

of Francisco Morales-Bermúdez, the new president, at the end of the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers Conference in Lima, a conference that “Velasco had inaugurated days prior” (267).

This well-written book is useful to anyone wanting to learn more about Velasco and Peruvian society as a whole during these years. It will not satisfy those looking for archival notes or engagements with comparative theories of populism, but that is not the aim of the book. (There is a bibliographic essay at the end of the book, 14 pages of scholarship published in Spanish.) It is a book that will fit well in the hands of a history professor or a casual reader, and Rojas Rojas should be applauded for this slim volume with plenty of narrative and analytical power.

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## POLITICAL PROJECTS IN MODERN PERU

*La nación radical: de la utopía indigenista a la tragedia senderista.* By José Luis Rénique.  
 Lima: La Siniestra Ensayos, 2022. Pp. 498. \$22.50 paper.  
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Is Peru a country especially prone to producing radical political visions? Are such visions mere inventions of nonconformist intellectuals, or expression of widespread popular sentiment? What has been the trajectory of political projects that aimed to convert these “utopic emotions” into revolution? (15). These are questions that José Luis Rénique raises and returns to throughout his latest book, *La nación radical*. In the context of Peru’s current political crisis, as protesters demand democratic accountability and an authoritarian regime seems intent on shutting down avenues for political expression, this book is essential reading.

Across six sections that combine unpublished texts with others that have been substantially revised for this volume, Rénique analyzes different aspects of Peru’s radical tradition, from Juan Bustamante’s indigenous rebellion of 1867 through the *indigenista* projects of the early and mid twentieth century, the emergence of the New Left in the 1960s, and the ideological struggles and violent consequences of the Internal Armed Conflict (1980–2000). While the actors examined all fall loosely within the span of left-wing politics (there is no exploration of fascist or right-wing movements), the author shows how the parameters and strategies of radical politics have shifted over time and in response to different historical junctures. The book is particularly successful at blending biography with intellectual history, revealing, for example, how indigenista Enrique López Albújar’s experiences as a provincial judge in Huánuco (central highlands) shaped his literary work, and how Luis de la Puente Uceda’s revolutionary strategy took shape

following his trips to Castro's Cuba. There are also important reflections on the personal costs of a commitment to radicalism.

The only comparative analysis of Peruvian and non-Peruvian intellectuals comes in Chapter 2, which compares the trajectory and writings of the Chilean Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna and the Peruvian Manuel González Prada. As such, the book does not directly address the question of whether Peru is especially given to producing radical intellectuals. What it shows quite clearly, however, is that Peru's intellectual history is underpinned by a racially framed breach between rural and urban society, or more specifically, between Lima and the highlands.

The desire to overcome this breach and build a harmonious nation motivated figures from Manuel González Prada to Maruja Martínez to enter the political fray. But it also led to the reproduction and reformulation of misplaced assumptions about the racial "other." Thus, the tendency among indigenista intellectuals to reduce the complex realities of rural conflict to a confrontation between modernity and tradition found its echo in the idealistic vision of the MIR guerrillas, the violent "new peasant vanguard" envisioned by Sendero Luminoso, and the exasperated comments of a young Ricardo Letts Colmenares: "How strange that I should have to wage revolution for my people! What a tragedy! It is the product of the damage produced by 140 years of betrayal and four centuries of viceregal oppression." (464). The repetition of this discourse, Rénique argues, stems from both a failure to take account of the constant change and reinvention that has characterized Peru's rural communities, and the pragmatic desire to forge a myth to mobilize support within (or against) an entrenched and deeply unequal political system.

Spanning work from the late 1970s until the present, the book is a fascinating window on the evolution of Rénique's research trajectory and authorial voice, from the detailed archival studies of his early career to the vivid first-person accounts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings that followed the Internal Armed Conflict. At some 498 pages, this is a long text that merits close reading and careful reflection. It is disappointing that no index is included, since I am sure that this is a text I will return to repeatedly for different reasons. Beyond that quibble, this is a rich and stimulating book that will attract both specialist readers of Peruvian history and those interested in the intellectual history of political radicalism in the Americas.

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