of Ecuadorian resident Carlos Arroyo del Río. In the northern highland town of Cayambe, long-time Indian leader Dolores Cacuango led indigenous forces in an attack on the local army barracks. In Quito, women's committees played an important role in large antigovernment street demonstrations. White feminists including Nela Martínez and Luisa Gómez de la Torre were featured speakers in the protests, helped organize a human enclosure

around the government palace in Quito, and gained the surrender of the men stationed there. For three days, Martínez served as a minister of government.' Ecuador, one author observed, finally "was in the hands of its legitimate owners "

Despite the important roles white and Indian women played in this "Glorious May Revolution," white male political leaders excluded them from the subsequent government that emerged out of this revolt. Significant racial, class, and gender barriers deterred their full participation in society. Ecuador remained a deeply racially divided society that systematically barred the large Indian population from involvement in public affairs. A small elite class with a near monopoly on political and economic power attempted to keep the masses out of active decision-making processes. Furthermore, in a male-dominated society, women were relegated to the private, domestic sphere. All of these hurdles would have to be overcome in order to gain a political voice in the shaping of a society that would respond to their needs and concerns. This process would require that strong challenges be raised against the exclusion of Indians and women from the dominant society's constructions of citizenship rights.

Examining the relationships between white and Indian women in Ecuador highlights the types of alliances subaltern actors developed in their struggle to achieve social changes as well as the nature of the obstacles they needed to overcome in order to realize their goals. Rural, illiterate, Quichua-speaking indigenous women leaders including Dolores Cacuango and Tránsito Amaguaña played an active role in organizing social movements that challenged their exclusion. Urban, educated, Spanish-speaking white women such as Nela Martínez and Luisa Gómez de la Torre joined Indian women in these efforts to expand social opportunities and political power for both Indians and women. There were significant ethnic, class, and cultural gaps between the two groups, but they managed to cross these boundaries in order to struggle together for a common vision of social change. In the process, they influenced each other's notions of the role of class, gender, ethnicity, and citizenship rights in Ecuadorian society.

Citizens and Nationals

Women and Indians faced similar cultural barriers and legal obstacles that denied them access to citizenship rights and prevented their full participation in the political life of the country. This history of exclusion and repression facilitated alliances that crossed race, class, and gender boundaries. From the founding of the country of Ecuador in 1830 to the reforms that reimplemented civilian rule in 1979, every constitution recognized a fundamental distinction between "nationals" and "citizens." Nationals were those who were either born in Ecuador or who gained the status through a process of naturalization. To enjoy citizenship rights, the 1830 constitu-

tion required a person to be male, married or older than twenty-two years of age, own property worth at least 300 pesos or be engaged in an independent "useful" profession or industry (domestic servants and day laborers were explicitly excluded), and be able to read and write.³ Although not explicit about the subject, property and literacy requirements of the constitution excluded Indians from the body politic. With some minor variations (the age requirement varied between eighteen and twenty-one years, the property requirements were eliminated in 1861, the marriage requirement was dropped in 1897), these have been the determining factors for claiming citizenship throughout most of the country's history. As long as these legal hurdles remained, Indians and women could never hope to become fully participating members in society.

The liberal state excluded both Indians and women from political discourse for similar reasons. Despite a liberal tradition that theoretically viewed all Ecuadorians as equal before the law, some people were less equal than others. In the public mind, women were associated with tradition and religion. Politicians extended the vote to women in Ecuador in 1929 (although it was optional, unlike for men, who were obliged to vote), the first country in Latin America to do so. This action was not designed to advance women's rights, but rather to preempt a nascent feminist movement, prevent many women from entering the political arena, and create a bulwark against what was perceived as a growing socialist threat in society.⁴ With the cult of *marianismo*, women were treated as second-class citizens and relegated to the domestic sphere. Something that on the surface might appear to be a political opening was, in fact, an elite attempt to tighten their grip over society. Similarly, the rhetoric of legal equality cloaked the reality of a racist situation in which the dominant culture viewed Indians as inherently inferior.

Suffrage, however, comprises only part of the exercise of citizenship rights. In his classic study, T. H. Marshall defined citizenship as encompassing civil, social, and political rights. Civil rights refer to individual liberties, including freedoms of speech and religion. Social rights refer to legal constructions of equality and access to due justice. Political rights including the ability to participate in the exercise of state power, therefore, represent only one aspect of citizenship.' Full citizenship requires access to all of these rights. Indians and women (and particularly Indian women who faced a situation of triple discrimination based on race, class, and gender biases) were excluded through a variety of legal and social mechanisms from the exercise of these rights. Civil liberties, including freedom to marry, work, live, and own property, often translated into more significant aspects of citizenship than the occasional right to cast a vote in an election. Recognizing this, elite men were very careful to control the civil rights of women and Indians. By subjugating constructions of female citizenship rights to male control and Indians' rights to white

control, women and Indians could be effectively maintained in a marginalized position in society.⁶ Even after the expansion of suffrage rights, Indians and women continued to face what Guillermo O'Donnell termed "low-intensity citizenship" with a notable gap between principle and practice.'

