

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

drama; for to submit to his blindness meant, as he well knew, ceding power to a man, Ramón Castillo, hostile to all the values by which he lived. All of which is to say that specialists and general readers alike would welcome a first-rate biography of Ortiz centered upon the tortured politics of his presidency.

What Félix Luna has given us instead is a superficial and meretricious paste-up. Except for a handful of interviews, his sources are the published memoirs of Ortiz' contemporaries. He counterfeits immediacy by transcribing excerpts as though the witnesses were speaking directly to the reader; and he hypes the prose further by appending more or less relevant snippets from popular magazines of the time, in the fashion of John dos Passos' camera eye. These sources permit some insight into the relation between Justo and Ortiz and into the byzantine machinations by which Ortiz was saddled with Castillo as his vice-president. We learn about the progress of Ortiz' disease and also about his household economy, as both his doctors and his servants have unburdened themselves. Despite Luna's repeated assurances that Ortiz was a passionate democrat, however, we do not learn *why* he was a democrat, nor what democracy meant to him in the Argentine context, nor how he reacted to all but a few of the conflicts of the time (and those, predictably, scandals or personal confrontations), nor in fact what were the issues that divided him from his fellows and were about to polarize the country at large. One must hope that Luna's trivializing effort will only encourage others to do a needed job properly.

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RONALD C. NEWTON

Juan Domingo Perón: A History. By ROBERT J. ALEXANDER. Boulder, 1979. Westview Press. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiii, 177. Cloth. \$15.00.

Few, if any individuals outside of Argentina have followed the career of Juan D. Perón as closely as Robert J. Alexander. Thus he is well prepared to undertake a detailed analysis of the accomplishments and shortcomings of the Argentine dictator and his impact upon Argentina and its neighbors. *Juan Domingo Perón: A History* is indeed a very welcome addition to the growing list of monographs by U.S. scholars on Argentina.

Since Perón was one of the Latin American area's most controversial figures over the last four or five decades, there is a tendency in books