

Inglaterra' y contrasta con las sillas de cráneo de vaca de los chacareros, en el final del texto.

En este libro, los sonidos han cobrado disimuladamente su protagonismo en la historia. Se puede oír el tranvía que avisa su paso; las funciones de cine mudo al son del acompañamiento de pianistas y el público que comenta los pormenores del relato cinematográfico; los reclamos a los malos espectáculos teatrales; el mercado, la calle y el conventillo, espacios de encuentro donde la gente expresa sus sentimientos, opiniones, puntos de vista y necesidades. También las imágenes ocupan un lugar destacado; sin embargo, el texto las interpreta poco. Queda pendiente al lector la tarea de detenerse en la cuidadosa selección de fotografías, dibujos, caricaturas, propaganda y portadas de libros y revistas que formaron parte del universo de circulación entre los individuos.

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**SONIA ALDA MEJÍAS: *La participación indígena en la construcción de la república de Guatemala, S. XIX.* Madrid: UAM Ediciones, 2000.**

The central argument of *Participación indígena* is that the indigenous population of nineteenth-century Guatemala involved itself regularly in national politics through voting and elections, not just sporadic outbursts of violence. Communities had clear ideas of what might be gained by this participation, the author argues, and the national parties encouraged and facilitated their involvement, both in hopes of winning votes and as part of a larger project to construct and legitimate a modern, centralized nation state. Thus the book falls squarely within recent efforts both to write a new political history for Latin America and broader attempts to recognize agency among previously neglected groups.

The Constitution of 1812 largely defined the liberal state in much of post-independence Latin America. Guatemala's Indians interpreted its provision for *ayuntamientos* as validating the autonomous self-government they had enjoyed in the colonial period. Elites, by contrast, saw in the document a blueprint for constructing a centralized nation state based on individuals and individual rights, and they saw the indigenous communities as barriers to modernization. Both Conservatives and Liberals agreed that for the country to develop, the Indian would have to be 'civilized', by which they meant the adoption of 'western' values; what they disagreed upon was the rate and the degree of possible change. The Liberals seized the initiative in the 1820s and 1830s, but the reforms they introduced, and particularly what the indigenous

population perceived as threats to local autonomy and the inclusion of *ladinos* in community politics, prompted a popular resistance that brought the Conservatives to power in 1839. Their readoption of the Laws of Indies was not, Mejías argues, reactionary, but rather what they saw to be the necessary first step in a renewed, but now more gradual effort, to centralize power and modernize the population.

Lacking in most cases hereditary monarchs, the new Latin American states sought legitimacy through elections, and in Guatemala both the Liberal and Conservative parties encouraged indigenous participation in electoral politics, while attacking their enemies for doing the same. Legitimation did not necessarily rest on a democratic vote, however, but rather the support of the 'right' people, and the tendency for much of the century was to progressively restrict suffrage at the national level. Within indigenous communities, on the other hand, voting continued to be more general. Mejías correctly stresses that politics in these communities was not about absolute victory of one party or faction, but rather the distribution of local power so as to maintain peace and stability. Perhaps, however, she overemphasizes the importance of voting as such, given that local contests were largely predetermined by *costumbre* [e.g., rotation in office] and negotiations among community leaders. It may well have been that in many cases voting, which was open and non-secret, was instead a public affirmation of community solidarity and ratification of already agreed-upon results.

*Participación indígena* argues that voting was an important element, too, in ongoing negotiations between the indigenous populations and the aspirant state. Generally, the communities wanted two things from the state: local autonomy and support for specific projects or help with complaints— e.g., land disputes, military recruiting, disputes with the priest, etc. Problems and the sorts of conflicts that needed resolution changed over time, of course, and even *costumbre* was more malleable than discourse sometimes suggests. Above all, the Indians increasingly realized that their external political situation was now different from what had been their colonial experience. But rather than isolating themselves from this, Mejías says, they adopted and adapted those parts of the liberal project that they imagined best served their interests; they learned the language and the concerns, and the prejudices, of the new national governments and sought to use these to address their own projects. The communities had leverage because the state needed taxes and soldiers but was not powerful enough to obtain these without negotiation and compromise, and the political parties needed the Indians' votes to gain control of the state. Of course, the losers in each election blamed their misfortune on the manipulation of the ignorant Indian and each accused their

other of fraud. The degree of violence and delegitimation this provoked depended on how united or divided the elite was at that moment.

But if Mejías's central theme is indigenous participation in politics, the mechanics of this participation remain oddly elusive. Schematic explanations of the various voting and local government laws that are the focus of much of Mejías's discussion would be helpful, rather than finding the provisions scattered piecemeal through the book. How elections actually took place is never addressed. There are no tables or other representations of electoral results. Although the author makes it clear that this is not a quantitative study [173], it still would be interesting to have an idea, for example, of the relative weight of the indigenous vote in different elections or of regional differences and the changes in these over time. Mejías correctly challenges the now shop-worn myth of invariable harmony in indigenous communities, but in one way she perpetuates it: the idea that these communities always and in all situations unified against outsiders [226]. Recent work has demonstrated that communities did split or faction, and that they sometimes appealed to outsiders to weigh in on their side –a good example is Greg Grandin, "The Strange Case of 'La Mancha Negra': Maya State Relations in Nineteenth Century Guatemala," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 24, No. 2 (1997), 7-33. Finally, the footnotes show an enormous amount of interesting research, especially in the *corregidor/jefe político* papers in the AGCA, very little of which makes it into the text. A few case studies would breathe more life into the text.

Mejías is to be congratulated for taking on such a difficult topic and for turning up and using evidence many historians would not have imagined existed. The arguments in *Participación indígena* are complex and subtle, and this review has only touched on a few. To her great credit, the author has firmly put to rest any suggestion that Guatemala's indigenous population remained isolated from, or did not understand, national politics in the nineteenth century, or that their only involvement was sporadic outbursts of reactionary violence.

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CHRISTINE HUNEFELT: *Liberalism in the Bedroom: Quarreling Spouses in Nineteenth-Century Lima*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.

What can a fight between husband and wife tell us about the past? Christine Hunefelt uses over one thousand conjugal battles from the ecclesiastical