

THE ECUADOR

HISTORY,
CULTURE,
POLITICS

READER



CARLOS DE LA TORRE AND STEVE STRIFFLER, EDITORS

THE
ECUADOR
READER

HISTORY, CULTURE, POLITICS

Edited by Carlos de la Torre and Steve Striffler

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS *Durham and London* 2008

© 2008 Duke University Press

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞

Typeset in Monotype Dante by Achorn International

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data appear
on the last printed page of this book.

Contents

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction i

I *Conquest and Colonial Rule* 9

Tamara Bray. Ecuador's Pre-Columbian Past 15

Frank Salomon. Ancestors, Grave Robbers, and the Possible Antecedents of
Cañari "Inca-ism" 27

Susan V. Webster. Building a Life in Colonial Quito: José Jaime Ortiz,
Architect and Entrepreneur 40

Sherwin K. Bryant. Finding Freedom: Slavery in Colonial Ecuador 52

Karen Vieira Powers. A Battle of Wills: Inventing Chiefly Legitimacy in the
Colonial North Andes 68

Sarah C. Chambers. Manuela Sáenz: *Americana* or *Quiteña*? 79

• *Blanca Muratorio*. The State, Missionaries, and Native Consciousness in the
Upper Amazon, 1767–1896 86

II *A New Nation* 99

Andrés Guerrero. The Construction of a Ventriloquist's Image: Liberal
Discourse and the "Miserable Indian Race" in the Late Nineteenth
Century 103

Friedrich Hassaurek. Four Years among the Ecuadorians 117

Juan Montalvo. Selection from Juan Montalvo (1832–1889) 121

A. Kim Clark. Railway and Nation in Liberal Ecuador 126

Ronn Pineo. Guayaquil and Coastal Ecuador during the Cacao Era 136

Rob Rachowiecki. Mountaineering on the Equator: A Historical
Perspective 148

III *The Rise of the Popular* 155

Albert B. Franklin. Portrait of a People 159

José María Velasco Ibarra. You Are Not My President 163

- Raphael V. Lasso. *The Wonderland* 167
 Jorge Icaza. *Patrón and Peon on an Andean Hacienda* 169
 Pablo Palacio. *The Man Who Was Kicked to Death* 175
 Henri Michaux. *The Indian's Cabin* 182
 José María Velasco Ibarra. "Heroic Pueblo of Guayaquil" 185

IV *Global Currents* 189

- Galo Plaza Lasso. *Two Experiments in Education for Democracy* 193
 ✱ Adrián Bonilla. *The Origins of the Ecuadorian Left* 200
 ✱ Carmen Martínez Novo. *The Progressive Catholic Church and the Indigenous Movement in Ecuador* 203
 Salomon Isacovici and Juan Manuel Rodríguez. *Man of Ashes* 209
 Pablo Cuvi. *Men of the Rails and of the Sea* 218
 Jean Muteba Rahier. *Creolization and African Diaspora Cultures: The Case of the Afro-Esmeraldian Décimas* 226
 Hernán Ibarra. *Julio Jaramillo and Music as Identity* 237
 Steve Striffler. *The United Fruit Company's Legacy in Ecuador* 239
 Tom Miller. *The Panama Hat Trail* 250
 Diane C. Bates. *Deforestation in Ecuador* 257
 ✱ Carlos de la Torre. *Civilization and Barbarism* 267
 ✱ Felipe Burbano de Lara. *Deinstitutionalized Democracy* 271

V *Domination and Struggle* 277

- ✱ Carlos de la Torre. *Nina Pacari, an Interview* 279
 Sarah A. Radcliffe. *Women's Movements in Twentieth-Century Ecuador* 284
 Pablo Ospina. *The Galápagos: Environmental Pressures and Social Opportunities* 297
 Norman E. Whitten Jr. *Emerald Freedom: "With Pride in the Face of the Sun"* 302
 Suzana Sawyer. *Suing ChevronTexaco* 321
 Dorothea Scott Whitten. *Arts of Amazonian and Andean Women* 329

VI *Cultures and Identities Redefined* 337

- Jean Muteba Rahier. *National Identity and the First Black Miss Ecuador (1995–96)* 341
 Brad D. Jokisch and David Kyle. *Ecuadorian International Migration* 350
 Mary J. Weismantel. *Cities of Women* 359

<i>Noemí Espinosa</i> . Traditional Foods of Ecuador	371
<i>Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld</i> . Globalization from Below and The Political Turn among Otavalo's Merchant Artisans	377
* <i>X. Andrade</i> . Pancho Jaime	385
<i>Javier Vásquez</i> . Big Angel, My Love	388
<i>María Fernanda Espinosa</i> . Nature and Humanity through Poetry	396
<i>Barry Lyons, with Angel Aranda and Dina Guevara</i> . "Simple People"	403
<i>Iván Oñate</i> . The Writings of Iván Oñate	415
Suggestions for Further Reading	419
Acknowledgment of Copyrights	423
Index	427

The Origins of the Ecuadorian Left

Adrián Bonilla

Translated and summarized by Carlos de la Torre

Ecuador is not Cuba or Nicaragua, or even Chile. The Left never carried out a socialist revolution. But leftists have played an important role in mobilizing popular sectors, challenging elite power, and otherwise shaping Ecuador's political scene. The following, by one of Ecuador's foremost scholars, provides a brief, coherent, description of a very complicated history. As this contribution makes clear, what stands out about the history of the Left in Ecuador—and here it shares a lot with much of Latin America—is how vibrant and fragmented “it” has been. Even in a country the size of Ecuador, leftist unity has often been elusive.

