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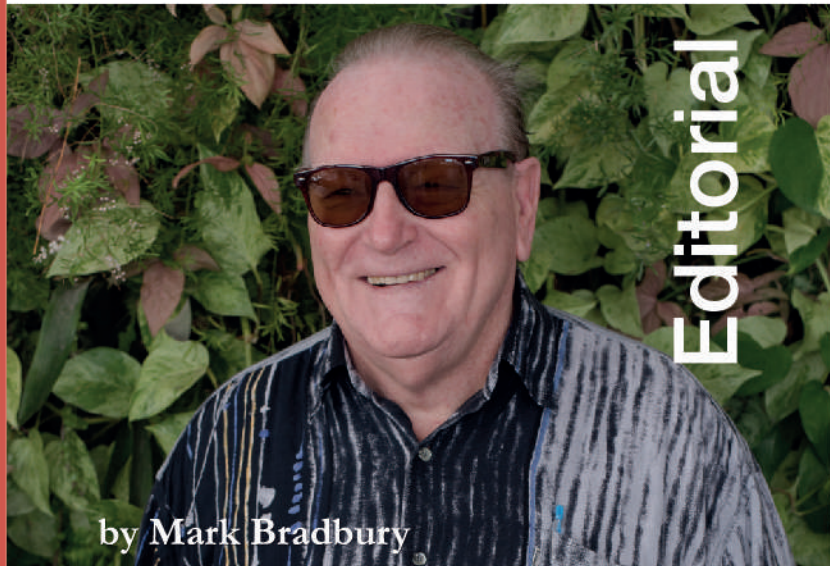
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Made in Ecuador



by Mark Bradbury

Patriotism in Ecuador

I was asked to do an article on Ecuadorian patriotism for the August issue of Hi Expat Magazine and even though I wasn't sure what I was going to write about, I accepted the assignment. I have been wondering what I was going to say ever since!

I have been living here on the Coast for almost seven years, and one thing I have definitely seen is that Ecuadorians are fiercely proud of their national heroes and athletes. Even though there are so many political factions, so many different classes of people, and so many other things that make the country diverse, there is one thing that they all have in common; a love for Ecuador.

That love for their country is displayed throughout the land whenever there is a futbol game of national importance. When Team Ecuador dons

the tricolor jersey, Ecuadorians come out by the thousands to jam every restaurant, bar, civic hall, or anywhere else that might be broadcasting the game. They are one for all and all for one in Ecuador! It is very impressive!

Our recent Olympic heroes get the same amount of attention. Bicyclists, weightlifters, wrestlers, race walkers, whatever; the people cheer them on. Prominent singers and performers draw a lot of support from the people as well. There is an outpouring of support for anyone or anything that represents Ecuador. But why?

Ecuador has been called the “Land of the Four Worlds.” It is made up of the Sierras, where most of the early Spanish colonization took place, the Coast, where I choose to live, the Amazon Basin, a world of its own, and Darwin’s favorite melting pot, the Galapagos Archipelago. Together, these regions unite to create one of the world’s most diverse countries. The irony is that Ecuador is a small country in size, but gigantic in its diversity.

Just like in nature, the people of Ecuador are as different as their natural surroundings. There are millions of people who have descended from early indigenous tribes scattered throughout the country. There are millions more who bear the bloodlines of the Spanish conquistadors and colonial settlers. And there are those who have descended from early African slaves, all who became part of our culture. Throw in some European and Asian colonists who also have carved their niche and you’ve got a tremendously eclectic population that form the 18-million-member group we call Ecuadorians.

And “National Pride” is seeded in each and every one of them! But where does this all start? I think it starts right in the cities, towns, pueblos, villages, and everywhere else they come together to live. I have seen local people get excited supporting the place they live, and their pride is evident. I remember living in Olon and every local person I met was so proud of their small town on the beach.

In Manta, there are so many ciudadelas, or small cities, within the larger canton, and every one of them is a source of pride for the people living there. They support everything that their neighborhoods are doing and show a lot of energy in doing so.

The cities and towns go to the next level and get behind the province they call home. Here in Manabi Province, the people embrace the idea of being Manabitas, and espouse their identity through food and drink. This province is known throughout the country as having some of the best food anywhere in Ecuador.

But when the bell rings, everyone is an Ecuadorian first!

When the Spanish Conquistadors came to Ecuador, the Inca came to Ecuador, the Inca Empire was established here. They eventually defeated the Incas and any other tribe that stood up against them, settling everywhere while taking

whatever they wanted. Gold and silver left here on its way to Spain regularly.

Quito, the northern capital of the Inca Empire, was taken over by the Spanish, who built a new city over the remains of the old Incan settlement. Guayaquil developed into the hub for the ships leaving for Spain. These two large cities would eventually be home to some revolutionary ideas that would set Ecuador free from the yoke of Spanish dominance.

On the evening of August 9th, 1809, a group of local leaders met and formed a junta to replace the colonial government installed by the Spanish King. They went to the palace the next day and told the loyalist regime that they were no longer needed, and that they were being replaced by a local government. It would get ugly for all of them a few months later, and eventually most of them were killed by Spanish soldiers with

bayonets while being held in the Royal prison.

This day, August 10th, 1809, is known as the “First Cry for Independence,” and even though it was not completely successful, it became the start of what would become a free Ecuador in 1822. This holiday is celebrated all over the country as the beginning of the war against Spain, and Ecuador’s people are extremely proud that their home was one of the earliest countries to declare their independence from the King of Spain.

That is why I think that the Ecuadorian people I have met here over the years love their country so much. They stood up to one of the superpowers in the world at the time, and eventually won their independence.

A small country and a small population, with huge pride in their home!

Raise the Tricolor! Viva Ecuador!









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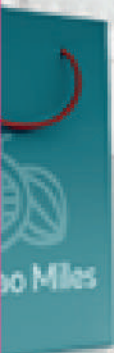
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by Rolanda Stinson-Smiley



The Zulu Experience

Have you heard of a restobar? Well it's exactly what it sounds like - a restaurant and a bar in one. Believe it or not, Manta had a pretty large restobar scene before the pandemic. I arrived here during the downturn of the pandemic and never really had a chance to experience Manta in all its glory. I heard that Manta had a very lively nightlife before the pandemic. As of 2022, the city is reopening and with that comes back the nightlife scene. Many of the clubs, bars, and live music venues are reopening and rebranding. I had the pleasure of visiting one such location this past month, Zulu.

Zulu is a newly opened restobar as of April 2022. It is located in Plaza Del Sol on Calle 32. It's down the road from the Wyndham Sail Plaza and is on the second floor of Plaza Del Sol. Going up to the 2nd floor the first thing you notice in front of the bar is a doorman, impeccably dressed, in a full black suit. You must make reservations and that gentleman is there to check the list.

Once inside Zulu, you are escorted to a woman behind a window who takes your cedula in exchange for your drink card. It is very common in Manta to exchange your cedula for a drink card at clubs and restobars. This way the establishment ensures that drink bills are paid by tipsy customers at the end of the night. Once you get inside Zulu, the decor transports you to another

place. It is so beautiful and artfully done. The interior has a modern African tribal theme with plenty of greenery, murals, and mirrors. There are two levels inside, with the bottom level being more of the restaurant and the top level more for standing and socializing. There is a stage in the front for performers and a sitting area with sofas and cocktail tables tucked in a glass lounge room just to the side of the stage. It looks like a posh VIP section. The bar stretches across the room and is fully equipped with top shelf liquor. There are multiple TV's throughout the restaurant advertising Zulu's signature drinks and entrees.

Speaking of signature drinks, Zulu heavily advertises its signature drink menu and specialty cocktails. Their signature drinks keep with the tribal theme of the restaurant in name and in appearance. The elaborate looking Gatsha and Zulu signature drinks were highlighted on the TVs in front of me, so I decided to try them.

The presentation of both drinks was none like I have ever seen before. Two of the wait staff came to the table, each holding a drink. The Gatsha was actually presented in a wooden box. They opened the box, removed the drink, and placed it on the table in front of me and then set the top ablaze. The Gatsha drink contained vodka, hierba luisa, lime, and coconut juice, and was very delicious. The Zulu drink came out in a glass container that when lifted produced clouds of

smoke. The actual drink was served in a brightly colored parrot glass. The Zulu drink contained rum, tropical fruit, and simple syrup. Both drinks were delicious, very large, and came with grand presentations. Along with the drinks came a very nice little complimentary appetizer of camote (purple sweet potato) chips and a sauce.

I asked the waitress for a recommendation of what dish to order and she suggested the Tabla Mar y Tierra, which is a surf and turf platter. It came with slices of very well-seasoned steak, jumbo fried calamari strips, fried planks of chicken, grilled shrimp, and fries. If you are looking for something light on the waist, this is not the dish for you.

But if you are looking for something to help absorb all the amazing drinks, the Tabla Mar y Tierra is what you need. The waitress mentioned that it was a perfect dish for sharing and I would have to agree. It was a very sizable portion and two people could not finish it all. I also tried the Ceviche Tempura de Calamar which is definitely not a ceviche by normal standards. Zulu's ceviche tempura was a dish of several large, fried calamari rings stacked in a bowl with chopped onions and tomatoes on top. It is served with a special house

acevichado sauce. When the dish comes to the table you immediately think you're just getting served a plate of fried tempura, however, the server pours the sauce tableside and once again Zulu is giving you a show. The tempura fried calamari was so flavorful and the house sauce just took it over the top.

Zulu is open Tuesday through Sunday from 6pm to 2am. If you want a more relaxed restaurant dinner, arrive early and enjoy the food, drinks, and upbeat

music playing from the speakers. If you're looking for the bar

scene, it's best to go much later. The live music or DJ (depending on the night) starts around 11:30pm. At this time,

Zulu, the restobar turns into a full on club. The restaurant tables are

moved to make space

for dancing and the music is cranked all the way up. The party starts and the signature drinks are flowing.

Zulu offers something different in Manta with a little extra on top. So if you are looking for an artsy restaurant, fully stocked bar, and a party, Zulu is definitely the place to go. Zulu is a place that boasts "your vibe attracts your tribe," and the vibes they are bringing are a win for Manta.











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by Marcos Chiluiza

Becoming Ecuadorian, All You Need to Know!

August is an important month for Ecuadorians. The First Cry of Independence is celebrated on August 10th every year and is a day that signifies freedom for many Ecuadorians. Ecuadorians carry a lot of pride in their nationality and every year more and more foreigners want to become Ecuadorians.

When you have a permanent residency visa, you are granted about 90% of the rights of an Ecuadorian citizen. The only thing that is not included is the ability to hold an Ecuadorian passport, the right to vote, and the right to be elected in local elections.

In any case, the naturalization process has undergone some changes since February 18, 2022. Here we have included a summary of these changes:

The following persons qualify to apply for Ecuadorian citizenship by naturalization:

- 1.- Foreign persons with a permanent residence visa who have domiciled in Ecuador on a regular basis for at least three years, as of the date of entry on the application
- 2.- Persons recognized by the Ecuadorian State as refugees and stateless persons who have remained in the country for at least two years

The process and requirements to apply for naturalization in Ecuador for the above mentioned persons are:

- 1.- Regular and continuous residence in the country with a permanent residence visa. This means that during the first 3 years of permanent residence the holder should not be outside of Ecuador for more than 90 days total

- 2.- Apostille birth certificate
- 3.- Have general knowledge of history, geography, culture and current news in Ecuador
- 4.- Speak and write in Spanish
- 5.- Possess legal income in Ecuador
- 6.- Be up to date in their obligations with the Ecuadorian State, Internal Revenue Service, IESS and Municipality
- 7.- Explain in an interview the reasons why one wishes to acquire Ecuadorian nationality. This requirement is very important because the person must be prepared with a speech about the significance of being Ecuadorian.

Those who are over 65 years of age at the time of applying for naturalization do not have to demonstrate general knowledge of history, geography, culture and current news in Ecuador, but they must speak and write in Spanish.

NOTE: It is important to remember that the letter of naturalization can only be requested within Ecuadorian territory.

Naturalization by marriage or common-law marriage (civil union)

Foreigners who meet any of the following conditions may apply for naturalization by marriage or common-law marriage:

- 1.- Those who have an officiated marriage in Ecuador, with an Ecuadorian person, may apply for naturalization 2 years from the date of its officiation and when a domicile has been established in the country
- 2.- Those who have officiated a marriage with an Ecuadorian person abroad may apply for naturalization 2 years from the date of registration with the General Directorate of Civil Registry of Ecuador and provided that a domicile, at the date of filing the application, is established in the country
- 3.- Those who are in a de facto union with an Ecuadorian person can apply for naturalization 2 years after the date of officiation is registered with the General Directorate of Civil Registry of

Ecuador and provided that their domicile is established in the country.

NOTE: The administrative procedure of authorization and issuance of the letter of naturalization in these 3 above-mentioned cases may not exceed ninety days from the date of filing the application.

But, in practice, the naturalization process usually takes between 18 and 24 months:

- 1.- Provide proof of temporary or permanent residence at the time of filing the application and keep it valid during the naturalization process
- 2.- Provide a birth certificate with complete data including the names of the applicant's parents
- 3.- Possess a marriage certificate or de facto union duly registered by the General Directorate of Civil Registry and Identification and Registration of Ecuador
- 4.- Explain in an interview the reasons for which one wishes to acquire Ecuadorian nationality
- 5.- Stay up to date in obligations to the Ecuadorian State

Naturalization of children or adolescents born abroad to a naturalized Ecuadorian mother or father:

Children and adolescents born abroad will receive Ecuadorian naturalization once their mother or father have been declared Ecuadorian by naturalization. They must be registered by the Ecuadorian father or mother in the General Directorate of Civil Registry, or in diplomatic missions or consular offices, and will retain Ecuadorian nationality as long as they do not express their will to the contrary.

