

personal, yet also provides compelling details of the relatively short life of a figure whose influence on his contemporaries and future generations is nonetheless impossible to measure.

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## ECUADOR

*The FBI in Latin America: The Ecuador Files.* By Marc Becker. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017. Pp. 336. \$94.95 cloth; \$26.95 paper.  
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This book investigates US intelligence-gathering and Ecuadorian politics in the 1940s, during which time the FBI was in charge of US surveillance in Latin America. Becker is not interested in the history of US-Ecuadorian relations per se, but in using FBI surveillance files to help fill gaps in historical knowledge about the Ecuadorian left. He also uses his deep knowledge of Ecuadorian history to assess the accuracy of US claims about Ecuadorian politics. The resulting book is a model for the innovative use of primary sources to explore multiple perspectives in history.

Becker deftly balances background information with detail and analysis, making the work useful and readable for scholars from many different fields. The book opens with an overview of the FBI's Special Intelligence Service (SIS) and its mission to collect economic and political information in Ecuador. Although officially the foremost concern for the SIS was to report on fascist sympathizers, in practice agents focused their attention on communists rather than fascists. Becker argues that FBI officials in Ecuador were in fact less concerned with ideology and politics than they were with defending US economic interests.

The years that the FBI was in Ecuador (1940–47) were turbulent ones in Ecuadorian politics. Responding to President Carlos Arroyo del Río's increasingly dictatorial tendencies, leftists and liberals banded together to oust him from power in May 1944 in the "Glorious Revolution" (*La Gloriosa*). Becker describes the coup and subsequent constitution of 1945 as a moment with the potential for true social revolution. However, the movement lacked the ideological coherence necessary to achieve lasting change. Instead, it brought to power the conservative populist José María Velasco Ibarra, who eventually betrayed the ideals of *La Gloriosa* and purged his government of liberal and radical members. Becker pays particular attention to the role that the Ecuadorian Communist Party played in 1940s politics; he views the party as the main advocate for equality. He contends that although communists had wide popular

support, they could not effect change due to internal divisions, combined with the fact that most of their supporters were disenfranchised by literacy requirements.

Becker shows that US officials' responses to the Ecuadorian left varied. Although the FBI concentrated on a perceived communist threat throughout the period, members of the State Department viewed the left as a potentially moderating influence in Ecuadorian politics in the early 1940s. They became more worried about Ecuadorian communism only as the Cold War took shape. Throughout most of the period, both State Department and FBI officials called for progressive reforms rather than the elimination of communism. Becker sees this tactic as a template for similar policies in the post Cold War era.

Becker's book relates an astonishing amount of information about both Ecuadorian history and US diplomatic priorities in the 1940s. His expertise in Ecuadorian political history allows him to underscore how FBI agents often misinterpreted events and problems in Ecuador because they did not understand how global issues played out in the country. He also, rightly, notes that race, class, and gender were particular blind spots for US officials in Ecuador. Becker fills in these gaps to some extent, describing women's roles and influence in the momentous events of the 1940s and referencing the actions of workers in the countryside. Readers will not, however, find in-depth analysis of race or gender in this book, although Becker closely analyzes indigenous activism in many of his other works. Instead, the author concentrates on political analysis that highlights the importance of the left in events of the 1940s.

Becker's own politics are apparent, particularly in his closing critique of US policy in Latin America, which lacks the depth and precision of the rest of the book. These minor points, however, do not detract from what is overall a compelling and innovative work. This book is essential reading for scholars interested in twentieth-century Ecuadorian history, the history of the Latin American left, or the history of US surveillance in Latin America.

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## ARGENTINA

*The Right to the City: Popular Contention in Contemporary Buenos Aires.* By Gabriela Ippolito-O'Donnell. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2011. Pp. 320. \$38.00 paper.  
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The rich array of studies on social movements and democratization in Latin America notwithstanding, the relationship between the collective action of marginalized people