on political authorities and government employees to live up to the state's own rhetoric about their roles.

In the liberal period, the actions of indigenous day workers were central to the very formation of the liberal state in Ecuador. Indians not only utilized law and state discourse, but in some cases even helped to generate those discursive resources when their petitions led to new government decrees. Their local struggles, in which they drew on the state idea, generated changes that became institutionalized in the state system. In the words of Gramsci, these subaltern activities led to "molecular changes which in fact progressively modif[ied] the pre-existing composition of forces, and hence bec[a]me the matrix of new changes." In the 1930s and 1940s, Indian peasants actively drew on various political discourses: from the paternalism of Velasco Ibarra, and his claims to speak for the people, to the new rhetoric of indigenismo, which in Ecuador was a quasi-official project. Indians clearly manipulated the discourse of the central state—the state idea it promoted—to deal with everyday problems, increasing the legitimacy of the state. In both periods, they also took advantage of the various gaps and fissures in the Ecuadorian state system by playing off some state officials against others, further contributing to the legitimacy of the central state. This does not indicate Indians' susceptibility to false consciousness, nor does it indicate ideological consensus. Rather, it points to a hegemonic process in which political leaders were called upon, in Gramscian terms, not only to dominate, but to lead, and in so doing, they were willing to incorporate some aspects of subaltern projects into their own projects. In the process, they undermined not only other social groups, but also other state institutions or authorities. Ultimately, the fissures in the state system may have been central to the dynamic of domination, rather than being weaknesses or inadequacies of the Ecuadorian state.

On May 28, 1944, Indigenous peoples joined a coalition of workers, peasants, students, and lower-ranking military personnel in the Glorious May Revolution that overthrew the increasingly unpopular presidency of Carlos Arroyo del Río. Masses of people flooded the streets to demand deep-seated reforms that would address their grievances. It was a time of euphoric optimism that seemed to signal the emergence of new social relations and the end of exclusionary state structures. Ecuador, one author observed, finally "was in the hands of its legitimate owners."

This rupture in the liberal elites' domination over state structures led to an explosion of popular organizing efforts as Indians and other subalterns increasingly agitated for their concerns. Workers, women, students, peasants, and agriculturalists all held meetings during June and July to elect new leaders and put forward organizational agendas. Taking advantage of these political openings, in August Indigenous leaders formed the Confederación Ecuatoriana de Indios (FEI, Ecuadorian Federation of Indians), the first successful attempt in Ecuador to establish a national organization for and by Indigenous peoples. Building on decades of Indigenous protest movements, the FEI subsequently flourished for the next several decades as it fought to improve the living and working conditions for Indigenous peoples in Ecuador.

Popular organizing efforts culminated in a Constituent Assembly that drafted a new constitution intended to codify the gains of the May 1944 revo-
lution. Delegates did not expect the congress to stay in session for more than two months, but highly contested topics including those related to citizenship rights, suffrage, representation, and language led to lengthy debates over fundamental issues of how to conceptualize state structures and who should control them. In the glow of the aftermath of the founding of the FEI, Indians had high hopes that finally they would have a direct say in the formation of state structures. By the time the assembly promulgated Ecuador’s fifteenth constitution seven months later, the limitations to reforming social relations through constitutional means were becoming obvious. Challenges to the state idea that civil society gained on the streets were lost in the halls of power. Although Indigenous peoples wished to have a seat in the assembly that debated ideas of the state, they appeared to grow more organized as part of civil society. Whether to engage the state in the electoral realm or to organize as a social movement remained an unresolved issue that Indigenous activists would debate for years to come.

Constituent Assembly

All of the delegates in the 1944–1945 Constituent Assembly were men from Ecuador’s privileged white mestizo class. Notably absent were Indians, peasants, and other marginalized sectors of society who had played important roles in the success of the Glorious May Revolution that led to this assembly. Almost all Indians in the 1940s were illiterate, and despite liberal ideals of equality, every constitution since the founding of Ecuador had made literacy a prerequisite for citizenship. The persistence of exclusionary models of state formation prevented Indians, who in the 1940s comprised about half of the population, from enjoying the benefits of citizenship, including direct access to the national congress. This ensured a continuation of a liberal model of state structures that limited participation to an educated white, urban, dominant class. By necessity, Indians had to rely on others to represent their interests to the government. With the writing of a new constitution, Indians hoped for the elimination of these restrictions that excluded them from direct participation in political discourse.