Naturalization of foreign persons for having rendered relevant services to the country:

A foreign person who has remained in Ecuadorian territory for more than 3 years and has rendered relevant services to the country may acquire nationality by naturalization. The granting of nationality for relevant services to the country is granted by the President of the Republic.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The granting of the letter of naturalization is a sovereign and discretionary act of the Executive Party. This means that if for any reason the authority decides that the person should not obtain Ecuadorian nationality, it can refuse the request.

The most common causes for denial of Ecuadorian citizenship by naturalization are:

- 1.- Failure to comply with the requirements set forth in this Law
- 2.- Having received an enforceable conviction for any of the crimes listed in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; for any crime under Ecuadorian law whose penalty of imprisonment exceeds five years; as well as for the crime of illicit trafficking of controlled substances
- 3.- Being considered a threat or risk to internal security according to the information available to the Ecuadorian State

Renunciation of Ecuadorian nationality:

Persons who have acquired Ecuadorian nationality by naturalization and those who have acquired nationality by adoption or by naturalization of their parents, once they have reached the age of eighteen, may renounce their Ecuadorian nationality.

The naturalization process is a process that should not be taken lightly. We highly recommend that at the time of obtaining a permanent residence visa you know whether or not your plans are to apply for Ecuadorian citizenship. This is because many documents must be prepared in advance, especially regarding the documentation of proof of income in Ecuador.



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by Manuel Avilés



by Manuel Avilés

by Carlos Ramírez

The History of the Insurance Industry

The history of insurance goes back to the first civilizations in history. Man understood that hunting, gathering, and making tools would be more effective efforts if they were done in groups. Noticing that the system worked well, they continued to collaborate in groups that consisted of a wife, children, and head of household. This ancient Babylonian tradition was also replicated in other areas of the Roman and Greek civilizations between 3000 BC and 4000 BC. These agreements were commonly used between these civilizations for many years.

During this time, civilian men lent large amounts of money for the trade of important objects, often by sea. Unfortunately, it was common for the men to be robbed at sea by pirates and the merchandise lost. When this happened, the group of maritime merchants equally divided the losses. These contracts became so popular that they became part of the Hammurabi Code. Based on neighborhood solidarity, these contracts ranged from the replacement of an entire ship to the replacement of a bird. In these agreements the wife and children, who were left without the protection of the father, were also covered.

Maritime insurance was one of the first to be established, but soon after, in the 9th century, the Guilds appeared. Guilds were institutionally incorporated groups of craftsmen who

followed common rules among themselves in the case of production losses. In France and Germany professional institutions were also founded. A group of professionals would take the risk for a collective in the case of losses, and would be the one to finance them. This was a game of chance that some were willing to play.

In 1337 maritime insurance was used for the first time. Insuring the Santa Clara ship that made voyages between Genoa and Majorca, this contract established the use of the term "policy." In 1435 the Ordinance of Maritime Insurance was enacted in Barcelona, the oldest known regulation to date.

In modern times, it was Charles I who introduced the maritime insurance system as regulation. This change would give way to the institutionalization of insurance companies with multi-personal entities and corporations. But, on September 2, 1666 insurance would forever change its course with the great fire of London, which devastated 12,300 houses and 87 churches, in addition to businesses and uncountable human losses. From this, Dr. Nicholas Barbón would be the precursor and founder of Fire Office, the first fire insurance company which was born when he abandoned

his profession as a doctor to rebuild the houses and churches lost during the catastrophe. In England, another insurance enthusiast, Edward Lloyd, known worldwide and established to this day as one of the oldest insurers in the history of insurance, was also establishing himself. Lloyd's coffee house was the meeting point for maritime merchants and money-lenders in the area. In 1698, its founder managed to obtain permission to establish "Lloyd's News". This newspaper provided information on the most recent voyages and markets in the world, as well as news on cargoes shipped and losses at sea. His idea became a real insurance exchange and the first association of private insurers was created. Lloyd's Underwriters would position itself as a monopoly of marine insurance in England until the 20th century.

In eighteenth century Spain, fire and life insurance companies were booming and quite successful. Soon, following this prosperous time, the history of insurance would take a turn again and in 1908 the Instituto Nacional de Previsión would be created, which is the origin of what we know today as Social Security.

Turning our focus away from international insurance, the birth of insurance in Ecuador started with Seguros La Union,

under the command of Mr. Federico Goldbaum on April 21, 1943. After establishing themselves as the first insurance company of Ecuadorian origin, they issued their first aviation policy in 1945 which also included the Fidelity Bonds branch. In 1946 they added automobile insurance, in 1947 theft with fracture and personal accidents was included, and in 1949 they positioned themselves as the first insurance company to build a building for their operations. The following year they would give way to insurance for the death of livestock and insurance for personal accidents at work. In 1953 they established guarantee and faithful fulfillment insurance along with other insurances still in force today.

Another long-standing insurance company in Ecuador is the IESS, which began operations as the Caja de Pensiones (Pension Bank). The main objective of this insurance company, with its own assets, differentiated from State assets, was to grant civil and military public employees' retirement benefits. In 1963, through Supreme Decree No. 517, the Pension Fund was merged with the Insurance Fund to form the National Social Security Fund with the addition of a medical department. On July 10, 1970, the Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security (IESS) was established. They were founded on the basis of these four services:

- **Individual and Family Health Insurance: Protects the insured and their family in the event of illness and maternity.**
- **Pension Insurance: Protects the insured in contingencies of disability, old age, and death.**
- **Risk Insurance: Guarantees members and employers occupational safety and health insurance through preventive actions, programs, and audits, and also helps the families of members in contingencies arising from work accidents and professional illnesses.**
- **Manual Labor Insurance: In accordance with the Social Security Law, it permanently protects the population of the rural sector and artisanal fishermen of Ecuador in their vulnerable states of need, through health care, disability, old age, and death.**

IESS is a huge pioneer in the history of Ecuadorian insurance, but in 2010 the operating mode of the IESS would change. The government declared, arbitrarily, that companies must extend

insurance to a worker's family, including partners and children under 18 years old. This increased the demand for affiliation with IESS and forced them to sign agreements with external providers to meet the demand for new members. These quick changes generated many of the problems that IESS faces today, one of which is potential bankruptcy.

At the same time, companies such as Sweaden of Quito were born, as well as Confiamed, Vida Sana, Seguros Sucre, Alianza, Aseguradora del Sur, and others, all of which are of Ecuadorian origin and are within the statute of requirements set forth by the Superintendence of Securities, Companies and Insurance. In Ecuador, these companies are legally constituted insurance options that offer products for the benefit of their affiliates.

Insurance, throughout the world and throughout history, has changed in many ways. Its evolution has allowed it to develop into a necessary benefit for all who use it. Insurance today is varied and allows one to insure everything, no matter where they are. You can live in Ecuador and have a life insurance policy in the Cayman Islands that guarantees that your retirement is safe or that in case of death your beneficiary receives your remuneration. **Having insurance has never been as easy or as necessary as it is today.**



Eloy Alfaro: The Leader of the Liberal Revolution

by Carolina Segarra

The story of Eloy Alfaro is that of a humble hero, a Creole liberator, and a Manaba, one who was the son of a Spanish Republic and overcame many fears while facing bloody battles. Colonel Eloy Alfaro came to liberate a people oppressed by the old mandates of the Spanish crown and the government of Gabriel Garcia Moreno.

Eloy Alfaro is the first son of Manuel Alfaro and Natividad Delgado. He was born on June 25, 1842, 4 years after Manuel and Natividad built their home in Montecristi. This small town was once an indigenous village that later became known as a town of merchants. Manuel Alfaro, with his ability to trade, extended his small hat business throughout the Pacific, becoming one of the best known hat merchants in the country. Positioning his "Panama Hat" brand as one of the most important in Ecuador, their fruitful business of hats would soon turn Manuel and Natividad into the richest in the whole area with large hectares of land, crops, and a lot of labor. From the beginning, little Eloy was a friend to the workers on his parents' land, and in his adolescence he worked to support the agriculture and livestock that they managed. He never felt superior to any of his peers or companions and always fought for the rights of the indigenous people. In addition, Eloy went on many international trips with his father to promote his hats and close important deals. These trips helped Eloy build character and eventually inclined his interest in politics and the national and international military. Since Eloy had an economic advantage, thanks to the wealth of his parents, he was never put in the position to look for financial means from the Republic of

Ecuador. Nor did he need the support of the government of any other neighboring countries. Eloy was genuinely focused on improving the quality of life of Latin Americans who lived as slaves to the dictatorial government of the day.

His desire to liberate oppressed people increased every day, which led him to get involved in the failed insurrection of 1864 against Gabriel García Moreno. This failure led him to be exiled in Panama until 1875, the year in which García Moreno was assassinated and Alfaro was able to return to Ecuador. By this time Eloy had married Ana Paredes Arosemena, daughter of one of the notables of the ISTMO, which continued to guarantee that finances would not be a problem for Eloy.

On his return to Ecuador Eloy immediately began fighting against the government of Antonio Borrero, and on September 8, 1876 he was appointed colonel thanks to his participation in the coup d'état of Ignacio de Veintemilla against Borrero. As a surprise to his followers he would soon rebel against Veintemilla for not fulfilling his promises in government. At the beginning of 1883 Alfaro was proclaimed supreme chief of Manabí and Esmeraldas, and organized an army that defeated the dictator, whose last stronghold, Guayaquil, fell on July 9, 1883.

After this triumph, a new failure would greet him. When Veintemilla was overthrown the command was ceded to Placido Camaño. Alfaro, who was the leader of the liberals at

the time, was not able to convince the people of his competence as a leader. The people's dissatisfaction with him continued for four more years while revolt after revolt only ended in defeat. Due to this, he was coined as the "General of Defeats." His misfortune took him back to Panama, a place where he took refuge in his international allies and was able to recoup his lost economic fortune.

After this period, a ship named "Esmeralda" would give Alfaro the win he so desperately needed. On January 3, 1895, the flag of Ecuador had been sold and a scandal unfolded involving the purchase of the Esmeralda. With the intention of improving the Ecuadorian military corps, to everyone's surprise, in November 1894 this ship would sail with the flag of Ecuador to Japan. This deplorable act was plotted between the higher-ups of the Ecuadorian government and Chilean leaders who were eager to make deals with the Japanese. This act, without bad intentions, according to Luis Cordero, led to his overthrow, and his fall would give way to the late presidency of Alfaro.

On June 5, 1895, the people of Guayaquil gathered to contemplate new liberal ideals that would fall in line with the progress of modern civilization. Once the people agreed upon the ideals, ones which would lead the Republic into happiness and harmony, Alfaro was summoned. He was appointed Supreme Chief of the Republic and General in Chief of the

Army, otherwise known as "The Distinguished General Don Eloy Alfaro." The act was signed by about 16,000 people. The Ecuadorian Liberal Revolution had begun. The fundamental pillars of this new era for Ecuador were published in the Liberal Decalogue and are:

- 1. Decree of dead hands**
- 2. Suppression of convents**
- 3. Suppression of monasteries**
- 4. Compulsory secular education**
- 5. Freedom for indigenous peoples**
- 6. Abolition of the Concordat**
- 7. Ecclesiastical secularization**
- 8. Expulsion of foreign clergy**
- 9. A strong and well-funded army**
- 10. Railroad to the Pacific**

After these new reforms were enacted, and the wrath of dissatisfaction from some Catholic montoneros was heard, Alfaro was proclaimed supreme leader on January 12, 1897, under a Constituent Assembly. Founded in liberal ideals, Alfaro's leadership established the dissolution of the relationship between Church and State, which angered many Ecuadorian Catholics. Additionally, under Alfaro, the construction of the Quito-Guayaquil railroad took place. All of these changes were supported in secret by the great Masonic lodges that Alfaro belonged to. He was an initiated Mason in Costa Rica, which integrated the Lodge Rosa de America N° 36 of Panama, as well as a member of the lodges in Guayaquil. In 1905, he received a vote of applause from the Masonic Congress held in Buenos Aires and after that he

founded the Fraternal Chain Lodge and Temple of Friendship and the Lodge of Natural Law in Quito. The Supreme Council of Peru granted him the 33rd Degree.

Alfaro's Masonic influence gave way to many great advances in Ecuador at the time. The declaration of secularism in education was a milestone for this area that allowed the development of an education focused on scientific theories, leaving aside the demands of the church on education and dogmatic theories that had stagnated many learning processes. As for the state, liberalism was proclaimed as a new form of government which facilitated international trade relations by eliminating international trade blockades that had been imposed by the Spanish crown. The two periods of Alfaro's government are considered the best in the history of Ecuador. He also managed to gain international recognition for his participation in revolts in neighboring countries.

During his second term (1906-1991) the Constitution of 1906, "the magna carta of Ecuadorian liberalism" was promulgated. The construction of the railroad was completed, new infrastructure and communication works were initiated, and free public education was consolidated. For these purposes large sums of money were allocated to the creation of schools such as: Mejía School in Quito, Olmedo School in Portoviejo, Eloy Alfaro School in Bahía de Caráquez, Manuela Cañizares

for women and Juan Montalvo for men in Quito. He also created the Conservatory of Music, the School of Fine Arts, institutionalized the Armed Forces and created the Military College. These are just some of the works that Alfaro carried out in education which generated discomfort for many of the groups that were not in favor of progress.

