

Once We Were Corn Grinders: Women and Labor in the Tortilla Industry of Guadalajara, 1920–1940

María Teresa Fernández-Aceves

CIESAS, Occidente

Abstract

The mechanization of Guadalajara's corn mills—along with the building of the new revolutionary state, competition between secular and Catholic labor movements, the conflict between church and state, and changes in the labor force—created the conditions for a militant feminist working-class politics in the Mexico of the late 1920s and 1930s. The convergence of these processes sheds light on how men and women workers, entrepreneurs and the revolutionary state, and male and female labor leaders attributed different cultural meanings to sexual difference, work, and politics at this time. The example of women workers in the tortilla industry highlights how differences in gender and class became culturally significant and why specific gender differences changed and became politicized when mechanization at the corn mills was accelerated in the 1930s. This story challenges the myth of women's passivity, reveals the significance that women's mobilization and militancy had on the labor movement, and illustrates the difficulties encountered by secular feminists and organized women workers in a male-dominated trade union movement. It concludes that women gained a bittersweet victory by obtaining certain rights while remaining marginalized by male-dominated institutions.

Early in 1930, in the city of Guadalajara in the northwestern Mexican state of Jalisco, Jovita Robles, a leader of the Unión de Trabajadoras en Molinos de Nixtamal, launched a fierce protest against her male coworkers at the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration of the State of Jalisco. These men, she claimed, sought to displace women workers in the corn mills.¹ Their efforts to remove women from the workplace reflected the male workers' corrupt and violent politics. The men were so determined to destroy the women's unions and jobs that they were willing to ally themselves with the owners of the corn mills to achieve their goals. With a strong and combative attitude she fought to protect women workers from hostile male-dominated labor relations and politics. Robles was representative of many single mothers and women of the tortilla industry who were also activists of the *Círculo Feminista de Occidente* (a cross-class secular feminist organization, CFO). Her history contrasts sharply with the image of the single, young, weak, inexperienced, and politically passive female worker that we are, perhaps, more familiar with. Far from being a victim, Robles was skilled, literate, and willing and able to confront a range of abuses on the job. Her actions reflected her dedication to the rights of women workers as well as the changing realities of the corn mill industry. The mechanization of the tortilla industry,

which accelerated in the 1930s, tended to empower male corn mill workers and relegated women, whose labor was defined as non-skilled and non-productive, to feminized enclaves.²

The politicization of women tortilla workers, which I discuss more fully below, complicates the notion, still prevalent in some labor histories, that the labor movement was founded by skilled and economically independent men.³ The story of women tortilla workers challenges the myth of women's passivity and reveals the importance of women's mobilization and militancy to the labor movement. It corroborates the argument that the rationalization of production strengthened gender ideologies and promoted both the sexual division of labor and the dichotomy between domesticity and waged labor.⁴ Similarly, it confirms the recent findings of Latin American women's and gendered labor history: that policymakers, industrialists, legislators, employers, educators, labor leaders, and even some feminists reinforced and reproduced the nineteenth-century category of woman worker.⁵ These studies have shown that these groups contributed to the marginalization of women, justified the hiring of women at low wages, and promoted the idealization of the working-class woman housewife and consumer.

At the same time, the mechanization of the corn mills—along with the building of the new revolutionary state, competition between secular and Catholic labor movements, the conflict between church and state, and changes in the labor force—created the conditions for a militant feminist working-class politics during the late 1920s and 1930s.⁶ The convergence of these processes sheds light on how men and women workers, entrepreneurs and the revolutionary state, and male and female labor leaders attributed different cultural meanings to sexual difference, work, and politics. Gender differences became more visible and significant during the rise of the tortilla industry and the unionization of its workers.

As I illustrate below, the example of women workers in the tortilla industry highlights how gender and class differences became culturally significant and why specific gender differences became politicized. These class and gender struggles show that men and women experienced tensions and divisions not only within organized labor, but also among unionized female tortilla workers. Likewise, it illustrates the difficulties encountered by secular feminists and organized women workers within politics and within a male-dominated trade union movement.

In order to understand these changes and the politicization of tortilla workers, I first describe the rise of the radical regional politics that made possible the galvanization of secular men and women workers as well as the establishment of the CFO. Second, I explain the changes in the corn mills brought about by the technological revolution. Third, I detail the new gender division of labor and working conditions in the tortilla industry: the industrial and mechanized corn mills, the administrative dough shops, and the tortilla factories. Fourth, I explore the rise of the male-dominated trade union movement, its relations with women and the CFO, and its ideological influence on the unions. Fifth, by looking at the life of Anita Hernández Lucas, a tortilla worker leader, I examine the rela-

tionships of solidarity established among socialist female teachers, textile workers, and tortilla makers at the CFO. I conclude that women gained a bittersweet victory because, although they obtained the rights of collective contract, maternity leave, annual vacations, and minimum wage, they remained marginalized by male-dominated institutions.

The Rise of Radical Regional State Politics under Anti-clerical Governors

From the mid-1910s to the 1920s, radical and anti-clerical governors of Jalisco—Manuel M. Diéguez (1914–1919), Basilio Badillo (1921–1922), José Guadalupe Zuno Hernández (1923–1926), and Margarito Ramírez (1927–1929)⁷—introduced important social reforms in church, labor, and educational matters in order to counterbalance the powerful Catholic social action movement that promoted the principles of the *Rerum Novarum*.⁸ These anti-clerical governors built a Jaliscan mass base for the revolutionary cause and favored the improvement of working conditions for urban and rural, male and female workers, whom they encouraged to organize and strike. The secular labor movement had its roots in nineteenth-century anti-clerical liberalism and was radicalized by anarcho-sindicalist ideas, the revolutionary process, and communism.

During the 1920s the Catholic and secular labor movements and women's mobilizations simultaneously fed off one another and triangulated with the state in a dialogical fashion, rather than being directed by the state or the Church.⁹ In fact, popular forces were more radical than the weak revolutionary state.¹⁰ In this period the conflict between Catholic and secular organizations significantly radicalized workers. Both fought to control public space and obtain recognition, as well as civil, social, and political rights. Under Governors Zuno and Ramírez, secular male and female labor organizations, peasants, and women gained political acceptance and membership and their organizations grew, while Catholic groups declined, principally due to the level of state repression directed against the latter as a result of the Cristiada (1926–1929), the military movement against federal anti-clerical measures.¹¹

Leaders of the Catholic and secular labor movements, legislators, elite women, and state agents favored and promoted the creation of male unions that favored men's traditional role as breadwinners. The revolutionary state and secular Catholic labor leaders temporarily accepted the participation of working women as an example of class solidarity. However, they all believed that once the class struggle was won women would not have to work outside the home and could return to their "natural" duties as wives and mothers.

