

On March 31, 1979 thousands of bereaved Ecuadorians filed through the streets of Quito's old city to pay final homage to José María Velasco Ibarra, the man who had dominated their country's politics for some 40 years. Elected to the presidency on five occasions (1933, 1944, 1952, 1960, 1968), Velasco was repeatedly ousted from office by the military or forced to resign, completing only one full term (1952-1956). A powerful orator—he once boasted, "give me a balcony and the people are mine"—he followed demagogic campaign promises of fundamental reform with mediocre performance in office and maintenance of the status quo. Eschewing a political party base or an ideologically coherent program, Velasco Ibarra ran purely on the basis of his personality. As a result, Ecuadorian politics from 1952-1978 was largely marked by the alternation of Velasquista populism (nine years), military rule (ten years) and transitional civilian presidents lacking a popular mandate (four years), hardly a strong record of institutional development.² Though few suggested it at the time, Velasco's death—merely weeks before the final round of Ecuador's recent presidential election—may have symbolized the end of an era in that nation's politics—an era dominated by *caudillo* (strong man) rule, weak political parties, outdated ideological debates, and low levels of political legitimacy.

The Legacy of Underdevelopment
One of South America's smallest republics, Ecuador has also

traditionally been among the region's least developed nations. Through the early 1970s, the country experienced little industrialization and retained a substantial, impoverished rural population.

As Table 1 reveals, in 1970, among the ten Spanish-speaking nations of South America Ecuador ranked ninth in life expectancy, eighth in literacy, and eighth in urbanization. Indeed, the Ecuadorian economy was so undeveloped prior to the nation's post-1973 petroleum boom that, at the close of the past decade, the country had nearly twice as many government bureaucrats as industrial workers.³

Not surprisingly, the comparatively low level of socioeconomic development was accompanied by limited political participation. The small size of the nation's middle class, the absence of a strong trade union movement, the small number of skilled blue- and white-collar workers, and a low literacy rate all contributed to a nonparticipatory political culture. When national elections were held, suffrage was restricted to literates—less than half the adult population through the mid-1950s. Ecuadorian political scientist Rafael Quinteros notes that in the early 1950s, only 28.4 percent of the nation's adult population voted, a lower proportion than in Argentina (61.8%), Bolivia (51.4%), Colombia (40.2%), Peru (39.2%), or even Paraguay (29.1%).⁴ Indeed, in Ecuador's presidential elections held between 1948-1968 (that is, the five

elections preceding the one recently completed), a mere 30-55 percent of the country's adult population even managed to register and only 60-80 percent of those registered actually voted.⁵ In the countryside, participation has been particularly restricted since cultural and linguistic considerations have isolated much of the Andean Indian peasantry from the political arena. Those villagers who have voted often have been pressured to follow the dictates of local political bosses allied with the landed elite and, not infrequently, with the Catholic Church.

An Unrepresentative Political System

Ecuador's low level of political mobilization has undoubtedly helped spare the country the pronounced class conflict that has torn apart nations such as Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay in recent years. It has, however, also contributed to a weak political party system and rule by unresponsive elite cliques. Until the current election, the country had failed to establish mass-based, national parties.

Historically, Ecuadorian political parties distinguished themselves ideologically on the basis of their stance on church-state relations. "Left" parties—Liberals, Socialists—were anticlerical and secularist. Parties of the "Right"—Conservatives, Social Christians—were generally confessional Catholic. By the midtwentieth century, however, the church-state

Table 1

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Selected South American Nations (circa 1970)

Nation	Population (000) (Rank)*	Annual Popula- tion Growth (Rank)	Percent Urban (Rank)	Percent Literate (Rank)	Life Expectancy --Years (Rank)
Uruguay	2,886 (9)	1.3% (10)	79.9% (1)	90.5% (2)	68.4 (1)
Argentina	24,352 (2)	1.6% (9)	78.9% (2)	91.5% (1)	66.3 (2)
Colombia	21,116 (3)	3.2% (3)	57.5% (5)	72.9% (6)	60.6 (6)
ECUADOR	6,093 (7)	3.4% (2)	45.7% (8)	69.7% (8)	55.0 (9)
Bolivia	4,931 (8)	2.6% (7)	29.3% (10)	39.8% (10)	53.0 (10)

*rankings in all the columns indicate their position within the 10 Spanish-speaking nations of South America.

Source: Inter-American Development Bank data and *The Statesman's Yearbook: 1970-71*. Reprinted in R. Scott (ed.) *Latin American Modernization Problems* (Urbana, University of Illinois, 1973), p. 15.

issue had lost any real significance in the nation's political life. Thus, the old left-right labels now explain little about the individual party's orientation toward fundamental socioeconomic issues nor do they have much relevance to Ecuador's contemporary political problems.

While political lore still places the Liberals "to the left" of the Conservatives and Social Christians, the laissez-faire Guayaquil financial oligarchs who dominate the Liberal Party are actually more economically conservative than much of the Conservative Party's Andean elite. When asked to differentiate themselves from the opposition, spokesmen for all of Ecuador's major parties—Concentration of Popular Forces (CFP), Democratic Left, Conservatives, Liberals and Social Christians—insist that they are "left of center" on socioeconomic issues.⁶ Even the party secretary of the Conservatives (a very traditionalist group currently led by a retired right-wing Colonel from one of the highlands' most feudal states) and the secretary of the CID (a party closely tied to coastal, big business interests) characterized their orientations in those terms.⁷ The fact that such ideological self-definitions bear no resemblance to actual party behavior does not mean that these leaders are consciously deceptive or cynical. Rather, it reflects the fact that, until recently,

political parties have been alliances of convenience between powerful factions, in which ideology, programs, or policies have had little importance.

More often than not, aspiring young politicians selected their party affiliation on the basis of their own regional origins and family background rather than on programmatic or ideological criteria. Prominent contemporary leaders such as Deputies Julio César Trujillo (leader of the small but influential Popular Democracy/Christian Democratic Union (DP/UDC) and Rodrigo Borja (leader of the growing Democratic Left) originally joined the Conservative and Liberal Parties, respectively, simply because those groups dominated the regions (highlands and coast, respectively) in which the two men lived. Dr. Trujillo rose to the secretary generalship of the Conservatives (before leaving the party to form a new, more progressive alliance) in spite of his deep political differences with other party leaders. Even while serving as the party's national leader, he was barred from speaking at party meetings in certain Andean provinces where local Conservative officials considered him to be "far too radical."⁸

Attempts to place Ecuadorian parties along an ideological spectrum have thus been doomed to failure, since personalities,

regional loyalties, and political styles have had overriding importance. Dr. Trujillo vividly illustrated this point to me when he noted that during the 1960s, while still a Conservative Party leader, he served as legal council to a bank workers union. Once, while representing several clerks who had been fired by their bank during a bitter strike, his court room adversary, representing the bank, was the leader of the Socialist Party.

Because of the nonprogrammatic, ideologically confusing nature of the Ecuadorian party system, leading political figures change party affiliations and interparty alliances like discarded sports coats. The current mayor of Quito withdrew from the progressive, Democratic Left when he failed to secure its mayoral nomination, and then ran successfully as the candidate of the right-of-center Liberals. During the recently concluded presidential campaign, the Socialist Party originally announced its support for the rightist Social Christian candidate, then withdrew its backing when he selected a populist running mate.

The failure of Ecuadorian parties to define their position on issues has been accompanied by their inability to develop a broad organizational base or to build a mass following among the peasants and urban poor who have been gradually

incorporated into the political system in recent decades. Consequently, from 1944 until this year's election, none of the country's elected presidents were closely linked to the major political parties. Velasco Ibarra was essentially an independent; Galo Plaza (1948-1952) came out of the ranks of the Liberals (indeed his father, also a president, had been a major party figure) but was elected as an independent Liberal against the candidate of the party's dominant faction; Camilo Ponce (1956-1960) left the Conservatives to form his small, personalistic, Social Christian Party from which he was elected to the presidency.

In short, events leading up to this year's election support political scientist John Martz's contention that Ecuadorian parties have been elitist in leadership, highly opportunistic, weak in organization, ineffective in articulating positions, and lacking in fixed ideological orientations. "Short term gains," said Martz, have been "prized over long-term ideological consistency.... Efforts to create mass parties [have been] unusual.... Between elections the organizations [have] concentrated on relations with their counterparts at senior levels and internal elitism [has] negated effective participation of the rank and file."⁹

The Populist Response

Through much of Latin America during the postwar decades, as voting and other forms of mass political participation expanded, existing political parties generally proved incapable of integrating lower income groups into the political system. A frequent response to that institutional void was the growth of populism. These movements often were based heavily on the oratorical and political skills of a single charismatic leader, offered vague promises of reform to the newly enfranchised masses, and frequently adopted an antioligarchical tone which frightened vested economic interests and the armed forces. Once in power, however, the populists usually avoided structural changes, relied more heavily on rhetoric than on coherent programs, and did little to alter the political or economic status quo. Brazil's Getulio Vargas, Argentina's Juan Perón, and Panama's Omar Torrijos are all outstanding examples of such leadership.

In Ecuador, the populist response to the political party vacuum was initially represented by Velasco Ibarra and his Frente Nacional Velasquista.¹⁰ More recently, the Concentration of Popular Forces (CFP), a left-center party founded in 1947, emerged as the nation's

leading populist movement. Since the early 1960s, the party has been dominated by Assad Bucaram, the former mayor of Guayaquil. Born of Lebanese immigrant parents, Bucaram's humble origins are highly atypical of the Ecuadorian political elite. A former merchant with little formal education, he has combined inflammatory oratory with administrative competence (as mayor) to amass a great personal following among the impoverished dwellers of Guayaquil's shantytowns (*suburbios*).¹¹ Though staunchly anti-Marxist, he espoused a progressive, if vague, political program.

Until the current election campaign, however, the CFP failed to serve as an effective agent of political development and economic change. Like most populist movements, it was longer on rhetoric than on constructive policy alternatives. More a personal vehicle for its strongman leader than a coherent political party, it was unable to develop a national constituency outside its power base in the state of Guayas (Ecuador's most populous and economically critical province). Bucaram himself has allegedly not been adverse to engaging in the

At left: mourners at funeral of Velasco Ibarra; at right, Assad Bucaram, CFP leader.



Table 2

Indicators of Socioeconomic and Political Change: 1950-1978

Year	Percent Urban	Percentage Adult Literacy	Registered Voters
1950-1952	28.5%	30.0%	691,006
1960-1962	36.0%	63.6%	1,102,391
1968-1970	38.0%	69.7%	1,198,987
1978	44.0%	76.5%	2,088,874

Sources: Rafael Quinteros, "Los Partidos Políticos en el Ecuador...", pp. 281 and 293; *Ecuador: Tecnología Agropecuaria y economías campesinas* (Quito: CEPALES, 1978), p. 24; John Martz, *Ecuador: Conflicting Political Culture and the Quest for Progress* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1972).

unsavory tactics common to Guayaquil politics (including the use of goon squads to intimidate opponents). His personal domination of the CFP, his rough (often vulgar) oratorical style, and his no-holds-barred attacks on his opponents not only antagonized the nation's economic elite and military, but also alienated many middle-class voters and drove a number of capable politicians out of his party.¹²

1950-1978: Changes in the Social and Economic Order

As in most of Latin America, during the past few decades Ecuador has witnessed important modifications in the pattern of underdevelopment described above. The spread of public education, the expansion of radio and other mass media into the urban slums and countryside, the breakdown of rural feudalism, and the movement of peasants into the cities were all under way by the late 1950s.

Extensive rural-to-urban migration (principally into Guayaquil and Quito) and the expansion of literacy—two interrelated phenomenon—increased the number of voters as well as the general level of lower-class politicization.¹³ In the countryside, the 1964 Agrarian Reform law and subsequent agrarian legislation accelerated an already ongoing transition in several regions of the countryside from semifeudal to more modern, capitalist agricultural

exploitation. That process converted many peasants from peons to hired agricultural laborers, changed others to small landowners, and drove still others off the land.¹⁴ All three results tended to weaken traditional landlord controls over the peasantry. While Ecuador's level of lower-class political mobilization remains somewhat limited even today (far lower, for example, than in neighboring Peru), by the early 1970s the needs and demands of the peasantry and urban poor could no longer be ignored.

