

**OPERATION
PEDRO PAN GROUP, INC.**



AND THE OPPG HISTORIC COMMITTEE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE:

Operation Pedro Pan: A 50 year Perspective

**11/18/2011
8:30 a.m.**

Miami Beach Resort and Spa
4833 Collins Avenue
Miami Beach, Florida

Cost: \$50.00 (includes breakfast and lunch)

RSVP: Members@PedroPan.org

PROGRAM

November 18th, 2011

- 8:30 a.m.** **Registration/Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00 a.m.** **Opening Remarks – Carmen Valdivia, Historic Committee Chair**
- 9:10 a.m.** **Moderator – José Azel, Senior Research Associate, ICCAS, University of Miami**
- 9:15 a.m.** **Invocation and “The Legacy of Monsignor Bryan Walsh”**
Most Rev. Thomas Wenski, Archbishop of Miami
- 9:30 a.m.** **Overview – Carlos Eire, T. Lawrason Riggs Professor of History and Religious Studies at Yale University**

HISTORICAL CONTEXT PART I

Moderator: *Jaime Suchlicki, Director, ICCAS, University of Miami*

9:55 a.m. Pre-Castro Cuba - The Cuban middle class family

Speaker: *Jaime Suchlicki*

10:20 a.m. Revolutionary Period - Effect of changes on the middle class Cuban family

Speaker: *Juan Clark, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Miami Dade College*

10:45 a.m. Operation Pedro Pan, from small plan to largest Children Exodus in the Western Hemisphere

Speaker: *Victor Andres Triay, Professor of History at Middlesex Community College.*

11:10 a.m. Questions and Answers

11:20 a.m. HISTORICAL CONTEXT PART II

Moderator: *Victor Andres Triay*

Reflections on Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh

Speaker: *Dermot O'Brien, Monsignor Walsh's nephew*

Reflections on James Baker

Speaker: *Chris Baker, James Baker's son*

12:00 p.m.

LUNCHEON

RETROSPECTIVE EVALUATION

1:00 p.m. A Comparative Look at the Alternatives Our Parents Faced

Moderator: *Carlos Eire*

Children in Cuban Political Prisons

Speaker: *Ambassador Armando Valladares*

Pedro Sin Pan Experience

Speaker: *María Argelia Vizcaíno*

Pedro Pan Experience

Panel: *María De la Milera, Catholic Pedro Pan Experience*

Eloy Cepero, Protestant Pedro Pan Experience

Marcos Kerbel, Jewish Pedro Pan Experience

Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Produccion (UMAP)

Speaker: *Emilio Izquierdo, UMAP veteran*

2:15 p.m. Questions and Answers

2:25 p.m. Break

PROSPECTIVE VIEW

Moderator – *José Azel*

2:40 p.m. The Pedro Pans and Cuba's Future

Speaker: *José Azel*

3:05 p.m. The Pedro Pan Legacy

Speaker: *Christina Díaz González, PP2 (Pedro Pan Second Generation)*

Author of "The Red Umbrella"

3:20 p.m. Questions and Answers

3:30 p.m. Closing

Book Signing Immediately Following

Operation Pedro Pan: A 50 Year Perspective

SPEAKERS:

Dr. José Azel is a Senior Research Associate at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies (ICCAS), University of Miami. He was one of the founders of Pediatrix Medical Group, the nation's leading provider of pediatric specialty services. He co-founded Children's Center for Development Behavior. Dr. Azel was an Adjunct Professor of International Business at the School of Business Administration, Department of Management, University of Miami. Azel holds a Ph.D. in International Affairs from the University of Miami. He is the author of *Mañana in Cuba*. Azel came to the US through Operation Pedro Pan and is a Trustee of Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc. and also a member of OPPG's Historic Committee.

Dr. Christopher Baker is the son of the late James D. Baker who was the Headmaster of Ruston Academy in Havana. James Baker was approached in 1960 by a number of parents of Cuban students at Ruston to see if he could help get their children to the United States. In pursuit of this request he visited with Father Walsh in Miami on December 12, 1960 and from an agreement reached between them, Operation Pedro Pan was born. Chris lived in Cuba from 1944 to 1959. He earned his BA at Middlebury College, his MA and PhD at the University of Florida. He was a Visiting Professor at the University of Costa Rica and modernization advisor to the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly from 1969 to 1973. In 1974 he joined the World Council of Credit Unions and its overseas credit union development program. Chris served as President and Chief Executive Officer of this organization from 1993 until his retirement in 2000.

