

the official liberal position, the poems and songs composed by the soldier-poets remembered the Triple Alliance War as an heroic and glorious action and claimed to fight now in the name of Solano López. The Chaco War thus led to a redemption of national honour, as well as a rehabilitation of the rural, Guaraní-speaking soldier-agriculturalists against the liberal politics of the last decades, which had seen them as obstacles to modernisation and development. Drawing on Wolfgang Schivelbusch's book on the 'Culture of Defeat', Chesterton states that Paraguayans did not emulate the victor's model of modernisation and culture, as other countries had done: 'Rather, Paraguayans viewed their triumph in the Chaco solely as the result of their own unique heritage. [...] What did occur in Paraguay after the later victory was that the initial defeat was viewed as a success. After the War of the Triple Alliance their culture survived to rise once again and defeat the Bolivians' (p. 5).

This is a well-written and convincingly argued book, which contributes on the one hand to our understanding of one of the last, but still under-researched frontier regions in Latin America, as well as to a slightly different path of scientific thinking and research at the beginning of the twentieth century in South America. Mainly, however, it is an important contribution to our understanding of Paraguayan nationalism and to the fact that the War of the Triple Alliance, and not the founding of the Republic or the victorious Chaco War, are still today the cornerstones of national identity. The argument of the resurrection of the soldier-agriculturalist and the Guaraní language as the centre of national identity would have been even stronger if the author had drawn a line of continuity and change to the national identity formed under Solano López. Namely the publication of propaganda newspapers in Guaraní or bilingual Guaraní/Spanish during the last years of the Triple Alliance War should have been considered as the basis which made possible the protagonism and success of the 'clase popular' and their language during the Chaco War.

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Eric D. Carter, *Enemy in the Blood: Malaria, Environment and Development in Argentina* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2012), pp. xv + 283, \$38.50, hb.

This short and elegant book explores the science, politics and institutions behind the 'discovery, control, and eradication of malaria in Argentina from 1890 to 1950' (p. 3). Medical geographer Eric Carter has written an insightful history that should be read by anyone interested in public health, state-building or the environment in Latin America.

The campaign against malaria proves to be a revealing window onto the making of scientific knowledge and political power in Argentina, especially in the four northwest provinces where the disease was endemic, Tucumán, Salta, Jujuy and Catamarca. Bringing Argentina into the vast global scholarship on malaria is welcome, and bringing the provinces into Argentine scholarship still largely focused on Buenos Aires even more so. But this is more than just a provincial case study.

Why did malaria gain national prominence? It was concentrated in one region, and was not the largest killer even there. Yet it became the focus of a complex, sustained and ultimately successful state campaign. The answer, Carter persuasively shows, lies in the 'geographical imaginaries' constructed around the disease, and the outsize

influence regional elites wielded within the national government. This began with the *tucumano* who forged a unified national state in 1880, Julio Argentino Roca, and continued with provincial worthies such as Eliseo Cantón, dean of the Buenos Aires medical school and author of the first major report on malaria. Carter's study brings into clear view the large cast of reform-minded but politically conservative scientist-statesmen who dominated public life and government policy in northwest Argentina until the rise of Perón.

From early on, malaria was viewed as a disease of place, rooted in a particular landscape. Malaria kept the population lethargic, provincial scientist-politicians claimed, and the fear of malaria kept away the European immigrants they longed to attract. Their solution was 'healing the land', or *saneamiento*, by draining wetlands and building canals to expand usable land in the countryside and create parks in the major cities, like Tucumán and Salta. Malaria control was a strategy for regional development; healing those actually suffering was a secondary concern. This approach seemed to be decisively validated in 1902, when a malaria epidemic struck the provincial capital of previously unaffected Santiago del Estero, only to vanish with the mosquitoes after a massive *saneamiento* project drained swamps to make an urban park (pp. 49–50).

That same year the national Malaria Service was established. With offices in all four affected provinces, the service opted for broad and thin coverage rather than targeted efforts, *saneamiento* projects and (some) free quinine pills. After initial success, the Malaria Service had its budget slashed in half during World War I, then settled into a two-decade-long holding pattern under the leadership of an ophthalmologist. It is at this point that Carter's account gets interesting.