At the end of his term in 1910, and with the growing border problems between Ecuador and Peru, the presidential elections of that year favored Leonidas Plaza, but Alfaro did not accept it graciously. This led him to commit electoral fraud by positioning Emilio Estrada as president. He was forced to return to Panama due to this and in the same year Estrada died and Freile Zaldumbide took power. When Zaldumbide took power, Alfaro, and other politicians, took this chance to return from exile, which turned out to be a fatal decision for all of them. When they arrived in Ecuador they were arrested and accused of various crimes, being imprisoned in the Garcia Moreno prison, a place that would give way to one of the bloodiest histories of Ecuador. One day, the penitentiary guard opened Alfaro's cell and gave way to an enraged crowd that shouted, "long live religion! Down with the Masons!" In the middle of the brawl General Alfaro was killed by a shot in the forehead, along with his brother Merardo, his cousin Flavio, and

General Ulpiano Paez. Their bodies were dragged to Ejido Park where they were cremated. To this day the real perpetrators of this massacre are unknown, but the prosecutor, Pío Jaramillo Alvarado, from Loja, ruled in 1919 that, "In the pursuit of justice I maintain before the national opinion, and I accuse before history the responsibility of the government of Mr. Carlos Freile Zaldumbide for the murder of Alfaro and his radicals."

Eloy Alfaro's life was marked by different shades, by several struggles, and international recognitions, but above all by his love for his people, for the montubios, indigenous, and serranos who were victims of landowners, for those who were beaten, and who were not paid for their work. The old fighter, despite always living in opulence, felt the pain of others, and all his struggles were focused on the common good. A reprehensible act ended his struggle, but his legacy still touches us today. We have taken steps towards a secular society and gender equality in Ecuador thanks to General Eloy Alfaro. Son, father, grandfather and Mason, dedicated to even ungrateful people, today and always in Ecuador we will shout "VIVA ALFARO!"

Tatiana Hidrovo Quiñónez, ¿Quién mató a Alfaro?, 26 DE ENERO DE 2017 <https://www.eltelegrafo.com.ec/noticias/68/1/quien-mato-a-alfaro>



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Eugenio Espejo: The Mind Behind Ecuadorian Independence

by Juan Francisco Carrasco



This year Ecuador will celebrate the 213th anniversary of the “First Cry for Independence,” which took place on August 10th, 1809, in the city of Quito. This was the first of many revolutionary events that allowed for the liberation of Ecuador from the Kingdom of Spain. This historical event made Ecuador the first independent country in South America and inspired many other countries such as Chile, Colombia, and Peru to do the same.

In general, history states that a group of patriots took over the Real Palace to inform Count Ruiz de Castilla, who was the President of the Real Audience of Quito, that he was no longer a governing authority and would be removed from office. Nevertheless, history often forgets the group of people that first birthed these ideas of independence, freedom, and equality. One of these was Francisco Javier Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo, better known as Eugenio Espejo.

Eugenio Espejo was born on February 21, 1747. Originally with the surname “Chuzig,” that in Quechua means “owl”, he was baptized as “de Santa Cruz y Espejo” because like many other indigenous descendants that lived in the colonies he was evangelized and given a christian name. His father was a Cajamarca Indigenous Quechua named Luis Chuzig and his mother was María Catalina Aldás, a mulatto from Quito. Eugenio was raised in a humble family with his younger

brothers Juan Pablo and Maria Manuela.

Despite the economic limitations of his family, Eugenio Espejo had the opportunity to study at a public school in Quito where he stood out as a good student and leader. His great intellect allowed him to study medicine at the Hospital de la Misericordia and in 1767 he managed to obtain his medical degree. As a doctor he was well known and noted for his criticism of the city's health and sanitation system. He is also remembered for a piece he wrote about smallpox that transcended throughout history.

Additionally, Espejo studied civil and canon law, graduating in 1770. Historical references indicate that Espejo had ideas much ahead of his time from a very young age. Due to the fact that he was literate he was able to understand French libertarian ideas and became a critic of the system imposed by the Spanish crown.

Later in 1790, Espejo, along with many other intellectuals, created la Escuela de la Concordia, later named the “Sociedad Patriótica de Amigos del País de Quito” (Patriotic Society of Friends of Quito). The goal of this society was to improve life in Quito. This same society created the first newspaper in Quito named Primicias de la Cultura de Quito (Novelties of the Culture of Quito) and Espejo became the editor. Therefore, he is known in the country as the father of journalism. The newspaper only released seven editions before it was stopped. The

liberal ideas because both the newspaper and the society were a threat to the Spanish crown. The king of Spain, Carlos IV, knew this and dismissed the society in 1793 before it gained even more power.

Throughout his life, Espejo continued to write about his libertarian and revolutionary ideas and his texts referred to the importance of education. Espejo knew that educating the population would allow the development of society, but the Crown only wanted to educate the children of the Spanish, and only allowed a few mestizos to access schools. This seemed very unfair to him and because of this education was one of his pillars of struggle. As part of his legacy today there is a well-known school in Quito that bears his name and still imparts his teachings.

As part of his libertarian ideas, Espejo promulgated the importance of equality, since in his opinion there should be no different treatment between Spaniards, mestizos, or indigenous people. He believed that equal opportunities were essential, and that it was necessary to end the rule of the Spanish yoke. He thought this because the Spanish crown was not interested in improving the conditions or the quality of life of the indigenous and mestizo population. The crown preferred keeping the people ignorant by giving them heavy labor and service jobs instead of educating them. Espejo had also many ideas regard

ing gender equality, however, these ideas were not fully developed due to the form of thinking that people had in that period of time.

Most people did not understand the texts of Eugenio Espejo, however his texts planted the ideas of equality and freedom in the minds of many young people. Through his writings Espejo became a great activist and over time he gained more and more followers. His name gained prestige and the scope of his ideas increased until he reached Spain. The king ordered that he should be silenced and because the authorities considered him an enormous threat they imprisoned him under the accusation of conspiracy.

Many of Espejo's friends and companions from the group of intellectuals continued working to achieve freedom for the Country, even after his death. Morales, Quiroga, Salinas and Pio Montufar stand out from the other intellectuals because they were also part of the First Cry of Independence. In particular, Juan Pio Montufar was an important character since he was the first president of the Real Audience of Quito that didn't respond to the Spanish crown.

Eugenio Espejo never saw his dream of a free Ecuador come true, yet he was still a man ahead of his time, a precursor that spread his ideas and dreams of independence to the people, a man that inspired the heroes of Ecuadorian independence with his words, and started a revolution with his ideas.





ECUADOR PICTURAS

by Manuel Avilés



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Olón Inspirations

by Ted Klubinski



Maria del Carmen Montesdeoca

I had the pleasure meeting Maria del Carmen Montesdeoca, Co Founder/Treasurer of Punto Verde Central Ambiental y Cultural, when purchasing raffle tickets for one of the many fundraisers she supports and coordinates. Maria is an inspired dynamo who tirelessly works to preserve and protect the culture and environment of Olón. Originally an abandoned home donated to the community by the Minister of Environment, Punto Verde is now a pristine, refurbished facility that houses a library, theater, office space, and outdoor area. Plays, concerts, cinema, art exhibitions, English, art and music classes, and even Arabic dancing are available for locals and expats spanning all ages.

Recent workshops at the center have included learning how to protect and save the sea turtles in this fragile ecosystem, bilingual music, dance, theater, story-telling, painting and more for children. Punto Verde is a vital resource enabling diverse communities to come together and share the evolving culture that is Olón.

Maria and her husband Rodolfo are also the proprietors of The Sea Garden House, which is an enchanting accommodation that includes eleven rooms and a cozy tree house for guests. Open-air spaces and flowering, tropical gardens surround the Sea Garden House and its full-service restaurant.

Chris Brokate

If you are looking to purchase land, a home, or rent an apartment, Chris Brokate is an agent along with his brother Gerald, the owner at Ecuador Properties Olón. Chris has been passionate about a trash-free environment since coming to

Ecuador from Sonoma County, California where he founded the Clear River Alliance, which spearheaded the removal of 750 tons of garbage and debris from the Russian River watershed.

We benefit from his passion here in Olón where he and friends created the Yo Amo Mi Playa Limpia Olón campaign. Their mission is to, “Remove trash from the environment and educate our public by creating zero waste.” Chris can be seen every Saturday morning with a team of volunteers removing trash along the beach. Yo Amo Mi Playa Limpia is now supported by the Rotary Club of Guayaquil Norte as a Community Corps Project. Chris says that his goal for cleanup is 120%!

He recently organized the first Yo Amo Mi Surf contest. In partnership with Escuelita el Mar, Mingas Por el Mar, the Salanga Turtle Rehabilitation Center and a number of schools he encourages youth to protect and preserve the environment and its inhabitants. He is galvanizing future eco-activists. Demonstrations and discussions have inspired many attendees to respect and care for the precious breeding grounds for multiple species of sea turtles who for generations have cyclically evolved on Olón’s beaches. Chris is now raising funds for a second surf contest scheduled in January 2023.

DJ Wild Bill Stanley

DJ Wild Bill Stanley hails from Dallas and does most of his spinning at The Pink Iguana, a hot-spot restaurant for expats and locals alike. Depending on the evening or event he can hurl you back to nostalgic disco dancing (usually at



the end of every month), or have you “Gettin’ Jiggy” for fundraisers like the recent 90s-themed “Raining Cats and Dogs” fundraiser for PAWS-Olón, a local vet clinic providing free or low-cost spay and neutering service to diminish the increase of abandoned pups and kittens.

Bill has an insatiable passion for music so you can choose your dance party whether it be current house music, new wave, 80s, or oldies but goodies favorites to dance to. For you closet-performers there is also Koastal Karaoke every other Thursday night.

He donates his time and money for philanthropic events held usually at The Pink Iguana, hosted and supported by owner Jerry Thurman. The Pink Iguana serves good ol’ comfort food and Italian specialties, but if you crave finger-licking treats, sit at the pub for tacos, burritos, burgers with fries, chicken wings, and beer battered-fish and chicken.

Jerry and his wife Cheryl never fail to offer their restaurant for community events and work closely with Wild Bill and his wife Caroline to be sure the directors of the charities have a successful event.

Bill and Caroline created and administer the Facebook group Olón Life. They created this group for networking in the coastal area. Wild Bill spins a fun mix of music for compelling community welfare needs as diverse as feeding seniors to promoting local skateboarding.

Mike Becker and Darcy Hamilton

The Covid pandemic inspired Mike Becker and Darcy Hamilton to take swift action for seniors and families suffering from food insecurity for various reasons. They launched the Olón Food Bank and Senior Lunch.

Last July they celebrated 100 meals served to seniors and recently that number rose to 130! These meals are provided through the generosity of donors. Volunteers help prepare, serve, and clean up. Mike is known around town for his cookie-baking skills, selling and delivering bagfuls to delighted supporters who know the money goes towards the meal project.

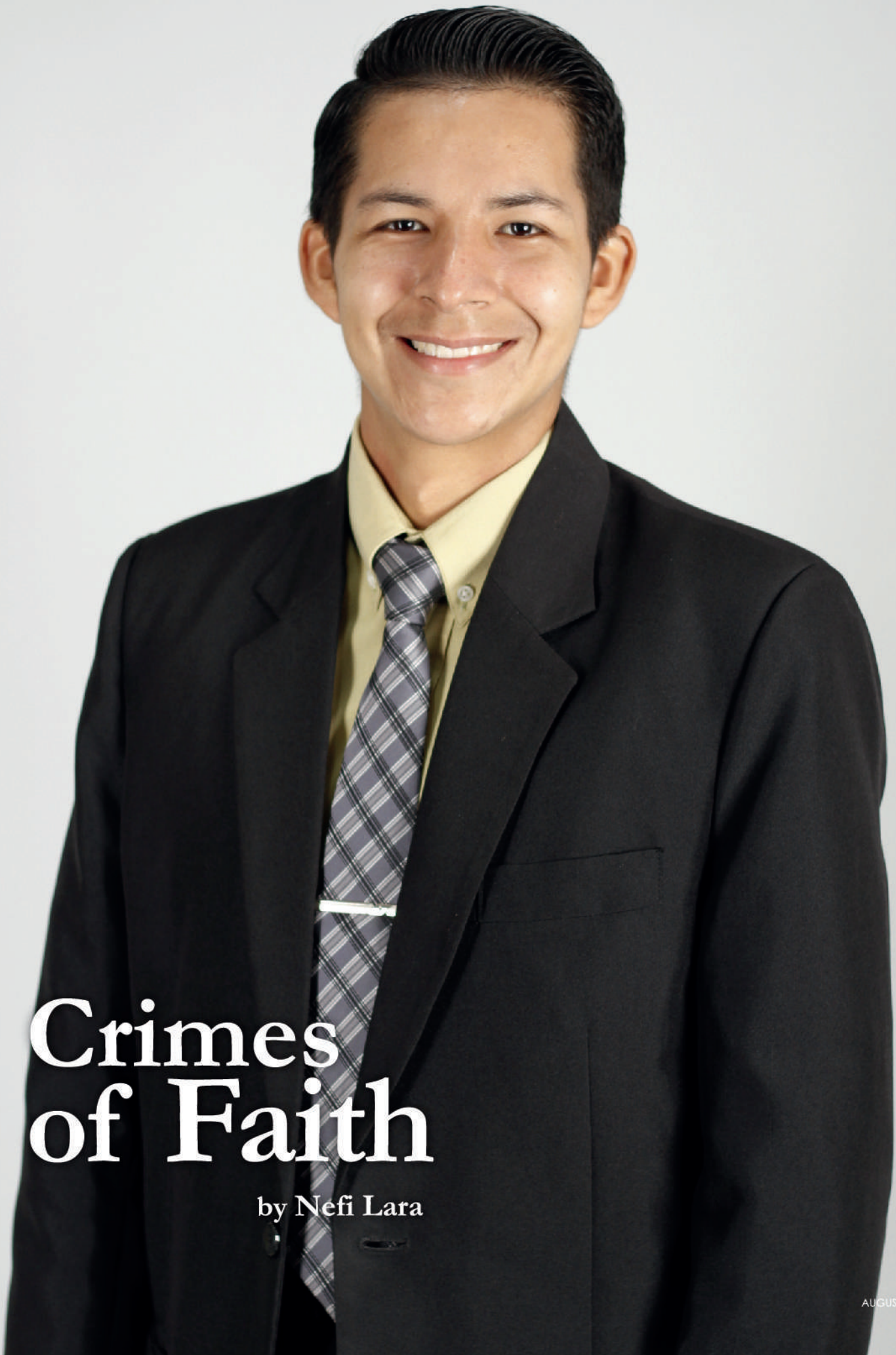
The food bank is replenished weekly for individuals and families who can take home bags of food staples, fresh produce, and hygiene supplies. Currently 21 families are served while the waiting list is 100. The Spirit of Wellness Foundation in conjunction with the Olón Comuna (political representatives) supports the food bank which costs \$25 per distribution.

