

# Peasant Identity, Worker Identity: Multiple Modes of Rural Consciousness in Highland Ecuador

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On December 30, 1930, agricultural workers on the Pesillo hacienda in the canton of Cayambe, in the northern Ecuador highlands, rose up in protest against abuses they faced at the hands of their bosses. Local governmental officials reported that no one was working as the strike spread across the hacienda and threatened to engulf neighboring properties. Pesillo's newly formed peasant union El Inca, as well as Tierra Libre from the neighboring Moyurco hacienda, presented a list of 17 demands which focused almost exclusively on issues of working conditions, indebtedness, and salaries. They demanded that the *patrones* (bosses) fire *mayordomos* (overseers) who mistreated workers, raise their daily salary to forty centavos, recognize an eight-hour work day, pay women for their labor, and establish a school for their children. The protesters also demanded an end to the Catholic church's abusive practice of charging *diezmos* (tithes, or a tenth of the peon's agricultural production) and *primicias* (the church's right to the "first fruits" of a harvest), and an end to the practice of demanding personal service in the landlord's house. Their final demand was free medical care.<sup>1</sup> Political repression forced some of the Quichua Indian workers into hiding, while others left for the capital city of Quito to present their demands directly to the government. Under political pressure to resolve the strike, the Ministry of Government, together with the Labor Commissioner, arranged for an agreement that conceded to many of the protesters' demands, including respect for an eight-hour work day, provision of one day of rest a week, payment for the work of women and children on the hacienda, abolition of the custom of forcing the

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Indians to provide personal services for the haciendas' employees, and an agreement not to fire workers on the haciendas except for reasons of bad conduct or insubordination.<sup>2</sup> Although the workers returned to work, the *patrones* refused to comply with the agreement and there were continued threats of a new strike.

What is interesting about this uprising is not that a subjugated peasantry protested against exploitative conditions, for the Andean highlands of South America have long been the site of intense peasant rebellions,<sup>3</sup> but the types of consciousness and identity that underlay and drove the revolt. Historians traditionally have reduced Latin America's entire rural population into the singular category of peasant, but increasingly scholars have challenged the accuracy and utility of that concept. With a resurgence of ethnic consciousness in recent years, scholars have progressively described such agricultural workers as Indians, thereby emphasizing their ethnic rather than economic relations with the dominant culture. The Pesillo hacienda strikers' petition, however, did not emphasize peasant demands for land or an ethnic agenda of ending racial discrimination, but rather called for higher wages and better working conditions – typical working-class demands.

On a deeper and more profound level, the strike reveals a complex form of consciousness among the rural activists who participated in this social movement. This study examines these multiple modes of rural consciousness and identity and how they interacted with each other in the context of collective action and conflicts on the Pesillo hacienda. Although rooted in a deep sense of ethnic identity, in what Guillermo Bonfil Batalla might term the *Ecuador Profundo*,<sup>4</sup> through interaction with state structures, the land tenure system, and urban leftists, rural Indians at Pesillo began to acquire a class consciousness similar to that which Karl Marx believed only an urban proletariat would attain. Furthermore, the formation of this consciousness added strength and cohesion to their ethnic demands. Traditional forces often associated with the peasantry, as well as class ideologies similar to that of an urban proletariat, shaped the concerns of Ecuador's rural peoples, and this resulted in a broader and deeper political consciousness.

### **Land tenure and labor relations at Pesillo**

The multiple modes of rural consciousness that materialized on the Pesillo hacienda emerged out of the context of land tenure and labor relations that had historically excluded the Indigenous work force. Beginning with a small land grant from the Spanish crown in 1560, the Merced order of the Catholic Church expanded the size of the hacienda as it came to control a wide and ecologically diverse area, gaining almost exclusive control over land and labor on the Pesillo

hacienda. Seemingly isolated in the rural Andean highlands, the Pesillo Indians inevitably felt the dramatic influence of broader political and economic developments in Ecuador and around the world. Eloy Alfaro's 1895 Liberal Revolution began a large-scale attack on the Church's wealth, power, and influence in Ecuadorian society, seeking to subject the Church to secular control. In 1904, the liberal government of General Leonidas Plaza expropriated Pesillo, along with other Church-owned properties, and rented them to private landowners. Four years later, Alfaro promulgated the 1908 *Ley de Beneficencia* (Law of Charity), which created an administrative board, called the *Junta Central de Asistencia Pública*, in the capital city of Quito to administer these properties. The intent of this legislation was to utilize the property of the Catholic Church to benefit society in general through the funding of urban social welfare projects such as hospitals and orphanages, rather than having those resources only enrich the Church.<sup>5</sup>

Instead of using this expropriation as a political opening to liberate the Indigenous workforce, the government continued to administer these haciendas in the same feudalistic manner as previous owners. A small, elite, urban, white class of people administered and benefited from Pesillo's wealth, while the illiterate, barefoot, Quichua-speaking, traditional dress-wearing, rural-dwelling Indians who continued to work the land had little to show for their efforts. Labor relations at Pesillo remained grounded in the legacies of the colonial *encomienda* system that granted the right of Indigenous labor and tribute to a white elite. With the phasing out of the *encomienda* system in the seventeenth century, Indians were forced to work on large, privately owned estates in a system of coerced labor known as *concertaje*, which was based on a contractual agreement between an Indian (almost always the male head of household) and a large landholder. The Indian (a *concierto*, later known as a *huasipunguero*)<sup>6</sup> worked for the landholder (the *hacendado*) in exchange for a salary and a small parcel of land (the *huasipungo*) on which he could grow food for his family. The Indians also received rights to some of the hacienda's resources, such as water, firewood, and pasture for their animals. This arrangement, however, was often converted into a system of debt peonage, with the debt being passed down through generations. Traditionally, the *huasipungo* system required that the peon who contracted the debt with the *hacendado* mobilize the resources of his entire family in a never-ending attempt to repay that debt. When a landlord sold an hacienda, the indebted Indians were included as part of the value of the property, being listed together with cattle and other items of value.

The small *huasipungo* plots provided the peons with a basic economic survival strategy. Although this intensely farmed land could only produce a basic subsistence diet, it did help ensure that a family could survive rough times. In

his study of Mexican haciendas, Charles Gibson observed that Indians sometimes remained on haciendas because even with all of the hardships this system “offered positive advantages to Indian workers.”<sup>7</sup> Bauer concurred that peons recognized the economic value of these relations and that “the ultimate threat against unsatisfactory tenants was often dismissal from the hacienda.”<sup>8</sup> Despite the continual agitation for higher salaries, these workers continued to place a high cultural and economic value on their small *huasipungo* plots and would fight to retain them. This agricultural lifestyle and strong attachment to land is what leads casual observers to assume that the people at Pesillo were peasants.

### Campeños

It is difficult to establish a precise definition of the word “peasant” and, as Sidney Mintz noted in a 1973 essay in the *Journal of Peasant Studies*, this issue has invoked a lengthy debate.<sup>9</sup> Issues of self identity, created identity, and situational identity, all complicate a definition. On one hand, some scholars favor tightly restrictive definitions that limit peasants to a nineteenth-century rural French population, while others have broadened the term to include virtually anyone involved in agriculture, from hunters and gatherers to small landholders, whatever the economic mode of production involved. Increasingly, many historians who study peasants in Latin America have largely eschewed issues of terminology in order to focus on deeper and more significant questions of power and the role that the peasantry played in nation building.<sup>10</sup> Collapsing diverse economic modes of production into a simplistic catch-all category of “peasant,” however, tends to hide certain forms of rural consciousness. Not only has the term become so commonly used that it can hardly be avoided, but also a more critical inquiry into what it means to be a “peasant” helps to understand rural protest movements.

