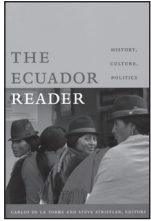


REVIEWS

New & Noteworthy

THE ECUADOR READER: HISTORY, CULTURE, POLITICS



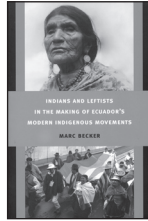
edited by Carlos de la Torre and Steve Striffler, Duke University Press, 2008, 480 pp., \$24.95 (paperback)

THIS INSTALLMENT OF DUKE UNIVERSITY Press's Latin America Reader series is meant to introduce nonspecialists to a country that, as the editors note, is relatively unfamiliar in the North. So the time is ripe for a collection that would deepen readers' understanding of Ecuador, given that the country has become a "major tourist destination," while its "indigenous weavers and musicians now travel to Europe and the United States to market their goods, and themselves." Moreover, Ecuadorians are "one of the fastest-growing immigrant groups in the United States and Spain."

Since diversity is the rule in Ecuador, the editors strive "to provide the reader with a wide array of material in terms of topic, approach, historical period, region, perspective, and especially form." This includes such primary works as a speech from five-time president José María Velasco Ibarra, colonial-era ceramics by anonymous indigenous women artists, a handful of Afro-Ecuadorian poems, 19th-century European travel accounts, a selection from avant-garde novelist Pablo Palacio, and a series of recipes. The *Reader* also includes secondary work from historians and social scientists on colonialism, state formation and nationalism, indigenous identity, environmentalism, and more. A list of suggested reading for those seeking more depth is appended.

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INDIANS AND LEFTISTS IN THE MAKING OF ECUADOR'S MODERN INDIGENOUS MOVEMENTS

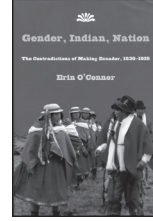


by Marc Becker, Duke University Press, 2008, 336 pp., \$23.95 (paperback)

ECUADORAN ELITES AND OUTSIDE OBSERVERS alike were shocked in June 1990 when a powerful indigenous uprising paralyzed the country for a week, making demands for land ownership, education, and economic development in the countryside. In the years since, Ecuador's indigenous movements have played a key role in ousting three neoliberal presidents and in electing President Rafael Correa. Taking the 1990 milestone as his starting point, historian Marc Becker aims to show how the country's modern indigenous political movements developed.

Becker begins with the campesino unions that emerged in the late 1920s. Key to this development, he emphasizes throughout, was a collaboration on equal terms between rural indigenous peoples and urban socialists. Contesting interpretations that urban leftists treated campesino struggles opportunistically or as subordinate to their own, Becker finds that "this is a faulty reading of history." Campesino militants quickly adopted urban tactics like strikes and demonstrations, deploying them to great effect in local struggles in the 1930s, leading to the establishment of the national-level Ecuadorian Federation of Indians, the first organization of its kind, in 1944. Challenges to the hacienda system continued through the 1960s and beyond, as did cross-fertilization between different sectors of the Ecuadorian left.

GENDER, INDIAN, NATION: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF MAKING ECUADOR, 1830–1925



by Erin O'Connor, Arizona University Press, 2007, 288 pp., \$49.95 (hardcover)

THIS MONOGRAPH EXAMINES THE HISTORY of Ecuador's indigenous movements through the lens of gender analysis. Historian Erin O'Connor begins with a contemporary dilemma: "Indigenous women are central to and yet often marginalized within indigenous activism." She asks, "What past events and developments help to explain the simultaneous importance and marginalization of women within contemporary indigenous activism?" This book-length answer to that question centers its research on Ecuador's particular history of nation-state development, which, O'Connor asserts, is "crucial for understanding the history behind contemporary Indian-state relations."

Congressional debates, presidential speeches, ministerial reports, hacienda records, and national newspapers from the early republican era inform O'Connor's analysis from "above," while civil and criminal court records offer a glimpse from "below." Charting the social category of gender as an ever evolving concept, O'Connor finds that "the processes of nation making increased men's ability to negotiate with the state, while Indian women's capacities were not similarly extended despite their importance within indigenous communities." This "masculinization of Indian-state relations," she writes, "... laid foundations for the development of later indigenous movements and women's contradictory place within them."