

*Ecuador: Conflicting Political Culture and the Quest for Progress.* By JOHN D. MARTZ. Boston, 1972. Allyn and Bacon. Map. Tables. Graphs. Figures. Bibliography. Index. Pp. viii, 216. Paper. \$3.50.

The publication of George Blanksten's *Ecuador: Constitutions and Caudillos* in 1951 was the first successful attempt by a North American scholar to describe the Ecuadorean political system. Until 1972, this work stood alone as the most comprehensive analysis of Ecuadorean politics written by a non-Ecuadorean. John Martz's recent endeavor to document and interpret the course of political events in Ecuador since that time is thus a welcome addition to a small body of quality literature on the politics of Ecuador. Martz has been able to cut through the Byzantine maze of politics in that Andean nation and extract the salient and scholarly information. He writes in an interesting style and has been able to assemble the material in a readable and well-organized fashion. And this is not an easy task as anyone familiar with Ecuador can testify. The political turbulence reflected in coup and counter-coup, the drafting of 16 separate constitutions, the wide variety of personalities and political factions, and the ceaseless shifts in the composition of coalitions make Ecuadorean politics read like a Russian novel.

Martz leads the reader through this political labyrinth thoughtfully and with skill. He discusses the historic and contemporary importance of regionalism, the indelible imprint that centuries of subjugation of the indigenous masses have left on the character of Ecuador and its social, economic, and political institutions. He also examines the changes that are beginning to take place and the conflicts they have wrought. And he devotes a lengthy analysis to the dominance of contemporary Ecuadorean political life by the perennial demagogue, Velasco Ibarra, and strives to define the clashes that stem from a traditional polity trying to deal with modern issues. Yet despite this comprehensive and often illuminating account of "conflicting political culture and the quest for progress," Martz leaves the reader dangling, unsure what the author's conclusions are, if any. This failure to draw together into a comprehensive set of statements his final judgments leaves the work unfinished. His dismally small bibliography is also a disappointment. He lists only 18 references—just those in English. For some unexplained reason, he unfortunately excluded sources written in Spanish and referred the reader to the footnotes instead. This is especially disconcerting as several significant studies which have been published in Spanish only are distinctly superior to most of the publications listed. This is especially true of Hurtado's *Dos mundos superpuestos* and Alfredo and Piedad Costales' *Historia social de Ecuador*, among others.

Despite these criticisms, *Ecuador: Conflicting Political Culture and the Quest for Progress* will serve to fill a long standing lacuna in the literature. It is an especially useful and informative primer for those whose knowledge of Ecuador is minimal and for those who wish to refresh their memories with updated material.

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*A Naturalist in Costa Rica.* By ALEXANDER F. SKUTCH. Gainesville, Florida, 1971. University of Florida Press. Illustrations. Figures. Appendices. Index. Pp. x, 378. Cloth. \$12.50.

Scientists from temperate zones, attracted by the magnificent profusion of plant and animal life in the tropics, have long been especially interested in Costa Rica. Located near the junction of the two Americas, Costa Rica has received a multitude of floral and faunal contributions from each. This fact, plus the diversification into distinct races and species caused by the varied terrain, makes the country truly a paradise for naturalists. Few foreign naturalists who have studied Costa Rica, however, can match the continuing dedication of Alexander F. Skutch, who has been making detailed observations of nature in Costa Rica since the 1930s.

Skutch received his doctorate in botany from Johns Hopkins University in 1928 and went immediately to Panama, where his interests began to shift from plants to bird life. Having made additional field trips in Central America, Skutch decided to settle in southern Costa Rica for the specific purpose of studying bird life. At first he supported himself by making botanical collections for foreign museums, but in 1941 he purchased a small farm in the Valley of El General, which at the time was a frontier zone just being opened to extensive settlement, and used it as a base for scientific observations. The availability of scarcely explored forests and woodlands and the paucity of scientific information about the area were the chief attractions. Although he made extensive scientific trips to other parts of Costa Rica—he lived, for example, for a year on the slopes of Volcano Poás for the purpose of observing the habits of the Costa Rican quetzal—and occasionally to other countries in Central and South America, Skutch's observations deal principally with El General. As readers of Skutch's extensive bibliography (the appendix lists over 200 items published by Skutch from 1927 to 1971) already know, his principal scientific contributions are in the fields of nidification and life cycles of Central American birds. These interests are of course reflected in the work but not to the exclu-