

biological and cultural traits work against each other in defining the indigenous. In doing so, it points to the fact that the left politics of recognition founded on cultural relativist definitions of identity and the defining indigeneness in terms of essentialized traits fall dangerously close to the official pluricultural liberalism reflected in recent state reforms.

Throughout the first twelve months of the Other Campaign, Delegado Zero met with diverse groups of people to listen to their concerns and forms of struggle. In fact, listening is a central component of the Other Campaign: the processes giving form and substance to this political proposal necessarily hinge upon the exchange of words, memories and ideas. This signifies a drastic break not only from the vanguardist politics of the past but also from the traditional political party platforms currently in force.

However, the cartography drawn by Zapatista support bases suggests that while listening is essential to the new politics of the Other Campaign, the resulting dialogues must be understood as existing in a power-laden terrain that locates indigenous and mestizo subjects in relational and hierarchical positions in which difference is experienced through political and economic inequalities. At the same time, recognition cannot be relegated exclusively to culture, because ethnically marked traits fail to account for the persistence of colonial legacies and the presence of biological signifiers producing difference in an era of globalization. This requires drawing on shared experiences of racialization that can help forge political alliances across cultural differences. Heeding the lessons emerging from 12 years of practicing indigenous autonomy in Zapatista communities responds to the concerns voiced by indigenous organizations in the plenary session of the Other Campaign and offers guidance for action in a yet-uncharted phase of the EZLN struggle.

10

Pachakutik and Indigenous Political Party Politics in Ecuador

Marc Becker

IN 1995, INDIGENOUS LEADERS in the Ecuadorian Amazon founded the *Movimiento Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik* (Pachakutik Movement for Plurinational Unity—MUPP) to campaign for political office. This political movement emerged out of years of debate regarding the role of Indigenous peoples in electoral politics. Should Indigenous organizations put forward their own candidates and issues, or should they support existing parties that “understand and guarantee the fundamental rights of the Indigenous population” (Karakras, 1985: 48)? Pachakutik represented the emergence of a third option: forming a new political movement in which Indigenous peoples and other sectors of Ecuador’s popular movements organized together as equals in a joint project to achieve common goals (Lucas, 2000: 118).

A decade later, the decision by leaders of one of the Americas’ best organized social movements to enter electoral politics remained contentious, controversial, and divisive. By no means was this clearly the best decision, but in the absence of concrete alternatives, it was not immediately obvious what other course of action Indigenous militants should have taken. Indigenous communities demanded a seat at the table of political negotiations, and to take that seat required entering a realm known for its corruption, dirty dealings, and tradeoffs. Not entering would mean passing on an opportunity to have their voices heard on a national stage.

The conundrum of the inherent tensions between social movement organizing and electoral politics is by no means new, nor is it unique to Ecuador or to Indigenous movements. Academics tend to counterpoise political parties against civil society, but grassroots activists often tend to move organically

from one strategy to another (armed struggles, electoral campaigns, labor strikes, street mobilizations) without making clear distinctions in what they see as a singular struggle for social justice. While sometimes social movements tend more toward autonomy (as with the Zapatistas in Mexico) and other times more toward formal political participation (as when the MST [*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*—Landless Workers Movement] allied with the PT [*Partido dos Trabalhadores*—Workers' Party]) to help elect Lula to the presidency of Brazil), activists are often unwilling to deny themselves access to any tools that might help them realize their goals. Activists in Bolivia supported Evo Morales's presidential campaign even while holding him at a distance. Perhaps given different strategies and goals, a certain amount of tension is not only inevitable but also healthy.

Electoral politics seem to provide as possible outcomes either victory (as with the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela), defeat (the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1990), fraud (which led to the M-19 guerrillas in Colombia), or co-optation (often the experience of populism in Latin America). The example of Pachakutik, however, provides a more complicated but also perhaps more accurate depiction of the outcome of engaging formal political processes. All social organizing strategies require certain compromises and tradeoffs, and electoral politics are of course no exception. As Karl Marx famously noted, elections are often little more than a mechanism for people to select every couple years which members of the dominant class will rule over them. But what other viable mechanisms at the dawn of the twenty-first century exist to gain power? Most activists are not content to remain permanently in opposition. They have a vision they want to become a reality. Never implementing an agenda becomes a sterile exercise that can eventually lead to a paralyzed social movement.

As neither a success nor a failure, the example of Pachakutik underscores the reality that there is no one best or correct path to struggle for social justice. What works at one time and place may be entirely wrong elsewhere. Rather than implementing dogmatic or simplistic solutions, we need to engage in continual conversations and critiques as we search for more effective strategies.

Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador

Pachakutik emerged out of a context of growing discontent with the Ecuadorian government's neoliberal economic policies that favored the wealthy elite while weighing heavily on marginalized peoples. Since the 1920s, Indigenous activists had strenuously organized against exclusionary political and economic systems (Becker, forthcoming). Granting citizenship rights to Indige-

nous peoples in 1979 failed to create an inclusionary environment. Instead, changing citizenship regimes challenged local autonomy that further politicized ethnic identities (Yashar, 2005). Building on decades of struggle, in 1986 activists formed the *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador—CONAIE) to press for cultural, economic, and political changes. CONAIE's most stringent demand was to rewrite the first article of the constitution to recognize Ecuador's diverse Indigenous nationalities as part of a pluri-national state. Conservative opponents condemned the move as an attempt to dismember a unified nation-state. As Leon Zamosc (2004: 131) observes, however, it was elite adherence to neoliberal policies and not these subaltern demands that made Ecuador one of the most politically unstable countries in Latin America.

A powerful Indigenous *levantamiento*, or "uprising," swept across Ecuador in June 1990, stunning the country's elite and catapulting Indigenous peoples onto the center stage of national consciousness. CONAIE forced the government to address subaltern concerns and came to be seen as a model for how civil society should organize itself to fight for its rights. Indigenous movements proved to be best positioned to stop the savageness of neoliberalism, defend national sovereignty, and implement a true democracy. CONAIE both drew on and helped foster transnational organizational strategies that gave it a highly visible profile as one of the most powerful social movements in the Americas (Brysk, 2000).

CONAIE opposed subordinating ethnic groups to a class struggle, but it also highlighted the fact that it was a mistake to embrace ethnic identities to the exclusion of a class consciousness. Rather, CONAIE (1989: 281) advocated a "third way" in which the struggle acquired a "double dimension" of organizing on a class basis together with other popular movements as well as ally-ing with independent ethnic organizations to defend Indigenous cultures. Class and ethnicity appeared at the same time to be mutually conflictive and reinforcing. The potential strengths as well as complications of organizing along these lines also informed the creation of Pachakutik.

Movimiento Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik

The formation of Pachakutik in 1995 was an explicit reversal of a policy that CONAIE adopted at its Third Congress in 1990: not to participate in elections because neither the political system nor political parties were functioning in a way that represented people's interests. Popular distrust of the traditional political class grew throughout Latin America as subalterns became disenchanted with the failures of empty formal democratic structures

to improve their living standards (Vilas, 1996). CONAIE forbade its leaders from holding political office and boycotted the 1992 presidential elections "as a way of rejecting traditional elections, political mismanagement, and demagogic political parties" (*Hoy*, September 9, 1991). Rather, CONAIE believed that Indigenous movements could realize more profound and lasting changes as part of civil society. Many grassroots activists, however, failed to understand why they should not avail themselves of all tools at their disposal to challenge elite systems of domination. Increasingly, many local Indigenous activists believed it was time for them to make their own politics and to make good politics that would benefit everyone rather than just select individuals. This grassroots pressure forced national leaders to rethink their hesitancy to enter the electoral realm.

Pachakutik emerged directly out of social movements, and this fundamentally influenced its ideological and strategic orientations. It worked closely with CONAIE, agitating for subaltern concerns in the halls of power while civil society kept pressure on the government out on the streets. Pachakutik proposed a government based on the three traditional Andean values of *ama llulla, ama quilla, ama shua* (don't lie, don't be lazy, don't rob). Significantly, Pachakutik was not a formal political party, but rather organized as a political movement that was structured in a horizontal, democratic, and inclusionary fashion. It explicitly identified itself as part of the new Latin American Left that embraced principles of community, solidarity, unity, tolerance, and respect (Rodríguez Garavito, Barrett, and Chavez, 2005). Pachakutik opposed the government's neoliberal economic policies and favored a more inclusive and participatory political system.

Although often seen as an "Indigenous" party and the political wing of CONAIE, Pachakutik provided a shared space for all activists who envisioned a better, more humane world. Given that Indigenous peoples were a large (comprising perhaps as much as 40 percent of the population) but minority and by no means homogenous presence in Ecuador, it would be difficult for them to gain high political office without an alliance with and support from non-Indigenous sectors of the population. Intercultural alliances proved vital to its success.

Electoral Campaigns

In its first electoral contest in 1996, Pachakutik experienced moderate success on both local and national levels. It elected eight deputies (including six Indigenous peoples) to congress and two Indigenous mayors, including Auki Tituaña in the town of Cotacachi. Most significantly, longtime CONAIE

leader Luis Macas won a post as a national deputy in the National Congress, becoming the first Indigenous person elected to a national office in Ecuador. Macas's victory, as journalist Kintto Lucas (2000: 5) noted, was due to his success "in combining the Indigenous vote . . . with the vote of progressive and left-wing sectors."