Eric Foner has pointed out that the phrase "we the people," which opens the U.S. Constitution, reveals a similar, though unstated, division within Benedict Anderson's imagined community. "The people" were the white males who held citizenship rights, while Indians, Africans, women, and others were relegated to an inferior status.' Similarly in Ecuador, there was no concept of universally held civil, social, and political rights. The political elite enjoyed "what has been euphemistically termed 'democracy in the Greek sense,' in which effective citizenship is limited to a few men of education and culture, with the others rigidly barred from participation."⁹ A small minority of the country's elite—white and *mestizo* educated urban dwellers (varying from about 0.3 percent at the time of Ecuadorian independence to about 3 percent in the 1940s¹⁰)—selected the government that would rule over the rest of the populace. The majority of the country's population—women and Indians—had no say in the regime to which they were subject. An Indian remained "a complete outsider in government and public affairs" and was "treated by the rest of the population like a domestic animal."¹¹ As Jeff Gould noted in the case of Nicaragua, "to accept the validity of indigenous claims to citizenship and communal rights would be to delegitimize and destabilize local ladino identities and power."¹²

To overcome these barriers and gain the right to full political, social, and economic participation in society, white and Indian women in Ecuador overcame long-standing racial and class barriers and began to organize together around common interests and concerns. This action led to what James MacGregor Burns and Stewart Burns called an activist citizenship that extends beyond the "outer frame" of voting to a concern for political, civil, economic, and social rights. Legal establishments did not grant these rights, but they "are created far more by those who actively shape them and live them in the thick of personal and social struggles."¹³ Similarly, Joe Foweraker and Todd Landman concluded that "the essentially *individual* rights of citizenship can only be achieved through different forms of *collective* struggle."¹⁴ In Ecuador, four key women led this collective struggle. In order to understand better the ideological changes that occurred as a result of their efforts, this essay examines their lives and analyzes their roles in three realms: the construction of indigenous community social structures, the formation of political federations, and the creation of bilingual education programs. This history demonstrates what Charles Epp discovered, specifically, that citizenship rights grow "primarily out of pressure from below. not leadership from above."¹⁶

Dolores Cacuango

Dolores Cacuango is one of the primary symbols of indigenous resistance in Ecuador. She was born in 1881 on the Pesillo hacienda in the canton of Cayambe in northern Ecuador. When she was fifteen years old, as partial payment of her parents' debt to the hacienda's owners, she was sent to the capital city of Quito to work as a servant. Like most indigenous peoples born in the nineteenth century, she had to work from a very young age and never attended school or learned to read or write. This experience raised her awareness of the nature of racial discrimination and class divisions in her society. It led her to dedicate her entire life to a struggle for the rights of her people.

Upon her return to Pesillo, Cacuango began to organize hacienda workers. She rose to a position of leadership in the fight against the hacienda system and participated in the struggle for land rights, to end the payment of *diezmos* (tithes), and to terminate the *huasicama* system that forced Indian girls like her to work in the landlords' houses. A hacienda administrator later complained that "this pernicious woman" helped Indians build houses on hacienda land even though they did not have a formal contract to do so.¹⁶ Although illiterate, she fought tirelessly for schools for indigenous communities and was instrumental in setting up the first Quichua-Spanish bilingual schools in Ecuador. A newspaper article from the 1940s described her at the head of indigenous struggles, the last to retreat, and always ready to suffer for the cause.¹⁷ In 1946 the government of José María Velasco Ibarra threatened to exile her to the Galápagos Islands. The local priest in Cayambe attempted to bribe her so that she would stop leading indigenous revolts, but she continued her work for a more just society.¹⁸

Cacuango served on the Central Committee of the Ecuadorian Communist Party along with Luisa Gómez de la Torre and Nela Martínez.¹⁹ Founded by Ricardo Paredes in 1926, the Communist Party was the first political party in Ecuador to defend the rights of Indians and women. Jesús Gualavisú, an Indian leader from Cayambe and a colleague of Cacuango's, actively participated in the founding congress of the party, particularly around issues concerning land and indigenous peoples. Through the influence of Gualavisú, Paredes, Gómez de la Torre, and Martínez, Cacuango came to see the party as the best avenue to struggle for her interests as a woman and as an Indian. In 1958 she was imprisoned for leading this party in Cayambe but continued her work after being freed. When she died in 1971, Indians remembered her as a hero who inspired hope for a better future, while landowners were relieved to finally be rid of one of the most memorable "agitators"²⁰ Her thought was immortalized in a mural that the well-known Ecuadorian artist Oswaldo Guayasamín painted on the wall of the National Congress. The mural (combining

her native Quichua with a heavily Quichua-influenced Spanish) says in part:

Ñuca tierra es Cayambe,
y no me jodan ... carajúand Porque
somos libres como el viento libres
fuimos, libres seremos ... Todo
manos, todos oídos,
todo ojos, toda voz ...

