

O passado que não passa. A sombra das ditaduras na Europa do Sul e na América Latina. **Organizers: Antonio Costa Pinto and Francisco Carlos Palomanes Martins.**
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The title of the publication [*The past that doesn't pass. The shadow of dictatorships over Southern Europe and Latin America*] reveals the author's concerns with keeping alive the memory of "a past" that cannot be forgotten. However, the purpose of this book goes far beyond encouraging people to remember the horrors perpetrated during the dictatorships that marked the history of the twentieth century: the different chapters introduce interpretations that contribute to a wider understanding of the meaning of the traumatic experiences suffered in a past that has left enduring marks of authoritarianism in the political culture of Southern Europe and Latin American nations. This publication is especially important for the Brazilian public because it analyzes different aspects of dictatorships that were similar to the one occurring in Brazil after the coup of 1964.

The book resulted from the work of two historians who are specialists on this subject: Antonio Costa Pinto (University of Lisbon) and Francisco Carlos Palomanes Martinho (University of São Paulo). Acting in perfect synchronicity on both sides of the Atlantic, they organized this work in order to allow for a comparison between the way in which today's consolidated democracies revisit their past, either symbolically, in order to get over historical legacies, or with the declared aim of punishing those responsible for the atrocities committed in the last century.

The production of historical knowledge linked to the memories that have been constructed about dictatorships demands a critical approach: the book's organizers have oriented themselves in accordance with this perspective. In different chapters, authors of diverse nationalities analyze the ways in which, after a period of re-democratization, the past was revisited and interpreted, taking into account "cycles of memory and commemorations," the struggle for justice and also the authoritarian legacies.

Antonio Costa Pinto and Francisco Carlos P. Martinho also appear as authors in this work. In the introductory chapter, Costa Pinto draws attention to the fact that the

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“end of the Cold War and the emergence of an international community that was more active in its exportation of democratic values and institutions” made the return of an authoritarian past to the political arena possible, giving rise to analysis and debate about the elimination of the legacies of authoritarianism and the policies of punishment/reparation.

These questions run through the entire book, which is structured around three key concepts: authoritarian legacies, transitional justice and the politics of the past.

Samuel Huntington, quoted by the author, commented on transitional justice in countries where the authoritarian political government crumbled and was replaced by the opposition—which represented the possibility of punishment—and he also described transitions undertaken through reforms in which the authoritarian elite was a partner in the transition process, as happened in Brazil or Spain. Pinto also draws attention to the fact that, in some countries (Argentina, Chile and Brazil, in particular), the archives where the documents compounding the authoritarian legacy were “saved” were only opened many years after the democratic transition: such situations explain, in part, the delay in the opening of punitive processes.

The following chapters contain studies on Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece. Marco Tarchi examined the Italian case, seeking to show the correlation between the fall of fascism and the contradictions of Italian transitional justice. The Portuguese case is addressed by Filipa Raimundo, who analyzes the role of political parties in the criminalization and judgment of the political police, the institution responsible for repression in the Portuguese “Estado Novo” during the first years of the regime. Also on the subject of transition, Dimitri A. Sotiropulos addresses the punitive process of transitional justice in Greece, a country where transition was implemented through a rupture controlled by members of the elites. The same question is discussed in the Brazilian case: Alexandra B. de Brito seeks to show that “transitional justice” still takes place in “slow motion.”

In the remaining chapters, the analysis turns to the construction of the memory and the politics of the past. Francisco Carlos P. Martinho, who has devoted himself to the study of the last Portuguese Prime Minister of the “Estado Novo”—Marcello Caetano—shows how his memory was constructed from his exile in Rio de Janeiro after the coup d’état of April 25, 1974. In the chapter entitled “O governo Lula e a construção da memória do regime civil-militar brasileiro” [“Lula’s government and the construction of the memory of the Brazilian civil-military regime”], Daniel Aarão Reis looks at the provocative relationship between two distinct moments in recent Brazilian history, allowing

us to observe that the “the history of the present time” was already constructed from different temporalities.

Leonardo Morlino reflects on questions discussed by other authors in the same collection, namely the authoritarian legacies, the politics of the past and democracy in Southern Europe and Latin America. Nevertheless, he examines these subjects from a comprehensive perspective that allows the reader to develop a broader understanding of the dictatorships analyzed throughout the book.

I draw attention to the last chapter, written by two authors working together and facing the challenge of propounding a comparative approach on “the politics of the past” in Latin America and Southern Europe, dealing with similar subjects, while taking into account quite different conjunctures. Working within the regional and international context, they seek to explain the expectations and actions of the different protagonists involved in the process and show the importance of taking into account, in these comparisons, the internal conditions that molded that process. It should be noted that the two European authors, albeit of different nationalities, had already undertaken important research into the most recent dictatorial experiences in Latin America (Chile, Uruguay and Argentina).

As can be noticed, the chapters display both more specific approaches to particular cases (Greece, Italy, Brazil, Portugal and Spain) and a more generic analysis organized around subjects relating to dictatorship, re-democratization and justice. Despite this diversity, the organizers of the collection have managed to build a work displaying a clear equilibrium between the more specific analysis and that of a more comprehensive character. Instead of compromising the work as a whole, the different approaches complement and enrich the collection.

To finish, I should like to say that the challenge that the organizers of the collection placed before themselves was not a small one. Exploring subjects that are common to the authoritarian experiences of European and American countries characterized by particular cultures and histories has resulted in a comparative approach to the past of two continents from a very well constructed transnational perspective.