For the presidency, Pachakutik allied with *Nuevo País* (New Country), who ran its leader Feddy Ehlers, a white journalist, on a platform that stressed multiculturalism. His campaign stops glittered with rainbow-colored *wipala* flags, a symbol from Tawantinsuyu (the pre-Spanish Inka Empire) that Indigenous movements utilized to represent the unity of women, men, Afro-Ecuadorians, Indigenous peoples, and mestizos. Ehlers placed a close third in the first round of the elections. With his defeat, the remaining political parties engaged in a *caza para el voto indígena* (hunt for the Indigenous vote) in the subsequent presidential runoff race (M. González, 1996). For its first venture into the electoral realm, Pachakutik had performed surprisingly well, which seemed to point to the ascendancy of an Indigenous voice in Ecuador's public sphere.

The runoff election for the presidency pitted two of Ecuador's richest men—conservative Social Christian Party (*Partido Social Cristiano*—PSC) candidate Jaime Nebot and right-populist Abdalá Bucaram—against each other. Although most popular organizations refused to support either candidate, believing that both were equally bad, several Indigenous leaders signed letters of support for Bucaram's candidacy. These were widely viewed as opportunistic moves by individuals desiring to gain positions of political power in the new government, and perhaps foreshadowed the inevitable compromises and challenges that electoral politics would bring to a social movement.

Bucaram won the presidency largely on campaign promises of aiding the poor. Despite CONAIE's refusal to endorse his candidacy, Bucaram's populist style gained him broad support in rural Indigenous communities. Once in office, however, he implemented neoliberal reforms, including raising transportation and cooking gas prices, that hurt the poor but benefited the wealthy elite. The tactical alliances some leaders made with the Bucaram government further compromised Indigenous organizing efforts and led to splits within the movement. Several Indigenous leaders became implicated in corruption scandals, including the sale of visas. Within six months, Bucaram's economic policies alienated his popular base and a mass uprising on February 5, 1997, evicted him from power.

With Bucaram removed, CONAIE and other social movements called for a constituent assembly—a demand that eventually gained wide support. In elections for this assembly, Pachakutik won seven seats plus three more in alliances with other parties. It built a center-left minority bloc that pressed for a series of significant constitutional revisions, including recognition of

Indigenous rights. Although CONAIE/Pachakutik was not successful with all of its proposals (Ecuador was declared merely "multiethnic," stopping short of the more politically charged "pluri-national"), their actions resulted in a significant shift in the conceptualization of political institutions. The new constitution that was promulgated in August 1998 was the most progressive in Ecuador's history (Andolina, 2003).

In the subsequent 1998 elections, Pachakutik increased its electoral strength with the victory of eight candidates for the National Congress. Indigenous leader Nina Pacari gained the vice presidency of the congress, the most senior governmental position that any Indian had obtained in Ecuador's history. Perhaps more significantly, Pachakutik was solidifying its support on a local level with an increasing number of victories in municipal races. Pachakutik appeared to promise a culmination of CONAIE's drive to insert Indigenous peoples directly into debates, giving them a voice and allowing them to speak for themselves (Lucas, 2000: 118). The significant presence of Indigenous players in national politics had become undeniable.

January 21, 2000, Military-Indigenous Coup

On January 21, 2000, Ecuador experienced the last twentieth-century coup in Latin America when an alliance of lower ranking military officials and Indigenous leaders evicted president Jamil Mahuad from power. Faced with soaring inflation and a free-falling economy, Mahuad proposed a plan to replace the sucre with the U.S. dollar as legal tender. Critics denounced this sacrifice of national sovereignty, which could only undermine their standard of living. In the coup, CONAIE president Antonio Vargas, Colonel Lucio Gutiérrez, and former supreme court president Carlos Solórzano—symbolizing a union of Indians, soldiers, and the law—formed a Junta of National Salvation that briefly took power. Several hours later, defense minister General Carlos Mendoza pulled rank on Gutiérrez and replaced him in the Junta, but then resigned, collapsing the provisional government. Under pressure from the United States, Mendoza handed power over to vice president Gustavo Noboa.

With the failure of the coup, Indigenous movements began to change tactics. Activists advocated a plebiscite to recall legislators, reverse dollarization, end privatization, and grant amnesty for the coup plotters. Leaders then turned to a general strike, but when that failed Indigenous movements once again pressed for a referendum. In the midst of all these strategic shifts, Pachakutik scored its largest victory to date in the May 21, 2000, local and regional elections in which it won control of five provincial prefectures (more than any other single party) and nineteen municipal governments. Although now one of

the larger parties on a local level, it had a long way to go before it could become a majority or even dominant force in national politics. Pachakutik also faced tensions between constituent calls for immediate and local concrete economic benefits that Ecuador's clientelistic political system demanded, and attempts to redesign national-level political systems to be more democratic and responsive to subaltern concerns (J. Collins, 2004: 56). Advocates commonly spoke of moving from protest to proposal, but transitioning from social movement to political party tactics was by no means an easy process.

