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Reseña de "The Cuban Revolution: Years of Promise" de Teo A. Babún y Víctor Andrés Triay

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the volume is a catalyst; it forces us to consider human impacts on the island's environment and what needs to be done to preserve it for the future. While particularly focusing on Puerto Rico, this book punctuates the growing relevance of these issues for the rest of the Caribbean. López Marrero and Villanueva Colón should be commended for their efforts. The maps and raw data in this book offer a wealth of compiled data that will serve researchers as an important reference for the future.

Teo A. Babún and Víctor Andrés Triay. 2005. *The Cuban Revolution: Years of Promise*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 117 pp. ISBN: 0-8130-2860-4.

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As the fiftieth anniversary of the Cuban Revolution of 1959 draws near, new assessments of its origins, course, and legacies are clearly needed. Fortunately, while state archives and most records related to this period in Cuba remain closed to historians and citizens alike, a growing number of private institutions and individuals have begun to make previously unknown collections available to researchers. While written sources of a primary nature remain rare, the release of photographs documenting the rise to prominence of Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement in the anti-Batista struggle of the 1950s and the early years of the Revolution are increasingly common. Thus, along with Yale University's recent on-line release of thousands of digitized images taken by U.S.-based Hungarian journalist Andrew St. George, Teo Babún and Víctor Andrés Triay's publication of a small but equally fascinating set of political portraits offer a much needed visual reprise. Although most of the photographs in Babún and Triay's book focus on Fidel Castro's guerrillas in the mountains, it also includes a number of scenes from the bloody struggle of the middle-class urban underground and the early euphoric days of January 1959. However, after offering a series of photographs that depict one of the revolutionary government's many executions of Batista's intelligence and security agents on January 2, 1959, the book inexplicably skips ahead to focus on the exodus of exiles to Miami and the CIA-directed invasion force (known as Brigade 2506)

that revolutionary loyalists defeated at the Bay of Pigs.

Indeed, the silences in the book's visual narrative cogently reflect the same arguments laid out in its accompanying text. That is, the radicalization of the 1959 Revolution and its eventual embrace of state socialism represented a betrayal of the interests and the political values of Cuban elites rather than the fulfillment of a much more radical nationalist vision that Fidel Castro and many, albeit lower-class, Cubans shared. As the authors put it, "Many who had helped Fidel Castro rise to power, especially the anti-Communist Cuban middle class, felt betrayed. In their estimation Castro had manipulated them with promises of democracy to get into power and then installed a Communist dictatorship" (p. 59). However, for the Babún family whose large landed estate and industrial holdings made them, like Fidel Castro's own family, part of Oriente's *upper*—not middle—class, this betrayal seems extremely personal.

As Teo Babún writes in the preface and Triay's essay confirms, Babún's father was a wealthy Santiago industrialist who contributed money, sanctuary, arms and even the modern radio transmitter that launched the critically important mountain-based radio station known as *Radio Rebelde* to the rebel cause (pp. ix, 21). Yet, the authors' essay makes it clear that the Babún family's support for Fidel may have been much more pragmatic than altruistic. According to the authors, the Batista government maintained an army post known as "El Uvero" on Babún family property, at least until Fidel's forces attacked and pillaged it in May of 1957, winning their first significant victory of the war and "taking with them all the supplies they could load aboard one of the Babún family trucks" (p. 13). Thus, the Babún family's previous political complicity with Batista's government and then with Fidel's guerrillas does bring up the question of how differently the many poor, black or peasant guerrillas who made up most of the pictures made by the Babúns' hired photographer may have interpreted their own historical hardships and sacrifices in the war, especially compared to those of wealthy recruits and financial patrons (see images 10-12; 20, 23-27).

In addition, *The Cuban Revolution: Years of Promise* is peppered with important errors in its identification of individuals featured in photographs. Many of the individuals whom the authors misidentify are key figures such as Celia Sánchez (mistaken for Melba Hernández, p. 47), William Morgan (twice mistaken for another unknown, probably foreign, man, pp. 46 and 48), Guillermo Sardiñas, the Catholic priest Fidel elevated to the status of *Comandante* (p. 52) and the still-living Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo (p. 74). Other errors are of omission. For example, tremendously significant figures such as Soviet Vice Premier Anastas Mikoyan, who made a much publicized (and alarming) visit to Cuba in February of 1960, is described as unknown on page 60. Similarly, Violeta