The 1944–1945 Constituent Assembly represents a significant point in the evolution of perceptions of state structures in Ecuador. The process of writing a constitution not only revealed persistent regional tensions between the coastal and highland regions as well as political tensions between conservatives, liberals, and leftists, but also exposed tensions over whether state structures should serve only the interests of wealthy elites or also include the impoverished rural masses. Indians appealed to central state structures to

defend themselves from those who exploited them at the local level. As divergent and contradictory interests emerged during assembly debates, it momentarily appeared that Indians and their supporters might achieve significant conceptual shifts in the construction of Ecuadorean society. Ultimately, however, attempts to alter state structures through constitutional means ended in failure. These events reflected the limitations of employing state structures as a medium for creating ethnic spaces that would permit the development of political rights for Ecuador’s Indigenous peoples.

The Role of Indians within State Structures

The first item of discussion for the Constituent Assembly that gathered in Quito on August 10, 1944 (the anniversary of independence from Spain), was to define the meanings of the Ecuadorean state, nation, sovereignty, and democracy. Generally the delegates agreed that the state was defined by its territory and people, but the meaning of Ecuadorean nationalism was much more contentious. Many searched for a sense of a unified national identity in a shared history, language, religion, territory, culture, and race. Manuel María Borrero, a liberal delegate from Cañar, pointed to the “racial duality” that divided whites and Indians as a barrier to the creation of a unified national identity, which he perceived as essential for the development of the Ecuadorean state. Such comments reveal the limited knowledge of Indigenous communities and ethnic diversity that characterized discussions in the Constituent Assembly. Not only did delegates collapse the extreme diversity of more than ten different Indigenous groups into one homogenous category of “Indian” and then proceed to equate that with the Kichwa (Quichua) people living in the highlands, they largely ignored the sizable Afro-Ecuadorean population, perhaps 5–10 percent of the total. Furthermore, this search for a unified national identity submerged profound regional divisions between the coast, the northern and southern highlands, and eastern Amazonia, reflecting the continuation of classic nineteenth-century liberal ideologies that presented a homogenized construction of Ecuadorean realities. Without understanding or appreciating Ecuador’s diversity, the assembly found it difficult to legislate on behalf of subaltern groups, especially given their competing concerns and interests.

If there were any discordant voices in the assembly that challenged this exclusionary model and embraced the concerns of the Indigenous peoples, they came from the Left. A small but growing literate middle class sympathetic to leftist causes helped to give leftists a significant presence in the assembly (Socialists held 31 of the 98 seats, and Communists retained another 9 seats).
Socialists intended to use this opportunity “to write a revolution” because a “revolution is not only the triumph of arms, but more than anything it is changing the fundamental bases of the socioeconomic organization” of state structures. Reflecting this goal, Socialist leader Manuel Agustín Aguirre, who represented highland workers’ interests and served as the assembly’s first vice president, began the debates with a critique of Ecuador’s history as one of the dominant class repeatedly and constantly using state structures to exploit people and resources. “To speak of a democratic state,” Aguirre argued, “we must first destroy latifundismo and incorporate the Indigenous masses into civilization. As long as feudalism persists, constitutions will not be democratic.” He believed the duty of the congress was to accomplish what Eloy Alfaro’s 1895 Liberal Revolution failed to do: destroy the existing semi-feudal state structures. The presence of leftists sympathetic to subaltern concerns in the halls of power created fractures in elite constructions of the purpose and exercise of state functions.

Conservative elites fought to retain their position of privilege, which necessitated the exclusion of the rural Indigenous masses from political discourse. From the beginning, signs emerged that the Left’s desire not to alienate their conservative colleagues would ultimately mean failure to incorporate Indigenous peoples fully into the body politic. To calm reports in the newspaper El Día that the assembly was going to pass laws breaking up large estates, Socialist delegate David Altamirano from Chimborazo noted that there was no cause for alarm because they would not promulgate any agrarian reform laws. Delegate Pedro Saad, representative for coastal workers, claimed that the Communists did not want “to make a revolution of the extreme Left, as people are saying on the street.”

One exception was Communist leader Ricardo Paredes, who repeatedly pressed for expanding citizenship rights to allow Indigenous peoples a direct voice in designing state structures. Paredes had not been popularly elected, but rather the FEI had named him as a special representative of the “Indigenous race.” On August 10, as the Constituent Assembly was engaged in its opening formalities in the legislative palace, Indigenous leaders and their supporters gathered a few blocks away in the Teatro Sucre to put the finishing touches on Ecuador’s first national Indigenous organization, the FEI. In its final meeting, the FEI announced that they had selected Paredes as the functional representative for the Indigenous race to defend their interests in the Constituent Assembly.