The work is practically full-time for volunteers and there is more to do. Mike’s next goal is to establish internships for youth who can learn from experience and proceed with certification to implement these programs in other cities including our neighboring barrio, Montañita. This is intended to propel job placement for the interns who will be skilled in foundation grant proposal writing.

Darcy hosts the luncheon at his restaurant, The Roadhouse, where great meals, with vegan options, and a bar and pub offer the perfect ambience for expats to meet. Often entertained by live music as well.

Many compassionate individuals contribute to the well-being of our town. Olón is a well-spring of inspiration. Come to Olón and find yours!





Crimes of Faith

by Nefi Lara

Faith is defined as that which cannot be seen, touched, or felt with any of the five senses (taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing) and which surpasses all scientific and verifiable evidence. The saying, "Faith can move mountains" is one that has led many people in the artistic, political, and business world to the pinnacle of success. A crime is defined as a shameful, indelible, undue, and painful act for the person who, unexpectedly, receives it. It is condemnable before the law and a tragedy for society.

What happens to people who are victims of crimes for thinking differently or not believing in something or someone? What acts 'justify' a death sentence? What happens to those who take advantage of the faith of others to satisfy personal desires? Did such crimes exist in Ecuadorian history? Do crimes continue to be committed in the name of faith? What has been done to mitigate such painful acts?

Medieval times were the antecedent to crimes of faith, between 400 and 1500 AD. This era of humanity is also known as obscurantism. During this period criminal acts and false and interposed accusations on the part of the Holy Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church were frequent. The Supreme Pontiffs delegated certain officials to protect the Church from any attack against it. "It was an 'Ecclesiastical Tribunal' established by the Roman Pontiffs between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in order to defend and protect against heresies of all peoples of Christian faith" (Pine, n.d.).

This delegation had the job of questioning people. They accused, tortured,

and murdered them if they did not practice, profess, or share the same principles and beliefs of the Church. In those years these acts were considered holy or sacred, but over time these acts have been condemned thanks to battles for independence. We can now enjoy freedom of religion, thought, and belief. However, there are also many other religious organizations who have committed religious acts for a few and stained their hierarchies with innocent blood. So this leads me to question the state of Christian organizations and their members today. Today believers, without pretending that it happened, follow the living example of the one they consider their God and savior, Jesus Christ, who was unjustly accused and killed by a priestly elite.

One of the key figures for freedom of thought and religion was Eloy Alfaro Delgado, who backed the institutionalization of secularism in the Republic of Ecuador. Unfortunately, this did not guarantee the total eradication of crimes of faith in the country. These crimes continued to be executed, not in the original form of the Holy Inquisition, but in such a way that mocked the faith of the indigenous people. In the literary work *Huasipungo* by Jorge Icaza, we read that the village priest, in his hegemonic sermons, took advantage of the indigenous people to profit from the lands that belonged to them. Jorge Icaza used his book as a social commentary which denounced the outrage, abuse, and deceit caused by religions at that time (between 1930 and 1950).

The Catholic Church is not the only organization of this type with a criminal record against humanity.



There are other religious organizations that in one way or another have committed reprehensible acts such as taking advantage of the faith of many to enrich themselves. This act can be defined as Priestly Superciliousness. This means that any person, especially men who lead a religious congregation, can fall into the vanity of obtaining recognition, monetary benefit, satisfying their carnal desires, among other acts that are considered impure and banal while in this position of power.

In the United States, there is a prominent religious organization that, since 1840, has committed illegal acts against that nation and women. When Wilford (Woodruff) officially declared in 1840 that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had creased the practice of polygamy, some of the members did not agree. These members decided to separate and become The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints where they continued the practice of polygamy. Warren Jeffs, the president of the FLDS, was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for sexual abuse of minors and marriage arrangements between boys and girls in 2011. This extremist organization also has many ties to well documented racist actions (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.).

Sunni Fundamentalist Islam is considered another religious organization that endangers and threatens humanity. In September 2001, this group was the cause of irreparable losses, people, and dreams in the U.S. Al Qaeda, the group that perpetrated the collapse of the Twin Towers, in the name of Allah, circumvented the security

system of the United States. Once again, in the name of faith, they committed unimaginable acts that only the heart of a criminal can harbor.

Pope Francis recently met with indigenous Canadians to publicly ask forgiveness for the harm done to children of these communities by Catholic agencies. His Holiness said, "On several occasions, both my predecessors and myself have asked forgiveness for personal and social sins, for all actions or omissions that did not contribute to evangelization." The journalist Bernardo (Barranco) also mentions that "another topic to reflect on is the abuse of forgiveness. Faced with the repeated use, apologies for clerical sins committed and demand for pardons, one may wonder about its symbolic effectiveness."

Therefore, mitigating the negative impact of criminal acts by deceitful individuals or organizations is a product of experience. It is difficult to recognize that if the case of someone's death and/or abuse is not unique or renowned, it remains as a precedent for the advancement and improvement of laws. I am not a lawyer, but following this logical sequence makes me think that many of the current laws are the consequences of a difficult or unresolved event over the years. So crimes of faith are sadly still in force.

Therefore, mitigating the negative impact of criminal acts by deceitful individuals or organizations is a product of experience. It is difficult to recognize that if the case of someone's death and/or abuse is not unique or renowned, it remains as a precedent for the advancement and improvement of laws. I am not a lawyer, but following this logical sequence makes me think that many of the current laws are the consequences of a difficult or unresolved event over the years. So crimes of faith are sadly still in force.

by Alex Asanza - Geronto

Keeping a Strong Body and Strong Mind Throughout the Years

As the years go by our bodies begin to change and some of the essential functions of our body start diminishing. We can slow these changes and keep our bodies healthy if we choose to make healthier decisions by using the tools our body needs.

One of the most valuable tools we have for our body is physical exercise, which we should do some form of everyday! The World Health Organization recommends 150 minutes of physical exercise per week to keep fit and healthy, while also avoiding a sedentary lifestyle which could trigger chronic diseases in older adults.

The practice of daily physical exercise not only improves our physical capacity such as in strong muscles and good balance... the benefits go much further!

Daily physical exercise helps:

- 1.- regulate sleep
- 2.- prevent and control heart diseases
- 3.- improve our mood
- 4.- prevent depressive states
- 5.- acts as a brain protector by allowing us to preserve our cognitive abilities

Physical exercise is most effective in older adults when done in

multicomponent routines, where we can combine different types of exercises:

- Joint amplitude exercises
- Strengthening exercises
- Walking and balancing exercises
- Stretching exercises

Each type of exercise is meant to give our body and mind the necessary energy that we need to be able to perform normal activities in our daily life. This is thanks to a strengthened functional capacity.

Therefore, it is important that older adults adopt a healthy lifestyle in a way that is sustainable. This will allow one to maintain an active and independent life. Integrating physical exercise, a good diet, good mental health, and having an active social life are all key to sustaining a healthy lifestyle.

Older adults contribute valuable knowledge and experience to our communities. It is important that we continue to create spaces where older adults can socialize, contribute, and share their stories. These spaces contribute to good mental health and flourishing social lives which are an important part of overall health.

In order to aid this population, Geronto has expanded to both Cuenca and Manta (with more than ten years of experience in Guayaquil) to offer integral care to older adults. Geronto's services are aimed to maintain, improve, and strengthen one's physical and cognitive abilities. These services include:

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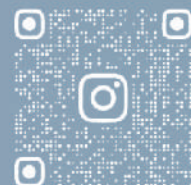
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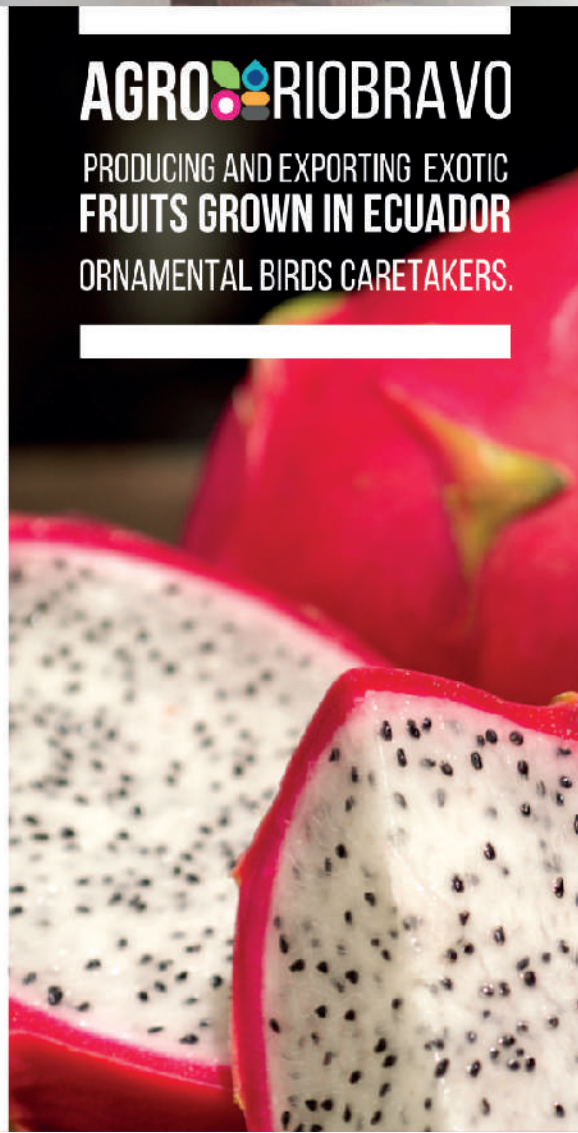
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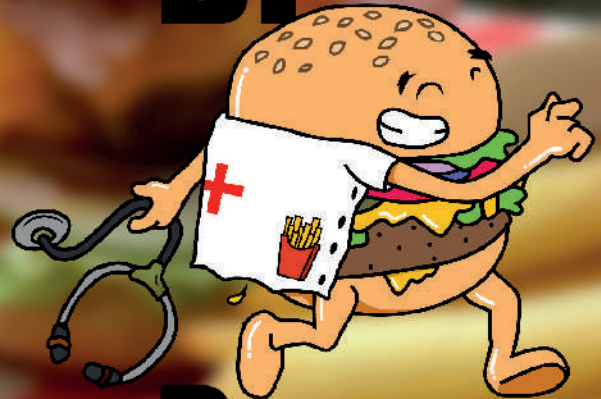
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Heroes in the Fight for Independence

HISTORY COLUMN 135



by Karen Betancourt

The first cry of Independence in Ecuador would not have been possible without the vigor, intrepidity, and insight of men and women with great desires for freedom. This event, which occurred on August 10, 1809, was the starting point of a series of rebellions that arose around Ecuador, mainly in Quito, Guayaquil, and Cuenca. After 13 years of conflict with the Spanish empire, which consisted of many confrontational moments such as on August 2, 1810, October 9, 1820, and November 3, 1820, the final battle for independence was on May 24, 1822. When thinking about the fight for independence in Latin America I am sure that a series of heroic names come to mind, one of them probably being Simón Bolívar. Known as The Liberator, he was the leader of many revolts that led to the independence of not only Ecuador but also to other nations such as Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Panama, and Bolivia. He is widely remembered as an important figure in the emancipation of Latin America from the Spanish throne. Additionally, one cannot forget the child hero, Abdón Calderón, who participated in almost all the battles for independence. He is commonly remembered for staying in combat despite having been shot four times.

He continues to be remembered in schools with a legacy of civility, patriotism, and love of freedom that was instilled in him by his father before he died.

Likewise, the renowned Antonio José de Sucre, the Grand Marshal of Ayacucho, can never be forgotten. Credited for having won the Battle of Ayacucho, which meant the end of Spanish rule, he stood out for his great diplomatic and strategic work in forming the Liberation Army of the South which defeated the Spanish army in 1821. He is remembered for doing his job with loyalty and discipline throughout the fight for independence. In addition, he also participated in the creation of Ecuador as a nation. It is said that Sucre could have been the innate successor of Bolívar due to his strong conviction, morality, and sense of justice. As well as due to his constant fight in the defense of indigenous rights and the freedom of slaves.

