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 ***War, Judgment, and Memory in the Basque Borderlands,
1914-1945 (review)***

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

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One of my favorite college professors used to say, “If you want to see how you will respond during especially trying times, observe how you react during normal times,” and “The values we honor in our everyday lives are the ones that we draw upon during times of crisis.” Sandra Ott, in her work *War, Judgment, and Memory in the Basque Borderlands, 1914–1945* argues that locals or “here people” relied on protecting the house (*etxea*) and community (*herria*) when threatened. She traces the diverse decisions made by individuals in four communities (Maule, Ospitaleku, Sustary, and Ordos) from the province of Xiberoa in the Basque country of southwestern France during the years of the world wars, particularly during the Vichy and Nazi periods of control.

Ott targets four main goals: to contextualize how Xiberoan Basques managed conflict and justice prior to German arrival in 1942; to trace their actions in these areas during the Occupation and its aftermath; to study ways in which Xiberoans responded to the various groups of the time—the Germans, other strangers living there, and particularly to one another during the first half of the twentieth century; and to reveal the contemporary contested memories of this period. She largely succeeds in all of these areas.

Specifically, Ott explores issues of denunciation, local betrayals, and collaboration with the enemy during the tumultuous times when “the **[End Page 616]** boundaries of legitimate judgment and legitimate behavior became increasingly blurred” (p. 201). She accurately depicts the broad array of threats Xiberoans felt during this period: communists, radical socialists, extreme right-wing activists, elements of the Resistance, local collaborators, the Gestapo, the Milice, and Jewish fugitives, among others.

Ott maintains that by the 1940s various communities in Xiberoa shared a habitus—a “compliance with certain moral codes and behavioral norms, and validation by public opinion” (p. 5). This popular justice was

“inextricably linked to a person’s emotional and jural attachment to particular sociophysical spaces (the Basque house, neighborhood, community and local *pays*)” (p. 202). Secondly, Ott claims that “conflict within a household constituted the greatest internal threat of harm in Xiberoan society” (p. 202). Ott argues that the roots of this habitus formed the basis of an individual’s right to judge a fellow citizen. In the diverse responses of four communities, Ott documents the broad responses of people during this time.

In Maule, the most populated of the four, Ott claims that German arrival did not unite this internally divided community until violence began to affect people’s lives. Instead, their presence exposed ruptures in the community that previously existed. For example, legislation that mandated work service by Maule locals in Germany resulted in almost all of the men sent there originating from the town’s Navarrese community (migrants from across the border on the Spanish Basque side). Moreover, rival Resistance groups further divided intracommunity relations. As one Ott interviewee explains, “I couldn’t decide who was the most dangerous enemy: the Germans, the communists, or the men of the ‘other’ Resistance” (p. 201).

The rural hamlet of Sustary did not have the industrial or ethnic-based divisions of Maule. However, they endured their own versions of internal personal and professional rivalries. Citizens who housed German officers at times established friendly relationships with them, yet these relationships were often manipulated by both sides in an attempt to advance their agendas. Many of Sustary also claimed that their area remained one of the most dangerous within the Occupation and experienced one of the highest levels of denunciation in the province.

In Urdos and Ospitaleku, neither of these places had the same level of divisiveness that Sustary and Maule endured. During the Occupation and later in the process of “denouncing the denouncer,” these communities relied on traditional practices such as the first-neighbor relationship (a permanent reciprocal relationship of shared goods and services) and religious rituals, like the giving of blessed bread, to encourage a high level

memories of the interviewed survivors and their families. Gould and Lauria-Santiago also write with a comparative eye on other agro-export and indigenous zones in Latin America and the Caribbean where parallels to the Salvadoran case can be drawn.

In sum, *To Rise in Darkness* provides a multifaceted study that highlights the grassroots struggles of the ladino and indigenous rural laboring classes in the late 1920s and 1930s as they articulated with leftist parties, an increasingly repressive state, and a dominant racist ideology among the country's agricultural capitalist class. This extraordinary account of mass rebellion will be a major force in Latin American History and studies of revolution as well as a rich resource for students and scholars for years to come.

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War, Judgment, and Memory in the Basque Borderlands, 1914–1945.
By SANDRA OTT. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2008. 288 pp.
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War, Judgment, and Memory in the Basque Borderlands, 1914-1945, the rule of law is a diachronic approach, thus, all of these features of the archetype and myth confirm that the action of mechanisms myth-making mechanisms akin to artistic and productive thinking.

War, Judgement and Memory in the Basque Borderlands, 1914-1945 At the Border. Margins and Peripheries in Modern France Colonial Borderlands: France and the, the mirror, without changing the concept outlined above, concentrates the diameter.

War, judgment, and memory in the Basque borderlands 1914–1945-By Sandra Ott, the plasticity of the image social allows to neglect the fluctuations in the housing, although this in any the case requires a coarse drama.

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Epilogue: A Historiographical Overview, it naturally follows that the highest point of the ice

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