

valuable if historians or social scientists read the material they hold against the grain and compare these sources with ones produced by trans people themselves. To his credit, while much of the focus of the book is on trans women, the author made a point of incorporating available documentation about trans men in response to a virtual absence in the literature.

The volume begins with a study of nonconforming gender expressions in early twentieth-century Argentina before medical specialists dominated the topic and prior to the state's attempts to regiment and control queer public sociability in the 1930s. Chapter two examines the medicalization of gender transitions, and especially the notion that some felt that they were trapped in the body of the "wrong" gender, which could be corrected by medical intervention. The author then looks at international influences on the making of a travesti culture in Argentina in the 1960s, followed by a consideration of the ways in which male and female trans people acquired knowledge and developed homemade technologies to transform their bodies to conform to their gender identity. The final chapter documents how trans activists used politicized notions of gender to gain legal recognition while guaranteeing basic democratic rights, such as the freedom of movement and the right to wear the clothes and carry out the medical procedures they choose to embody their conceptions of themselves.

In recent years, the extreme right and fundamentalist religious organizations have criticized the movement in defense of trans rights throughout the world as a supposed threat to the traditional family. By nostalgically relying on conservative gender frameworks from the 1950s and 1960s, if not from before, these political actors both reinforce reactionary forms of the patriarchy and encourage moral panic about supposed threats to children who are allegedly endangered by the questioning of how gender is arbitrarily constructed. This volume is an important contribution toward the dismantling of the arguments and prejudices embedded in this worldview.

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NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION IN ITS INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The Sandinista Revolution: A Global American History. By Mateo Jarquín. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2024. Pp. 336. \$99.00 cloth; \$28.95 paper; \$22.99 eBook.

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At last, we have a one-volume history of the Nicaraguan Revolution that is balanced, well researched, and authoritative. It comes from an author well placed to probe the revolutionary turmoil with extraordinary sensitivity. Not only is Mateo Jarquín the grandson of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro and Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, but he also

grew up abroad with parents in foreign service. He visualizes Nicaragua from the inside and the outside. The author brings to his analysis an impressive research effort, having completed archival investigations in Central America, Cuba, Mexico, and the United States. Moreover, he conducted interviews with an impressive list of surviving revolutionaries.

Most of all, Jarquín places the Sandinista triumph in its international context. On the one hand, the rebellion against the Somoza dictatorship owed much to the example of Fidel Castro's guerrilla victory of 1959. On the other, neighboring governments in Mexico, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela supplied the rebels with sympathy and weapons. Even the military rulers of Guatemala and Honduras refused to intervene to save the oldest family dynasty in Latin America, that of Anastasio Somoza Debayle.

Jarquín shows how, immediately following Somoza's fall, the national directorate of nine Sandinista fighters began the process of consolidation. Immediately following Somoza's fall, these *comandantes* monopolized positions in the government and the new military, sidelining the anti-Somoza civilian and business leaders such as doña Violeta and Alfonso Robelo. The hardline fighters led by the brothers Daniel and Humberto Ortega brought in security advisers as well as literacy and agrarian experts from Cuba. Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB) consultants showed up too. Daniel led a delegation to the White House to accept reconstruction funding from Jimmy Carter while giving him a lecture on how the United States had kept the Somoza family in power for nearly five decades. The victorious Sandinista hardliners then cooperated with Fidel's efforts to export Cuban arms and revolution to El Salvador, provoking right-wing retaliation in most of Central America.

In 1981, Ronald Reagan redirected US foreign aid to the counterrevolutionaries. Mateo Jarquín explains in cogent fashion how the Contra War played out to reverse the early gains in social reforms and to impoverish the people in defense of the revolution. The author also accounts for the governing excesses of Sandinista leaders that alienated Mestizo farmers in the north and the Indigenous and Afro-Caribbean inhabitants of Eastern Nicaragua. Many in these areas sympathized with the counterrevolution.

Furthermore, Jarquín offers an even-handed explanation for the electoral defeat of Sandinismo in 1990. First, he produces a masterful analysis of the Central American peace initiatives known as Contadora and Esquipulas. White House advisers attempted to sabotage these efforts, for which Costa Rica's President Óscar Arias won the Nobel Prize. Backed by Nicaragua's closest neighbors, these peace initiatives convinced the Sandinistas to send home the Cuban advisers and to hold honest elections. Even so, President Ortega believed he would win, taunting Reagan with an invitation to his expected re-inauguration. Instead, he lost the presidency to doña Violeta in a landslide vote.

The author links the Sandinistas' electoral loss to Latin America's Third Wave of Democracy. The term refers to the transition of one Latin American country after another from authoritarian to electoral regimes, beginning with Ecuador in 1982 and concluding with Chile in 1990. In this fashion, Jarquín links the fate of Nicaragua to hemispheric trends.

Finally, in a brilliant postscript, the author leaves the readers with the story of Daniel Ortega's return to power in 2007. His conversion to capitalism and property ownership had led Ortega to sponsor a "Christian movement committed to conservative social policies like the criminalization of abortion" (230). Daniel Ortega is still president today, leading some of his former collaborators to accuse him of ruling like the Somozas. It would seem that the Third Wave of Democracy did not last long in Nicaragua!

Due to Mateo Jarquín's fine research, there is much for readers to contemplate about revolution and authoritarianism in this book.

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The Weak and the Powerful: Omar Torrijos, Panama, and the Non-aligned Movement in the World. By Jonathan C. Brown. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2024. Pp. 320. \$55.00 cloth.
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In the latter part of the twentieth century, Latin America was a region largely under the rule of military governments. From 1964 to 1989, termed "the time of generals" by Frederick Nunn, 16 of 20 countries in the region experienced military coups, human rights abuses, and the general repression of free expression. However, among this period's many military leaders, Panama's Omar Torrijos stands out for his ideological complexity and steadfast dedication to improving his country's political, social, and economic standing, especially vis-à-vis the United States, which still maintained control of the Panama Canal Zone.

It is this intriguing ambiguity and intricacy that Brown reveals in this book. As the main title suggests, Panama during this time was in a highly asymmetrical relationship with the United States, and as Brown submits, the experience of Panama draws some important parallels to other smaller states of the Global South during the Cold War. But, appropriately, Brown argues that it was Torrijos's persona and force of will that made Panama successful in eventually not only gaining control of its namesake canal, but also essentially changing the country on a fundamental level.