When we think about the heroes of independence, surely we imagine hundreds of strong knights dressed as soldiers. However, in the fight for independence in Ecuador, we must also recognize the courageous actions of women heroines who fulfilled many important roles. The first to come to mind is the free-spirited Manuela Cañizares. She played an important part in the fight for independence by meeting discreetly in her house with the patriots to encourage them to carry out the revolutionary coup during the early hours of August 10, 1809, which installed an Autonomous Government in the country. Her fight against injustice and her support was always

decisive. This is despite the fact that years later she had to hide when a criminal proceeding was carried out for all those involved in the rebellion and she was sentenced to death if found. Another significant woman is known as the Liberator of the Liberator, Manuela Sáenz. Remembered today not only for her love of Bolívar but especially for her courageous intervention in having orchestrated an attack against him. She was undoubtedly a heroine who showed no fear while dressed in a military uniform, using weapons and espionage tactics against the Spanish empire during the war.

We must also recognize the heroic intervention of other silent protagonists such as Rosa de Montúfar. An aristocrat from Quito, she helped hide the libertarian leaders, including her father and uncle, in her hacienda in the Valley of Los Chillos after they fled from the dungeons of the city of Quito. She also helped Antonio José de Sucre and his troops before the Battle of Pichincha. Montúfar was the only member of her family who did not have a prison order. At the young age of 25, she had to defend herself legally to ensure her freedom and claim her assets that had been confiscated by the state. In addition, she contributed money to hire soldiers, buy food, and offered slaves from her own farms to work as soldiers. These actions could have cost Rosa her life, but her ingenuity and strength helped drive the course of the long-awaited autonomy of the country.

Lastly, we cannot deny the brave role played by the princesses or “guarichas,” as said in Kichwa. A term that was later made synonyms to “liberal woman” by the Spanish. These women are those who joined the fight for independence together with their husbands or boyfriends and participated in logistical and even military activities. The guarichas were rebellious Andean warriors, and mestizo women who used their clothing to store food and take it to the soldiers. They were strong but compassionate, providing first aid and care to the wounded. They were wise women committed to revolutionary principles, who even helped send and receive correspondence. They did not fear anything, nor did they mind being cold and hungry, which allowed them to act as spies and combatants on the battlefield. They commonly used bayonets and machetes, carried weapons and ammunition, and many even did so while carrying the weight of their children on their back. It was thanks to these resilient, creative, strong, confident, and faithful women that the country was able to defeat the Spanish throne.

This is how these heroes and heroines left a legacy of determination, audacity, strength, resistance, and courage. Their notorious but often stealthy and discreet work leaves us with a great lesson on how our patriotic fervor can be capable of promoting change in our nation. As well as teach us how to persevere in the face of those who try to diminish what we feel is right. It is with the courage of these heroes that we should try and fight against injustice everyday. We must continue to fight for and defend our freedom while also honoring the heroes of our independence who gave their souls and lives for the country.





by Manuel Avilés



by Manuel Avilés



Manuela Sáenz: A Revolutionary Woman

by Yamel Cedeño Cevallos

Manuela Sáenz and Aizpuru or Sáenz de Thorne

Fondly remembered by Ecuadorians as Manuelita, Manuela Sáenz was born to Spanish parents in the city of Quito in 1797, destined for a life of rebellion in defense of what is right.

Family life limited Manuelita. Her circumstances forced her to choose the life of a revolutionary when, in the year 1809, the Creoles, individuals born in American territory with European parents or heritage, were accused of spreading conspiracies about Hispanic people. This moment in history marked a turning point in the life of Sáenz because of the first hand account of inequality that she witnessed while simultaneously learning about Manuela Cañizares. A woman of many achievements, Cañizares inspired Manuelita as she defiantly gathered the “conspirators” in her house as a means of rebellion.

Although Manuelita lived among nature for a few years and developed many practical skills, once she returned to the city of Quito with her mother it was decided that she would join a convent of nuns in Santa Catalina when she was seventeen years old.

Manuelita always proved to be a woman that lived a life without restraints and her rebellious character seemed to be the reason behind her decision to leave the convent. Even though women were not considered valued members of society during her time this did not stop Manuelita's drive for

knowledge, including learning how to read and write. It is said that due to her acquired literacy knowledge she began an epistolary relationship with Fausto Delhuyar, who was a colonel in the King's army.

From this relationship a scandal formed that put Manuelita's name in public debate, which resulted in a forced marriage. James Thorne was a 40 year old British man who was a friend of Manuelita's father. After the ceremony in 1817, Manuelita and Thorne traveled to Lima where Sáenz's desire for independence only grew stronger. Letters from this time in their marriage have been found where the following was written to Thorne from Manuelita: “Leave me in peace my dear English lover. Let us pursue something different. For in heaven we will marry again, but not on earth.” Not long after this, the illicit romance between Manuela and Simon Bolivar, the liberator of the Americas, had become known.

Her stay in Lima only helped further her role in the fight for liberation. In 1820, she used her house as a space for the gatherings of independent parties and those who supported the Crown to share information. The rebellious presence of Sáenz is a key characteristic which speaks to her capacity as a spy. For her participation in the liberation of Peru and her negotiations with battalions in 1822 she is recognized as the “Caballera del Sol.”

From here she returned to be with her father in Quito and to what we now know as Ecuador. She worked to gain independence for the city and was actively involved by helping the sick and donating food to soldiers.

Her romance with Bolívar did not stump her independence. She established herself as the only female heroine in the battle of Ayacucho, along with Antonio José de Sucre, because she was appointed as a member of the General Staff of the Liberation Army. This battle was the last known confrontation between the liberating group and the royalist faction in Latin American territories which made it highly significant.

When the New Constitution of independence was recognized, certain groups that supported Bolívar revolted. It was from this event that the legend of Manuela Sáenz was born. Once again as a heroine, they say that she was armed and dressed as a man on a horse. She entered to defend Bolívar against the insurgents, including many powerful generals. After the death of the liberator, Bolívar, she was banished to Peru. Manuelita continued to be accused of many things and her name slandered. From this, her work Torre de Babel was born as a protest against the accusations.

In 1835 she managed to return to Ecuador, but the then president Vicente Rocafuerte ruled that she

should leave the country. She eventually made her way to Paita, a port located in Peru. Since she never received the promised money from her Catahuango Hacienda in Quito, she sustained herself on handicrafts that she made such as sweets, fabrics, and embroidery.

During her last years Manuelita was visited by great figures such as Simón Rodríguez, Hermann Melville and Guiseppe Garibaldi. At 60 years of age, in the year 1856, she contracted diphtheria and she died.

The importance that Manuelita Sáenz leaves forces us to rethink the history that we have been told about the fight for independence. In this heroic process, we not only had men who died for their country but women who, with the little they earned and with everything to lose, decided to enter the battlefield knowing that it would mean dishonor and a loss of dignity in an unforgivingly, sexist society. We must recognize her for everything she has done and more, strip away her identity as the woman behind the liberator, Bolívar, and honor her alone for the heroine she was, is and will always be.



The Liberator's Nightmare

A look at several Hispanic American dictatorships after the death of Bolivar

by Ronal Intriago

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One of Bolivar's widely known dreams, which he held as an obsession bordering on fanaticism, was to see the unification of his America. Many accounts throughout history speak of Bolivar's dreams. He daydreamed because he knew he could make it possible. The very act of freeing us from the tyranny of the Spaniards was evidence of his genius in his military and political career. He was the wisest man of his time. There is no one who has achieved clearer recognition of his people than he, nor anyone who made a more accurate analysis of their political needs. With a keen and visionary mind, he closely observed the events of the entire world during the revolutionary era that spanned from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century. He studied the political forms developed in various countries and the psychological aspects of the populations. He applied his observations to his own problems to the point of relating them to the character of his own people, "of themselves willful and mischievous, and supposed to form under such principles the republican whole of South America united and great, which had been the object of its dreams." The most expensive of his dreams, we would say.

Sadly, before he died, and in anticipation of what was coming, he exclaimed, "I have plowed into the sea." His perception was so acute that he also said, "America is ungovernable by us." In all this, he was right, to our misfortune. But what disturbed him most and gave him anxiety in his last days was to realize that his America that he loved so much would come to be in the hands of incompetent rulers after his death. He said, "Our America will fall into the hands of vulgar tyrants." At another time he mentioned with disdain that, "only a skillful tyrant can rule America." His

position as a political prophet has not been duly recognized because from that date onwards a wave of dictator-tyrants would rule the destinies of many peoples of Latin America. From his death onwards there was a promotion of tyranny, in which each one proclaimed himself the defender of freedom, the right way to happiness and peace. All these promises were made with the most brutal cynicism by people who came to power by virtue of an accident and not by historical inevitability.

For a correct interpretation of this essay, it is necessary to clarify the terms that we will use to designate the various leaders that governed us, whose remnants are still difficult to eradicate in all the classes of our society: authoritarianism. A tyrant is, "the ruler who imposes his will on his subjects without following reason or justice and, sometimes, with cruelty." Some authors use the word caudillo (warlord) which is to say, "A person who exercises omnipotent influence over his people in political or administrative matters," and when we use the term dictator we are pointing to a "person who abuses his authority or who is inflexible in dealing with others." In any case, all three definitions have the same connotations that are consistent with this study.

We will not fall into the widespread error of thinking that they were one hundred percent negative. No. But we will point out their great defects, which outweighed their virtues and caused a tremendous setback through a type of politics characterized by despotism, incompetence, squandering, rapaciousness, nepotism, and impunity. All this combined with a

megalomania to ultimately overshadow reality. We will reduce them to the size of human beings, although some of them bordered on animalistic. We will see that the human being has not changed, what changes are the clothing and the scenario. We will see many names that were the nightmare of the liberator. And, although they are personalities that repeat themselves, it is interesting to observe, and we believe that it is also instructive, that the whole history of Latin America is a testimony of bad political formation.

Bolivar's Successors

We will begin by focusing on Bolivar's nation. After his death, there were three interesting figures in the history of Venezuela, who are remembered for different reasons: José Antonio Páez, Antonio Guzmán Blanco, and Juan Vicente Gómez. We will take an anecdotal look at the first two, since the dictator, Gómez, will be analyzed in more detail later.

Páez managed the country with a firm hand from 1830 to 1846. According to his biographers, he loved only two things, money and destroying his enemies. Furthermore, he was a murderous tiger to finish off his opponents and "a meek sheep in the halls of flattery." (Let us keep in mind that this detail - that of flattery - is said of all those who reach this kind of power.) He was a man who knew how to deal with wealthy people, who in turn supported his command. He created monopolies for himself and his friends. On two occasions he put the presidency in the hands of other men while continuing to control the military from his estate. Something typical of our misinterpreted politics for many years: the military is the one who, behind the scenes, has held the reins of some countries. This kind of military man cannot

possibly relinquish control of the country's strongest force. If he did, he would have been a great military man in the eyes of history.

The next president, who governed in a picturesque manner, was Antonio Guzmán Blanco, the "type of Latin American aristocrat in full formation." Fond of everything that smelled of French and owner of "a sublime egocentrism," he allowed statues to be erected during his government and pompous titles to be bestowed upon him. The most conspicuous of which was that of "illustrious American." (We know very well that vanity is inherent in all human beings, but these individuals display an exorbitant vanity. It is no coincidence to find parallels at present, in all spheres). All his ministers were content and one who dared to contradict him was sent to be shot. This is another detail that appears among tyrants: to not allow someone to contradict him. We will see more examples below.

Even before Gómez, there were others who reflected a foolish way of doing politics. When General Francisco Linares Alcántara was asked what his government program was, he answered, "to climb the tower of the cathedral and throw gold pieces at everyone who passes by." Which, in a way, he did. And when someone tried to propose a business to him, he answered, "Friend, don't be a fool, I have the best business in the world, which is the treasury." When reading this answer, we are reminded of the attitude of many officials who boast about their corruption among their friends with devilish abandon.

Cipriano Castro, a general whose time

in power is remembered for his parties, was the next to enter the list of inefficient rulers. It is not a question of criticizing his fondness of stepping on toes, nor his twenty-two young women that he had, but the fact that he maintained them together with his numerous children in a "relative luxury of life," with the money of the state. When it came to making judgments and charges, he appointed officials or dismissed them for no other reason than his own whim. Something typical of our emotional politicians. This is another detail that must be taken into account because this continues to work throughout our geography: incapable people are appointed to high positions with no other merit than their friendship with the boss of the day.

For Castro, the finance ministry was the most ideal place from where he could build up the wealth of his friends. Everyone profited from such opportunities. He recalled the advice of a previous ruler who said, "We must act in haste while there is still time to do so. The treasury is like a river; we all have a right to drink, and the only quarrel between us is the size of the pitcher." The reader may recognize that this approach is still used today, not only at the government level but also at the level of any public institution.

Bolivar's Worst Nightmare

In the political life of Latin America, nothing has been the object of such meticulous studies as Caudillismo: dictatorship, or the simple predominance of a man who relies on personal patronage. In the past, even in the recent past, caudillismo has triumphed so frequently that many consider it

the most outstanding characteristic of the political life of Latin America. In the case of Venezuela, it is almost comical. Since 1830, the date of the division of the Gran Colombia, and the beginning of national existence in this country until 1935, a caudillo has always replaced the preceding one. In this case, none as nefarious as Juan Vicente Gómez. He belongs to the list of those who pushed back the cart of Hispano-American history and moved Mr. Simon to his grave. He is a compilation of everything that is related to a dictatorship, wherever the dictator may be. Let's examine him.

