

overlooked subjects render it a valuable resource for students and researchers alike seeking to look beyond worn out polemics and polarized interpretations.

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DEBORAH SHNOOKAL, *Operation Pedro Pan and the Exodus of Cuba's Children*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2020.

Deborah Shnookal's new book on Operation Pedro Pan is a strong contribution to the scholarship of U.S.-Cuban relations, and in addition, it contributes to our understandings of how young people have been used by states in contests over migration, power, and ideological commitment. Between 1960 and 1962, just over 14,000 Cuban young people moved to the United States without their parents through a system of easy visa waivers with heavy ideological implications. The United States painted itself as a savior "rescuing" children from Communist Cuba while, years later, Cuba would represent itself as a victim whose children had been kidnapped.

Many of the young people who came over as "Pedro Pans" have since written memoirs, most notably, Carlos Eire's *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy*; however, Shnookal's is the first major analysis by a historian. She argues that Operation Pedro Pan was not simply a humanitarian program to protect Cuban children, but rather that it was intimately connected to the United States' broad array of covert attacks against the Castro revolution in the early 1960s.

At its heart, this is not a history of the life of the young people involved; instead, it is a political history of the program which, the author asserts, was organized and executed to destabilize the Cuban revolution.

One of the strengths of Shnookal's scholarship is its juxtaposition of the Pedro Pan operation and the 1961 Literacy Brigades. She emphasizes the youth and energy of the revolution and posits that these two competing projects defined a generation. She demonstrates that many of the Pedro Pans were not young children but, rather, politically aware adolescents. Some parents wanted their teenagers in the United States and away from the dangers of counter-revolutionary activity, while other Cuban youth might have been flirting too closely with revolutionary politics for their upper-class parents' comfort. In contrast, she emphasizes that among the middle class young people who remained in Cuba, thousands joined the Literacy Brigades and traveled into the countryside. This formative experience created bonds of loyalty to the revolution for decades.

This juxtaposition demonstrates the powerful role of youth in the Revolution's early years. Shnookal writes: "What makes this story particularly fascinating is that the Pedro Pans and the literacy *brigadistas* were the same cohort; classmates, cousins, friends, neighbors, sometimes even siblings. Thus, the options of Miami or the mountains symbolized, for the generation of young Cubans and for Cuba itself, far more than geographical locations" (3). This is an evocative framing, and she explains how the fear of the Literacy Brigades convinced some parents to send their young children away (to escape revolutionary indoctrination), even as other young people embraced this new mission.

Shnookal then sets up her main contention, namely, that counter-revolutionary forces intentionally misled parents and scared them into believing the revolution would take away parental rights. She calls this "the Patria Potestad Hoax." She points to several factors stoking the flames of parental fears, including propaganda stemming from the United States and the Catholic Church's antipathy to the revolution. The author argues that rumors were rampant in these years, and counter-revolutionary Cubans and CIA agents aggravated parents' fears, going so far as to print out a fake new "law" and circulating it to cultivate a sense of chaos. She calls this a "classic example of black propaganda" (118) and a cynical "scare campaign" (126).

Shnookal's evidence on this point is compelling, although not definitive (due to the secretive nature of the documents and campaigns). Shnookal notes the sad irony of the Patria Potestad Hoax, namely, that because they feared losing their parental rights, thousands of parents voluntarily relinquished their children to the United States, often creating family separations for years on end. Hence they lost the very parental rights they were hoping to secure. However, Shnookal does not acknowledge that some of the parents' fears of revolutionary education were legitimate. While it is true that the Cuban government never severed parental rights or removed children from the home, it is also true that the revolution soon demanded a very specific pedagogy and loyalty, and one which would ultimately lead to repression. This is a line of analysis that Shnookal does not pursue.

Shnookal then dives into the nuts and bolts of the Pedro Pan operation, and she uncovers a definitively fishy visa waiver system. The main actor was Father Bryan Walsh, a Catholic priest who was able to write up an unlimited number of visa waivers for Cuban children. The Cuban government did not prohibit the children from leaving. She writes, "[i]t remains an intriguing, and still unexplained, aspect of Operation Pedro Pan how a young Miami priest came to be authorized by the US government to sign visa waivers for as many Cuban minors as he chose" (140). Father Walsh repeatedly denied any association with the CIA, but Shnookal is clearly unconvinced (167, 183-5).

Along with this sobering story, Shnookal draws powerful connections with contemporary events. First, and not surprisingly, she notes the comparisons with Elián González and the controversy over his custody in 2000. She notes how now adult Pedro Pans spoke out about the necessity for González to remain in the United States, even as Cuban-Americans seemed to jettison any commitment to parental rights, e.g. the rights of his father. Secondly, and perhaps more provocatively, Shnookal points to the recent family separations at the border. She notes that if in the twenty-first century, families are separated to deter immigration and asylum, in the early 1960s the U.S. encouraged family separation to destabilize Cuba. Although readers will have to look elsewhere for accounts of the Pedro Pans, Shnookal effectively explains how this covert migration program resonates in the present. In this vein, Shnookal's book will be of interest to scholars who study children, child migration, and child separation.

In conclusion, Shnookal's book raises important questions about how governments use children as ideological symbols, U.S.-Cuban relations in the early 1960s, and the psychic costs of covert programs.

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JENNIFER ADAIR, *In Search of the Lost Decade: Everyday Rights in Post-Dictatorship Argentina*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020.

Raúl Alfonsín assumed the presidency of Argentina on December 10, 1983, after more than seven years of military rule. Having won the first democratic elections in a decade, Alfonsín took office facing a host of challenges: economic instability, political turmoil, and the trauma ensuing from the extralegal violence perpetrated by the Armed Forces, which had killed and/or disappeared as many as 30,000 people. The new president articulated a bold vision of change but, six years later, during the hyperinflation crisis of the late 1980s, tumultuous conditions would oblige him to hand over power some five months before his mandate officially ended. Despite the optimism that accompanied Alfonsín's election, many have considered his time in office as a "failure"—in the end, he could not restore Argentina's economy, nor successfully prosecute all of those involved in the crimes committed during the dictatorship, nor ultimately serve out his term.

Jennifer Adair's *In Search of the Lost Decade: Everyday Rights in Post-Dictatorship Argentina* demands that we reconsider almost all aspects of this commonly accepted narrative. Echoing E.P. Thompson's famous call to examine the past without the "enormous condescension of posterity," Adair aims to recover the "sense of process and possibility" that characterized Argentina's