

JAMES P. BRENNAN (ed.): *Peronism and Argentina*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1998.

In recent months, as the Argentine presidential campaign swings into high gear, Peronist slogans have reappeared in public political debate, while various candidates are making use of myths that originated in the 1940s. This trend brings new relevance to issues concerning Peronism's significance in twentieth-century Argentina and the metamorphoses this movement has undergone since Perón first burst upon the national political scene. The present collection of eight essays, which arose out of a 1990 conference held at Harvard University, provides a useful outline for discussing these issues.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part is devoted to the intellectual controversy surrounding Peronism as a social and political phenomenon. Cristián Buchrucker's article, reviewing the major interpretations of Peronism, incisively rejects comparisons between Peronism and European fascism between the two world wars, and shows the futility of comparisons between Peronism and socialism. Buchrucker rightly observes that "what Perón proposed as 'national Socialism' was what for the European observer would be a variant of the mixed economy and the welfare state in which the unions played a prominent role" (p. 10). His discussion of Peronism as a manifestation of Latin American populism, however, is less cogent.

Mariano Plotkin's contribution (originally published in Vol. 2, No. 1, of *EIAL*) is still the best historiographic essay on the classic Peronism of the years 1946-1955. Despite the omission of several important studies on specific aspects of the Peronist regime, it constitutes an essential survey of writings on the Peronist movement and regime, from the books published immediately after the fall of the regime in 1955, through such important contributions as those of Gino Germani, Torcuato Di Tella, Miguel Murmis and Juan Carlos Portantiero, and ending with Tomás Eloy Martínez's *La novela de Perón* and *Santa Evita*.

The second part of the book, and the most interesting in many respects, addresses several aspects of Peronism's influence on Argentine society and politics since the mid-1940s. María Fernanda Arias continues her work on the neo-Peronist parties that emerged during the period of Perón's exile, focusing here on the Movimiento Popular Neuquino (MPN), a party that, despite its Peronist identity, managed to maintain its independence from mainstream Peronism. Her article constitutes a contribution to a little-known chapter in the history of Peronism, as well as to the history of Argentine provincial parties.

James Brennan's article, which focuses on the business sector's role in Peronism, is the longest and best-researched in this collection. Brennan shows

that the bourgeois component of Perón's populist alliance was more complex than is usually thought, and that it was not limited to a few new industrialists but included important agrarian and commercial elements, especially in the provinces.

This section ends with an article by Juan Carlos Torre that summarizes his previous important writings on the Peronist labor movement.

The last part of the book concerns the latest phase in the evolution of Peronism, a phase that began in 1989 with the election of Carlos Menem to the presidency. The three essays comprising this section (by Vicente Palermo, María Cecilia Cangiano, and Torcuato Di Tella, respectively) examine the trends of change and continuity linking the "historical Peronism" of the 1940s and 1950s with this "third Peronism." Palermo shows how, in the midst of the 1989 hyper-inflation crisis, Menem used Peronist symbols and myths to shape a neo-liberal project that was in fact antithetical to "classic Peronism." Cangiano reconstructs the ways in which the working-class community of Villa Constitución, at the site of the Acindar steel plant, has responded to the political and social changes that took place during the first years of Menem's government. The concluding article, by Torcuato Di Tella, deals with the non-revolutionary, threatening nature of Peronism and the components of Peronism past and present.

In sum, this is a useful collection of essays and a valuable teaching resource.

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CAROL WISE (ed.): *The Post-NAFTA Political Economy: Mexico and the Western Hemisphere*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998.

Promises filled the air during the honeymoon years of trade liberalization in the early 1990s. Announcing his Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI) in 1990, President George Bush proclaimed, "prosperity in our hemisphere depends on trade, not aid ... the future of Latin America lies with free government and free markets." Likewise, a Mexico trade official lobbying for the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1991 asked critics of the agreement to "just imagine how Mexico could help the U.S. economy recover when our own economy improves, and with it the standard of living of Mexicans." On the other side of the debate, critics of the NAFTA, and any other hemispheric free trade initiatives, promised, among other things, a "giant sucking sound."

Carol Wise's edited volume, *The Post-NAFTA Political Economy: Mexico and the Western Hemisphere*, examines the rhetoric and reality of trade