

a un nuevo género cinematográfico, el *cine quinqué*, cuyos protagonistas son jóvenes delincuentes atrapados en los bloques de edificios en los que viven y que les cierran el horizonte, prisioneros de los espacios abiertos y de la calle, pese a que creen haberla convertido en su territorio. Los suburbios desaparecen entonces de las pantallas españolas durante unos quince años antes de reaparecer en las películas de fin de siglo que marcan la vuelta a cierto realismo social. El autor apunta sin embargo de manera oportuna que éstas tienden a anclarse en un suburbio o un barrio con aspecto universal, a fin de denunciar los males de la sociedad y la marginación de los olvidados por el progreso, evitando así cualquier localismo. En el otro extremo de dicha tendencia, nace la imagen del Madrid mitad futurista, mitad virtual, el de Amenábar o Álex de la Iglesia, una imagen apocalíptica fuertemente inspirada en la estética del cine americano. En medio siglo, Madrid ha vuelto entonces a las tinieblas, a dicha imagen de Babilonia que todavía se le asocia. A la vez teatro y cuerpo en mutación, ciudad e isla, Madrid no deja de reinventarse a través del cine español al que asusta y atrae a la vez.

Apoyándose con frecuencia en trabajos de civilización (entre los cuales los de Bernard Bessière) que dan cuenta de las metamorfosis de la capital a lo largo de los años, la labor de Jean-Paul Aubert propone al lector un panorama a la vez completo y detallado de una inmensa parte del cine español estrechamente vinculado con el espacio y el tiempo en los que se elaboró. Si se puede lamentar la ausencia de fotogramas –pero hacer una selección de éstos en el seno del abundante corpus analizado representaría un dilema cruel– no cabe duda de que este libro despertará en sus lectores las ganas de callejear por Madrid, con el deseo secreto de volver a encontrar, bajo los adoquines, las películas.

**Avalos G., Hernán et alii, *Bosque de la China, Testimonio de un pasado sangriento: Batalla de Placilla – 1891* (*China Forest, Testimony of a Bloody Past: Battle of Placilla - 1891*). Valparaíso, Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Cultural y las Artes, 2013, 127 pp.**

Por Mario E. Valdés  
(Universidad de Concepción)

We are in front of an emotional, dreadful and provocative book. The first characteristic is very common, considering that Chile's history has

been marked by traumatic and violent incidents. Only in the XIX century, after the War of Independence, Chile had the conflagration with the Peru-Bolivian Confederation, the war against Spain, the Pacific War and four civil wars. In the twentieth century, the impacts of the global crisis erupted in 1929, the uprising of the sailors in 1931 and the disagreements of civil society that emerged with the Coup of 1973, are other signs of how terrible it has been Chilean history at times.

This book takes us to one of those terrible events. A team of scholars and researchers trained in Archaeology, Anthropology, History and Military Science, conducted an investigation that rescued a part of the bloody past of one of those Chilean episodes: the final battle in the called Civil War of 1891. In 2006 one of the authors -Alfredo Delgado- found an archaeological site at a place called Bosque de la China (*China Forest*): a ditch with human remains in a wooded area of Placilla<sup>1</sup>, locality where the last confrontation took place (on August 27th 1891) between the government forces of President José M. Balmaceda and the victorious Congress revolutionary army.

Site investigation brought archaeological results about the permanence at the scene such as bullets, military buttons and metal buckles, and others. But also, bio-anthropological analysis of the site showed that there were human remains of at least 10 individuals, including four 7 - 15 years old children. One of the adults was a woman, which suggests that the human remains correspond not only to soldiers, but might also be civilians. Otherwise, in that time it was very common for military forces to use children to work as drummers, buglers and orderlies.

The Battle of Placilla left between 3,000 and 5,000 deads, which were buried quickly because of a health issue. Such bodies in the ditch were burned, what is evident on the uneven intensity of the skeletal remains that were found and analyzed. Considering that the bodies were put down with the bullets they carried -when they were exposed to heat of cremation the ammunitions exploded- helping to further deteriorate the corps in the ditch.

