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A LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENTIST: Guillermo O'Donnell

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1966–1973, EL ESTADO BUROCRATICO AUTORITARIO: TRIUNFOS, DERROTAS Y CRISIS. By GUILLERMO O'DONNELL. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Belgrano, 1982. Pp. 496.)

BUREAUCRATIC AUTHORITARIANISM: ARGENTINA, 1966–1973, IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE. By GUILLERMO O'DONNELL, translated by JAMES MCGUIRE in collaboration with RAE FLORY. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988. Pp. 338. $45.00.)

The publication in 1982 of Guillermo O'Donnell's exhaustive, incisive, but difficult book on the Argentine regime of 1966–1973 marked the culmination of a decade's work by a leading figure in the generation of social scientists who came to maturity during the heady years of resurgent popular movements and the nightmare years of military rule that followed. This book was one of the early contributions to what has now become an agonizing retrospective analysis by a whole generation of Argentine intellectuals of the years leading up to the debacle of 1976 and their own role in it.[1] To those who have read only O'Donnell's articles on the bureaucratic-authoritarian state, this book will come as a surprise. It offers a far less "structural" account than they might expect. The book is far more concerned with intention, preconception, ideology, and blunder—in short, with the paraphernalia of political agency. It reflects the mood of a generation whose members still wonder whether they were responsible for what happened and whether they could have altered the course of events by acting otherwise.

Bureaucratic Authoritarianism recounts how a regime came to power in 1966 with the intention of creating once and for all the conditions for stable and sustained capitalist accumulation in Argentina, and how its efforts to achieve this came to grief. After 1962, realizing that constant intervention in politics in alliance with civilian parties and factions had severely weakened their internal cohesion (English edition, p. 85), the military leadership undertook a program of "modernization"

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and "professionalization" inspired by the newly fashionable doctrine of national security.[2] The coup of 1966 was led by the same General Onganía who had been at the forefront of the modernization process, yet his time in office was marred and eventually terminated by the factional strife that the modernization should have extirpated. Onganía identified himself with a "paternalist-corporatist" faction, but this faction was not in complete control—especially in the upper reaches of the military hierarchy. A major contending force were the "liberals," the group most closely connected to the *gran burguesía*, O'Donnell's term for the combination of big business, transnational corporations, and the oligopolistic sector of Argentine capital. (I shall henceforth translate the term simply as "big business," although his translators, presumably with his agreement, render it clumsily as the "big" or "upper" bourgeoisie.) The tensions between these two factions—mediated by a third group known as the "nationalists"—proved to be a permanent source of weakness in the ensuing attempt to construct a bureaucratic-authoritarian state.

Such an outcome occurs, to be sure, in a structural context that constrains the choices and opportunities of salient actors. For O'Donnell an essential feature of a capitalist economy is a degree of predictability: if the most powerful economic actors, in this case transnational corporations and domestic big business, believe that "things are going to get worse," they will shift their activities away from productive activities to short-term speculation, in a pattern O'Donnell describes as the "plunder economy" (*la economía de saqueo*). These activities may be highly profitable, but they divert resources away from the real economy and reinforce negative expectations. In these circumstances, the dominant actors in the Argentine case pressed for a change in their environment that, in addition to guaranteeing the irreducible requirements for a capitalist economy, would discipline the unions, bring order to the state apparatus, and give unequivocal guarantees to foreign private investment. Meanwhile, as all actors maximized short-term gains, "randomizing their behaviors," the state danced more and more to the tune of civil society[3] and became colonized by a variety of political and ideological forces. Its role as guarantor of order was undermined and thus was created a propitious climate for attempting to establish a bureaucratic-authoritarian state.

In earlier works of O'Donnell's and in parts of the work under review, the type and level of threat to the established order that precedes and provokes the implantation of a bureaucratic-authoritarian state is cited as a major explanatory factor of the degree of repressiveness that such a state acquires. But the English translation contains a modification of that position, which had already been attacked by various critics as too simplistic.[4] An added passage (beginning on p. 142) explains how the "relative mildness" of the crisis of 1966 contributed to

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the articulation of forces that precipitated its collapse; this statement is not the same as saying that the crisis contributed to the relative mildness of the regime's repression and reflects a revision of the author's earlier, more simplistic interpretation. In any case, the threat represented by the union leadership in Argentina is a constant subject of puzzlement. Dominated by Peronism, union leaders did not question the capitalist parameters of society, but their constant recourse to radical and even violent methods of struggle was enough to feed the insecurities of big business and their "liberal" allies in the armed forces.