My land is Cayambe,
don't screw me around ... dammit
Because we are free like the wind we
were free, free we will be ... All
hands, all hearing,
all eyes, all voice...²¹

Tránsito Amaguaña

Tránsito Amaguaña was another important indigenous leader who struggled for a more just social order in Ecuador. She was born in 1909 on the Pesillo hacienda into a family that already had a history of political activity.²² Her mother, Mercedes Alba, led struggles demanding payment for the work women did on the haciendas, and in response the landlord took away the family's small *huasipungo* plot on which they relied for subsistence agriculture. Like Cacuango, from a very young age she was required to work for the hacienda without pay at a variety of jobs such as sweeping, washing dishes, and taking care of livestock. As a result, Amaguaña was able to go to school for only six months. She was married at the age of fourteen, and at fifteen with a baby on her back she joined clandestine political meetings on the hacienda in Cayambe where she met Cacuango.

Amaguaña has been called "a tireless fighter" who "represents the female memory of the history of past struggles."²³ In order to effect the desired profound changes in Ecuador's land tenure system, she helped take indigenous demands directly to the central government located in Quito. People would walk for two days, often barefoot with babies on their backs, for these meetings and protests. In Quito they would spend anywhere from a few days to a month at the Casa del Obrero, a meeting place for peasants, artisans, artists, workers, students, and intellectuals who were interested in causes of social justice. Amaguaña claimed to have made twenty-six trips like this on foot to Quito.²⁴ In the 1990s she still occasionally went down to Quito from her small house high up in the *páramo* to participate in indigenous gatherings.

Like Cacuango, Amaguaña was also involved in leftist political organizing efforts. Amaguaña traveled to Cuba in 1962 as a representative of indigenous peoples in Ecuador. Later, she traveled to the Soviet Union where bands and parades of schoolchildren received her. Upon her return to Ecuador, the military overthrew the government of Carlos Julio Arosemena. The military persecuted the political left and imprisoned its leaders, including Amaguaña, for four months and four days. In prison, guards

would taunt her in order to break her spirit so that she would incriminate other peasant leaders. She never gave in, and upon leaving prison the government wanted her to sign a statement that she would not return to organizing peasants. She refused to sign the statement and instead continued her organizing efforts.²⁵

Nela Martínez

Several white, educated women emerged during the 1930s to 1950s who actively supported indigenous organizing efforts. One of these, Nela Martínez Espinosa, a writer and intellectual, was born to an elite landholding family in southern Ecuador in 1912. Her life was marked with an internationalist ideology and a commitment to solidarity "with her people, with humble people, with the workers, Indians, and women."²⁶ She was an untiring fighter for the rights of women and social justice. Martínez began her political life in 1934 as a member of the Communist Party and later served on its Executive Committee and Central Committee. Deeply involved in politics, she took an active role in current issues. She participated in the 1945 National Assembly as a representative of the working class. She used this position to fight for the rights of women and denounce the sexual discrimination that women faced in the political, cultural, and social realms. She also later led the list of candidates for the Frente Popular coalition for deputy for the province of Pichincha.

Martínez is primarily known for her feminist work. Together with Luisa Gómez de la Torre and other mostly white, upper-class women in Quito, she formed the Alianza Femenina Ecuatoriana (AFE, Ecuadorian Feminist Alliance) in 1939. Its objectives were to contribute to the cause of world peace, provide solidarity to victims of war, and promote the incorporation of women into political movements in opposition to the government. Although its leadership was comprised largely of elite intellectuals, the AFE also had a presence in marginalized neighborhoods in Quito and in other cities throughout the sierra and on the coast.²⁷ While this would appear to indicate the presence of a paternalistic and condescending intervention from the outside, Martínez made it clear that women's liberation had to come from women themselves, including indigenous women. These movements also could not be isolated from broader struggles for social liberation.²⁸ This same attitude would influence her work with indigenous groups.

Particularly important is how Martínez's feminism intersected with ethnic issues and the struggles of indigenous peoples. She was one of the founding members of the Ecuadorian Federation of Indians (FEI), which was formed in the aftermath of the May 1944 Revolution, and she used her literary skills to edit the organization's newspaper, *Nucanchi Allpa*. It

is through these cross-cultural interactions that we see the influences that female leaders had on each other in Ecuador. Martínez notes that in the 1920s and 1930s, *Amauta*, a journal edited by Peruvian Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui, arrived in Ecuador. Leftists would read and discuss his writings (both among themselves and with the indigenous activists), and years later Mariátegui's works still maintained a central place in Martínez's private library.²⁹ Educated urban leftists such as Martínez provided an important conduit to bring important intellectual trends from the outside world to illiterate indigenous leaders such as Cacuango and Amaguaña. In exchange, isolated intellectuals such as Martínez became more critically aware of the true nature of social inequalities that indigenous women faced. Together, white and Indian women struggled for a more just social order.