This cold-hearted and imperturbable man was entrusted with power for only a few months, but he went on to stay in power for twenty-seven years! He called the new political change the rehabilitation. (We are not surprised by the pompous titles with which his governments were given.) Since his first year of celebrations in office, "a festival of macabre, disproportionate jokes, cynicism, [and] ridicule hovered over the great hacienda of Gómez." Gómez considered Venezuela as a property of his own. Something typical of any tyrant. To begin with, and in an act of pure cynicism, he freed his brother accused of murder and appointed him commander of the same prison. He put his people in key positions and, "they would remain in them, as long as they conducted themselves well and kept their views to themselves." Anyone who expressed a free idea or made an independent movement was imprisoned and tortured. No government used prison more cruelly than Gómez.

His designated jailers were the cruelest, capable of all wickedness, with no mercy. Torture was the "ignominious symbol of the inhuman primitivism of the regime."two, since the dictator, Gómez, will be analyzed in more detail later.

In his work *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, Gabriel García Márquez paints a lively picture of a military tyrant with "his very long life as a solitary despot," who could very well be Gómez or any other tyrant. As García Márquez suggests, when governed by a dictator of this nature the people believe that he will never die, precisely because of the pressure to which he is subjected. In the case in question, the people thought Gómez would never die. In the meantime, it became impossible to mention his name or a single word directly or indirectly of his government. It must have been terrible to have lived in such deep fear. No one could organize, let alone talk about what they felt. Of course, there were some brave ones who did, but it was useless.

Like any dictator unsure of his power, Gómez developed a system of espionage that grew into a vast organization. There were spies everywhere. In fact, everyone wanted to be one. Nothing could happen anywhere in the country without Gómez immediately being informed. With this widespread fear of being spied on, any revolutionary attempt was doomed to failure. The slightest phrase of protest, spoken or written, resulted in jail. He muzzled the press to an extreme degree. His writers, sycophants, and employees wrote the most absurd notes in order to praise him. Once, one of the main newspapers of Caracas published the news that Gómez had changed the weather of Maracay

with his presence. García Márquez, in the above-mentioned work, writes with the finest of ironies that the "Politicians of letters and undaunted flatterers claimed him to be the corrector of earthquakes, eclipses, leap years and other errors of God." (Indeed, in the art of governing, then and now, there has always been creeping duplicity.) It went to the extreme of making the people believe that if someone spoke ill of the tyrant, it was worse than speaking of divine authority. What is shocking to thinking and reasoning people is that these tyrants surround themselves with a facade of peace and prosperity.

We know very well that every government has to create its own mechanisms of domination to stay in power. A dictatorship needs them, even more, to remain in power indefinitely. In this regard, Gómez controlled everything and said that with money and jobs everyone could be bought. He was always seen with his pockets full of wads of bills and "gave them to certain people with great pleasure." He thought that there was no one who would have been tempted to refuse them. Anyone who wrote well about him received prizes, whether he was a poet or a writer.

The people around him were a horde of opportunists, eager to take advantage of his generosity even if it meant disregarding ethics and morals. He controlled the Congress at will and began to look for ways to win their favor. They awarded him the "Order

of the Liberator," and lived for the rest of his days with the title of "El Benemérito" (The Meritorious). Another of his sarcasms, since we know that this word means, "worthy of great esteem for the services he has rendered."

Whenever the council met to elect a president for the next term, everyone knew that there was no possibility for any candidate other than Gómez. In 1913, a newspaper editor announced another candidacy. He was arrested and the candidate had to flee to another country. In 1923, this puppet congress once again elected Gómez as president for a new term and three of his brothers as vice presidents; "an act of nepotism unparalleled in the history of the world."

And when it seemed that he was immortal, he died. The people then experienced a sense of courage, "as one who notices the well-being produced in a numb body, feeling the tingling that brings back the awakening of its limbs." Everyone took to the streets to celebrate the death of the tyrant who had suffocated them for almost thirty years.

Other Disruptions to Bolivar's Dream

Different in ethnic and social origin, and in their innovative or reactionary ideologies, educated or uneducated (let's remember that Gómez was semi-literate), we must recognize that some dictators have been a factor of progress for their country in certain areas. Although, in most cases, they have only set their people back. From the south of the Bravo River to the Land of Fire, these rulers were responsible for such great social inequalities that they gave meaning to the phrase, "Power doesn't corrupt men; but if the mediocre

come to power, they corrupt it." Let us look at some of these leaders from an all-encompassing perspective. We will not analyze their political history, but simply demonstrate the fact that many times the trivial is what brings us closer to the man. Lastly, one must keep in mind that only a mythical figure does not bear any blemishes to their legacy, but the actions of these leaders were not only foolish, but also irrational.

Starting with the Dominican Republic, we meet Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, best known for his rule during the "Era of Trujillo." The legacy of his government was one in which, "Millions of people, tainted by propaganda, lack of information and brutalized by indoctrination, isolation, stripped of free will and even curiosity, with the use of fear and the practice of enslavement and obsequiousness, came to deify Trujillo." And still, many of his followers came to affirm that this manipulator of "naive and lazy fools" was a godsend for the Republic.

Under his regime of terror, it seemed as though the end of the world was imminent. He exercised over Dominicans a hypnotizing power that was worse than fear. He created a devilishly effective system in which the majority of the people, sooner or later, participated as spies or accomplices to the point in which only the exiled or the dead were safe. Everyone feared losing what was theirs. If someone was intelligent or capable, sooner or later he was called to serve the "benefactor." One was not allowed to say no because Trujillo had, "taken away from men the sacred right granted to them by God, free will."

Naturally, around him arose groups of bootlickers who compared him to Charlemagne, Napoleon, or Bolivar.

In this sense, human beings have not changed; there are people who, when they work for nobility, forget their values, and lose their sensibility and their integrity. Unfortunately, the lack of perspective from these workers contributed to the inflated ego of their superiors. It was common for superiors to give themselves and their workers extravagant titles which only turned out to be complete deceptions. These included titles such as Benefactor, Best Democrat, Best Teacher, Best Student, Best Journalist, Candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize (just before engaging in the killing of thousands of Haitians), Recipient of the Annual Book Award, Doctor (without having studied), Knight of the Order of Genius, Restorer of Financial Independence (when everyone knew that he considered public funds his personal fun money), sole head of the Dominican party, Protector of Organized Labor, Maximum Leader of the Opposition, Language Academic, Extraordinary Ambassador, and Professor of Economics (without ever having taught a class). But still, in a long history of electoral frauds, the people continued to "elect" him undoubtedly.

He ruled his country with an obscene passion. He thought he owned everything and everyone. This included various monopolies, cattle raising, can factories, beer factories, weapons, explosives, fruit juices, chocolates, shoes, clothes, alcohol, real estate, public records, vegetable oil, flour, sugar mills, cement, asphalt, concrete blocks, sawmills, steel, the only two shipping companies, shipyards, air transportation, newspapers, radio,

television, pharmaceutical sales, insurance companies, the national lottery, and organized crime in all its manifestations; as well as the hunger and misery of the majority of Dominicans.

After thirty-one years of living a huge lie, the people realized that the only way to end the tyranny was to end the tyrant. He was assassinated in 1961.

The Profile of a Dictator: When Fiction Trumps Reality

When reviewing our comical, political history we could never forget Manuel Estrada Cabrera. An evil tyrant for more than twenty years, he implemented a crooked, corrupt, and cruel tyranny in Guatemala during the early twentieth century. Cold, inaccessible, mean, vindictive, and all-powerful, he controlled the distribution of goods and evils at his will over the heads of his fellow countrymen. Under his regime, people lived in an atmosphere dominated by slander and intrigue, by denunciation, and by envy and revenge. Despite this, he sustained his power due to the rampant mediocrity of his people who indulged him with phrases such as, "Many of us profess the belief that a man like you should rule the people of France, or free Switzerland, or industrious Belgium, or wonderful Denmark," or, "For a man of vast enlightenment, Mr. President, it is with good reason that you are held in the world to be one of the first statesmen of modern times."

However, everyone knew of the cruel power that reigned in this Central American republic, plagued by crime, unpunished murder, and the moral degeneration of its president. In Paraguay, the supreme Dr. Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia, who was well represented in the work I, the Supreme by Augusto Roa Bastos, reigned for many years. This work

turned the figure of the dictator into the main character of a vibrant epic who, during long years of silence and death, tyrannized his people. Dr. Francia recognized that the power of rulers is held in ignorance, on the domesticated meekness of the people they govern.

The fact is, our turbulent political reality far exceeds what we could conjure up in fiction. It is not necessary to have an extensive memory to remember who governed, and who, with glamorous phrases, duped their unwary people. In other words, these leaders claimed to have contributed so much to these countries but in reality only set them back by many years. "When I came here there was nothing. I made everything myself." Benjamin Carrion wrote, "The crude deception of material advancement and the promotion of public works has been the poor resource of almost all the unimaginative leaders who have plagued, for periods of time, many of our Spanish-American peoples." This goes for Melgarejo as well as Juan Vicente Gómez, García Moreno, Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, Estrada Cabrera, Ubico, Pérez Jiménez or Anastasio Somoza. But yet, the nations still do not fall. The old saying is as follows, "You can deceive all people for a certain time or you can deceive part of the people all the time, but you cannot deceive all people, all the time. A saying that has been relentlessly confirmed over and over in the history of Spanish America. And of all the deceptions, there is none worse than the false promise of material works, which excuses the lack of absolute initiative in those who use it."

All of this was due to an absence of political maturity in our societies,

rather than the consequences of inherent political ignorance. As the writer Ubaldo Gil said, "The legacies of Rafael Trujillo, Pinochet, Stroessner, Batista, Perón, Castro and other dictators of our America never seem to end because the very existence of our democracies is a whirlpool of contradictions. Our democracies and those who rule over them struggle to be understood not as they could be, or can be, but as they are."

If we review the characters outlined here, it becomes clear what a true dictator is. The dictator seeks to conceal his inner insecurity by means of grand gestures, noise, and lights. He begins by spewing hatred and persecutions. He only speaks of the happiness and progress of the nation. He only lives thanks to his party. He speaks of his empire that will last a thousand years. He is solemn and dramatic. He has unchecked power backed by violence. He creates a crisis and then appears as a savior. He pretends to shake the foundations of society. He believes himself to be the lord of life and death. He is not loved, he is feared. The dictator is vengeful, that is why he hates, kills, and banishes. He is blindly obeyed, even if he says the most unfounded things. In short, the dictator knows that people who have known oppression can be oppressed.



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Conclusion

When looking for an explanation the tendency has been, for those who have dedicated themselves to the study of this form of power, to blame it on the peculiar temperament of Hispanic Americans. In reality, we are extraordinarily cynical and masochistic people. We recognize our own weaknesses and make jokes about them. Elena Poniatowska says that "Our history as Latin Americans is one of magic, misery, and abandonment and no philosopher has ever really defined us, no philosopher has taught us to be proud of ourselves...and the dream of Bolivar remains just that, a dream. It serves for speeches, it remains far, far away, on a horizon that no one can reach, and it is just another example of our already florid

Latin American rhetoric...and despite our intensity, we have never considered Latin American integrity as a matter of survival. We are so immersed in our own problems that we live almost always in states of emergency, on the brink of cataclysms, both natural and those of our economy."

Finally, we can say, although it is perhaps very hard to admit, that the great lesson history gives us every day is that there has never been a tyranny that has not been deserved by those who suffer from it. In reality, the tyrant is always the avenger of our own faults. For him to disappear it is not him we have to defeat, but ourselves.



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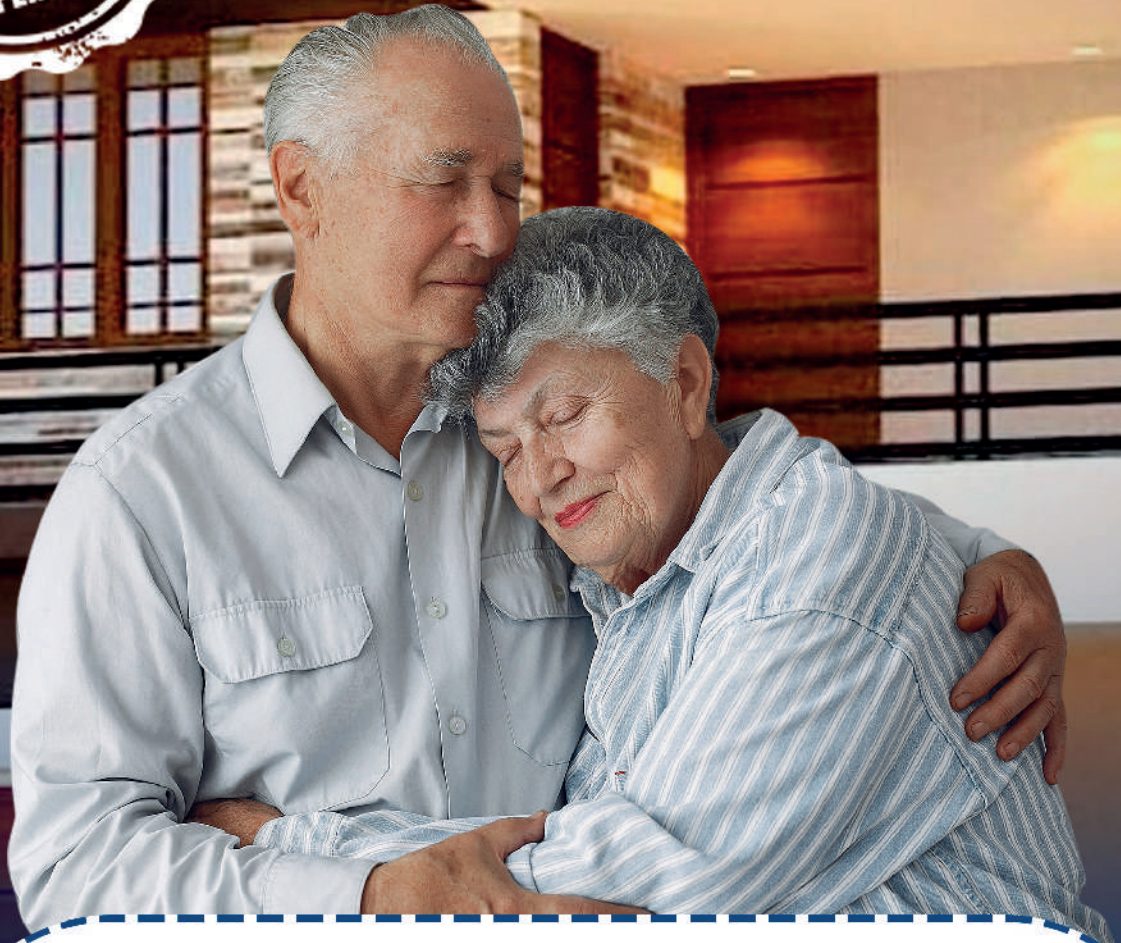


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Cuyabeno: Part Two



by Peter Stromberg

The following morning we were moving a little slower, as people naturally do in the rain. Packing all of our earthly belongings out of the wounded truck and into the taxi. The deluge continued. We made a quick detour to “Home Depot” to buy some black plastic to try and keep our already damp backpacks from being soaked while in transit in the bed of the truck; we formed a luggage burrito. We had missed one day of the actual “vacation” part of our vacation due to our transportation issues. The pace of the crew quickened once we were moving in the right direction. We needed to be at the bridge by 2:00 PM for our rendezvous with the canoe and team. Our guide’s name was Chino, a local from the Siona tribe that calls this region of the flooded Amazon home.