As the 2002 electoral campaign heated up, militants within Pachakutik debated whether to forward an Indigenous person as a candidate for the presidency of the republic. At first they decided to do so and engaged in a community-based primary that finally selected Auki Tituaña, the popular mayor of Cotacachi, as their candidate. A Cuban-trained economist and a capable administrator, Tituaña was part of a very small educated Indigenous intelligentsia able to navigate both the Indigenous and white-mestizo worlds. Nevertheless, the divisions within Indigenous movements also played out in the political arena. Facing a potential rift, CONAIE decided that the time was not right to run an Indigenous person for the presidency and asked its members to withdraw their candidacies. Tituaña complied; Antonio Vargas did not.

Vargas—the now former and discredited president of CONAIE—announced that he would run for office with his own political movement, Amauta Jatari. "This is the first time that Ecuador has had an Indigenous presidential candidate," Vargas declared. "It is an historic event" (LAWR, 2002: 129). His candidacy, however, was widely viewed as an opportunistic and egotistical move, motivated more by personal ambitions than a commitment to a struggle for social justice. CONAIE condemned Vargas for running, even calling his actions treasonous. FEINE (*Consejo de Pueblos y Organizaciones Indígenas Evangélicas del Ecuador*—Council of Evangelical Indigenous Peoples and Organizations of Ecuador), the federation of evangelical Indians that supported Amauta Jatari in opposition to the more Catholic and leftist CONAIE/Pachakutik alliance, cast its support behind Vargas (Andrade, 2003). Ricardo Ulcuango, former CONAIE vice president and Pachakutik candidate for the National Congress, urged FEINE to distance "itself from the manipulation to which it has been subjected" (Saavedra, 2002: 7). Vargas faced charges of submitting falsified signatures on petitions to register as a candidate with the electoral council. Ultimately, the council allowed Vargas to remain on the ballot (some said so as to divide the Indigenous vote), but he came in last place with less than 1 percent of the vote. Perhaps significant because he was the first Indigenous person to run for the country's highest office, his actions ultimately only contributed to a fracturing of what was once seen as one of the strongest social movements in the Americas.

Meanwhile, Lucio Gutiérrez, who briefly served with Vargas in the January 2000 triumvirate, also declared that he would be a candidate. At first Pachakutik shied away from an alliance with the former coup plotter because of a learned distrust of military officials, but because of Gutiérrez's backing of social movements during the failed coup attempt, he could count on grassroots Indigenous support. When Pachakutik decided not to run its own Indigenous candidate, it chose to throw its support behind Gutiérrez. CONAIE president Leonidas Iza justified this decision on pragmatic grounds. "Going into these elections without a presidential candidate could have fragmented the Indigenous movement's captive vote, because traditional political parties take advantage of the campaign to go into Indigenous communities," he said. "So we decided to support Gutiérrez and concentrate the other candidacies on a single slate" (Saavedra, 2002: 6). This move proved to be crucial to his eventual electoral victory, as without Indigenous endorsement he barely polled in the single digits (Saavedra, 2002).

Pachakutik continued to gain strength in local races, particularly in highland and Amazonian rural communities with a dominant Indigenous presence. CONAIE leaders Salvador Quishpe and Ricardo Ulcuango led the party to victory in congressional races in the provinces of Zamora Chinchipe and Pichincha. Representing the left wing of the Indigenous movement, their victories constituted a definitive shift in political discourse. "Our presence in the National Assembly," Ulcuango stated, "is a new challenge in this long road of 500 years of searching for a more equitable pluri-national Ecuador" (*Tintají*, January 1–15, 2003). In total, Pachakutik won eleven representatives in congress and seventy-five seats on municipal governments (*Rikcharishun*, 2002a).

Luis Macas's loss in an Andean Parliament race, however, reflected the fractured regional and ethnic tensions in Ecuadorian society and seemed to drive home the point that the country was not yet ready for Indigenous peoples in national-level political offices. Early returns placed Macas in second place in this race. Late returns from the coast, where a majority of Ecuadorians but very few Indians lived, increased the vote for the conservative Social Christian Party and pushed Macas to sixth place, out of the running for the parliament. Locally, Indigenous candidates could win offices, but to gain national power they needed to move beyond their Indigenous base of support.

