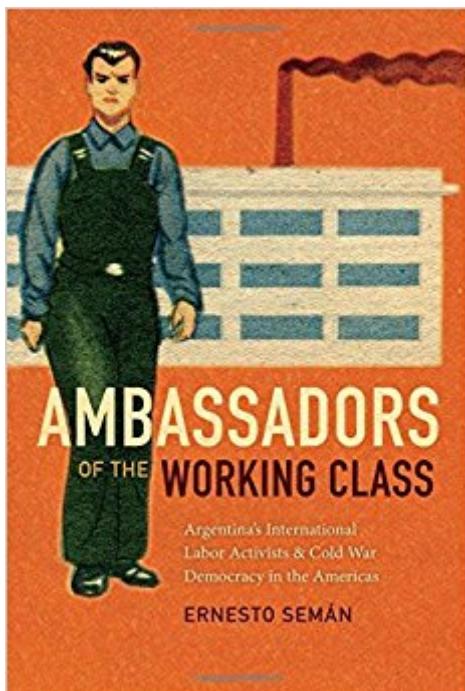


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Ambassadors Of The Working Class: Argentina's International Labor Activists And Cold War Democracy In The Americas



Synopsis

In 1946 Juan Perón launched a populist challenge to the United States, recruiting an army of labor activists to serve as worker attachés at every Argentine embassy. By 1955, over five hundred would serve, representing the largest presence of blue-collar workers in the foreign service of any country in history. A meatpacking union leader taught striking workers in Chicago about rising salaries under Perón. A railroad motorist joined the revolution in Bolivia. A baker showed Soviet workers the daily caloric intake of their Argentine counterparts. As Ambassadors of the Working Class shows, the attachés' struggle against US diplomats in Latin America turned the region into a Cold War battlefield for the hearts of the working classes. In this context, Ernesto Semán reveals, for example, how the attachés' brand of transnational populism offered Fidel Castro and Che Guevara their last chance at mass politics before their embrace of revolutionary violence. Fiercely opposed by Washington, the attachés' project founded, but not before US policymakers used their opposition to Peronism to rehearse arguments against the New Deal's legacies.

Book Information

Paperback: 328 pages

Publisher: Duke University Press Books (August 25, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0822369052

ISBN-13: 978-0822369059

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Best Sellers Rank: #369,296 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in Books > History > Americas > South America > Argentina #342 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Caribbean & Latin American #357 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Labor & Industrial Relations

Customer Reviews

"Using the history of Peronist worker attachés, Ernesto Semán takes readers on a journey through the political, economic, and social history not only of Argentina but of the Americas as a whole. This is political, economic, intellectual, and transnational history at its best. This splendid book reveals how the attachés and their intense activism shaped the dynamics of early Cold War

politics in the Americas, and Semjn provides novel perspectives on Argentinian populism, its historical tributaries, and the way it enables us to rethink the legacy of FDR's New Deal." (Barry Carr, coeditor of *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*) "Wonderfully written and argued, combining transnational history, political analysis, and cultural studies, this account of Argentina's worker attachs is transformative" not only because it tells the little-known story of union activists in the Argentine diplomatic service but also, and most importantly, because it sheds valuable new light on our understanding of Peronism. • (Javier Auyero, author of *Patients of the State: The Politics of Waiting in Argentina*)

Historian Ernesto Semjn is Assistant Professor at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond and the author of five previous books, which include novels and political essays.

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