The post-1973 Ecuadorian petroleum boom accelerated these processes of change.¹⁵ Oil revenues flowing into the public treasury and the private sector contributed to the expansion (and personal enrichment) of the urban middle class. The rapid growth of university education, the creation of new jobs in the government bureaucracy and the development of the commercial and industrial sectors all were critical elements in this process. Oil money has also drawn back to Ecuador professionals who had been working abroad.¹⁶

Many younger members of the growing middle class—lawyers, academics, progressive capitalists—found the existent political order inadequate to the needs of an expanding, gradually modernizing economy. Consequently, they looked for new

political alternatives. The decision of Ecuador's armed forces to introduce a new constitution (in 1978) and to hand over the reigns of power to a civilian government (in 1979) after seven and a half years of military rule, reflected the growing illegitimacy and inadequacy of the old order of *caudillos* and coups.

The Search for a New Legitimacy

While the nation's officers were not united in their political goals, many military leaders wished to create a constitutional order that would provide the new civilian government with greater legitimacy and stability than had been enjoyed by past regimes. Consequently, the new constitution, selected by popular referendum in January 1978, gave the vote to illiterates (though not in the 1978-79 election). It thereby promised to increase the size of the electorate in future elections by some 25 percent.¹⁷ Ecuador's eighteenth Constitution, which took effect in August 1979, also provided for a second round run-off should no presidential candidate achieve an absolute majority on the initial vote (a procedure following in the recently concluded election). The intention of that provision was to prevent the election of a "minority president" such as the 1956 winner who took office with only 29% of the vote) and to guarantee the ultimate victor the legitimacy of having obtained an absolute majority. The creation of a unicameral national congress was designed to streamline legislative activity. Finally, election laws promulgated by the military government subsequent to the approval of the Constitution sought to eliminate very small parties. This, it was reasoned, would "rationalize" the political system by presenting the electorate with a more restricted but more clearly defined set of alternatives.

Unfortunately, as we shall see, military behavior during the course of the 1978-79 presidential campaign served all too often to undermine these efforts at legitimizing a new political order.

The Original Alternatives: Populism Versus the Old Cliques

Once the new Constitution was selected by the voters and the first round of presidential elections (along with municipal elections) had been scheduled for July 1978, the military junta faced their next dilemma. Assad Bucaram, the front-running candidate, was generally expected to win any freely contested election. Yet, the nation's economic oligarchy, most of the military high command, and a large portion of the middle class were unalterably opposed to him. Indeed, the armed forces' 1972 coup was partially motivated by the fear that Bucaram would win the following year's presidential election. This author's recent interviews with a diverse sample of Ecuadorian political leaders revealed a widely held, intense hostility toward the CFP strongman. Bucaram was alternately depicted as a dangerous leftist (though he is staunchly anti-Marxist), a neofascist demagogue, and a would-be dictator. Not surprisingly, then, the nation's military, political, and economic establishment looked for a way to block his election.

Early in 1977, when the military signaled the start of the "return process" (*retorno*), Liberal and Conservative Party leaders began to plan an alliance aimed at stopping the CFP. In August of that year they opened formal negotiations which culminated 4 months later with the formation of an 11-party coalition called the "National Constitutional Front." While its spokesmen insisted that the purpose of the coalition was to insure a broad political base for the restoration of civilian government, they privately admitted their anti-Bucaram intentions. Front members spanned the political spectrum, including Liberals, Conservatives, Social Christians, Socialists and the neofascist Democratic Nationalist Revolutionary Action (ARNE).

Two figures emerged as potential coalition candidates: Sixto Durán Ballén, a 57-year-old, U.S.-trained architect and urban planner who

had served as Minister of Public Works (1956-1960), as a technocrat in the Inter-American Development Bank (1960-1968) and as Mayor of Quito (1970-1978); and 62-year-old Raul Clemente Huerta Rendón, a former Finance Minister, former national director of the Liberal Party and twice an unsuccessful candidate for the presidency.¹⁸ Durán, an amiable father of 13 with a reputation for being a good administrator and public works advocate, was a leading figure in the Social Christian Party and the favorite of the traditional right-of-center. Huerta, widely associated with political intrigue, was supported by the coastal, Guayaquil financial oligarchy.

Despite their apparently potent array of political support, both men were initially hesitant to run, a hesitancy based on the fragility of the Constitutional Front and on their apprehension that Assad Bucaram might be impossible to beat. When Huerta withdrew from the race (citing his wife's alleged ill health), the Front turned, in February 1978, to Sixto Durán. Soon thereafter, however, the 11-party coalition showed itself to be as unstable as the candidates had feared. The Socialist Party withdrew its support for Durán in a dispute over his selection of a running mate. Several small rightist parties (particularly the CID) offered Sixto (as he was widely known) only lukewarm support. Finally, and most important, the Liberal Party withdrew from the Front in order to run its own candidate.

On February 12, 1978 the Liberals' national convention nominated Francisco Huerta Montalvo, the highly ambitious nephew of party chieftain Raul Clemente Huerta. Starting his political career as a national student leader, "Pancho" Huerta had moved rapidly through the Liberal ranks up to the party's secretary generalship. During the negotiation of the National Constitutional Front, the young (37-year-old) physician had declined an offer to be Sixto Durán's running

mate. More confident than his uncle had been of his own popularity, Pancho led his party out of the Front so that he could secure the Liberal nomination. Thus, as the Liberals concluded their convention, the nation looked forward to a presidential campaign dominated by three candidates, Assad Bucaram, Sixto Durán, and Francisco Huerta.

That picture, however, was to change extremely rapidly. Dismayed by the inability of the Liberals and Conservatives to name a single candidate and by the more generalized splintering of the Constitutional Front, Assad Bucaram's military and civilian opponents searched for a more dependable means of eliminating him. Initial efforts to dump Bucaram had centered on allegations that, contrary to his own assertions and birth certificate, the CFP leader had actually been born outside Ecuador during his parents' migration from the Middle East, making him ineligible for the presidency. When these allegations could not be substantiated, a new approach was tried. On February 20, 1978 the government announced that presidential nominees must be born of parents who were citizens of Ecuador at the time of the candidate's birth. As he was born shortly after his Lebanese immigrant parents arrived in Ecuador, Bucaram was clearly ineligible.¹⁹ Commenting on the transparency of the junta's maneuvers, Guayaquil's *El Universo* stated, "The dictatorial government has insistently denied that its laws are earmarked for some people. Nevertheless, they [i.e., the laws] have meant the destruction of the political aspirations of certain people whom the government dislikes."²⁰

With Assad Bucaram's abrupt elimination, conventional political wisdom held that the CFP was no longer a viable political threat since its popularity allegedly rested heavily on its strongman's shoulders. The two dominant traditional parties, Conservative and Liberal, could now, so it seemed, vie for power. The Liberal nomination, so recently spurned by Raul

Clemente Huerta, suddenly appeared extremely tantalizing to the aging party boss (whose wife's health improved remarkably after Bucaram's legal removal). Raul Clemente's renewed interest in the presidency coincided with growing doubts within the Guayaquil oligarchy and the military regarding the "overly outspoken" young Liberal nominee, Francisco Huerta.

Thus, in March 1978, the Guayaquil newspaper *El Telégrafo* charged that a research institute headed by Pancho Huerta had signed an 11-million sucre (\$450,000) agreement for a government-commissioned study of unemployment. Technically, then, the Liberal nominee had violated an electoral law barring candidates from being party to a government contract.²¹ When Huerta denied any wrongdoing, the case was brought before the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), the government body charged with administering the elections and interpreting electoral law. Given the close ties linking the TSE's leadership to the military and to the Liberals' Guayaquil oligarchy, few were surprised when the Tribunal ruled on April 27 that Francisco Huerta (like Bucaram) was ineligible to run. Shortly thereafter, less than three months before the scheduled July elections, Raul Clemente Huerta succeeded his nephew as Liberal Party candidate.

The CFP: Two New Faces

With their original standard-bearer and party titan removed from the race, the CFP was forced to seek a new nominee. Losing little time, the party turned to a 37-year-old Guayaquil attorney and law professor, Jaime Roldós Aguilera. A man of obvious intellectual ability, Roldós had graduated first in his class from a prestigious preparatory school and first at the University of Guayaquil Law School while at the same time serving as president of the university's student body. Despite his impressive scholastic credentials, his work as a CFP functionary, and a brief stint in the

national legislature (1968-1970), however, he was a relatively unknown figure in national politics. Indeed, his designation as CFP nominee appeared to have rested on two factors: his role as a close aide to Bucaram within the party, and his marriage to the party boss's niece (herself a politically involved lawyer). Not surprisingly, political pundits tended to regard Roldós as an understudy who would surely take his marching orders from his wife's powerful uncle. Initial CFP campaign literature and posters reinforced this impression declaring "Bucaram is with Roldós." Here, as in the party's impressive coastal rallies during the early months of the campaign, the presidential nominee seemed to be getting second billing.²²

Yet, as the campaign progressed, Roldós began to establish an image of his own. Though neither highly photogenic nor charismatic, the CFP candidate was clearly intelligent and highly articulate. In the mass media and at public rallies he emerged as an extremely polished (if low-key) speaker and

debater. His air of competence and professionalism set him apart from the haranguing style of his mentor, Bucaram, and his Liberal opponent, Raul Clemente Huerta. As a member of a distinguished coastal family and an attorney for the Bank of Guayaquil, Roldós could appeal to the members of Ecuador's expanding middle class who had been offended by Bucaram.²³

In selecting his running mate, Roldós reached beyond the ranks of the CFP to the small but intellectually powerful and well organized Popular Democratic Party (officially called Popular Democracy/Christian Democratic Union or DP/UDC). Further emphasizing his ticket's strengths—youth, professionalism, and intelligence—Roldós selected Osvaldo Hurtado, a prominent 38-year-old political sociologist at Quito's Catholic University. Hurtado had also begun his political career in the 1960s as a university student leader (concurrently with Roldós and with Francisco Huerta) and soon thereafter led an exodus of progressive, young Catholic

C.F.P. concentración de fuerzas populares

ROLDOS

BUCARAM

PRESIDENTE DE LA REPUBLICA

PRIMER REPRESENTANTE NACIONAL

A CFP campaign advertisement.

professionals from the conservative Social Christian Party (currently led by Sixto Durán). The dissidents formed the Ecuadorian Christian Democratic movement, endorsing the most "radical" ideology and program of any non-Marxist Ecuadorian party. Heavily influenced by the writings of the Christian communitarian movement and by the left-wings of the Chilean and Venezuelan Christian Democratic parties, Hurtado became the group's leading spokesman, as well as one of the nation's most widely read political scientists.²⁴

In early 1978, as the electoral campaign approached, the Christian Democrats merged with the Progressive Conservatives (a group that had previously bolted from the Conservative Party under the leadership of Julio César Trujillo) to form the DP/UDC. When the Popular Democrats failed to meet technical requirements for a place on the ballot, Jaime Roldós approached Hurtado and Trujillo regarding an electoral alliance. Once on the CFP ticket, Hurtado not only far outshone his vice-presidential opponents, but added a forceful oratorical style and photogenic quality lacking in Roldós.²⁵

Despite his obvious talents, Dr. Hurtado had one clear political

liability. He was viewed by much of the nation's economic and political elite (and by some military officers) as a "closet Marxist" with dangerously progressive ideas.

The First Electoral Round: Frontrunners and Alleged Also Rans

By May 1978, with the Liberals' nomination of Raul Clemente Huerta, a field of six presidential nominees was completed. Political pundits, labeled Sixto Durán Ballén as the leading "right-of-center" candidate and Raul Clemente Huerta as the front-running "left-of-center" nominee. Actually, while Durán's backing came from Catholic parties traditionally associated with the precapitalistic, highland landlords, he tended to speak more for the interests of the new *Quiteño* entrepreneurial class produced by the post-1973 oil boom. Based in the nation's capital, Sixto and his supporters favored an active state role in the economy (though their primary interest clearly lay in subsidies for business) and were, in many ways, less conservative than the laissez-faire coastal, commercial groups associated with the Liberals' Raul Clemente Huerta.