Although scholars have often called the rural peoples in Latin America “peasants,” this can be a very problematic label, especially when it involves collective actions. Even in the small country of Ecuador, there is a wide variety of “types” of peasants and it is a mistake to collapse these disparate forms together. As Michael Redclift noted, “all too often attempts are made to assess the revolutionary potential of the Latin American ‘peasant’ without distinguishing clearly enough between sections of the rural population, and placing them within the context of the land-tenure system.”<sup>11</sup> These issues are further muddied in an English-language study because the Spanish-language term *campesino* is often imprecisely translated as “peasant.” The Spanish term is not an ethnic marker; a *campesino* could be white, mestizo, Indian, or even a foreign immigrant. Literally,

*campesino* was simply a “rural dweller” or a person who lived in the countryside (“*campo*”) and worked the land and could “include both landless agricultural workers and the owners or operators of small-holdings.”<sup>12</sup> The term conveys a sense of social status more than an economic role or ethnic identity. There is no Spanish term which implies the relation to the means of production indicated in the English word “peasant,” nor an English term which indicates the possible range of identities which the Spanish “*campesino*” encompasses. This has led several scholars to skip entirely the issue of translation in favor of the Spanish term.<sup>13</sup> While it provides a convenient gloss, it also has shortcomings as a category that represents a simple and shared identity.

In analyzing the Mexican case, Christopher Boyer positions *campesino* identity as resulting from a historical process that “originated with the interaction of state formation and the lived experiences of rural people.” As such, becoming a *campesino* involved “an ideological construct – a particular way of understanding the world.”<sup>14</sup> In particular, Boyer points to leaders he calls village revolutionaries (similar to the leaders of the 1930 strike at Pesillo) who fostered a formation of *campesino* identity constructed as both a political category and cultural identity. *Campesinos* became “a distinct social group united by a shared set of political and economic interests as well as by a collective history of oppression.”<sup>15</sup> In a sense, a “*campesino*” identity tends to be a hybrid construction that draws on a variety of social, cultural, and economic relations to the dominant culture.

Such an interpretation can be contrasted with more traditional and overly economic deterministic models. Karl Marx, for example, theorized the problem of collective action and revolt through an interpretation of classes as related to modes of production. He believed that forms of work bred exploitation and a consciousness of interests that produced class conflict. Proletarians in the industrial work place shared common experiences which would lead to the development of a revolutionary class consciousness. Peasants, on the other hand, were engaged in a mode of production which “isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse.” Since “the identity of their interests begets no community . . . they do not form a class.” According to Marx, peasants are incapable of representing their own interests; they must rely upon others, who then become their masters. As a result, peasants were like a “sack of potatoes” who were “not revolutionary, but conservative.” Marx proceeded to note that “nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history.”<sup>16</sup>

Others have echoed this, particularly noting that Indigenous peoples responded to local conditions of racial discrimination leading to a community rather than class consciousness.<sup>17</sup> In the 1970s, a large body of literature emerged

which argued that peasants were more revolutionary than what Marx had believed.<sup>18</sup> This historiographic trend challenged the conventional interpretation of peasants as a pre-capitalist and politically anachronistic group which was only concerned with defending their traditional values and institutions. Steve Stern disputed the assumption that peasants were politically inert and only reacted defensively against larger destructive external structural issues.<sup>19</sup> The case of Pesillo demonstrates that rural workers acted positively in recognizing their shared interests, developing a political consciousness, constructing an identity, and mobilizing to fight for social justice and equality. As evidenced by demands in the 1930 petition for schools and health care, they were not motivated merely by individual concerns, nor were they romantically clinging to a disappearing past. They recognized that larger forces were at work beyond the hacienda that were responsible for their oppression, and this encouraged them to fight for national political and social reforms. In general, Marx's European perception of the peasantry has proven to be a poor fit for Latin America.

A refusal of the Latin American peasantry to act as Marx predicted is also apparent in the social and political dynamics of events in El Salvador that parallel rural protest movements in Ecuador. In 1932, communist leader Agustín Farabundo Martí led a rural insurrection that attempted to overthrow the landholding oligarchy. Although this revolt was much more violent than contemporary movements in Ecuador and most historians look back on it as an unmitigated failure, it is instructive to consider the forces which led to its instigation. Héctor Pérez Brignoli observes that common ideals united peons, Indian peasants, and communist leaders in this rebellion. He then asks whether this uprising was "the stifled prelude to a 'modernizing' revolution, or perhaps the last gasp of some 'primitive' revolutionaries doomed to failure?"<sup>20</sup> This is the language that has divided two generations of scholars studying the actions of peasants, but both interpretations tend to locate the peasantry "as a determinate and virtually unchanging social group."<sup>21</sup> Anthropologists previously had commonly and romantically viewed peasants as primitive peoples holding to the past. Revolts such as the 1930 strike at Pesillo and the 1932 uprising in El Salvador would therefore become reactionary affairs, with peasants desperately attempting to defend their eroding land base and autonomy from an encroaching modernity. Instead, in both cases peasants presented a forward-looking perspective built on alliances with outsiders to agitate for common concerns. As both Mintz and Gould have noted, their rural consciousness must be understood and interpreted in historical terms.

Significantly, the 1930 strike at Pesillo emerged out of the *huasipunguero* population that was permanently attached to the hacienda, although they were not the only rural dwellers in Cayambe. In addition to *huasipungueros*, *comuneros*

*libres* who retained access to their own aboriginal land base, and often had little contact with the hacienda, lived in the area. If they did work on the hacienda, they were called *yanaperos* and might be paid with produce from the hacienda or rights to pasture land instead of (or in addition to) a salary. In addition, *peones sueltos* did not have access to any land, either as a *huasipunguero* or from a free community, and worked on the hacienda as day laborers.<sup>22</sup> For the most part, these other categories of rural dwellers did not join the protests, either on the hacienda or against government policies. Those who did join were family members who resented being deprived of a *huasipungo* plot and were fighting to regain what they perceived as their legitimate property. In fact, *huasipungueros* resisted eviction from the hacienda and clung to their status as a justification for their protest against abuses on the hacienda.<sup>23</sup>

The land demands which the hacienda workers at Pesillo developed soon extended far beyond a simple defense of traditional territory and became something quite different from the land demands that most peasants would commonly make. Agrarian reform was not one of the demands of the 1930 strike at Pesillo, but contact with white and *mestizo* Marxists in Quito, who helped the Indians present their demands to the landowners and central government, soon introduced this idea to rural activists. Naturally, this raises the question of what kind of consciousness Marxists sought to foster among the exploited peons on the hacienda. Did the communist party, which was built on a working-class consciousness, push for the most basic of peasant demands: land? For the peons on the Pesillo hacienda, however, in what Cynthia Radding has termed social ecology,<sup>24</sup> land became as much of an ethnic as a peasant demand, and this complemented rather than conflicted with traditional working-class agitation that focused on economic issues of salaries and working conditions. Many scholars who have looked at peasant labor have not examined how this intersected with rural consciousness. Those who have examined peasant rebellion have seen it either as emerging out of a revolutionary rural proletariat or, conversely, a backward-looking romantic peasantry clinging to the past. The nature of economic structures on the Pesillo hacienda resulted in an agrarian workforce which seemingly transcended this dichotomy. Working together as laborers on a rural estate led them to have shared experiences of exploitation, which fostered a proletarian class consciousness that led to strikes such as the one in 1930 demanding higher wages and better working conditions. This became part of the complex and conflictive forms of rural consciousness in highland Ecuador during the first half of the twentieth century.

