

Estas son, sin duda, cuestiones que se abordarán en futuras investigaciones. Este libro constituye una base importante para ello.

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JUAN MANUEL PALACIO, *La justicia peronista. La construcción de un nuevo orden legal en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2018.

No other topic in Argentine history has attracted as much attention as Peronism. To this ever-growing scholarly field, Juan Manuel Palacio contributes a historical analysis of the legal and justice system built in the country's rural areas during Juan Perón's first administrations (1946-1955). Palacio essentially defines this "Peronist justice" as the set of judicial policies aimed at controlling and moving social conflict into the legal arena while, at the same time, curtailing the involvement of the existing judicial system (p. 17). He frames his study within the recent scholarship on the first Peronist administrations that, in his view, has over-emphasized continuities rather than ruptures with previous policies, structures, and ideas and, thus, has minimized the impact of Peronist policies. Instead, Palacio stresses that the legal policies and structures built by Perón in the rural areas regarding labor and land ownership and tenancy were not just innovative—they were revolutionary. He dismisses the interpretation of Perón and other Latin American populist leaders as violating laws and institutions and governing in an authoritarian fashion, claiming that they were "serial creators of legislation" (p. 25) to provide support for new policies and structures.

Palacio structures his analysis in seven chapters, with one serving as a general introduction and the remaining six equally distributed in two sections. The introductory chapter frames Peronist rural labor policies within the evolution of international law regarding social rights [*derecho social*]. This new legal framework flourished in the interwar years in the Euro-American world and rejected the old laissez-faire liberal model, as it favored state intervention in labor and contractual relations, questioned absolute property ownership, and defended property's social function. This new approach influenced social and labor legislation in Latin America and Argentina; by 1943 Argentina, had already put in place a set of protectionist laws, although they were neither numerous nor necessarily applied.

The first section then is devoted to the Peronist rural labor legislation and the state institutions in charge of implementing it. Chapter two outlines the regulatory action developed by Perón from the Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión, the Secretaría's structure at the national and regional levels, and key legislation

regarding monthly and temporary rural labor. Chapter three analyzes the labor tribunals that oversaw the implementation of the new legislation, while chapter four turns to the experiences of rural workers with the new system, as they claimed their newly acquired rights with the legal help and support from the new labor courts and state institutions. The second section deals with the Peronist judicial structures aimed at addressing rural tenancy. Chapter five shows that despite some previous legislation, traditionally rural tenants were not protected by the state or the law. Beginning in 1943, a series of decrees and laws culminating in Law 13246 (1948) decreased rural rental rates, forcibly extended the periods of rental agreements, and mandated written contracts between tenants and landowners before state authorities. Chapter six describes the creation, structure, and evolution of tribunals [*cámaras paritarias*] established to control and supervise the contractual relations between tenants and landowners. Mirroring chapter four, the last chapter explores the experiences of state actors, landowners, and tenants in the workings of the tribunals, describing how tenants, with the help of the tribunals, defended their rights against landowners who wanted to circumvent the new legislation.

The book, based on solid archival work and careful analysis, is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on the social construction of Peronism. Palacio's attention to the voices of rural workers, tenants, state agents, and landowners relates to the works by Eduardo Elena and Daniel James on the construction of Peronism from below, shedding light on how Peronism was experienced and shaped by subalterns who were quite conscious of their rights. The book also relates to the analysis by James and Juan Carlos Torre that demonstrates how Peronist urban labor legislation, while seemingly moderate, radically redefined labor and social relations and, ultimately, citizenship. Rather than a top-down, monolithic regime, Peronism appears as a contentious construction involving multiple actors and agendas, an aspect additionally highlighted in the works of other scholars such as Mark Healey, Natalia Milanese, Matthew Karush, and Oscar Chamosa.

In light of the book's links to those authors, Palacio's description of the recent scholarship as overemphasizing continuities and denying Peronism's revolutionary character seems overstretched. The peculiar mixture of continuity and change is an intrinsic characteristic of Peronism widely acknowledged by the current scholarship. Palacio's arguments, while emphasizing the revolutionary dimension of Peronism, actually fit into that consensus. For example, although Perón wanted a more centralized and controlled system of labor tribunals, in the end provincial autonomies were respected as demanded by both the political opposition and Peronist provincial authorities (p. 112). Also, Palacio argues that Perón's rural labor legislation and reforms amounted to an agrarian reform

because of their impact and, particularly, because of how they were perceived by different social sectors (pp. 168-169). At the same time, he acknowledges that they did not involve land redistribution, a landmark piece of structural agrarian reform in other Latin American countries, showing both the extent and limits of Perón's rural agenda. This comparative aspect, on the other hand, is another of the book's contribution. Perón's national structures and policies regarding land open up fascinating comparisons with other populist experiences in countries such as Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic. Finally, his call to abandon the view of Peronism and other populist regimes as inherently violating the law and his framing of Perón's rural policies within an international legal and judicial environment that questioned the liberal order are important to correct facile and misleading interpretations of the Peronist experience as a historical aberration.

In summary, Palacio's book is a sophisticated study that provides a nuanced understanding of a critical area of Peronist policies that has received comparatively less attention than others, such as urban labor. It will be of interest to scholars, students, and the general public interested in comparative labor, law, agrarian reform, and populism in Latin America.

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JAMES P. BRENNAN, *Argentina's Missing Bones: Revisiting the History of the Dirty War*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018.

In September 2010, at the XXIX International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association in Toronto, I watched in wonder as an unpublished Argentine graduate student took historian Steve J. Stern to the woodshed for having said "Dirty War." That term, the student chided, should not be used. It is "the language of the Argentine dictatorship." Stern, the most accomplished historian of South American authoritarian rule of his generation – as kind as he is talented –, *apologized*. In 1987, having been severely beaten by military thugs a decade earlier, having escaped into exile, then having returned to Argentina, historian Eduardo Saguier pronounced that there was less freedom of speech in post-dictatorship Argentina than there had been under military rule. This, of course, was raucous hyperbole. But Saguier was onto something that played out years later in Toronto. Beginning in the 1980s, dominant historical narratives on the dictatorship have not only been analytically narrow at times, but have drawn on language and the prohibitions enforced in academia to censor new questions and hypotheses.