In a compelling study of the 2002 elections, Scott Beck and Kenneth Mijeski (2006: 167) argue "that electoral success via the creation of a voting bloc is more difficult than occasional targeted mobilizations of tens of thousands of Indian participants." While CONAIE excelled at mobilizing their grass roots in massive, cohesive uprisings, the volatile, fragmented, chaotic, and corrupt political system provided challenges that Indigenous movements had difficulties overcoming. The significant competition from political parties' estab-

lished clientalistic networks meant that CONAIE could not act with a hegemonic voice in the electoral realm as it previously had as a social movement. Furthermore, neoliberalism is predicated on individualism and atomization, channeling political participation into ritualistic electoral exercises that poll citizens as individuals rather than communities (Robinson, 1996). These factors created extraordinary challenges for the expression of collective rights or the creation of a participatory democracy.

Lucio Gutiérrez

Amidst high expectations, Gutiérrez took office on January 15, 2003, just less than three years after his failed coup attempt. Privately, some Indigenous intellectuals conceded their doubts about a Gutiérrez presidency. As a career military officer, he had no political experience, and critics feared that he could become an authoritarian leader like Alberto Fujimori in neighboring Peru. Bolivian Indigenous leader Evo Morales publicly criticized him for meeting with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington instead of leading popular protests against neoliberalism in the streets of Quito. Leaders cautioned against giving Gutiérrez a blank check (*Rikcharishun*, 2002b).

As Gutiérrez began to form his government with little consultation with his Indigenous allies or broader social movements, it became apparent that he viewed the masses in the same light as other populists during Ecuador's long twentieth century: as a malleable force to solidify a politician's hold on power and not as an equal partner with whom to consult on policy matters or to share power. Gutiérrez would govern much like José María Velasco Ibarra and Abdalá Bucaram, who during electoral campaigns, spouted leftist rhetoric in order to appeal to the poor masses but once in office ruled in favor of the oligarchy. It is little wonder that Indigenous peoples learned to approach electoral politics with a good deal of reservation and skepticism. With so much institutionalized power stacked against them, Indigenous activists seemed positioned to make a much larger impact outside of power and on the streets as part of a well-organized and mobilized civil society. But organized protests would not result in the implementation of alternative proposals. For that, they needed to enter into the messy realm of electoral politics. Electoral politics and grassroots social movements increasingly seemed to represent diverging paths that pulled activists in two separate directions (Lucas, 2003).

After some last minute scrambling, Pachakutik walked away with four cabinet posts and several secretariats as rewards for their support of Gutiérrez's candidacy. Most significantly, Luis Macas was named agricultural minister

and Nina Pacari took over foreign relations, the first Indigenous person in Latin America appointed as a foreign minister. Being named to such high positions, however, quickly proved to be a double-edged sword as powerful leaders were forced to walk a fine line between support for Gutiérrez's controversial economic policies and remaining accountable to their grassroots constituency. "Because the presence of social and Indigenous movements is what characterizes the Gutiérrez government," economist Pablo Dávalos (2003a: 4) asked, "will Indigenous peoples be willing to compromise their main project of constructing a pluri-national state in order to defend a political and economic agenda that is not theirs, and a government of which they apparently are a part but does not permit them to have control or a say in the running of the economy?" Some militants were disappointed in the failure of Pachakutik's ministers to achieve serious reforms. "The disadvantages outweigh the benefits we have obtained from power," Cotopaxi Indigenous leader José Paca stated (AGR 2003b: 1, 2003a: 8). Once again, involvement in electoral politics threatened to shred Indigenous movements from within.

Increasingly more activists agreed with Alejandro Moreano (*Tintají*, July 1–15, 2003) that it did not make sense for Pachakutik to remain in the government, and that "the only correct political position is to overthrow Gutiérrez." Finally, on August 6, 2003, half a year after Gutiérrez took power, CONAIE and Pachakutik removed their support, declaring that Gutiérrez "betrayed the mandate given to him by the Ecuadoran people in the last elections" (IPS/LADB, 2003: 2). Pachakutik's break with Gutiérrez left its members, including ministers Pacari and Macas, with the choice of either leaving Pachakutik and remaining in their posts, or remaining in Pachakutik and leaving the government. In the end, both resigned their posts along with almost all lesser Pachakutik functionaries. "He never listened to us," Pacari said (Saavedra, 2003: 1). "Gutiérrez is a traitor," Pachakutik coordinator Gilberto Talahua stated in what became a common charge. "I didn't trust him after the second round of elections when he changed his policies so frequently." Talahua continued, "He has become a president of the business class" (AGR, 2003a: 8). It is almost impossible for a minority and historically subjugated population to gain political power without entering into alliances, but coalitions with bourgeois political parties lead to inevitable class contradictions. Electoral politics threaten to be a no-win situation.

