

to supply Cuba with weapons.) Lionized by Soviet leaders, Castro had more honors lavished on him than any visitor to Russia since the time of the czars. Yet Quirk predicts that in the long view of history, Castro will be considered not only “arrogant” but “irrelevant.”

More than a decade in the writing, this study supersedes and surpasses the monumental opus of British author Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (1971). It is the definitive work to date: balanced, objective, and well documented with a wide range of sources in endnotes and informative footnotes. If there is one notable omission, it is that Quirk—after four visits to the island and research in the remote Galician village where Angel Castro, Fidel’s father, was born—never succeeded in meeting Castro himself. Hence his portrait loses some of the immediacy of character found in the reportage of Tad Szulc, Herbert Matthews, Richard Eder, Georgie Anne Geyer, and photobiographer Lee Lockwood, who recorded intimate hours spent with their subject in the Sierra Maestra and elsewhere.

Instead, Quirk bases his account on an exhaustive analysis of the Maximum Leader’s speeches, materials in the collection of the Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba, and a wide range of published sources. These include declassified documents from U.S. government departments and agencies now available under the Freedom of Information Act; Foreign Broadcast Information Service daily reports; early scholarly works by Rolando Bonachea and Nelson Valdés, Andrés Suárez, and Carmelo Mesa-Lago, and by the European socialist intellectuals René Dumont, K. S. Karol, and Régis Debray; personal memoirs of Carlos Franqui, former editor of *Revolución*, the Nicaraguan poet-priest Ernesto Cardenal, the writer Teresa Casuso, and others; and works written from the vantage point of the U.S. Embassy by Philip Bonsal and Earl E. T. Smith, balanced by an insider’s view of the State Department’s tragic blunders in Latin America by Wayne Smith, former head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana.

In a rare profile in 1977, Castro admitted, “a man should not remain in office too long, lest he became arrogant.” Some 40 years after the attack on the Moncada barracks, Castro suggested that he might step down if the United States ended the economic blockade. But he failed to mention a possible successor, and two weeks later he was “elected” to another five-year term as president of the Council of State. In the author’s words, “By all appearances, the Maximum Leader would see Cuba destroyed before he gave up his power and his prerogatives.”

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Return to Havana: The Decline of Cuban Society Under Castro. By MAURICE HALPERIN. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1994. Bibliography. Index. ix, 200 pp. Cloth. \$18.95.

Maurice Halperin returned to Cuba in 1989, some 20 years after conducting his academic and policy work during the Cuban Revolution’s first decade (1962–1968).

In almost all respects the revolution's impact 20 years later disappointed him. This book is a highly readable account of that disappointment.

An academic whose career was scathed by McCarthyism and Cold War hysteria, Halperin taught in Canada (Simon Fraser University) after stints in the Soviet Union and Cuba. He had high hopes for an anti-imperialist, progressive revolution in Cuba that would avoid the pitfalls of Stalinism and would nurture a genuinely nationalist attack on poverty and racism. He hoped for a new democracy in Cuba. As an octogenarian looking back on the revolution—and forward to the mid-1990s—he expresses real sadness. This distinguishes Halperin's book from the bulk of works by revolution bashers and anti-Castro Cubans.

Halperin's sympathies notwithstanding, his essay reiterates most of the now-common critiques of the Cuban Revolution: Castro's overbearing personalism and the system's authoritarianism, bureaucratic ineptitude, inefficiency, and corruption. Halperin addresses the failed political economy; the rationing system; the roles of the interior ministry, the secret police, and the military (and General Ochoa's execution); Cuba's African policy; and the effects of perestroika and the demise of the Soviet Union. He also notes that "a considerable amount of terror has been part of Castro's Cuba for more than 30 years," citing Cuban author Jorge Valls' claim that "only South Africa, Indonesia, and possibly the People's Republic of China came close" (p. 167).

Like many other writers, Halperin concludes that the Cuban Revolution's successes were a product of Castro's skill in fostering nationalism; in achieving (with Soviet help) important gains in health care, education, and international prestige (up to the 1980s); and in using anti-Americanism to account for the revolution's difficulties. He also asserts that Castro's failures "bear the imprint of his monumental ego, his reckless self-confidence, and, most important, his unchallenged authority" (p. 175). In part, these personal attributes stem from "the personality disorder that Castro displayed as a child and throughout the rest of his life" (p. 185).

Halperin's reflections on the revolution do not range as widely as Andrés Oppenheimer's in *Castro's Final Hour* (1992) or as analytically as the essays in Carmelo Mesa-Lago's edited volume *Cuba After the Cold War* (1993). Halperin's book still warrants attention as a volume that encapsulates personally the optimism of the early years, the later disenchantment, and the gloom of the 1990s. In the final pages, Halperin tells the reader that in 1989 he "found the popular mood one of deep discouragement, . . . I could see the toll being paid in the weary and cheerless faces I passed on the street" (p. 190).

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