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Alison J. Bruey, *Bread, Justice, and Liberty: Grassroots Activism and Human Rights in Pinochet's Chile* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2018), pp. xx + 298, £74.50, hb.

Alison J. Bruey's *Bread, Justice, and Liberty: Grassroots Activism and Human Rights in Pinochet's Chile* is a wonderfully researched and written book. For those interested in the social history of human rights in Chile, popular resistance against the country's 1973-1990 military regime, as well as the peculiarly Chilean elite consensus politics that consolidated over the course of the 1990s, this book will be indispensable reading. But to this reviewer at least, Bruey's social history of grassroots activism in Chile also sheds new light on and makes important contributions to ongoing debates on the origins, historical evolution and future of human rights.

At its core, *Bread, Justice, and Liberty* is an engaged and engaging social history of Santiago's *poblaciones*, the urban poor and working-class neighbourhoods that were violently targeted by the Chilean military after the 1973 coup. Bruey beautifully brings to life the personal politics of resistance of the neighbourhoods and their inhabitants who animate the book. The research conducted for the book is meticulous and relies on several years of fieldwork, archival materials and oral history interviews.

In particular, the book makes several important contributions to our understanding of patterns of social mobilisation against the Chilean military regime and as well as their multiple legacies for contemporary Chile. The book describes the diverse coalitions of resistance to the Chilean dictatorship in Santiago's *poblaciones*. Despite their many differences, Catholic and leftist popular groups both shaped the Chilean opposition movement to the military regime. Bruey retraces the political debates between the multitude of groups that constituted the Chilean popular opposition and the many tensions in terms of tactics, strategies, decision making processes and worldviews that had to be negotiated. Highlighting the central role of the Catholic Church in Chile in enabling resistance to the Pinochet regime is certainly not novel, but Bruey brings to life the role of the Church at the grassroots level in the *poblaciones* as individual priests provided spaces and some degree of protection to efforts to organise resistance during the dictatorship. The book emphasises the particularly important role of associative bonds through family relations and neighbourhood in building social movements and organisation. Bruey also highlights the role of youth protest through their simultaneous involvement in neighbourhood religious activities, leftist politics and anti-regime action. As such, the book makes an interesting contribution to thinking about intergenerational political learning, and the importance of concrete spaces of transmission of political ideas, particularly the family, Church, and neighbourhood associations.

Bread, Justice, and Liberty also sheds light on evolving patterns of mobilisation and resistance over the course of the Chilean military regime. Bruey emphasises, in particular, the important continuities in social and political mobilisation over the course of the military dictatorship: "activists and activism of the 1980s were directly related to those of the 1970s, and both were rooted in pre-coup organizing cultures and traditions." (p.12). As such, Bruey argues "the *trabajo de hormiga* (ant's work) of

resistance that activists did in *poblaciones* during what are often referred to as the *años oscuros* (dark years) from 1973 to 1983 was key to the rise of mobilization and protest in the 1980s” (p.13), and the eventual transition to democracy. Remarkably, these cultures and traditions of political mobilisation withstood the onslaught of state violence. The book powerfully relates the personal impact of the specific forms of state violence inflicted on *pobladores* such as the use of *allanamientos* (search raids) as a method of repression. However, while brutal military violence may have been effective in reducing mobilisation, Bruey argues, the military coup led to a hiatus and not to a fundamental rupture of associative life in the *poblaciones*. Nonetheless, the resounding political defeat that the 1973 coup represented for Chile’s popular sectors led to a dramatic shift in social and political expectations, and a notable downward moral displacement (p.89) in the status of *pobladores* in the ‘new’ Chile that the military regime sought to violently build.

It is precisely in this respect that the book offers some insightful reflections on the historical and social legacies of the dictatorship on Chilean democracy. The book’s social history offers not only an important perspective on the Chilean dictatorship, but also on the character of the country’s transition to democracy. From the perspective of the *poblaciones*, the Chilean transition was far from triumphant. Crucially, the Chilean transition to democracy was far from peaceful in the *poblaciones* as violence accompanied the widespread public protests towards the end of the 1980s. Moreover, the sense of economic, social and political defeat was palpable for many *pobladores*, Bruey argues, given the highly constrained nature of Chile’s transitional neoliberal democracy. The transition also brought with it a distinct sense of disillusion and political alienation from the civilian elites that succeeded the Pinochet regime. For Bruey, this alienation was particularly evident in the *poblaciones*.

Beyond Chile, *Bread, Justice, and Liberty* also offers important contributions to thinking about the history and contemporary practice of human rights politics. As Bruey points out (p.7), “Chile was one of the most symbolic examples” of the systematic human rights violations as state policy carried out by the “Cold War national security regimes” in Latin America in the 1970s and the 1980s. The transnational solidarity campaigns that responded to the military’s use of state violence was also paradigmatic for the type of human rights politics that emerged in this period and that would in turn fundamentally shape the modern international human rights regime in the decades that followed. But the book offers a poignant reminder that the human rights concerns of those targeted by state violence in Chile went beyond the violations commonly associated with the Chilean military regime, most notably disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture and exile. As aptly captured in the book’s title, for *pobladores* their experiences of state violence were both political and economic, and *Bread, Justice, and Liberty* constituted inseparable demands that motivated their resistance to the military regime. The interconnected and indivisible character of human rights for *pobladores* also meant that their struggle for democracy in Chile was just as much about social rights as about political rights. This conceptualisation of human rights was marginalised by Chilean elites during and after the transition, however, as amply illustrated in the exclusive focus on political and certain restricted forms of civil rights (disappearances, but not torture) by successive *Concertación* governments in the 1990s and the early 2000s.

Another important and related insight formulated in the book concerns the practice of human rights. Put simply, the idea and practice of human rights matter the most when they are threatened. Bruey relates how solidarity may emerge in times of crisis and emphasises the crucial importance of the agency of people most affected by violence and oppression. While focusing on Chile in the 1970s and the 1980s, the book resonates in our contemporary world. We are facing a political crisis of global dimensions that have direct implications for human rights everywhere. Global inequalities are rising, fuelling our 'age of anger', in turn driving political violence. Support for representative democracy as a political system is in decline and civil society spaces are increasingly restricted in many countries. There is a resurgence of nationalism and intolerance in many regions of the world, including in Latin America. The trend towards the undermining of the international rule of law, including international human rights, continues to gain strength. *Bread, Justice, and Liberty* provides a timely reminder that responding to these interlocking and mutually reinforcing crises will be a continuous struggle requiring an explicitly political agenda of creatively mobilising people for whom human rights matter the most.

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