## A Rural Proletariat

The descriptive terms for the protesters at Pesillo which commonly appeared in press reports, organizational demands, and hacienda correspondence were *trabajadores agrícolas* (agricultural workers), *obreros* (laborers), *trabajadores* (workers), *jornaleros* (day laborers) or *peones* (peons), all of which appear more frequently than “*campesino*.” In August of 1930, activists at Pesillo announced the formation of El Inca, an *organización obrera y campesina* (worker and peasant organization) comprised of *obreros agrícolas* (agricultural workers).<sup>25</sup> The petition this union drafted several months later did not include the term *campesino* once, but used the terms *jornalero* and *peón* seemingly interchangeably when referring in general terms to the workers on the hacienda. In addition, activists had formed a *sindicato* (syndicate or union), drawing on models from the labor movement for their organizational structure. Furthermore, underscoring a working-class identity, *huasipungueros* aggressively used provisions in the 1938 labor code to advocate for their concerns.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, press reports from a 1954 strike on the Pitaná hacienda used the terms *trabajadores*, *trabajadores agrícolas*, *peones*, and *indígenas* interchangeably, but never described the strikers as *campesinos*.<sup>27</sup> On a superficial level, these terms are merely a matter of semantic distinction which can be seen as synonyms for the same concept and do not differ that significantly from what outsiders and those inside the rural movement utilized. On a deeper level, however, these labels uncover conflictive and evolving identities and modes of rural consciousness in highland Ecuador. They suggest the pressures on a rural society which retained a deep attachment to land and sought to maintain its ethnic identities while being increasingly drawn into a global capitalist system through the mechanisms of wage labor.

Peasant studies literature from the 1960s and 1970s often explained peasant uprisings as a response to external conditions such as landlessness, exploitation, agrarian capitalism, or proletarianization.<sup>28</sup> In examining rural consciousness, Sidney Mintz, Jeffery Paige, and others claimed that although land ownership tended to make peasants more conservative, agricultural workers engaged in wage-based labor were more likely to revolt. Mintz contends that therefore in Cuba it was a rural proletariat working in the sugar fields, not a peasantry, that led the 1959 revolution.<sup>29</sup> Jeffrey Gould’s work on rural Nicaragua has further blurred the distinction between a peasantry and rural proletariat as he focused on the economic role of rural actors.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Jean Piel noted that an “emerging Indian proletariat” carried out the first modern rural strikes in Peru.<sup>31</sup> Following the same logic, had the rural inhabitants of Pesillo been living on individual, privately owned plots of land, they would not have risen up to demand their rights. Instead, it was the shared experiences of exploitation through wage labor



on the hacienda that led to the development of a type of proletarian consciousness, and this social cohesion provided the environment for the drafting of demands and the organization of a strike.

Various efforts have been made to bridge the conceptual gaps which this terminology produces. Some scholars, including Mintz, have noted that these workers were not truly peasants but instead formed a type of rural proletariat. As a result, they were more likely to struggle for common class interests rather than individual economic needs. Particularly on the Pesillo hacienda by the 1920s, where most of the rural population worked as wage laborers, there was already a process of proletarianization in place. At the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in 1928, Ricardo Paredes, the Secretary General of the Ecuadorian Socialist Party, adamantly argued that it was a mistake to interpret rural populations as a peasantry. Wage earners on agricultural estates comprised a rural proletariat, not a true peasantry, and these agricultural laborers were acquiring a revolutionary consciousness. Together with an urban proletariat, they promised to play a leading role in a revolutionary struggle.<sup>32</sup> This led to the use of the term “semi-proletariat” to indicate a poor, exploited group of people who were “neither entirely landless nor purely wage laborers nor all renters but some combination of the three.” Rural mobilization, therefore, resulted from “their peripheral location in the agro-export economy and shared oppression by the landowning classes.”<sup>33</sup> Cristóbal Kay has observed that the necessity of wage labor, combined with the attachment to land, has continued to trap the peasantry “in a permanent process of semiproletarianization.”<sup>34</sup> The term “semi-proletariat” is not a recent academic invention. Pedro Saad, a labor leader and the Secretary General of the Ecuadorian Communist Party, used the term *campesinos semiproletarios* in a 1961 essay. He described them as people so poor that they could only afford to rent a tiny plot of land that could not produce enough to support themselves. For this reason, these workers also had to find jobs elsewhere for part of the year.<sup>35</sup>

Key to the formation of such hybrid identities was interaction with the dominant culture on both economic and political levels, with both landlords and state structures. In a study of banana workers on the Ecuadorian coast, Steve Striffler notes how both the United Fruit Company and the government had to confront organized worker demands for better wages and working conditions while at the same time facing peasant demands for land.<sup>36</sup> For these “peasant-workers,” preserving a land base as well as earning a salary were part of the same survival strategy to maintain their autonomy and independence. Striffler theorizes that a peasant studies’ tendency to form deterministic economic models to explain political action and consciousness resulted in historically and politically empty interpretations that failed to explain rural protest. It is a mistake, Striffler

argues, to discard the role of “larger structures.” Rather, it is necessary to gain a more sophisticated analysis of “state” and “capital” in order to understand “the role that subaltern groups play in its transformation.”<sup>37</sup> Workers transform capitalism in much the same way as capitalism transforms workers.

Interactions with urban leftist leaders also helped formulate the type of worker consciousness that Indians at Pesillo developed. This can be traced back to the influence of Ecuador’s nascent urban labor movement on the language, tactics, and ideology of rural protest in the 1920s. Michiel Baud notes how this is reflected both in the terminology of calling an Indigenous uprising a “huelga” (strike), as well as targeting the government rather than local private landholders and merchants with their actions.<sup>38</sup> A large general strike on November 15, 1922 in Guayaquil represented the birth of popular movements in Ecuador. It served not only as “a rallying cry for labor and ... a milestone in the growth of Ecuador’s labor movement,”<sup>39</sup> but also lent strength and legitimacy to a burgeoning rural protest movement. A growth in infrastructure, including extension of the railroad network, facilitated the development of alliances between rural communities and urban activists, and permitted previously isolated rural communities more direct access to central government officials.<sup>40</sup>

In this context and with these influences, in the late 1920s Indian workers at Pesillo formed El Inca, the first peasant union in Ecuador. Hiding in caves, creek beds, and under cover of night, activists on the neighboring haciendas of Moyurco and La Chimba subsequently founded the sister syndicates Tierra Libre and Pan y Tierra. The primary issues that these organizations addressed were land rights, access to water and pasture, salaries, education, and the ending of abuses. The almost simultaneous emergence of these organizations with leftist political parties in Quito led to strategic alliances with urban leftists that helped overcome the liabilities of their relative rural geographic isolation. These networks further contributed to a broader class consciousness. At Pesillo, the workers increasingly understood their interests as directly conflicting with those of the government and the administrators of the hacienda (who fundamentally functioned as local representatives of state power). They began to organize protest movements in an attempt to alter social relations and hopefully eventually gain control over the means of production on the hacienda. Resulting from these factors, state-owned haciendas such as Pesillo became the theatre for some of the most militant social movements in the twentieth century, as symbolized with the strike that began on December 30, 1930, and the subsequent petition with 17 demands. This activism led government officials to fear the spread of a “Bolshevik” threat that they warned could lead to a “*revolución comunista indígena*.”<sup>41</sup>

