

discourse on love – both the official (moralistic) and the artistic (romantic) – play an important role in the author’s analysis, especially in the third chapter. According to the moralistic discourse, love can only be positive and engenders responsibility and devotion. Romantic vision, represented in Soviet films and literature, describes the spontaneity and dangers of love, as well as the suffering, emotional struggles, and conflicts that it can bring. During the thaw under Khrushchev, subjectivity and individualism assumed an important place in Soviet culture. Field remarks that in the absence of real privacy in overcrowded apartments, people delineated the private through acts of the imagination. Small objects, poems, songs, and other reminiscences or traces of individual taste, choice, happiness, and grief constituted the imagined privacy.

Chapters 4 to 6 are devoted to the everyday realities of private and family life, including such issues as marriage, divorce, child-rearing, contraception, abortion, and medical assistance. Field examines the continuity with pre-war society and the changes under Khrushchev. Although the hypocrisy of the official discourse and its remoteness from the realities of private life were typical of the whole Soviet period, the Khrushchev era was marked by great efforts on the part of officials, experts, and professionals to solve the country’s growing social problems.

Field’s book is an original archive-based study, but it is surprisingly short for a historical monograph. The main chapters based on the author’s own archival research constitute around fifty pages, covering themes such as romantic love, family life, child-rearing, sexual practices, and divorce. As a consequence, many subjects are only briefly studied, and some important issues are scarcely touched upon at all. For example, while in her introduction and the first few chapters the author mentions that the construction of mass housing was an important particularity of the era, having a great impact on private life, the new patterns of living in individual flats are not investigated. This book can be seen rather as a useful synthesis of Soviet private life than as an exhaustive contribution to the study of its subject. Since it is well-written, retraces the main outline of the academic debate and also of the Soviet ideological debate on private life, and provides a solid bibliography and index, it will be useful for anyone looking for a synthesis on the subject.

A comparative dimension could have enriched the analysis. It would have been useful had Field put the results of her research into a broader context, comparing her findings with what historians and sociologists have written about private life and discourses on love in other countries, especially socialist countries, in the same period. While the universe of communist morality seems rather grotesque to us today, we may still wonder to what extent the Soviet case was original, and in what respect it was typical of the postwar world.

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MARC, BECKER. *Indians and Leftists in the Making of Ecuador’s Modern Indigenous Movements*. [Latin American Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations.] Duke University Press, Durham [etc.] 2008. xxv, 303 pp. \$79.95; £50.00. (Paper: \$22.95; £12.99.); doi:10.1017/S0020859009990162

Throughout the 1990s, the appearance of indigenous movements in Latin America generated a flood of studies on the “ethnic question” in the social sciences. Almost

immediately, these indigenous movements (especially in countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia) showed remarkable skill in communicating with the public authorities and in channelling much of the social dissatisfaction related to economic reforms implemented in accordance with the latest neo-liberal policies. Many of those studies and analyses pointed to the undeniable fact that this was a particularly historic moment: for the first time, those movements were able to articulate, from their subordinate position, a political discourse of their own, questioning the mono-ethnic basis of the colonial independent republics that had survived until the construction of regional modern nation-states. This point of view usually led to an emphasis on the originality and the elements of rupture displayed in relation to the preceding forms of collective class action. That action had been expressed through *campesinista* speech in rural areas, where large contingents of the population classified as “indigenous” were concentrated. In that way, the historical roots of the struggles and demands of those groups became invisible as a certain stereotypical image of the “Old Left” grew: insensible to identity consciousness and affected only by class struggle.

Marc Becker’s book breaks with these ideas and assumptions. Taking as a case study the indigenous movement in Ecuador (until recently one of the most organized and most capable of social mobilization in the Americas), Becker offers a long-term historical study from the 1920s to today; from the organization of the first peasant unions to the outstanding moment of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE). This is a detailed study of an enormously complex and prolonged period, which also explores the entangled and until now forgotten relationship between urban, intellectual members of leftist parties (mainly the Ecuadorian Communist Party, PCE) and indigenous activists. The book’s contributions can be broadly summarized as follows: one strongly empirical, and the other theoretical and rather interpretive.

First of all, this book is an important contribution to the social history of Ecuador. Before an ahistorical image of the novelty of the indigenous population’s mobilization and demands, the author reveals the deep ancient roots of peasant struggles at the beginning of the twentieth century. He also identifies old synergies and interchanges which grew between the indigenous and leftists: those relationships were the true humus that nourished the contemporary indigenous movement. As Becker says, “Social movements do not develop in isolation.” The Quechua activists of the 1920s and 1930s, for example, quickly adopted traditionally leftist weapons, such as unions and strikes, in Andean rural environments; and they did this in the context of the vast rural property system (or *latifundios*) in which a minority of landowners monopolized most of the land devoted to ranching and agriculture.