Although not himself an Indian, for two decades Paredes had been deeply involved in organizing Indigenous communities. Because of his long involvement and deep commitment, he was highly regarded in Indigenous circles and entrusted with presenting Indigenous demands to the national assembly. Paredes strove to meet these expectations as he actively lobbied for Indigenous concerns. For example, he used his position to launch an investigation into abuses on the Ticolayas and Tigua haciendas in the central highland provinces of Chimborazo and Cotopaxi and to defend Indigenous demands on the San Vicente hacienda in Otavalo. Socialist delegate Emilio Uzcátegui, representative for highland primary schools, greeted Paredes’s contributions with the observation that this was “the first time that an authorized voice of a true and authentic representative of the Indigenous race has been raised in the Ecuadorian Congress.” It was the closest subalterns ever had come to contributing to discussions concerning the construction of state power.

Paredes was the last delegate to join the Constituent Assembly. If his late arrival almost seemed an afterthought, reflecting the marginalization of Indigenous concerns from elite constructions of state structures, he was determined not to be a minor player in the deliberations. In a lengthy speech during the discussions on concepts of state formation early in the constitutional debates, Paredes noted that extreme regional and cultural differences as well as the lack of infrastructure that further isolated areas in which Indians lived prevented the formation of a unified national identity. At most, the delegates should talk of a national identity in formation. Breaking from the concept of a unified Indigenous population that focused only on the highland region, he addressed the unique needs of various Indigenous groups spread throughout the Ecuadorian territory, particularly the Cayapas (Chachi) in the coastal province of Esmeraldas and forest Indians in the eastern Amazon basin. Not only more acculturated highland Indians but also isolated Indians in the Amazon, he argued, must be incorporated into the body politic. Different groups would have different concerns, and hence there was no singular, unified solution to the so-called Indigenous problem. Foreshadowing arguments that Indigenous leaders would make decades later, Paredes maintained that it was a mistake to see Indians as racial or ethnic groups because their history, language, territory, and cultural institutions made them nationalities. He repeatedly urged his fellow leftists not to see Indigenous poverty as a simple issue of class oppression, but rather a complicated issue that took into account their varying cultures and national characteristics.

“The Indigenous problem is one of the most arduous issues that the country faces,” Paredes noted, with “almost half of the Ecuadorian population living in a truly subhuman condition for the last five centuries.” Despite their good intentions, liberals had not been able to solve Indigenous problems. Paredes blamed this on the failure of state structures to address Indigenous concerns. Only through a Ministry of Indigenous Affairs dedicated exclusive-
ly to Indigenous issues would sufficient resources be allotted to find true solutions to these problems. The few efforts that had been undertaken were focused almost entirely on the highlands, but the government’s shortcomings became even more obvious when one considered those living in the eastern Amazonian basin. “We Ecuadorians must consider Indians as Ecuadorians,” he argued, “but we have done nothing to benefit Amazonian Indians.” The purpose of a government ministry would be to study these problems and develop concrete solutions favoring all Indigenous peoples. “The creation of a Ministry of Indigenous Affairs would be the May Revolution’s greatest achievement,” Paredes urged. “If the May Revolution manages truly to incorporate Indians into the Ecuadorian population, giving them all the benefits of civilization, it would be the achievement of its highest aspirations and the most beautiful of its conquests.” From Paredes’s perspective, state structures should be utilized to expand Indigenous rights.

Years later, the formation of a ministry under Abdalá Bucaram’s populist government (1996–1997) proved to be highly contentious and divided the Indigenous movement. Dissidents denounced the “ghettoization” of Indigenous concerns into only one ministry when in reality their interests should be addressed throughout government structures. Paredes recognized this problem. “The Indigenous problem is not a simple thing,” he later said. “Indians belong to many social categories.” In addition to being rural agricultural workers, they were also workers, street sweepers, peons, and bricklayers in the city. Even with these limitations, this ministry would at least give exposure to Indigenous issues that previously had lain outside of the purview of state structures. It would be a step in the right direction.

**Suffrage**

Despite their exclusion from power, the role of subalterns in the conception of Ecuadorian citizenship was a common topic of debate in the Constituent Assembly, particularly as exhibited in its most public and political manifestation—the right to vote. Since independence, constitutions always had been highly exclusionary. Age, gender, wealth, and “cultural status,” which generally meant the ability to read and write, limited citizenship rights. In 1945, state structures continued to be “bifurcated” with the retention of distinctions between citizens and Indians (defined as those unable to read or write). Whereas in the early republic period Indigenous peoples resisted the loss of legal recognition of their separate cultural identity represented by citizenship, by the twentieth century they increasingly desired political representation. Without citizenship, Indians could not be elected to political office or have a direct say in constructing state structures. The right to vote seemed the most visible and overt way to change the political balance of power, which led activists to defend the rights of their allies and to disenfranchise those who might side with their opponents. Highly contentious debates on the extension of suffrage indicated just how deep an impact elites feared that it could have on the nature of state structures.