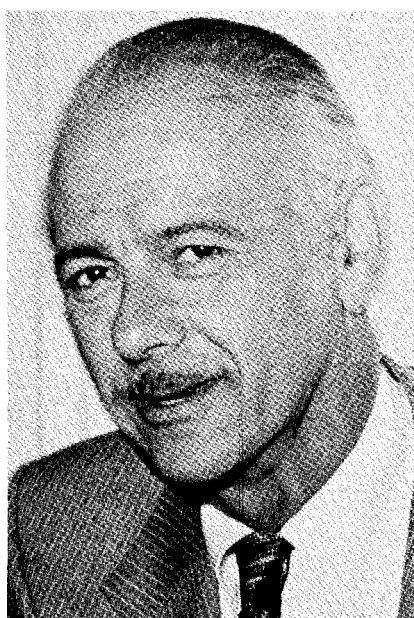
Though they both represented the traditional era of Ecuadorian politics, Durán and Huerta offered differing campaign styles and distinct

personalities. Durán Ballén's only significant previous entry into electoral politics was his successful 1970 campaign for mayor of Quito. Once in office, he pursued his instincts as an architect, former Minister of Public Works, and development bank planner by stressing the construction of water works, power stations, and paved streets. Sixto's technocratic orientation appealed to the military government that seized power in 1972 and he was the only mayor of a large Ecuadorian city to be asked to serve beyond his elected term of office. The close relationship which he enjoyed with the governing junta earned him the label (to his dismay) of "the military's candidate."

While Durán felt that his association, in the public mind, with an unpopular military regime cost him votes, he didn't mind being labeled a technocrat. Running on a record as "a builder," his campaign propaganda called him "the man who works." Indeed, he told this author that he saw himself more as an urban planner than as a politician. His weak campaign performance bore this out. Despite his pleasant and likable personality (a quality that emerged more clearly in small groups), Sixto performed poorly in several television debates among the six candidates and in other media appearances. In his walking tours he did little better, seeming uncomfortable as he asked bystanders for their votes or tried to deal with the occasional heckler.

Durán's major asset in the first electoral round was his extensive financial support. Because of the chaotic condition of the Liberal Party—changing candidates in mid campaign from one Huerta to another—Durán received considerable aid from both the Quito and Guayaquil oligarchies. Indeed, the streets of the nation's major cities were dominated by pro-Sixto wall signs and posters.

At left, Sixto Durán, Social Christian candidate; at right, Liberal candidate Raul Clemente Huerta.





Raul Clemente Huerta, Liberal candidate

Raul Clemente Huerta, commonly considered to be the principal opponent of the allegedly "front-running" Durán, was a coastal lawyer whose firm represented many multinational and Guayaquil corporations. Though he failed to enunciate any clear position (depending instead on vague slogans such as "Raul Clemente is the 'fatherland'"), he represented economic interests to the right of Durán Ballén. A proponent of the old, fire-breathing school of oratory, Huerta did very poorly on the first televised candidate debate and failed to participate in follow-ups. If Sixto Durán was an insufficiently aggressive campaigner, Huerta was excessively so. His pugnacious style, his late entry into the race, and his reputation as a back-room dealer who had sabotaged his own nephew, all hurt Raul Clemente's campaign. He seemed unable to build on the Liberal Party's coastal base and develop a national constituency.²⁶ Indeed, one Ecuadorian journalist, arguing that most of Huerta's support was rooted in his long record as a Liberal standard bearer and his wire-thin (3,000 vote) loss of the presidency 23 years ago, caustically commented, "the high point of Raul Clemente's 1978 campaign came in 1956."

While the two early front-runners were performing disappointingly as campaigners, the CFP's Jaime Roldós developed momentum as the electoral race progressed. Unlike

Rodrigo Borja (Izquierda Democrática).

his opponents, Roldós ran (both as a conscious strategy and in the minds of his critics) as part of a team. He allotted a critical campaign role to Osvaldo Hurtado, his articulate running mate, and accepted—for better and for worse—Bucaram's populist appeal among Guayaquil's impoverished slum dwellers. Said one political analyst, "Hurtado diagnosed reality in scientific terms; Roldós translated those explanations into political reality; and Bucaram expressed them in irrational terms."

Gradually, however, the CFP's presidential candidate emerged from under the shadow of his mentor and established himself, not only as the leading member of the party's team, but also as the most effective campaigner of all the major candidates. Still, as election day approached, political analysts and opinion polls indicated that Roldós was still in a battle for third place (highest among the first round's "also rans") with another young and articulate candidate, Dr. Rodrigo Borja Cevallos. Borja, a 42-year-old attorney and university law professor, had left the Liberal Party in 1969 to help found a new, left-of-center party, the Democratic Left (Izquierda Democrática, ID).

Drawing its greatest support in Quito, the party has sought to establish itself as the voice of a new

generation of reformist, professionally trained, programmatically oriented political leaders. Loosely linked to the international social democratic movement, ID is characterized by its leaders as "left of the CFP" (a proposition which the CFP's spokesmen and many independent analysts reject) and right of the Christian Democrats.

Borja—handsome, articulate, ambitious, and skillful (characterized by some as "too skillful")—was a formidable candidate offering many of the same qualities as Roldós (and Hurtado). Lacking the money and national organization of Durán and Huerta, or the CFP's voting base in the slums of Guayaquil, the Democratic Left assessed its present position realistically and saw itself rather as the party of the future. In an attempt to establish a clear national identity, ID was the only major party to have rejected from the start of the "return process" any electoral coalition. Dr. Borja indicated to this author that he never entertained expectations of making the two-man presidential run-off, but rather was aiming at a strong third place finish as the base for future growth.

Ecuadorian opinion polls (Table 3) in the closing weeks of the first round seemed to confirm general "political



Table 3

Final Pre-Election Opinion Polls: The First Electoral Round

	Durán	Huerta	Roldós	Borja
IECOP Poll	25.5%	29.3%	21.0%	18.9%
CEDATOS Poll	20.9%	19.0%	10.4%	11.6%

wisdom." They indicated that no candidate would come close to securing the 50 percent vote needed for a first round victory, that the Social Christians' Sixto Durán Ballén and the Liberals' Raul Clemente Huerta were engaged in a close battle for first place (with both making it to the run-off) and that Jaime Roldós and Rodrigo Borja were closely matched for third place.²⁷

Two other candidates, neither of whom were considered serious contenders, rounded out the list of nominees. Abdón Calderón Muñoz, a Guayaquil economist, was the leader of the Frente Radical Alfarista, a coastal-based party that had left the Liberal Party years before, as the parent organization had moved increasingly to the right. Calderón had made many political enemies through his exposés of corruption in Guayaquil and national politics, but had also picked up some national following as a muckraker.

Finally, René Maugé Mosquera, a young communist lawyer, led a coalition of Marxist parties joined together in the "Leftist Broad Front" (FADI). Along with Roldós, Hurtado, Borja, and Francisco Huerta, he represented a new generation of national political leadership. An articulate and intelligent speaker, Maugé brought respectability to the FADI ticket. Because the Ecuadorian Marxist left exercises little influence outside certain labor unions and in the nation's universities, however, Maugé and FADI lacked the organizational base or funds to mount a serious challenge.

The First Round of Campaigning: Interest and Entertainment
For an observer (such as this

author) who had recently witnessed national elections in Venezuela and Colombia, the Ecuadorian presidential campaign seemed rather modest and low key. Long-term students of Ecuadorian politics, however, insisted that the first presidential round elicited more than usual voter interest. Because national elections had not been held for a decade, this was the first opportunity for many young Ecuadorians to choose their chief executive. Whereas only 852,000 voters had participated in the 1968 election, some 1.8 million were expected to go to the polls this time.

Traveling to towns and villages throughout the nation, the leading candidates drew crowds everywhere. With the exception of CFP demonstrations in Guayaquil and some Liberal rallies, spectator emotions were generally rather restrained. A European rural development expert working in an impoverished province of the highlands suggested to this author that the same villagers came out to cheer with equal enthusiasm any of the candidates who passed through their town. If the candidate did not define their programs in much detail (indeed they didn't), if all of them depicted themselves as progressives seeking badly needed change (as they did), if party identifications were generally weak and voter decisions based largely on personality, the race was still good entertainment after years of political inactivity. In short, the first round lacked strong passion, great intensity, or well-defined issues. It was, however, a campaign and Ecuador had not experienced one of those for ten years.

The Voters Speak — And Confound the Experts



FRA candidate, Abdón Calderón Muñoz.

On July 16, 1978, 1.6 million Ecuadorians went to the polls to vote for the presidency and elect municipal governments. As most political analysts had predicted, Sixto Durán finished slightly ahead of Raul Clemente Huerta, though his razor-thin margin awaited confirmation in a recount. But, contrary to the predictions, Sixto's apparent lead was for *second* place, not first. The CFP's Jaime Roldós, initially viewed as an unknown fill-in for Assad Bucaram, had confounded the experts by outdistancing all his rivals by a wide margin. Besting his nearest opponent by over 100,000 votes, Roldós unofficially amassed 31 percent of the ballots cast compared to 23 percent and 22 percent for the candidates of the major traditional parties. The ID's Rodrigo Borja finished a distant and disappointing fourth with 11 percent of the vote. Abdón Calderón (Alfarista) with 9 percent and René Maugé (FADI) with 5 percent (both higher totals than expected) rounded out the count.

What accounted for Jaime Roldós' unexpectedly strong showing? Stunned spokesmen for the Liberals, Conservatives, and Social Christians whom I interviewed insisted that massive fraud had taken place in the city of Guayaquil where the Roldós-Hurtado ticket had outdistanced its nearest rival by 143,000 votes (indeed that city contributed the CFP's entire margin of national victory). Yet, even Sixto Durán conceded that ballot stuffing could merely have widened the CFP

margin but did not account for its first place finish. Independent analysts noted that any fraud in Guayaquil was largely offset by similar Liberal and Conservative activity in their coastal and highland strongholds.

More serious analysis suggested that Roldós' slogan, "the Force of Change," had struck a responsive chord among the electorate. Peasants and urban workers throughout the country, feeling they had not shared equally in the benefits of Ecuador's oil boom (indeed, a common subjective assessment of the "man on the street" was that inflation had made life more difficult for the poor), rejected the old order and hoped for a new one. Equally important, Roldós' restrained call for reform convinced many middle class voters that the CFP standard bearer was not a rabble-rousing populist or radical, but rather an intelligent voice for political and economic modernization. Significant numbers of voters who had been undecided until the final weeks of the campaign apparently moved to Roldós-Hurtado (and, possibly, away from the Democratic Left) on election day.

Roldós' victory was particularly impressive given that the percentage of adults registered to vote in the highlands (the stronghold of the Conservatives and Social Christians) was far higher than on the coast (where the CFP is more organized). That percentage ranged from 69-93 percent in Andean provinces and only 55-78 percent on the coast. Thus, while the Ecuadorian coast has a slightly higher population than the sierra (highlands), the Andean region had 300,000 more voters. The CFP bastion of Guayas (Guayaquil), with 847,500 adults, cast 44,000 fewer votes than Pichincha (Quito), with 564,000 adults. Roldós and Hurtado overcame this disadvantage not only by sweeping Guayas, but also by running ahead of Sixto Durán in the sierra provinces of Pichincha, Cotopaxi, and Cañar.

As for the Constitutional Front's Durán Ballén, he had started the race with a large lead and financial advantage, but had been stymied by his weak campaign style and poor use of media. Wrote one Ecuadorian journalist, "it's not certain that he had the most money [Huerta may have had more] but he certainly made the worst use of it." More important, Durán was popularly identified with the old order. Speaking of his first round performance, Sixto admitted to me "he [Roldós] was able to project an image of freshness and youth, and I couldn't." One more cynical observer wrote, "The high point of Durán's campaign was the day he announced: ... From then on he lost votes continuously."

Raul Clemente Huerta, a more dynamic campaigner than Durán Ballén, had also been hurt by his identification with the status quo and the interests of the oligarchy. Divisions within the Liberal Party and Huerta's reputation as a back-room dealer who had sabotaged his own nephew's candidacy added to his difficulties. Indeed, Raul Clemente's record denied him the one strength that Sixto Durán enjoyed, a reputation for integrity.²⁸

Borja and the Democratic Left had run a respectable campaign, but had failed to extend their strength outside their power base in the nation's capital. Even there, ID lost the mayoral election in Quito and carried the province of Pichincha by a mere 1,300 votes. Rodrigo Borja had campaigned for essentially the same constituency as had Roldós-Hurtado—the urban lower and middle class voters seeking change—and had been bested by the CFP candidates. Borja insisted to this author that the military's transparent victimization of Assad Bucaram had earned the DFP an antigovernment sympathy vote. But the underlying fact remained that the CFP had run a more effective campaign and Roldós had proven himself the strongest candidate.

