

politics, and offers a valuable qualification of Héctor Aguilar Camín's arguments for Sonoran exceptionalism by placing those politics in a national context. Its coverage of Calles' activities on the national scene is judicious and convincing. It is a dispassionate work, remarkable for its objective tone and non-judgmental approach. But Buchenau's probably sensible decision to avoid psychologising has its costs. Indeed, the more one learns about Calles, the more one suspects that he was (and is) a good candidate for the couch. Psychological speculation might have helped fill some of the gaps in his early career, for which documentation is obviously scarce, but the big issue in this regard is his posture toward the church. It was not a case of bad luck when the Cristero rebellion undermined his reform programme, but rather a crisis mostly of Calles' own making. So why the self-destructive behaviour, which was also detrimental to the revolution? Buchenau concedes that much about Calles' posture toward the church was personal, but his reticence to explore that realm means he cannot offer a full explanation of this watershed event in his subject's career.

This consideration notwithstanding, Buchenau has provided us with a much-needed addition to the English-language literature, written in clear, accessible prose. It is essential for scholars of modern Mexico, and they can assign it to their undergraduates as well.

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Robert Howard Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón: Early Radio in Argentina, 1920–1944* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2007), pp. xxvi + 224, \$59.95, hb.

In 2007, a headline of the newspaper *La Nación* announced free Wi-Fi and full cellular phone communications in the underground subways of Buenos Aires. In practice, the cellular connections were clear and the technology seemed better than in most subways in North American cities. Robert Claxton would have nodded at the headline, knowing that 'Argentines have used communication medias, including radio, as much as people in western Europe or the United States have and to a greater extent than most other nations' (p. xxvi). We need to remember that in the early twentieth century Argentina had a highly developed telecommunications infrastructure, and was well ahead of most nations.

Beginning with the early stages of radio development during 1920–1944, *From Parsifal to Perón* is a unique book about how and why Argentine society developed commercial and non-commercial radio broadcasting, and how new radio technology influenced the social and economic tastes of radio listeners. Though Claxton begins the book with some interesting facts about Argentina's leadership in telecommunications in the twentieth-century, his story goes beyond giving us a simple history of early radio; he discusses the importance of radio as medium of information and national unity. In six chapters, plus introduction and conclusion, he examines the connections between radio, technology and nationhood, and the potential influence of radio on democracy.

In the introduction, Claxton guides the reader through colourful images of a modernising city and country that was ready to absorb and spread radio technology. It is easy to be drawn into these guided descriptions and the arguments of the book by the book's readability. And the images of technologically curious radio amateurs

are somewhat similar to the ones described in Beatríz Sarlo, *La imaginación técnica*. Sarlo also discusses the rise of Argentina's technological obsession in the 1920s. The curious radio amateurs were simply known as *aficionados*.

In the first chapter, 'Beginnings of Radio in Argentina', Claxton argues that radio technology emerged from the milieu of a rapidly growing, changing and modernising society. In the 1920s, Argentine society was flourishing. Buenos Aires, in particular, was a modern city with all the technological and cultural amenities of any major North Atlantic city. It attracted immigrants, foreign investment, and was home to excellent cultural resources. Ambitious and middle-class young men from the cities became interested in radio technology and broadcasting. In this environment, where technological advancements and popularity of the radio materialised, on 27 August 1920, five medical doctors who were also *aficionados*, managed to broadcast a three-hour performance of Richard's Wagner opera, *Parsifal*. This success was a clear sign of a bright future for radio in Argentina.

By 1928, the country had a free and enterprising radio broadcasting system. Chapters two and three detail the success and failure of nineteen broadcasting stations, demonstrating that radio technology and broadcasting were homegrown processes developed by amateurs. Unlike the foreign ownership of the telephone, urban transport system, and the railroads, the radio was mainly a domestic innovation and nationally owned. As a result of the curiosity, ingenuity and high literacy of the amateurs, radio technologies were created and improved and by the 1930s, radios became smaller, user-friendly, and more affordable for the general audience. While commercial radio attracted a wide array of listeners, non-commercial broadcasting, as discussed in chapter four, did not fare so well. Claxton discusses four non-commercial stations that were pioneering and experimental, and demonstrates that the surviving stations remained only because the radio managers eventually turned them into something resembling their commercial counterparts.