Indeed, the union leadership even welcomed the coup of 1966. There are two reasons for this attitude: union leaders were tempted by what O'Donnell calls the age-old populist illusion of achieving a "union of the people and the armed forces" through a pact with the paternalist and nationalist factions within the military. Also, they had been engaged in continuous and often violent clashes with the weak and indecisive Radical governments in power since 1963. These governments had benefited from the Peronist party being excluded from the elections and from the resulting 40 percent abstention rate, and they had also tried to use various institutional devices to undermine the unions. So the unions had little incentive to respect their constitutional position. To these explanations one must add the hopes entertained by Augusto Vandor, the powerful leader of the *metalúrgicos*, to take Perón's place as leader of the movement.

In any case, the army-union alliance proved short-lived. The goals of the new government were formulated in unequivocally corporatist terms: slogans invoking "integration," "authentic representativity," "solidarity," and "community" were proclaimed in opposition to "sectoral egoism," "subversion," "lack of faith," and "lack of spiritual cohesion" (p. 95). But within no time at all, the new military government and the unions fell out. A wave of rationalizations and attempts to impose wage settlements by compulsory arbitration were enough to provoke strikes and protests in various sectors. This trend culminated in a confrontation in late 1966. The unions lost out badly in this battle, but three years later, they returned to the fray on the crest of a wave of popular mobilization confronting a now-weakened and divided state apparatus.

Just as one might forget the initial union support for the coup, so one might also forget that the economic team first appointed under the aegis of the dominant faction of paternalists met with strenuous opposition from big business and had to be rapidly replaced by a "liberal" team composed of orthodox economists enjoying greater confidence in those quarters. For O'Donnell, no bureaucratic-authoritarian state is viable without a normalization of the economy along orthodox lines conducted in close collaboration with big business, and therefore the

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ambitions of the "paternalists" and the "nationalists" to create cohesive bases for national integration were pure illusion. So much may seem obvious after the later experiences of military government in the 1970s, but in Argentina in 1966–67, these initial defeats did not mean the end of either the paternalists themselves or their attempts to carry out their program.

In the event, the subsequent stabilization program of early 1967 was not entirely orthodox for it sought to correct imbalances in the economy while avoiding the accompanying risk of recession, and considerable initial successes were achieved in this respect. Under the program, the agricultural sector was forced to forego the benefits of devaluation via state retention of a corresponding percentage of agricultural export revenues, thus holding down food prices and the overall rate of inflation. The supply side was protected through an initial readjustment of wages and prices followed by the imposition of price controls, which had the effect of sustaining the level of effective demand. In addition, capital spending expanded in the public sector, with the amount spent on construction doubling in three years, financed largely by the retention of a share of agricultural export revenues. Growth resumed quickly, but above all in those activities controlled by foreign capital and in the oligopolistic sectors of domestic industry. Even so, domestic and foreign private investment were not forthcoming, partly because installed capacity was not yet being fully used but also because of a lack of confidence in the long term. This distrust was due to the continued presence of "paternalists" in the upper reaches of the state apparatus, who were waiting impatiently for the second stage of their "revolution"—the *tiempo social*, as they called it—in which wages would be raised, unions reorganized, and the influence of big business tempered. In addition to provoking union opposition on account of its attempts and threats to reorganize them, the government also incurred the wrath of the medium and small business sectors, which felt excluded from the benefits of the stabilization. These complaints met with a favorable reception among those same paternalists. Above all, the secret of the success of the program had been the measures taken against export agriculture, although they had antagonized the "pampean bourgeoisie" who were the dominant stratum of capitalist farmers, a central component of the Argentine ruling class with a political strength immeasurably greater than that of its flaccid "latifundista" counterparts in other countries. Thus the source of the government's initial success threatened to become the cause of its ultimate failure.