María Luisa Gómez de la Torre

Like Martínez, María Luisa Gómez de la Torre (commonly known as "Lucha") was an urban, elite leftist leader who became deeply involved in the struggles of indigenous peoples in rural communities in Ecuador. Gómez was born in Quito in 1887, geographically not far from highland Indian communities but culturally worlds removed from them. She worked with Martínez and others on a variety of projects, including the Communist Party, the AFE, and the FEI.³⁰ Gómez was involved in the founding congress of the Ecuadorian Socialist Party in May 1926. She was an active participant in the Socialist and later Communist parties and served on the Communist Party's Central Committee. She felt at home "among the men, treating them as equals, sharing with them ideas and emotions."³¹ Whereas Martínez was known primarily for her feminist work, Gómez was known more for her role as an educator. Gómez was the first woman to teach at the Colegio Mejía, a prestigious all-male school in Quito.³² She used her skills as a schoolteacher to become deeply involved in early Quichua-Spanish bilingual education projects in Ecuador.

How well accepted were these white women into indigenous communities? Given the deep racial barriers in Ecuadorian society, it would only be reasonable to assume that Indians would view the actions of people such as Gómez with suspicion. If such was indeed the case, years of dedicated labor overcame these hesitations. When Gómez died in November 1976, the Communist Party applauded "her example as a fighter for a more just and humane country." The FEI noted her role "as a fighter for democratic agrarian reform, education, and the rights of the exploited and oppressed indigenous masses."³³ Fifteen years after her death, Gómez's biographer reported that her portrait still hung in indigenous huts among images of saints and other treasured objects.³⁴

'Women and Indigenous Communities

Because women in Latin America traditionally have played a marginalized role in white-mestizo society, many people assume that indigenous women were marginalized within their own communities. The emergence of strong women leaders in rural indigenous struggles, however, indicates a distinction between the dominant white culture that sought to disenfranchise women, and indigenous societies that embraced and encouraged their contributions. As Cacuango's and Amaguaña's stories indicate, indigenous women organized within their communities as equals with men. For example, in March 1931, 141 Indians walked from Cayambe to Quito to present their demands directly to the government. Of this number, fifty-seven (including Cacuango) were women and about a dozen were children. Barely half were men.³⁵ Throughout the twentieth century, Indian women took aggressive leadership roles in social protest movements, from mothers confronting young soldiers at roadblocks to later leaders such as Nina Pacari earning a law degree and arguing land rights with the national government."

The 1937 Ley de Organización y Régimen de las Comunas (commonly called the Ley de Comunas), which extended legal recognition to local indigenous communities, gave tacit acknowledgment to the unique nature of gender relations within them. The law explicitly states that both men *and* women from the community were to gather every December to elect leaders for the coming year. Indeed, both men and women participated in these annual meetings and were listed on the membership rolls, although men usually held the top positions in the *comuna*. Placing both men and women on an equal legal footing is perhaps ironic given that in the dominant society, which wrote this law, women did not enjoy such equality. In any case, in the administration of *comunas*, as in other organizations that indigenous peoples formed, women could play a role equal to that of men.³⁷

Anthropologist Muriel Crespi, who conducted her field work on the Pesillo hacienda in Cayambe in the 1960s, voiced the possibility that women rose to positions of leadership in peasant syndicates and other radical organizations because they had less to lose than their male counterparts. Under the patriarchal social order on the haciendas, only men could own property and thus face sanction from the existing power structures for their political activities.³⁸ Although this interpretation is compelling, it fails to explain their actions. As Crespi acknowledges, these women suffered for the ways they defended their communities: military troops abused them, the government imprisoned them, and the landowners evicted their entire families from the haciendas. Crespi also observes that most of these leaders were married, in their thirties or

unattached single militants who could act with little thought as to the consequences of their deeds. They had deep roots in their communities. In fact, this may have been a significant factor in forcing the women to action. For centuries they and their ancestors had lived under the oppressive rule of outsiders. The time had come for them to make a significant push to ensure that their descendants would not be condemned to the same fate. They fought for their rights not because they had nothing to lose but because they had everything to gain.

White women and Indian women brought different but complementary skills to their efforts to expand concepts of citizenship. Indian women were accustomed to participating in communal decision-making processes and enjoyed social prestige and authority in their own communities. On the other hand, white women had access to the political and social privileges of living in an urban society, including access to education and knowledge of the broader world. These two groups of women possessed important but distinct skills that converged in the successful formation of political federations and bilingual schools.

The FEI

In addition to their participation in local community organizational efforts, these women also became deeply involved in indigenous-rights federations at the national level. For example, they played key roles in the founding of the FEI, or Ecuadorian Federation of Indians. In particular, Cacungo played a leading role. At the inaugural session of the FEI, she spoke as the representative of the peasant syndicates of Tierra Libre, El Inca, and Yanaguaico from her native Cayambe. Nela Martínez also spoke as a delegate of the Ecuadorian Feminist Alliance.