In chapter five, 'Radio and Argentine Nationhood', Claxton discusses how broadcasting became 'a great national classroom' (p. 90). Before 1930, Argentina grew from the influx of European immigration. The population of Buenos Aires City grew from 1.5 million in 1914, to 4.7 million by 1947. Claxton argues that radio broadcasting helped educate and entertain immigrant and native born residents. Radio stations provided programming that listeners from broad and diverse backgrounds could say they identified with. Claxton, defining nationhood rather broadly, as a shared sense of identity among people who speak the same language and enjoy a traditional past, argues that 'broadcasting stations linked remote corners of Argentina' contributed to the consolidation of this identity by giving everyone a gaucho past and fusing polar opposites such as the country and city, the immigrant and native born, and urban tango and rural music.

In the final chapter, 'The Influence of Radio', Claxton concludes that radio broadcasting had little effect in promoting political democracy in the 1920s and 1930s. Instead, successful radio broadcasting focused on entertaining its listeners through distinctively Argentine dramas and programmes. Radio also introduced advertising, helping to build consumerism.

This is a seminal work, though the book is difficult to locate within a specific genre. Arguments maintained throughout the book include the pioneering efforts of self-taught radio amateurs in Argentina, comparisons with radio broadcasting in the United States, and the connection between nationhood, radio technology and broadcasting. Claxton has done a fine job researching the broad importance

of radio technology and broadcasting in Argentina, but future studies could focus on just one topic given in any of the chapters. It would be interesting, for example, to learn more about why radio broadcasting seemed to be regulated but not heavily censored. Also, chapter five could benefit from specific examples of how radio became to function as a great national classroom in people's homes. The connection between radio technology, import substitution, and domestic innovation also needs more clarity. The four appendices at the end of the book are helpful and could assist scholars trace the trajectory of pioneering radio broadcasters, dealers and regulations. Future studies on radio broadcasting and its effects on Argentine society should be inspired to follow this work.

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Alicia Bernasconi and Carina Frid (eds.), *De Europa a las Americas: Dirigentes y Liderazgos (1880–1960)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, Colección La Argentina Plural; CEMLA; CEHIPE, 2006), pp. 241, pb.

Although immigration has always been a major dimension of Argentine history, it was only during the 1970s and 1980s that the subject received the intensive and sustained scholarly treatment that it deserved. The historian Jose Luis Romero and the sociologist Gino Germani were the pioneers in the field and, although all of us who have followed in their footsteps are indebted to them for opening up the subject in a serious way, their work was of necessity limited both in scope and methodology. With the founding of the *Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* in Buenos Aires under the leadership of Gianfausto Rosoli and Luigi Favero, and especially with the establishment of *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* (1985), a scholarly journal devoted to migration edited by Luigi Favero and Fernando Devoto, Argentine migration studies blossomed.

The scholarly production of the past three or four decades has for the most part rejected the previous assimilationist models in favour of a more nuanced form of Argentine pluralism. In the process, the focus has for the most part shifted from elites and more global trends to micro studies of social networks, marriage patterns, mutual aid societies and other ethnic institutions, participation in labour markets, the impact of gender, family roles, etc. With the large number of studies we have greatly enhanced our knowledge of the immigration process and the adjustment of immigrants to the host society. We are also now better able to make generalisations, test theories and models, and make meaningful comparisons. It is important to note that Argentine migration studies have developed to the point that they have much to offer students of migration in the United States, Europe and other places.

This book under review illustrates well many of the best aspects of recent Argentine migration history. Edited by two established Argentine scholars and with a prologue by Fernando Devoto, one of the leaders in the development of Argentine migration studies, this anthology focuses overwhelmingly on the nature of ethnic leadership in Argentina during the period of mass migration from 1870 to 1930. The authors of the articles are also predominantly Argentine. As Devoto points out in his historiographical overview in the prologue, the focus on elites and how they have related to ethnic groups and the society at large is less of an innovation than a return to a previous interest of a half century earlier. But the current focus on leadership