By 1944, restrictions on voting based on gender and overt economic factors had been removed, but most deputies wanted to retain the age and “cultural” restrictions. Few argued for giving minors the right to vote, and apparently most deputies still believed Indians were the equivalent of minors (that is, “niños con barbas”). Critical observers noted that denying the vote to illiterate Indians was a throwback to debates within the Catholic Church after the European conquest as to whether the Indians could be considered human beings. The desirability or even possibility of universal suffrage caused deep disagreements within the assembly. Manuel Elio Flor, a conservative representative from Pichincha and second vice president of the congress, maintained that “pure universal suffrage does not exist” because money, ideas, class relations, and religion influenced elections. Although this was a remarkable admission from someone who profited from systems of domination, it was difficult to use this logic as a basis to exclude those who did not benefit from privilege.

The debates for suffrage rights for Indigenous peoples provide interesting comparisons with the decision to grant women the right to vote. In the public mind women much like Indians, were associated with tradition and religion, and debates over extending voting rights to them followed similar lines. Rather than opening up the body politic, granting citizenship was a way to “civilize” marginalized populations. Hence, giving women the vote in 1929 was not based on a progressive impulse designed to advance women’s rights, but was rather a conservative reaction intended to preempt a nascent feminist movement, to prevent women from entering the political arena, and to create a bulwark against what was perceived as a growing socialist threat in society. What appeared to be a political opening for women was, in fact, an elite attempt to tighten their own grip on society. Curiously, conservatives did not embrace the same philosophy for Indians. Rather, the rhetoric of legal equality cloaked the reality of a racist attitude that viewed Indians as inherently inferior. Remnants of nineteenth-century patriarchal politics were still very evident in debates in the Constituent Assembly.

Debates over suffrage also engendered deep disagreements within the political Left, the Indians’ best friends in the halls of power. Many leftists feared that if the Indians were not given a proper ideological formation, they
would become susceptible to the influence of wealthy landholders who would sway their votes. This, of course, would hinder the electoral prospects of the Left in its attempt to position itself as the defender of lower-class interests. For example, Communist leader Pedro Saad advocated granting illiterate people the vote in local municipal elections to give them both more power and valuable lessons in citizenship, but he "would not dare give the vote to illiterates for higher-level political elections." On the other hand, Ricardo Paredes insisted that not only more acculturated highland Indians but also isolated Indians in the eastern Amazonian rain forest must be included as part of the body politic.

What emerges from these debates is that leftists were not immune to the common liberal assimilationist attitudes of the dominant culture, and in fact elements of leftist thought emerged out of that ideological formation. As a result, the 1945 constitution failed to extend citizenship rights or the vote to Indigenous peoples, even as it continued to claim that the Ecuadorian government was "republican, elected, responsible." Granting formal rights to new groups of people can be highly disruptive to existing fragile alliances, so perhaps it is not surprising that it would be 35 more years before this dream would be realized. By then, expanded access to education opened up more possibilities for electoral participation. In the 1940s, however, elites who benefited from the status quo still firmly controlled political power and saw little need to extend the franchise to subalterns who might use it to challenge their privileged position. Denied suffrage rights, Indigenous peoples could not take a seat in the National Assembly to debate the concepts and applications of state power. Rather, they were forced to work outside state structures as a social movement and to rely on sympathetic allies to represent their interests in the congress.

**Functional Representation**

Given the tension between a desire for universal suffrage and a fear of unchecked influences on the political system, delegates extended a system of functional deputies to guarantee congressional representation for "minority" interests, even though Indians comprised about half of the country's population in 1944 and could hardly be properly termed a minority group. Since the 1929 constitution, special interest groups—university professors, schoolteachers, students, agriculturalists, industrialists, the press, merchants, workers, peasants, and the military—had been guaranteed representation in congress. These various national bodies selected fifteen "functional" senators to represent their interests, and the Council of State selected a senator "for the guid-

ance and defense of the Indian race." Whereas others had the right to select their own representatives, Indigenous peoples, by far the single largest group of those named in the law, could not because elites found them mentally and politically incapable of exercising this right. Rather than supporting Indigenous struggles, politicians who filled this post were often antagonistic toward the very people they were to guide and defend. FEI's selection of Paredes in 1944 as their functional representative was the first and only time that Indians had direct control over this position.

