

result of their missions: Emilio, a soldier in Angola; Nancy, who taught physiology for two years in Ethiopia; and Laidi, a doctor for two years in Zambia.

There is also a useful historical account of the reality in health and education in 1950s Cuba, the challenges faced by the new revolutionary government, measures taken and subsequent achievements. This includes the process of introducing national, free public healthcare and education systems. Importantly, Randall identifies the cultural element of post-1959 Cuban internationalism and its impact on national consciousness: ‘The Revolution institutionalised generosity and shaped it as solidarity, naming it a collective value and national characteristic capable of bringing aid and hope to people in places too numerous to list’ (p. 108).

Today, around one in ten Cubans has participated in some form of internationalist mission: exporting the gains of the Cuban revolution. Randall points out that ‘Cuba has never pretended aid while establishing beachheads of geopolitical control or launched exploitative industries that siphon off a nation’s natural resources while local people provide cheap labour and the profits revert to foreign coffers’. She concludes that Cuba’s contribution to the global community over half a century ‘demonstrates a new paradigm of solidarity’ (p. 209).

However, there are other aspects which are under-examined by Randall but essential to this paradigm – the political economy of socialism, the politics of anti-imperialism, the planned nature of the economy. Nonetheless, Randall has made an energetic contribution and we are grateful.

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Ernesto Semán, *Ambassadors of the Working Class: Argentina’s International Labour Activists and Cold War Democracy in the Americas* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2017), pp. xiii + 314, \$94.95, \$26.95 pb and E-book; £79.00, £21.99 pb and E-book

Ernesto Semán adds another piece to the puzzle of Peronism, one of the most elusive and widely researched historical movements in twentieth-century Latin America. He focuses on the worker attachés programme, established in Argentina by Juan Perón’s administrations in 1946–55 and that enlisted rank-and-file union members for diplomatic posts around the world. Organised in seven chapters, introduction, and conclusion, the book provides a transnational history of Peronism and explores the emerging Cold War in Latin America. Semán places organised labour as a critical element of competing projects of international labour activism between Argentina and the United States, informing debates on democracy, social rights, individual freedom, national sovereignty and solidarity across the Americas. Theoretically, the book draws on several frameworks dealing with labour activism related to identity formation, cultural approaches to the history of Peronism, a conceptualisation of populism that rejects top-down analysis, and a multi-dimensional view of the Cold War in Latin America.

The book directly engages with several bodies of literature. The transnational dimension of Peronism is explored through the interrelated national and international dimensions of Perón’s concept and policy of the Third Position, an alternative to US- and Soviet-inspired ideologies and international projects. Semán uses William Roseberry’s theoretical insights to analyse the attachés’ reports and actions in different countries, presenting Peronism as a “language of contention” open to

renegotiation rather than operating as a strict doctrine dictated from above' (pp. 191–2). Worker attachés actively promoted Peronism's ideals abroad while at the same time adopting, adapting and transforming those ideas according to their own experiences and circumstances. This bottom-up approach complicates other scholarly analysis of Peron's foreign policy in Latin America that focuses on more diplomatic grounds. Furthermore, it enters into dialogue with works on Peronism such as those on cultural approaches by Matthew Karush and Oscar Chamosa (*The New Cultural History of Peronism*, 2010), and consumption, gender, and citizenship by Eduardo Elena (*Dignifying Argentina*, 2011) and Natalia Milanesio (*Workers Go Shopping in Argentina*, 2013). Semán's nuanced approach to Peronist identity reveals continuities and fractures between processes, ideas and policies before and during the Peronist decade, as well as exposing the logic behind multiple examples of contradictions in the worker attachés programme and in Peronism at large.

In addition, the book relates to the scholarship that has revised the Cold War in Latin America. The worker attachés programme confronted US-based labour movements and international networks linked to the emerging Cold War environment. Worker attachés promoted abroad an idea of democracy related to social rights, equality and change linked to rights and benefits achieved in Perón's Argentina. Meanwhile, the United States viewed Peronism as a new form of a totalitarian threat that could facilitate communist penetration.