In these early chapters, O'Donnell devotes much space to exploring what might be termed the "mentality" of the Argentine ruling classes and the factions of the military. He is particularly eloquent (if somewhat repetitive) on big business's obsession with stable expecta-

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tions, "firmness," "efficiency," "social peace," and above all, "order." He writes of the capacity of big business to extract the requisite behavior from the bureaucratic-authoritarian state—at least in its early stages, as in the imposition of their "own" finance minister within nine months of the original coup d'état—in the wry tone of someone watching the government of a nation acting like the board of directors of a small company. His account takes great pains to make it clear that this approach was not a mere abstract requirement of the structure of Argentine capital: it resulted from certain modes of thought in which the personal character of senior officials mattered a lot and from a variety of parish pump politics in which the gran burguesía really could place "their" man in "their" ministry. One of the many possible readings of O'Donnell's text is as an exploration of these mechanisms and modes of thought.

If some readers believe that these passages betray a conception of political action in which class interest leads too simplistically to political action and in which the state appears too malleable an instrument of power, they should turn to some opinion poll results (p. 141), which reveal an extraordinary degree of class polarization. In June 1968, a poll asked four hundred people what they regarded as the best achievement of the current military government. "Economic stability" was mentioned by 67 percent of the upper-class respondents, 33 percent of the middle-class respondents, and 8 percent of the lower class respondents. In contrast, 41 percent of the middle-class respondents found nothing to speak well of, and the proportion of lower-class respondents who believed that the government had done nothing at all praiseworthy reached an extraordinary 80 percent. Thus Argentina at this time seemed to offer a comforting case for the much-derided advocates of "crude class analysis."

Even so, the criticism directed at "simplistic" applications of the concept of class to political action is founded on analytical objections and cannot be dismissed by "mere" empirical findings. The reader must therefore turn to Chapter Five, "Economic Successes and Political Problems," which tells how, despite extremely favorable structural conditions for their continuation in power, the military leaders of the bureaucratic-authoritarian state initiated their own painfully slow downfall. This process dragged on for five of the seven years of military rule and reveals some interesting mediations between class and political affiliation.

The process began with President Onganía's announcement in 1968 of his long-awaited "tiempo social," a second stage of the government's period in office when it intended to build on its early economic successes by creating and gathering round the state (*ensamblar con el Estado*)[5] "authentically representative organizations of the community"

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(p. 151) and by rewarding the people for the sacrifices imposed on them by economic normalization. This corporatist-paternalist suggestion was not well received by either big business or the unions. Within a short time, the darling of big business, Adalberto Krieger Vasena, had resigned as Minister for Economic Affairs, and the unions had rejected the government's overtures as involving unacceptable infringements on their autonomy. Within two years, Onganía himself had been overthrown by a "nationalist" faction that succeeded in antagonizing big business and the unions even further. It was overthrown within less than a year by the "liberal" General Lanusse, who eventually concluded that the only person who could save Argentine capitalist society was Perón himself. What Lanusse did not understand in his haste to extract the military from their predicament, or perhaps preferred to ignore, was the deeply creative yet destructive potential of Peronism and the highly fragmented state of the Peronists. When Perón eventually returned, the military had no cards left to play, and he treated them with utter contempt.

While military leaders were antagonizing each other and their principal sponsors (the gran burguesía), the opposition was developing an extraordinary momentum. The movement started in 1969 with a conflict at the University of Rosario and then spread to Córdoba, the second city of Argentina and home of the most advanced and internationalized sector of Argentine industry. A series of monumental misjudgments on relatively unimportant matters by the local military governors and university officials provoked the town's entire population to form what can best be termed a "commune"[6] led by students and by workers. The "Cordobazo," as it became known, is considered by O'Donnell to have been the beginning of the cycle of violence that persisted until after the "Falkinas" war in 1982.

Eventually, the regime lost everyone's confidence. Capital flight, soaring inflation, the collapse of foreign investment, and a deteriorating balance of payments all indicated that from 1970 on, Argentina was returning to the plunder economy that the coup of 1966 had been intended to eliminate. At the same time, the violence initiated by the "Cordobazo" was increasing.