Of all these anti-clerical governors, only Zuno built a secular, populist movement that would weaken Catholics, implement a program of social justice, and secure regional autonomy.¹² He signed a pact with workers of the Grupo Acción of Jalisco in which artisans and industrial and service workers gave their support in exchange for fulfillment of their labor demands.¹³ To counter the strong Catholic social action movement, Zuno decreed that his government would recognize only secular labor organizations and hence banned all Catholic

labor organizations. To counteract the policies of the central government that sought to undermine Zuno's policies of regional autonomy, the governor legislated the autonomy of municipalities, the legislature, and the courts. The Guadalajara-based Confederación de Agrupaciones Obreras Libertarias de Jalisco (CAOLJ) promoted independent unions and strikes and fought against the efforts of the Mexico City-centered Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana (CROM) strikebreakers and the Mexico City-based Ministry of Industry, which sought to impede the autonomy of organized labor.¹⁴ Zunistas and their Communist allies also fought against the exploitation of workers by local and foreign companies and expanded the rank-and-file of the CAOLJ, in which artisans and service workers predominated.¹⁵ In 1927, both Zunistas and Communists radicalized and unified Jaliscan organized labor into the Confederación Obrera de Jalisco (COJ).

The Radical, Secular Women's Movement and Labor Politics in the 1920s

Under this popular mobilization, radical women who organized into female or mixed-sex unions—textile workers, teachers, and food workers—joined Zuno's labor organization, the CAOLJ.¹⁶ Working women became advocates of Zuno's labor policies such as the first Labor Law of August 13, 1923,¹⁷ the establishment of the Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration at the Labor Department, the Ley de Sindicato y Sociedades Mutualistas of 1924, and a Workers' Colony in 1925.¹⁸ Zuno's laws derived from the Constitution of 1917, which awarded women workers the right to child care, a minimum wage, maternity leave, and wages equal to those of men. Different types of women workers—textile workers, tortilla makers, service workers, clerks, and teachers—claimed the right to work, to receive a minimum wage, to organize a union, and to have their labor contracts fulfilled. Furthermore, Zuno needed radical liberal women to offset the strong Catholic women's organizations, including the Asociación de Damas Católicas of elite Catholic women and the Liga Protectora de la Obrera of working-class Catholic women, which promoted a public presence of Catholic women in the campaign to re-Christianize and moralize Mexican society. Consequently, Zuno created similar organizations to fulfill the needs of workers and tried to solve the problems faced by working-class women.

Domesticated Working-Class Mothers versus Working Women

The state-oriented women's organizations of the 1920s, together with the Secretaría de Educación Pública's (SEP) gendered educational policy for vocational training schools, promoted the domestication of working-class women and sought to redirect them to appropriate female occupations and to redeem them from poverty and ignorance.¹⁹ They envisioned working women as mothers, whose ideal place was the home. According to this view, women would work in home production to promote the rationalization of the family wage. Women workers had to be responsible for family unity and child care and had to follow

proper consumption patterns. These state-oriented organizations helped consolidate the segmentation of industrial work and the sexual division of labor.

The CFO carved out an alternative role for working-class women; it promoted women workers' militancy and began a critique of the sexual inequality brought about by changes in the labor force. By the late 1920s numbers of women textile workers declined due to mechanization, the economic crisis, and a labor movement that sought to save only male jobs. The number of female professionals, mainly teachers, and women's political organizations, mostly in the service sector, grew. These changes in the labor force significantly contributed to the mobilization of women.

Displaced and politically active women textile workers allied with teachers witnessed the beginning of the displacement of women tortilla workers and were completely aware of the lack of interest by male, Communist-oriented unionists in the needs of female workers. These women took advantage of the political space to maneuver. When the weak revolutionary state allowed the Communist influence on men and women workers to counterbalance the Cristiada, the workers responded by organizing more radically.

In 1927, seven women teachers and workers, influenced by the development of secular feminist and labor organizations at the regional and national levels, and with a radicalized anti-clerical class culture, established the CFO.²⁰ The CFO fought for the moral and material improvement of women workers through commissions of work, justice, and improvement. The CFO campaigned for the moralization of society, but offered an alternative non-Catholic morality. For the CFO, women had a right to employment, a minimum wage, education, and civil and political equality. The CFO stressed the idea of a "new woman," politically informed of her civil, political, and social rights. By promoting women's education, the CFO became a literacy training and political orientation center. It built cross-class alliances aimed at improving women's working and living conditions. CFO women helped female workers—seamstresses, domestic servants, shoemakers, tortilla, oil cooking, and cracker workers—to organize unions.²¹ Most importantly, it gave voice to single working mothers when their members joined state labor, health, and educational agencies.

Under this unique cross-fertilization between secular feminists and working-class women and spurred by the building of the new revolutionary state, competition within organized labor, the Cristiada, labor force changes, and the Great Depression, Mexican women experienced one of the most significant technological revolutions: the introduction of the corn mill. Corn mills transformed the production of tortillas from an exclusively domestic task to one that could be partially or completely done outside the home.

The Corn Mills

In Mexico, women have made tortillas (corn griddle cakes) since pre-Hispanic times.²² The production of tortillas was a long process that took at least six hours. For centuries this process took place at home. Depending on the social class of

women, they did everything themselves, had their own *torteadora* (female tortilla maker), or had female domestic servants make them.

The corn mill represented a technological revolution in the production of tortillas and generated significant changes both within and outside the domestic realm in Mexican society. In the case of Jalisco, the changes brought about by the corn mill did not all occur at the same time. It took several decades to restructure the process and create a new gendered division of labor. As the new tortilla industry expanded and developed it generated three distinct workplaces outside the home: corn mills, dough shops, and tortilla factories.

The first workplaces were the corn mills themselves. From the 1900s to 1910s the founding of such mills usually depended upon access to electricity. Initially, there were two types of corn mills: the industrial corn mill, which used steam or electricity to grind large quantities of *nixtamal* (a Nahuatl term to refer to maize kernels soaked in lime solution and softened by heating), and the home-oriented corn mill, which served individual families in grinding their *nixtamal*. By 1929 there were five different types of corn mills producing ground *nixtamal*.²³

Industrial corn mills required five distinct occupations: *cebadores(as)*, male or female workers who cut up the lime for the *nixtamal*, supervised the running of the corn mills, and added the specified raw materials to the machine; *boleras*, female workers who made balls of dough; *recaudadoras*, female workers who sold the dough; *conductores de masa*, male workers who carried large quantities of dough from corn mills to dough shops; and the *nixtamaleros(as)* male or female workers who soaked and softened the kernel maize. By 1930, there was intense fighting between women and men inside the corn mills for the skilled and better paid positions of *cebadores* and *nixtamaleros*. The other positions were not disputed between male and female workers. *Boleras* and *recaudadoras* were considered unskilled and lower paid jobs and were performed by women.

The second workplaces were the dough shops, where generally only women worked as *expendedoras de masa* (female dough sellers); the third workplaces were the *tortillerías* (tortilla workshops or factories) where women made tortillas manually.²⁴ By the late 1920s and early 1930s there were different types of *tortillerías*. Some were linked to large industrial corn mills, while others were family workshops that did not hire unionized workers.²⁵

The tortilla industry did not attempt to take women from the home. It sought to redirect women's domestic activities to be more productive and modern.²⁶ This meant that the state favored the mechanization of the production of tortillas in order to allow women to perform more creative jobs maintaining and promoting the welfare of the community through fruitful functions such as anti-alcohol, sanitation, and vaccine campaigns.²⁷ Although entrepreneurs and the state sought to orient peasant and working-class women toward "more" generative works, in fact the corn mills and the *tortillerías* provided tortillas to those social groups, mainly the growing urban middle classes, who could not spend much time at this task and did not have domestic servants.

