

derrideano que, en la figura del marrano, nos obliga a re-pensar las formas de leer la realidad y, especialmente, el lugar del *outsider*.

Lo que nos enseñan los diferentes capítulos de este libro es que el marranismo es una forma de pensar, no sólo una figura conceptual. Es por ello que el legado se convierte en filosofía, y que esta filosofía toma encarnadura en el pensamiento hispanista y latinoamericanista por sus propias paradojas: el pensamiento latinoamericano es un pensamiento marrano.

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ERNESTO SEMÁN: *Ambassadors of the Working Class: Argentina's International Labor Activists & Cold War Democracy in the Americas*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017.

No less than five hundred labor activists became diplomats in Argentina's Foreign Service during the Peronist decade. The nomination of these rank-and-file union members as labor attachés in Argentine embassies around the world was a bold move initiated by Juan Perón only a few weeks after he took office in 1946. It reflected, among other things, the entry of representative figures of the "New Argentina" into traditional elite spaces such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These blue-collar workers-cum-diplomats were entrusted with the mission of disseminating the *Justicialista* gospel regarding social reforms beyond the borders of the Republic. The message of social justice, political citizenship, and national sovereignty was intended to mobilize workers across Latin America to emulate the Peronist model and create a regional labor movement under the aegis of Argentine leadership. It seems that the initiative for this new labor diplomacy originated with Juan Atilio Bramuglia, Perón's first minister of foreign affairs, whose political and ideological thinking had been rooted in the Socialist Party.

Based on meticulous research, Ernesto Semán's new book sheds new light on this under-researched aspect of Peronism. The *agregados obreros* (worker attachés) participated in union meetings and party conventions, they appeared in the media, distributed Peronist propaganda material, covered travel costs for hundreds of labor leaders who visited Buenos Aires to witness firsthand the achievements of Justicialism, and channeled aid from the Eva Perón Foundation to local causes in different countries within and outside of Latin America.

The book is full of fascinating episodes, from the attaché in Moscow who tried to smuggle Spanish Republican refugees out of the Soviet Union; to the labor diplomat in Bogota who made contacts with both Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the

Colombian populist leader, and the young Cuban law student Fidel Castro; or the attaché in Guatemala who gave shelter to future leaders of the Guatemalan guerrilla following the US-sponsored coup. The leftist backgrounds common to the attachés (many of them had been members of communist, socialist and anarchist unions prior to the rise of Perón) were clearly manifested in their efforts to forge ties with progressive groups and labor organizations in Latin America.

But Semán's volume is much more ambitious, and poses broader questions in an attempt to generally evaluate the Argentine populist enterprise in the context of an escalating Cold War. Herein lies its major contribution, but also some of its flaws. The social reforms promoted by Peronism were initially viewed by American officials as Fascist, and then as fomenting unrest which might lead to Communism. These officials were therefore determined to contain Perón's transnational aims and his government's efforts to create a regional labor movement inspired by Justicialism. In this atmosphere, Perón no longer considered the attachés as political allies but as agents whose autonomy should be limited and whose activities should be monitored and controlled. It is no wonder that the "Agrupación de Trabajadores Latinoamericanos Sindicalizados" (ATLAS), which was supposed to transform Peronism into an international movement, remained of little importance and had little impact on the lives of workers across the continent.

Reading *Ambassadors of the Working Class*, however, one gets the slightly exaggerated impression that the competition in the Americas between the liberal and the populist projects and their respective visions of democracy was one that involved two alternatives of equal weight, and that the ideological influence of Roosevelt's New Deal on Peronism was substantial ("The New Deal is probably one of the most crucial . . . sources in the configuration of the Peronist identity" [p. 52]). The claim that Peronism was always on the mind of decision makers, intellectual, and scholars in contemporary United States and that "discussions about Peronism advanced the questions that guided U.S. liberalism in its domestic and foreign policies in the following decades" (p. 20) seems to overstretch the argument.

The book touches upon too many issues in chapter sub-sections that are sometimes very short. The claim about Perón's "actual fascist inspiration" (p. 15, and repeated several times during the book) is not substantiated. The labor attachés did not play such a "crucial function in the creation of a political identity among workers" in Argentina (p. 7) and Perón's anticommunism did not start in 1948—it was present throughout his political career. Furthermore, Peronism's appeal in Latin America was not that great, although thousands of copies of propaganda brochures were distributed in many countries.

Still, this is a provocative book that is worth reading and discussing. It clearly illustrates the heterogeneity of Peronism, the competing tendencies within that movement, Perón's difficulties in disciplining his labor base, and the charismatic leader's gradual shift towards a conservative anti-Communism. At the same time, it raises issues for discussion beyond the specifics of the Perón regime or Argentina's international role. I am still not entirely convinced that "a better understanding of Peronism should illuminate the particular area in which the identity of postwar U.S. liberalism took shape" (p. 54), but Semán is absolutely right in emphasizing the need to avoid a discussion of inter-American relations that would exclusively focus on the analysis of the U.S.'s influence in Latin America. His book also contributes to the discussion of Latin American populism as "a form of authoritarian democratization."

Although *Ambassadors of the Working Class* is more a book of Argentine history than a post-1945 history of the Western Hemisphere, as the author claims, this volume should be of interest not only to students and scholars of Argentina but also to historians of the Americas and of Cold War policies.

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ALBERTO PIÑEYRO: *Natalio Botana y Salvadora Medina Onrubia. Dos voces para Crítica*. Montevideo: Rumbo Editorial, 2014.

La historia del periodismo argentino de la primera mitad del siglo veinte tiene reservado un lugar destacado para el diario *Crítica* y su fundador, el uruguayo Natalio Botana. Recién en los últimos años, la personalidad de la escritora Salvadora Medina Onrubia, la esposa argentina de Botana y madre de sus hijos, ha comenzado a ser abordada. La trayectoria biográfica de ambos, las vicisitudes por las que pasaron—juntos y separados—, sus actos públicos de resonancia política y cultural, son las líneas que recorre Alberto Piñeyro en su libro, a través de capítulos que permiten adentrarse en las vidas de Natalio y Salvadora, las cuales traza y desarrolla en paralelo. Y el diario *Crítica*, claro está, sirve de trasfondo.

Natalio Botana nació en el pueblo de Sarandí del Yí en 1888 y comenzó desde joven a escribir en periódicos y revistas de Montevideo, redactando sobre todo críticas literarias e integrándose de ese modo a la bohemia artística e intelectual de la capital uruguaya. Luego, se trasladó a Buenos Aires, donde desplegó sus dotes de periodista hasta fundar en 1913 el famoso diario *Crítica* que a su vez lo haría famoso a él. El medio, que se convertiría con el paso de los años en el de mayor tirada de la Argentina, tenía un carácter popular y sensacionalista,