O'Donnell's account shows that the protest and strikes were by no means an exclusively working-class phenomenon at this time but largely involved provincial and lower-middle-class workers. One table shows that both the number of strikes and the share of strikes in which "middle sectors" were involved increased substantially from a low point at the beginning of the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime up to 1971 and 1972, when the regime finally withdrew (p. 295).[7]

As for union leaders, they refueled inflation, sapped the confidence of the bourgeoisie, gave short shrift to their restive rank and file,

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and opened the way for a renewal of the plunder economy and the praetorian politics of old. The combination of grass-roots radicalism and a corrupt entrenched union bureaucracy (prepared to resort to violence to defend its positions and deeply committed to a narrowly economistic perception of its role) might have been less lethal had it not come together in the country's most powerful political movement. It was a unique concatenation of circumstances in which the organization that offered the strongest economic opposition faced by almost any Latin American capitalist class ultimately demonstrated, in the interlude between 1973 and 1976, its own political impotence. The terror unleashed was not as ferociously counterrevolutionary as it became after 1976, but as O'Donnell observes, union leaders were engaged in repressing what their bureaucracies distrust and fear most: "extraordinarily rich and creative experiments of popular organization at the district level and of workers' organization at the plant level" (p. 457 in the Spanish version, omitted in the translation). It is hardly surprising that these experiments were often penetrated by guerrillas, thus inviting extremely fierce repression without offering the slightest realistic hope of a "democratization of social relations" (p. 458 in the Spanish version, also omitted in the translation).

The revolt that began in Rosario and Córdoba provoked the rise of an alliance (even a merger) between the gangsterism of the unions and that of the extreme right. This alliance first erupted in the massacre of Peronist Youth on the road to Ezeiza airport while Perón's plane was landing on his return in 1972. It was created by the surreal figure of José López Rega, the personal secretary and notional Minister of Social Welfare popularly known as *el brujo* (the sorcerer) because of his astrological inclinations. These events paved the way for the *guerra sucia* and the return of the bureaucratic-authoritarian state with much greater ferocity in 1976.

O'Donnell spares none of the protagonists in describing this process. In a telling footnote, he speaks of the responsibility of an adult generation that did not combat the "game of hate and of idolized violence in which youthful passions were sacrificed at this time" (p. 454 in the original). He also writes with acuity and some courage on the role of Perón himself, a person whose deep hostility to socialist revolution was never in doubt. Perón's "organicist and corporatist" discourse was closer to Onganía's than to those of Marx and Castro (p. 461), but for tactical reasons, Perón supported and stimulated the useful allies he found on the "left." These were the Montonero guerrillas and the Peronist Youth, with their echoes of "Mao, Fanon and Guevara" (p. 461). O'Donnell mentions the curious ideological history of the Montonero leadership, who started their career in the extreme right movement Tacuara, which emerged at one of Buenos Aires's most pres-

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tigious high schools. Unfortunately, however, O'Donnell does not elaborate on the strange ideological matrix into which they fit or mention the influence of the priests of the Sacerdotes del Tercer Mundo, particularly Fr. Carlos Mujica, a chaplain at the school who consciously guided them toward Peronism. How it came about that an entire generation of upper-middle-class high school students became supporters of the Montoneros remains one of the great, tragic mysteries of the Argentina of that era.

O'Donnell's lengthy elaboration of the radicalization of both demands and methods of struggle in Chapter 5 is a good example of his style, which forms an inherent part of the substance of his interpretation. Like his equally elaborate account of the various factions in the army and the dominant economic groups, it exemplifies how in writing about the actions and thoughts of a group, O'Donnell maintains a constant awareness of that group's conception of its own aims, the actions and aims of others, others' perception of its actions and aims, and so on. The reader occasionally gets the sensation of traveling through a Proustian hall of mirrors. This deep involvement with the ideological-relational dimension of his subjects explains the promiscuous use and abuse of inverted commas—a contrapuntal device whereby in the course of a description "from without," the reader's attention is being drawn to a parallel account seen "from within" by those involved, with frequent hints of irony by the author himself. O'Donnell's Spanish style is not quite up to such complexity, and the ultimate effect is heavy, but this dimension is undoubtedly imbedded deeply in his interpretation and overshadows any lapses into much-derided "class reductionism."

When I first read the Spanish edition of this book, it seemed to me that two readings were possible. Now we have a translation into English that has been heavily edited (presumably with O'Donnell's approval and encouragement), one that also contains at least one addition of several pages (which I have noted). As a result, the complications aroused by the original ambiguity are compounded by hints that O'Donnell has changed his position on certain sensitive issues.

My comments on the translation are therefore concerned partly with its quality and partly with these hints at a shifting position. The translators undertook a Herculean task because rendering O'Donnell's prose into fluent and literate English was impossible unless they meddled with his conceptual vocabulary. Unfortunately, his Spanish style does not have the lightness of touch that might enable him to bring off those meandering sentences, which might lull a dreamy reader into thinking that he or she was being escorted by a slightly obsessive guide around the cavernous antique shops of the Buenos Aires flea market of San Telmo, or (changing escorts now), visiting the sites of those epic moments of witness known as heroic *jornadas*, the milestones of the

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history of the working-class movement. In short, O'Donnell abuses the subordinate phrase and clause.

