

Congress in 1908, paved the way for the great electoral reform, the Saenz Peña Law, of 1912.

Fulsome in his praise for the politics of Figueroa Alcorta, and extensive in his coverage of the political battles waged by contending parties and factions in the provinces, Díaz Molina unfortunately ignores the considerable social unrest that convulsed Argentina in these years. Labor demonstrations and strikes are facilely blamed on foreign agitators. Perhaps the author's perspective is best revealed by his treatment of the important Ley de Defensa Social of 1910—it is described, without comment, in one paragraph. Far greater attention is lavished on the most minute details, including the menu of a centennial banquet given by the Infanta Isabel de Borbón.

Despite its considerable bias, the monograph, because of its detail, does capture some of the essence of political cleavages within conservative ranks. Díaz Molina also paints, sometimes vividly, an engaging picture of the style of life at the top of the socioeconomic ladder. For the most part, however, the work is quite disappointing.

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*Juan B. Justo y su época.* By DONALD F. WEINSTEIN. Buenos Aires, 1978. Fundación Juan B. Justo. Notes. Appendix. Index. Pp. 230. Paper.

In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Juan Bautista Justo, an entity of the thinned and perhaps nostalgic ranks of old socialists, the Fundación Juan B. Justo, has published this book on the political life and times of the founder of the Argentine Socialist party. It is the Spanish translation of the doctoral thesis of Donald F. Weinstein, submitted to the City University of New York in 1974. The foundation, whose relatively small membership is composed of activists of a party of little influence in Argentine political life for the past decades, takes apparent pride in presenting this work on Justo as a testimony of the foreign recognition given to the founder and spiritual mentor of Argentine socialism. The author and his sponsors have succeeded in convincing themselves that Justo rightly deserves a ranking in the pantheon of foremost Argentine political heroes along with Rivadavia, Alberdi, Sarmiento, and Mitre; and, further, that he stands tall beside Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Juarès, and Iglesias on the plane of international socialist thought. Closer to the truth is the likelihood that this humane and decent figure is but

scantly appreciated in Argentina or elsewhere, and that he remains overshadowed—at least in the popular imagination in his homeland—by his archrival, the flamboyant and irrepressible Alfredo Palacios.

This political biography of Juan Bautista Justo (1865–1928) is a panegyric of nearly hagiographic proportions. Herein lies its most severe disappointment. It is not the case, from the reviewer's vantage, that the protagonist is undeserving of praise for his abundant and commendable moral virtues. Justo had few equals as a medical doctor, weighty writer and journalist, teacher and legislator, stalwart proponent of cooperative movements, and generally as the voice of a fervent humanism that sought to assuage the harrowing pain and dislocation of the burgeoning Argentine population at the turn of the century. But in Donald Weinstein's book one can find very little scrutiny of the regrettable defects in the man, his ideology, and tactics. Some critics easily may forgive his arrogance and others may blush over his disingenuousness. But the fact remains that Justo—and, of course, his sympathetic collaborators—never succeeded in mobilizing the masses into an effective political movement. After 1943 others did attain that goal.

To make the point bluntly, the Argentine Socialist party was a failure because of its inability to capture electoral support. It never came close to enjoying real power. Its history is marked by merely token victories. Its leadership, Justo included, was elitist and was mostly suckled on diluted European influences difficult to ingest in preindustrial Argentina. Its meager prestige was limited mostly to Buenos Aires. The party flourished on moral rage. Faithful always to a pre-Leninist Marxism, it eschewed violence in any form but it was frequently the target of violence unleashed by the government. Justo was himself nearly assassinated in an attempt upon him in June 1916, from which he escaped with a leg wound.

What is conspicuously absent from Donald Weinstein's treatment of Justo and the socialists is a diligent consideration of their flaws. He is inclined to explain their failures by consistently pointing an accusative finger at electoral corruption and the frustrating reluctance of immigrants to assume citizenship so as to participate in the political process. Warranted as are these denunciations, the matter remains clouded by other complications, many of them astutely pondered by Rodolfo Puiggrós in *Las izquierdas y el problema nacional* (Buenos Aires, 1967), a work cited by Weinstein.

From the pages of *La Vanguardia*, the long-lived and eloquent Socialist newspaper, and the massive writings of essays and books by Justo was launched a mighty stream of largely theoretical pomposities and enraged tirades and imprecations over three decades in the most active

period of his estimable life. His style was that of an obstinate sermonizer, even in his sixteen years in legislative offices, and not that of the pragmatic *político* who appreciated the mundane vote where it might have counted most. For all his moral zeal and despite his best intentions, Justo lacked charisma for all but socialist adepts of similar gentility. He was Argentina's Eugene Debs. Soon after the party's formation in 1896, the anarchists stole its thunder. After 1916 the Unión Cívica Radical preempted it. After 1943 Perón buried it.

Donald Weinstein has made ample use of a vast array of published materials by and on his esteemed subject. Much less information on the times and the people of the era seems to have concerned him. As endearing a romantic as is Justo, a depiction of him, his ideas, and work outside the context of the often grim realities of the Argentina of his day can only blur what should be weighed far more lucidly. There is no effort here, for example, to examine Justo's economic theory and his proposals to offset mounting disjunctive forces in a rapidly developing nation. As it stands, one who reads this unsophisticated apologia of Juan Bautista Justo might gather that the "cruel economic machine" that rules the life of mankind can be guided by moral force alone. It is probable that some who sought guidance in Justo found some comfort in this form of innocence, while at the same time it is also probable that others—one suspects a majority—found only despair or resignation. Perhaps in this we have a clue as to the fate of Justo and his followers.

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*Ortiz: Reportaje a la Argentina opulenta.* By FÉLIX LUNA. Buenos Aires, 1978. Editorial Sudamericana. Illustrations. Notes. Appendixes. Pp. 347. Paper.

Roberto M. Ortiz presided over an Argentina increasingly divided by its response to the European tragedy of the 1930s and the likelihood of the spread of war to the American hemisphere. In retrospect—in the light of the series of political disasters that began with the ascent to power of Colonel Juan D. Perón—Ortiz was the last successful exponent of the old style of Argentine politics. Given his stubborn adherence to democratic principles amidst the opportunism and corruption of his political generation, it can be argued that he was the last Argentine of stature potentially capable of restoring and modernizing the country's representative system. In his struggle against diabetic blindness there is not only the poignancy of personal misfortune but also the stuff of high political