

usefulness of debtors' prisons for creditors, and perhaps a contraction in extending loans under £2.

Wakelam's economic rather than penal perspective on debtor's prisons is a useful counterbalance to entirely accepting the negative views of late eighteenth-century prison reformers. His research into the prison records helps us understand why creditors utilized debt imprisonment to obtain repayment. More research from the debtors' perspective will help round out this new view.

Amy M. Froide

History Department, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (MD), United States

E-mail: froide@umbc.edu

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OVIEDO SILVA, DANIEL. *El enemigo a las puertas. Porteros y prácticas acusatorias en Madrid (1936–1945)*. Comares, Granada 2022. lii, 286 pp. Ill. € 33.00.

This book analyses the role of Madrid's *porteros* (concierges) as police informers from the late nineteenth century to the mid-1940s. Spain's *porteros*, a sort of caretaker-cum-doorkeeper, played a central role in social surveillance. Given that concierges were on duty throughout most of each day in the lobby of their apartment block and knew all the residents in the building, they were often approached for information by the authorities. In times of peace, building caretakers were legally bound to collaborate with the authorities, and the information provided by the concierges was often a useful source in police investigations and also for social control. In times of war and occupation, the information provided to the authorities, in the form of denunciations and accusations, triggered large-scale intracommunal political violence. *El enemigo a las puertas* explores the relationship between Madrid concierges and the state apparatus and seeks to unravel the complex workings of intracommunal political violence during the Spanish Civil War and the early years of the Franco dictatorship.

The book is chronologically divided into three parts. The first deals with concierges in Madrid from the 1870s to the beginning of the Spanish Civil War on 18 July 1936. During this period, the building caretakers regularly provided policemen and judicial investigators with information about residents. At a time of rapid urbanization and scarce police resources, security services increasingly relied on concierges, who occupied a privileged position in between the public and the private space. Fully aware of the concierges' key role, Spanish authorities repeatedly issued legislation turning *porteros* into "auxiliary" police forces, which implied that building caretakers were obliged to provide information about their neighbours. Here, Daniel Oviedo takes a long-term approach, somewhat similar to the classic works of Sheila Fitzpatrick on Russia and Robert Gellately on Germany, to investigate continuities and ruptures in accusatory practices and the state coercive apparatus beyond dictatorial periods. The author demonstrates that concierges'

denunciations were a well-established practice in the years before 1936, a habitual procedure that was, in turn, testament to some of the enduring factors of Spain's sociopolitical conflict prior to the Civil War.

The second part analyses concierges in Republican-controlled Madrid during the Civil War. The 18 July 1936 *coup d'état* led to a partial breakdown of the Republican state's coercive apparatus, while the number of semi-autonomous left-wing organizations mushroomed in the Spanish capital. These organizations, usually linked to political parties and trade unions, acted as "micro-powers" and filled the void created by the military insurrection. Together with Republican police, the members of these newly created left-wing groups violently repressed thousands of *Madrileños* accused of sympathizing and collaborating with the Francoists. In this context of civil war, the new Republican authorities insistently turned to concierges as a valuable source of information about neighbours' political inclinations. The information provided by concierges became – often literally – a matter of life and death. What *porteros* said to the new Republican authorities could save residents from jail or a firing squad. Their comments could also decisively contribute to their neighbours' imprisonment or execution. As Oviedo comprehensively shows in the chapters devoted to the Civil War, some caretakers voluntarily denounced residents and actively worked as informers for the Brigada de García Artadell, one of the "micro-powers" that had emerged at the beginning of the conflict. Moreover, the Brigada García Artadell had a Concierges' Committee, largely comprising socialist militants, which urged their colleagues "to fulfil their duties" by denouncing the Republic's political enemies. The majority of concierges, however, collaborated with Republican authorities when pressed for information, but did not volunteer it. In the context of the Civil War, these *porteros* did not come forward; nonetheless, they provided information about people and properties when required by Republican authorities. Finally, the author explores a third group of *porteros*, who chose to avoid accusing residents of pro-Francoist sympathies and opted for discretion. In these cases, the building caretakers risked their own lives, for the protection of fifth columnists was, of course, considered a treacherous act. In short, concierges acted as the spark and the gasoline of Republican repression, but some of them also operated as a firewall against intracommunal violence that could also engulf the *porteros* themselves.