The book offers a fascinating picture of the competition between regional and international labour organisations in Latin America. Worker attachés sought to establish the basis for a Peronist-inspired Latin American labour organisation, the *Agrupación de Trabajadores Latinoamericanos Sindicalizados* (Organisation of Unionised Latin American Workers, ATLAS), against the US mobilisation of labour diplomacy and the American Federation of Labor–Congress of International Organizations (AFL–CIO) at the international and regional levels – and both of them in competition with the communist-oriented, Mexican-based *Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina* (Confederation of Latin American Workers, CETAL). In this manner, Semán's perspective relates to the works on the Latin American Cold War of authors like Tanya Harmer (*Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War*, 2011) and Patrick Iber (*Neither Peace nor Freedom*, 2015), by presenting regional actors and dynamics that disrupt traditional bipolar interpretations of the conflict and rigid ideological and geographical boundaries.

Finally, the book discusses how struggles around labour and Peronism shaped the evolution of political, scholarly and ideological frameworks in the US. Labour activists, diplomats and scholars sought to make sense of Peronism at a time of retreat and reversal of the most radical and pro-labour policies of the New Deal and transition to the Cold War in the mid-1940s. Their vision of Peronism as a totalitarian threat had to do not only with the specific confrontation with Argentina. It also involved the redefinition of labour rights and politics in the US, with contending perspectives about the need for moderate social reform or no reform at all. Peronism informed the views of diplomats and of scholars in US academia, for example, regarding the conceptualisation of modernisation theory. These debates also involved Argentine scholars, who provided many of the original categories and theories on Peronism and populism. This transnational approach to the development of social sciences adds yet another dimension to the complex history of Peronism and a welcome addition to the understanding of the Cold War as not exclusively focused on the unidirectional impact of the United States on Latin America.

Clearly written and based on solid research, the book offers many insights while at the same time leaving some areas open to question. For example, the influence of the New Deal in Argentina in the 1930s and 1940s was far more widespread than presented in the text, crossing political and ideological boundaries from conservatives groups to Radicals and Socialists. For that reason, while it shaped the emerging Peronist identity (pp. 52–3), it also appeared in the ideas and platform of the anti-Peronist Democratic Union in 1945–6. There is no clear explanation regarding why the worker attachés programme was expanded in 1949–52 if Perón was precisely at that time attempting to curb its ideas and influence (ch. 6), and the explanation of Peronism's influence on George Kennan's famous 'Long Telegram' is tenuous as presented (pp. 62–3).

These criticisms notwithstanding, Ernesto Semán's book is an example of the possibilities offered by a truly transnational historical approach, informed by careful research and relevant theoretical frameworks. It opens interesting comparative perspectives with other movements and countries in Latin America, and it should be of interest to scholars and students of Peronism and the Cold World in Latin America.

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Luiz Bernardo Pericás, *Caio Prado Júnior: Uma biografia política* (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2016), pp. 484, £15.50, pb

Caio Prado Júnior (CPJ) is one of the most intriguing and relevant figures of Brazilian Marxism. A lifetime member of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCB), he was also the author of *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo* (1942), a solid critique of the PCB's historical diagnosis of Latin America as a feudal region and an explicit attempt to erode the theoretical underpinning of the party's national front politics.

The book (the first biography to draw on his personal archive) begins with an attempt to add CPJ to the 'great names' of Latin American Marxism and frame him as the Mariátegui of Brazil. Chapter 1 describes Caio's personal history, his early political engagement with the Partido Democrático during the 1930s, and his quick political radicalisation and affiliation to the PCB. Chapter 2 discusses (rather disjointedly) Caio's reading, his intellectual correspondents and the reception of his works. This addresses Nelson Coutinho's accusation (repeated by others) that CPJ 'did not understand Marxism well' and rarely referenced Gramsci and Lenin (p. 49): the evidence presented includes a description of Caio's key intellectual influences (including Lukács), his reading of Marx, his disdain of Gramsci and his hostility towards Althusser. Chapters 3 and 4 turn to CPJ's first visit to the Soviet Union and his activities as a member of the PCB, particularly as a vice-president of the Aliança Nacional Libertadora (National Alliance for Freedom), a role that landed him in prison between 1935 and 1937 and later exile in Paris.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on CPJ's intellectual production. Chapter 5 devotes only one page to his most important book, *Formação*, without discussing the political tensions it generated by becoming the first critique of the 'feudal diagnosis' in Brazil. The publication of *História econômica do Brasil* (1945) and his 'new fighting trenches' (p. 113), i.e. his editorial work and publishing at Editora Brasiliense, take up most of the rest of this chapter, which ends with his election to the state legislature in 1947 and second short imprisonment. Chapter 6 revolves also around a similar