

## Genealogy and history against punishment<sup>1</sup>

We are the faces of adversity and the horizon that the Andean city produces.

*Mujeres de Frente* are organized women in Quito with our children and teenagers, whom we take care of and who share our search for jobs to make it possible to sustain life for all . We are self-employed street vendors, urban waste recyclers, housekeepers and piecework cleaners, young women with secondary and higher education who are eventually renumerated, teachers and students. We are city laborers chased daily by the forces of metropolitan order, relatives of people in prison, and women who were formerly imprisoned and released. Heterosexual, bisexual, and lesbian women. Some of us are Indigenous and Afro-descendant migrants and practically all of us are *mestizas acholadas*. All, names of the dispossession we experience and the struggles we contend with.

As women pulled by forces of the citizen order daily, uprooting is the punishment we fight against.

Our experience has been that of being uprooted. We were torn from our infantile ties when impoverishment forced our elders to transfer us from our position as daughters to that of servants or helpers; when running around, in search of merchandise on the street and temporary detentions by municipal police officers stripped us of the certainty of the sustained presence of our elders; when policemen, judges and jailers eradicated the maternal bond from us. We work surrounded, belligerent, piecework, silent, late at night, at dawn, always on the edge of the law, we live displaced from the economy considered formal and from social security. We see how our lives are described in the mass media with words like urban disorder and criminality, how we are torn from the promise of citizenship daily. And yet, we do not stop flourishing. Here we are. Here we continue to sustain life.

As migrants of the first, second, third or no longer remembered generation, uprooting and forgetfulness are the punishments we fight against.

We arrived in this Andean city as *chagras*, daughters, granddaughters, or descendants of women we do not remember; women who were uprooted from rural employment, from small peasant production units and community subsistence economies besieged by large-scale agricultural exploiters, monopolizers of the internal markets and investments in extractive projects. We look at each other in reciprocity and discover ourselves lost in the trap of *mestizaje*, stripped of community by the forces of order, barely sustained by family ties that we help to re-sew against forces of order dedicated to ripping us off and ripping us off and ripping us off. And yet, we do not stop flourishing. Here we are. Here we continue to support life, but this time denouncing that the strategy of the capitalist colonial patriarchy today is to weaken us by producing rootlessness and forgetfulness. A strategy that we experience as multiple forms of daily punishment against which we organize.

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1 This text was originally written in Spanish, here: <https://desinformemonos.org/genealogia-e-historia-contra-el-castigo/>

As almost always unrecognizable daughters of the Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples from whom we ourselves or our ancestors were torn, as women who have lived lost in the trap of miscegenation, in the trap of the promise of a citizenship that is denied to us, today, organized, we work to return to our ancestors and the history of our peoples, we work to strengthen ourselves by building memory, dignity, roots and community.

And we say: Ours is not a *mestizo* association, we the *Mujeres de Frente* are an organization with Indigenous and Afro-descendant roots. And we built a school, our Feminist and Popular Political Training School, no longer as a process to learn what the militancy say we should to speak correctly, but to co-investigate together, directing our searches in two directions: genealogical and historical. Genealogical to return us to our ancestors, to the warmth of those who know why we have been and, despite adversity, why we continue to be. And historical to return us to the stories of the peoples to which we belong, not to return to rural communities or small towns, but to rescue us from the trap of forgetfulness and miscegenation, to sink into our roots and consolidate our community of Indigenous, Afro-descendant and *Chola* roots. And to combat the lack of memory that makes our peoples and comrades ignore us when we are imprisoned, when our brothers and sons die in prison massacres, and when the punitive state is launched against us with the promise of remaining unpunished.