Gutiérrez excelled at exploiting divergent interests of Indigenous communities in order to weaken civil society and retain his hold on power (Saavedra, 2004a; Lucero, 2006: 31–32). Dávalos (2003b) declared that Pachakutik had become a caricature of what it was when it was founded seven years earlier. It had become ridden with sectarian divisions and a bureaucracy unaccountable to

social movements. Serious divisions emerged between previously close allies CONAIE and Pachakutik, and even between CONAIE and its Amazonian and coastal affiliates CONFENIAE (*Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana*—Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon) and CONAICE (*Coordinadora de Organizaciones Indígenas y Negras de la Costa Ecuatoriana*—Coordinating Body of Indigenous and Black Organizations of the Ecuadorian Coast) (Saavedra, 2004b). These divisions appeared to assure the former colonel's continued hold on power. Increasingly, the conservative PSC took the lead in attacking Gutiérrez, which put both CONAIE and Pachakutik in a difficult bind of appearing to ally with a party of the oligarchy against a common enemy. From a grassroots perspective, these types of backroom dealings were what brought a good deal of disrepute to the entire political class, with discontent extending not only to the presidency but also to a hopelessly fragmented and conflictive congress (including, now, Pachakutik) that was no more popular or effective in passing legislation.

In Bolivia, social movement leader Oscar Olivera worried that electoral politics could demobilize the masses and refused an invitation to join Evo Morales's government. "If Evo fails," Olivera noted, "it will be a failure for the social movements. The gains of six years of struggles will be lost" (Dangl, 2007: 200). As if to illustrate his point, joining the Gutiérrez government had seriously weakened Ecuador's Indigenous movement. Seemingly they would have been better off had they followed Olivera, who believes that true transformations come from organizing and mobilizing people at the grass roots.

In the midst of all this, Pachakutik still managed to hold its own in local electoral contests. In October 2004 municipal elections, Pachakutik won control over eighteen mayoralties—though some observers argued it could have won more had it not been tainted by its disastrous short-term alliance with Gutiérrez (*Tintají*, November 15–30, 2004). With Pachakutik out of office, CONAIE struggled to return the Indigenous movement to its previous strength. In December 2004, CONAIE elected longtime leader Luis Macas to head the organization. Militants called on the organization to retake the initiative that it once had (*Tintají*, January 1–15, 2005). Leading the opposition as a social movement rather than as a political party, CONAIE undermined the government's attempts to sign a free trade pact with the United States and forced the government to terminate its contract with Occidental Petroleum. While Pachakutik stumbled in the electoral realm, under Macas's leadership CONAIE demonstrated that it could still occasionally marshal its Indigenous bases in street protests (Tamayo, 2006). Internal dissent fostered by entering the electoral realm, however, continued to thwart the power of the movement to forward positive alternatives.

Rebellion of the *Forajidos*

An April 20, 2005, popular uprising finally brought down the Gutiérrez government. Gutiérrez had derided the protesters as *forajidos* (outlaws), which they subsequently took up as a term of pride and honor. As had happened before with popular movements, the masses moved further and faster than the leaders. Seemingly without central coordination, thousands of people took to the streets of Quito. Unlike previous uprisings, Indigenous movements played a minor role in the mobilization, with those allied with Vargas and FEINE coming to Gutiérrez's support. Instead, this uprising was characterized by the overwhelming presence of Quito's urban mestizo middle classes. Internal fragmentation and declining confidence in leadership increasingly preoccupied with electoral politics translated into a discredited force that failed to mobilize the Indigenous masses. "If Quito threw out Gutiérrez," FENOCIN's (*Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, Indígenas, y Negras*—National Confederation of Peasant, Indigenous, and Black Organizations) president Pedro de la Cruz (2006: 59) lamented, pointing to strong lingering regional divisions, "the countryside voted for him." A once strong Indigenous movement appeared to have become marginalized and insignificant to the political forces sweeping the country (Merino, 2005).

2006 Elections

With the trauma of its involvement in Gutiérrez's government still echoing throughout its ranks, Pachakutik experienced a resurgence of hot debates over whom (and even whether) to support for a presidential candidate in October 2006. Should they forward an Indigenous candidate such as Luis Macas or Auki Tituaña, or should they support someone like Rafael Correa from outside the movement. Macas was well-known for his long trajectory as an Indigenous leader, but his 2002 loss in the Andean Parliament race raised questions whether he could draw support nationally. Tituaña had a reputation as an honest and capable local leader, but he lacked the national exposure for a successful presidential run. Correa was not Indigenous, but he spoke Kichwa and had gained broad popularity during a brief stint as minister of economy for his harsh criticism of neoliberal policies. Some dreamed of a Correa-Macas ticket as the best option, while others questioned whether Correa was ideologically committed to Pachakutik's center-left agenda (Lucas, 2006). Some Indigenous activists would have preferred a Macas-Correa ticket with their leader in the presidential slot, but Correa refused to entertain this proposal.