Trying to Stop Roldós-Hurtado: The Oligarchy Panics

If the CFP's first round showing surprised most Ecuadorians and pleased many, it greatly upset critical elements of the military and of the nation's political and economic elite. Election-night statements by Vice-Presidential candidate Osvaldo Hurtado on the need for "popular organizations such as labor unions, cooperatives [and] neighborhood committees" as eventual channels for "gaining the means of production" fueled the fears of the right. So too did an article published shortly before the July election in which Jaime Roldós stated, "I believe ... that a revolutionary process would be an ideal one given the present condition of so many people laid aside from the economic order."²⁹ Statements such as these, said Guayaquil's daily *El Telégrafo*, "have brought about worry—worse, yet, panic—in Guayaquil's entrepreneurial circles." At the same time, the rightist party CID (closely tied to Guayaquil financial interests) warned that "the communist-like infiltration of the Roldós ticket, be it named Popular Democracy [i.e., Osvaldo Hurtado's party] or what have you, represents the greatest danger ever to Ecuadorian democracy."

Not surprisingly, then, the electoral results of July 16 quickly produced rumors of an impending coup which would preclude a second-round run-off and the promised return to civilian government. Indeed, on election night Hurtado warned a national television audience of a possible *golpe* (coup).

Fears of military intervention were soon exacerbated by the shadowy nature of the electoral recount. Earlier in the year the government had announced that, should a second-round presidential run-off be necessary, it would be held within one month of the first election. Indeed, informed observers, noting that the Ecuadorian run-off system had essentially been borrowed from the French Fifth Republic, expected that the second round would be completed (as it is in France) the

following week. Yet, shortly after Roldós' triumph, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE—the government body responsible for administering the electoral process) announced that a recount would take at least 46 days. In early August the TSE declared that the recount would require four months. In addition, they stated, a second-round election could not be held for five months after completion of the recount.

Since the majority of the Electoral Tribunal's members had been named either by the Supreme Court's rightist chief justice (a man linked to the Liberal Party's Guayaquil oligarchs) or by the military government, few regarded it as a neutral body. Shortly after the election, several TSE officials—particularly the Tribunal's vice chairman—spoke darkly to the press of major irregularities and fraud in the vote. In the succeeding weeks, as the TSE proceeded to throw out thousands of votes, it appeared increasingly evident that the Tribunal was trying to alter the results. While it would be impossible to disallow enough votes to oust Roldós from first place (his margin was too large), there seemed to be an effort to narrow his victory so that voters would not view him as the inevitable second-round victor (the TSE was anxious to avoid a band wagon effect). In addition, suspicion abounded that the Electoral Tribunal was trying to move Huerta into second place on the assumption that he would be a stronger candidate than Durán in the second round. At the same time the Conservative and CID Parties (which had backed Sixto in the first round through the National Constitutional Front) pressured Durán to step down in favor of Huerta in the run-off.

As the recount dragged on, expectations heightened that the return to civilian government would be interrupted. Speculation focused on the statements and activities of three men widely considered to be *golpistas* (advocates of a coup). General Guillermo Durán (no

relation to the presidential candidate), commander of the Ecuadorian army, and General Bolívar Jarrín Cahueños, Minister of Government (i.e., internal security) and a close associate of General Durán's, were known to favor termination of the electoral process. Indeed, a former director of the Liberal Party (Dr. Pedro José Arteta) claimed that in November 1977—before the constitutional referendum had even taken place (with Assad Bucaram still a potential candidate)—General Jarrín had approached Liberal and Conservative leaders with a plan to cancel the referendum and the elections.

On September 12, another *golpista*, Dr. Rafael Arizaga Vega, succeeded from the vice chairmanship to the chairmanship of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal. Arizaga had called his own neutrality into question by revealing after the election that he had voted for Raul Clemente Huerta. In early September, he had anticipated the Electoral Tribunal's findings, stating "the TSE is absolutely and totally aware that an election fraud was committed on July 16. The electoral process may be declared void."

Events quickly moved toward a confrontation. Two days after Arizaga Vega assumed leadership of the TSE, Jaime Roldós warned "we are on the verge of a coup." On September 22 Arizaga went on national television to "prove" that massive fraud had taken place and to suggest that the elections be cancelled. He also announced that the members of the Tribunal, having established electoral fraud to their own satisfaction, were resigning from office. Arizaga Vega's statement was clearly designed to precipitate an internal coup by anti-*retorno* forces. Indeed, highly placed sources informed me that *golpista* elements within the armed forces were on the verge of seizing power that day.

Military intervention did not take place for a variety of reasons. To begin with, the United States embassy had strongly pressured the

Ecuadorian armed forces to continue the return to civilian rule. Further indication of the Carter administration's strong commitment to *retorno* came in the form of a visit to Ecuador by the commander of the Canal Zone's Southern Military Command. The visiting general conveyed to the Ecuadorian *junta* the United States' firm support for the electoral process. Within Ecuador itself, the mass media (particularly leading television stations and newspapers in Quito and Guayaquil) had helped mobilize public opposition to a coup. The military was itself divided. While army commander Durán was moving toward a takeover, the chief of the ruling *junta*, Admiral Alfredo Poveda, firmly committed himself to continuing the return process. Within the army (clearly the critical branch), most junior officers seemed to feel the time had come for a military withdrawal. Indeed, a significant number enthusiastically endorsed Roldós' reformist program. In the final analysis, then, Generals Durán and Jarrín could not be at all sure that their troops would follow orders for a coup.

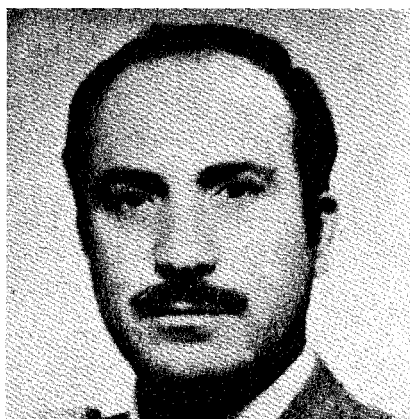
On September 23—less than 24 hours after Dr. Arizaga Vega's inflammatory television speech—Admiral Poveda and the ruling Military Council reconfirmed their commitment to stepping down. The presidential run-off, they announced, would be held in April 1979, some four to five months after the completion of a new first-round recount. In addition, the *junta* decreed that congressional elections—for a 69-member single chamber—would be held simultaneously with the second presidential round. Two days later, the Supreme Military Council appointed a new—presumably more objective—Electoral Tribunal which would start a fresh recount. On October 5, the Council further announced that the elected civilian government (both President and Congress) would take office on August 10, 1979. This was the first time that a precise date had been set for that critical event.



*Abdón Calderón, assassinated
Alfarista candidate.*

All these developments heartened *retorno* supporters, although their pleasure was tempered by the *junta*'s new, delayed timetable. The nine month lapse between presidential rounds not only contradicted the spirit of the "French run-off system," but gave hard-line opponents of Roldós and Hurtado time to mobilize their forces. "Thus," wrote one leading political journalist, "the congressional election, originally seen as a legitimization of the return process, now appears to be a method of stalling so as to strengthen military control of the transition." At the same time spokesmen for the Guayaquil elite—such as León Febres Cordero, a major anti-Roldós activist—called for an alternative to either continued military rule (clearly unacceptable to most Ecuadorians) or a second-round election (unacceptable to the oligarchy). Febres Cordero and Francisco Huerta (the former Liberal presidential candidate) called for cancellation of presidential elections and the establishment, instead, of a constituent assembly which would select an interim president (undoubtedly other than Jaime Roldós).³⁰

In short, despite the apparent September setback for *golpista* forces, the real danger of a coup persisted well into 1979. At one point, in fact, the military government officially announced that a coup plot had failed, but it revealed nothing about where the



*General Bolívar Jarrín, Minister of
Government.*

plot had originated and no arrests were made. On November 11, 1978 the new Electoral Tribunal announced that its recount had been completed. Yet, even then, prospects for the future remained cloudy as weeks passed without an official announcement of the recount results.

The Calderón Affair

On November 29, 1978—as the nation anxiously awaited the TSE's recount—Abdón Calderón Muñoz, the unsuccessful July 16 presidential candidate of the Alfarista Party (FRA), was shot down on the streets of Guayaquil by two men on a motorcycle. Ten days later the muckraking economist died. Some analysts suspected that the assassination was a reprisal by local political or business interests which had been subjected to Calderón's exposés of corruption—a shooting in the violent tradition of Guayaquil politics. Others noted that Calderón and the FRA had announced their second-round support for Jaime Roldós, while still others felt the murder was part of a more generalized attempt by rightist forces to intimidate progressive political movements and to create an atmosphere of chaos that would serve as a pretext for termination of the electoral process.

For its part, the government quickly insisted that the attack was a private affair unrelated to national politics. Indeed, Minister of Government General Bolívar Jarrín stated on the

day before Abdón Calderón's death that the shooting was related to a hit-and-run accident involving the economist's family. Rejecting that interpretation completely, the Guayaquil daily *Expreso* (directed by Calderón's brother-in-law) warned of a government cover-up. Jaime Roldós called for a full investigation and demanded the dismissal of General Jarrín, known to be a leading *golpista*. The General responded with a December 11 radio and television address featuring thinly veiled threats against the mass media. "Abuse of freedom of speech," he warned, might prevent the return of civilian government.

During the weeks that followed, the "Calderón Affair" unfolded in the nation's press, implicating government officials in an upwardly spiraling fashion reminiscent of the United States' Watergate scandal. Stymied by the Guayaquil police's refusal to follow up leads, the Calderón family and supporters pursued their own investigation. Shortly after the shooting, three witnesses told police (and the Calderóns) that they recognized one of the assailants as Guillermo Méndez, a well-known member of a right-wing terrorist group.³¹ When police failed to pursue Méndez, the Calderón family (with the help of friendly witnesses and several Guayaquil policemen who resisted a cover-up) traced him to a small highland city. On December 8, Méndez was apprehended by the authorities as he carried forged identification and over 100,000 sucres (\$4,000) in cash. The accused assassin quickly implicated Abel Salazar, a Guayaquil attorney who he said had hired him to attack (but not kill) Abdón Calderón. When Salazar was arrested later, he told police that Major Jaime Hermosa—a top-ranking aide to Minister of Government Jarrín—had given him 50,000 sucres after Calderón's death and advised him and Guillermo Méndez to flee the country.

For a brief period the military government continued to reject these allegations, with Minister of

Table 4

The First Electoral Round: Provisional and Recount Results

Candidates (President/Vice Pres.)	Provisional Results (%)	Official Recount (%)
Roldós/Hurtado (CFP/DP)	452,699 (31%)	381,165 (27.7%)
Durán/Ycaza (Social Christ/ Conservative)	340,447 (23%)	328,452 (23.8%)
Huerta/Vivanco (Liberal)	321,327 (22%)	311,986 (22.7%)
Borja/Banca (Democ. Left)	162,342 (11%)	165,284 (12.0%)
Calderón/Molina (FRA)	130,725 (9%)	124,376 (9.0%)
Maugé/Muñoz (FADI)	75,277 (5%)	65,198 (4.7%)
Blank or Void	130,177	144,988
	1,612,994	1,521,449

Source: *El Comercio* (Quito): July 18, 1978; *Neuva* (December 1978), p. 41.

