

Paramilitarism and European society in the 1940s

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Note sur la responsabilité : Gareth Pritchard is Senior Lecturer at the University of Adelaide, Australia. Vesna Drapac is Associate Professor at the University of Adelaide, Australia

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Résumé ou extrait : This book explores the social roots, character, and consequences of paramilitary violence in Europe in the 1940s. Paramilitarism had an impact on the lives of millions of Europeans, yet knowledge about this important topic is partial and fragmented. The general perception of European paramilitary violence in the 1940s derives almost entirely from the resistance/collaboration paradigm. This dichotomous analytical framework makes a clear distinction between politically motivated violence and social violence, such as sexual, criminal, and structural violence. By contrast, in this book, Gareth Pritchard and Vesna Drapac recognise the mutual dependence of all kinds of violence. Their interpretative

model, the Regimes of Violence paradigm, which takes account of the changing relationship between state, society, and organised violence, allows us to observe paramilitarism in the round. The Regimes of Violence framework reveals the interconnectedness of paramilitarism with other forms of violence during this period of unprecedented brutality. Today, paramilitary violence is a global phenomenon. It has resulted in the undermining of the rule of law and the erosion of civil society in many different countries on different continents, while at the same time traumatising the countless numbers of innocent people who are caught in its crossfire. With their compelling and timely study, Pritchard and Drapac provide an historical context and present a novel approach for understanding why paramilitarism shows no sign of abating.

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