Even though women played a major role in the founding of this organization, its goals for social reform as laid out in its statutes did not embrace an explicitly women's or feminist agenda. The Federation sought to:

- Gain the economic emancipation of Ecuadorian Indians;
- Raise the Indians' cultural and moral level while conserving whatever is good in their native customs;
- Contribute to national unity;
- Establish links of solidarity with all American Indians.³⁹

In general, these goals indicate that the FEI would demand social and economic changes in society, in addition to defending the ethnic interests of the Indians. The goals included ending an old practice whereby women and children were required to work without compensation on haciendas that employed their husbands and fathers. These obligations were considered to be particularly abusive and odious, and terminating them became

a key demand of the indigenous federations. This was part of the exploitative social structure that white and Indian women worked together to change. For people like Cacungo and Amaguaña, the only way to improve their lot as poor, illiterate, Indian women was to agitate for changes in a society that systematically restricted their access to broader citizenship rights.

Delegates at the FEI congress elected Cacungo as the secretary general of the new organization. In this capacity, she traveled widely to represent the FEI both within Ecuador and outside the country. This position required her to make many public appearances and speeches as well as meet with representatives of labor unions and the government.⁴⁰ Cacungo overcame these challenges to make a dramatic impact on the white, male-dominated, Spanish-speaking political structures in Ecuador. It would be naive to assume that she accomplished this on her own. White women such as Gómez and Martínez played critically important supportive roles in these endeavors. Martínez, in particular, served as Cacungo's personal secretary and accompanied her on trips such as that to the Second Congress of the Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina (CTAL, Confederation of Latin American Workers) in Cali, Colombia.

The roles of Indian and white women also complemented each other in other political endeavors. As indigenous women, Cacungo and Amaguaña had no hope of making their voices heard in national politics. They could, however, use their connections with white women such as Martínez and Gómez to communicate their concerns. During debates in the 1944 constituent assembly, which drafted the most liberal constitution Ecuador has ever had, members of the Communist Party were the only ones who consistently pressed for universal citizenship and suffrage rights, including extending those rights to women and illiterate peasants, Indians, and urban workers. The Communist Party incorporated both Indians and women (such as Dolores Cacungo) into its upper ranks and even presented women as candidates for office. With their place in the urban world, white women could more easily make their voices heard in seats of power. But in a country that remained predominately rural and Indian, they lacked the mass support that Indian women could provide. Indian and white women created a bridge between these two worlds so that they could work together on issues of common concern. Their success relied on spanning these cultural gaps. They realized their chief successes in the political and educational realms.

Bilingual Education

From the beginnings of liberal rule in 1895, the Ecuadorian government expressed a desire to create special schools to educate Indians and train them to be good citizens. Elites recognized the need for "a special kind of

instruction to address the particular conditions and situation" of the "backwards and ignorant" Indian race. They instructed the teachers' training school in Quito to create a section to equip teachers with the necessary special skills to teach Indians.⁴¹ Liberal concern for the education of Indians revolved around a desire to improve their hygiene, train them in new agricultural techniques, and raise their cultural horizons. Underlying this goal, however, was a much more important political project. The liberals saw education as a way to extract Indian children from their traditions and customs, which they saw as holding them back from realizing their full potential. For these Indians to become part of their unified mestizo nation, they would have to suppress their ethnic identity.

The liberals faced opposition to their educational project on two fronts. Hacienda owners saw little need to train a group of people whom they believed to be inherently and innately inferior and suited only to hard manual labor; it was a waste of time. Children should be toiling (for free) on their haciendas rather than learning skills that would only turn them into demanding and pretentious workers. Furthermore, a literate population would be harder to cheat and exploit because the workers could then verify the records that were kept on their indebtedness. In the 1950s, Bishop Leonidas Proaño, who ministered to Indians in the central highland province of Chimborazo, found that large landowners opposed his education programs because "an illiterate Indian is unlikely to protest against the land-tenure system or demand the payment of the legal minimum wage if he does not know that he has any rights."⁴²

The liberal educational project also gained little support among the Indians. In 1933 anthropologist Moisés Sáenz observed that "the Ecuadorian Indian does not demonstrate any enthusiasm nor love for schools."⁴³ Indians had not been consulted in designing the curriculum, and the schools did not respond to their needs or concerns. It is not surprising that education leaders found a rural population apathetic to or even antagonistic toward schooling. Despite repeated attempts to implement a program of universal and rural education, a wide gap remained between this ideal and its reality. The government failed to appropriate the funds and delegate the personnel necessary to make these projects happen.

