**Author:** **WEISSFISCH, Harry**

**City:**  ???

**Title:**   My Ecuadorian recollections Within the Guayaquil Jewish Community of Ecuador: 1956 – 1961

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I read with interest the various recollections of some of the Jews of Guayaquil 1956 -1961 and they all seem to enjoy that xenophobic, self-center view of Ecuador and Ecuadorians.

My parents fled from Czechoslovakia in 1939 to Ecuador. They remembered how primitive and miserable the living conditions were; the lack of sanitation facilities, education, etc., how the people lived while 2% of the population enjoyed wealth and controlled the nation and would not and could not relinquish their power.

I was born in Ecuador.

My parents could not afford the cost of becoming members of the Guayaquil Jewish Community Center; nevertheless, I gravitated to it because I found young people my age with whom I could interact. How wrong was I? Although I tried to blend in, they saw me as an intruder and for the most part were antagonistic towards me. To be fair I lacked social graces, and I was not one of those attending the American School.

I am not going to print names, but many were self-centered, pompous asses, arrogant individuals who displayed a disdain towards Ecuador and Ecuadorians, in general; that may be due to their parents’ attitude toward their host country.

I never participated in Jewish classes at the center nor did I want to, however, I did make use of the pool. I did participate in some of the plays, however, never attended any services as I remember, even at that age I disdained religion.

The culmination of their arrogance was when the father of one of the members came to me (I was about 14 or 15 years of age at the time) and told me I could not make use of the Jewish Community Center because my father had not paid the dues.  I never returned, even when the owner of El Rosado, (I forget her name,) apologized and told me that I would be welcomed at the Center at any time; I never returned.

In conclusion, my recollection of Jews of Ecuador is quite negative.

Just want to add that while I lived and attended High School in Ecuador, my Ecuadorian classmates and friends never ever behaved in the way my ‘so called Jewish friends behaved,’ I never felt as an outsider with them; I was one of the boys. In addition none of my friends ever questioned my “Jewishness.”

I left Ecuador in 1961 and have never returned.

Harry Weissfisch