The Siona language is called Tucanoan, and it has a very unique sound and cadence. Although most Siona people now speak Spanish, when they talk amongst themselves it’s usually in their native tongue. I’m not sure why it is so pleasing to the ear, even without understanding the language. It was the sound of adventure and far-off places. According to Wikipedia, “Today, Ecuadorian Siona is spoken by less than 250 people and is critically endangered.” It’s a sound and a rhythm that won’t be around much longer. Replaced by a language that fits better into a smartphone.

The Siona are water people who live with the flow of the river and rains. They locate their communities on

the banks of the rivers and their houses are carved out of the forest. They are on the water daily, as there are no roads in this part of the Amazon. All of the transportation, from work to leisure, happens by boat. Before the outboard motor and fiberglass boats, dugout canoes powered by paddles were the means of transport. You can still see the single-tree dugout canoes being used in the early mornings by the more seasoned fishermen. The guides today are known for their ability to pilot the 8-meter-long boats at high speeds through tunnels that they hack open with their machetes. It is exhilarating to travel through the forest on a 25-foot-long canoe with an outboard motor pushing her through the vines and trees at max speed...in the dark.

The Siona people are also known for their deep knowledge of the forest and the medicinal plants only found in the Amazon. Ayahuasca is a plant that has recently sprouted in popularity and exposure in the modern western world and pop culture. From Silicon Valley CEOs to Hollywood types, it seems the secret is making her way out of the jungle. In one of the Siona villages in Cuyabeno lives a family of several shamans by trade. They are four brothers that have been practicing ancient medicine since around the ages of eight or nine. The oldest brother is 78, and the youngest of the brothers is in his early 40s. As a part of “community tourism,” most of the eco-lodges in the area offer their guests a day trip with the Siona’s, learning about their way of life. On the tour, the ladies harvest yuca and make it into

delicious yuca bread over an open fire, while the Shaman performs a “limpia,” or cleansing ceremony, on tourists (without the medicine). The shaman sings an “Icaro” while waving a handful of leaves in a circular, repetitive motion around the patient's head. Along with the singing in their language, most of the time some whistling is involved while the shaman looks at your spirit and cleans accordingly.

When community members fall ill, they seek out the shaman for medical advice and counsel. Traditionally, the shaman would drink the prepared mix of ayahuasca and enter a higher state of awareness. This allowed them to diagnose the patient and have a deep sense of what was ailing that particular person. I've also heard them speak about walking through the forest in this heightened state and seeing the plants that the patient might need stand out by shining brighter. Some take micro-doses before the hunt. It helps them speak and think like the animals they are tracking, one hunter explained to me. There are a million ailments that ayahuasca is prescribed as remedy for in the Amazon.

The shaman's thatch-roofed hut, or maloka, is usually kept out of town, or apart from the community, which makes sense for several reasons. The ceremonies last until dawn. There's singing, and other “noises” that can, and will, happen throughout the evening and into the morning. The shaman also calls all animal spirits and protects you from the ones you might have unknowingly

brought, so it makes sense to have the ceremony out of town. Nobody would enjoy being the shaman's neighbor. He makes the family next door with the 10 roosters look like good neighbors!

The maloka serves a couple of functional purposes, such as providing shelter from the nightly Amazon downpour, having an ample fire pit, and the ability to hold a “town's worth” of hammocks. Made from strong hardwood beams, the rafters hold at least a dozen hammocks, as the hammock is the preferred craft for time travel by the Siona. I saw some beautiful handmade hammocks with lines made from a fiber that gets spun by a specific type of palm tree. The nicer malokas have some sort of toilet apparatus, and sometimes a grass lawn and some landscaping. I've yet to see 5-star AirBnB accommodations when it comes to these types of real authentic experiences in the Amazon. The “spa type” facilities exist in the world, and I think that is an amazing channel to get medicine to the people who need to receive it in that more manicured manner. It comes down to what you're looking for in the end, and each location has its advantages and disadvantages. Regardless of your choice of setting, the results of drinking the ancient concoction can be life-changing.

Amongst our group, there were some rumblings of trying the mysterious medicine, little whispers



by Manuel Avilés

here and there, until someone came forward and said to one of our guides that he'd like to try some. This got the wheels turning. The guide approached me and asked if I would go with the "tourist" to the ceremony. That was a big ask. After some thought, I agreed, as I wanted a rematch of my first experience in 2015. Seven years earlier, I had the privilege of spending a night with Izak and three friends, drinking the medicine for the first time. Time travel in a hammock, and visiting long-passed relatives in the spirit world, is a memory I hold dear to my heart. I'd have to admit that I was eager to have another tour of that magical night. As it turned out, the shamans had a different plan for me that evening.

The morning of the day of the ceremony arrived. I was still looking for a push or a sign from the forest that today was a good day. As our group was touring around in the boats to see the pink river dolphins, we came around a wide bend in the river. With my neck strained and looking at the canopy, I caught the moment a harpy eagle left its perch and glided across an opening in the forest formed by the curve of the chocolate river. The harpy is the biggest of the eagles in South America and feeds on big prey, like monkeys and sloths. It was massive, and as I looked at our guide, we both agreed that seeing such a rare creature was a good omen.

The "tourist" who started all the ayahuasca talk was starting to come up with excuses as to why he should not follow through. Cold feet. Something about having to drive the next day was his

reason for why he'd have to decline attending the night's ritual. In moments of truth sometimes one's curiosity can be overcome by the fear of the unknown. As the commitment had been made and preparations set in motion, our guide and I decided to stick to the plan and go through with the ceremony. We sent word to the shaman in the morning that we were on schedule and only Chino and I would be in attendance. "No tourists on this space shuttle," I remember thinking.

The day carried on as any day deep in the Amazon. Jaw-dropping beauty with incredible creatures playing around in the trees, eye candy in every direction. Deep and dark green was the signature color of this forest. Parrots and macaws were flapping their way through the sky, as the only real traffic that happens in the Amazon is in the sky. Troops of monkeys swung through the forest in front of us. As we sat down to eat in the early afternoon, I took a look at my plate of food and smiled. I noticed Chino smiling as well. "Buen provecho... y nos vemos pronto." We both giggled at our plates of food. Most of the time in an ayahuasca ceremony you see your food again; purging is part of the cleanse.

After sunset, we loaded up into the boat. Traveling through the maze of trees at incredible speeds, led by the light of a tiny headlamp and brief flashes from the moon, it was an intricate display of mental mapping. It was dark, and we were going so fast that my hat blew off. We were missing trees by inches, and sometimes not

missing them at all, with a gentle graze on the side of the boat from time to time. When we arrived safely at the dock, I glanced back at Chino. He was giggling at my apparent fear while he pushed the limits of what was possible in those boats.

Entering the maloka, I was immediately aware that there was more than one shaman there, two of the four brothers. They were adorned in their full shaman attire. Upon their heads perched an intricate crown of tropical feathers with every color imaginable, in a perfect arrangement like a crisp rainbow. The tiny beaded necklaces draped down in great numbers over their chests, a single feather piercing through each ear lobe. Faces painted red with achiote in designs that tell the stories of their ancestors. Finally, the shamans wore a necklace made from the fangs of the jaguar, the signature attire of any shaman. Over recent years, hunting and deforestation have led to the puma's shrinking numbers. Because of this, most of the shamans have four to six jaguar fangs, and the rest of the necklace is supplemented by the tusks of the wild boar. These most precious relics are passed down from father to son, from one shaman to the next. The jaguar fangs were as long as my middle finger.

It was completely dark in there, not the usual soft light from a small fire. The lack of vision made getting my hammock set up a little bit trickier. As I

fumbled around in the dark tying knots and getting my area sorted, it dawned on me that this wasn't a tourist ceremony. This was a meeting amongst the men of the Siona tribe. As I set the "perfect" angle on the hammock, one of the brothers approached me with a huge gourd cup full of liquid. It was so big that I thought it was water and declined, saying I had brought my own. After a quick laugh, he said, "No, eso no es agua." Dread and fear started at the top of my head and ran right through my body. This was a massive dose of medicine. It was hard to tell from holding the cup just how big it was, but once I was on the fourth gulp, I realized that I had been served around three times as much as I had taken on past journeys. Gulp after gulp, the dirt-tasting concoction was reluctantly guided to the pits of my stomach. "Jeez, that was a lot," I remember the voice in my head saying as the shaman smiled ear to ear, teeth visible in the low light like the cat in *Alice in Wonderland*.

As I leaned back in my hammock, my mind soberly drifted between fear and excitement. The brothers were talking amongst themselves with Chino in their local dialect. There was no pageantry or singing, no shaking of any rattles, or beating of any drums. This was a meeting to get down to business; cut right to the meat and potatoes of it all. I was f-ing terrified. This dose was big, and sooner or later, I had to punch the ticket and the ride would start, past the point of no return. About 15 minutes after drinking the medicine, I noticed a buzzing sound flying around my head. Ecuador has massive insects and the bees are no exception. Some of them

make a buzzing sound that sounds like a small airplane. I wrongly assumed the buzz I heard was an insect. I would later find out from the shaman that it was one of the spirits of the ayahuasca protecting me; warning me maybe of what was about to occur. The buzzing stayed with me for the next eight hours. The familiar buzzing sound changed intensities depending on what was happening to me at the time.

As previously mentioned, purging is a part of the process, to some degree or another, depending on many factors. Factors such as diet preceding the event, size of the dose, and of course, how the medicine is prepared. These all factor into how the body will react to each experience with the plant. Another factor is how often you expose yourself to the plants. The shamans, for example, barely purge, if at all. I heard some uncomfortable spitting, maybe from them, but nothing on the scale that I've witnessed happen to myself and other tourists. Generally speaking, the healthier and cleaner you treat your body, the less difficult the purging part of the ride can be. Just like the trepidation and excitement that occurs while waiting for any psychedelic experience to start, ayahuasca is no different, save for one factor. What you're waiting for generally is to explode as the purging is the signal that the ride has begun and your journey has started.

Twenty minutes had passed. It felt like I had a wild beast in my guts and it was trying to climb out. I noticed some lights and the sound of a motor coming down the river. It was another boat pulling up and

docking. I was outside taking a knee in the grass as the two older brothers jumped out of the boat and came walking by in their full shaman garb. It was an awkward greeting. I was literally about to explode as we shook hands. I said my hellos and moved towards the garden to begin the purge.

The next 10 hours were some of the hardest of my life. I had a poison inside me and my body was rejecting it with every cell of my being. My body wanted it out, all of it. As the four shamans and my friend Chino swayed in the hammocks, giggling and carrying on in their native tongue, I was pretty sure it was at my expense. They made fun of me in their own way, and the harder I released, the harder and longer they laughed and cheered. There was no singing of ancient songs, no rattle shaking, or drum beating. This was just the medicine and the man in the forest....good luck.

Having drank medicine over a dozen times, I have had a couple of the magical experiences that you might have heard about coursing through Youtube videos or in a documentary on Netflix. On a previous voyage, I had a very real-feeling conversation with my long-deceased grandma and grandpa. Other spiritual dimensions maybe. This time was not that. This was pain and agony. Pure survival, both mentally and physically. I purged for 10 hours. In the thick of the experience, I couldn't help but laugh a bit, thinking to myself, "If you can survive this, there's not much to be

scared of in the real world.” The sound of a rhythmic buzzing filled my ears. Laying back in the hammock, waiting for morning to show her much welcome arrival, birds chirping and the blue light were soothing me through the end of the journey. The brothers laughed and told animated stories that I couldn’t come close to understanding, other than what I could pick up through body language and smiles. We talked about the night briefly and said our goodbyes.