Hacienda worker collaboration with an urban proletariat culminated in the founding of the Confederación de Trabajadores del Ecuador (CTE, Confederation of Ecuadorian Workers) in Quito in 1944. The CTE, which subsequently became a major force in leftist labor organizing efforts in Ecuador, demanded better salaries, a shorter work week, a guaranteed right to strike, the elimination of feudal trappings in agriculture, and a defense of democracy. The CTE maintained that since its inception the demands of the rural masses formed a central element of its ideology. It called for land and water to be returned to Indian communities from which they had been snatched, the formation of agricultural cooperatives, the creation of an effective system of credit which would benefit the Indians, and the improvement of living conditions for salaried agricultural workers. It also announced plans to group "all peasant and Indian organizations in Ecuador into a Federación Nacional Campesina e India" (National Peasant and Indian Federation) as an integral part of the CTE.<sup>42</sup> In response, activists formed the Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios (FEI, Ecuadorian Federation of Indians) in August of 1944, as a peasant wing of the CTE, in order to agitate for peasant and Indigenous concerns from a class-based perspective. Even the founding of the FEI, which took place in the Casa del Obrero (Worker's House) in Quito, relied heavily on the complementary and supportive role of leftist political and labor leaders. From the 1940s through the 1960s, the FEI flourished as the main organizational expression of highland Indigenous and peasant groups.

In the 1960s, Pedro Saad considered the question of the worker-peasant alliance to be of principal importance to the revolutionary movement in Ecuador. This was not a new idea, but something that the Peruvian Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui and some militants in the Communist International advocated in the 1920s.<sup>43</sup> At the founding of the Ecuadorian Socialist Party in 1926, delegates accepted Indigenous leader Jesús Gualavisí's proposal to create an office to defend the interests of peasants and workers.<sup>44</sup> This led to the formation of an organization called the Socorro Obrero y Campesino (Worker and Peasant Help) which was designed "to help with the demands of workers and peasants in their conflicts with capitalists, landlords, and authorities."<sup>45</sup> At a subsequent 1931 congress, Indigenous workers planned to create a Confederación de Obreros Agrarios y Campesinos (Confederation of Agrarian Workers and Peasants) which emphasized both labels.<sup>46</sup> Building on Mariátegui's theories, Saad contended that the working class alone was not able to carry forward a revolutionary movement, especially in a country like Ecuador with a large rural Indian population. Furthermore, Saad found strong parallels of interests between workers and the peasantry. For example, whereas feudalistic land tenure patterns hurt agrarian workers because they did not control their means of production, they also damaged industrial workers because these rural dwellers could not

afford to purchase any industrial production. In countries such as Peru and Ecuador where the peasantry formed a majority of the population, this sector of society would form the basis of a revolutionary movement.<sup>47</sup>

Still, as Striffler notes, the existence of certain types of agricultural labor “makes it hard to be a worker in any subjective sense.”<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, an additional problem with terms that focus on proletarian aspects is that they minimize the ethnic component which was a significant element of the struggle at Pesillo. Although labor historians have been interested in how work formed consciousness, new literature on ethnicity has emphasized that the mode of production alone cannot form consciousness and that ethnic factors have to be considered as well. Over the past decades, Indian organizations throughout Latin America have led powerful protests based primarily on their ethnic identity.<sup>49</sup> As Mark Thurner noted, it is necessary “to reconceptualize the recent history of peasant politics along ethnographic lines.”<sup>50</sup> Such studies help break down broad, all-encompassing terms that traditionally have been markers of a shared identity.

## Indígenas

Although the people at Pesillo rarely utilized the ethnic marker “Indian” to identify themselves in written proclamations, contemporaries would have viewed them as unmistakably Indigenous. They were primarily Quichua-speaking, wore traditional dress, including ponchos and embroidered blouses, engaged in traditional medicinal and religious practices, ate a traditional Andean cuisine of potatoes and *cuy* (guinea pig), lived in rural huts, and worked in agriculture – all factors which would have led outsiders to label them as Indians. In a racially charged atmosphere, white landowners utilized the derogatory label *indio* (Indian) and occasionally the more proper *indígena* (Indigenous) to refer to this population, sometimes publicly and more often in private correspondence. Activists perhaps originally eschewed the label because of its negative and racist connotations, but over the next several decades it became an overtly embraced category of ethnic pride.

Baud notes a social science questioning of “the analytical concept of ‘Indian’” because it “obscures more than it illuminates.” Discussing an Indigenous strike in Cuenca in the southern Ecuadorian highlands in the 1920s, Baud asks whether these insurgents were “peasants who resisted a predatory state” or Indians who drew on a collective historic memory built around an ethnic identity.<sup>51</sup> Even though Indigenous uprisings usually responded to economic pressures and government policies, an ethnic component was present in these early movements. As historian Galo Ramón noted, “although externally the Indian movement has

taken a classist form, it has a profound ethnic dimension” which, while not always explicitly articulated as a political program, is still present in “the growth of *comunas*, the persistence of symbols such as the Quichua language, dress, Andean behavior patterns, challenges to modernity, and even in the emergence of a more explicit ethnic discourse among Indian intellectuals.”<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, increasingly activists and scholars emphasize the importance of ethnicity to Indigenous communities. “From an indigenous point of reference,” Guillermo Delgado-P. argues, “indigenous peoples’ histories remain colonial when reduced to class.”<sup>53</sup> These ethnic aspects cannot be ignored.

The 17 demands that the strikers presented at Pesillo in 1930 included the term *indígena* only once, and then as an adjective describing a type of labor rather than as a noun or a term of self identification. In the second demand, they called for the abolishment of the custom of extending free “indigenous services” to employees on the hacienda. An unstated but assumed underlying issue that informed this demand were the racial tensions between the Indigenous workforce and the white-mestizo management. Ethnic divisions paralleled the class structure on the hacienda, as poor people tended to be “Indians” and rich people were usually “white.” The *patrones* on the Pesillo hacienda, whether from the Merced order, the government after expropriation in 1904, or the neighboring *hacendados* who rented the estate from the Public Welfare ministry, were all absentee landlords representing the power of the minority but dominant white culture centered in the capital city of Quito. A group of mid-level managers, called “employees” or “servants,” carried out day-to-day operations on the Pesillo hacienda and a wide gulf in terms of pay and prestige divided them from the Indigenous workforce. Most of these employees were white professionals who carried out a variety of services necessary for the administration of the hacienda. The lowest in pay and social prestige among this managerial class were the *mayordomos* who oversaw the agricultural work on the hacienda and had the most direct contact with the Indigenous peons. These *mayordomos* were usually mestizos who were attempting to distance themselves from their Indigenous roots and claim a white identity. This fostered racist attitudes and actions toward the agricultural workers, and in turn Indigenous workers often despised the *mayordomos* for their cruel and abusive treatment. These social, cultural, and ethnic divisions gave rise to very real racial tensions, and though not explicitly articulated as such, it was these differences that drove the demands to fire abusive *mayordomos*. Demands for better working conditions therefore contained a definite if unstated ethnic agenda.

Despite an apparent focus on economic issues in their 17 demands, more important than the small salaries for many *huasipungueros* were the tiny garden plots which they received as partial recompense for their labor on the hacienda.

