

PERUVIAN LAND REFORM

Los años de Velasco (1968–1975). By Rolando Rojas Rojas. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2022. Historias Mínimas Republicanas Series. Pp. 292. \$10.15 paper. doi:10.1017/tam.2023.50

Rolando Rojas Rojas's *Los años de Velasco* is a lucid and smart synthetic history of the Juan Velasco Alvarado regime. Published in the Historias Mínimas Republicanas series through the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, the book is a combination of a broad overview of the era and specific histories that fit within the larger narrative.

According to Rojas Rojas, one of the central tensions of the Velasco years is that between the authoritarian reform of Velasco and the multiple ways social movements decided to interact with the regime. Considering the real reforms taking place with Velasco at the helm, would social movements that had been pushing for some of those very reforms take up the call to join some of the new organizations and institutions created to push for change? Or would they continue their previous political analyses and place the Velasco government in opposition to their movements, as Hugo Blanco did? This question turns into a question of the vision of politics as a whole. Following the work of Julio Cotler, Rojas Rojas closes the book by referring to the corporatist nature of the regime, despite its call for “democracia de participación plena,” and labeling it a “proceso de democratización social por la vía autoritaria” (273–74).

The book is divided into 13 chapters, plus a preface, introduction, and epilogue. Rather than sticking strictly to chronology, Rojas Rojas has written a thematic history with opening and closing chapters acting as bookends to the era. The reader will find some of the familiar aspects and programs of the Velasco era—such as the nationalization of oil and agrarian reform—alongside chapters on teachers, social movements, the press, international relations, cultural nationalism, and political parties, among others. While all the chapters are well done, the chapter on the history of oil and conflict in Peru is particularly worthwhile. Each chapter also contains shorter self-contained sections highlighting related topics—these range from university student radicalism to feminism. Rojas Rojas is careful to place the Velasco years within the context of Peruvian and global history. Thus, the military coup that brought Velasco to power is connected to widespread desires among Peruvians for progressive reforms and gridlocked governments unable to produce those reforms. That around 500,000 people attended Velasco's burial shows some of the popularity of those reforms (270).

Rojas Rojas's discussion of international relations, too, is particularly well done. In Chapter 8, the reader passes through a discussion of economist Raúl Prebisch, theories of international trade, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, and how all of these relate to conversations on compensation for oil company nationalization, and Velasco's relationship with the Non-Aligned Movement. The Non-Aligned Movement returns five chapters later with the overthrow of Velasco by the military and the speech

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