

RAANAN REIN, MARIANO GRUSCHETSKY & RODRIGO DASKAL (comps.): *Clubes de fútbol en tiempos de dictadura*. Buenos Aires: UNSAM, 2018.

This masterful collection of fifteen chapters on the everyday lives of Argentine football clubs during that country's most recent dictatorship (1976-83) is many things. It's a sequel to Raanan Rein's edited volume *La cancha peronista* (2015), which addressed football clubs and society during Juan D. Perón's first two presidencies. (This sequel is better than the terrific original). Rein contributes an outstanding chapter on the 1978 World Cup of Soccer in which he challenges the established view that the protests against the mega-event amounted to little of substance. Mariano Gruschetsky's chapter on *clubes de fútbol, sociales y deportivos* underlines that these localized (often neighbourhood) clubs were much more than premier football teams; in many cases they were alone under military rule in continuing to vote on and elect their leaderships.

Most important, in chapter after chapter the book tells marvellous stories that provide novel insights into how the dictatorship touched the lives of ordinary Argentines through their football clubs. Raanan Rein tells one such story. The journalist Jacobo Timerman wrote famously of how he tried to find the disappeared up until his own kidnapping and detention. Sometimes, during the late 1970s, Roberto Viola, Jr. would hang around the Club Atlético Atlanta in the Villa Crespo neighbourhood of Buenos Aires. A former club football player of middling talent, the foul tempered Viola would pass the time by playing cards with club members. Now and again, someone would slip him a piece of paper on which a name was written, along with a few other bits of information on somebody who had been disappeared by a military unit. Could Viola help? The story is reminiscent of Timerman, but more gripping and complex. It shows us how the search for those missing (and the memories of such searches) operated at the neighbourhood level. The process functioned in this case because Viola's father, Roberto Viola, Sr., was a powerful member of the military government and its most prominent ideologue. He was also all at once *de facto* president of a regime notoriously hostile to Jewish Argentines and, like his son, a longstanding active member of Atlanta, long viewed by Argentines as a "Jewish" football club.

As does the Viola story, the book's chapters often complicate what we know of dictatorship in ways that are not only germane to football but much more broadly poignant. Government-club relationships were sometimes heavy-handed and authoritarian. Osvaldo Cacciatore, an Army officer and the mayor of Buenos Aires, is a recurring character – a Robert Moses-like bull in the china shop that ran urban planning by fiat. In what started as a shady real estate deal, Cacciatore demanded and obtained the closing of the *Gasometro*, the legendary football

stadium that was home to the Club Atlético San Lorenzo de Almagro. Fans were devastated when the stadium was physically removed from its Boedo neighbourhood base. This was only recently remedied with the return of the stadium to its former locale, an unusual instance of collective memory empirically demonstrated. In many cases, the government had a less hierarchical, less direct authoritarian relationship to football. In some instances, for example, member representatives of Club Atlético River Plate engaged in small acts of defiance when they absented themselves from the club's general meetings where honorary members from among the officer corps were named.

On several occasions, chapter authors leave it to readers to assess the evidence on the relationship of clubs to authoritarian rule. Julio David Frydenberg tells the story of the dog “Boneco,” mascot of Club Atlético Independiente, who dashed about the field on game days to great applause. Boneco wore a sweater with the emblems of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police and the Federal Police, among others. While this might be read as evidence of the club's support for the military government, Frydenberg cautions that the dog began sporting the emblems two years before the 1976 coup d'état. Boneco also carried a banner that announced the upcoming 1978 World Cup of Football: “Argentina extends its hand to the world and offers peace, work, and liberty.” Might this be read as compliance or compromise with military rule? Frydenberg leaves the question for readers to ponder. Here as in many other cases, where military rule touched club activities it often did so in ways that tended not to disrupt day-to-day life on the pitch or in the stands.

In inspired contrast to the other chapters, the editors have included Jorge Vidal Bueno's splendid study on the Chilean club Colo Colo. If other chapters frequently reference corrupt dealings in dictatorship links to the generally successful business of football, the Colo Colo experiment lacks the sleaze but failed in the colossal absurdity of a neoliberal design stuck to a football club. The analysis integrates the political uses of sport with performative elements. In that context, Vidal Bueno examines how the Chilean military regime sought control of (but did not intervene in) the sport by radically transforming the business of football in accordance with the government's new emphasis on the logic of the free market. From 1976 to 1978, a corporate administrator transformed the *ethos* of Colo Colo. The firm in charge of this, BHC, marked a change as it came from the financial sector, not the industrial sector familiar to recent club directors whose approach to business and to the club held a *desarrollista* tinge. In the place of club directors who, in the past, had run the club on their own time *por amor a la camiseta*, BHC ushered in an administrative style more in keeping with a bank than a football club hovering between the professional and the amateur. No stranger to performance, *de facto* president Augusto Pinochet

often surrounded himself in public with prominent athletes and took an interest in the Colo Colo experiment. Vidal Bueno argues that this change was not simply an effort to “modernize” the business of football in keeping with equivalent changes in the corporate and financial sectors. It allowed the military to control an important football club, in part by arranging for officers to be appointed to the directorate.

This is the first strong academic volume to tackle sport and dictatorship in Argentina, and the most probing edited collection to date on how the last Argentine military government shaped everyday life and vice versa. Through the prism of football, the book is an excellent assemblage of the histories of business, the city, popular culture, government-institutional relations, and neighbourhood under dictatorship. ¡Golazo!

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STEVEN HYLAND: *More Argentine Than You: Arabic-Speaking Immigrants in Argentina*. New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2017.

Steven Hyland’s book represents an important contribution to the history of Middle Eastern diasporas in Latin America, following the developments of ethnic studies and under the influence of the concept of “transnational identity.” Hyland’s book is developed along two main axes, one of which is chronological and the other, center-peripheral. Hyland focuses on Tucumán’s Syrian-Lebanese migrants and their descendants. Thus, the book sheds new light on the changes that affected Syrian and other Arab immigrants in Argentina in general, and those immigrants that settled in Tucumán in particular. Tucumán’s Arab immigrants are an interesting case study for discussing processes of social integration of Middle Easterners in Argentina, as well as the challenges and negative stereotypes they had to face while interacting with the local society.

Each of the seven chapters in this book deals with a different period of the longer process that takes place from 1880 to 1946. The only exception are the three chapters that discuss the decades of the 1920s and the 1930s in greater depth and from different angles. Those decades are particularly important in the crystallization of a hybrid Syrian-Argentine identity in Argentina.

Another way to approach this important book is by looking at its four parts. The first one thoroughly describes the background of the immigrants and the factors that motivated them to leave their home and travel to the Americas, as well as their early years in Argentina, up until 1914. The beginning of Arab immigration to Argentina is analyzed through several aspects relevant to the

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