As the years passed, and particularly between 1940 and 1960, a fierce debate took place regarding the “agrarian question”. It was a period first of vindication and general improvement in the working conditions of indigenous people and peasants, and then of mobilization in favour of agrarian reform. The Ecuadorian Federation of Indians (FEI) played a fundamental role during this time. Established in 1944 under the protection of the PCE, the FEI was to become the leader of a true peasant movement of national scope, helping to crystallize a class alliance between the landless and thereby transcending the limits of allegiances based on identity. After the implementation of the agrarian reforms of 1964 and 1973, and in parallel with the rise of ethnically based political movements, the FEI began to lose relevance, a process that became irreversible in the 1980s.

In terms of interpretation, Becker’s theses will doubtless open a debate about the relationship between indigenous peoples and the state. Somehow, after Andres Guerrero’s

essays were published,¹ it became commonplace to assume that ventriloquism was the institutionalized form of relationships between the indigenous peoples and the state until such time as they were able to articulate a political discourse of their own. This ventriloquism was how indigenous populations used institutions such as the protectors of Indians in colonial times, the *tinterillos* (town clerks), the *indigenistas* or the leftist parties, to translate their voices, the voices of non-citizens, since their speech was inaudible and unrecognizable without the mediation of white and *mestizo* citizens. Using historical evidence, Becker questions the idea of ventriloquism, arguing that ethnic- and class-consciousness was present, to a varying extent, in the work of the PCE and the FEI. It was not that those organizations spoke *in the name of* the Indians. On the contrary, outstanding Quechua leaders, both men and women, participated in those organizations and held positions of significant political leadership.

This is the real point of controversy, because even in the shadow of such a vast empirical investigation, I believe the correct conclusion to be drawn is the opposite. In a certain sense, the fact that indigenous demands, embedded in class discourse, were audible to the hegemonic society only through the interlocution of recognized organizations is not only not invalid, but reinforces the theory of ventriloquism. Becker shows, in fact, how one of the FEI's greatest accomplishments was to take agrarian conflict from the local, private level (the *haciendas*) to the public and national level, as Guerrero had noted much earlier.² On the other hand, the constant presence of indigenous activists in leftist organizations and also their verifiable exchanges with urban, non-indigenous ideologists can be interpreted via Gramsci as the formation of *organic intellectuals*: agents of change who will play a leading role in the fight for land, for the dissolution of the hacienda regime, and in the construction of a new social activism defined mainly by being indigenous.

The book consists of eight chapters. After an introduction in which the author outlines his definition of ethnic identities as social constructions and in which he presents his main hypothesis (chapter 1), he analyses the relationship between the founders of the Ecuadorian Socialist Party (which became the PCE in 1931) and indigenous activists from the 1920s until the beginning of the 1930s (chapter 2). Next, Becker considers the first strikes and mobilizations of the indigenous peasants (protected by the PCE) to improve wages and working conditions on the haciendas (chapter 3). The foundation of the FEI is the most relevant event in the 1940s, and the analysis of its initial steps is one of the most interesting parts of the book (chapter 4). From an account of an important conflict on a large northern hacienda in 1954 which ended in the slaughter of Indians at the hands of the police, Becker passes to the path of the left during this time, stating that in contrast to previous periods the discourse of the PCE (and with it that of the relevant indigenous activists) was moving towards class-based propositions and attitudes. The FEI's ability to build a *campesinista* discourse around the goal of land reform allowed it to develop an efficient operative capability from the end of the 1950s to the first half of the 1970s

1. Andrés Guerrero, "The Administration of Dominated Populations under a Regime of Customary Citizenship: The Case of Postcolonial Ecuador", in Mark Thurner and Andrés Guerrero (eds), *After Spanish Rule: Postcolonial Predicaments of the Americas* (Durham, 2003), pp. 272–309.

2. *Idem*, "La desintegración de la administración étnica en el Ecuador", in *Sismo étnico en el Ecuador. Varias perspectivas* (Quito, 1993), pp. 91–112.

(chapter 6). Once the agrarian reform cycle had ended, FEI members were unable to adapt to the new situation. And so identity-based organizations went back to representing mainly their old social bases and the movement began to decline, a decline which continues today (chapter 7). Ultimately, in the second half of the 1980s, the most outstanding events were the foundation of the CONAIE and the consolidation of independent indigenous movements (chapter 8).

This is a meticulous work that fills a void in our understanding of recent Ecuadorean history and, more generally, of the history of the Andean world. A meticulous work that, in addition, has the virtue of paving the way to an inescapable debate about citizenship, its creation in Andean countries, and the intricate ways by which groups historically considered ethnically inferior and subordinate reach social representation.

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