Delegates in the 1944–1945 Constituent Assembly decided to retain this system of functional representation, but there was strenuous debate about how to divide up these positions. Landowners demanded two delegates but resisted granting agricultural workers an equal level of representation. Granting Indigenous peoples functional representation, writes Edison Egas Egas, "scandalized the bourgeoisie who viewed Indians only as instruments of labor and not beings with rights." Conservatives argued that giving Indians representation would lead to a bloated congressional body that would make it difficult to accomplish legislative tasks; moreover, they would be an antagonistic presence in the respectable body. This, however, did not prevent conservatives from arguing that since "agriculture was the principal source of wealth" in the country, the landowners' representation should be raised from two to six delegates, which would give conservatives relatively more strength in the assembly. These disagreements over exactly what interests the functional senators should represent hit at the heart of assembly debates over the purpose of state structures and whether they should be used to advance the interests of marginalized groups or maintain the status quo. These contradictory interests could not be easily reconciled.

Paredes not only advocated citizenship rights for Indigenous peoples, he also provided the strongest voice for their direct representation in the national assembly. "There are class problems and there are nationality problems," Paredes argued. Indians faced certain unique characteristics including racial discrimination and feudal-style relations on haciendas from which white mestizo agricultural workers were largely exempt. Given their economic and social oppression, "the Indigenous problem is the deepest and most terrible problem facing the country." In Paredes's mind, these factors justified giving Indians their own representation in the assembly. He looked forward to the day when people like him would not have to represent Indigenous interests, when they would be allowed to represent themselves.

Paredes succeeded in making only minor revisions to the law that granted Indians functional representation, including removing the paternalistic language of charging the representative with "guiding and defending the Indian
race.” Even though agricultural workers numbered more than half of the population, the assembly named only one representative for Indigenous organizations in the highlands, and two for peasant syndicates on the coast. Indians in the Amazon received no delegates. Unlike the 1929 electoral law that gave the Council of State the right to select the functional representative for the Indigenous race, the 1945 electoral law stipulated that the president of the cantonal electoral tribunal would assemble the leaders of legally recognized Indigenous communities (comunidades) and similar associations that had operated for at least a year. These meetings would select delegates who would then elect a deputy to the congress. Yet because the comuna structure often functioned to undermine popular organizing strategies, many of the more politicized Indigenous communities rejected it. Furthermore, notable Indigenous leaders, including Dolores Cacuango and Tránito Amaguaña, were excluded from serving in the National Assembly because of literacy restrictions on citizenship. As a result, the true representation of Indigenous concerns was limited. The FEI fought without success to claim the right, as they had done with Paredes in the 1944–1945 assembly, to name this representative.  

As a tool for Indigenous peoples to influence state structures, functional representation was at best a mixed bag. The high point obviously was in the 1944–1945 assembly when, taking advantage of political openings after the May Revolution, the FEI named Paredes to this position. Paredes presented the strongest, clearest, and most articulate defense of Indigenous concerns ever heard in the Ecuadorian congress, but this was no substitute for Indians representing their own interests. Because no Indians were present, they could not influence state structures directly, and as before they would continue to defend their ethnic interests as outsiders. Elites continued to control state structures to their own benefit.

Language

The role of language in the formation of state structures and national identity was also hotly debated in the Constituent Assembly. Delegates fought over the purpose of language and its practical and symbolic values, and whether Spanish should be an “official” or “national” language. Paredes, in his role as functional representative, noted that whereas everyone in the assembly agreed that Spanish was Ecuador’s official language, the role and purpose of Kichwa and other Indigenous languages engendered much more contentious debate. Several delegates observed that Kichwa was not the only Indigenous language in Ecuador, that others such as Jíbaro (Shuar), Zaparo (Zápara), and Cayapa (Chachi) were also important. Others questioned why this article should even be included in the constitution. “Language is a natural sociological phenomenon,” remarked Gustavo Buendía, Socialist Vanguard delegate from Pichincha, “and it cannot be regulated.” Having the congress declare a language official made it no more so than declaring Tulcán “tierra caliente” made it possible to grow sugarcane there.  

Much of this discussion about language reflected the dominance of liberal assimilationist assumptions that governed elite discourse over Indigenous rights and dictated the construction of state structures in Ecuador. Since the beginnings of European colonization, fluency in Spanish had been used as a mark of civilization. Indigenous languages were disparaged as inferior and a mark of backwardness. Daniel León Borja, Conservative delegate from Chimborazo, argued that encouraging the study of Kichwa would only result in the “deepening of existing ethnic and cultural conditions.” Indian children should be taught Spanish in the schools to help civilize them, and having only one official language would also strengthen Ecuadorian national identity. Facility with European languages was also equated with intelligence. Liberal delegate Eduardo Vásconez Cuvi argued that had the Spanish taught their language to the Indians, they would have already been assimilated into white society. The racist underpinnings of many such assumptions indicates how far Indians and their supporters would have to go before dominant society would recognize the value of their cultures. It also reflects the orientation of state structures to European rather than Indigenous standards.