Socialist ideas were introduced to Ecuador by immigrants, sailors, and well-to-do intellectuals who had studied in Europe or who were oriented toward the Old Continent. By 1926, this political and intellectual expression coalesced in the form of the Socialist Party. Early members were radicalized liberals; others were anarchists with influence among artisans in Guayaquil; and still others were influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution. In 1931, the latter group split from the Socialist Party to form the Communist Party, an organization that would maintain the political line of the Third International [Comintern] and the Soviet Union.

Between the 1930s and 1960s, however, the split between Socialists and Communists was relatively minor. They worked in different spaces and had few open confrontations. Communists focused their efforts on those social classes who, according to Marxist theory, were central to the revolutionary project: workers, peasants, and artisans. They founded the Central Federation of Ecuadorian Workers (CTE) in 1944 and the Ecuadorian Federation of Indians (FEI) in 1945. By contrast, the Socialist Party fought the good fight on all fronts. They presented candidates, struggled to control local governments, and got involved in conspiracies and revolts. Socialists, in this sense, were more opportunistic and less rigid in terms of strategy and tactics. Communists, in turn,

stuck more narrowly to the revolutionary path, assured that they knew the road to the promised land.

By the 1960s, however, the Marxist left underwent an acute process of differentiation. Relative harmony gave way to factionalism as the number of leftist groups proliferated and intense debates emerged over the nature and timing of revolution. Such tensions were caused, paradoxically, by the growth and success of the left on an international scale. External factors such as the Cuban Revolution (1959), the growing struggle between the Soviets and the Chinese, and the proliferation of guerrilla movements throughout Latin America were all felt (and played out) within the Ecuadorian left during the 1960s and 1970s. Was Ecuador capitalist or feudal in nature? Was the time ripe for revolution, or was Ecuador not yet ready? Who would carry out the revolution: peasants, workers, intellectuals? Was violence a necessary part of the process?

Ultimately, three ideological currents emerged during this period: the Communists, who tended to follow orders from Moscow (and were eternally waiting for the right revolutionary moment); the Maoists, who were inspired by the Chinese break from Moscow (and the possibility of *rural* revolution); and the Radical Socialists. The latter groups supported the Cuban Revolution, and rejected Moscow's insistence that socialist transformation could only be achieved by passing through a series of stages. They were not willing to wait for capitalism, or even revolution, but believed that revolution must be made, and made now.

Even within these tendencies there existed considerable division. In order to create a broad youth movement, for example, the Communist Party created the Unión Revolucionaria de Juventudes Ecuatorianas (Revolutionary Union of the Ecuadorian Youth), or URJE. Once created, however, this youth organization was not easily controlled by party leaders. In fact, the URJE became a critical space where Communist militants and other leftists questioned the tactics and strategy of the party. Members of URJE became involved with Latin American revolutionaries who were organizing guerrilla movements—despite mandates from the party that insisted the time was not ripe for revolution. They also violated party discipline by organizing activities outside the purview of the party such as military training.

The event perhaps most revealing of divisions within the Communist Party was the attempt to create a guerrilla front in Toachi, 200 kilometers from Quito, led by the Communist leader Jorge Rivadeneira. The guerrilla movement itself had little lasting impact on Ecuadorian history; the insurrectionists were apprehended almost immediately. But the failed revolt did lead to a serious housecleaning within the party. The party expelled or sanctioned midlevel cadre involved in the revolt, and ended its association with the URJE.

In August 1964, the Maoist-oriented Marxist Leninist Ecuadorian Communist Party (PCMLE) was formed. For Maoists, Ecuador of the 1960s was a semifeudal and semicolonial nation that needed an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution (not unlike China). The time for revolution was now and depended largely on the will of party militants.

Another important group during this period was the Revolutionary Leftist Movement (MIR). It was a dissident group of the Communist Party that split over the handling of the Toachi guerrilla affair. The MIR proclaimed the need for socialist revolution based on the guerrilla strategy of Régis Debray, a French intellectual and revolutionary closely aligned with Che Guevara. As a result, the MIR organized rural guerrilla movements that failed for the same reason as many Guevara-inspired revolts: the urban middle-class leaders had little organic connection to the peasants they were trying to turn into revolutionaries.

Socialists were hardly of one mind during this period, but were much more likely to work within the existing political system than were their Communist/Maoist counterparts. In the 1960 presidential election, the Socialist Party was divided between a faction that supported ex-President Plaza, a group that supported the ticket of Antonio Parra and Benjamín Carrión, and a sector who rejected all pacts with the bourgeoisie. The radical section of the Socialist Party, later renamed the Ecuadorian Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSRE), under the influence of the most important Ecuadorian Marxist ideologist, Manuel Agustín Aguirre, developed the thesis that Ecuador was a backward and dependent capitalist country that needed a socialist revolution. Its theses differed from the insurrectionist line proposed by other radical organizations, but it shared the call for an immediate socialist transformation.

The most important issue for the Marxist left during the 1960s was revolution—when, how, under what circumstances, and who [would lead it]. Beyond that, there was little agreement. In this, Ecuador was on par with many of its Latin American neighbors.