

and of the impact made by such broadcasts on Salvadorans in rural areas of meager literacy. Perhaps modesty prevented the author from giving himself more than one sentence as a broadcast pioneer, but in 1959 he established the first real video news reports, using newsreels, still pictures, and weather maps. Before this, from 1956 to 1959, TV news consisted of an announcer in front of the camera reading a few headlines.

The biographical sketches of leading journalists at the end of the book will prove especially helpful to Latin Americanists attempting to make contact with Salvadoran intellectuals and men in public life. The compilation was made in late 1964 and is already out of date; for example several of the men listed have died. But this list remains the best available at the present time.

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MARVIN ÁLISKY

France in Central America. Félix Belly and the Nicaraguan Canal.

By CYRIL ALLEN. New York, 1966. Pageant Press. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 163. \$4.00.

Central Americans first learned of Félix Belly in 1856 upon reading an article in which he urged them to unite against the United States. Capitalizing on his popularity, this prominent French journalist of Napoleon III's Empire was instrumental in negotiating the Cañas-Jerez treaty (1858), a commendable adjustment of the troublesome boundary dispute between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. These two countries, in turn, rewarded Belly with a special convention which gave him the right to construct an interoceanic canal, following essentially the conditions set down in the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850. The nature of Belly's negotiations, the inclusion of a clause permitting French ships to patrol Lake Nicaragua during the construction of the passageway, and the transit treaty of April 1, 1859, between France and Nicaragua all seemed to indicate that the French Emperor had chosen to challenge United States interests in Central America. And although Napoleon III did not recognize Belly as his official agent, the principals concerned assumed that the writer's mission was authorized. After all in an earlier day Louis Napoleon had flirted with the notion of a Nicaraguan canal.

Despite his initial success, Belly failed no less than seven times in the next twenty-one years to realize his dream of an interoceanic communication system. His foremost obstacle was the United States government, for at every turn American agents thwarted and discredited the Frenchman. As a result Belly was unable to get financial

help in the United States, and France and England hesitated to support the canal project openly. Without an official guarantee from any government, moreover, European investors would not part with their money. The vagaries of Central American politics, the unscrupulousness of partners, and the manipulations of bankers were additional contributors to the so-called "Belly Fiasco."

Allen has exposed a key incident in the diplomacy after a wide search for documentation throughout the world. Among other sources, he has effectively used the papers of General Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, the erstwhile president of Texas, who served as a minister plenipotentiary in Central America. The new light that Allen throws on the foreign policy of the Buchanan administration is particularly noteworthy; so is the infectious enthusiasm he brings to the topic. It is indeed unfortunate that he has weakened his contribution by a poor presentation of the materials. The text bogs down in needless details and asides; quotations are weakly introduced; and many issues and pertinent questions are raised and then left dangling, perhaps because there was too much emphasis on Belly's own works and the *New York Herald*. Also there is no index, and the maps are totally inadequate. Further the title is misleading, for the book does not provide a meaningful analysis of French influence in Central America before Belly's appearance.

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MARIO RODRÍGUEZ

My Fourteen Months with Castro. By RUFO LÓPEZ-FRESQUET. Cleveland, 1966. World Publishing Company. Appendix. Index. Pp. xvi, 223. \$4.95.

Rufo López-Fresquet was Minister of the Treasury in Castro's first revolutionary government, holding office from January 1959 to March 1960. Late in October 1960 he fled Cuba and now lives in Puerto Rico. His memoirs of this period were commissioned by the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace at Stanford as part of a continuing project designed to collect the impressions and analyses of key Cuban exiles. This background information is important, for if the reader expects to find a work of scholarship here, he will certainly be disappointed. López-Fresquet's book is an interesting and at times a useful account of one insider's impressions of Castro and the early months of his rule. But it is neither history nor even a historical document of note. It is a memoir, and as a memoir it must be judged.

Fortunately, because López-Fresquet belongs to the group of exiles who understood the poverty of United States policy in Cuba, the bru-