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“Pinocchio” Lasso: As liar as opportunist

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Ecuador has been living under turbulent times for a while now, with three provinces in a state of emergency, with indigenous people who do not want to be deceived again and again by a President —a millionaire banker— who took advantage of the disagreement between some aboriginal leaders with Correísmo and grabbed the power, after some tried to revive the much persecuted Citizen Revolution, without Correa, which had won the first round in the general elections a year ago.

The arrest of some of their leaders, plus their subsequent release, to calm things down, have not diminished the indignation of the indigenous mass deceived by Guillermo Lasso, who had barely managed to qualify for

the second round, in a way that seems pretty surprising to us. The leaders of various Aboriginal groups often decide for whom their followers should vote.

The deception was so great that Lasso came to receive the Baton of Command in a solemn ceremony and use his good diction, false modesty, and power of persuasion to convince indigenous people that his government would comply with all their demands.

And although the indigenous groups represent 7% of the 14 million Ecuadorians, that was enough for Lasso to defeat the young candidate of Correismo and replace his student, Lenin Moreno, who was well described as a traitor to his party, comrades, and revolutionary ideas, who has among his "merits" having handed over the creator of Wikileaks, Julian Assange, from the Ecuadorian embassy in London to the British authorities, which have already decided to extradite him to the United States.

Lasso, caught red-handed, is now trying to meet with some indigenous chiefs to try to disunite the movement led by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, whose president, Leónidas Iza, denounced that he was *"politically kidnapped"* by the government of Guillermo Lasso, and he confirmed that he is a victim of pressure to step aside the protests across the nation.

*"I have regained my freedom under due process. I have not escaped,"* said Iza after being arrested, accused of paralyzing public transportation. And he added: *"It is*

*absolutely clear that there is political pressure masterminded by you,"* he said, addressing President Lasso.

The leader denounced that at first, he was accused of the crime of "terrorism", and then his accusation was disguised and changed into blocking traffic in flagrante delicto. Iza also said that he was the victim of an ambush by the Ecuadorian Army to arrest him when he was traveling in a vehicle on a highway that was normally passable.

In addition, he stated that during the search of his belongings *"they only found"* in his pocket a dollar and 55 cents, a 2-euro coin, the keys to his house and a keychain. *"Never seen burning tires or mounds in the place, all the vehicles were transiting,"* he said.

## **A MOCKERY TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE...**

It is actually naïve and of political ignorance to believe Lasso was serious when he talked about a *"fight"* for Ecuador's *"democratic soul,"* at the ancient rites and ceremonies organized by the Pirhuin's endogenous community, province of Tungurahua, to give Lasso the Baton of Command, which occurred in festival atmosphere with music, dance, and ancestral rites, everything surrounding the *"chacana,"* a cross symbolizing the union between human beings and the universe in native cultures.

*"The delivery of this Baton of Command in this chacana*

*means—in the indigenous world— transferring the power of the peoples, the good wishes and positive energies of the Pachamama, while delivering friendship, trust and commitment between the original peoples,"* said Manuel Caizabanda, prefect of the province of Tungurahua.

Lasso, sneakily, thanked the indigenous community. In addition, he asked them to work together to improve living conditions in the rural and agricultural sectors, after which he pointed out that he receives the Baton of Command *"with humility, committed to all of you to carry out and make the dreams of prosperity of a people that wants to advance, that wants to prosper, come true"*.

This way, he offered indigenous communities *"to improve irrigation channels in rural areas, promote agricultural and livestock credit, simplify procedures and streamline processes to access productive loans, reactivate rural schools and intercultural education,"* all consistent with his inaugural speech for the presidency, when he urged all Ecuadorians *"to find common ground in diversity; that is, the indigenous peoples, the Afro people, peasants, cholos and mestizos, of all the cultures that coexist in this beautiful territory called Ecuador"*.

## **...AND AT THE FAILED BIDEN'S SUMMIT**

Before facing the justified massive protest headed by indigenous people, Lasso had attended the Americas Summit held in Los Angeles, California, U.S. In his speech, in front of other heads of states of the region, he talked about the different ways his government



contributes to the fight against climate change. Unfortunately, facts tell another different story.

It has been a year since Lasso proposed to foster the "*ecological transition*" as a public policy. He added, symbolically, the terms Ecological Transition to the Ministry of Environment and Water. Such approach of public policy is essential in a planet aiming to survive a climatic crisis, especially in a country with ecosystems that contribute not only to the mitigation of climate change at a global level, but are also living reservoirs of biodiversity and cultures.

However, a year after the aforementioned impulse, the actions are not consistent with the statement, and it actually seems more a populist speech of an environmental nature or a political marketing slogan with little coherent support in practice. This was evident when, just one month after the acclaimed change of the ministry's name, he signed decree 95, which sought to double oil production, and a month later, he signed decree 151, which stimulated the expansion of mining.

Not only does this evidences the contradictions between discourse and praxis, but also calls into question the president's real commitment to the sustainability of life on Earth. Given the above, it is worth asking: is the ecological transition a top priority for this government? Are there concrete proposals to limit dependence on natural resources at the country level? How are peoples and nationalities and defenders of nature included in this

process?

## **CURSING THE LIAR**

With so many lies, Lasso's nose must have grown enormously, like the fable about Pinocchio, but he deserves the leading role in the three terrible curses by Heinrich Christian Johann Heine, which is collected in the Critical Edition of the Complete Works of José Martí, Volume 27, page 62:

In his poem "**The Silesian weavers**", this German poet says that these workers, while weaving, sing three curses between their teeth: *"one against God, for forgetting their prayers and their hunger; the second, against the Prussian king for not alleviating their misery and ordering them to be shot as if they were stray dogs; the last one, against a false homeland where only ignominy, impudence, and the manure inhabited by worms prosper"*.

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