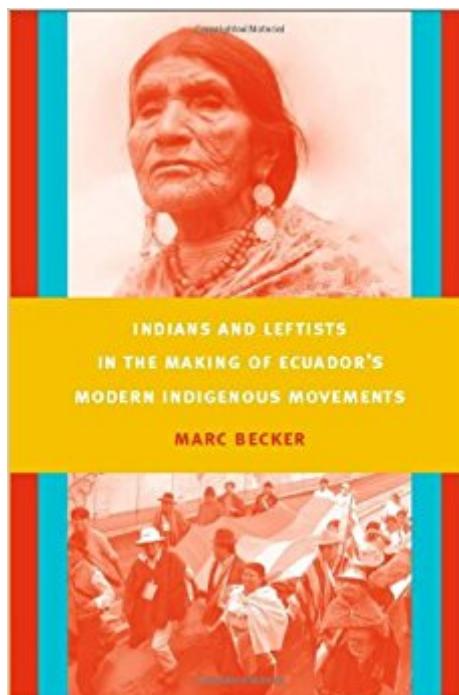




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Indians And Leftists In The Making Of Ecuador's Modern Indigenous Movements (Latin America Otherwise)



Synopsis

In June 1990, Indigenous peoples shocked Ecuadorian elites with a powerful uprising that paralyzed the country for a week. Militants insisted that the government address Indigenous demands for land ownership, education, and economic development. This uprising was a milestone in the history of Ecuador's social justice movements, and it inspired popular organizing efforts across Latin America. While the insurrection seemed to come out of nowhere, Marc Becker demonstrates that it emerged out of years of organizing and developing strategies to advance Indigenous rights. In this richly documented account, he chronicles a long history of Indigenous political activism in Ecuador, from the creation of the first local agricultural syndicates in the 1920s through the galvanizing protests of 1990. In so doing, he reveals the central role of women in Indigenous movements and the history of productive collaborations between rural Indigenous activists and urban leftist intellectuals. Becker explains how rural laborers and urban activists worked together in Ecuador, merging ethnic and class-based struggles for social justice. Socialists were often the first to defend Indigenous languages, cultures, and social organizations. They introduced rural activists to new tactics, including demonstrations and strikes. Drawing on leftist influences, Indigenous peoples became adept at reacting to immediate, local forms of exploitation while at the same time addressing broader underlying structural inequities. Through an examination of strike activity in the 1930s, the establishment of a national-level Ecuadorian Federation of Indians in 1944, and agitation for agrarian reform in the 1960s, Becker shows that the history of Indigenous mobilizations in Ecuador is longer and deeper than many contemporary observers have recognized.

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“In this timely contribution to Latin American history and the study of Indigenous South Americans, Marc Becker documents the long history of Indigenous political activism in Ecuador, reminding us that current events never spring into existence without historical precedent. The impressive amount of new documentary evidence he provides makes this a book that will be immediately read and discussed, and then debated for years to come.”

Mary Weismantel, author of *Cholas and Pishtacos: Stories of Race and Sex in the Andes*

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This is a must read book despite the surprising paucity of site field work. The indigenous movement in Ecuador has reached important levels of political representation and at least constitutional recognition that is unique to this country and deserves close attention. Underlying the integral role that the left played in this, as Marc Becker does, adds an essential historical and social element that is not otherwise easily available.

This book is well documented and interestingly written. I grew up in a neighboring community and some of my Indigenous friends verified what is documented here.

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