Despite these problems, the need for schools should not be underestimated. One scholar calculated that in 1934, 80 percent of the Indian workers on haciendas (as compared to 40 percent of the rest of the rural population) were illiterate.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Indian actions demonstrate that when they controlled the schools and when these schools responded to their needs, they strongly supported educational endeavors. One of the demands from a strike on the Pesillo hacienda in northern Ecuador in 1931 was for the establishment of a school.⁴⁵

The first and most successful Spanish-Quichua bilingual schools for Indian children were established in the 1940s on the Pesillo hacienda, where Cacuango and Amaguaña lived. In Latin America, often elite, educated, white urban female reformers who paternalistically sought to improve the lot of those less fortunate than themselves took leadership roles in creating educational opportunities for the lower classes. These Indian schools developed rather differently in Ecuador. The impetus for these schools emerged from within the indigenous communities, with Cacuango and Amaguaña taking the lead in their organizations. Indigenous women joined forces with radical white women such as Martínez and Gómez, who played supportive but critical roles in the formation of the schools.

An unusual situation resulted. Martínez and Gómez were not involved in the schools because they sought to assimilate the Indians into a mestizo culture. Rather, Indian and white women organized around common issues and concerns. Neither group of women could have started these schools on their own. Cacuango and Amaguaña had the authority and prestige in the Indian communities to organize the schools, but they lacked the pedagogical training and skills to draw up a curriculum. Martínez and particularly Gómez de la Torre possessed the knowledge and training to develop bilingual programs, but without local initiative and support for their project they would have failed. Together, white women and Indian women overcame cultural barriers and created a force that challenged the political hegemony of the Ecuadorian state. By teaching indigenous children to read and write, they empowered them to take a more active role in society. Their work forced an expansion in the understanding of citizenship rights and responsibilities.

These schools represented true grassroots efforts, but the Ecuadorian government never officially recognized, sanctioned, or supported them. The goal was to have indigenous teachers instructing children in their own native Quichua language. These teachers included José Tarabata in Pesillo, Neptalí Ulcuango in La Chimba, José Amaguaña (brother of Tránsito Amaguaña) in Moyurco, and Luis Catacuango (son of Dolores Cacuango) in San Pablourco. The Indian-run schools were so successful and posed such a threat to elite hegemony that in the 1950s and 1960s the government attempted to replace them with their own. Unlike the locally run bilingual schools, the Indian workers did not have a high degree of identification with these new schools, and they never were very successful. In the 1980s the government once again attempted to implement rural literacy programs in Cayambe. Local activists, however, confronted these programs with a great deal of mistrust and rejected them as the efforts of a government that represented the interests of the oligarchy. These educational programs were not designed to respond to local interests, but rather imposed an elite agenda. Instead of hiring local people, the government

brought in outsiders who did not understand peasant cultures and stirred up divisions and discord.⁴⁶

Tránsito Amaguafía later said that "we did not only struggle for land and better treatment, but we also wanted our children to be educated so that they would learn how to read the laws and keep track of accounts."⁴⁷ As noted, it would be harder for landlords to abuse and exploit literate workers. It was critical to the Indians and their urban supporters that control of the schools remain in local hands in order to ensure that they would achieve this purpose. Through this process, education became an empowering tool to improve the role of Indians in society. It provides one of the clearest examples of how women in Ecuador were able to utilize a traditional role of educational reform to agitate for profound structural changes.

Conclusion

T. H. Marshall observed that "citizenship and the capitalist class system have been at war." Capitalism requires and creates social inequalities. If "citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community," then capitalism requires a subclass of people who are denied these rights.⁴⁸ For those who valued an egalitarian and just society, this meant fighting to overthrow the current capitalist system. As Marshall understood, extending citizenship meant expanding social rights. As white and Indian women discovered in Ecuador, fighting for citizenship became an effective means to push for broader changes in society. This goal still has to be realized as popular movements continue to "struggle to protect and promote values of equality and inclusion" in the face of exclusionary neoliberal models of citizenship.⁴⁹

In commenting on the significance of Nela Martínez's life, Lilya Rodríguez observed that history does not have a gender. Men and women participate equally in historic actions, but it is in the *writing* of history that women disappear into the shadows of male heroes. The result is a sexist history that serves the interests of the dominant culture.⁵⁰ Similarly, particularly in a situation such as rural Ecuador in the first half of the twentieth century, a history that excludes the actions of poor, non-citizen Indians who comprised the majority of the population also merely serves the interests of the dominant culture. Writing a history that includes these elements is not only a more comprehensive history, but it is also a more accurate one.

The lives of these four women (two indigenous, rural, illiterate, and poor; and the other two white, urban, educated, and elite) intersected at many different points. They participated together in political parties and movements, fought for indigenous rights and bilingual education, and organized themselves into women's groups. All of these factors (their class,

ethnicity, and gender) influenced who they were and how they interacted with the larger society. They clearly informed the demands which they advocated. In working side by side in their struggle for common goals, white and Indian women gained mutual respect for each other and developed deep friendships.