Nevertheless, the work above not only examines these remains corresponding to a Balmacedist

<sup>1</sup> Placilla: District of Valparaíso, V Region. It is located at 65 miles from Santiago city to the North.

trench from the battle itself, but the authors also contextualized the participation of the popular sectors in the war. Various historiographic researches were made in order to demonstrate the civil war of 1891 under the social structure, in other words, from the perspective and main role of ordinary people who took part - or rather were dragged - to the contest. For this reason the book shows various interpretative views from traditional historians who explained the participation of popular sectors in war, moved by land-owners that assumed one position or another. But the authors also wonder about this topic in light of historiography that try to explain the presence of pampino<sup>2</sup> workers on the side revolutionary Congress motivated by their distance from the Balmaceda government, in consequence of the repression suffered at the juncture of the strike of 1890, and the southern farmer popular involvement, product of the forced hook, to the Balmaceda army, where the rigors of recruiting and mobilization were tinged cover up with excellent ranch reward, which included wine and cigarettes. In this context the book's authors also bring up new historical interpretations, such as that qualifies the abandonment by balmacedist troops of the government, moved by deliberation, not treason as contemporary authors of the absurd contention indicated. Balmacedist troops that defected to Congressman amid the war effort, not only were turning their coats as a signal for the revolutionaries - in battle - do not fire, but before another confrontation, troops who embraced the cause Congressman, were placed in the front line, resulting immediately exposed to the first action dangers of war. Balmacedist troops changed to the Congress side as the war campaign was still going on, not only were turning their coats as a signal for the revolutionaries -in battle- do not fire, but before another confrontation, troops who embraced the Congress cause, were placed in the front line, resulting immediately exposed to the first war action dangers.

However, one of the best aspects showed in this book is the presentation of the daily life of the soldier. The story makes clear the characteristics of the soldier's military equipment and wardrobe, and to provide information about the daily communal meal in the campaign. The Balmaceda army equipped their people with a grey dress coat and red material pants; boots, kepi, a

<sup>2</sup> Pampino: It is related to pampa, a Quechua word that means *plain*.

blanket and underwear. But not all the fighters dressed up uniform in the battles. The majority Saltpeter men and workmen turned on soldiers; they fought with their ordinary clothes. The food was based on *charqui*, onions and cookies. Rather, the high-protein food like the meat derivatives and milk were scarce. On the other side, the forces in motion used to take the nutritional resources belonging to the enemies, according to the place where they have been found. That is exactly what happened with congressmen when in "*Las Cadenas*" stayed at the property of the Balmaceda's pro landowner Claudio Vicuña; in this place apart from made a pause before charge the final attack against the pro-government, they drank plenty wines and ate sheep meat. On the other hand, according with the chronicles covered in this work, hygiene in campaign was certainly not the best in men whose hygiene was far from soap and quillay<sup>3</sup>.

Perhaps the hardest of this book is the shocking memory of the use of children during the war. But there were some other terrible aspects on operate of soldiers in daily existence. The custom of using bladed weapon smeared with human feces had a purpose; if the weapon did not cause the death, it generated infections leading to the same ending. Here we have a contemporary source quoted by the authors; the congressman officer J. Olmedo said this phrase before the battle:

"The immediate ranks were agitated, with honest demonstrations and satisfactoriness hoarse grunt. Before a minute, Romero came to me: -¿Permission to shit the irons my Lieutenant? The "*Antofagasta's* soldiers already started... -Wait a bit, man. Let see what my Captain says... But Cid - and neither Déllano, who joined us in that moment - didn't oppose objections to the barbaric measure (...) in macabre laugh and wild signs of unmistakable signification. Two or three of my men had already defecated beside the row, and now all the section dealt on spread with fresh stool the blades of bayonets and hooks. The old way, brutally legacy of the *Arauco War*, means that anyone who put this poison edges on his body, would have remote survival possibilities" (p 86).

