

Indians and Leftists
in the Making of Ecuador's
Modern Indigenous Movements

A book in the series

LATIN AMERICAN OTHERWISE: LANGUAGES, EMPIRES, NATIONS

Series editors:

Walter D. Mignolo, Duke University

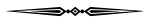
Irene Silverblatt, Duke University

Sonia Saldivar-Hull, University of Texas, San Antonio



Indians and Leftists
in the Making of Ecuador's
Modern Indigenous Movements

MARC BECKER



Duke University Press

Durham & London

2008

© 2008 Duke University Press

All rights reserved

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

Designed by Katy Clove

Typeset in Dante

by Keystone Typesetting, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-

Publication Data appear on the
last printed page of this book.

For an electronic appendix, please see

<http://www.yachana.org/indmovs/>

Frontispiece: Dolores Cacuango, 1968.

Photo by Ralph Blomberg. Courtesy of
the Archivo Blomberg, Quito, Ecuador.

About the Series

Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations is a critical series. It aims to explore the emergence and consequences of concepts used to define “Latin America” while at the same time exploring the broad interplay of political, economic, and cultural practices that have shaped Latin American worlds. Latin America, at the crossroads of competing imperial designs and local responses, has been construed as a geocultural and geopolitical entity since the nineteenth century. This series provides a starting point to redefine Latin America as a configuration of political, linguistic, cultural, and economic intersections that demands a continuous reappraisal of the role of the Americas in history, and of the ongoing process of globalization and the relocation of people and cultures that have characterized Latin America’s experience. *Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations* is a forum that confronts established geocultural constructions, rethinks area studies and disciplinary boundaries, assesses convictions of the academy and of public policy, and correspondingly demands that the practices through which we produce knowledge and understanding about and from Latin America be subject to rigorous and critical scrutiny.

In his new work, Marc Becker provides a full and detailed account of contemporary Indigenous movements in Ecuador and their complex relationship with the Marxist left. Becker offers historical as well as cultural substantiation for the reader to understand that we are facing, in Ecuador and elsewhere in the Andes, the unfolding of a new phenomenon of “Indigenous Movements.” This new phenomenon represents a break with the past, because activists insist that more than a “movement,” they are and should be thought of as a “nation.” The entire debate and conceptualization of a “plurinational state” in both Ecuador and Bolivia today is grounded in this historical, political, and intellectual shift.

Becker’s well-informed account blends history with analyses of gender, class, and ethnic struggles. In the final section of the book he shows that we are no longer witnessing a romantic return to the past, an idealistic rehearsal of the image of the Indians. Instead he demonstrates that now we are witnessing the emergence of “Indianism” (rather than “Indigenism”) as a new articulation of the political through the insertion of a distinctive Indian actor that blurs the lines between “friend” and “enemy.” Indians were neither; they were outcast by the internal struggles among blanco-mestizos who totalized the political sphere, and have been forced to find new avenues for political action. With the rise of these new Indigenous movements, the “colonial revolution” of the sixteenth century has reached a point of crisis and decay—a radical shift, a “pachakutik,” that is reorienting five hundred years of imperial, colonial, and national history.

Solo los obreros y campesinos irán hasta el fin

—AUGUSTO CÉSAR SANDINO

Nayawa jiwtxa nayjarusti waranga waranqanakawa kutanipxa

—TÚPAC KATARI

Ñuca tierra es Cayambe,

y no me jodan carajú

Porque somos libres como el viento

libres fuimos, libres seremos

Todo manos, todos oídos,

todo ojos, toda voz

—DOLORES CACUANGO

Die Proletarier haben nichts in ihr zu verlieren als ihre Ketten

Sie haben eine Welt zu gewinnen

Proletarier aller Länder, vereinigt euch!

—KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS