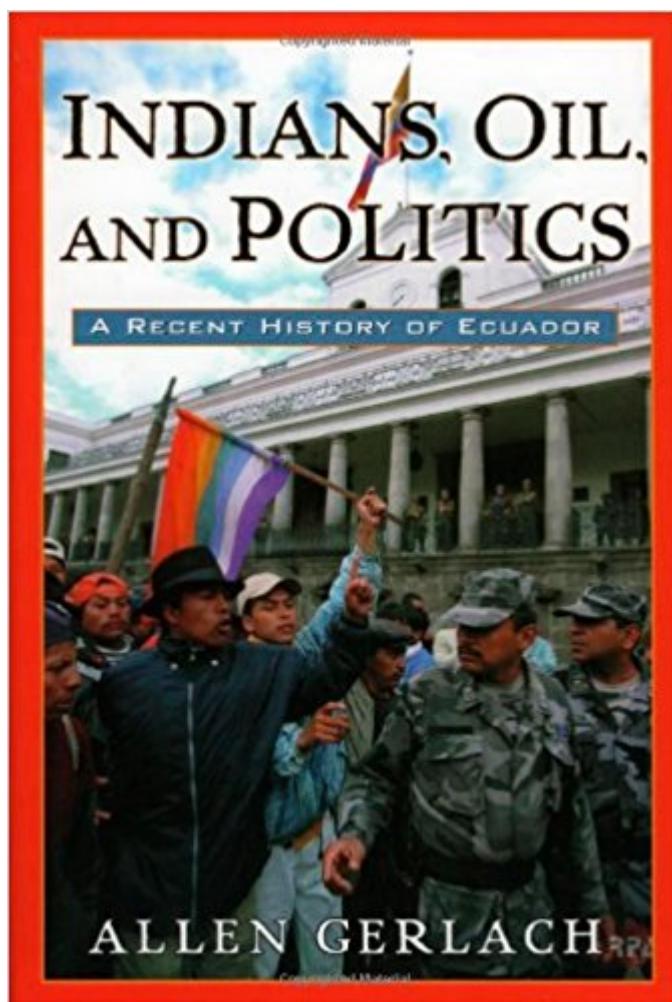


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Indians, Oil, And Politics: A Recent History Of Ecuador (Latin American Silhouettes)



Synopsis

"It is indispensable that Ecuador has peace, but to have peace you need freedom and to have freedom you need justice. And the Indian population needs justice."-President Gustavo Noboa, January 23, 2000 For five centuries, the Indians had very little voice in Ecuador. Now they are major protagonists who seek more acceptable terms in which to coexist in a society with two vastly different world views and cultures-that of Indians and that of the descendants of Europeans. Their recent political uprising has become the most powerful and influential indigenous movement in Latin America. They have inspired other Indian movements throughout the continent. Author Allen Gerlach details the origins and evolution of the Indian rebellion, focusing on the key period of the last thirty years. In the process, he also presents a concise political history of Ecuador. Gerlach infuses his text with an abundant supply of quotations from participants in the rise in ethnic politics, bringing Ecuador's history and the Indians' opposition to the country's government to life. In addition, Indians, Oil, and Politics serves as a case study on what happens to a nation when its economy is based solely on one commodity-in this instance, oil. The discovery of oil in the 1960s was a major factor in Ecuador's modernization and also sparked the Indians' fight for their rights. Oil wealth wreaked havoc on the environment and cultures of the native people of the , and it did not end old traditions of political fragmentation and corruption. Gerlach explains that the Indians fought back by forming federations to advance their interests and by joining forces with similar structures molded in the highlands of Ecuador. Together they created the country's first truly national indigenous organization in 1986-CONAIE (The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador)-and by 2000 their movement was a major force to be reckoned with, one which increasingly influenced state policy. This book shows how the Indians have

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Customer Reviews

This is the best book on Ecuador today. It provides necessary background information to comprehend the political, economic, and social situation in the country. The author correctly identifies the politics of oil and the growing indigenous movement as the most important factors in Ecuador's recent history. His detailed breakdown of recent events is exemplary and gives the facts required to understand one of the most important but least-studied countries in Latin America. This kind of book has long been needed; Gerlach's insights into the complex politics of Ecuador are extremely valuable for those interested in contemporary Ecuador and Latin America in general. (Erick Langer) Indians, Oil, and Politics stands as the best overall analysis of recent Ecuadorian history in any language. Latin America's contemporary indigenous rights movement began in the jungles of Ecuador, not Chiapas, Mexico. Allen Gerlach has produced a truly masterful account of that movement, together with a brilliant case study of corporate greed and its devastating impact on indigenous peoples. (Thomas M. Davies, Jr.) This book provides a detailed discussion of Ecuadorian politics at the end of the twentieth century, focusing on a four-year period in which there were six national presidents. It will be useful for anyone trying to sort through the rapidly shifting political alliances and breaches during this complex period of economic and political crisis. (Kim Clark) Provides a general overview of major themes in Ecuador's political history. (Latin American Research Review) Belongs in all college and university libraries with significant holdings in Latin American studies. Highly recommended. (Choice)

Allen Gerlach has written primarily on Latin America for newspapers, magazines, and academic journals. He is currently an attorney.

This book has lots of information and a lack of jargon but I do agree that an editor could have helped make the text flow better. Once the author starts talking about indigenous movements he tends to move around in time and repeat points in ways which make it hard to keep a clear thread. The chapters on recent presidencies also could use more structure. Still, worth reading if you want to get a quick picture of Ecuadorian politics till about 2001.

Gerlach's discussion of the Indian uprising of 2000 is excellent, although at times his book suffers from too much detail and too little abstraction. If you are in search of a history of Ecuador, specifically the rise of the indigenous movement, then this is your book.

A superb review of contemporary Ecuadorian politics and their historical roots. It's very engaging and many chapters read like a political thriller.

I have recently moved to Ecuador and thought this book might give me a better understanding of what is going on here. There is plenty of information in this book--but it is completely garbled! I have read many political science books, and this is the most disorganized, badly written, unedited one I have ever tried to get through. There are outright mistakes, frequent repetitions, poor translations, and no clear storyline, chronological or otherwise. Could someone please write a better book about Ecuadorean politics? It should be a fascinating subject.

I'm going to Ecuador soon and I feel like this book has given me a great introduction to social issues and politics in the country. With the information I have gained I have been able to follow the most recent developments in the current Gutierrez administration, and I can put these events in a historical perspective. Gerlach, for me, has made sense of the senseless. The book has also helped me to form a lot of questions for which I hope to get answers on my upcoming trip.

If you want to understand the current economic climate in Ecuador, this book will lend you a helping hand as to the pre-cursor that has led to Correa's regime.

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