

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.

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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.

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