Dr. Juan Clark is an Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Miami Dade College. He has researched the issue of the Cuban exodus and of living conditions on the Island for over 40 years and has published extensively on these subjects, among them is "The Exodus from Revolutionary Cuba 1959-1974: A Sociological Analysis" (U.F. Ph.D. Dissertation). He is also the author of *Cuba: Mito y Realidad; Testimonios de un Pueblo; Religious Repression in Cuba* and *Human Rights in Cuba: An Experiential Perspective* with Ángel De Fana y Amaya Sánchez. He has written many papers emphasizing all aspects of the Cuban exodus particularly the rafters, as well as the nature of totalitarianism, including the repressive apparatus, the economy, the repression of religion and the realities of the pervasive new class. Dr. Clark is a paratrooper veteran of the Bay of Pigs Invasion and was the coordinator of the Cuban Information Committee. He is also a member of OPPG's Historic Committee.

Eloy Cepero was born in Bahia Honda, Cuba and came to the US in 1962 through Operation Pedro Pan. He attended Coral Gables Senior High School, the University of Miami and post graduate studies at Florida International University. He studied economics, finances, Latin American History and served in the US Marines. Since his graduation he has studied Cuban history, culture and music and has given conferences on the history of Cuban music as well as hosted radio and television programs on that subject. Eloy has enjoyed a long career in banking and wrote a best seller titled *Cuba: Un viaje a través de postales* and *Relato de una familia Cubana: Memorias de un Pedro Pan*. Cepero is a Trustee of Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc. and a member of OPPG's Historic Committee.

María De La Milera was born in Holguin, Oriente, Cuba and came to the US in 1962, under the unaccompanied Cuban children program known as "Operation Pedro Pan." After four years at the

Maryvale Orphanage in Los Angeles, California, she was reunited with her parents in 1966 and moved back to Florida in 1968. Maria received her Professor of music degree at the age of 14, a few months before coming to the U.S. and later found her true vocation in public service. She worked at the U.S. Senate for nine years and for the past twenty-three years in the Miami-Dade County government. Maria has served on the Board of Directors of many community organizations and currently serves as Secretary in the Board of Directors of Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc and she is a member of OPPG's Historic Committee.

Christina Diaz Gonzalez, Esq. is the author of the award-winning and best-selling children's novel, *The Red Umbrella*. This debut novel (the story of a 14 year old Cuban girl who is sent to the U.S. in 1961 as part of Operation Pedro Pan) showcases the generosity of the American spirit and highlights the pain of losing one's homeland. Reviewers from publications such as The Washington Post, Publisher's Weekly and School Library Journal have praised the book as being exceptional, compelling and inspirational. A former attorney, Christina is now pursuing her dream of being an author and her second novel, *A Thunderous Whisper*, will be published in Fall 2012. Christina's parents and mother in law came from Cuba through Operation Pedro Pan.

Dr. Carlos Eire arrived in the U.S.A. on 6 April 1962, with his brother Tony. He is now the T. Lawrason Riggs Professor of History and Religious Studies at Yale University. A historian of late medieval and early modern Europe, and a Pedro Pan, he has two identities that seldom intersect. To a broad reading public world-wide, he is best known as the author of the National Book Award-winning memoir *Waiting for Snow in Havana* (2003, which has been translated into over a dozen languages, and of the recently-published *Learning to Die in Miami* (2010). As a historian of religion, he is known by scholars and students as the author of *War against the Idols: the Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (1986), and *From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art and Craft of Dying in Sixteenth Century Spain* (1995), and, more recently, *A Very Brief History of Eternity* (2009). He is also co-author of *Jews, Christians, Muslims: An Introduction to Monotheistic Religions* (1996). Carlos is a Trustee of Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc. and a member of OPPG's Historic Committee.

Emilio Izquierdo Jr. is a veteran of the UMAP camps in Cuba. His profile literally reads: *"This individual is a catholic and thus he is negative to the revolutionary process. His father was in prison for a crime against the power of the state. He is currently under police investigation as he is a friend of "negative elements" from his social class that visit him frequently after work. This investigator believes that this individual can be called to the 'Plan UMAP SMO' since he cannot serve the regular military service."* According to the Cuban government, this corresponds to Emilio Izquierdo's "criminal profile" and the reason why he was sent to the UMAP camps. Emilio is president of Asociacion UMAP, an association of ex-prisoners of the UMAP.