Interestingly, dominant classes normally antagonistic toward Indigenous peoples articulated a range of ideas and opinions toward the use of languages, reflecting the contradictory attitudes of those who controlled state structures. For example, Conservative delegate Gonzalo Cordero Crespo from Azuay argued that Kichwa could be used as a tool of acculturation and assimilation. Conservative delegate Rafael Terán Coronel, one of the few delegates who spoke Kichwa, pointed out that the Inkas spoke Quechua and they were an advanced civilization. While Terán Coronel maintained that language itself was not a sign of a level of intelligence, the historical value placed on a language and culture did not necessarily extend to the present. Similarly, in Cuzco in neighboring Peru, Marisol de la Cadena discovered that elites could promote Quechua as a valuable part of the great Inka culture while at the same time denigrating its use in the twentieth century.
to some of Paredes's arguments. "The Indians have their own native civilization," Socialist Emilio Uzcatégui conceded, and the Communist Party was right not to remove them from their own civilization but to encourage their natural development, which would benefit the entire country. In the end, Paredes and his supporters carried the day; for the first time, the Ecuadorian constitution recognized the value of Indigenous languages. The fifth article of the new constitution stated, "Spanish is the Republic's official language. Kichwa and other aboriginal languages are recognized as elements of the national culture." It was a small and largely symbolic victory, but it also revealed the growing strength of Indians and the Communist Party's important role in facilitating the advancement of their agenda. It is also a concrete example of Indians successfully exploiting centralized state structures to their benefit over the opposition of local elites. Concessions on these less formal issues of state formation also meant that Indians were gaining an opening that could eventually lead to more formal concessions, including a seat at the table where these issues were discussed. Indigenous pressure through their allies in the assembly increasingly forced more and more elites to acknowledge that state structures would have to be modified to take their concerns under consideration.

Aftermath

In overthrowing Arroyo del Río, according to Agustín Cueva, all Ecuadorians, "the red with the conservative, the priest with the soldier, the woman and the man, the student and worker" could momentarily unite to make the Glorious May Revolution. But it became impossible to solidify these diverse forces into a common front after the ouster of the president. Many of the apparent gains of the May 1944 "revolution" were limited and failed to result in any profound or long-lasting changes, either in the state system or state idea. Although Indians had played a significant role in this political transformation, after the victory they were soon forgotten, marginalized, and excluded from participation in government affairs. The change in government failed to grant Indians citizenship or create a conceptual shift that would address the underlying structural problems of exclusionary state structures.

A definitive break that ended the possibility of using constitutional structures to gain more space for Indigenous peoples came on March 30, 1946, when President José María Velasco Ibarra dissolved the Constituent Assembly (which was supposed to remain in power until August 1946), declared himself dictator, abrogated the progressive 1945 constitution (in effect just over a year), and reinstated the 1906 constitution. In August, Velasco Ibarra con-
vened another constitutional assembly with the task of writing a new magna carta more to his liking. Leftists refused to participate, choosing instead to adhere to the 1945 constitution. As a result, Conservatives held the upper hand in writing a document that governed the country for the next twenty years. Critics denounced it for rolling back the democratic advances embodied in the previous constitution. This new document provided a legal basis for the continuation of the latifundio as the primary mode of agricultural production, directly undercutting Indigenous demands for land. Delegates struck the limited functional representation that Indians had enjoyed in the 1929 and 1945 constitutions, although Conservatives retained their own elite representatives for landholding and commercial interests. The constitution also failed to acknowledge the importance of ethnicity, removing the reference to Kichwa and other Indigenous languages. This was part of a determined effort on the part of Conservative elites to exclude from government those deemed unworthy of participating in political discourse. The advance of an Indigenous rights agenda was retarded, and activists would have to await a more opportune moment to press their concerns.

Without question, the FEI saw the process of state formation as engendered by the 1944 Glorious May Revolution as a positive development and fully embraced its potential to work to their advantage. The disappointment Indians felt was not due to a failure to take power in Ecuador. In fact, over half a century later, Miguel Llumo, the national coordinator of the Indigenous Pachakutik political movement, observed that simply electing Victor Hugo Cárdenas as vice president of Bolivia in 1993 or Alejandro Toledo as president of Peru in 2001 did not solve those countries’ problems. Indeed, their neoliberal policies led to deeper economic crisis. Merely placing Indians in positions of power would not automatically mean an end to long-standing problems. Rather, the structure of the country had to be changed to build a new society. Similarly in 1944, Indians were at the vanguard of redefining state structures so that they would be more inclusionary and responsive to the broader needs of el pueblo.

