

limited time, he advises them to read only the first and last chapters; unfortunately, these are sketchy at best. His main argument is that the Caribbean region (defined so as to include the Antilles, Central America, Venezuela, Guyana, and, peripherally, Mexico) has in recent years undergone profound political and social changes with which U.S. policy has not kept up. He urges that the United States place very high priority on the region and develop a truly special relationship with it. The heart of the book traces the history of U.S. policy toward the Caribbean. After reviewing the historical legacy ("From Jefferson to Eisenhower"), individual chapters are devoted to the Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon-Ford years (the last is 138 pages long, taking up almost half of the total narrative). He devotes a brief chapter to the nature and strategies of economic development.

Martin's basic thesis is that the United States, for at least a decade, has neglected its vital Caribbean economic, political, and strategic interests, and that an entirely new set of policies should be adopted. He claims to reject both the activist approach of the Kennedy administration and the passive posture characterizing the Nixon-Ford years. But his own list of policy recommendations for improving U.S.-Caribbean relations is, in my view, randomly articulated, sometimes platitudinous, and largely anachronistic, with many of the assumptions and proposals reminiscent of Alliance for Progress goals listed in the Punta del Este Charter. An impressively wide range of subjects is treated, but individual nations and issues receive haphazard analysis. Specialists will have specific quarrels with the author's generalizations and interpretations.

U.S. Naval Academy

G. POPE ATKINS

The Early Fidel: Roots of Castro's Communism. By LIONEL MARTIN. Secaucus, New Jersey, 1978. Lyle Stuart. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Pp. 272. Cloth. \$8.95.

Most students of the Cuban Revolution agree that by the time Fidel Castro seized power he was a radical with a socialistic bent, a nationalist and antiimperialist. However, the author of this book goes further, accepting Castro's later claims that "by the time he left the university (nine years before the victory of the Cuban Revolution . . .) he was already a convinced Marxist-Leninist. . . ." Hence, from the beginning, Castro was "consciously" [author's emphasis] guiding the

“Cuban revolutionary process toward a Jacobinic [sic] overthrow of the capitalist system and an *alliance with the socialist camp*” [reviewer’s emphasis].

To prove his case, the author, a longtime resident of Havana, presents a chronological account of Castro’s career from his student days until the successful conclusion of his insurrection. Most of the material he presents is not new, but he “reinterprets” events and documents and “explains” Castro’s association with anti-communists and his less than candid Marxist-Leninist formulations of policies and programs as matters of “tactics,” to be sure, compatible with Marxist-Leninist objectives.

What he is particularly interested in establishing is that, contrary to misleading appearances, Fidel Castro during the 1950s was more than friendly toward the Partido Socialista Popular (PSP), as the Cuban Communist Party was then known, and vice versa. Accordingly, the communists supported Castro’s struggle against Batista, that is, when they understood what he was up to, which they sometimes failed to do. However, retrospectively, years later, they invariably came to understand and applaud everything he did or said. For this part of his narrative, the author relies to a large extent on recent interviews with “old” communists whose reminiscences are accepted at face value. No one, including the author, claims that Castro was ever a member of the PSP. At a time when any “convinced Marxist-Leninist,” and in addition an activist, was a disciplined member of the PSP—or at least a disillusioned ex-member like several of his close associates—Castro’s failure to join the party is perplexing.

The author has dredged up a few hitherto unreported documents and photographs, but his argument is not convincing. It is, nevertheless, useful as an example of the rewriting of history in the current Cuban context. Castro on several occasions has had to tamper with his ideological credentials to conform with shifting objectives, in particular as they affected his relations with the Kremlin. Up until his support of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and Cuba’s subsequent total integration into the Soviet commonwealth, the corpse of the old Muscovite PSP had been relegated most of the time to potter’s field. Now that it has been rehabilitated as the fountainhead of true Marxism-Leninism, with a number of its survivors holding high-level posts in Castro’s governing apparatus, Castro himself is revealed to have been at heart, from the start of his political career, a Marxist-Leninist of the Soviet persuasion.

Simon Fraser University

MAURICE HALPERIN