Even so, some Hispanisms could have been avoided: "ordinary consciousness" for "conventional wisdom" (p. 7); "legal personality" for what I would call "legal status" (p. 8); "exploitation" for rate of utilization of capacity (Table 50—an undergraduate "howler"); "sanctioned" for "punished" (p. 85); "current" for "faction"; "intervened" for "requisitioned" (p. 88); and "chamber of resonance" for "sounding-board" (p. 142). These points may be pedantic, but some of the terms used will puzzle readers unfamiliar with the Spanish usages they reflect. I note as I write the list, however, that many of these Hispanisms have become almost standard usage in the professional Spanglish of the Latin Americanist community. If they had become part of the Spanglish of New York, Miami, or Los Angeles, I would be more ready to accept that they had indeed entered common usage.

At other points, subtleties in the original Spanish—especially those containing hidden references to Argentine political terminology—have been omitted, perhaps with the author's consent or even at his request. Either way, such omissions are a shame. I found three instances on a single page (p. 298, or p. 444 in the original): the lost irony of the use of the term "columna vertebral" (spinal cord), the standard phrase used by union leaders to describe their role in the Peronist movement; the omitted reference to "ajustar cuentas" with grass-roots leaders (meaning settling accounts, usually by assassination); and the rendering of the word "desaliento," which means disappointment and occurs frequently in political jargon, as "discouragement."

Omissions (presumably at the author's request) include a long passage delving into the minds of the participants (pp. 114–16 of the original) and, more significantly, some enthusiastic reflections on the extent to which grass-roots movements acting in the name of Peronism in the early 1970s constituted a threat to the "cellular domination" that, in O'Donnell's view (and mine), constitutes the ultimate guarantee of the capitalist character of society. The latter omission, added to those already mentioned, reflects a deeper shift. To be sure, O'Donnell's theoretical statements ought not to give much comfort to the post-Marxists who (in Argentina as in Chile) worship at the altar of social democracy. He states fairly unequivocally in the opening chapter that the state in a capitalist society, whatever the regime, is the guarantor of capitalist relations, and he believes that capitalist relations tend to effect the exclusion of popular sectors from the fruits of the development process, especially a dependent and transnationalized process. In my opinion, now that the events described in the book are receding into the past and although O'Donnell has not removed that theoretical position from his book, he does not want to encourage the idea that the shop-floor

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agitation of the early 1970s (let alone the Montonero exaltation of violence) would be a good example for subsequent generations to follow. And he may not want to give too much rein to the ideas that I found strongly implied in his theoretical statements—that formal institutional democracy falls far short of guaranteeing a reasonable distribution of economic opportunities.

The other aspect of the dual reading concerns the relationship—or lack thereof—between the highly structural theoretical statements of the early chapters and the enormous importance during the account of the process itself of the "hall of mirrors" effect already mentioned. This point is important because O'Donnell's works turn up on reading lists in Latin American politics courses everywhere. Yet for some time now, I have had the sensation that his reputation rests on ideas that he may no longer believe in and that may have been overemphasized in the body of his work as a whole.[8] I refer here primarily to the paper positing the "deepening" thesis.[9] This work hypothesized that bureaucratic authoritarianism was a response by economic power groups and technocratic elites to the need for major infrastructural works that the process of import-substituting industrialization was incapable of financing or managing: such works could only be carried out under a new arrangement enjoying the confidence of multinational corporations. This idea was wrenched out of context and given far more importance than I think was ever intended and has quietly been dropped by its probably puzzled progenitor. O'Donnell found that a simple idea runs the risk of being cheapened by popularity.

Other dimensions of his work at that time have received less publicity, and some of them deserve far more serious consideration. One is the account of the accumulation of contradictions that brought about the collapse of the political economy of import-substituting industrialization in various countries.[10] That analysis remains valid and deserves more attention. We have been bombarded with pontifications from economists about why import-substituting industrialization did not work, but their analyses do not explain why the model fell apart, merely that it was inefficient—hardly a distinguishing feature of any economic model.