Felipe Burbano de Lara (*Hoy*, June 6, 2006) observes that the debate over electoral alliances strikes at the heart of the conceptualization of Pachakutik. Should it convert into an Indigenous party or retain its original structure as a multiethnic political movement? Pointing to the key role that Indigenous movements played in Ecuador, Barbano notes that it was very difficult to think of a renewed left without the participation of Indigenous peoples. Similarly, if Indigenous peoples did not join a broader leftist movement, they threatened to do little more than isolate themselves from wider political movements. Activists continued the dance of how to balance competing concerns and contrasting strategies in building a strong movement for social justice.

In May, Pachakutik (with strong backing from Ecuarrunari) nominated Macas as its candidate with the argument that it had paid too high of a price in forming alliances outside of its own movement. For the first time, Pachakutik would run not only someone from within its own ranks but also a long-time Indigenous leader. Activists from the coast and Amazon publicly disagreed with a Macas candidacy, complaining that he had ignored them as agricultural minister. They preferred instead to support Correa, while Pachakutik's leaders pleaded with its bases to respect the movement's decisions. Ulcuango and Cholango compared Correa to Gutiérrez, contending that his actions were deeply fracturing the Indigenous movement. In reaction, Correa closed off dialogues with Pachakutik over possible alliances, even if it meant losing the support of one of the most organized sectors of civil society (*Comercio*, June 28, 2006). Running its leader for office also brought CONAIE organizing efforts to a standstill.

From the first polls, Macas ranked in last place with about 1 percent of the vote—faring about as well as Antonio Vargas did in his discredited 2002 campaign. Racial discrimination seemed to be an ongoing problem, with the media often ignoring Macas's candidacy (Macas, 2006). Nevertheless, Macas ran a serious and dedicated campaign. "Our electoral campaign is part of a national mobilization in defense of sovereignty, biodiversity, and natural resources," he declared. "To gain changes in government, it is necessary to have the backing of a strong mobilized society that will guarantee these changes" (*Rikcharishun*, 2006: 3). Despite large rallies in rural areas, Macas came in sixth place with a dismal 2 percent of the vote. Reversing earlier gains, Pachakutik also performed poorly in congressional races dropping from ten seats to only six. "When it comes to the vote, it appears that most of the Indigenous population does not trust one of their own," journalist Richard Gott (*Guardian*, October 19, 2006) wrote. "They clearly prefer to vote for a white man, who, they probably believe, may well be able to deliver the jobs and housing that they crave." One critic noted that the Indigenous vote had "gone up in smoke" (Marco Arauz, *El Comercio*, October 19, 2006).

Banana magnate and Ecuador's richest man Álvaro Noboa won the first round and faced off against Correa for the presidency. Citing the threat of Noboa's alliance with imperial and oligarchical interests, Pachakutik announced its unconditional support for Correa's candidacy. In the November 26 run-off election, Correa defeated Noboa by a wide margin, with centrists preferring Correa's leftism to Noboa's conservative policies. Ecuarrunari (2006), who had opposed Correa in the first round, greeted his victory with joy. "Ecuador has begun its revolution," they declared in a press release. "The *compañero* president Rafael Correa has announced that we will recover our natural resources." Their cheer seemed to parallel that with which they greeted Gutiérrez's victory four years earlier. History seemed to be repeating itself.

In justifying support for Correa, Ecuarrunari's president Humberto Cholango (2006: 34) articulated a position that merged the interests of social movements with electoral politics in a unified struggle against the oligarchy and neoliberal system. Voting was simply one more way to continue fighting "for the construction of a plurinational state and a more just intercultural society." Whether on the streets or in the voting booth, the demands were the same: nationalization of petroleum resources, a constituent assembly, and no free trade pacts. Acknowledging criticisms that writing constitutions is historically a way for elites to consolidate their control, Cholango demanded broad democratic participation of Indigenous peoples and other popular movements in the assembly. Civil society pressure would assure that a new constitution responded to the needs of the people.

A study of the election results revealed that a large part of Indigenous vote had gone to Gilmar Gutiérrez—running in place of his brother Lucio, who had been barred from the campaign—who came in with a surprisingly strong third place finish with 16 percent of the vote. In the second round, Gutiérrez initially allied with Noboa rather than Pachakutik's current ally Correa. The fragmentation resulted from an increase in clientelistic politics, more development projects that led to a depoliticalization of the population, and the growing strength of protestant churches in areas such as Chimborazo that had a high concentration of Indigenous peoples. Pachakutik's vote, nevertheless, remained high in regions such as Cayambe, with a long history of radical communist-oriented political organizing (Báez Rivera and Bretón Solo de Zaldivar, 2006). Walter Benn Michaels (2006) argues that identity-based politics are essentially reactionary because they distract from more important issues of economic inequality. Neoliberalism, Michaels contends, not racism is the problem. An apparent lesson is that in contrast to the claims of New Social Movement theory, ethnicity does not provide a strong and coherent basis for social change, but instead more traditional class struggles create better openings for political change.