Defense General Andrés Arrata asking newsmen why anyone should accept the word of "a proven delinquent" (Méndez). On December 20, however, the Supreme Military Council announced that General Jarrín and his aide, Colonel Alberto Villamarín Ortiz, chief of the national police, had been removed from their positions. Three weeks later, Major Hermosa (of the national police) admitted giving some 600,000 sucres (\$23,000) to Abdel Salazar, instructing him to organize a "hit squad" against Abdón Calderón. Those orders, said Major Hermosa, originated with his own superior, General Jarrín. In February 1979 the government announced it would bring charges against the General. Legal maneuvers and further details regarding the case dominated the news during the following months, often overshadowing the ongoing electoral contest. As of the writing of this article, General Jarrín's trial had not yet begun and no official explanation has been offered for the Calderón murder. However, Jarrín's successor as Minister of Government, Admiral Victor Hugo Graces, soon admitted what had

become abundantly clear: that the assassination was indeed an attempt to create a climate of chaos which would permit termination of the electoral process. Whether the plot really originated with General Jarrín or with higher-ranking officials remained unresolved.³²

The Recount Results

Amid the unfolding drama of the Calderón case—which complicated an already unstable political atmosphere—on December 8 (six months after the July election) the government finally announced the official results of the new Electoral Tribunal's recount. The revised tally showed Jaime Roldós still in first place and Sixto Durán Ballén still in second with a reduced margin over Raul Clemente Huerta.

As Table 4 reveals, of 95,000 votes annulled by the TSE, 71,500 were for the CFP slate of Roldós and Hurtado (62,000 of them in the party stronghold of Guayas). But after months of recounting, charges of fraud, calls for termination of the electoral process, and several near coups, the second presidential round was set for April 8 (later changed to April 29 in order to allow

political parties more time for preparing their congressional slates).

The recount had narrowed Roldós' July margin sufficiently (from 112,000 to 52,700 votes) to make Sixto's candidacy in the second round appear more viable. Thus, Durán Ballén and leaders of the Conservative and Social Christian Parties told me that they could win in April "simply by picking up most of Raul Clemente Huerta's votes." From the perspective of the candidates' ideologies such optimism seemed reasonable, since Huerta stood to Durán's right, but it discounted the historical animosity between Liberals and Conservatives. As in the United States' old "solid south" (which remained in the Democratic camp long after that leaning conformed with any ideologically based rationale), many voters in Liberal bastions such as Esmeraldas would never consider voting for a Conservative-backed candidate regardless of left-right configurations. Hence, it was hard to believe that the conservative coalition could pick up more than half of Huerta's votes, especially after Liberal leaders declared their neutrality in the run-off.

Roldós' position was further strengthened by endorsements from the parties that had placed fourth and fifth in the July election—the Democratic Left (whose defeated presidential candidate, Rodrigo Borja, headed a strong congressional slate) and the FRA (now led by Cecilia Calderón, the charismatic daughter of the slain party leader). The sixth place FADI remained neutral, but one could expect voters for the Marxist front either to vote for Roldós-Hurtado or to abstain.

The Problem of Political Legitimacy

Earlier in this Report, I maintained that a critical goal of the new Ecuadorian Constitution and of the return to civilian rule was to enhance the legitimacy of a political system which had heretofore enjoyed only limited popular participation and support. Yet, the

sequence of events from the start of the electoral process in early 1978 through the first months of 1979, served only to increase popular cynicism and to call into question the integrity of the political system. The elimination of Assad Bucaram's candidacy for the presidency (and, then, for mayor of Guayaquil), the removal of Liberal nominee Francisco Huerta, and the repeated postponement of round two, all convinced most Ecuadorians that those in power could change the rules of the political process at will to serve their own needs. The open calls by leaders of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and by Chief Supreme Court Justice Gonzalo Karolys (the man who named many of the TSE members) for annulment of the elections, further heightened public distrust of Ecuador's political leaders. Moreover, high-ranking leaders of both the Liberal and Conservative Parties (including Raul Clemente Huerta's faction) were known to be involved in attempts to manipulate the recount and cancel the second round. Finally, the apparently critical role of the Minister of Government in the Calderón murder and the involvement in the plot of several undercover police agents (who were members of the rightist terrorist group that carried out the attack) did little to enhance the reputation of the military government.³³ Indeed, throughout this period, only Roldós-Hurtado—who both simply insisted that the law be carried out in regard to the election and the assassination—and Sixto Durán—who steadfastly resisted pressures to join the antielectoral movement—acquitted themselves honorably.

Of course, the mere fact that the Calderón family and the mass media had been able to bring the full assassination plot to light and to force the removal and trial of General Jarrín suggested that Ecuador enjoyed a more open political system than many of its authoritarian neighbors in Latin America. Yet, most "typical voters" interviewed by this author in early 1979 felt that Jarrín would receive a

minimal sentence and that higher government officials had probably been involved in the Calderón affair. I was also repeatedly told that politics was a crooked game manipulated by a power elite. Thus, as the country prepared to face the next stage in the electoral process, many voters believed that Jaime Roldós would never be permitted to take office or, if he did do so, that he would be ousted soon after his inauguration. In short, the cause of political legitimacy had clearly not been well served.

Why the Fear of Roldós?

The extreme reactions precipitated by the prospect of a CFP administration raises a basic question: "Why were large segments of Ecuador's economic, political, and military elite so fearful of Jaime Roldós?" Interviews with leaders of the conservative parties represented in the National Constitutional Front (backing Sixto Durán) evoked a welter of contradictory responses. Some of Roldós' political opponents simultaneously accused him of being dangerously radical (or allied with radical elements represented by Osvaldo Hurtado) and of being allied with powerful banking interests. Others charged Roldós and Hurtado with planning to use Ecuador as a "laboratory for testing their social theories," then admitted that the CFP candidates were unlikely to change the country greatly. The greatest danger, one critic warned, was that the young candidates were raising false hopes among the poor for changes that could not be attained.

A published interview with Dr. Luis Ponce Palacios, national director of the Social Christian Party, clearly illustrated the contradictory and confusing character of the charges leveled against the CFP team. Accusing Roldós of being backed by "powerful members of the economic elite" (within which Ponce was a central figure), Dr. Ponce suggested that the CFP and Assad Bucaram were "rightist neofascists." At the same time, however, he labeled Osvaldo

Hurtado and the Christian Democrats, "quasi-Marxists." When asked how Roldós and Hurtado could be both "bourgeois and communist," Ponce replied that "electoral alliances bring together antagonistic forces."³⁴

When pressed, most of the CFP's harshest critics admitted to me that their fears of a Roldós victory rested not so much with the candidate himself (whom they conceded to be a reasonably capable and honorable person), but rather with Assad Bucaram and Osvaldo Hurtado. Roldós, several of them insisted, was nothing more than a puppet of Bucaram, a man who still evoked intense hostility outside the CFP (indeed, one politician who backed Roldós called Bucaram "foul mouthed, arbitrary, and a liar").

Opponents of Osvaldo Hurtado and the Christian Democratic movement warned ominously of "foreign influences over their ideology," suggesting a Marxist orientation. Conservative politicians frequently charged Hurtado and his supporters with fomenting class conflict. A strident example of such accusations can be found in an official campaign biography of Sixto Durán written by a member of the far-right ARNE Party. Noting that the Chilean Christian Democratic Party had recently joined with the Marxist Popular Unity (UP) in common opposition to their nation's military dictatorship, the author facetiously suggested that "the christian democratic movement throughout the world... plays the communists' game."³⁵ Sixto Durán himself, while refusing to call Hurtado a Marxist, likened the Roldós-Hurtado position to Salvador Allende's.

What did Roldós and Hurtado Really Represent?

If the Ecuadorian upper classes viewed Roldós and Hurtado's appeals for change with apprehension, the nation's Left surely refused to include the CFP's candidates in their ranks. When an Ecuadorian political journal asked four Marxist academics and leftist union leaders to evaluate the front-

running team, all the respondents depicted them as bourgeois reformers. Said Telmo Hidalgo, president of the Pichincha Federation of Workers, they are "populists representing bourgeois interests and are... in no way a workers or peasants party."³⁶ Indeed, coming out of an anti-Marxist political party (the CFP), a well-to-do landowning family, and a law practice whose clients included the powerful Bank of Guayaquil (where his brother was a vice-president), Roldós hardly seemed to qualify as a radical or revolutionary.

Speaking to reporters several months after his first-round victory, Roldós declared, "we may define ourselves as men of the left, that is, we propose structural changes. We are not in agreement with the present structures... [but] we believe in giving private enterprise the possibility of ample development...."³⁷ In an earlier interview, the CFP standard-bearer strongly rejected both "orthodox socialism and Leninism" in favor of "more reformist solutions."³⁸

Osvaldo Hurtado appeared to endorse an ideology somewhat to the left of his running mate. In 1976 he characterized the goals of his Christian Democratic movement as "a socialist project" and rejected the type of capitalism that had developed in Ecuador as "having generated intolerable forms of exploitation."³⁹ Since that time, however, as the young professor entered into the political arena he moderated his position and, by his own admission, moved toward the political center on purely pragmatic grounds. Moreover, even in his more radical academic years, Hurtado's Christian Democratic philosophy was always offered as an alternative to Marxism.

In short, while both Roldós and Hurtado stand to the left of the Ecuadorian political spectrum and left of previous administrations, they are reformers and not radicals. Their 21-point campaign program and their highest-ranking advisers emphasize administrative reform and efficiency. In their discussions

of agrarian reform, for example, they stress that considerations of social equity and economic redistribution must always be balanced with productivity criteria.

My own interviews with Osvaldo Hurtado and with the Roldós policy advisers suggested they are men deeply concerned with redressing the many social and economic inequities characterizing Ecuadorian society. When they talk of taxing the rich more heavily, they are as concerned with the plight of the small businessman and the middle class as they are with the peasantry and urban slum dwellers. One prominent businessman backing the CFP candidates confided, "if we in the middle class don't reform the system, we will eventually face serious class conflict in this country."

To be sure, when one considers the high-ranking advisers to the Roldós-Hurtado campaign, it is difficult to believe the right's allegations of "dangerous Marxist tendencies." Fernando Aspiazú (a leading Guayaquil banker), Rodrigo Paz (head of Quito's major currency exchange house) and Mauricio Dávalos (former vice-president of Citibank of Quito) are among Roldós' most important advisers and supporters.

A leading Ecuadorian political scientist suggested to me that rather than viewing Roldós-Hurtado as antiestablishment, the leading candidates in the first presidential round could be more fruitfully characterized as follows: "Raul Clemente Huerta represented the interests of the Guayaquil commercial barons, particularly agricultural exporters. He was the most laissez faire and conservative of all six candidates, seeking to protect the entrenched coastal elite and to limit the role of the state. Sixto Durán, though allied with traditionally conservative Andean landowners, is also linked to a new, Quito-based industrial and technocratic group that has benefited greatly from the petroleum boom and associated public works projects. Thus, he and

his backers favor government promotion of economic infrastructure and other statist policies, though they remain quite conservative on issues such as land reform. Finally, Roldós is representative of the most progressive, modernizing sector of Ecuador's professional and capitalist class. Hence, while his views are considered radical by conservative military officers and the old oligarchy, his goal is not to weaken capitalism but to make it more humane, efficient, and stable."

Accepting the validity of the above assessment, Osvaldo Hurtado added, "We realistically accept the fact that only moderate reforms are possible in this country and we propose no more than that. We will work entirely within the existing framework."

"Why, then," I asked, "the apparent panic of the oligarchy and the talk of pre-emptive coups?" "It is not fear of our alleged radicalism," Hurtado replied, but rather "the realization of the traditional political leaders that their days of back-room clique politics are over. Our ticket represents a new era of programmatic, open politics. In addition, there are elements of the military and economic elite (though not all of either group) who strongly oppose our election because we will put an end to corruption and influence buying. We will be the first government that cannot be bought."

While Dr. Hurtado may have overstated the capacity of any administration to eliminate entrenched corruption, his evaluation was endorsed by most independent political experts to whom I talked. They agreed that the most radical threat a Roldós-Hurtado administration would pose to the oligarchy would simply be making the rich pay taxes already on the books and in cutting their major "lines of corruption." Within the context of the current Ecuadorian political system that would represent major change.

