

moving account of the highlights of King's career and the civil rights movement that should motivate, capture the attention, and provide an intelligent opening to the exploration of the racial history of America.

Seton Hall University

Larry A. Greene

**Lester D. Langley. *Mexico and the United States: The Fragile Relationship*. Twayne's International History Series. Boston: Twayne, 1991. Pp. xvi, 139. Paper, \$13.95.**

This brief volume focuses not so much on Mexican-United States relations since World War II as on the evolving interrelationship between the two countries and its effects on bilateral issues. Langley finds former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt's statement that "Mexico and the United States are united by geography and divided by history" summarizes the common interpretation of the basis for United States-Mexican relations. He notes in this volume that since World War II, the development of the border region has reversed this: "In actuality, Mexico and the United States were once divided by geography and in modern times have been united by history. Neither government will admit it, but they have chosen this course."

Langley feels that the postwar intertwining of the two economies, born of Mexico's decision to give priority to industrialization and economic modernization over social equity, has shaped her postwar relationship with the United States. Both nations basically agree about the logic of Mexico's decision but arrive at their opinions from very different social and political perspectives. Despite growing economic interconnections, Langley believes that because of these different perspectives there are no simple or straightforward solutions to issues between the two nations. Despite a seeming commonality of interest in a series of mutual problems (illegal immigration and drug trafficking to name two current concerns), significant differences in the political culture and public psyche of each country have made it difficult to reach mutually satisfactory solutions.

Although intended for a general audience, this volume might present problems for the undergraduate reader. The book is arranged chronologically, rather than topically. It is an integrated, synthetic narrative, no doubt in order to avoid the discontinuities of the collected-articles approach frequently used in works on recent United States-Mexican relations. Chapter One broadly surveys Mexican-United States contacts from Independence to the Cárdenas administration. The five succeeding chapters discuss major issues in bilateral relations, using both the passage of Mexican presidential administrations and the development of major issues as organizing principles.

The chronological approach makes the narrative somewhat hard to follow. Trying to trace long-term bilateral issues to closure or abandonment becomes a daunting chore, even for someone already familiar with them. Novice students might become lost in the descriptions of innovative ideas later abandoned, and controversies that threatened, but ultimately did not much change, United States-Mexican relations.

This same organizational scheme, however, also produces the work's great strengths. Langley's narrative does illustrate the complex internal political dynamics of Mexico and the United States as these influence foreign policy choices for their presidents. From the United States's side, the book shows the impact of governmental bodies other than the State Department and the executive branch and the importance of regional public opinion in formulating general policy and specific approaches to salient issues. Langley also highlights the ways in which Mexico's internal political stresses, in large part fueled by those same economic choices that have drawn Mexico closer economically to the United States, often drive the

Mexican government away from agreement with the United States even as their economic closeness dictates mutual cooperation.

This work is best suited to use in advanced undergraduate courses and above specializing in Mexican-United States relations, Latin American foreign policies, or Mexican politics.

Austin College

Victoria H. Cummins

**Sebastian Balfour. *Castro*. London and New York: Longman, 1990. Pp. viii, 1984. Paper, \$11.16.**

Sebastian Balfour analyzes Fidel Castro in terms of the historical context from which the Cuban leader emerged and the political context in which this dynamic individual became a widely recognized world figure. Balfour uses secondary materials as diverse as files of the Museo de las Clandestinidad in Santiago and a T.V. interview with Barbara Walters to argue that Castro was motivated by national ideals rather than ideological goals in his pursuit of liberty and social justice for his native Cuba.

Working chronologically, Balfour locates and traces in Cuban history the origins of that particular brand of nationalism manifested by Fidel Castro. Again and again, he points to revolutionary figures such as José Martí rather than Karl Marx as the source of the Castro inspiration. Arguing that the young radical was rather "unsophisticated ideologically," Balfour acknowledges Castro's opportunism and downright good luck.

In this rather sympathetic consideration of his subject, Balfour explains that Castro understood that any accommodation with the U.S. was very unlikely and on that basis rather than the U.S.'s over-reaction to initial reforms, the young Cuban leader moved his country into the Soviet fold. Efforts to keep a reasonable distance from Soviet authority, according to the author, helped give direction to the revolution in the decade of the sixties. Failure of efforts to industrialize and to deal effectively with the siege conditions maintained by the U.S. compelled a rapprochement with the Soviet Union in the seventies. According to Balfour, Castro's ideologically inspired foreign affairs coups in Africa and continued personal role in governing the country sustained the revolution throughout the eighties.

Balfour argues convincingly that the Castro-led revolution of the fifties was an authentic part of the post-World War II wave of anti-colonialism. He effectively places this upheaval in the Cuban nationalist tradition and demonstrates that, at least initially, it was an anti-imperialist rather than anti-capitalist revolt. But Balfour is far less persuasive in explaining why Castro's embrace of communism became a bear hug, why his initial expediency was transformed into international advocacy. He is mildly critical, at best, of Castro's disinclination toward the "rituals of parliamentary activity" and seems satisfied with the Cuban leader's contention that only the loyal and battle-hardened could sustain the cause and lead this resource-poor country struggling against U.S. economic oppression. Balfour even finds it difficult to pass critical judgment on Castro's notorious repression of virtually every form of dissent.

As one of the "Profiles In Power" series, this monograph should work well in class as a supplementary reading. It does reflect a liberal bias, but in an age when "Castro-bashing" likely will become popular, it might serve as a scholarly antidote. Consequently, it should generate some interesting debate, especially along philosophical lines. Although maps placed within the first two chapters would have provided a better orientation to the physical setting, the work is nicely edited and reads especially well. Upper-level high school and college undergraduates should benefit significantly from exposure to Sebastian Balfour's interpretation of the role of this especially interesting world figure.

New Mexico Military Institute

William E. Gibbs