The *huasipungueros* did not actually own their plots of land; they were part of the hacienda and on loan to the workers as partial payment for their labor. *Huasipungos* were often the least productive land on a hacienda and generally could not produce sufficient foodstuffs to feed the workers' families, much less produce a surplus to sell. Nevertheless, as Jorge Icaza vividly portrayed in his novel *Huasipungo*, the workers became very attached to their plots and treated them as their own, and were willing to revolt if the landowners attempted to take these plots away.<sup>54</sup> Even though *huasipungueros* could earn more as free laborers on the hacienda, many Indians were willing to work for lower wages in order to have their own plot of land.<sup>55</sup> According to a study from the 1940s, this was because of a great love for the land which flowed in their blood. It was a central part of their Indigenous culture and ethnic heritage. They would rather have the small plot of land and only earn seventy-five centavos a day than be without the plot (and the attachment to their cultural heritage) and earn the six sures of a free peon.<sup>56</sup>

The Quichua Indians on the Pesillo hacienda did not view the land as an economic commodity which could be bought, sold, and owned. Much like the air that surrounded them, the land was a shared resource that served the needs of everyone. It was an endless frustration to hacienda owners that the peons would take things "because the hacienda belonged to everyone." As a result, both the urban leftists and the rural Indians shared a common concept of a social construction of land that responded to community instead of individual needs. This influenced the nature of agrarian reform which the leftists proposed and the Indians quickly came to advocate. The urban Marxists told the Indians they had a right to own the means of production on the hacienda and they should fight to take control away from the *hacendados*.<sup>57</sup> Rather than favoring the division of the hacienda into smaller individually owned and worked tracts of land, the Indians at Pesillo envisioned transforming the hacienda into a worker-owned and operated cooperative in which everyone would share in the wealth of the production.

Upon close inspection, it becomes clear that an ethnic consciousness underscored the activists' actions and demands in the 1930 strike at Pesillo. By the end of the twentieth century, after decades of exploiting ethnicity as a tool in an Indigenous-rights struggle, it had become clear that ethnicity could be a force for social change. But this idea was also present at the time of the Pesillo uprising. Even the name of their peasant union (El Inca) would seem to reveal the persistence of an ethnic identity, even if it was a created one, as the Inkas were arguably more of a conquering force rather than aboriginal presence in the northern Andes. In the 1920s, Mariátegui believed that Indians, like Marx's European industrialized working class, had experienced alienation from the ruling

classes and were ready to throw off their oppressors. Mariátegui claimed that “the hope of the Indian is absolutely revolutionary” and that the idea of the socialist revolution would move them to action.<sup>58</sup>

The comments of Indigenous peoples reveal that they self-identified as Indians and, furthermore, they embraced this ethnic identity as something that gave them the strength and will to persevere through difficult times. In 1937, when Virgilio Lechón was in prison for his political activities, his wife, María Clotilde Tarabata, petitioned the national congress for his release. She wrote that “my husband is certainly an Indian, an Indigenous person who has not denied his race nor his surname.”<sup>59</sup> Embracing an ethnic identity did not mean clinging hopelessly to a rapidly disappearing past, but rather provided new ways of navigating a changing economic and political situation.

Although a communal tendency is entirely consistent with what we know about Indigenous culture, it runs counter to our traditional understanding of peasants and small farmers motivated by personal and individual concerns. At the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, Paredes explained that unlike the individualized nature of the French peasantry, Indians in Ecuador as throughout the Americas were “imbued with a remarkable collectivist spirit.” He urged encouraging this collective agricultural system in the construction of socialism.<sup>60</sup> The types of salary, working conditions, and land demands that workers at Pesillo made indicate the complex nature of rural consciousness that this rural population possessed. Their struggles were based on a combination of both their traditional ethnic identity and concepts as well as an emerging class consciousness that they were quickly developing. Throughout the Andes there has been a great deal of overlap between peasant and Indigenous groups.<sup>61</sup> Bolivian Indian leader and former vice-president Víctor Hugo Cárdenas considers Indian and peasant to be “*conceptos intercruzados*.”<sup>62</sup> This led Aymara activists in the 1980s, organized into the Katarista movement in Bolivia, to critique their reality through the “two eyes” of an exploited peasant class and an oppressed Indigenous nation.<sup>63</sup> Since the terms are often used synonymously, it can be difficult to discuss one without the other. In fact, agrarian reform laws in the 1950s in Guatemala and Bolivia deliberately substituted the word “*campesino*” for “Indian.” Some activists came to see these as complementary, not diametrically opposed, concepts.

Although the FEI has long been disregarded as an organization distant from Indigenous concerns,<sup>64</sup> an ethnic consciousness fundamentally underscored its actions. Dolores Cacungo, a Quichua Indian long active in struggles on the Pesillo hacienda, played a leading role in the founding of the organization and served as its first secretary general. In its founding statutes, the Federation defined its four-fold purpose:

1. Gain the economic emancipation of Ecuadorean Indians;
2. Raise the Indians' cultural and moral level while conserving whatever is good in their native customs;
3. Contribute to national unity;
4. Establish links of solidarity with all American Indians.<sup>65</sup>

Rather than suppressing ethnicity, the FEI identified it as something positive and to be affirmed as a useful aspect of their struggle. This was an *Indian* organization, and that did not need to be denied in the struggle for liberation. Also present, as articulated in the first point, was a call for socio-economic changes, which seems to imply a proletarian class consciousness – albeit while not denying that they were Indians. Many of the FEI's subsequent demands and programs revolved around issues of raising salaries, shortening the work week, and ending forced labor for women, all of which were consistent with working-class or labor union goals. Noticeably absent were traditional peasant demands for land, although campaigning for agrarian reform became one of the organization's primary objectives. The agrarian reform program which they envisioned was not breaking up the large haciendas into small private *minifundios*, but transforming agrarian structures into a cooperative system. When the Ecuadorian government promulgated agrarian reform legislation in 1964, the Federation began to lose steam and disintegrate. But during the height of its trajectory, the FEI represented a sometimes delicate balancing act between peasant, worker, and Indigenous modes of rural consciousness.

### **A peasant by any other name?**

We can extract a series of conclusions from this discussion. First, *huasipungueros* on the Pesillo hacienda articulated a series of demands (salaries and working conditions) which paralleled those of working-class labor unions. Their concerns were not inimical to nor in conflict with larger popular movements in Ecuador, but rather an integral aspect of those broader political developments. Second, these peons came to make land demands which were not the traditional requests for individual plots, but rather they pushed for a broad program of agrarian reform that addressed issues of the means of production. Finally, far from being reactionaries and isolationists, these rural workers made ideological demands that were not intended to be a modernizing force in society, but rather a transformational one. The goal was not simply to improve their individual societal status, but to rework social, economic, and political relations throughout society on a fundamental level while striving toward social justice and equality.



