

JIMENO, MYRIAM. *Juan Gregorio Palechor: the story of my life*. xvi, 230 pp., illus., bibliogr. Durham, N.e.: Duke Univ. Press, 2014. El 5.99 (paper)

This book is an important contribution to scholarship on indigenous activists, the context of their activism, and their intellectual role in the Andes, especially in Colombia, which has not seen such a major work on these topics since the publication of Joanne Rappaport's *The politics of memory* (1998). Jimeno, a professor of anthropology at the National University of Colombia, focuses on the case of Juan Gregorio Palechor, a crucial figure for indigenous social movements in twentieth-century Colombia. This volume continues to discuss and develop the anthropological approach to indigenous intellectuals initiated by Rappaport. The author enriches this scholarship by exploring the relationship between the state, indigenous peoples, political struggle, and indigenous organizations through Palechor's life-history (1923-92). The book's relevance is dual: it expands and updates our knowledge of indigenous activists in Colombia, and it reveals some of the processes of continuity and change in the production of indigenous social movements in the context of Colombia, the Andes, and the Americas.

The book has three main sections. The first is an important discussion of the trajectory of autobiographical narrative as a means of learning about indigenous peoples. This is a very useful section for specialists interested in the making of autobiographies, life-stories, and biographies. The author emphasizes that studying the production and circulation of autobiographies is especially useful for understanding subaltern groups' views in the context of the Americas. Jimeno's discussion in this section shows the way in which anthropological methodologies enrich a field traditionally in the hands of historians.

The second section is a conceptual review of ethnic struggle in the social and historical context of Cauca and its relations with Colombia's especially violent process of nation-making. The author analyses the problematic relation between the nation, indigenous communities, and the region of Cauca, which is the home of Colombia's main indigenous groups such as the Nasa and Paez. She pays a lot of attention to the creation of the CRIC (Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca), in which Palechor played a major role. Jimeno also underlines that the struggle for indigenous people's rights in the *resguardos*, the local indigenous territory in Colombian terminology, was one of the most important issues in Palechor's agenda. It is interesting that the author particularly emphasizes the fact that Palechor was a local supporter of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a great populist of Colombia in the 1940s, and was also an admirer of Father Camilo Torres Restrepo, a precursor of liberation theologians. With these connections, the author shows the ways in which indigenous politics are linked with national political events in Colombia and the Andean region.

The last section is Palechor's autobiography, which includes the collective experience of his people, their way of life, traditions, and struggle. In this section the author presents a set of long interviews from different moments of time in which Palechor relates his life-history. Palechor, interestingly enough, connects his life to the main political events that have shaped Colombia, such as his association with the Revolutionary Liberal Movement (MRL) and the National Association of Peasants (ANUC). Later he explains his frustration with political parties and the Colombian state as the main reason he helped to create the CRIC: to channel his goals of autonomy and territory for indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, the construction of this auto-ethnography obscures the complexities of Palechor's ideology. Perhaps this silence stems from Colombia's political violence or the very process of forming this autobiography. The author presents this section mostly as 'story narrative' rather than life-history. Yet she does not grapple with the differences between history and storytelling or narrative; such a discussion would have made an important contribution to the conceptual goals of this book.

This well-written work not only provides an approachable view of indigenous intellectuals in the Andes and in the Americas but also shows the trajectory and nature of indigenous organizations. However, readers accustomed to narratives that blend theory and history may resist the structure of this book, which was originally written in

Spanish. Its separation of theory and history reflects a strong tradition among certain Latin American academics and offers non-Latin American scholars an opportunity to familiarize themselves with other academic traditions. Despite these specific problems, this book represents an excellent resource for those interested in Andean and American indigenous experiences. For this reason, it will be an excellent addition to graduate and undergraduate courses in Latin American and Native American studies.

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