In contrast to strong mobilizations against Occidental Petroleum and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in March 2006, the Indigenous movement's weak electoral showing seemed to underscore that it made more significant advances as a social rather than electoral movement. Sporadic mobilizations, however, could not achieve the movement's goals of participatory democracy and social justice. In order to realize more profound and permanent changes, Indigenous organizations once again called for a constituent assembly. Correa's overwhelming victory in an April 15, 2007, plebiscite to convoke such an assembly co-opted the issue from Indigenous militants. In the September 30, 2007, elections, Correa further consolidated his control by winning a majority of seats for the assembly, thereby assuring that a new constitution would be to his liking. This was a citizens' revolution, Correa declared, not one built by social movements. Pachakutik won only a couple seats in the assembly and, together with the traditional parties, was left behind as an increasingly marginalized and irrelevant political force. After a decade of struggle, CONAIE seemed to have little to show for having entered the realm of electoral politics.

How to Change the World

Referring to the popular movements that toppled Bucaram, Mahuad, and Gutiérrez, economist Pablo Dávalos notes that "three times we have won and three times we lost" (Zibechi, 2006: 1). Through these gains and reversals, it became clear that Indigenous movements were strong enough to bring governments down but not united enough to rule on their own—or even in alliance with others. Shifting from a grassroots social movement to a national-level electoral apparatus proved to be difficult and wrought with complications. When organized as part of civil society, Indigenous activists had realized the potential of a social movement. The tempting promises of political party politics, however, remained elusively beyond their grasp. In the aftermath of a failed electoral campaign, it remained to be seen whether Indigenous movements could regain on the streets what they had lost in the voting booth.

In *Change the World without Taking Power*, John Holloway (2002: 19–20) proposes that the world cannot be changed through taking control over state structures. Instead, he maintains that the revolutionary challenge facing the twenty-first century is to change the world without taking power. Petras and Veltmeyer (2005: 137, 174) similarly advise avoidance of "electoral politics, the path preferred by the 'political class' because it is predicated on limited political reforms." They condemn Pachakutik for their "serious political mistake to seek state power from within the system." Others, such as Greg Wilpert (2007) in *Changing Venezuela by Taking Power*, contend that social

movements can use state structures to make positive changes. Holloway (2002: 215) concludes his book with the question, "How then do we change the world without taking power?" and then provides his answer: "We do not know." It is easy to criticize one path, but perhaps irresponsible to do so without suggesting viable alternatives.

State structures continue to play an important role in the implementation of neoliberal economic policies, and popular movements need to challenge these structures whether as part of civil society, a political party, or an armed struggle. The case of Indigenous movements in Ecuador would seem to underscore the argument that it is not possible to change the world without taking power, but neither is taking power all that it takes to change the world. As a social movement, CONAIE could disrupt the exercise of state power, but in entering government Pachakutik failed to change neoliberal economic policies. In struggling with these issues, Indigenous peoples in Ecuador are little different from activists elsewhere. Changing the world is a puzzling but pressing issue that Indigenous activists, along with the rest of us, continue to try to solve.

11

Transnational Black Social Movements in Latin America

Afro-Colombians and the Struggle for Human Rights

Kwame Dixon

THIS CHAPTER ANALYZES BLACK SOCIAL MOVEMENTS with particular emphasis on Afro-Colombians, as national, regional, and transnational actors. It examines the relations between race and citizenship in Latin America by analyzing the current struggles of Afro-Latin peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean. From Los Angeles to Rio de Janeiro, from the Bronx to Salvador Bahia—brown, black, and Indigenous peoples are challenging racial inequality, while at the same time constructing alternative models for political participation. The struggle to be full citizens, on the one hand, and the day-to-day human rights violations faced by Afro-Latin Americans, on the other, serves to reinforce the shared experiences of black peoples in the Americas. It is argued that deeply entrenched racial and social prejudices and other forms of discrimination are the foundations for the de facto disenfranchisement of the hemisphere's populations; in many black communities throughout the region, glaring poverty, widespread human rights violations, and the discriminatory impact of neoliberal agendas underscores the urgent need for constructing a common paradigm of social action in the Americas (Dzidzienyo and Oboler, 2005: 5). By analyzing and investigating the complex interactions and interrelations among culture, race, and politics, this research focuses on the cultural politics enacted by Afro-Latin social movements as they articulate and implement new visions and practices of citizenship, democracy, social relationships, and development (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar, 1998b: 2).

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