The third part of *El enemigo a las puertas* studies the early years of the Franco dictatorship, from the fall of Madrid on 28 March 1939 to the defeat of the Nazis in 1945. During these years, the Francoists acted as an occupying force in the Spanish capital, where they implemented a brutal political purge leading to thousands of executions. Madrid concierges were then caught in an extremely difficult position. They were suspected of collaborating with the Republican authorities and thus potentially guilty of having denounced conservative citizens to the "Reds". At the same time, the Francoists were very interested in the knowledge that the building caretakers had about their neighbours' left-wing inclinations and their political roles during the Civil War. Hence, Francoists imposed accusatory practices among *porteros* and residents alike. Specifically, the military authorities forced all Madrid concierges to fill out questionnaires, which were later cross-checked against the information provided by the most senior residents of the buildings where the *porteros* had worked. On the

whole, Francoists managed to create an extended, well-resourced repressive network that sought to incorporate as many citizens as possible. Although some of the denunciations were spontaneous, Oviedo shows that the coercive apparatus set up by the winners of the Civil War drove thousands of concierges to accuse neighbours of being left-wing sympathizers. Additionally, Francoists awarded medals to those building caretakers who had protected conservative residents and their property during the conflict. Following a patronizing and classist logic, 525 *porteros* were rewarded with a “Fidelity Medal” for their “loyalty”. From the very first day, Francoism was built on a profound, unbridgeable social divide between victors and vanquished, with no room for leniency, let alone forgiveness.

The different periods covered by the book allow Oviedo to engage with diverse historiographical debates on twentieth-century Spain. On the issue of Republican repression during the Civil War, the findings of the book undermine the idea that home-front violence was exclusively due to “uncontrolled” mobs. *El enemigo a las puertas* shows the multifaceted factors of violence, which combined some left-wing micro-powers acting in an unrestrained manner with the development of an ample and coercive network of denunciations by Republican authorities. Equally, Oviedo questions those historians who have argued that left-wing repression was the by-product of a master plan that Republican authorities carefully designed. What becomes clear from this book is that the fragmentation of state power after the July 1936 *coup d'état* led to an eruption of different Republican violences, which, in turn, changed in form and intensity over the Civil War.

With regard to Francoist post-war repression, Oviedo follows the new approaches of social historians trained at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, such as Gutmaro Gómez, Rubén Pallol, Jorge Marco, and Alejandro Pérez Olivares, who have focused on the role of ordinary citizens in the production and prevention of violence. Having begun his academic career at the Complutense, Oviedo provides a complex picture of the behaviour of Madrid citizens, problematizing their actions and demonstrating that collaboration with the Francoist authorities was rooted in a myriad of different reasons, including ideological and economic motives, as well as personal vendettas, fear of retaliation, and a desire to protect relatives and friends regardless of their political views. Contrary to traditional theories that represented totalitarian states as all-powerful regimes capable of meticulously controlling individuals, the picture that emerges from *El enemigo a las puertas* is of a fluid and dialectic relationship between coercion and agency.

Overall, *El enemigo a las puertas* is a fine work of social history. It zooms in on and out of the lives of hundreds of individuals, and focuses particularly on the misadventures of two concierges, Mariano and Antonio, who lived in adjoining buildings and had very different experiences during the Civil War and after. The investigation of individual cases is coherently combined with a more quantitative exploration of *porteros*' attitudes in different neighbourhoods of Madrid, including a statistical analysis of Francoist questionnaires that concierges and residents in 300 buildings in the La Latina district filled out. Perhaps the comparative international dimension could have been explored further. In some chapters, taking additional consideration of academic works on the role of building caretakers in occupied cities, such as Paris and Budapest during the Second World War, might have pointed up similarities and differences

compared with Madrid. Still, *El enemigo a las puertas* is an outstanding book. It is thoroughly researched, thoughtful, and well-written. It shows the changing, at times paradoxical, attitudes of the concierges and their shifting positions between victims and victimizers depending on the historical situation. In doing so, *El enemigo a las puertas* exposes the complexity of human nature and shows what social history can teach us about the contradictions of ordinary people.

Alejandro Quiroga

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

E-mail: alequiro@ucm.es

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