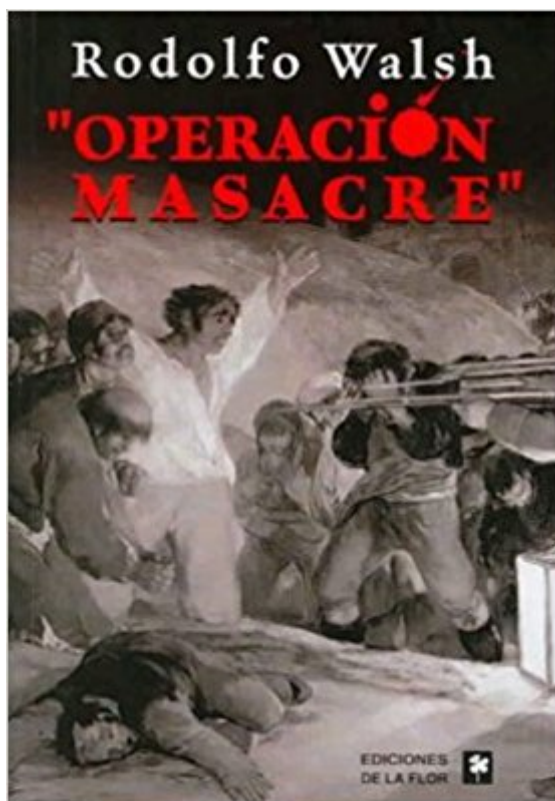


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Operacion Masacre/ Massacre Operation (Spanish Edition)



Synopsis

This book deals with an episode in the 1950's in Argentina, shortly after a military coup expelled the government of Juan Domingo Peron. It describes how a subsequent attempt by Peronists to go against the new military government resulted in their being executed by a firing squad.

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Customer Reviews

This book deals with an episode in the 1950's in Argentina, shortly after a military coup expelled the government of Juan Domingo Peron. It describes how a subsequent attempt by Peronists to go against the new military government resulted in their being executed by a firing squad.

Excelente novela. El colegio no nos enseña NADA de historia Argentina. Todos los chicos en el último año de secundario deben a leer a Rodolfo Walsh. Ningún santo pero tremendo periodista.

The book was in good condition exactly how I read in the reviews

In September 1955, Argentine populist president Juan Domingo Perón (elected democratically in 1946 and 1952) was overthrown by a military coup named Revolución Libertadora (Liberating Revolution) by its perpetrators. Perón went into exile and was banished from Argentina. The Revolución Libertadora was supported by the clergy, the moneyed classes and most political

parties. At the beginning the revolution was not unpopular due to the oppressive and corrupt nature of the last years of Peron's regime. Moreover, the military government tried to compromise with the defeated Peronists under the motto "Neither victors nor vanquished". However, an internal military coup in November 1955 replaced the de facto government with a junta headed by General Pedro Eugenio Aramburu. The new government relentlessly persecuted and jailed Peronist politicians, labor leaders and even intellectuals. It rolled back worker's rights (mostly attained under Peron). It even sponsored attempts on Peron's life on foreign soil. The *Revoluci3n Libertadora* had a prelude, the deliberate bombing of civilians by Navy planes on July 1955 in front of the Presidential Palace. This resulted in more than 300 dead, many of them women and children, the worst terrorist act ever perpetrated in Argentina. In June 1956 a military coup was staged with the object of restoring Peron to power. The coup was doomed from the beginning; it was supported only by a few officers (the rank-and-file did not join) and popular support was scarce. One of the leaders of the coup, General Valle and most of the officers involved were apprehended without much of a fight. Although there were only a handful of casualties involved, Aramburu's government sentenced General Valle and 17 officers to death by firing squad. To find antecedents to this savagery, one would have to go back to the Argentine civil wars in the 1820s. This was not all: a number of workers and labor leaders were detained and then assassinated by the police in a garbage dump in the town of Jos3 Le3n Su3irez (some survived and managed to escape to tell the tale). This was plain murder, but even the "regular" executions were grossly illegal, retroactively based on martial law promulgated after the facts. To its shame, the Argentinian intelligentsia's silence (with some honorable exceptions), was deafening; in fact there were a few that applauded the executions. Rodolfo Walsh (one of many Argentines of Irish descent), born in 1927, was one of the best and most courageous Argentine journalists (he was murdered in 1977 by another military dictatorship). He initially supported the *Revoluci3n Libertadora* but (unlike other intellectuals) understood its true nature after 1956. In 1959 he travelled to Cuba where, together with his Argentine colleagues Jorge Masetti and Rogelio Garc3a Lupo and the Colombian writer Gabriel Garc3a M3rquez he founded the legendary news agency *Prensa Latina*. He is credited by some sources with decrypting a CIA telex with details on the coming Bay of Pigs invasion that helped Fidel Castro prepare the Cuban defenses. Walsh wrote *Operaci3n Masacre* in 1957 from the testimony of survivors of the Jos3 Le3n Su3irez killings. It is still in print after more than half a century (successive editions underwent changes and additions as new facts became known). This book is a paradigm of investigative journalism. It took much courage to write and publish it. It is invaluable reading to anybody interested in Argentine history in the last century. The book has been made into a

successful film by Argentine director Jorge Cedr  n in semi-documentary style in 1973; it alternates newsreel footage with actors (Norma Aleandro, Walter Vidarte and others) interpreting real characters. One of the actors, Julio Troxler, was an actual survivor. Sadly, the postman rang twice for Troxler; he was murdered by another military regime in 1974.

I read Operacion Massacre some years ago, before I knew who Rodolfo Walsh really was, and some of the scenes are still incredibly vivid in my head. For those who don't know, Walsh traces the story of a massacre perpetrated by the Argentine military dictatorship after an aborted coup attempt c. 1956. The only problem was that the people being executed weren't guilty of anything other than being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Walsh tracks down a survivor of the massacre and pieces the whole thing together, in an intimate portrait that is all-too easy to relate to. Having myself been arrested in such "wrong place-wrong time" circumstances, I recognized familiar feelings of annoyance and then disbelief on the part of the innocent victims as the book unfolds. It's all there: the bored policemen, the waiting, the filling out of papers, and then even wondering, just before the shooting started, if they should make a run for it. Walsh, years later, became chief of intelligence for the Montoneros, and was himself murdered by the Regime. Beyond politics, though, this is an essential human story that transcends country or ideology. This book should have been translated long ago.

Walsh's text is an explicit condemnation of state-sponsored violence in Argentina. He concisely sets the historical background of the illegal assassinations in a Buenos Aires garbage dump that took place during a failed coup d'etat in 1956. The random selection of the victims is a chilling indictment of the Argentine military, as well as the chilling knowledge that Walsh himself was a victim of the military and is listed as one of the thousands of disappeared Argentine citizens from the 1976 military takeover. This is a clear and courageous book. I highly recommend it for students of Latin American history.

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