All four of these women in Ecuador, along with many others, personally felt the oppression of social inequalities. The quadruple (class, ethnic, gender, citizenship) oppression under which Cacuango and Amaguaña lived, and which Martínez and Gómez directly observed through their work in indigenous communities, was not something that could be easily mitigated through reformist legislation. It was tightly bound up in the nature of society. Simply extending to women the right to vote would not make any difference in Cacuango's and Amaguaña's lives, since no one in their communities could exercise the franchise. For them, the only way to improve their lot appeared to be through a wholesale, radical, and socialist transformation of society. As all four of these women recognized, these changes would have to take place on a variety of levels, including the class, ethnic, and gender structurings of society. It meant struggling for a fundamental redefinition of citizenship rights.

Notes

1. Sergio Enrique Girón, *La revolución de mayo* (Quito: Editorial Atahualpa, 1945), 336, 118.
2. Raquel Rodas, *Nosotras que del amor hicimos ...* (Quito: Raquel Rodas, 1992), 60.
3. "Constitución de 1830," in Federico E. Trabucco, *Constituciones de la República del Ecuador* (Quito: Universidad Central, Editorial Universitaria, 1975), 35. For a general discussion of citizenship in Ecuador, see Amparo Menéndez-Carrión, "Ciudadanía," *Revista Paraguaya de Sociología* 30:88 (Sept.–Dec. 1993): 81–92.
4. Francesca Miller, "The Suffrage Movement in Latin America," in *Confronting Change, Challenging Tradition: Women in Latin American History*, ed. Gertrude Matyoka Yeager (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1994), 169.
5. T. H. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development: Essays* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 71–72.
6. Donna J. Guy, "White Slavery, Citizenship, and Nationality in Argentina," in *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, ed. Andrew Parker et al. (New York: Routledge, 1992), 202–3.
7. Guillermo O'Donnell, "On the State, Democratization, and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Postcommunist Countries," *World Development* 21:8 (1993): 1361.
8. Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 38–39.
9. Joseph S. Roucek, "Ecuador in Geopolitics," *Contemporary Review* 205: 1177 (February 1964): 77–78.
10. Rafael Quintero and Erika Silva, *Ecuador: una nación en ciernes*, 3 volumes, Colección Estudios No. 1 (Quito: FLACSO/Abya-Yala, 1991), t. 1, 100; t. 2, 148.

11. Harry A. Franck, *Vagabonding down the Andes: Being the Narrative of a Journey, Chiefly Afoot, From Panama to Buenos Aires* (New York: The Century Co., 1917), 152.
12. Jeffrey L. Gould, *To Die in This Way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880-1965* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 86.
13. James MacGregor Burns and Stewart Burns, *A People's Charter: The Pursuit of Rights in America* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 462, 13.
14. Joe Foweraker and Todd Landman, *Citizenship Rights and Social Movements: A Comparative and Statistical Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1.
15. Charles R. Epp, *The Rights Revolution: Lawyers, Activists, and Supreme Courts in Comparative Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 2.
16. Letter from Juan Francisco Sumárraga to Director, Junta Central de Asistencia Pública, March 21, 1946, in Correspondencia Recibida, Segundo Semestre, Segundo Parte, 1946, 1555, Archivo Nacional de Medicina del Museo Nacional de Medicina "Dr. Eduardo Estrella," Fondo Junta Central de Asistencia Pública, Quito, Ecuador (hereafter JCAP); Letter from C. Anibal Maldonado, Administrador, to Jefe, Departamento de Haciendas, Asistencia Pública, October 10, 1946 (Oficio #27), in Correspondencia Recibida, 1946, JCAP. For basic biographical data on Dolores Cacuango, see Osvaldo Albornoz Peralta, *Dolores Cacuango y las luchas indígenas de Cayambe* (Guayaquil: Editorial Claridad S.A., 1975); and Raquel Rodas, *Crónica de un sueño: las escuelas indígenas de Colores Cacuango: una experiencia de educación bilingüe en Cayambe* (Quito: Proyecto de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural, MEC-GTZ, 1989).
17. "Dolores Cacuango," *Antinazi* (Quito) 2:19 (April 17, 1943): 4; facsimile edition in Raymond Mériguet Cousségal, *Antinazismo en Ecuador, años 1941-1944: autobiografía del Movimiento Antinazi de Ecuador (MPAE-MAE)* (Quito: R. Mériguet Cousségal, 1988), 214.
18. Rodas, *Crónica de un sueño*, 63.
19. A photo in Elías Muñoz Vicuña, *Masas, luchas, solidaridad* (Guayaquil: Universidad de Guayaquil, 1985), 91, of a Central Committee meeting in Quito, July 26-28, 1947, shows seventeen people, of which Cacuango is one of three women and the only indigenous person.
20. Muriel Crespi, "Mujeres campesinas como líderes sindicales: la falta de propiedad como calificación para puestos políticos," *Estudios Andinos* 5:1(1976): 165.
21. "Dolores Cacuango: un orgullo para Cayambe," *La Hora del Norte* (Quito), November 10, 1989.
22. Amaguaña recounts her life's story in interviews published in José Yáñez del Pozo, *Yo declaro con franqueza (Cashnami causashcanchic); memoria oral de Pesillo, Cayambe*, 2d ed., revised (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1988); Raquel Rodas, *Tránsito Amaguaña: su testimonio*, 3 (Quito: CEDIME, 1987); and Martha Bulnes, *Me levanto y digo, testimonio de tres mujeres quichua* (Quito: Editorial El Conejo, 1990), 31-40.
23. Bulnes, *Me levanto y digo*, 14.
24. Rodas, *Tránsito Amaguaña*, 25.
25. *Ibid.*, 35-37.
26. Lilya Rodríguez, "Acción por el Movimiento de Mujeres," in *Homenaje a Nela Martínez Espinosa* (Quito: Acción por el Movimiento de Mujeres, 1990), 23. This publication is from a homage paid to Martínez on May 29, 1990, in the Salón de la Ciudad in Quito. The following biographical data are extracted from it.