In retrospect, many participants in the events of 1944 noted the conservative outcome. Military leader Coronel Sergio Enrique Jirón called the revolution “stillborn.” Others called it a “revolution betrayed.” Minister of Education Alfredo Vera, a Communist, noted that Velasco Ibarra was never committed to a revolution that would open up political space for subalterns, but wanted to restore democracy only to preserve the oligarchy. Socialist leader Manuel Agustin Aguirre noted that his first meeting with Velasco Ibarra left him totally disillusioned, not only because of the leader’s cold and distant personality but also because of his conservative and opportunistic political stances.

Velasco Ibarra’s second period in office, much like his other four terms as chief executive, resulted in deeper entrenchment of the exclusionary features of Ecuadorian politics and a denial of a voice to Indigenous peoples and popular movements in building the state.

Although Indians (as well as women, workers, and others who participated in the coalition that overthrew Arroyo del Río in 1944) had their own organizations and were able to articulate their own demands, until they gained full citizenship rights they could not directly use formal political channels to press for legal and structural changes such as raising minimum salaries and enacting agrarian reform. They faced what O’Donnell calls “low-intensity citizenship,” owing to a notable gap between the liberal principle of equality and political exclusion. This was a form of a polyarchic democracy in which a small group of competing elites manipulated decision making to maintain control of the system. A situation of partial democracy continued to exclude the majority of people from the full exercise of their citizenship rights.

In the meantime, Indigenous peoples were left to make their presence felt through other means, including their newly formed FEI. Were electoral mechanisms and constitutional assemblies appropriate avenues for advancing Indigenous struggles? Paredes’s limited success as a functional representative for the Indigenous peoples and the reversal of gains made in the 1944–1945 Constituent Assembly highlight the limitations of electoral strategies for contesting state structures. Over the next several decades, FEI would gain concessions, including agrarian reform legislation, mobilized as part of civil society. Endless debates over the most appropriate and effective methods of engaging and altering state structures would continue to follow Indigenous organizing efforts for years to come.
280

14. Minister of Public Works to the Governor of Chimborazo, transcribed in Governor of Chimborazo to the Political Administrator of Alausí, Riobamba, August 27, 1914, AJPA.
15. Political Administrator of Alausí to the Municipal Police Chief of Alausí, Alausí, August 25, 1921, AJPA.
18. José Ignacio Izurieta to the Director of the JCAP, Quito, October 5, 1934, AAP/MNM LCR 1934-II b. 844-46.
19. José Ignacio Izurieta to the Director of the JCAP, Quito, December 13, 1934, AAP/MNM LCR 1934-II b. 852.
20. Carlos R. Cavi to the Director of the JCAP, Quito, n.d. (late 1934), AAP/MNM LCR 1934-II b. 843.
21. This labor regulation was one of the results of an agreement signed on October 19, 1934, to end the peasant strike. In line with the paternalism of the era, the agreement was reached by Izurieta (the leaseholder), Gregorio Ormaza (the subsecretary of government and social welfare), Augusto Egea (director of the JCAP), and the two functional senators representing workers, Rosendo Naula and Antonio Páez. Notable for their absence were the peasant leaders and their lawyer.
23. The division of the hacienda was subsequently used by the peasants (in 1944) to argue that the estate had an excess of land, supporting their own petition to receive a plot to establish what was essentially a village center.
24. Peasants of Tolongat to the Director of the JCAP, Tolongat, February 15, 1943, AAP/MNM LCR 1943-I b. 989.
25. Transcribed in Minister of Social Welfare to the Director of the JCAP, Quito, August 23, 1943, AAP/MNM LCR 1944-I.

Chapter 7: State Building and Ethnic Discourse in Ecuador's 1944–1945 Asamblea Constituyente

