

*A History of Cuba and Its Relations with the United States.* Volume I. 1492-1845. *From the Conquest of Cuba to La Escalera.* By PHILIP S. FONER. New York, 1962. International Publishers. Notes. Index. Pp. 255. \$3.75.

Too many of the American journalists and social scientists who have recently turned their attention to Cuban affairs write as if the history of that island began on January 1, 1959, or perhaps as far back as July 26, 1953. This shortened perspective leads them to pay too much attention to minor and as yet insoluble problems, and to ignore the long sweep and continuity of Cuban history. Thus they wrangle at great length about when Fidel Castro became attached to Communism, whether he originally intended to make a democratic revolution, and exactly how well or badly he was treated by U. S. officials when he came to this country in 1959. The result is to treat the last decade of the island's history as a footnote to Fidel's biography, and to minimize those aspects of the Cuban situation that have deep roots in the past.

Professor Philip S. Foner, whose previous books have all dealt with American history, has instead wisely and courageously tackled the Cuban story from the other end. In the present volume, which covers Cuban history from the beginning down to the slave revolt in Matanzas in 1844, he repeatedly shows how current controversies were foreshadowed one and two and three centuries ago. Here, in the loyalty of Peninsular priests to the Spanish Crown, is the origin of Castro's anti-clericalism. Here, in the Creole slaveholders' fear of revolts and consequent opposition to independence, is the beginning of today's division between *guajiro* and *gusano* (the *fidelist* epithet for all 'counterrevolutionaries'). Here is the distorted economy, underdeveloped and overspecialized, with sugar making up 84 per cent of exports as far back as 1851. And here, in the record of American intervention on the

side of Spain during the Monroe, Adams, and Tyler administrations, are the origins of Castro's bitter tirades against "Yanqui Imperialism."

While he writes from a definite *fidelist* viewpoint, Dr. Foner has not allowed his sympathies to swamp his careful scholarship. His book is well-written, accurate, and thoroughly researched, making abundant use of printed and manuscript sources in both English and Spanish: he makes no assertion that he cannot abundantly prove by direct quotation. The result is a work that can be set beside Robert F. Smith's *The United States and Cuba* (1960) as the best book on the subject to be published in many years. A second volume, covering the quarter of a century from 1845 to the beginning of the *guerra grande* in 1868, is to be published shortly, and can be awaited with great interest.

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*La fundación de Barinas y vida heroica del capitán Juan Andrés Varela.* By VIRGILIO TOSTA. Caracas, 1961. Editorial Sucre. Pp. 36. Paper.

On May 25, 1577, the city of Altamira de Cáceres was founded by Juan Andrés Varela, a Spanish captain from Galicia. The site for this city in western Venezuela, which today bears the name Barinas, was selected by Captain Varela because of the natural features it provided for defense against the Indians and because it offered a gateway to the llanos. The events involved in the founding of the city and the life of its founder are the subjects of the two essays contained in this short paper by Virgilio Tosta.

Sr. Tosta's accounts are good examples of the continuing nature of the Spanish conquest. Well into the period historians have labeled "colonial" and years after the Pizarros, Alvarados, and de Sotos, lesser-known conquistadors tramped Latin America's wildernesses in search of gold and glory. Like their predecessors, they fought among themselves and were plagued by the con-