

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at the XXIX International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association in Toronto, I watched in wonder as an unpublished Argentine graduate student took historian Steve J. Stern to the woodshed for having said "Dirty War."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.

In this exceptionally smart book, James P. Brennan starts off by confronting precisely that limitation in Argentine popular and academic cultures. Despite that “Dirty War” is a usage “roundly rejected now by all human rights groups as indefensible” (p. 3), Brennan invokes it in his title and in the book narrative as an adroit nod to some of what he hopes to achieve that is new. He sets out to understand those responsible for dictatorship violence as well as the victims, and he sets aside the bland alternative, *la represión*, a term that has conditioned a range of vague, unsatisfactory historical assumptions in dictatorship studies.

Brennan examines the case of Córdoba (which he knows extremely well) to reach larger conclusions about Argentina. As a hotbed of social protest in 1969-71, a focus of leftist insurgency recruiting, and a heavily militarized region in the lead-up to the 1976 military coup d'état, Córdoba became ground zero for dictatorship state terror. Brennan extrapolates from Córdoba to Argentina, beginning with a lucid chapter on the rise of revolutionary leftist violence and the beginnings of ferocious military terror *before* military rule.

There is a powerful chapter drawing on military archival records about the ways in which the armed forces prosecuted its internal war. It stresses the geography of illicit detention centers, psychological warfare, anti-Semitism, and more. Chapters on the functioning of the La Perla detention center and the tactics of the Third Army Corps (both based in Córdoba) are linked gems, the most astute analysis to date of the gruesome political, cultural, ideological, and bureaucratic mechanics of how the killing machine worked. In a tour de force, Brennan takes the story up to the present. He explains the political and evidentiary difficulties in bringing human rights abusers to justice, as well as the significance of the legal precedents established in convicting military killers decades after the return of democracy. Equally compelling is the story of how Argentines constructed memories of dictatorship through debates over how to best preserve and repurpose illicit detention centers, the almost Sisyphean task of building a documentary record, the collection of oral testimonies, the actions of human rights groups, and the contested invocation of the term “genocide” to characterize dictatorship state terror. The book is also attentive to the notion of a politically imposed memory of the past, and the dangers that this poses to a presumed consensus on what happened under military rule.

Brennan signals where scholars might go next. “In contrast to the victims of state terrorism,” he writes, “the voices of its perpetrators have remained silent and only fragments exist from official pronouncements and the handful of interviews granted by former military commanders immediately after the restoration of democracy in 1983” (p. 96).

In 2017, serving a life sentence for crimes against humanity, former military officer Ernesto Barreiro told me a strange story. In 1975, he was transferred to an

intelligence unit in Córdoba to hunt down leftist insurgents. When he reported to the commander of the Third Army Corps, General Luciano Benjamín Menéndez, the latter looked at him and shouted, “¡Me mandaron un Montonero!” What did that mean? Why did Menéndez link the man who would quickly become the most effective anti-terrorist military operative under his command to the principal leftist group targeted for military annihilation, the Peronist Montoneros? Barreiro explained. He was no Montonero. However, despite the military government’s anti-Peronist political, social, and economic emphases, Barreiro was known within the armed forces as a Peronist, as were many of his fellow army officers. This is what set off Menéndez upon seeing Barreiro. Those officers expressed that Peronist identity, for example, in their sometimes-open dismay over the economic liberalism of the military regime and the attendant abandonment of working people.

It could be that Barreiro made up the story. Alternatively, he was telling the truth (or his truth); there may be an as yet unexplored question of dictatorship-era tensions between Peronists and anti-Peronists in the Argentine military. Or the story may lie in another direction. Whatever the case, *Argentina’s Missing Bones* points to a next important path for historians of the last dictatorship. Until now, with the exception of a small handful of military rule sympathizers, while scholars have conducted hundreds of interviews with former leftist insurgents, they have no oral histories with soldiers and officers active through the 1970s and early 1980s. Without that source base, we only have part of the story. And forty years past the dictatorship, time is running out for potential interview subjects languishing in jails and elsewhere. Between December 2015 and May 2019 alone, 165 former soldiers, security force members, police officers, and penitentiary service employees convicted of violent dictatorship-era crimes died in Argentine prisons.

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NAOMI SCHILLER, *Challenging the State: Community Media and Popular Politics in Venezuela*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018.

In *Channeling the State* we follow the crew and volunteers of Catia TVE, a community TV channel situated in the Caracas suburb of *Manicomio*, while they struggle to engage in constructing the Bolivarian Revolution through the production of television. Catia TVE was founded through the initiative of local media producers in the 1990s and came to the government’s attention just after Hugo Chávez was elected to the presidency in 1999. The local channel