Chino and I loaded up in the boat and made our way back through the forest tunnel waterways in silence. Taking left and right turns that come around blind corners, dodging ancient trees that tower out of the water and hold up the canopy. Thinking about making those same moves in the dark, made me realize how memorized or instinctual these routes are. It’s like living in the same neighborhood for your whole life and knowing the back alleys and tiny shortcuts that get you home a bit quicker. Instead of street signs and houses, these navigators use specific trees and turns in the river, and holes in the forest walls. To the layman, these look like the rest of the forest, not the shortcut through the island. Ancient trails and pathways that have been passed down for generations and need constant cleaning by the machete, as the Amazon tries to close the open spaces in the endless competition for the precious sunlight.

As my body was jerked back and forth by the aggressive boat maneuvers I was thinking, “Why do it? What’s the point of putting yourself

through all of this amazing discomfort?” Even typing this now and replaying that amazingly difficult night back in my head, I’m wondering what the benefits of the medicine are. They seem to reveal themselves over time and are not always obvious. I think the more profound “trips” I’ve taken had an obvious benefit. I solved a question I was asking or came to terms with the loss of a loved one. There was an intention and a goal, and it was achieved. Although those might be the experiences that you might hear the most about or become more romanticized, I find that I draw the most strength from my harder experiences with the medicine.

Don’t get me wrong, I’d prefer to ride unicorns over rainbows and visit passed loved ones around a psychedelic campfire, only to be given some sage advice as to the meaning of life. Those kinds of journeys do happen with ayahuasca and I’ve had some blissful experiences while under the influence of this ancient poison. However, much like most adventures in life, the ones that I draw on most often, or that I learned the most about myself, were the harder times and the mishaps. Nobody plans on failing, and we go on adventures in the hopes of having fun. Sometimes, however, the car breaks down, it rains the whole time, and you overdose on an ancient medicine from deep in the Amazon jungle. Regardless of mishaps and bad luck, adventure was had; and although not planned, these types of adventures often turn out to be exactly the medicine you need.



by Manuel Avilés



by Manuel Avilés



The Manabi Market Fair

by Merly Loor Q
Daniela Delgado M
Johanna Alarcon H

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Manta is a booming commercial area that has seen considerable population growth in recent years. The national and international migration to the area has improved the quality of life and economy of the people of Manta. Year after year several festivals and fairs are put on to continue stimulating the economy and without exception, each one of them are distinctive and memorable for all who attend.

Manabí Market was born from the hearts of three young women entrepreneurs who came together to complete a project for their master's degree. Little did they know this project would turn into something much bigger. The HiExpat team attended the Manabi Market, along with other brands who sponsored the event, and are excited to tell you more about this initiative and the creators behind it.

The Founders of Manabi Market

• Merly Loor Q

A young businesswoman from Manta who graduated in Foreign Trade and International Business. She is passionate about creating innovative businesses that generate social and economic value for the city and the country.

Co-founder - Manabí Market

Founder of Merly Loor Real Estate Broket

• Daniela Delgado M

A young businesswoman from Manta who graduated

in Hotel Management and Tourism with a specialization in events. She is an activist who cares deeply about the environment, animals, and human rights. Passionate about business with a purpose, she supports innovation and holds brands accountable to environmental and social responsibility.

Co-founder Manabí Market

Founder VIDA ECO EC

• Johanna Alarcon H

From Manta, a young architect by profession and entrepreneur by conviction, she leads her own design studio and direction of architectural, urban and interior projects. She has specialized in the area of construction, remodeling and furniture design, carrying out comprehensive projects nationwide.

Co-founder Manabí Market

Founder of Johanna Alarcón H.

Interview with the Founders of Manabi Market

1.- We love the idea of Manabi Market. Can you tell us how this project was created?

Manabí Market was born from a graduation project for the Latin American School of Entrepreneurship and Citizen Leadership in 2015. Our love of connecting with people pushed us to think about more ways we could connect people, and we decided that the best way to do it was through an event such as a business and networking fair.

2.- What prompted you to create a festival focused on supporting businesses in Manta?





We wanted to discover and bring innovative businesses from different cities in Ecuador to Manta! Connecting businesses with future partners and investors and encouraging the consumption of Ecuadorian products is part of our philosophy of local consumption.

3.- Who are the people behind Manabi Market? Tell us a little about how you all know each other and how you came up with the idea for the festival.

There are three of us in total and we are all proudly from Manta. Each of us were lucky enough to receive a scholarship from the School of Entrepreneurship and Leadership. Going through school together, we decided to unite our visions and values in order to help the city and connect more people and their businesses.

4.- What has been the reaction from most vendors after selling at the Manabi Market event?

Overwhelmingly the biggest reaction is of thanks and gratitude. Vendors thank us for connecting them to customers, allowing them to close sales, and for putting on a well-organized event which benefits all who participate and attend.

5.- What is your vision for the expat community in Manta?

We hope to see the expat community continue to grow and grow. We know that many expats first arrive by references from friends but once they know everything that Manta can offer, such as a high quality of life, pleasant weather, and delicious cuisine, we hope they make the decision to stay.

As locals we are continually improving things and we are excited to form a community with expats. We want to live our lives together and that's why we believe we need more spaces and activities where the local community and the expat community can interact.

6.- In your opinion, do you believe that an increase in the expat population in Manta has boosted certain economic areas for the region?

Of course! Without a doubt, the increase in the expat population in Manta has boosted many economic areas such as construction, real estate, tourism, investment, and business. We are pleased that the influence from this community has benefited so many and are very excited that the expat community continues to choose us as a destination.

Additionally, we extend our gratitude to the expat community for attending Manabí Market and showing their support to the different businesses who visited our beloved city! We truly hope you enjoyed the event.

7.- How connected do you find the local community and expat community to be?

I think we are going through a transition towards being able to connect more and more with the expat community. The people of Manta are very warm, friendly people, and very willing to collaborate, so being able to connect is something that flows naturally for us.

We wholeheartedly believe that we need more spaces and activities where we can connect local culture and people with the expat community!





8.- Can you tell us a little about the experience you had with Don Shader and other expats who attended the event?

We think the work that Don Shader is doing is spectacular, giving exposure and sharing information about Ecuador with the whole world is what we need! We were excited to chat, take photos, and even be part of an interview for his YouTube channel.

We had the opportunity to meet many new people from the expat community and introduce them to vendors during the two days of the fair. We are very grateful for the experience and to the people.

9.- If you were to create a fair that aimed to connect expats to local culture and businesses, what area of culture would you focus on?

We would love to promote a food and drink festival including cocktails, craft beers, and music! For us, food is an integral part of meeting new people and connecting cultures.

10.- What was your favorite part of planning this project?

Our favorite part, by far, was being able to connect with everyone who wanted to be a part of this project. We even had people who currently live in other countries contact us with the hope of joining forces and supporting this great cause.

11.- Can you tell us a bit about the sponsors of this event and how you got them to come together for this project?

It was definitely a team effort. We have worked on our credibility and on proposing win-win negotiations. When we presented the Manabí Market

project and explained that the main purpose of the event was to help entrepreneurs and businesses and support the local economy, many put their politics aside and joined forces with us to put on a great event. Sponsors such as La Guarda, Fiat, Municipality of Manta, Purissima, Systray, KV Travel, Hi Expat, Fali, ULEAM, Merlt Loor Real Estate Broker, Johana Alarcón Arquitecta, Trattoria Da Gabriele, ALAS, iLatina, Taurus Gym, La Casa de Lucho, Majo Mieves, Rodan T, Muya Gourmet Kitchen, Oopa Bakery, and Family Market all participated. We had the joy of bringing together a very strong community of sponsors and for that we are grateful.

12.- Please tell us a little about the band that performed on Saturday, after the wine tasting.

The band's name is RETROMACHINE. All the members are from Manta except for one member who is from Africa. They are an incredible musical band with a lot of talent and the ability to connect people with music from the 80s, 90s and 2000s. They are a hit! They play every Sunday at a restaurant called Caminito. We love being able to find and support local talent.

Manabí Market, without a doubt, stole the hearts of its participants and visitors. The event was full of energy, good food, good wine and good music. The beer stands were a crowd favorite as well, one which featured two young beer artisans from Quito. We are also proud to note that the event was pet friendly, environmentally conscious, and featured several stands dedicated to vegan food. Ecuador has great potential, strong and hard-working people, and a promising commercial future. It has been a pleasure connecting with the three entrepreneurs behind the festival and we look forward to catching up with these ambitious dreamers at the next Manabi Market.







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by Julio Merchán

Searching for Patriotism

When one hears about patriotic symbols they may think of the national flag, especially the flag of Ecuador, which is honored by flag bearers and accompanies young people who graduate from educational institutions as a badge of patriotism.

These symbols are very important for the citizens of Ecuador since they are a sign of honor. Patriotic symbols are recognizable by their three colors, which are yellow, blue, and red.

The symbols on the flag signify protection against foreign invaders and honor the fight for independence.

Each color of the flag also has a meaning. The yellow represents the gold deposits and abundant land in the country, the blue represents the seas and the sky, and the red represents the blood shed by our heroes.

Ecuador was recognized as a republic for the first time in 1830, when the country took hold of its own destiny and began to walk with its own two feet, thus beginning to differentiate themselves from other countries.

National or patriotic symbols are images or figures that identify us as part of a country separate from others. Patriotic symbols give an identity to the people who are part of a country or a nation, representing the ideology of each individual that makes up their society.

I come from another generation and believe that the teaching that was imparted in the institutions in the past was for the purpose of molding the behavior of students through the values of the patriotic symbols. Our symbols encompass a myriad of values that we use for the education of students.

In the 80's and 90's there was a subject called civics, where we were taught to respect the national symbols. I bring this up because nowadays most young people and students do not know the meaning of the patriotic symbols and have little interest in learning about them. Additionally, we could add that most teachers do not give due importance to this subject, hence children and young people are forgetting their history.

In this century, with technology everywhere, we should be using it to our advantage and carrying out engaging activities so that children and young people know the history of patriotic symbols. If a young person does not know the significance of them, I believe that they will struggle to understand how they belong.

From the State itself, meaning the Ministry of Education, I believe it should be law that a young person cannot graduate if they do not know the significance of patriotic symbols. Knowledge is fundamental for one to value their identity. If we can deepen the understanding of our identity, children and young people in the future will be able to pass along knowledge and stand strong in the identity of their heritage.

Unfortunately, I have observed children and young people who do not sing the national anthem and do not stand at attention while it is sung. The reasons for this are diverse but include lack of civic education, indifference, and distraction.

Another cause could be because children were not taught at an early age what the value of belonging means. The teaching of this value begins at home, since it is the first place where children and young people know that they belong.

Looking at it this way, adults have a great responsibility before children and young people to teach them about the importance of symbols and values. These symbols teach young people to respect one's national identity and cultivate a sense of belonging to their country.

From an early age we must instill in them love and respect for our country, as it will be important for the civic formation of children and young people.

I encourage everyone to try to learn about and understand our patriotic symbols while deepening your knowledge about the history of Ecuador.

by Julie Harper

You Don't Have to Ask Permission to Play with Clay: T'uru Art Studio Manta



hoped for always comes forth in Ecuador. That's just my truth here. Therefore, I wasn't totally shocked when I received a call from my friends, Michael and Amy, wanting me to come along for a tour of T'uru. "Disconnect from your routine, connect with your hands."

Jose Gabriel, (owner of the Clara Barton School which is next door) walked us into the beautiful oversized artisanal doors. The brand new building is stunning and is flanked by gorgeous topiaries. The moment you walk into the space, ahhh, you are transformed. There is such a feeling of harmony. My respiration softly, gently slows...I think to myself, 'I can learn here.'

One of the shop's owners and José's mother, Aida Herrera, met us just inside and gave us all a beautiful smile and a genuine warm welcome with her kind and patient demeanor. You can just, I don't know, 'feel' it. Aida's business partner, Suanny Cantos is her daughter-in-law. While Aida is the face you see when you walk in the door, Suanny shares in the day-to-day operations, and also does the daunting task of marketing and ensuring that their teamwork is indeed, going to bring something new and fresh to Manta.

My friend Amy and I were immediately transformed. We became a couple of 'little kittens' with new spaces and objects of art to explore. We go our separate ways, only to greet each other every now and again with a huge smile and a hearty laugh and hug, knowing we had found bliss! Yes...it's that kind of place! And as curious as kittens, we relentlessly peppered our separate ways, only to greet each other every now and again with a huge smile and a hearty laugh and hug, knowing we had found bliss! Yes...it's that kind of place! And as curious as kittens,

we relentlessly peppered our gentle hostess with 1,000 questions to which she responded patiently and in detail to each of them. Aida escorted us through the sweeping space with high ceilings, pointing out that it isn't just clay they work with, but other malleable materials, using different techniques which also include window pane glass. The shelves throughout the space contained lovely fired pottery, ceramics, and glassware crafted by her students. But it's not for sale...only a display, like a museum of fine art. There are beautiful work tables, colorful chairs, and spaces that beckon you to 'be still, sit down and start creating.' The space is clean, well-lit, and impeccably organized. There is a calming soft drone of these new artisans talking about nothing but materials and technique; the art and sheer joy of learning. This is truly a family business. A family project. And with the launching of this project, it is obvious that they have each other's backs. It's a brave and beautiful undertaking.

How lucky are we, fellow expats? Every day we wake up, it gets better and better. Another business launched, another place to explore! Everyone I encountered at T'uru was bilingual.

T'uru is located right here in Manta. It is next door to the Clara Barton School in the Gavilanes Urbanización.

They are open M-F 9:30 to 12:30 and 3:30-6:00. They do have Saturday hours with a 6-person minimum requirement. Call for class options and prices or feel free to drop in and check it out. They can be contacted through WhatsApp at 0987515619. Let's start crossing things off our bucket lists.





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