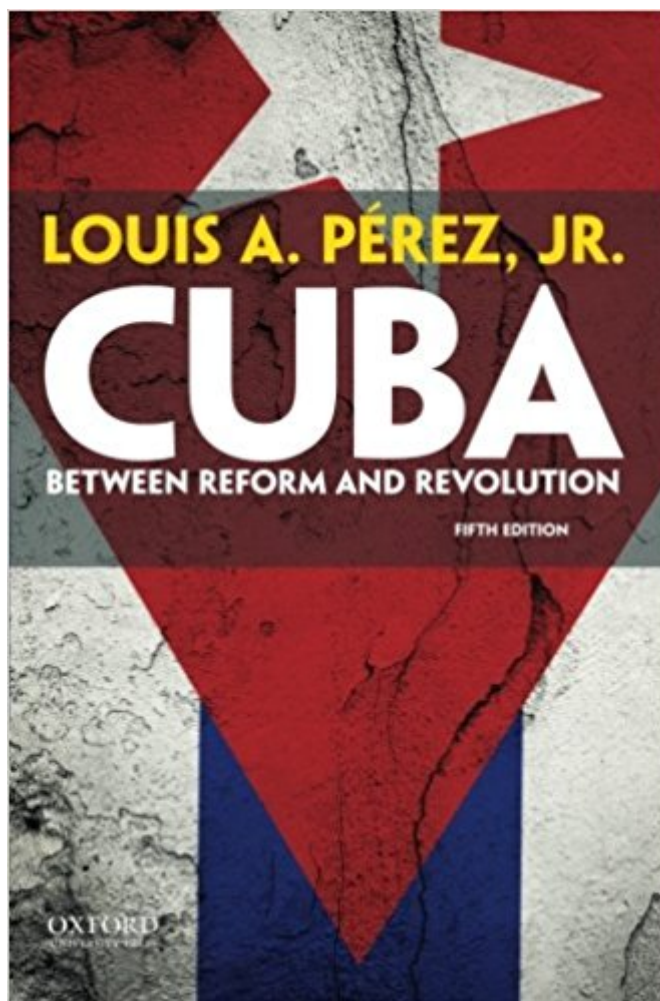


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Cuba: Between Reform And Revolution



Synopsis

Spanning the history of the island from pre-Columbian times to the present, this highly acclaimed survey examines Cuba's political and economic development within the context of its international relations and continuing struggle for self-determination. The dualism that emerged in Cuban ideology--between liberal constructs of patria and radical formulations of nationality--is fully investigated as a source of both national tension and competing notions of liberty, equality, and justice. Author Louis A. PÃ©rez, Jr., integrates local and provincial developments with issues of class, race, and gender to give students a full and fascinating account of Cuba's history, focusing on its struggle for nationality.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Covering almost 4 centuries of history even of a small country as Cuba is a daunting task. Perez, however, does a wonderful job in making a succinct and clear overview of the general narratives that have shaped the island. Beginning with a brief introduction to the native population of the island before the Spanish discovery of Taino and Ciboney tribes to the present years of the revolution. What I think was important was how the author provided a geographical overview of the island so as the reader can become acquainted with the territory. While for many Cubans this may not be necessary for those with little or even just some knowledge of Cuba this preliminary step is extremely helpful. I enjoyed this book most of all because it gives a narrative to each historical epoch. From the bleak beginnings of Cuba as a country that was depopulated over and over as more Spaniards moved to the Spanish colonial mainland to how and why Havana was able to grow

as an important city for Spanish interests. Again because the author cannot cover everything many will criticize that he missed this or that. Personally my biggest surprise was that he didn't mentioned the events that lead to the Spanish-American War. He does extensively note the long history of U.S. intentions to annex Cuba. But the explosion of the Maine and the events leading to the U.S. occupation are not mentioned at all. With respects to keeping a bias opinion and the accuracy of his evidence...well with regards to all the modern developments (i.e. 2000-present) the author is quite accurate and he does give a succinct and clear idea of the main events. With respect to the Pre-1959 I cannot attest for much. The author at least does try, so it seems, to keep a non-biased view throughout his book.

At least two reviews have been posted recently claiming Professor Perez is wrong about the facts he offers on social and economic conditions in Cuba before the victory of the revolution in 1959. I have placed a comment under the more extensive of the two challenges, but I want to alert others who may not look at the comments to the reviews, that in general, but especially on Cuba and its revolution, a subject on which feelings run very deep, a challenge to factual material presented by a leading academic expert such as Professor Perez (no relation to this writer) cannot be credited unless the source is given, and preferably a reliable or authoritative source that can be independently verified. In this case, the author of the longer challenge writes with such assertiveness and specific detail that I imagined I was reading first hand testimony from someone who was there, although the reviewer doesn't say that. Even then, on Cuba, such accounts need to be taken with a grain of salt and the person should be encouraged to provide authoritative or reliable and verifiable sources to corroborate at least the overall picture they are presenting if not all the specific details. But as it turns out, in the case of the comment that challenges Professor Perez so vigorously, it comes from someone whose profile page has another review where he makes it clear he was born in 1973. He is in his 30s, but he'd need to be well past retirement age to know from personal experience the assertions he makes challenging Professor Perez on the facts about Cuba in the late 1950s. Yet the critic provided no sources. Among many of us Cuban emigres (and our descendants) a myth has developed that I would caricature as, "Nothing was wrong with Cuba before 1959; nothing has been right ever since.

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