Second-Round Campaigning

The clouded electoral recount, the ongoing possibility of a coup, and the Calderón Affair brought electoral activity to a virtual halt well into 1979. It was not until March, after the TSE finally issued its regulations for the congressional elections, that campaigning for the April run-off really resumed.⁴⁰ Until that point, all the parties and many political insiders retained serious doubts about whether a second round would be permitted. The mobilization of pro-election spokesmen by former President Galo Plaza Lazo, pressures from the Ecuadorian mass media and the U.S. Embassy, and the commitment of *junta* chief Vice Admiral Alfredo Poveda, all were critical elements in maintaining momentum toward *retorno*. Perhaps equally important, secret talks between Roldós and the armed forces convinced key officers that a CFP government would pose no threat to critical military interests. The electoral process was allowed to continue, said political insiders, when Roldós pledged that, if elected, his government would not prosecute major military figures for acts of corruption.⁴¹

Once the campaigning actually got under way, public attention was divided between the congressional and presidential races. Twelve political parties satisfied Electoral Tribunal requirements permitting them to field congressional lists. These slates could include up to 57 candidates spread throughout the nation's 20 provinces and 12 positions elected at large from the entire country. Both the at-large seats and the delegates allocated to each of the provinces were to be elected through proportional representation. Parties fielding congressional slates ranged from the Marxist UDP and MDP through the rightist CID, Social Christians, and Conservatives. That only the CFP met the TSE's modest requirements for fielding candidates in all 20 provinces revealed the weakness of party organization in

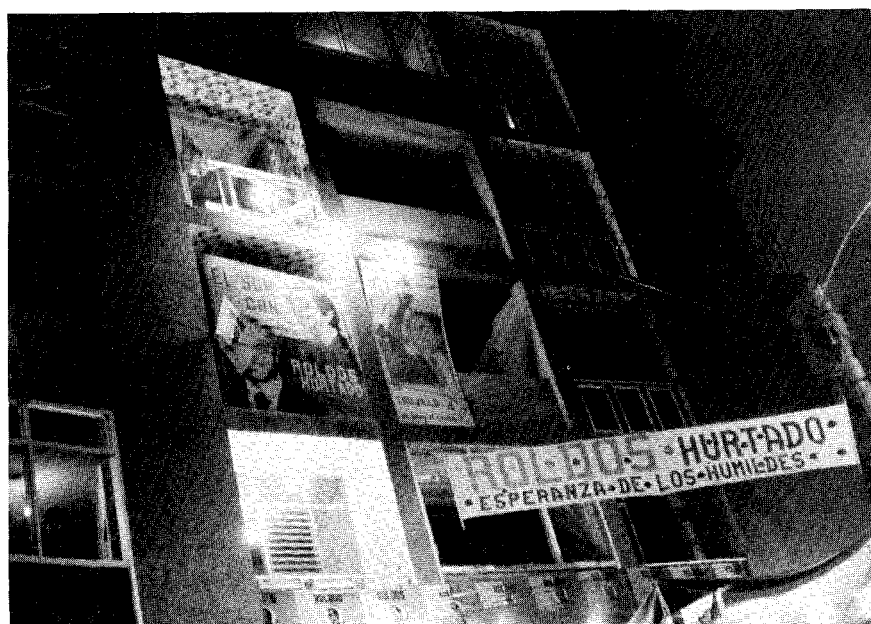
Ecuador. The Democratic Left was able to present candidates in 19 and the Conservatives in 18, but the Liberals only qualified in 15 provinces and the Social Christians in 12. Another indication of weak party structures—or at least limited party identification within the electorate—was the fact that campaign propaganda generally urged voters to support list 6, 8, 12, or whatever (as they would be numbered on the ballot), with no mention of the name of the party being endorsed.

The CFP, its congressional slate headed by Assad Bucaram, had emerged as the acknowledged front-runner in both the presidential and congressional races. The CFP list was strengthened by the inclusion of nearly ten members of the Popular Democratic/Christian Democratic movement. The most important of these candidates was Dr. Julio César Trujillo, who had masterminded Roldós-Hurtado's impressive showing in the highlands during the first round.

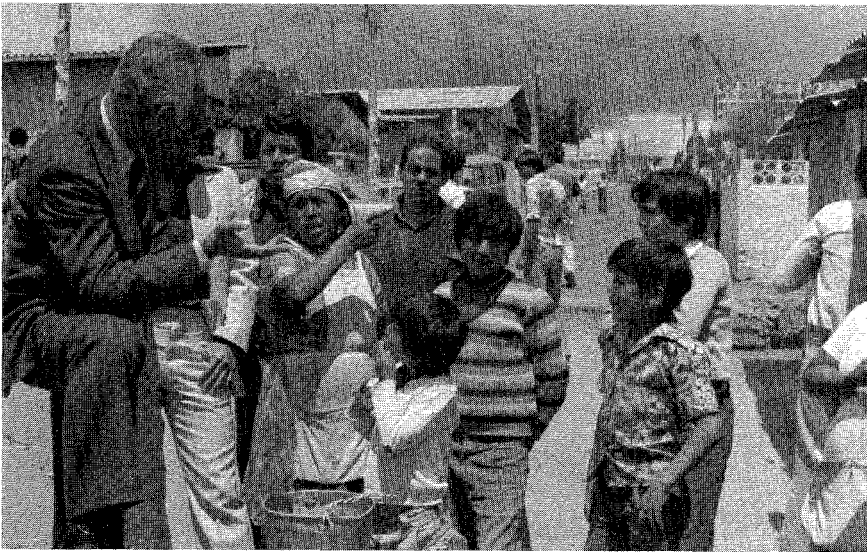
The Conservatives, benefiting from the overrepresentation of small Andean provinces (each province was allocated at least two deputies regardless of size) was generally expected to run second to the CFP in congress. The Liberals, who might normally have challenged

their traditional opponents for the second slot, had been badly split after the first round by a bitter fight for control of the party between adherents of Raul Clemente Huerta and those supporting his nephew Francisco.⁴² The Democratic Left fielded an impressive list of young and dynamic candidates (mostly from the newly emerging professional and technocratic class), hoping to recoup from their disappointing presidential showing in the first round. Finally, the Social Christians (Sixto Durán's party) mounted a very aggressive (indeed pugnacious) campaign led by its first-ranking congressional candidate, León Febres Cordero, a spokesman for the Guayaquil business community.

As for the presidential campaign, the second-round race had gotten off to a tentative start in February with a radio-television debate between the two front-running candidates (this was to be the only debate of the second round). Taking a more aggressive stance than he had previously, Sixto Durán accused Bucaram of mud slinging and attacked Osvaldo Hurtado's Christian Democrats as leftists. During the weeks that followed, national attention focused on a series of attacks on the CFP ticket by the Social Christian's León



Quito balcony, from which Roldós and Hurtado addressed a large audience at an evening rally.



Febres Cordero. Using the mass media, the Guayaquil businessman accused Roldós and Hurtado of tax evasion and of having come to an accommodation with the increasingly unpopular military government (or "the dictatorship" as it was generally called). Febres Cordero thus established himself as the "point man" of the Social Christian-Conservative campaign, trying to take the label of "the military's candidate" off Sixto Durán's shoulders. To be sure, Roldós had apparently committed himself to not prosecuting military corruption too zealously if elected. The fact remained, however, that the links between Durán and the military would make such an agreement superfluous on Sixto's part.



Jaime Roldós and the Popular Democrats' Julio César Trujillo took to the air waves to angrily rebut Febres Cordero's charges. Taking a more aggressive tone than was his custom, Roldós lashed out at "the [military] dictatorship" and suggested that the Guayaquil oligarchs represented by Febres Cordero might be connected with the Calderón assassination. Dr. Trujillo attacked Febres Cordero as the voice of the coastal oligarchy. This confrontation during the closing weeks of February constituted an atypical departure from an otherwise lifeless race.



Once the two presidential candidates began their respective campaigns in earnest—only seven weeks before the scheduled April 29 election—they each manifested markedly different styles and strategies. At CFP rallies and in campaign posters and propaganda, Osvaldo Hurtado received virtually equal billing with Roldós. Despite the attacks against him leveled by the right, the handsome and articulate young professor was

Sixto Durán on walking tour of Quito, engages in discussion with a market vendor, then chats with workmen and local residents.

considered a strong campaign asset by Roldós and his strategists. In contrast, Sixto Durán Ballén generally campaigned by himself and made very little use of his running mate.

Sixto's campaign concentrated on a series of walking tours through the principal cities and addresses to various small gatherings, while Roldós and Hurtado stressed mass rallies throughout the nation. If Durán Ballén had shown himself to be a weak campaigner in the first round, he seemed even more reluctant in the run-off. Indeed, his self-description as a technocrat and not a politician proved all too true. The Social Christian-Conservative campaign management was amateurish in the extreme, with the candidate himself having to attend to minor details which should have been handled by advance men. (I watched Durán spend considerable time on the phone making his own plane reservations during the closing weeks of the campaign.) Sixto's insistence on driving his own car to rallies and walking tours (and in looking for parking space) reflected both the candidate's admirable lack of pretentiousness and his concomitant lack of political professionalism. Similarly, this author watched Durán waste precious time fruitlessly arguing with hecklers and die-hard Roldós supporters during a walking tour of northern Quito.⁴³ Observing the Social Christian campaign shortly before the election and talking to Durán Ballén about his prospects, I sensed that he and his more objective aides knew he was beaten. Even the financial advantage that his campaign had enjoyed in the first round evaporated in the run-off as erstwhile backers refused to pour good money after bad.

In contrast, the Roldós-Hurtado campaign was a triumphant tour of the nation. At mass rallies they were introduced as "President Roldós and Vice-President Hurtado" while CFP literature described their candidate as "president of the people." Given the unreliability of polls conducted in the first round

and the limited size of all the campaign budgets, no voter surveys seemed to be conducted in the run-off. Yet political analysts were so sure of a CFP presidential victory that the opposition—particularly the Conservatives and Liberals—concentrated on gaining a congressional majority to stymie the new administration. At the same time, parties endorsing Roldós-Hurtado—particularly the Democratic Left—sought to associate their congressional slates with the CFP presidential ticket.⁴⁴

On the whole, the run-off was as lacking in concrete issues as the first round had been. Sixto Durán's campaign, led by León Febres Cordero (head of the Social Christian congressional list), tried, rather unsuccessfully, to depict the CFP team (particularly Hurtado and Bucaram) as dangerous authoritarians who might lead the country down the road to Marxism. Durán Ballén media advertisements admonished citizens to "Conserve the future with your vote—Only your vote can save the country from chaos and misery." CFP newspaper ads countered: "On April 29, your vote will decide between the oligarchy and the people; between lies and truths; between oppression and liberty; between dependency and independence...; between privilege and equality...; between exploitation and justice; between the past and the future."

Beyond such generalized assertions, neither candidate offered much in the way of specific policy recommendations. While the Roldós-Hurtado ticket generated some excitement, on the whole the electorate seemed apathetic and cynical—a result, perhaps, of the political maneuvers and conspiracies of the previous months. While the CFP candidates had apparently convinced a majority of Ecuadorians that they were more likely to challenge the status quo than were the traditional parties, few voters expected a great deal from any administration.

Jaime Roldós Aguilera.

The Voters Decide

On April 29, 1978, some 1.7 million Ecuadorian voters overwhelmingly elected Jaime Roldós to the nation's presidency. While the turnout was slightly higher than on the first round (1.68 million versus 1.61), it was lower than the vote in the January 1978 constitutional referendum, suggesting somewhat less public interest in the presidential race. Over 10 percent of the ballots cast (184,481) were void or blank. However, if the turnout was disappointing, and the Roldós-Hurtado victory surprising to virtually no one, the magnitude of the CFP sweep exceeded even their supporters' most optimistic expectations. Jaime Roldós took every province in the country, save one, and amassed nearly 70 percent of the valid votes: 1,025,148 to Durán Ballén's 471,657.⁴⁵ Even in his home city of Quito, the former mayor lost by a two-to-one margin.

Jaime Roldós thanked the military government for resisting pressures to annul the elections, while Osvaldo Hurtado (as always, the more combative member of the team) still warned of possible rightist attempts to stop the CFP from taking office. For his part, Sixto Durán graciously wished the winners well and announced his retirement from politics. His poorly



Table 5

Provisional Results of the Congressional Election*

Party	Coastal Seats	Andean Seats	Oriente (jungle) and Galapagos Islands	National (at large)	Total
CFP	13	12	2	4	31
Democratic Left (ID)	2	8	3	2	15
Conservatives	0	8	0	1	9
Liberals	1	1	0	1	3
Social Christians	2	0	0	1	3
Others	4	1	0	3	8
	22	30	5	12	69

*The figures reflect congressional recount results as of July 1979. At that time some seats were still being disputed, but no change in party strength was expected.

managed campaign ran true to form until the very end: on election day, Sixto had arrived at the polling place without his voting card and had to send an aide home to retrieve it before he could cast his ballot.