In the 1920s, hygienists turned increasingly nationalist, like much of the Argentine intellectual field, warning darkly of 'the degeneration of the race' while rhetorically exalting the virtues of creole workers of the Northwest provinces. This nationalist turn led the Malaria Service to double down on the *saneamiento* strategy, embracing Italian models of large-scale drainage. More promisingly, it also spurred the founding of regional medical research institutions in the Northwest. As a counterpoint, the Rockefeller Foundation also began work in the region; within a few years, their socially blinkered and politically clumsy officials would be driven out, but in that short time they also made real advances. The regional researchers and Rockefeller doctors began to focus, for the first time, on the local ecology of the insects themselves.

Looking closely at the mosquitoes led to a crucial shift. In the 1930s, Jujuy-born Carlos Alvarado took over the Malaria Service and dramatically reversed course. Drawing together evidence from previous studies, he showed that the dominant mosquito vector in Argentina, *A. pseudo*, behaved rather differently from what officials had assumed. Far from eliminating this kind of mosquito, Alvarado conclusively showed, *saneamiento* had helped it to flourish. Applying an ecological perspective, Alvarado reorganised the service around the novel strategy of foci patrols, which called for systematic data collection and targeted mosquito suppression. Shaking up the Malaria Service, Alvarado brought rigour and professionalism, ending the tradition of doctors going on vacation in summer, malaria high season, while concentrating resources where they had the greatest impact. His actions reduced the incidence of malaria and, even more importantly, laid the institutional groundwork for the next shift.

In 1947, after decades of erratic campaigns, malaria was virtually eliminated from Argentina almost overnight, when Alvarado hit upon the idea of using DDT and

Perón's reformist health minister Ramón Carrillo threw his full support behind the scheme. This dramatic success built upon the ecological sensibility and institutional reforms Alvarado had developed, but also eroded them in favour of large-scale DDT spraying, which Alvarado would go on to promote evangelically in a highly influential career in international health.

Written with verve, this book is a landmark study of national institutions in provincial territory. It is strong on science, elites and institutions, but somewhat thinner on social history and subaltern groups, largely due to the sources available. Carter navigates the tangled web of Argentine politics with skill, although he makes a few small missteps, such as misdating the constitution or occasionally falling under the narrative spell of his elite subjects. Readers may well be surprised, for example, by his portrait of a conservative Jujuy strongman's concern for the poor or the 'successful labor activism' of late 1930s Tucumán (pp. 134–5). His overall take on Peronist health policy is subtle and persuasive. But when he strays from the malaria campaign he starts to lose control of his material, veering from recycled regime propaganda, 'with the irreplaceable assistance of his legendary wife, Eva, Perón elicited not simply the loyalty but also the adulation of the masses', to half-digested opposition commonplaces about 'following Benito Mussolini' (p. 146). These are minor glitches, however, in a well-built case.

Carter recasts our understanding of public health in this period, while opening up new avenues for comparative research and raising questions for scholars in areas ranging from federalist politics to environmental history. He is particularly suggestive on the consequences of 'geographic imaginaries', such as setting the state down a fruitless path of *saneamiento* and blinding scientists to the importance of studying mosquitoes themselves. This is a book that deserves a wide readership, a model for how to bring questions about scale and territory into studies of politics, expertise and disease.

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Nicola Foote and Michael Goebel (eds.), *Immigration and National Identities in Latin America* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2014), pp. x + 356, \$74.95, hb.

In today's society it is almost impossible to ignore the issue of, and the problems caused by, immigration. However, its prominence in press, media and political debate is not matched in the academic literature, especially on Latin America and the Caribbean. The publication of a new book covering the period 1850 to 1950, an edited volume with chapters by an array of respected scholars, is therefore to be welcomed. It is pleasing that the title overtly associates immigration with national identity and nationalism. This is rare in the literature but it always seemed perfectly natural to me as the grandson of Irish immigrants to the North of England.

The volume has been written with the focus very much on the immigrants themselves. There are the usual accusations of 'xenophobia' and 'populism' towards the native inhabitants, usually targeting the 'working class' who cannot resist incitement by political elites during economic crises. This instinctive support for immigrants, yet denigration of native working classes whose livelihoods are most undermined, is uncomfortable. Similarly, the easy accusations of 'xenophobia' as most people are not