Peons on the Pesillo hacienda were not attempting to hold on to a disappearing past, but rather drew strength and ideas from their ethnic heritage and worker consciousness to build a better future. As the Zapatista rebels in Chiapas, Mexico, stated some sixty years later, “our struggle is not against the future, but about who shapes that future and who benefits from it.”<sup>66</sup>

The 1930 strike at the Pesillo hacienda took place in the context of an acute awareness that economic and political forces beyond their immediate environs influenced their destinies and had a negative impact on their desire to improve their position in society. This understanding led them to look for ways to force fundamental changes in their social relations with outside society and the international capitalistic order. Their actions, in turn, influenced Ecuador’s political economy, and particularly the functioning of highland haciendas.<sup>67</sup> These rural dwellers refused to allow themselves to be victimized or to play the role of victims. Instead, their actions fostered a class consciousness similar to what E. P. Thompson noted in his landmark study, *The Making of the English Working Class*. Class consciousness was not an automatic outcome of a class society; it was the result of human intervention in order to address the inherent inequalities in a class-based society.<sup>68</sup> As Striffler advocates, we need to “place politically engaged human actors at the center” of a study of political and economic transformations.<sup>69</sup> It is that human intervention that we see in the creation of a blending of peasant, worker, and Indigenous consciousness on the Pesillo hacienda.

What type of identity or consciousness did the workers on these haciendas possess? Identities, like culture, can be freely traded and different forms assumed under various conditions as the need arises. It should not be surprising that at different times and places, different types of identities might emerge as primary. Undeniably, the workers on the Pesillo hacienda were ethnically Indian. All external indicators (dress, language, type of housing, type of work, etc.) as well as specific ideological statements point in this direction. In addition, as noted above, terms such as “*trabajadores agrícolas*” indicate the presence of forms of a worker identity. The *huasipungueros* understood that their interests were opposed rather than complementary to those of their employers. These agricultural workers directly experienced the alienation and irreconcilable contradictions with capitalism, and therefore gained a class consciousness. They also retained elements of what scholars have traditionally interpreted as a peasant identity, such as their attachment to the land. This sense of place and the social function of that space was so profound that it cannot be separated from their other forms of identity. When combined with working-class issues of wages and working conditions, it led to a class consciousness that helped foster a struggle for social justice. In the end, one aspect of this consciousness was not more

important than the others, but they interacted together in such a way that enhanced and advanced their struggle. It was through the blending of these seemingly conflictive modes of rural consciousness that the Indigenous peasantry on the Pesillo hacienda in highland Ecuador were able to gain strength and the ability to struggle for a transformation of society.

## NOTES

1. "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* (Quito), January 6, 1931, p. 1 (see text in appendix). For background on the history of revolts at the Pesillo hacienda, see Muriel Crespi, "Changing Power Relations: The Rise of Peasant Unions on Traditional Ecuadorian Haciendas," *Anthropological Quarterly* 44:4 (October 1971): 223-40; Mercedes Prieto, "Haciendas estatales: un caso de ofensiva campesina: 1926-1948," in *Ecuador: cambios en el agro serrano*, ed. Miguel Murmis and others (Quito: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) - Centro de Planificación y Estudios Sociales (CEPLAES), 1980), 101-30; Marc Becker, "Una Revolución Comunista Indígena: Rural Protest Movements in Cayambe, Ecuador," *Rethinking Marxism* 10:4 (Winter 1998): 34-51; and A. Kim Clark, "Racial Ideologies and the Quest for National Development: Debating the Agrarian Problem in Ecuador (1930-50)," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 30:2 (May 1998): 373-93.
2. "Se soluciona el problema creado por los indígenas sublevados en las haciendas Pesillo y Moyurco," *El Comercio* (Quito), Jan. 8, 1931, p. 1. The agreement is also discussed in a letter from the Secretaría de Policía to the Jefe Político, Quito, Jan. 7, 1931, Archivo Nacional de Medicina del Museo Nacional de Medicina "Dr. Eduardo Estrella," Fondo Junta Central de Asistencia Pública in Quito, Ecuador (hereafter cited as JCAP), Comunicaciones Recibidas, Enero-Junio 1931, 894.
3. See, for example, Steve J. Stern, ed., *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World: 18th to 20th Centuries* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).
4. Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).
5. Sr. General D. Leonidas Plaza G., "Se convoca licitadores para el arrendamiento de los predios rústicos pertenecientes a las comunidades religiosas," *Registro Oficial* III:926 (October 31, 1904): 9508; Sr. Gral. Dn. Eloy Alfaro, "Decreto declárase del Estado los bienes raíces de las comunidades religiosas establecidas en la República y adjudicanse a la Beneficencia Pública," *Registro Oficial* III:789 (October 19, 1908): 4164-65.
6. *Huasipungo* (sometimes spelled "guasipungo" in the historical literature) is a Quichua term comprised of *huasi* (house) and *pungo* (door), but the roots of this term have been lost. The usage of the term is unique to Ecuador, although the system it represents is not. In other countries, similar rural workers engaged in debt-peonage (or perhaps more accurately, share-tenancy) forms of labor relations are called *terrazuelos* (Colombia),

- inquilinos* (Chile), *yanacunas* (Peru), *colonos* (Bolivia), etc. See Udo Oberem, "Contribución a la historia del trabajador rural de América Latina: 'conciertos' y 'huasipungueros' en Ecuador," in *Contribución a la etnohistoria ecuatoriana*, ed. Segundo Moreno Y. and Udo Oberem (Otavalo, Ecuador: Instituto Otavaleño de Antropología, 1981), 301.
7. Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 249.
  8. Arnold J. Bauer, "Rural Workers in Spanish America: Problems of Peonage and Oppression," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 59:1 (Feb. 1979), 41-42.
  9. Sidney W. Mintz, "A Note on the Definition of Peasantries," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 1:1 (Oct. 1973), 91-106. Also see Eric R. Wolf, *Peasants* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966) and Henry A. Landsberger, "Peasant Unrest: Themes and Variations," in *Rural Protest: Peasant Movements and Social Change*, ed. Henry A. Landsberger (London: Macmillan, 1974), 6-18. Years later, indicating that this debate is nowhere near an end, John Coatsworth observed that peasants "have been so variously identified that a generally accepted definition has yet to be produced." See John H. Coatsworth, "Patterns of Rural Rebellion in Latin America: Mexico in Comparative Perspective," in *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico*, ed. Friedrich Katz (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 22.
  10. Peter F. Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State: Guerrero, 1800-1857* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996) and Florencia E. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) provide two excellent and solid examples of such work.
  11. Michael Redclift, "Peasants and Revolutionaries: Some Critical Comments," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 7:1 (May 1975), 135.
  12. Solon Barraclough, ed., *Agrarian Structure in Latin America: A Resume of the CIDA Land Tenure Studies of: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Company, 1973), 297. Barraclough also noted that "the fact that modern English has no exact equivalent of this concept [*campesino*] tells much about the different social structures in the English-speaking countries and Latin America." Occasionally activists will translate *campesinos* into English as "farm workers."
  13. In his examination of the Mexican revolution, John Womack rejected this translation because of its exotic connotations; "What they were is clear in Spanish: *campesinos*, people from the fields." Jeffrey Gould utilizes "*campesino*" on the basis that it was "the word used by the subjects of this study to describe their own social condition and class." See John Womack, Jr., *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), x; Jeffrey L. Gould, *To Lead as Equals: Rural Protest and Political Consciousness in Chinandega, Nicaragua, 1912-1979* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 7.
  14. Christopher R. Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos: Politics, Identity, and Agrarian Struggle in Postrevolutionary Michoacan, 1920-1935* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 20.