The congressional election results were more surprising than the presidential tallies and possibly more significant as an indicator of voter discontent with the traditional parties. While political analysts had conceded the CFP the largest number of seats in the new congress, it was expected to win no

more than 20-22 of the 69 deputies (all chosen through proportional representation). The Conservatives, assisted by the overrepresentation of the less populous and traditionally conservative Andean provinces, were expected to take as many as 14-16 seats. The Liberals had run a poor list of congressional candidates and knew they would suffer from the bitter internal split between supporters of the two Huertas. Based on their strong second place finish in the July 1978 local elections (only 3% nationally behind the CFP), they nevertheless hoped to elect 10-12 deputies.

The electoral results were strikingly different. The CFP swept to a 31-seat plurality, while the Democratic Left surprised the "experts" and exceeded their own expectations with 15 positions. Among the major traditional parties, the Conservatives elected a disappointing nine deputies while the Liberals were virtually obliterated as a major party with only three, as did Sixto Durán's Social Christians. The poor showing of the three parties most identified with the status quo, coupled with the even sharper decline of personalistic parties (the Velasquistas, CID, and PNR), suggested more forcefully than did

*Oswaldo Hurtado Larrea,
Vice-president of the Republic.*

the presidential results that the old political order was coming to an end.

The CFP and ID, the two major parties most clearly identified with anti-status quo reformism (excluding the weak Marxist parties) have emerged as Ecuador's dominant political forces. For the CFP the election meant political power after two decades of frustration. In taking the largest bloc of deputies from the Andean provinces, and two of four seats in the Oriente (eastern jungle), it had impressively stretched beyond its coastal stronghold and established itself as a national party. By running far ahead of his party's list and undoubtedly adding to its congressional strength, Jaime Roldós had challenged Assad Bucaram's position as the CFP's leader. Indeed, in retrospect it was clear that the cosmopolitan young lawyer had garnered far more votes from the middle class (and from the more staid Andean provinces, in general) than his flamboyant political mentor could have done. Ironically, in raising dubious legal road blocks to Bucaram's nomination, the CFP's opponents had forced that party to select a stronger candidate. More important, the elimination of the aging Guayaquil strongman had brought the country a far more qualified president.



The Democratic Left, for its part, had successfully established itself as the major alternative to the CFP as "the party of the future."

Undoubtedly it had gained congressional votes by wisely identifying its slate with Jaime Roldós. In the closing weeks, ID advertisements offered the simple message, "Roldós: List 12," leading some voters to believe it the slate for Roldós' party (the CFP was List 4). The real key to the ID's strong showing, however, was an impressive slate of dynamic, professional (generally young) candidates, many with personal followings in their home regions.

As for the losers, the Conservatives were reduced to an Andean party (Table 5). Indeed, they would have won even fewer congressional seats were it not for the over-representation of the highlands. The ten *sierra* provinces have a slightly smaller population than the five coastal states. But, due to the allocation of at least two deputies to each province regardless of size, the Andes elected 8 more representatives (30 to 22). In the election of nation-wide (at-large) deputies, the Conservatives (with 113,000 votes for those positions) actually ran behind the Social Christians (123,000) and Liberals (115,000) and received one-fourth the number of votes garnered by ID (445,000).

The Liberals—who had dominated Ecuadorian national politics for most of the first half of the twentieth century—were reduced to minor party status. Shortly after the election, Francisco Huerta announced that he was leaving the party to form a new political movement. If he brings much of the party's youth with him (a likely prospect), the Liberals will fade further. Finally, the Social Christians, lacking a national political figure after Sixto Durán's retirement, also show little prospects of a quick recovery.

Prospects for the Roldós Administration: A Look at the Short Term

On August 10, 1979, Ecuador's Supreme Military Command fulfilled its pledge and handed over the reigns of power to the civilian government. At 38, Jaime Roldós became the youngest popularly elected president in Latin American history. What kinds of policy is the new administration likely to pursue?

In post-election interviews, Vice-President Hurtado and top Roldós economic advisers noted to this author that, despite the country's relatively sound economy, financial constraints preclude expensive new social welfare or development programs. Oil revenues, while significant, have been stagnant since 1974 (indeed the volume of petroleum exports in 1977 was at its lowest point since 1972), as domestic petroleum consumption (rising at the alarming rate of 15% annually) takes an increasing slice of production. The external debt—now over \$1.4 billion—currently accounts for nearly 30 percent of export earnings and that proportion is expected to rise. The outgoing military regime had already issued a "bare bones" budget for 1979, only 6.6 percent above the preliminary level for 1978. The new administration will put a high priority on debt servicing and budgetary austerity.

While the Ecuadorian economy and government treasury are sounder than those of most of its South American neighbors, business and political leaders expect a recession of some sort in 1980. Distrust of the new administration in important segments of the business community has already decreased private investment somewhat and this trend will likely continue. In short, said Osvaldo Hurtado, "we are entering a period of economic difficulty due to a huge debt and weak export prospects." Both Hurtado and the administration's economic advisers feel the economic role of the state has been expanded to its current financial and administrative limits. Any additions to social programs, said Hurtado, will be financed by transferring government oil revenues from

public works projects (such as road construction)—a major area of investment by the military regime—into education, public health, and the like. Such transfers, however, are unlikely to produce major new expenditures in low-income housing or agrarian reform.

In short, contrary to the fears of its opponents and the hopes of many of its supporters, the Roldós government will be moderately progressive rather than radical. Dr. Hurtado listed three reasons for such moderation: first, he said, the CFP is essentially a center-left party, less change-oriented than the vice-president's Christian Democrats; second, as indicated, the short-term economic picture precludes bold new ventures; and, perhaps most important, Roldós and Hurtado are well aware that the military and economic power structure would not tolerate radical change.

Primary emphasis in the new administration's early policies will be placed on tax and administrative reform. One high-level administration economist insisted that the current income tax structure—which is not graduated beyond incomes of 3 million sucres (\$107,000)—weighs too heavily on the shoulders of the middle class and insufficiently on the rich. Moreover, any informed observer knows there is massive tax evasion and corruption. Rather than press for major changes in the tax structure, therefore, the government will concentrate on more honest and efficient collection of already existing income, sales, and import taxes.

Administrative reform will focus on streamlining the overbloated Ecuadorian bureaucracy and in improving the quality and honesty of its operations. Roldós' advisers have repeatedly stressed their commitment to terminating influence peddling, bribery, and other forms of corruption. Bureaucratic incompetence and inefficiency were also seen as major problems. Yet changes in all these areas will be slow. Even the most

well-intentioned government is unlikely to change overnight bureaucratic behavior that has been manifested for generations.

Beyond these two generalized reforms, the Roldós government will seek to improve the quality of various ongoing programs. In the relatively stagnant agricultural sector, for example, efforts will be made to increase output. Consequently, the agrarian reform program (introduced by an earlier military government) will stress only the redistribution of inefficiently farmed estates, with no major new expropriations. Productivity criteria will be given equal or greater emphasis than equity. Recently introduced (military government) decrees opening up the eastern Amazonian jungle (the Oriente) to large agrobusiness exploitation may be reversed in a return to past programs limiting colonization to middle-sized holdings.

Finally, educational reform will be given high priority. During the past decade, the number of students attending Ecuadorian secondary schools and universities has expanded rapidly, often, however, at the cost of educational quality. Consequently, attempts will be made to improve the quality of education, particularly in the areas of occupational-professional training.

Programs such as these do not represent a dramatic departure from the policies of the progressive military government headed by General Rodríguez Lara (1972-1975) or even from those of Admiral Poveda's outgoing *junta*.⁴⁶ But the Roldós-Hurtado team insists that its major contribution will come in the form of more professional, competent implementation of these policies. As one adviser put it, "we are the first Ecuadorian government to come to office with a comprehensive economic program and with well-trained people who know what they are doing."

To be sure, the quality of Ecuadorian political leadership in recent decades has not been strong. The demagogic and inefficient

Velasco governments alternated with military regimes (generally corrupt and ill-equipped to govern) and mediocre interim presidents (installed by constituent assemblies between coups). One must go back to the Galo Plaza administration (1948-1952) to find a president with strong leadership and administrative capabilities.

The Roldós campaign swept over its opponents because it was directed by competent professionals who were opposing traditionalist amateurs (with the obvious exception of the Democratic Left whose organizational talents helped earn the party second place in the congressional race). Presumably, those organizational and administrative skills will now be carried into government.

Of course, successful implementation of such reforms depends on the new government's capacity to stay in power for its full five-year term of office. In the final analysis, Roldós and his aides see this as a primary goal (explaining, in part, why they will not attempt radical change). They insist that this is not a question of self interest, but rather a means of legitimizing civilian government and opening up channels for ongoing reforms in the future. To provoke a coup, they argue, would only serve the defenders of the status quo.

Consequently, if Roldós fails to complete his term in office—as many political analysts predict—it will not be because of the administration's radicalism, but because of its failure to manage the anticipated economic downturn or to govern effectively. Roldós' success will depend in large part on his ability to work with the congress. Cynics expect the CFP congressional bloc to be controlled by an obstreperous Assad Bucaram, who leads the delegation, out to regain center stage from his former aide. The CFP party boss has already made clear that he will be a thorn in Roldós' side. On the one hand, he has negotiated a congressional alliance with the Conservative Party, an alliance

which Roldós rejects and which would surely reduce the President's capacity to introduce meaningful reforms. At the same time, Bucaram has publicly demanded sharp increases in the minimum wage and large social service and housing expenditures which administration economists feel the country cannot afford. What is not clear at this point is whether Bucaram will maintain control of his hand-picked CFP delegation or whether they will follow the ascending star of their president.⁴⁷

Even if Roldós is able to gain the support of most CFP deputies, he will need additional votes in order to forge a congressional majority. One might expect these votes to come from the Democratic Left, a party whose ideology and political style seem highly compatible with Roldós and Hurtado (whose candidacy ID supported in the presidential run-off). Yet neither the CFP nor ID seems interested in a congressional alliance and the parties' leaders were not even speaking to each other after the April election.

Bucaram remained bitter over ID's use of Roldós' name in order to boost its own congressional slate. The Democratic Left, for its part, sees itself as the CFP's primary opponent in the next presidential and congressional elections. ID leader Rodrigo Borja still harbors strong presidential aspirations and has no desire to strengthen the administration's position. Borja makes no attempt to hide his distaste for Bucaram and Hurtado (whom he labels rank opportunists) and he indicated to me that ID support of the Roldós-Hurtado candidacies on the second round was merely a case of supporting "the lesser of two evils." Thus, while the Democratic Left (which sees itself as more progressive than the CFP) will probably offer selective support of some of Roldós programs, the President will lack a dependable congressional majority.

Beyond Roldós: A New Political Order?

The 1978-79 national elections represented an important step in

Ecuador's political development. They produced a president and administrative team aware of the need for socioeconomic and political modernization. Perhaps more important, they seem to have marked the demise of the traditional (Liberal and Conservative) and personalist (Velasquista, CID) parties which had heretofore so successfully defended the status quo. Two political parties—CFP and ID—with programmatic, modernizing orientations emerged as the nation's dominant political forces and are likely to retain that position in the foreseeable future.

Yet, the very fact that so many Ecuadorians do not expect Jaime Roldós to finish his term of office, despite his overwhelming popular mandate, suggests the continuing instability and fragility of the nation's political institutions. If the country is to proceed further along the path of stable and responsive

civilian government, further changes will be needed. The CFP is a party with a strong organizational base, widespread popular support, and a capable new leader. However, its past history of highly personalistic, populist leadership has prevented it from developing an intellectual base or coherent ideology. Jaime Roldós' well-conceived electoral alliance with the Popular Democratic movement (DP/CDU)—particularly its Christian Democratic component—provided the CFP with badly needed intellectual and technical skills. One of the greatest tests facing the new President will be his ability to draw such talent into the CFP (either from the Christian Democrats or from outside the party system) and thereby permanently transform the CFP into more than the political arm of Assad Bucaram.

