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Martín Correa Cabrera, *La historia del despojo: El origen de la propiedad particular en el territorio mapuche.* Santiago: Pehuén and Ceibo, 2021, 359 pp. ISBN: 978-956-16-0835-1.

In this new edition of his prize-winning book (it was voted best essay of 2017 by the Consejo Nacional del Libro y la Lectura), Martín Correa narrates in extraordinary detail the history of the dispossession of Mapuche lands and territories. As the author himself emphasises, it is a history that everyone in Chile should know, because without this knowledge it is impossible to understand the magnitude of today's so-called "Mapuche conflict". This conflict was at the forefront of the new political constitution drafted by the Constitutional Convention, which began its work in 2021, included 17 members identified as indigenous citizens, and was initially led by Mapuche linguist and indigenous rights activist Elisa Loncón. The draft constitution was rejected in a referendum in 2022, but in 2021 there was great hope that the "historical debt" to indigenous communities would be properly addressed, and that Chile would be recognised as a plurinational state. Hence the republication of *La historia del despojo* (see the 'Colofón' at the end of the book), which – drawing together previous works authored by Correa and published by Chile's National Corporation of Indigenous Development (CONADI) – explains exactly how private and state actors colluded, both legally and illegally, to expropriate thousands and thousands of hectares of Mapuche land over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This painstakingly documented history of dispossession helps to legitimise the contemporary territorial demands of Mapuche communities – demands which have hitherto largely been ignored or negated by the Chilean state. The state's main response to such demands and the activists enunciating them (and reclaiming lands, sabotaging forestry company equipment, setting up roadblocks, carrying out arson attacks, protesting outside government buildings) has been violent repression (militarisation of Araucanía, police raids on rural communities, imprisonment on charges of terrorism, and fatal shootings). The reader cannot help but conclude that the responsibility for the current conflict lies with the state and the private interests (foreign settlers, landowning elites, national and transnational corporations) that it has directly or indirectly supported.

La historia del despojo is organised into six main chapters, framed by an introduction and epilogue. Five of the six chapters have a distinctive territorial focus: Lafkeche lands on the coast;

Pehuenche lands in the Alto Bío Bío region; the provinces of Malleco and Cautín; Huilliche lands south of the Tolten River; and Huilliche lands in Chiloé. This structure works well in two respects. Firstly, it draws attention to the diversity of regional experiences: the specificity of what happened in Malleco and Cautín, for example (the auction of lands claimed by the Chilean state as it proceeded with military occupation), compared to developments further north in Pehuenche territory (where landowners got local notaries to sign off fraudulent sales, a crime to which the central state turned a blind eye) or further south in Valdivia (which had been colonised by the Spanish colonial state and thus had a very different agrarian history to that of "indomitable" Araucanía). Secondly, and equally importantly, it spotlights the patterns and similarities of the historical processes of dispossession *across* Gulumapu, the Chilean side of Wallmapu (the ancestral territory of the Mapuche). There were differences, yes, but what connected the varied lived experiences of Mapuche communities throughout southern Chile was an officially endorsed package of lies, tricks and violence, and their "reduction" to such a small amount of land that many people were forced to migrate and look for work in the city, often the capital city, Santiago. In short, *la historia del despojo* did not happen by chance; it was systematic. The central state's efforts to transform the southern regions into "*el granero de Chile*" [the breadbasket of Chile] relied on indigenous dispossession.

Correa brings together a vast array of primary source materials collected from national and municipal archives to tell this history of dispossession. These include government decrees, ministerial reports, parliamentary debates, regional governors' reports, military memoirs, travel writing, official correspondence, notary records, court proceedings, land registration documents, deeds of sale, newspaper reports, and interviews with Mapuche community leaders from the 1990s through to the 2010s. These contemporary oral testimonies, which are neatly woven into the narrative alongside the historical documentation, help to bring the past into the present – an objective that is made clear throughout the book, and which is brought out forcefully in the final sentence: "*Ayer, para un pueblo con memoria*" [Yesterday, for a people with memory].

As he works through this wide-ranging material, Correa cites several important scholars such as José Bengoa, Leonardo León Solis, Jorge Pinto, Jorge Pavez, Jorge Iván Vergara, and Pablo Mariman. They are sometimes incorporated into the text directly; on other occasions, they are hidden away in the footnotes. I was slightly surprised that the book refers to so few Mapuche historians given the ever-increasing number and visibility of their publications (a point that is particularly true for researchers connected to the Comunidad de Historia Mapuche). I also think *La historia del despojo* would have benefitted from the inclusion of an explicit methodological reflection in the introduction and a more direct engagement throughout with the existing scholarship on Mapuche history in Chile – in other words, not just references to previous studies but a sense of the broader scholarly debates to which the book is contributing, and *how* precisely it is building on and expanding what has already been written. This emerges discreetly as we progress through *La historia del despojo*. It would greatly strengthen the text if it came across loud and clear from the first pages.

Perhaps, though, this absence of a clear-cut statement on historiography is also a noteworthy strength of Correa's book, in that, in many ways, he lets the sources speak for

themselves, and they have so much to tell us. Something that strikes me as particularly important is the prominence of individual names. Correa names – through the primary documents – hundreds of landowners, military commanders, government officials, lawyers, and logging companies; more crucially, he provides the names of hundreds (possibly thousands) of Mapuche people who lost, (mis)sold, and/or sought to reclaim their lands. This is significant because it reveals a fundamentally human history which in turn illuminates how "the system" functioned. *La historia del despojo* offers us so much more than an overview of relations between "Mapuche society" and the "Chilean state". In naming individuals – those who aided or secured expropriation and those who had their land taken away – and documenting their specific actions and interventions, Correa makes the history of indigenous dispossession very real. When confronted by individual human stories it is difficult to dismiss the bigger picture, even as "the names repeat themselves, get mixed up and entangled, fade into the background and then reappear once more" (p. 256). In fact, entanglement is a critical part of the history of dispossession that we rarely get to see so demonstrably: the connections between individuals; the family networks operating in both Mapuche and non-Mapuche society; most significantly, the ways in which landowners, notaries, police officials, and government authorities knew each other and worked *together* to secure the expropriation of indigenous lands. Correa shows in minute detail how, through personal connections, illegal expropriations were legalised. Legal ownership (of land) is not the same as legitimate ownership, however. Communicated most poignantly by the testimonies of contemporary Mapuche *lonkos*, this is a unifying thread of Correa's historical narrative.

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