

REVOLUTIONARY CUBA

The Revolution from Within: Cuba, 1959–1980. Edited by Michael J. Bustamante and Jennifer L. Lambe. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019. Pp. 344. \$104.95 cloth; \$27.95 paper.
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This collection offers some of the best historical scholarship on the Cuban Revolution to date. Dedicated to studying the revolution “primarily from *within*, and on Cuban terms” (306), the anthology circumvents recent trends in transnational history as well as the strong tendency in Cuban Studies to focus on US foreign policy. The result is a collection of nuanced and sophisticated essays that advance the field in several important ways.

First, the essays move beyond the national leadership to focus on other actors. Essays by Lillian Guerra, Elizabeth Schwall, and Reinaldo Funes Monzote show how the visions embraced by the Cuban leadership or state institutions were shaped by various cultural and scientific figures. Guerra deftly analyzes the photos and notes of journalist Andrew St. George to explore the Rebel Army’s strategic use of the foreign media before 1959. Schwall’s essay on two dance forms, popular cabaret and elite ballet, shows how choreographers, dancers, and teachers navigated and shaped the revolutionary cultural directives of the 1960s. Funes Monzote studies the influential geographer Antonio Núñez Jiménez, who pushed the leadership to consider major transformations to Cuba’s natural environment, such as ambitious irrigation and agricultural projects. Funes Monzote contextualizes these proposals—often dismissed as reflective of Fidel Castro’s megalomania—in Cold War visions of the “conquest of nature” and decolonizing nations’ attempts to transcend their underdeveloped economies and tropical “backwardness.”

Second, while most historiography on the Revolution focuses on the 1960s, this volume offers some of the first social and cultural histories of the Cuban 1970s, a period typically understood as one of “Sovietization” and cultural repression. In their essays, María A. Cabrera Arús and co-editor Bustamante ask how the decade was experienced. Cabrera Arús studies socialist fashion and consumption, revealing tensions between newer promises of material plenty and “a lingering emphasis on radical egalitarianism and unity” (191). Bustamante draws on commemorative expressions in film, television, political speeches, and museums to examine how the cultural landscape sought to keep the revolutionary spirit of the 1960s alive in the more institutionalized 1970s.

A third intervention of this volume is to remove the common filter of US foreign policy, allowing us to appreciate the internal dynamics of certain key revolutionary processes. María del Pilar Díaz Castañón offers a refreshing take on the Agrarian Reform of 1959, which is often analyzed as a key element in turning the US government against the Revolution. Díaz Castañón’s creative analysis of donations to support the agrarian

reform attests to the multi-class support and citizen enthusiasm for this early revolutionary project. Similarly, Abel Sierra Madero moves beyond analyzing the Mariel Boatlift of 1980 as an episode in US-Cuban relations. Drawing on interviews, periodicals, government speeches, and documentary films, he reconstructs the way those wishing to leave the island were discursively dehumanized, paving the way for the physical violence that marked the exodus. In a slightly different vein, Christabelle Peters offers creative speculation on what might have transpired in a 1965 meeting between Che Guevara and Julius Nyerere. Deemphasizing the common scholarly focus on the Cold War contest for Africa, she asks how these two major socialist leaders of the Global South might have influenced one another.

Finally, the book also includes a series of penetrating analytical and historiographical essays that help situate the scholarship on Cuba. The editors' introduction provides a thorough and perceptive overview of how scholarship on Cuba has evolved since the fall of the Soviet Union. Senior scholars Alejandro de la Fuente, Ada Ferrer, and Rafael Rojas weigh in with valuable "think pieces," informed by their expertise on other historiographies, other revolutions, and competing historical narratives within and beyond the island. Cuban archivist Jorge Macle provides a meta-analysis of Cuban historiography by exposing the country's limited legal guidelines for mandatory declassification. And in the final essay, co-editor Lambe discusses the conspicuous absence of the United States in the volume, arguing that modern Cuban history is too often narrated as a history of US foreign policy or cultural influence.

This book may not provide any startling new revelations or dramatically overturn what we already know. But its essays contain important methodological innovations, original themes, creative uses of sources, and valuable insights. In the process, we arrive at a far richer and more complex account of the first two decades of the Cuban Revolution.

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FILMMAKING

Hollywood in Havana: US Cinema and Revolutionary Nationalism in Cuba. By Megan Feeney. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. Pp. 309. \$35.00 cloth.
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In 1969, Alfredo Guevara, the head of Cuba's state film institute (the ICAIC), argued that the United States had colonized the minds of Latin Americans. American "comics, radionovelas, telenovelas" and "a good portion of North American cinematography" had succeeded in "conditioning not only the taste but also the reader, radio-listener, and spectator's capacity for comprehension," observed the functionary ([1969] 1998, 41–42).