Long term political change will further depend on the willingness of

opposition parties—particularly the Conservatives and Social Christians—and of the nation's economic elite to accept modernization and reform of the socioeconomic order and to reinforce the legitimacy of civilian rule. Finally, institutional development will require the military to stay in the barracks and allow this, and future, civilian governments reasonable room for maneuver. Currently, the armed forces includes a progressive sector of young officers who endorse Roldós' reformist orientation. If they can restrain the senior officers who are still aligned with oligarchical interests, and if the reformist and conservative wings of the armed forces can control their interventionist inclinations, Ecuador may make progress along the road to political development.

(August 1979)

NOTES

1. Readers not already familiar with Ecuadorian politics are referred to Thomas Sanders, "Ecuador: Politics of Transition" [TGS-8-'77], *AUFS Reports*, West Coast South America Series, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, 1977, to which this Report serves as a sequel. See also, Gerhad Drekonja, et al., *Ecuador Hoy* (Bogotá, Colombia: Siglo XXI, 1978); Osvaldo Hurtado, *El Poder Político en el Ecuador* (Quito, Ecuador: Universidad Católica, 1977); John Martz, *Ecuador: Conflicting Political Culture and the Quest for Progress* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1972).

2. The other four years witnessed the full term of civilian president Camilo Ponce (1956-1960), who was elected by a controversial 3,000-vote margin and only received 29.5 percent of the total vote.

3. Miguel Murmis et al., "Research Proposal on Ecuadorian Development" (Toronto: York University—unpublished mimeo).

4. Rafael Quinteros, "Los Partidos Políticos en el Ecuador y la Clase Terrateniente en las Transformaciones del Estado" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1978), p. 299.

5. Martz, *Ecuador*, p. 28.

6. This Report is based in part on interviews with the following Ecuadorian political leaders and party spokesmen: Sixto Durán Ballén (former mayor of Quito and 1978-79 presidential candidate of the National Constitutional Front and Social Christian Party); Osvaldo Hurtado (recently inaugurated as Vice-President of Ecuador and leader of the Christian Democratic movement); Dr. Rodrigo Borja (presidential candidate of the Democratic Left); Professor Julio Prado (Secretary General of the CID Party and Dean of International Studies at the Central University); Galo Plaza Laso (former President of Ecuador); Pedro José Arteta (former Secretary General of the Liberal Party); Dr. Fabián Alarcón (Secretary General of the PPP Party); Mauricio Dávalos (formerly economic adviser to presidential candidate Jaime Roldós and now Minister of Natural Resources); Dr. Blasco Peñaherrera (editor of *Vistazo* magazine; former Minister of Government; former Liberal Party Vice Presidential candidate); Dr. Luis Ponce (Secretary General, Social Christian Party); Colonel Rafael Armijos (Secretary General, Conservative Party); Dr. Julio César Trujillo (Secretary General, Popular Democratic Party); Galo Vayas Salazar (Deputy, CFP Party); and others who wished to remain anonymous.

7. A North American political scientist who has lived and worked for extended periods of time in Colombia and Ecuador suggested to me that even the most conservative Ecuadorian politicians use rhetoric that would place them on the left of the Colombian political spectrum.

8. Indeed, Colonel Rafael Armijos, the man who succeeded Trujillo as leader of the Conservatives, informed me that he wouldn't allow Trujillo to address party meetings in Armijos' home province of Loja when the Colonel was provincial secretary of the party and Dr. Trujillo was national secretary.

9. Martz, *Ecuador*, p. 108.

10. On Velasco and on Ecuadorian populism see: Pablo Cuví, *Velasco Ibarra: el último caudillo de la oligarquía* (Quito: Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, 1977); Esteban del Campo, *El Populismo en Ecuador* (Quito: FLACSO, 1978). Some scholars question the utility of the concept of populism in Latin America, arguing that it is too broad and all-encompassing a term.

11. With a population of over one million, Guayaquil is both Ecuador's most populous city and its dominant industrial and commercial center. The CFP's political power base extends from

the city into the encompassing province of Guayas (the nation's most populous province and a major agricultural export region) and adjoining areas of the coast.

12. Bucaram's high-handed tactics have antagonized political opponents from all sides of the Ecuadorian political spectrum. Sixto Durán, the presidential candidate of a coalition opposing the CFP, indignantly told me that Bucaram had distributed purposely mistranslated copies of Durán's English-language birth certificate (Durán was born in the United States). The words "mother's maiden name" had allegedly been translated to "name of unmarried mother" so as to make it appear that Durán's birth was illegitimate.

13. Between 1962 and 1975, Guayaquil's population more than doubled from 510,785 to 1,077,152 while Quito grew from 355,183 to 592,606. See Osvaldo Hurtado, *Dos Mundos Superpuestos* (Quito: Inedes, 1975).

14. See, Osvaldo Barsky, "Iniciativa terrateniente en la reestructuración de las relaciones sociales en la sierra Ecuatoriana: 1959-64," *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* (Quito), 1978.

15. See Sanders, "Ecuador: Politics of Transition."

16. One encounters, for example, many physicians in Quito who had been practicing in the United States prior to 1974, but returned to Ecuador when oil money created a profitable clientele among the new bourgeoisie.

17. Of some 3.1 million Ecuadorian adults in 1978, approximately 2.6 million were literate of whom 1.8 million registered for that year's election.

18. Huerta lost to the Social Christian candidate by a paper-thin (3,000 vote) margin in the 1956 popular elections and was an unsuccessful candidate in the 1966 election of a provisional president by a Constituent Assembly.

19. The absurdity of eliminating Bucaram on the basis of his parents' nationality was highlighted by the fact that Sixto Durán was fully eligible despite the fact that he had been born in Boston (but was of Ecuadorian parentage and had been declared an Ecuadorian citizen at birth).

20. Soon after being eliminated from the presidential race, Bucaram was declared ineligible to run for mayor of Guayaquil (on another technicality tailor-made for him). Finally, when his

wife planned to run for mayor of Guayaquil, she was also eliminated on a technicality. Assad Bucaram was ultimately able to qualify as a congressional candidate, heading the CFP slate.

21. Huerta sought to eliminate the conflict of interest by resigning from his position at the research institute (called Fedesarrollo), but the board of directors—drawn largely from the Guayaquil oligarchy—refused to accept his resignation.

22. Some observers were initially reminded of the 1971 Argentine election in which Hector Cámpora ran as a stand-in for Juan Perón using the rallying cry, "Campora to the presidency, Perón to power." In Ecuador, however, Roldós' stature rose quickly and dramatically.

23. Ironically, both Roldós and Sixto Durán's brothers were high-ranking officials of the Bank of Guayaquil. A significant number of "middle class voters"—ranging from taxicab drivers to professionals—told me that they would vote for Roldós (whom they considered distinguished) but would never have voted for Assad Bucaram.

24. Dr. Hurtado's *El Poder Político*... is a widely used text in the nation's universities and many secondary schools.

25. Dr. Trujillo, one of the country's most respected political leaders (among politically active Ecuadorians), directed the CFP's impressive campaign in the Andean highlands, an area in which the party had previously been very weak. Persons close to Drs. Hurtado and Trujillo assured me that neither man would have formed a political alliance with Assad Bucaram had he been the CFP candidate.

26. The Liberal Party historically has dominated much of the coast, due largely to that region's long-standing opposition to the Church and the Quito-based Andean elite. Huerta performed so poorly on the first televised presidential debate (including all six candidates) that he withdrew from subsequent joint television appearances with his opponents.

27. Both polls were conducted three to four weeks before the election. Results of the IECOP poll (showing Huerta ahead of Durán) were suspect since that survey was commissioned by the Liberal Party.

28. An article in the March 1979 issue of *Nueva* (a leading Ecuadorian news journal subsequently closed down by the military government) charged Durán Ballén with using his position as mayor to benefit himself and friends in real estate deals. Whatever the validity of such charges, Durán was respected by his political opponents for his opposition to the various legal maneuvers against Bucaram and his refusal to support anti-Roldós coup preparations (preparations which key Liberal leaders endorsed).

29. *Impacto* (June 1978). The Ecuadorian elite was not assuaged by Roldós' qualification, "But we must distinguish between the ideal and the possible."

30. See: Joaquín Loyola, "El minigolpe de los triónviros," *Nueva*, No. 52 (October 1978); Interview with Francisco Huerta, "No Propongo golpismo, pero..." *Nueva*, No. 53 (November 1978); *Nueva*, No. 54 (December 1978). Twice in recent decades interim presidents have been selected by a constituent assembly. The power of traditional parties would normally be much greater in the assembly than in popular election.

31. Méndez belonged to *Atala*, a terrorist organization associated with a number of political bombings in Guayaquil. He had recently been expelled from the university's medical faculty. Coincidentally, the witnesses who recognized him were fellow medical students.

32. Ecuadorians with inside knowledge of their political system often expressed the belief that Jarrín had to be acting with the tacit approval of somebody above him, probably army commander Durán. It was generally felt that Admiral Poveda and the ruling *junta* per se were not involved in the Calderón Affair (though General Durán was a member of the *junta*).

33. It might also be noted that several men involved in the Calderón murder were formerly bodyguards for Liberal Party candidate Raul Clemente Huerta. Although no link was found between Huerta or other Liberal leaders and the assassination, the events hardly spoke well for the people they hired. While attacks on local politicians are not uncommon in Guayaquil, no national political figure had been assassinated since Liberal President Alfaro in 1912, making the murder all the more shocking to the public generally.

34. "Roldós-Hurtado: Una puerta abierta... Hacia Donde?" *Nueva*, No. 53 (November 1978). My own interviews with Ponce and other opposition leaders brought out the same kind of contradictory analysis. Thus Pedro Arteta, former national secretary of the Liberal Party—a man closely associated with foreign corporations and widely believed to be an active *golpista*—accused the U.S. Embassy and State Department of interfering in Ecuadorian politics by backing Roldós.

35. Federico Veintimilla Salcedo, *Sixto Durán Ballén: Enjuiciamiento de su obra* (Quito: 1978).

36. "Roldós-Huerta: Una puerta abierta... Hacia donde?" *Nueva*, No. 52 (October 1978).

37. *El Universo* (Guayaquil): July 2, 1978.

38. *Nueva* (March 1978).

39. *Nueva*, No. 34 (October 1976).

40. Actually, the TSE issued its regulations in late January, but congressional lists were not filed until February 28. The election date was pushed back from April 8 to April 29 because several parties complained that they lacked time to get their congressional campaigns organized in time.

41. Corruption in the military regime was fairly extensive at all levels. General Guillermo Durán was believed to have been associated with a scandal that resulted in the closing of the La Previsora Bank. In March 1979, Ecuador's leading news magazine, *Nueva*, was closed down because of its revelations of military corruption. Insiders insisted that while a Roldós administration would probably prosecute lower-ranking officers for corruption, Roldós had made a tacit agreement with the military not to go after the most senior officers. Only then could he be sure of being allowed to take office.

42. After Francisco Huerta was deposed as the party's presidential candidate, his uncle's supporters ousted him as the party's national director. A bitter legal battle ensued between the two Huerta factions.

43. Durán stopped for nearly 15 minutes to engage several highly antagonistic Indian vendors (in an outdoor market) in heated debate. The women were followers of the FADI Marxist faction. Thus, Sixto violated a cardinal rule of political campaigning by losing valuable time debating firmly convinced opponents.

44. Newspaper ads for the Democratic Left (ID) urged voters to support

"Roldós and List 12" (the ID congressional slate). Roldós was apparently happy to accept such support. However, Assad Bucaram saw these ads as taking votes from his CFP congressional slate by leading voters to think that List 12, rather than the CFP's List 4, represented Roldós' party.

45. This represents the final presidential recount issued on June 6. Unlike the first round, the run-off recount did not differ substantially from the preliminary results announced the day after the election nor did it involve much drama.

46. On the Rodríguez Lara and Poveda *juntas*, see: Thomas Sanders, "Ecuador: Politics of Transition."

47. Several months have passed since the initial writing of this *Report*. As it goes to press, an open and hostile break has developed between President Roldós and Congressional chief Bucaram. In an attempt to reassert his political power, Assad Bucaram—backed by the CFP delegation and its Conservative allies—has engineered the congressional defeat of most of Roldós major proposals. The Bucaram-Roldós confrontation and the aging party boss' ability to control CFP congressional votes have fulfilled the most pessimistic predictions of Ecuadorian political experts. Thus, in late November, I am less sanguine about the new administrations prospects than I was in August.