Of course this investigation has opened several historical work lines about the popular sectors,

<sup>3</sup> Quillay: It is a tree which inner bark has been used as soap to wash people's hair.

the Chilean society and its ancestral forms of common cultural manifestations in a long-term view. While the civil outbreak of war left lots of deaths, also the affected families by this conflict were counted in thousands; the loss of a son, wife, nephew, cousin, etc., perhaps it use to bring with the loss of a little help to solve the daily living in the family based. We agree with the authors that Civil War of 1891 was the fact that strongly shocked the Chilean society as a whole, until *September 11, 1973*. Nevertheless, the Avalos, Saunier, Delgado and Venegas' book places us face-to-face to an absurd and brutal incident: war itself showed a break-up of the social elite that was leading the country. This did not doubt on enlist their soldiers lots of times, including children –by violent ways, to throw them after a fight by political causes that had little or nothing to do with those who struggle for their lives in the battlefield.

We think that Chilean society must not forget the sacrifice of many lives in this political nuisance that was the Civil War of 1891, especially because who caused it –government and opposition politicians- had big responsibilities in the society and the government conduction, and the institutionalism of the State, this last one continued its life and remained. But not the population that suffered with the imbalance of the political coexistence and was conducted to a fratricidal war where too many individual destinies were cut short and buried anonymously. So the Chilean society as a whole is in debt with the people who lost their lives in this conflict. It is possible that preferring democracy rationality, political negotiation and agreement searching – even in the worse divergence- we are honoring the memory of those thousands of ordinary Chileans; precisely to avoid excesses mentioned in this book, today and tomorrow.

**Chomsky, Noam; Pappé, Ilan, *Gaza en crisis. Reflexiones sobre la guerra de Israel contra los palestinos*. Madrid, Taurus, 2011, 331 pp.**

Por Miguel Ángel González Claros  
(Universidad de Cádiz)

El libro que reseñamos nos ofrece un análisis y opiniones de dos profesores expertos en el tema como son Chomsky y Pappé. Es una mezcla bien elaborada y amena donde se abordan por un lado, diversos temas relacionados con la cuestión israelo-palestina y por otra parte

encontramos ensayos que incorporan a la obra un análisis de mayor profundidad.

En noviembre de 1947, Las Naciones Unidas propusieron dividir Palestina en dos Estados, uno árabe y otro judío. El denominado conflicto palestino tiene su origen en el asentamiento del estado judío, que con el nombre histórico de Israel, comienza su trágico desarrollo en ese año. Como indica I. Pappé dicho año “marca también el peor capítulo de la historia de los judíos: hicieron en Palestina lo que no habían hecho en ningún otro lugar en los dos mil años anteriores. Incluso, dejando a un lado el debate histórico sobre por qué ocurrió lo que ocurrió, nadie parece cuestionarse el calibre de la tragedia que se abatió sobre la población indígena de Palestina como resultado de la emergencia y triunfo del movimiento sionista”.

El 1948, “año del regreso a la patria tras dos mil años de exilio”, es el año en el que Israel se apropió de casi el 80% de Palestina a través de la colonización y la limpieza étnica de la población palestina original y representa para los palestinos expulsión, masacre y destrucción, pero sin embargo las autoridades israelíes han sabido eliminar estos hechos de la memoria colectiva de la sociedad dentro y fuera de Israel.

Ante estos brutales actos coloniales la comunidad internacional mostró un alto nivel de pasividad justificada por el exterminio sistemático de los judíos europeos por parte del régimen nazi. Israel recibió sólidos apoyos por parte de Francia y Reino Unido y aunque la administración norteamericana dio pasos en la búsqueda de una iniciativa de paz que posibilitara el retorno de los palestinos, pronto se encontró con la respuesta israelí que contaba con la potente comunidad judía norteamericana lo que se plasmó en la creación del Comité de Asuntos Públicos Estados Unidos-Israel (AIPAC) que se constituyó en un potente lobby mediático y económico del gobierno de Washington al Estado de Israel.

El lobby israelí ha desempeñado un papel clave en la política de Estados Unidos en Oriente Próximo. El profesor Pappé pone a nuestra disposición una serie de “racimos de historia”, es decir, un conjunto de datos y pruebas que evidencian la implicación política de Washington en la zona desde la década de los 60. Durante todo el siglo XIX, la opinión pública estadounidense respecto a Oriente