In general terms the distribution of the corn mills suggests that the mills were located in zones that had a very dynamic economic and social life. Most of the corn mills were in the center of densely populated older wards of Guadalajara that had developed between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. These wards contrasted significantly with the new upper-class *colonias*, which could be considered suburbs within the city because they did not have the same services that were found in more central areas. Most of the tortilla unions were located in the Hidalgo sector, a densely populated area with mixed middle-class and working-class residents near downtown Guadalajara. Political and social mobilization was more likely to take place here because of the close contact among people. Hidalgo thus developed a street culture that neither the Catholic Church nor the state could contain. The Catholic Church did not control the creation of their unions during the high point of their expansion because this expansion took place at the same time as the military mobilization of the *Cristiada*. Similarly, state intervention was less regulated and less direct because corn mills, dough shops, and *tortillerías* were spread out over the city. The use of these loose, less regulated, and less constrained social and labor spaces contributed to politicizing the networks of everyday life and helped to develop their capacity for organization.

The Gendered Division of Labor in the Tortilla Industry

If the distribution of corn mills was an important element in the politicization and mobilization of their workers, what were the characteristics of the new tortilla industry that helped radicalize them? At the center was a power dispute in relation to distinct cultural meanings of work. The rapid mechanization of corn mills and the vision of industrialists reinforced and reproduced the distinction between women's domestic work, seen as unproductive and lacking in value, and men's work, perceived as productive and modern.²⁸ This gender difference and the male notion of waged labor, when implemented in the workplace, created an intense conflict between men and women and female and male labor leaders at the corn mills because women were excluded from the skilled positions, *cebador* and *nixtamalero*. From the 1910s to the late 1920s, these positions became masculinized because it was assumed that only men had the physical strength to carry one-hundred kilos of *nixtamal*.

From the 1920s to the 1930s, the percentage of Guadalajara tortilla workers who were female grew from sixty-five to eighty-seven percent, while the next decade saw a tremendous displacement by men. Their work force representation dropped from eighty-seven to thirty percent (Table 1). Women were concentrated in the dough shops and *tortillerías* in the unskilled but labor-intensive positions. Their payment depended on the amount of dough sold or on the number of tortillas made (Tables 2 and 3). Thus, the new, gendered division of labor displaced women from the skilled positions; women's work remained perceived as unskilled and unproductive with low salaries.

TABLE 1. Percents of Tortilla Workers in Guadalajara

	1920	1930	1940
Men	35	13	70
Women	65	87	30

Source: Dawn Keremitsis, "La Doble Jornada de la Mujer en Guadalajara: 1910–1940," *Encuentro* 1(1984): 41–64. Hermelinda Orejel Salas, "Sindicalismo Femenino en la Industria de la Tortilla de Nixtamal de Jalisco: 1920–1940," in *La Mujer Jalisciense. Clase, Género y Generación*, ed. Lucía Mantilla (Guadalajara, 1990), 397–422.

TABLE 2. Occupational Distribution of the Workers in the Tortilla Industry in Guadalajara, 1930

Industry	Number of		Number of		Men	%	Women	%	Total
	owners	%	Establishments	%					
Corn Mills	45	42	57	29	145	92	150	15	295
Dough Shops	27	25	—	—	8	5	292	28	300
Tortillerías	35	33	137	71	4	3	587	57	591
Total	107	100	194	100	157	100	11,029	100	1,186

Source: AHJ, *Ramo Trabajo*, 1930–1931.

TABLE 3. Percents of the Gendered Distribution in the Tortilla Industry in Guadalajara, 1930

Industry	Men	Women	Total
Corn Mills	49	51	100
Dough Shops	3	97	100
Tortillerías	1	99	100
Total	13	87	100

Source: AHJ, *Ramo Trabajo*, 1930–1931.

Working Conditions in Corn Mills

In the 1920s, sexual difference was clearly structured in the gendered division of labor in the unregulated tortilla industry, evident in distinct salaries for men and women. In 1923 and 1924, men in the corn mills earned between 1.50 and 2.00 pesos every day, while women received 0.85 centavos as *boleras*.²⁹ The wages in the *tortillerías* were half or less than in the corn mills, but *torteadoras* could make some tortillas to take home.³⁰

The working day in the corn mills started between 3:30 and 4 AM. *Nixtamaleros(as)* had to prepare the *nixtamal* in order to have the dough ready by 6 AM. They worked until 5 or 6 PM. Their wage depended on the amount of dough prepared and sold. Better wages meant, therefore, longer working days.³¹

Most workers of the tortilla industry complained that owners broke their verbal agreements at will and paid low salaries. Workers were fired without reason or compensation, and many did not receive a full payment of their wages.³² In response to increasing complaints and demands on the part of tortilla workers at the Labor Department and the Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration, tortilla unions intervened to stop this exploitation, even provoking the creation of new mixed or single-sex unions.³³

Furthermore, the conflicts were not only between workers and owners, but also among owners themselves. By 1929, there were several conflicts within the tortilla industry. Some small mill owners argued that the Compañía Molinera Jalisciense monopolized the industry and created unfair competition that caused the closing of smaller corn mills.³⁴ The small property holders stated that they could not pay the high salaries that the unions demanded and thus asked the Labor Department permission to readjust the number of workers or to close their mills.

On May 19, 1930, male and female workers complained (through the Sindicato de Expendedoras de Masa and the Sindicato de Trabajadores en Molinos de Nixtamal y Similares) to the Ministry of Industry that corn mill owners did not fulfill the collective contract of 1928.³⁵ These workers informed the Ministry of Industry that there was significant competition among different dough shops and corn mills. Owners did not maintain the distance required between mills, being too close to each other, and consequently negatively affected their wages. Workers also explained to the Ministry of Industry that they had indicated this condition several times to the Board of Conciliation to no avail. Workers argued that owners reduced their salaries with the approval of the state government. The Ministry of Industry emphasized the precarious condition of tortilla workers and urged local authorities to inform the Ministry about amelioration of the situation.³⁶

On May 21, 1930, the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration determined five causes of extreme exploitation in the tortilla industry. First, the end of the Cristero War prompted a return migration from city to countryside and a decline in demand for *nixtamal* and tortillas. Consequently, some mills closed. Second, disputes among COJ leaders prevented their close supervision over the industry's hiring of unionized workers. Third, mill owners took advantage of these divisions both to hire non-union workers and to evade the implementation of the 1928 collective contract. Fourth, attempts at unifying tortilla workers industry wide caused division among workers and unions. Fifth, the division prompted the formation of new unions not recognized by the owners or the old unions and hence outside the collective contract.³⁷