15. *Ibid.*, 3.
16. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 229; Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *ibid.*, 317-18.
17. Carol A. Smith, "Class Position and Class Consciousness in an Indian Community: Totonicapán in the 1970s," in *Guatemalan Indians and the State: 1540 to 1988*, ed. Carol A. Smith (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 205-229.
18. For the 1970s literature on peasants, see, for example, Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969); Howard Handelman, *Struggle in the Andes: Peasant Political Mobilization in Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975); Jeffery M. Paige, *Agrarian Revolution: Social Movement and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World* (New York: The Free Press, 1975); and Brian Loveman, *Struggle in the Countryside: Politics and Rural Labor in Chile, 1919-1973* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976). For a critical analysis of the literature on the Latin American peasantry, see William Roseberry, "Beyond the Agrarian Question in Latin America," in *Confronting Historical Paradigms: Peasants, Labor, and the Capitalist World System in Africa and Latin America*, ed. Frederick Cooper and others (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 318-68.
19. Steve J. Stern, "New Approaches to the Study of Peasant Rebellion and Consciousness: Implications of the Andean Experience," in *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean World, 18th to 20th Centuries*, ed. Steve J. Stern (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 5-6.
20. Héctor Pérez Brignoli, "Indians, Communists, and Peasants: The 1932 Rebellion in El Salvador," in *Coffee, Society, and Power in Latin America*, ed. William Roseberry, Lowell Gudmundson, and Mario Samper K. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 234. For critical analyses of the persistence of ethnic identity and the role of the Communist Party in the Salvadoran revolt, also see Erik Ching and Virginia Tilley, "Indians, the Military and the Rebellion of 1932 in El Salvador," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 30:1 (February 1998): 121-56, and Erik Ching, "In Search of the Party: The Communist Party, the Comintern, and the Peasant Rebellion of 1932 in El Salvador," *The Americas* 55:2 (October 1998): 204-39.
21. Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos*, 2.
22. Andrés Guerrero, *La semántica de la dominación: el concertaje de indios* (Quito: Ediciones Libri Mundi, 1991), 66.
23. Augusto Egas to Sr. Ministro de Gobierno y Asistencia Pública, Quito, March 31, 1932, JCAP, CD, 1932, 107.
24. Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700-1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).
25. Letter from Carlos Torres L. and Gustavo Araujo Z. to José Rafael Delgado, Pesillo, August 17, 1930, Comunicaciones Recibidas, Julio-Diciembre 1930, JCAP, 732.
26. For one example, see letter from Gonzalo Oleas to Director de la Junta Central de Asistencia Pública, Quito, March 6, 1939?, Comunicaciones Recibidas, Primer Semestre, 1939, JCAP, 957.
27. See "Dos indígenas de la hacienda 'Guachalá' fueron muertos por la policía," *El Comercio*

- (January 11, 1954): 3; "Los testigos y sindicatos de los sucesos de Guachalá rindieron sus declaraciones," *El Comercio* (January 12, 1954): 14; "Masacre en Guachalá," *El Pueblo* (January 16, 1954): 1.
28. Mitchell A. Seligson, "Agrarian Inequality and the Theory of Peasant Rebellion," *Latin American Research Review* 31:2 (1996), 151.
  29. Paige, *Agrarian Revolution*; Sidney W. Mintz, "The Rural Proletariat and the Problem of Rural Proletarian Consciousness," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 1:3 (April 1974), 291-325. Also see Theda Skocpol, "What Makes Peasants Revolutionary?" in *Power and Protest in the Countryside: Studies of Rural Unrest in Asia, Europe, and Latin America*, ed. Robert P. Weller and Scott E. Guggenheim (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1982), 157-79.
  30. Jeffrey L. Gould, *To Lead as Equals: Rural Protest and Political Consciousness in Chinandega, Nicaragua, 1912-1979* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990).
  31. Jean Piel, "The Place of the Peasantry in the National Life of Peru in the Nineteenth Century," *Past and Present* 46 (February 1970): 131.
  32. Ricardo Paredes, "VI World Congress, Reply to Humbert-Droz," *International Press Correspondence* (London, H.R.G. Jefferson) 8, no. 74 (October 1928): 1350.
  33. Jeffery M. Paige, "Land Reform and Agrarian Revolution in El Salvador; Comment on Seligson and Diskin," *Latin American Research Review* 31:2 (1996), 133. On semi-proletarianism, also see Carlos Rafael Cabarrús, *Génesis de una revolución: análisis del surgimiento y desarrollo de la organización campesina en El Salvador* (México, D.F.: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1983). Mark Thurner has proposed the term peasant-worker "because it depicts the twentieth-century hacienda peasant's dual circumstance more accurately than either 'peasant' or 'worker' alone, and it is more descriptive than 'semiproletariat.'" See Mark Thurner, *Hacienda Dissolution, Peasant Struggle, and Land Market in Ecuador's Central Highlands (Canton Colta, Chimborazo Province)*, LTC Research Paper 99 (University of Wisconsin-Madison: Land Tenure Center, 1989), 34. Recently activists within rural movements have commonly employed the term *campesino-indígena*.
  34. Cristóbal Kay, "Rural Latin America: Exclusionary and Uneven Agricultural Development," in *Capital, Power, and Inequality in Latin America*, ed. Sandor Halebsky and Richard L. Harris (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 36.
  35. Pedro Saad, "La reforma agraria," *Bandera Roja* (Guayaquil) 1:1 (Jan.-Feb. 1961), 33.
  36. Steve Striffler, *In The Shadows of State and Capital: The United Fruit Company, Popular Struggle, and Agrarian Restructuring in Ecuador, 1900-1995*, American encounters/global interactions (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 94.
  37. *Ibid.*, 205-207.
  38. Michiel Baud, "The *Huelga de los Indígenas* in Cuenca, Ecuador (1920-1921)," in *Indigenous Revolts in Chiapas and the Andean Highlands*, ed. Kevin Gosner and Arij Ouweneel (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1996), 233.
  39. Richard Lee Milk, "Growth and Development of Ecuador's Worker Organizations, 1895-1944" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), 91.
  40. A. Kim Clark, *The Redemptive Work: Railway and Nation in Ecuador, 1895-1930*, Latin-

American silhouettes (Wilmington, Del: SR Books, 1998), 211-12. This cut both ways, as the government used the train to extract leaders from Pesillo to stand trial in Quito for rebellion after the 1930 strike. See "Los indígenas de Pesillo y Moyurco se han sublevado," *El Día*, December 31, 1930, 1.