O'Donnell offered a political economy of import-substituting industrialization that rested on one basic insight: the colonization of the state by civil society, or the lack of state autonomy. He described it graphically in a paper on the Argentine spiral[11] and laid its conceptual foundations in the paper on corporatism, where he made his first attempt to theorize about the state as a congeries of specifically capitalist institutions.[12] The most successful article of this period, "State and Alliances" (like the book under review), was an analytically informed account of real historical processes. The least successful was the article

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attempting a more or less pure theory of the state,[13] which has been reproduced in a mercifully reduced form in the first chapter of *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*. The attempt to build the theory was, I think, a felt need because O'Donnell, influenced by the climate of the early 1970s, was adopting a view of the bureaucratic-authoritarian state as a specific form of the capitalist state, a perspective he could hardly sustain without explaining why the capitalist state did not invariably take on these authoritarian features. The outcome was a grandiloquent but gingerly walk through a political and theoretical minefield, as O'Donnell tried to claim that the state is a capitalist state yet is not an "agent" or "actor" but merely a "guarantor" of capitalist relations, the agent of an interest that is "general but partialized," and so on.

The other interesting dimension of O'Donnell's insight into the state is his account of corporatism, in the article that has been unjustly neglected, perhaps because it was appallingly translated.[14] This effort is noteworthy as an attempt to draw away from Schmitter's definition of corporatism and introduce a concept in which the dynamics of class society were built-in features, through the perception that corporatist institutions were a specific mechanism of representation that embodied an uncertain dialectic of colonization from without and control from within. Unfortunately, by showing how *corporativismo estatizante* and *corporativismo privatista* sustained the capitalist relations irrespective of the type of regime, O'Donnell cast doubt on the extent to which the bureaucratic-authoritarian state could be perceived as a fundamental rupture. This direction again led him along the tempting but unfruitful path of general theorizing about the state.

Fortunately, O'Donnell abandoned that path, and I recommend that the preferred reading of *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism* be one concentrating on the "hall of mirrors" and also on the interweaving of politics and economics, which is extremely rare in studies of this kind. The term *bureaucratic authoritarianism* is with us to stay, for it encapsulates so well the institutional character of these regimes and their institutionalization of terror and torture. It was originally intended, we might recall, to emphasize the idea of a technocratic elite taking power with military support to carry forward the development process that the irrationalities of politics had impeded;[15] but that element has been gradually diluted out of the term over the years. It does not even appear among the seven defining features of the bureaucratic-authoritarian state in Chapter 1 (p. 32). The term will remain as the description of a type of regime, not a type of state, so that the continuities between authoritarianism and democracy in the region can still be recalled. But in the long run, O'Donnell's book will be remembered for his unusually sustained insight into the minds of a political elite whom he knew only too well[16] and whose thoughts, fears, and interactions he was able to

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convey graphically to a wide audience. *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism* is, if you like, the political scientists' counterpart to Tomás Eloy Martínez's masterpiece, *La novela de Perón*.

In light of my observations, it is interesting to note that O'Donnell's recent occasional writings have shown a taste for the sociology or perhaps politics of everyday life, suggesting that the involvements I have detected in the book presage more to come. It turns out that in order to "survive" and to avoid "going crazy" (*volvernos locos*) while living in Argentina in 1979, he and his wife, Cecilia Galli, conducted what he calls a "proto-research study" on daily life in Buenos Aires. In an article entitled "Democracia en la Argentina, micro y macro," O'Donnell develops this theme in an impassioned tone befitting the place and the moment of writing—Buenos Aires in 1983.[17] While hotly denying that he wishes to denigrate the importance of political life and institutions writ large, O'Donnell insists that the consolidation of democracy in Argentina requires a change in the deeply rooted authoritarian habits of a society that has survived despite—or maybe because of—its relatively egalitarian character. He denounces the racism of Argentine culture, the recurring Manichaeism and paranoia that he perceives as characterizing the Argentine view of national history and its failures, the sexual repressiveness and patriarchal family organization, and the repressive character of its education system. His account is more a *cri de coeur* than an analysis, but the change of emphasis, compared with the essays of the mid-1970s, is clear.