1. The use of a capital "I" in reference to Indigenous peoples in this chapter reflects a specific preference established by the all-Indigenous board of directors of the South and Meso-American Indian Rights Center (SAIIC), a nongovernmental organization (NGO) based in Oakland, California, as an affirmation of their ethnic identity. The plural "peoples" indicates the broad diversity among Indigenous groups not only in Ecuador but throughout the Americas.
2. Raquel Rodas, Nosotras que del amor hicimos ... (Quito: Raquel Rodas, 1992), 60; see also Sergio Enrique Girón, La revolución de mayo (Quito: Editorial Atahualpa, 1945); Universidad de Guayaquil, El 28 de mayo de 1944: testimonio ([Guayaquil]: Litografía e Imp. de la Universidad de Guayaquil, 1984); and Silvia Vega Ugalde, La Gloria: la revolución del 28 de mayo de 1944 a la contrarrevolución velasquista, Colección Ecuador/Historia (Quito: Editorial El Conejo, 1987).
3. "La Asamblea Constituyente inició la discusión de la Carta Política," El Comercio (Quito), August 22, 1944, 11.
7. "El Dr. Francisco Arizaga Luque fue nombrado Presidente por 52 votos," El Comercio (Quito), August 21, 1944, 2.
9. "Actas de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de 1944," 1720 (August 22, 1944), APL. Paredes returned to this point numerous times during the debates. See "Actas de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de 1944," 3326 (September 21, 1944), APL; "Actas de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de 1944," 6436-37 (November 21, 1944), APL. Compare to Shuar intellec-
ual Ampam Karakras, who later adamantly maintained that Indians were nationalities because of their cohesive and differentiated identities, cultures, history, languages, spiritual practices, and economies; see Ampam Karakras, "Indigenous Sovereignty: An Ecuadorian Perspective," Cultural Survival Quarterly 25 (Summer 2001): 60-62; Confederación Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE), Las nacionalidades indígenas en el Ecuador: Nuestro proceso organizativo, 2d ed. (Quito: Ediciones Ayba-Yala, 1989). For at least a decade, Communists had referred to Indians as nationalities, something they had apparently borrowed from Soviet attempts to come to terms with a plurinational situation in their country. See, for example, Conferencia de Cabecillas Indios, "Indicaciones," Nucanchic Alpía 1, no. 8 (March 17, 1936): 2-3.


16. Ricardo Paredes in "Actas de la Asamblea Constituyente de 1944," 3:329 (September 21, 1944). APL. Paredes was not present on October 24 when the assembly debated giving citizenship rights to illiterate Indians and peasants and did not influence the outcome.

17. Article 92 of 1939 Electoral Law in Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE), Elecciones y democracia en el Ecuador, 3, Legislación electoral ecuatoriana (Quito: Tribunal Supremo Electoral Corporación Electora Nacional, 1990), 187. Such functional representation, with its roots in Italian fascism, was said to be at odds with the liberal ideal of universal suffrage, but many argued that the system was necessary to overcome the country's feudal legacy. See interview with Pedro Jorge Vera in Edison Eges Egas, 28 de mayo de 1944: la gloria a la revolución trascendida y la constitución de 1945 (Quito: Departamento de Publicaciones de la Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación, 1992), 190-93. Functional representation is not an anomaly in Latin America. After their 1979 victory in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas granted a variety of special interest groups automatic representation in their governing Council of State; see John A. Booth, The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution, 2d ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), 191.


22. The debate is recorded in "Actas de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de 1944," 3999 (October 3, 1944), APL.


29. Article 5 of the 1945 constitution in Trabucco, Constituciones de la República del Ecuador, 356.


32. Articles 139-41 of 1947 electoral law, TSE, Elecciones y democracia en el Ecuador, 239-31.


35. Guillermo O'Donnell, "On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Prob-


Chapter 8: Indigenous Communities, Landlords, and the State


4. Andrés Guerrero, La hacienda precapitalista y la clase terrateniente en América Latina y su inserción en el modo de producción capitalista: El caso ecuatoriano (Quito: Universidad Central, 1975); see also Andrés Guerrero, Haciendas, capital, and lucha de clases andina (Quito: Editorial El Conejo, 1983); and Fernando Velasco, Reforma agraria y movimiento campesino indígena de la sierra, 2d ed. (Quito: Editorial El Conejo, 1983). Analyses of this process were by no means limited to local researchers. See, for example, Michael Redclift and David R. Preston, “Agrarian Reform and Rural Change in Ecuador,” in Environment, Society, and Rural Change in Latin America, ed. D. Preston (New York: John Wiley, 1980).


8. Guerrero, La hacienda precapitalista y la clase terrateniente.


10. Velasco, Reforma agraria y movimiento campesino, 56.


12. Oswaldo Barsky, “Iniciativa terrateniente en la reestructuración de las relaciones so-


15. Hurtado, Political Power in Ecuador.

16. Barsky, “Iniciativa terrateniente en la reestructuración de las relaciones sociales.”

17. Barsky, “Los terratenientes ecuatorianos y el debate sobre la reforma agraria.”

18. Barsky, “Reformas acerca del estado, político y social.”

19. For example, see Lori Ann Thrupp, Gilles Bergeron, and William F. Waters, Bittersweet Harvests for Global Supermarkets: Challenges in Latin America’s Cotton (Washington, DC: World Resources Institute, 1995).


22. Velasco, Reforma agraria y movimiento campesino, 198.

23. Guerrero, Haciendas, capital, and lucha de clases andina.


25. Barsky, “Iniciativa terrateniente en la reestructuración de las relaciones sociales.”

26. Guerrero, Haciendas, capital, and lucha de clases andina; Velasco, Reforma agraria y movimiento campesino indígena de la sierra.

27. For example, see Christophe Eberhard, El campesino de Chimborazo: Situación.