On May 22, 1930, corn mill owners, the Unión de Trabajadores en Molinos de Nixtamal, and the Unión Social de Expendedoras de Masa reached an agree-

ment to end the precarious condition in the tortilla industry. Both owners and workers agreed to recognize the first collective contract of 1928 and end the regulations of the Constitutional Article 28, which banned the creation of monopolies. Both owners and workers agreed corn mills would hire only unionized workers. In order to supervise the fulfillment of this agreement and the collective contract, both owners and workers created a mixed commission, including two owners and two workers' representatives.³⁸

On September 26, 1930, workers of the tortilla industry (*Sindicato de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras en Molinos para Nixtamal de Guadalajara* and the *Unión Social de Expendedoras de Masa*) resolved to reorganize and unify in order to strengthen their unions and combat the chaos promoted by corn mill owners. Through a new secretariat they recognized the collective contract of 1928 and the agreement of May 22, 1930. As a new coalition, backed by COJ leaders Heliodoro Hernández and Roberto Hernández, they demanded that mill owners desist from hiring nonunion workers.³⁹ They won this demand when the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration ordered owners to comply. However, the worker coalition was short-lived as male and female workers fell into disputes, aggravated by the meddling of COJ leaders Heliodoro Hernández, Roberto Hernández, and Nicolás Rangel Guerrero. Thus, unification was followed by several years of violence and bloodshed.

The Rise of the Male-Dominated Trade Union Movement

Conservative Jaliscan politicians allied with President Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–1927) dominated state politics through the early 1930s, initiating a domestication⁴⁰ of the labor movement. Their task was facilitated by the weakening of the Catholic social movement, itself debilitated by Zuno's policies, the *Cristero War*, and the Catholic Church's refusal to support it after the signing of an accord with the state in 1929. The domestication of the labor movement was also accelerated by the negative impact of the Great Depression on Jalisco's industries (mining, textiles, and railroads) where labor radicalism had been centered.⁴¹ The Great Depression contributed to a change in the labor force and reinforced male-oriented policies that relegated women to non-protected and unregulated labor positions outside industrial centers.

Governor Sebastián Allende (1932–1935) aimed to promote industrialization, urbanization, and expansion of the internal market through public works construction of streets, roads, and highways.⁴² Workers on these projects became members of the state-controlled labor movement, along with newly organized service workers. The critical intermediaries were the new Callista leaders of the COJ—Carlos Sánchez Lara, Alfonso González, and Heliodoro Hernández—who between 1929 and 1932 transformed the COJ from an autonomous, combatant, and Communist organization to a domesticated one allied with Governor Allende.⁴³ In the midst of the Great Depression the COJ sought to avoid boycotts, strikes, shutdowns, lockouts, and sabotage.⁴⁴

However, women workers were able to work with and benefit from their

association with the more conservative COJ leadership. The women of the tortilla industry and the CFO could work with the new COJ leadership in part because they shared a core notion of women's role as non-Catholic revolutionaries and accepted their participation as an act of class solidarity.

The CFO did not contradict openly the COJ's idea of the traditional working-class family in which it was generally thought that women should encourage their husbands to join unions in order to improve family welfare.⁴⁵ However, the CFO had to find a way to accommodate its notion of women workers and mothers. By 1934, the CFO distinguished two types of working-class women: one group represented full-time labor leaders, who were recognized primarily as women workers. Their active political participation had masculinized them insofar as they put political concerns before domestic matters. The others were identified as wives whose femininity and domesticity recalled traditional notions of motherhood.

In order to avoid an open confrontation with the male leaders of the COJ and their working-class patriarchy, the CFO perceived women workers only in economic and moral terms and did not discuss publicly women's subordination in the household. The CFO pushed for equal pay for equal work, the acceptance of women in all jobs, and more female labor and health inspectors. It advised pregnant women to demand hygienic conditions with proper ventilation and light. The CFO urged women workers to join unions to avoid exploitation and to secure social rights. The CFO played a key role in the organization of female tortilla workers at a moment when they were threatened with obsolescence by new technology and a male-dominated trade union movement. The CFO taught tortilla worker leaders, and indirectly their rank-and-file, that women workers could have the same rights and benefits as their male counterparts. This helped to organize women in small shops and mills across the city and to convince them that political struggle and unionization were dignifying processes.

Political Revolution at the Corn Mills

Despite the fact that unionization was a dignifying process for workers it was carried out with a significant amount of conflict. Men and women workers, different unions, distinct labor leaders, members of political parties, distinct state agents, and owners experienced a long, violent, and very complex struggle that made unification and unionization very difficult. Owners took advantage of these divisions to hire nonunion workers and to evade the implementation of collective contracts.

At the core of this conflict was the notion that women workers threatened the ideal of working-class masculinity in the corn mills, especially at the moment when the industry was expanding and masculinizing the skilled positions that dovetailed with male-oriented politics. Women's unions challenged the binary cultural construction of femininity domesticity and wage-skilled work politics, as their numbers illustrate. From the 1920s to the 1940s, women dominated tortilla unionism with thirteen unions. Three of these were female corn mill unions

TABLE 4. Gendered Union Participation in the Tortilla Industry in Guadalajara, 1920–1940

Gender	Corn Mills	Dough Shops	Tortillerías	Total
Male	1	—	—	1
Female	3	3	7	13
Mixed	2	—	—	2
Total	6	3	7	16

Source: AHJ, Ramo Trabajo, 1920–1940.

that contended with the male and mixed-sex groups. Other female unions were mainly in the feminized enclaves: dough shops and *tortillerías* (Table 4).

In 1930, there were two distinct groups fighting for the control and unification of tortilla workers. One was led by the labor leader and Deputy Nicolás Rangel Guerrero whose base was formed by the male *nixtamalero* Timoteo Robledo (leader of the Unión de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras en Molinos de Nixtamal), the female dough worker Isaura Camacho (leader of the Unión Social de Expendedoras de Masa), and their respective rank-and-file. The other group followed labor leader Heliodoro Hernández Loza, whose supporters included Catarino Isaac (Sindicato de Trabajadores de Molinos de Nixtamal de Guadalajara) and Jovita Robles (leader of the Unión de Trabajadoras en Molinos de Nixtamal) as well as their base. Each group included the different unions fighting to control the available jobs at corn mills, dough shops, and *tortillerías*. Timoteo Robledo's group disagreed strongly with the fact that Heliodoro Hernández had become a labor representative of some tortilla workers at the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration. Robledo argued that that role was only for the representatives of the unions, not for labor leaders outside the industry.⁴⁶ Although Robledo and Clara Gómez complained several times of Heliodoro Hernández's role continued representing and orienting the opposite group.⁴⁷

While both groups sought the unification of workers, they were not willing to conciliate their differences and sought to control the COJ. This division did not benefit women workers, a group of whom decided to create a single-sex union, the Unión de Trabajadoras en Molinos de Nixtamal, in February of 1930.⁴⁸ This crucial action of the *nixtamaleras* was extremely significant because it expressed their ability to counteract perceptions of women as weak. Indeed, their response to male discrimination and to hostile and patronizing attitudes showed that *nixtamaleras*' self-perceptions diverged markedly from the positions articulated by the male unions, which minimized women's work and sought to displace it.

