



The Ruins of the New Argentina: Peronism and the Remaking of San Juan after the 1944 Earthquake

Mark A. Healey

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In January 1944, an earthquake reduced the province of San Juan, Argentina, to rubble, leaving perhaps ten thousand dead and one hundred thousand homeless. In *The Ruins of the New Argentina*, Mark A. Healey argues that the disaster and the massive rebuilding project that followed transformed not only the province but also the nation. The earthquake was a shattering and galvanizing experience, an indictment of the old social order and an invitation to transform it. From the nation's capital, an obscure colonel in a recently installed military regime launched a relief campaign and rapidly commissioned plans to rebuild the province, especially its capital city. The campaign was a rousing success, launching the public career of its director, Juan Domingo Perón, who would soon found a movement, reach the presidency, and transform the politics and social structure of the country. Dreaming and building the new city became the landmark project for a generation of modernist architects and planners, as well as an enduring challenge and controversy for local residents and the Peronist state. By exploring the struggle to rebuild, Healey shows how this destroyed province played a crucial role in forging, testing, and ultimately limiting the Peronist project of transforming the nation.

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