

1921-22), sólo son recuerdos literarios. Los años 30 no arrojaron muertes masivas, pero sí fueron masivos el encarcelamiento, los secuestros y la tortura por causas sindicales y políticas. Pero también los presos comunes eran sometidos a mal trato y a sevicias, violencia que legitimaba cotidianamente la violación de los derechos humanos. Durante el primer peronismo, hubo pocos asesinatos, a diferencia de las ejecuciones de la Revolución Libertadora, pero se aplicó sistemáticamente la tortura. Enumerar esta tradición de violencia local, nada más, hubiera sido más convincente que escribir que “había cierto acostumbramiento a la violencia”, como expresa Feitlowitz. Esta ensayista atribuye a la última dictadura militar la represión con picana eléctrica, la parrilla, la leonera, el quirófano; pero en realidad esos términos fueron acuñados en épocas mucho más antiguas, por lo menos desde la época en que el hijo de Lugones fue Jefe de la Policía.

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MARGALIT BEJARANO, comp.: *La comunidad hebrea de Cuba: la memoria y la historia*. Jerusalem, Instituto Abraham Harman de Judaísmo Contemporáneo, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1996.

Margalit Bejarano, the leading scholar of Cuba's interwar Jewish community, has produced a fruitful collection of short testimonies from more than five dozen men and women who lived in Cuba before 1959. A few contribute more than once; other statements are the result of two persons being interviewed at the same time. The bulk of the oral history research was carried out in South Florida, the result of the trick of history that drove the overwhelming majority of Cuban Jews from that island to the land that had barred their parents—although Dr. Bejarano also knows Cuba well, especially the period before World War II.

Her book is organized into five sections. Chapter 1 deals with the early days of Jewish life on the island, going all the way back to the beginning of the century. The entries deal with both Sephardi and Ashkenazi immigration, and offer rich detail about the difficulties of life faced by the first arrivals. Chapter 2 tackles acculturation and the origins of the Jewish community institutions in Cuba. Chapter 3 treats the terrible impact of the gathering Holocaust, and includes a rich selection of testimonies about the refugee experience. Chapter 4 examines the community's role in the founding of the State of Israel; Chapter 5 covers the post-war period, when the institutional Jewish community flourished until the outbreak of revolution cast dark shadows

over the community and led soon afterwards to its dissolution. Bejarano includes testimonies not only by community leaders but from ordinary people, not only from those who lived in Havana but from some whose families spent several generations in the provinces.

The book reproduces 44 excellent photographs and reprints 27 documents, ranging from legal papers to visas, to covers of Cuban anti-semitic publications. An appendix lists all Jewish organizations in Cuba from the date of their foundation and a detailed index of proper names linked to their communal affiliations.

In all, Dr. Bejarano's book provides an impressive and useful glimpse into the institutional world of Cuban Jewry. By focusing on communal institutions and by seeking out their former leaders and members, however, the book stops short of documenting the full range of Jewish life. Many of the Jews who arrived in Cuba and settled there did not affiliate communally; many of these, moreover, drifted into secular lives. Some more married Roman Catholics and no longer were recognized as Jews by Jewish organizations or, in most cases, even by the families. The percentage of Jews lost to the community may not have been larger than the percentage of Jews who did the same after arriving in the United States, or in Canada, or in Argentina, but it was a substantial number. It would have been interesting to interview some of these persons, many of whom went to the United States for the same reasons as the institutionally-affiliated Cuban Jews, to see how they fared in a different echelon of Cuban life. It would also be interesting to hear from persons on the institutional margins of the Jewish community, and from some non-Jews whose lives intersected with their fellow Jewish countrymen.

Scholarly opportunity exists, then, for further analysis of the dynamics of the institutional Cuban Jewish community examined by Dr. Bejarano. That group has remained tightly-knit, and has effectively closed ranks against those not considered sympathetic to its version of its collective memory. Oral history, especially about themes as emotionally charged as the ones lived through by Cuba's Jews, involves subtle and difficult considerations about authenticity, manipulation (deliberate or not), and reliability of memory over time. This is not a criticism of Dr. Bejarano's invaluable volume, but a cautionary note for historical researchers seeking to use oral history materials. Dr. Bejarano's book remains a solid contribution and a welcome addition to the literature of community life.