On February 18, 1930, Jovita Robles complained to the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration of the "dirty" work of "some" organizations that tried to destroy tortilla unions. Robles did not name these organizations, but she point-

ed out that they were asking owners to give the positions of *cebadoras* and *boleras* only to men. Such a “criminal” attitude made Robles very angry. She argued that, if women in the tortilla industry were not the first in the organization of unions, they were certainly veterans. Thus, Robles asked the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration for its help and support. She regarded those coworkers who attempted to destroy workers’ organizations as people against the revolution. Besides, the women Robles represented did not want to continue paying unions fees when their male leaders did not fight for women’s issues. Rather, she argued that these leaders spent the collected fees at the cantinas. Because of this unfair situation, female tortilla workers decided to create their single-sex union to allow women to decide on women’s needs and, subsequently, to let men solve men’s issues. In turn, they witnessed attacks from their male coworkers, who threatened to take over more female positions in the tortilla industry. Further, Robles stated that some male coworkers subverted collective agreements by receiving money from owners to have positions in mills filled only by men. For men, this was a way of saving jobs in an era of unemployment. Their collusion was confronted by an increasingly politicized group of women, galvanized by the church–state conflict, internal struggles in the COJ and tortilla industry, and the development of female labor and political organizations promoting women’s political and civil rights.

Robles’ declarations illuminate the intersection of gender and class in a period of rapid economic change and intense political struggle. She asserted that corn mills belong to the female, not the male, sex. She challenged those who contended that women lacked the skills for corn-mill work. She believed that women could perform all tasks from making the *nixtamal* to carrying the dough and cutting the lime. After all, she argued, they had been working at the mills since 1902.⁴⁹

Robles emphasized gender difference in order to show the distinct cultural notions between masculine and feminine jobs. She linked her argument with a traditional notion of feminine work held before the modernization of corn mills. At the same time, she recognized the existence of a new gendered division of labor within corn mills that required both men and women, but she felt men and women in the same positions deserved the same rights. This apparent contradiction of invoking gender difference and equality simultaneously was not resolved in dichotomous terms. Rather, women of the tortilla industry claimed their labor rights because they were women, workers, mothers, and citizens.⁵⁰ Robles presented a more nuanced feminist debate from a working-class perspective and not in a restrictive dichotomous manner. Yet, this dichotomy that she challenged had been reconstructed within the labor movement, the labor force, and politics by the different wages assigned to men and women and the distinct positions in labor centers and political organizations.

Through Robles’s claim was both radical and traditional, it revealed the conflicting power relations between men and women in the mills. Male hostility was manifest in physical violence, corrupt politics, and the use of violent language. For example, male *cebadores* did not respect *boleras* as workers. If some-

thing was wrong with the dough, the *cebadores* blamed the *boleras*. *Cebadores* not only ridiculed the skills of *boleras* but also used obscene language.

Although women of the Unión de Trabajadoras en Molinos de Nixtamal sought to maintain the industry for female workers, this was not possible given their internal leadership problems and the external intervention of other leaders. In 1931, the differences between the two groups in the tortilla industry intensified. Each group refused to recognize union members of the opposite group and asked owners to employ workers belonging to their respective unions, which allowed owners to hire nonunion workers. Consequently, claims at the Labor Department increased.⁵¹ Heliodoro Hernández signed a collective agreement with the owners of the corn mills that attempted to replace the first collective contract of 1928 and did not include the approval of the opposite group led by Timoteo Robledo.⁵² Likewise, Hernández and his group of tortilla workers denied the official and legal representation of Timoteo Robledo and Isaura Camacho because they were seen as traitors of workers for the division that they promoted.⁵³ Although Hernández's policy toward workers was conciliatory, it was carried out with more internal division and violence. On December 30, 1931, the tortilla worker María Martha Guillén was assassinated when corn mill workers attempted to force a corn mill owner to hire only union workers. Some resilient corn mill owners took advantage of this chaotic situation to threaten tortilla workers and to show them that they were not willing to sign a new collective contract that would recognize the rights of workers.⁵⁴ In early 1932 the president, Pascual Ortiz Rubio, ordered that the collective contract between owners and workers should be compulsory and effective for two years in the municipality of Guadalajara.⁵⁵ This was the second official collective contract obtained by tortilla workers.⁵⁶ Despite President Ortiz Rubio's intervention, mill owners continued firing workers without reason and compensation and did not honor the collective contracts. Consequently, the different male and female unions in the corn mills, dough shops, and *tortillerías* kept up their demands on the owners.⁵⁷

In 1934, the group of Timoteo Robledo and Isaura Camacho sued the Governor, the Municipal President, the President of the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration, the General Inspector of Police, and the Head of the Security Commission because Heliodoro Hernández and Catarino Isaac had expelled them from their unions, thereby forcing them to leave their jobs at the corn mills.⁵⁸ They lost this trial and did not recover their jobs. Similarly, in the same year, Jovita Robles expelled several female members because of their divisive role within the union.⁵⁹ These cases show that there were significant differences and power conflicts among women and men and highlight their diversity of opinions instead of a solid "sisterhood" and class solidarity.

By 1934, the male and female leaders of *nixtamaleros*, Catarino Isaac, Jovita Robles, and other tortilla unions had won a significant battle: the right to receive payment for the compulsory day of rest. In 1935, all the unions in the tortilla industry affiliated with the COJ and all supporters of Heliodoro Hernández

sought to obtain fixed salaries for all workers and demanded a new labor contract: the male union of *nixtamaleros*, the Unión de Trabajadoras en Molinos de Nixtamal; the female union of *nixtamaleras*, the Unión de Trabajadores de Molinos de Nixtamal; the female union of dough sellers, the Unión Social de Expendedoras de Masa; and the female tortilla maker unions, the Sindicato de Elaboradoras de Tortilla and the Unión Revolucionaria de Tortillas de Guadalajara. In order to revise the collective contract of 1932 they had to call for a general strike.⁶⁰ On September 9, 1935, corn mill owners and the distinct unions of the tortilla industry signed a third collective contract, replacing the contract of 1932.⁶¹ It called for more services for the female workers and a fixed wage of 1.50 pesos daily. Governor Everardo Topete intervened and signed an agreement between workers and owners granting a paid compulsory day of rest. Insofar as this agreement served to recognize the workers' demands for the right to this day of rest, it acted to diffuse tensions that may otherwise have grown violent. The female dough sellers' and *torteadoras*' unions obtained the recognition and fulfillment of their collective contracts. In addition, the *expendedoras* achieved a fixed wage in a regulated working day, annual vacations with salaries, the double payment of overtime, the payment of holidays, and the application of Sunday rest.⁶²

While unionized women of the tortilla industry gained some rights, expelled and nonunion women demanded justice and asked Governor Topete to intervene.⁶³ They emphasized their critical economic situation, as heads of families in extreme need of jobs. Clearly, not all the working women had male counterparts; they were the breadwinners. These *nixtamaleras* showed how important their work was not only in terms of their identity, but also for their survival. At the same time, they pointed out how difficult (almost impossible) it was for women to find jobs in a period of economic crisis. Their only hope was to address Governor Topete by using the revolutionary language of their Constitutional labor rights and by emphasizing their weak and precarious situation. Nonetheless, they remained excluded because they were nonunion.