Marcos Kerbel was born in Guanabacoa, Cuba and came to the United States alone in May, 1961 at the age of 14 as part of Operation Pedro Pan. He was sent to live in foster homes in Los Angeles, until his parents arrived in October, 1962 on the next to the last flight before the Missile crisis. He holds a Bachelor's of Business Administration Degree in Accounting and a Master Degree in International Business from Georgia State University. Marcos has been an international banker, CPA, CFP and college professor. He has been teaching at Florida International University since 1980. He was a founder and past president of the Florida International Bankers Association (FIBA) and currently, Chairman of its Education Committee. He co-authored: *Leading the Way - A Comprehensive History of International Banking in Florida*.

Dr. Jaime Suchlicki is the Director of the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, and Emilio Bacardi Moreau Professor of History at the University of Miami. He is the author of a dozen books on Cuba and Latin America. His best-known books are *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro*, now in its fifth edition, and editor with Irving L. Horowitz of *Cuban Communism*, now in its eleventh edition. He is also the author of *Mexico: From Montezuma to the Fall of the PRI*, and *Breve Historia de Cuba*. Jaime is a member of OPPG's Historic Committee.

Dr. Victor Andres Triay is professor of history at Middlesex Community College in Middletown Connecticut. He is the author of *Fleeing Castro: Operation Pedro Pan and the Cuban Children's Program*, (University Press of Florida, 1998) and *Bay of Pigs: An Oral History of Brigade 2506* (University Press of Florida, 2001) which was the recipient of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Award from the Florida Historical Society; also later published in Spanish by Random House, under the title *La Patria Nos Espera*; with Teo A. Babun he authored *The Cuban Revolution: Years of Promise*.

He was born and raised in Miami, of Cuban parents and graduated from Christopher Columbus HS in 1984 and from Miami Dade Community College in 1987. He received a BA in History from the University of Florida (1988) and a Master's and Ph.D. from FSU (1991 and 1995). He has also published a handful of essays and short stories. Victor is a Trustee of Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc. and a member of OPPG's Historic Committee.

Carmen Valdivia arrived in Miami in 1962 with her sister Isa through Operation Pedro Pan. She lived in the CWB Florida City Camp until 1965 when they were reunited with their parents. She later graduated from Miami Senior High School, Miami Dade Community College and the University of Miami's School of Architecture. Carmen is a Florida Registered Architect and the Vice president of the Board of Directors of Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc. and the Chairperson of OPPG's Historic Committee.

Ambassador Armando Valladares served 22 years as prisoner of conscience in Castro's political prisons. After his release, Mr. Valladares was appointed U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights by President Ronald Reagan who also awarded him the Presidential Citizen's Medal. He subsequently published his memoirs in the international best-seller *Against All Hope: A Memoir of Life in Castro's Gulag* (1985), as well as *El Alma de un Poeta* (1988), *Cavernas del Silenco* (1983), *El Corazón Con Que Vivo: Nuevos Poemas y Relatos desde mi Silla de Ruedas* (1980), *Desde mi Silla de Ruedas* (1976). He is currently chairman of the Valladares Project, an international children's rights advocacy nonprofit organization.

María Argelia Vizcaino was born in Guanabacoa, La Habana, Cuba and came to the US in 1980. Maria Argelia is a freelance journalist and has authored many articles that have been published in several languages. She has published two books, *Guanabacoa la Bella* and *Son y Sazón* (cubano). She has been an editor of Hispanic Publications, a graphic designer and producer of television programs. Her weekly column "Faranduleando con Maria Argelia" is published in the internet. She wrote the paper "Los Pedro Sin Pan" relating her life as a visa waiver holder that did not make it out through Operation Pedro Pan and had to grow up in Communist Cuba.

Most Reverend Thomas Wenski is currently the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Miami, having been appointed by Pope Benedict XVI on April 20, 2010 and installed on June 1, 2010. He previously served as Bishop of Orlando (2004–2010), coadjutor bishop of Orlando (2003–04), and Auxiliary Bishop of Miami (1997–2003).

OPERATION PEDRO PAN GROUP, INC.

Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc. is a nonprofit organization created in 1991 by former children of Operation Pedro Pan. The organization was founded to fulfill a pledge of Thanksgiving done in 1990. The pledge was done to “Honor the parents, the American nation and Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh”. The pledge includes the promise to give back to the community and help other kids in need.

OPPG’s Mission Statement:

To sponsor, aid, assist and promote programs that benefit children in need. This includes children without parents (unaccompanied minors) and the needy, regardless of race, creed, color and religion.

To document our history for future generations and to spread the knowledge of our exodus, as an important chapter of the history of Cuba and of the United States.

To locate, reunite and bring together those individuals who were part of Operation Pedro Pan and the Unaccompanied Cuban Children’s Program and to share our experiences.

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