The theme is taken up again in two other recent publications, one a contribution to the Hirschman festschrift, the other a reflection on the different styles of social relations in Argentina and Brazil—or to be more exact, in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro.[18] In Buenos Aires, O'Donnell contends, people are ruder but more equal in status (hence a phrase like "¿Y a mí que me importa?"). In Rio Brazilians are more polite and deferential but are appallingly unequal in status and apparently willing to accept such inequality (hence the phrase "Você sabe con quem está falando?"). The implication is that democracy is not (or not only) a matter of institutional manipulation or macro-economic luck but a more complex matter of culture. Maybe we know now that the introduction into Latin America under authoritarian auspices of a liberal discourse has not strengthened the democratic impulses at the level of social relations, but we might yet ask whether the rise of an alternative "social-democratic" liberalism needs to exorcise the grandiloquent political discourses of populism and nationalism before it can make substantial progress along that path. It may be that the "new social movements," or *basismo*, that have aroused so much enthusiasm, might succeed where the grass-roots activists of the early 1970s in Chile and Argentina failed, precisely because they seem to dispense with much of

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that grandiloquence and also because they have dispelled the obsession with state power that was the hallmark of radical activism in the past. We live in hope.

NOTES

1. In more recent papers, now written directly about the infinitely more murderous period after 1976, O'Donnell has begun to delve deeper into the private experiences—indeed the privatization of experience—especially among the intelligentsia during the unlamented regime of Videla-Viola-Galtieri. See his "Democracia en la Argentina, micro y macro," in *"Proceso," crisis y transición democrática*, edited by Oscar Oszlak (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1984). The main organs of post-Marxist and post-Peronist expression are *Ciudad Futura, Punto de Vista*, and (for the Peronists) *Unidos*. It is a measure of the atmosphere prevailing in the historic left that a sociologist noted for his Marxist positions in the 1960s told me in December 1986 that the only ideological innovation now is on the neoconservative side, whose political expression is the tiny "Centro Democrático" led by Julio Alsogaray. The intellectual supporters of military intervention in the 1970s, it should be added, are not reappraising anything, at least not in public.
2. O'Donnell describes this program in detail in *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*, Politics of Modernization Series (Berkeley: University of California, 1971); and in "Modernización y golpes militares," *Desarrollo Económico* 47 (Oct.–Dec. 1972). Unless otherwise stated, all page references are to the English edition of *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*.
3. The metaphor is taken from O'Donnell's earlier paper, "State and Alliances in Argentina," *Journal of Development Studies* 15, no. 1 (Oct. 1978).
4. In particular, see Karen L. Remmer and Gilbert W. Merkx, "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism Revisited," *LARR* 17, no. 2 (1982).
5. The translation under review has "amalgamation with the state."
6. I mean a commune in the sense of the Paris commune, not its more modern versions.
7. This description of the contents of the table is necessarily simplified.
8. There are three basic and well-known papers: "Corporatism and the Question of the State," in *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America*, edited by James Malloy (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976); "Reflections on the Patterns of Change in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State," *LARR* 13, no. 1 (1978); and "On the Characterization of Authoritarian Regimes," in *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, edited by David Collier (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970).
9. "Reflections on the Patterns of Change in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State."
10. See "Reflections on the Patterns of Change in the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian State"; and specifically, "State and Alliances in Argentina."
11. See "State and Alliances in Argentina."
12. See "Corporatism and the Question of the State."
13. "Apuntes para una teoría del estado," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 1 (1979); it was also a CEDES mimeo, Buenos Aires, 1977.
14. "Corporatism and the Question of the State."
15. See his *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics*, Studies in Comparative Politics no. 9 (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1973).
16. It is worth recalling that O'Donnell was something of a child prodigy in Argentine politics, rising through the ranks of anti-Peronist student politics to take the extremely important post of Sub-Secretario del Interior in 1963, the youngest viceminister in the country's history. Although the appointment did not last long, it was long enough for him to become acquainted with most of the prominent personages in this book. Thus his insights are not a matter of mere sociological training, or if they are, it was a very privileged sort of training.

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17. This circumstance is explained in the first footnote to "Democracia en la Argentina, micro y macro."
18. *¿Y a mi que me importa? Notas sobre socialibilidad y política en Argentina y Brasil* (Buenos Aires: CEDES, 1984); and "On the Fruitful Convergences of Hirschman's Exit, Voice, and Loyalty and Shifting Involvements: Reflections from Recent Argentine Experience," in *Development, Democracy, and the Art of Trespassing*, edited by Alejandro Foxley, Michael McPherson, and Guillermo O'Donnell (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986).

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