After this long and violent struggle the working conditions and the rights of female workers in the tortilla industry did not improve across the board. By 1941, a report from the Oficina Investigadora de la Situación de la Mujer y los Menores Trabajadores pointed out that *cebadoras*, *boleras*, *expendedoras*, and *molineras* had a minimum wage, paid compulsory Sunday rest, maternity leave, and eight-hour working days. By contrast, the *torteadoras* did not have a minimum wage; they worked by piecework with long working days and without maternity leave.⁶⁴

In order to have a sense how important the tortilla unions were, it is important to relate them to other women's organizations. During the 1920s and 1940s, female secular unions grew from twenty-eight to thirty-six organizations. By contrast, men's unions declined from 252 to 181, in part due to the effects of the Great Depression. The growth of women's professional and political organizations reflected how women mobilized to defend excluded female workers

from industrial centers. Of all women's organizations during these decades, the female unions of the tortilla industry dominated with thirteen different associations, followed by the garment industry.

Despite the divisions among tortilla workers, they actively participated in labor parades and parades commemorating the beginning of the Revolution on November 20. In these, they accompanied women of the CFO and other women's unions. Through their participation, women of the tortilla industry enhanced the familiarity with the language of the Mexican Revolution that they had acquired through their work struggles and at the same time linked their efforts to those of the international working class, inscribed in the memory of the Haymarket martyrs of Chicago.

Anita Hernández Lucas

The story of Anita Hernández Lucas is illustrative of the politicization that took place among women tortilla workers, their linkages to the CFO, and the cultural tensions of the ideals of femininity, domesticity, and motherhood with the real practices and challenges of women workers in the tortilla industry. She was born in Mexico City in 1916. Her father was a soldier during the Mexican Revolution and her mother followed him. After her father died during the revolution, her mother obtained a pension from General Álvaro Obregón and moved the family to Guadalajara, where her mother worked as *torteadora* and sometimes sold candies. All of Anita Hernández's siblings died from illness or accidents, illustrating how the lack of childcare exposed children to very dangerous situations; only she and her mother survived.

Hernández and her mother went to work at the different corn mills, usually working from 3:30 in the morning until 6:00 in the afternoon. Her mother began to attend union meetings and took Anita with her. There they met the textile leader María A. Díaz, Heliodoro Hernández, and schoolteacher Guadalupe Martínez. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Anita Hernández and her mother joined the labor movement and attended meetings of the CFO, where they met other women workers, including those in the tortilla industry: Jovita Robles and Refugio Santa María. All of them, including Anita Hernández, became leaders of distinct branches of the tortilla industry. Through relations of *compadrazgo* (compaternity) with one another and their families, they became an extended family. Anita Hernández recalls that everyone worked closely in the movement, watching out for one another and providing moral, political, and economic support when it was needed.

Anita Hernández remembers vividly that María A. Díaz and Guadalupe Martínez were always there to help them with strike actions and with their petitions. They advised the *torteadoras* to accept only the working conditions that workers demanded. In 1936, when Hernández's mother was elected general secretary of the Sindicato de Elaboradoras de Tortillas, she rejected the position and asked the union to give it to her daughter. Members of the union agreed and made her the leader of the *torteadoras*. As a leader, she worked tirelessly to im-

prove the working conditions of tortilla workers. The teacher Guadalupe Martínez, who belonged both to the CFO and the COJ, taught her to read and write as she did with other female tortilla workers whenever they could come to school. Through this intersectoral, interclass, and intergenerational experience, *torteadoras* like Anita Hernández learned the basic skills they needed to defend their labor rights.

Anita Hernández participated in the bloody struggles among corn mill owners, the state, workers' federations, and workers. Likewise, she led tortilla workers in shows of solidarity with other workers such as milkmen and struggled around issues of production and consumption faced by the poor working families of the city. Hernández not only became a leader of 600 *torteadoras*, she also became a labor inspector and city council member for the city of Guadalajara. Her children went on to become labor leaders in the tortilla industry.

Interviewed as an elderly woman, Anita Hernández recalls how she was radicalized not only by participating in the labor movement but also by being in contact with progressive women schoolteachers and textile workers. Hernández thinks she was not alone in the struggle, but that textile worker María A. Díaz, teacher Guadalupe Martínez, and tortilla workers such as Jovita Robles and Refugio Santa María “gave their youth, their life for the labor struggle. This was stronger than the household, the home, and parents. We went to the meetings without eating, without sleeping in order to go the labor struggle; this was a full time job. Heliodoro Hernández and Catarino Isaac taught them this.”⁶⁵

At the same time, Hernández remembers how she passed the values of honesty, respect, discipline, and loyalty in order to bring some benefits to the tortilla workers. More importantly, she emphasizes how her politicization allowed her to be proud of her working identity by changing her submissive attitude toward the owners. This empowered her and other tortilla workers in the struggle for social justice. However, she is silent about her submission to working-class patriarchy. She prefers to highlight how her political participation expanded labor and political rights for women workers within and despite male-dominated structures. Through her own life history, labor, and political trajectory, she wants to show how three different generation of women of the same family became part of the labor movement and were willing to fight intensively in order to improve workers and women's conditions.

Conclusions

Corn mill owners, male labor leaders from national and regional federations, men's unions, male workers, and state agents contributed to reinforce and reproduce the dichotomy between men and women and between domesticity and waged labor. Similarly, they acted to consolidate the segmentation of industrial work and the sexual division of labor. These social actors regarded women's presence in the corn mills as a threat to working-class patriarchy because they challenged preconceived notions of the woman worker that identified with domesticity and motherhood. For a while, male unions and the male trade union

movement justified accepting women workers when they showed "class solidarity." In reality, male leaders were more interested in expanding their political influence to counterbalance competing political forces.

In this political space, women of the tortilla industry, together with the CFO, carved out a distinctive role for working-class women that transcended the image of the mother and the victimized worker. Women tortilla workers and the CFO became central actors in the organization of other women within the organized trade union movement, the COJ. They promoted women workers' militancy and challenged the perceptions held by the state, owners, and male co-workers of women with their active political participation. They did not develop a full-fledged theory of women's emancipation, but did initiate a critique of sexual inequality. In this industry, women defended corn mills as a female space and highlighted how class and gender intersected. Women in the tortilla workers' movement had more freedom because corn mills were not controlled by the church and their distribution throughout the city allowed them to be less constrained by foremen. While the *cebadoras* and *nixtamaleras* were displaced by male workers, female workers demanded mills exclusively for women. In the long run they lost those positions, but the dough shops and *torillerías* remained female spaces and were not threatened by the mechanization of the industry.

Working women allied with women of the CFO had contested the unequal relationship of power between men and women in this industry. Yet, in the end, in the industry as a whole, women gained a bittersweet victory because they won rights to a collective contract, maternity leave, annual vacations, and a minimum wage, but remained marginalized by male-dominated institutions.