41. "Indigenous communist revolution;" letter from Augusto Egas, Segundo D. Rojas V., and Ernesto Robalino to Ministerio de Gobierno y Asistencia Pública, Quito, April 30, 1931, JCAP, Comunicaciones Recibidas, Enero-Junio 1931, 900.
42. Confederación de Trabajadores del Ecuador (CTE),"Estatutos de la Confederación de Trabajadores del Ecuador (C.T.E.)," in Osvaldo Albornoz, *et al.* (eds.) *28 de mayo y fundación de la C.T.E.* (Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional), 194-95; 199-200.
43. Secretariado Sudamericano de la Internacional Comunista (SSAIC), *El movimiento revolucionario latino americano: Versiones de la primera conferencia comunista latinoamericana, junio de 1929* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Revista La Correspondencia Sudamericana, 1929), 310; Ricardo Martínez de la Torre, *Apuntes para una interpretación marxista de la historia social del Perú* (Lima: Empresa Editora Peruana, 1947-1949), vol. 2, 439.
44. 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), 52.
45. "Formación del Socorro Obrero y Campesino," *La Hoz* (Quito) 1:2 (September 11, 1930): 6.
46. "El Congreso de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos," *La Hoz* 8 (December 20, 1930), 4.
47. Pedro Saad, "Sobre la alianza obrero campesina," *Bandera Roja* 1, no. 3 (1961): 28, 34.
48. Striffler, *In The Shadows of State and Capital*, 199.
49. See, for example, Xavier Albó, "El retorno del indio," *Revista Andina* 9:2 (Dec. 1991): 299-345.
50. Mark Thurner, "Peasant Politics and Andean Haciendas in the Transition to Capitalism: An Ethnographic History," *Latin American Research Review* 28:3 (1993): 42.
51. Baud, "The Huelga de los Indígenas," 227-28.
52. Galo Ramón Valarezo, "Indios, tierra y modernización: Cayambe-Ecuador 1950-1990," *El regreso de los runas: la potencialidad del proyecto indio en el Ecuador contemporáneo* (Quito: COMUNIDEC-Fundación Interamericana, 1993), 197, 205.
53. Guillermo Delgado-P., "Ethnic Politics and the Popular Movement: Reconstructing a Social Justice Agenda," in *Latin America Faces the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Susanne Jonas and Edward J. McCaughan (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 82.
54. Jorge Icaza, *Huasipungo*, Colección Ariel Universal No. 3 (Guayaquil: Cromograf S.A., 1973).
55. Moisés Sáenz, *Sobre el indio ecuatoriano y su incorporación al medio nacional* (México: Publicaciones de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1933), 54-56. Also see Prieto, "Haciendas estatales," 106, and Muriel Crespi, "The Patrons and Peons of Pesillo: A Traditional Hacienda System in Highland Ecuador" (Ph.D. diss., Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1968), 68.
56. Aníbal Buitron and Bárbara Salisbury Buitron, *Condiciones de vida y trabajo del campesino de la provincia de Pichincha* (Quito: Instituto Nacional de Previsión, Depto.

- de Propaganda, 1947), 38.
57. Letter from Augusto Egas to José Rafael Delgado, Quito, Sept. 2, 1930, JCAP, Libro de Oficios que dirige la Junta de Asistencia Pública, 1930, 352.
  58. José Carlos Mariátegui, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 29.
  59. "La Sra. María Clotilde Tarabata pide que la amnesia se haga extensiva a su esposo Virgilio Lechón," Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, 1937, Caja 6, VI-384, Archivo Palacio Legislativo, Quito, Ecuador.
  60. Ricardo Paredes, "VI World Congress, Reply to Bukharin on Draft Programme," *International Press Correspondence* 8:66 (September 25, 1928): 1176-78.
  61. As an example of this, Florencia E. Mallon, in her detailed and careful studies: *The Defense of Community in Peru's Central Highlands: Peasant Struggle and Capitalist Transition, 1860-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) and *Peasant and Nation*, discusses Indigenous peoples, but she freely uses the term interchangeably with peasants, and it is not clear that she understands Indigenous identities as something separate from a peasantry.
  62. Víctor Hugo Cárdenas, "El papel de las organizaciones indígenas en los contextos políticos americanos," Conferencia Magistral, 49 Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Quito, Ecuador, July 9, 1997.
  63. Xavier Albó, "And from Kataristas to MNRistas? The Surprising and Bold Alliance Between Aymaras and Neoliberals in Bolivia," in *Indigenous Peoples and Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Donna Lee Van Cott (New York: St. Martin's Press in association with the Inter-American Dialogue, 1994), 55.
  64. For example, see Melina H. Selverston, "The Politics of Culture: Indigenous Peoples and the State in Ecuador," in *Indigenous Peoples and Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Donna Lee Van Cott (New York: St. Martin's Press in association with the Inter-American Dialogue, 1994), 138.
  65. Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios (FEI), *Estatutos de la Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios* (Guayaquil: Editorial Claridad, 1945), 3. On Cacuango, see Raquel Rodas Morales, *Dolores Cacuango* (Quito: Sociedad Alemana de Cooperación Técnica, GTZ; Proyecto de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural, EBI, 1998).
  66. NACLA, "Gaining ground: the indigenous movement in Latin America," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 29, no. 5 (1996): 14.
  67. Guerrero, *La semántica de la dominación*, 40.
  68. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Random House, 1963).
  69. Striffler, *In The Shadows of State and Capital*, 5.

Appendix – 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

1. Que los patrones prometan despedir a todo mayordomo, empleado o sirviente que maltrataren a los trabajadores, aboliéndose de este modo el uso del garrote, foete y más castigos, de manera absoluta.
2. Abolición de la costumbre de dar a los sirvientes servicias indígenas que prestan servicios sin remuneración alguna. La hacienda puede contar con dos servicias que se turnarán cada mes, debiendo el Sindicato formar la lista del turno en referencia.
3. Cada servicia ganará 3 sucres mensuales.
4. Las mujeres que trabajan en el ordeño y que prestan servicios desde las primeras horas de la madrugada ganarán 20 centavos diarios, y después de haber terminado sus faenas en el ordeño y queseras quedarán libres, sin que se les pueda obligar a otros trabajos.
5. Todos los peones de la hacienda, que tuvieran huasipungos trabajarán 5 días a la semana. Los que no tuvieran huasipungos trabajarán como ganaderos, y sólo cuando a bien tuvieran.
6. Se les devolverá el huasipungo a los peones que se los hubiere quitado.
7. El jornal diario será de 40 centavos para los peones; y el jornalero tendrá las siguientes garantías: el usufructo de su huasipungo, aboliendo el cobro de diezmos, el pasto libre en el páramo y sitio para sus animales; no se hará uso del sistema de faena y tarea para un mismo día, en consecuencia, el día en que se de tarea, no se obligará al trabajo de faena o viceversa.
8. Cualquiera que sea la forma de trabajo, la jornada no será mayor de 8 horas. En caso de que la hacienda necesitare del trabajo de los peones pasadas las 8 horas y que estos se comprometieran a trabajar más tiempo, se les abonará por cada hora que pase de las 8 horas, a razón de 10 centavos por hora.
9. Los boyeros, cuentayos o cuidadores de animales no serán responsables de la muerte de los animales entregados a su cuidado, a menos de ser consecuencia de actos maliciosos, o de abandono del peón. Se abolirá la costumbre de cobrar al peón por los abortos de los animales.
10. Queda abolida la llamada reposición por la cual se entrega al peón las carnes de los animales muertos para que le devuelvan uno vivo.
11. Los patrones adecuarán los lugares para guardar las cosechas y hasta tanto quedará abolida la costumbre de entregar las especies en los llanos al jornalero y luego hacerle responsable de las diferencias de peso. Estas diferencias, que son generalmente una consecuencia de haberse secado las especies, constituyen un motivo permanente de deuda para el jornalero.
12. Los encargados del cuidado de los animales no serán empleados en otros trabajos, debiéndoseles abonar los 50 centavos diarios sólo por el cuidado de los animales encargados.
13. Las mujeres que fueren empleadas en trabajos de menor rudeza que los hombres, ganarán 30 centavos diarios.



14. Cada año se realizarán las cuentas y con este objeto dará el patrón aviso 10 días antes al Secretario del Sindicato, a fin de que este concurra personalmente o por medio de procurador o abogado.
15. Se establecerá una escuela en el punto denominado Pucará.
16. El pago de jornales se efectuará quincenalmente.
17. Se prestará asistencia médica gratuita y medicinas para los peones que enfermaren.

Fuente: *El Día* (Quito), 6 enero 1931, p. 1.