Casals, the voice of *Radio Rebelde*, and Jorge Enrique Mendoza, one of the rebel press's main journalists, remain unidentified on page 79. Moreover, some accurate identifications are not always consistent. Thus, central leaders Armando Hart and Faustino Pérez are named in one caption (p. 76) but not another (p. 71). Finally, the authors report Vilma Espín's second last name as "Dubois" when it was really "Guillois". In the same section, they also misrepresent her educational achievements in claiming that she graduated from MIT when, in fact, she only spent one semester there before quitting to join the 26th of July. Finally, they make the unsubstantiated claim that Espín Guillois divorced Raúl Castro years ago (a remark that would surprise the vast majority of island Cubans where such news has never been reported and would be considered false). Mistakes such as these are surprising since virtually no Cuban on the island would have committed them. More than any other, this point makes Babún and Triay's book very much a self-consciously "exile" narrative.

Still, the largely spontaneous, sometimes slightly unfocused portraits in this book do not just capture the radiating pride in rebel faces but the bravado of their tactics—including the violent destruction of infrastructure, the bombing of rail lines and the kidnapping of dozens of U.S. Marines as well as foreign corporate executives during the last six months of 1958 (see images 14-16, 32-33; for more on these kidnappings see Patterson 1994:160-173, 181). Thus, while much of the book's text and later imagery present the post-1959 period as a tragic drama in which counter-revolutionary exiles and U.S. officials play heroic roles, the significance of the undeniably lower-class background of so many of Fidel's forces depicted in earlier imagery and their commitment to its young, radical leaders remain undiminished. The book's silencing of how class factors contributed to the Revolution's radicalization and popularity is as problematic as its authors' insistence that the CIA's *brigadistas* "came from all sectors of society" despite the fact that every account of the Bay of Pigs operation confirms that non-*batistiano* members were the exception, not the rule (see, for example, Lazo 1968; Meyer and Szulc 1962; Higgins 1987; Kornbluh 1998; Blight and Kornbluh 1998). In short, this book, like many others, seeks to avoid (and possibly erase) the most obvious and painful line of division that defined Cuba's revolutionary moment like that of so many others in Twentieth-Century Latin America: class. How historic wells of class-driven desires for change may have propelled the Revolution toward greater radicalization remains in this book, like many other exile-based narratives, a fundamental and unspoken taboo. For this reason, its pictures speak louder than its words.

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Carolyn Morrow Long. 2006. *A New Orleans Voodoo Priestess: The Legend and Reality of Marie Laveau*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 336 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8130-2974-0.

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Since the nineteenth century, much has been written on Marie Laveau. All those writings fueled the legend of the Voodoo Queen but rarely told much about this free woman of color who lived in New Orleans through much of the nineteenth century. In the past four years, however, three scholarly works were published on this fascinating figure of the antebellum Crescent City. Carolyn Morrow Long's *A New Orleans Voodoo Priestess: The Legend and Reality of Marie Laveau* is the latest addition to this series of publications. Her book discusses and adds to the two previously published books (respectively in 2004 and 2005) authored by Martha Ward (*Voodoo Queen: The Spirited Lives of Marie Laveau*) and Ina Fandrich (her 1994 dissertation published as *The Mysterious Voodoo Queen, Marie Laveaux*).

These three books have added much to the knowledge on Marie Laveau, especially Long's, which came last and could thus discuss and correct some of the information contained in the previous two. To quote from Long's conclusion, "the purpose of this book is to separate legend from reality" (p. 207). To a large extent, she has managed to do

From the date of Castro's landing, Cuba was in a state of virtual civil war . On March 13, 1957, the Revolutionary Directorate (Directorio Revolucionario), a group of insurrectionists largely composed of students, launched a bloody and unsuccessful attack on the presidential palace in Havana. Serious disturbances were intermittent throughout Santiago de Cuba and central Cuba. Trade unionists attempted to provoke a general strike , but support among labour leaders collapsed after the government announced that anyone participating in the strike would be refused re-employment elsewhere. Had Mrquez Sterling won the election, the Cuban Revolution might have taken a very different course. Instead, Batista's interference virtually assured the collapse of his regime. History of the Cuban Revolution, consists of 110 pages of photographs and 20 pages of textual information and narratives of the illustrated events. Most of the images are always accompanied by short descriptions of the events that led to the Cuban revolution and its immediate aftermath. In 2003, Babun decided to join forces with Vctor Andrs Triay to make this book in pictures a reality. In the rst part of the book, Babun and Triay attempt to give the reader a clear and concise location of where many of the most important events of the Cuban revolution and its aftermath took place. The authors salvage photographs from history, which depict the uprising against dictator Fulgencio Batista going back to 1952, when Fidel Castro was a candidate to the House of Representatives.