NOTES

1. Archivo Histórico de Jalisco (hereafter cited as AHJ), Ramo de Trabaja, T-1-930, Exp. No. 3898.

2. For an early work on women workers in the tortilla industry, see Dawn Keremitsis, "Del metate al molino: La mujer mexicana de 1910 a 1940," *Historia mexicana* 130 (1983): 285–302.

3. For an excellent discussion of these representations in American labor history, see Ava Baron, "Gender and Labor History: Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future," in *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor*, ed. Ava Baron (Ithaca, 1991), 8; Sally Alexander, "Women, Class, and Sexual Difference," *History Workshop* 17 (Autumn 1984): 145. An example of this traditional view in the Mexican labor history, see Rosendo Salazar and José Escobedo, *Las pugnas de la gleba: los albores del movimiento obrero en México* (México, 1972).

4. For a comparative perspective, see Joan Scott, "La mujer trabajadora en el siglo XIX," in *Historia de las mujeres, el siglo XIX*, eds. George Duby and Michelle Perrot (España, 1993), 405–434.

5. Barbara Weinstein, "Unskilled Worker, Skilled Housewife: Constructing the Working-Class Woman in São Paulo, Brazil," in *The Gendered Worlds of Latin American Women Workers: From the Household and Factory to the Union Hall and Ballot Box*, ed. John D. French and Daniel James (Durham, NC, 1997), 72–99; Thomas Klubock, *Contested Communities: Class, Gender, and Politics in Chile's El Teniente Cooper Mine, 1904–1951* (Durham, 1998); Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, *Dulcinea in the Factory: Myths, Morals, Men and Women in Colombia Industrial Experiment, 1905–1960* (Durham, 1999), 1–35; Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises: Political Culture and State in Chile, 1920–1950* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000). Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, *Laborers Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender and Labor Politics in Urban Chile, 1900–1930* (Duke, 2001); Heidi Tinsman, *Partners in Conflict: The Politics of Gender, Sexuality, and Labor in the Chilean Agrarian Reform, 1950–1973* (Durham, 2002).

6. For a comparative perspective on Chilean working-class feminism, see Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex*.

7. See Mario Alfonso Aldana Rendón, *Del reyismo al nuevo orden constitucional, 1901–1917*, vol. 1 of *Jalisco desde la revolución* (Guadalajara, 1988); Jaime Tamayo, *La conformación del estado moderno y los conflictos políticos, 1917–1929*, vol. 2 of *Jalisco desde la revolución* (Guadalajara, 1988); Jaime Tamayo, *Los movimientos sociales, 1917–1929*, vol. 4 of *Jalisco desde la revolución* (Guadalajara, 1988).

8. Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of 1891 called on the faithful to fight socialism, diminish the excesses of industrial capitalism, and resolve the social question through safeguarding the household as the base for social order. It also called for the creation of Catholic trade unions and promoted social action. See S. J. Márquez Capert, *Las grandes encíclicas sociales* (Madrid, 1958).

9. I am using the term secular organizations in a broad sense to refer to anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists, communists, and even radical liberals.

10. For an excellent discussion of everyday forms of rule and negotiation of popular demands and interests, see Gil Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham, 1994); Daniela Spencer and Bradley A. Levison, "Linking State and Society in discourse and Action: Political and Cultural Studies of the Cárdenas Era in Mexico," *Latin America Research Review* 34 (1999): 227–245. For a regional and gender perspective, see María Teresa Fernández-Aceves, "The Political Mobilization of Women in Revolutionary Guadalajara, 1910–1940" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, Chicago, 2000).

11. From 1918 to 1926, Catholics responded to anti-clerical measures in powerful and effective multi-class, multi-organizational forms that included the participation of priests, nuns, and lay Catholics organized by class, gender, and generation. They used different tactics, from petitioning and nonviolent non-cooperation with the revolutionary state to more active, combative, and sometimes more violent actions to resist anti-Catholic and anti-clerical policies. For the state, especially during President Plutarco Elías Calles's administration (1925–1928), Catholic actions were seen as seditious acts against the laws and public institutions. This point of view impeded the path to the state's reconciliation with the church and Catholics in general. Consequently, state–church relations deteriorated because Calles sought to accelerate the process of secularization of Mexican society through an anti-clerical policy. He enacted the *Ley Calles* (Calles's Law), which allowed one priest for every 6,000 people, suspended the religious services, and granted the right of petition to those who followed and respected the Constitution and state laws. As a result, Mexican citizens who decided to embrace Catholicism including the clergy and lay Catholics lost their civil rights. The church and lay Catholics were convinced that their rights (e.g., freedom in education and worship) transcended state-given rights. These opposite positions did not find the adequate room to negotiate and conciliate, therefore, ended with the Cristero War. There is large historiography in this topic: see Jean Meyer, *La cristiada*, 3 vols. (México, 1973–1974); Agustín Vaca, *Los silencios de la historia: las cristeras* (Guadalajara, 1998); Moisés González Navarro, *Cristeros y agraristas en Jalisco*, 2 vols. (México, 2000–2001).

12. Tamayo, *La conformación del Estado moderno*, 97, 134, 171, 191, 199, 245–246.

13. The group Acción belonged to the Federación de Agrupaciones Obreras de Jalisco, the local branch of the Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana (CROM). It included iron workers, carpenters, hair dressers, corn mills workers, peasants, carriers, clerks, bakers, shoe makers, tailors, shawl makers, meat workers, mechanics, potters, janitors, bricklayers, jewelers, textile workers, and graphic art workers; Tamayo, *La conformación del Estado moderno*, 245–250.

14. Tamayo, *Los movimientos sociales*, 34–37; Angel Moreno Ochoa, *Semblanzas revolucionarias: Diez años de agitación política en Jalisco* (Guadalajara, 1959), 126, 141–144.

15. In 1925, Zuno invited Mexico City Communists David Alfaro Siqueiros, Amado de la Cueva, Hilario Arredondo, and Roberto Reyes Pérez to participate in the labor movement. They worked closely with industrial workers, including mining, textile, and electrical workers. Tamayo, *Los movimientos sociales*, 38, 43.

16. The female unions that joined the CAOLJ were the following: Unión Social de Expendedoras de Masa, Unión de Trabajadoras en Molinos de Nixtamal, and Unión Libertaria de Galleteras. There were also women in mixed-sex unions such as the Unión de Trabajadores de Molinos de Nixtamal y Anexos, Sindicato Evolucionista de Obreros de Río Grande, Sindicato Libertario de Obreros de Río Blanco, and Sindicato Libertario de Obreros de Atemajac. Tamayo, *Los movimientos sociales*, 34–37. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-9-926, Exp. No. 2132.