27. Silvia Vega Ugalde, *La Gloriosa: de la revolución del 28 de mayo de 1944 a la contrarrevolución velasquista* (Quito: Editorial El Conejo, 1987), 52, 7980.
28. Rodríguez, "Acción," 17, 22.
29. Nela Martínez, interview with author, Quito, April 27, 1996.
30. Rodas, *Amor*, 50.
31. *Ibid.*, 46. For examples of her participation, see Partido Socialista Ecuatoriano (PSE), *Labores de la Asamblea Nacional Socialista y Manifiesto del Consejo Central del Partido (16-23-Mayo), Quito, 1926* (Guayaquil: Imp. "El Tiempo," 1926), 28-29, 34, 97.
32. Vega Ugalde, *La Gloriosa*, 79-80.
33. Published newspaper notes (possibly from *El Comercio*) on Gómez's death dated Quito, noviembre 23 de 1976 (FEI), and Quito, noviembre 25 de 1976 (PCE), both located in Mercedes Prieto's personal archive, Quito, Ecuador.
34. Rodas, *Amor*, 9.
35. "141 peones de Cayambe han venido a esta ciudad intempestivamente abandonando sus faenas del campo," *El Comercio*, March 13, 1931; "Ayer fueron apresados 156 indígenas de las haciendas de Cayambe," *El Día*, March 13, 1931; "No se efectuó la audiencia del presidente con los indígenas de Cayambe," *El Día*, March 14, 1931.
36. Marc Becker, "Nina Pacari," in *Notable Twentieth-Century Latin American Women: A Biographical Dictionary*, ed. Cynthia Tompkins and David William Foster (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001), 218-22.
37. "Ley de Organización y Régimen de las Comunas" (Decreto no. 142), *Registro Oficial*, No. 558 (August 6, 1937): 1517-19. Also see Marc Becker, "Comunas and Indigenous Protest in Cayambe, Ecuador," *The Americas* 55:4 (April 1999): 531-59.
38. Crespi, "Mujeres campesinas," 167.
39. Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios (FEI), *Estatutos de la Federación de Indios* (Guayaquil: Editorial Claridad, 1945), 3.
40. Crespi, "Mujeres campesinas," 165.
41. "Decreta de 18 agosto de 1895," in Rubio Orbe, comp., *Legislación indigenista del Ecuador* (México: Instituto Indigenista Interamericano, 1954), 63; "Decreta de 12 abril de 1899," in *ibid.*, 67; "Creación de Escuelas Prediales," in *ibid.*, 84; "Creación de escuelas para la raza indígena," in *ibid.*, 68-69.
42. Penny Lerno, *Cry of the People* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1980), 147.
43. Moisés Sáenz, *Sobre el indio ecuatoriano y su incorporación al media nacional* (México: Publicaciones de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1933), 145.
44. Udo Oberem, "Contribución a la historia del trabajador rural de América Latina: 'concertos' y 'huasipungueros' en Ecuador," in *Contribución a la etnohistoria ecuatoriana*, ed. Segundo Moreno Y. and Udo Oberem (Otavalo, Ecuador: Instituto Otavaleño de Antropología, 1981), 323.
45. "Pliego de peticiones que los sindicatos 'El Inca' y 'Tierra Libre' situados en la parroquia Olmedo, presentan a los arrendatarios de las haciendas donde trabajan," *El Día*, January 6, 1931.
46. Manuel Escobar, "La FEI... el indio de poncho colorado," *Cuadernos de Nueva (Quito)* 7 (June 1983): 49.
47. Rodas, *Tránsito Amaguaña*, 30. Also see Rodas, *Amor*; Rodas, *Crónica de un sueño*; and Consuelo Yáñez Cossio, *La educación indígena en el Ecuador*:

historia de la educación y el pensamiento pedagógico ecuatorianos, 5 (Quito: Imprenta Abya-Yala, 1996), 28.

48. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship*, 84.

49. Cathy Blacklock and Jane Jenson, "Citizenship: Latin American Perspectives," *Social Politics* 5:2 (Summer 1998): 128.

50. Rodríguez, "Acción," 16.