17. See Francisco Barbosa Guzmán, *La iglesia y el gobierno civil* vol. 6 of *Jalisco desde la revolución* (Guadalajara, 1988), 273–274, 276; AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-1-923, Caja T-5 bis, Exp. No. 6056; “Ley estatal del trabajo,” T-4-923, Caja T-20 bis “J,” Exp. No. 7958.
18. Tamayo, *La conformación del Estado moderno*, 248–250.
19. The Jalisco female organizations were the following: Sociedad Norma, a student teachers’ organization, Casa Amiga de la Obrera, a daycare center, and the Liga Feminista de Mejoramiento Social. See Fernández-Aceves, *The Political Mobilization of Women*, 361. For a deeper discussion of state gender policies, see Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930–1940* (Tucson, 1997); Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex*; Patience Alexander Schell, “Educating the Children of the Revolution” (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University 1998); Katherine Bliss, *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico* (University Park, PA, 2001).
20. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-7-927, No. 2470.
21. María Teresa Fernández Aceves and Hermelinda Orejel Salas, “Sindicalismo Femenino en Jalisco, 1920–1940: Las trabajadoras en la industria de nixtamal” (B.A. Thesis, Universidad de Guadalajara, 1987); Silvia Lailson, “El trabajo y las organizaciones laborales de mujeres en Jalisco: 1920–1940,” *Encuentro* 15 (1987): 59–82.
22. For a detailed discussion when the first *metate* hand grinder appeared in Meso-America, see Arnaldo J. Bauer, “Millers and Grinders: Technology and Household Economy in Meso-America,” *Agricultural History* 64 (Winter 1990), 1–17; Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *¡Que vivan los tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (Albuquerque, 1998), 11, 100–106.
23. The different kinds of corn mills were the following: (1) those grinding *nixtamal* only for families; (2) those grinding over 300 kilos of maize for the public; (3) those grinding over 1,200 kilos for the public; (4) those grinding 2,000 kilos for dough shops; (5) those grinding 4,000 kilos for dough shops. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-2-929, T-142, Exp. No. 3667.
24. Each *torteadora* mashed approximately five kilos of dough in the *metate*. On average, a *torteadora* made between twenty or thirty kilos of maize dough in each workday. One kilo of dough makes 15 hand-made tortillas, so each *torteadora* made between 300 or 450 tortillas in one day. In contrast to this handwork, in 1907 a man proposed to sell a tortilla machine that could make 300 tortillas in one hour. AHJ, Ramo de Beneficencia, 1907.
25. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-7-934.
26. Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 5; Pilcher, *¡Que vivan los tamales!*, 100–101.
27. Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution*, 43.
28. For a comparative discussion of the problematic definition of women’s work and the cultural construction of this concept, see Daniel Scott Smith, “How a Half-Million Iowa Women Suddenly Went to Work: Solving a Mystery in the State Census of 1925,” *The Annals of Iowa* 55 (Fall 1996), 29; Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York, 1990), 1–29; Nancy Folbre, “The Unproductive Housewife: Her Evolution in Nineteenth-Century Economic Thought,” *Signs* 16 (1991): 463–484; Nancy Folbre and Marjorie Abel, “Women’s Work and Women’s Households: Gender Bias in the U.S. Census,” *Social Research* 56 (1989): 545–569; Baron, “Gender and Labor History,” 14.
29. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-6-923, Caja T-22, Exp. No. 536. T-2-924, Caja T-63, Exp. No. 1358.
30. Keremetsis, “La doble jornada,” 57.
31. *Ibid.*, 58.
32. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-9-925, Exp. No. 1700.
33. In 1929, the Unión Revolucionaria de Torteadoras de Guadalajara and the Unión de Elaboradoras de Tortillas were created. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-2-927, Caja T-15 bis “D,” Exp. No. 7310; T-9-928, Caja T-131, Exp. No. 3185, 3320; T-9-929, No. 3459.
34. From 1908 until 1927, the Compañía Molinera Jalisciense, S. A. monopolized the corn mills. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-1-929.
35. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-2-930, Caja T-163, Exp. No. 4286.
36. In 1930, there was a significant number of demands against corn mill owners, see AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-1-930, T-2-930, T-7-930.
37. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-2-929, Caja T-138, Exp. No. 3526.
38. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-2-930, Caja T-163, Exp. No. 4286.
39. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-2-930, Caja T-162, Exp. No. 4263.
40. I use the term domestication to refer to the negotiations between organized labor and

the revolutionary state to change their radicalism and autonomy for a closer relationship with the state in exchange for state support and the fulfillment of their labor demands.

41. Records of Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1920–1939, Roll 13, 821.00-JALISCO/200.

42. Ibid. Laura Patricia Romero, *La consolidación del Estado y los conflictos políticos*, vol. 3 of *Jalisco desde la Revolución* (Guadalajara, 1988), 111, 115.

43. Jaime Tamayo, “Movimiento obrero y lucha sindical,” in *Guadalajara, la gran ciudad de la pequeña industria*, ed. Patricia Arias (Zamora, 1985), 149–150.

44. Records of Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1930–1939, Roll 12, 812.00-JALISCO/100.

45. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-7-934, Caja T-38 bis “B,” Exp. 8445.

46. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-1-930, Caja T-153, Exp. No. 3905.

47. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-9-930, Caja T-155, Exp. No. 3950; T-9-930, Caja T-153, Exp. No. 3904.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

49. For a further discussion of the intersection between gender and class, see Fornsworth-Alvear, *Dulcinea in the Factory*, 27–34; Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex*.

50. As Joan Scott pointed out, the problem of sexual difference has been highlighted several times in different moments and has been examined either as a problem of difference or as equality. Scott proposed to go beyond this dichotomy and to study both difference and equality as part of the same feminist problem. Thus, it is necessary to examine how sexual differences are articulated and understood to produce naturalized constructions of gender roles. For further discussion, see Joan Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, 1996); María Teresa Fernández Aceves, “Entrevista a Joan Scott,” *La Ventana* 4(1996): 226–229.

51. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-7-931, Caja T-37 bis “A,” Exp. No. 8400.

52. AHJ, Ramo Trabajo, T-1-930, Exp. No. 3905.

53. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-7-931, Caja T-195, Exp. No. 5086.

54. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-7-932, Caja T-216, Exp. No. 5407, 5408.

55. AHJ, Ramo Trabajo, T-4-932.

56. AHJ, Ramo Trabajo, T-7-932; T-2-932, Caja T-19, Exp. No. 7689; T-1-932, Caja T-216, Exp. No. 5455, 5462.

57. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-2-933; T-2-933, Caja T-19, Exp. No. 7503, 7504, 7508; T-7-933, Exp. No. 5612, 7696, 5590, 5830, 5843, 5593, 5590, 5844.

58. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-2-934, Caja T-240, Exp. No. 5928.

59. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-2-933, T-9-934, T-3-934.

60. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-3-935, Caja T-260, Exp. No. 6562.

61. AHJ, Ramo de Trabajo, T-2-934, Caja T-243, Exp. 6003

62. AHJ, Ramo Trabajo, T-2-935.

63. AHJ, Ramo Trabajo, T-1-935.

64. Fernández and Orejel, “Sindicalismo Femenino en Jalisco,” 188.

65. Anita Hernández Lucas, interviewed by author, tape recording, Guadalajara, Jalisco, 17 August 1996 and 8 August 1998.