

some of the truth. Yet he persists in a rather touching optimism that the political realm can be the realm of truth. We know how hard it is to avoid self-deception in our personal lives, within families, for example. Why should we think that the state, or revolutionaries seeking control of the state, would be more open to the claims of truth than these other aspects of our lives? To the contrary, the political realm invites the most powerful illusions, since in that realm global justifications must be offered for the use of coercive power to achieve limited goods.

Lehmann's optimism prevents him from entertaining the possibility that the story found in the Gospel is more

radical than either revolutions or the established powers can contain. It may be that the silence and form of submission required of Christians can never be embodied by those who wish to hold state power. Contra Lehmann, the relevance of the Gospel does not depend on Christians being able to locate the epiphanies of God's kingdom, whether in revolutions or elsewhere.

All we know is that—however God makes his kingdom a reality—our task is to be obedient to the form of silence and submission we find in the cross of Christ. Such an obedience is indeed revolutionary, but it cannot be comprehended by the revolutionary rhetoric of our day, or of any day.

spect. Perhaps no one with his stature and his skills outside of Cuba has devoted so much time and effort to explicating the Cuban revolution to the U.S. public. This is his fourth book about Cuba. Much of it repeats what Matthews has said in the others (even many chapters and chapter headings are quite similar). What then, has Matthews said?

One important theme of the book, and certainly its most interesting one, is that "posterity, including future generations of Cubans, will grant him [Fidel Castro] more respect as a moral being, as well as a revolutionary, than he has been accorded during these hectic years." Much of the book outlines the moral claims of the Cuban revolution—although Matthews does not put it forth in these terms himself, except from time to time.

He makes a strong and plausible case as he details the reasons why honorable Cuban men and women took up arms in the 1950's against the Batista government. A revolution, justified at birth, has done much since to justify its rule, through policies in education, health, economic equality, sexual equality, and many others. The revolutionary government has also sought to change procedures for motivating individuals, away from individual and toward collective incentives, away from material and toward moral incentives. Answering Fidel Castro's claim of 1953, at the end of the trial after the failed attack on the Moncada barracks, that "history will absolve me," Matthews says: "I believe it will."

Matthews's case, however, is seriously weakened in two respects, one moral and one technical. The technical weakness is Matthews's systematic disregard for data that cast doubt on the achievements of revolutionary rule. Let us be clear about the charge. Matthews has chosen not to provide footnotes. He has, however, been scrupulously fair to provide arguments that do not agree with his, and to credit the research of others when he uses it. It is the marshaling of evidence on behalf of Matthews's own views that is at stake. Matthews dismisses the claims of Professor Lowry Nelson that about 1970 Cuban workers were un-

Revolution in Cuba: An Essay in Understanding by Herbert L. Matthews

(Scribners, 468 pp.; \$15.00)

With Fidel: A Portrait of Castro and Cuba by Frank Mankiewicz and Kirby Jones

(Playboy Press; 269 pp.; \$10.95)

Jorge I. Domínguez

How does one criticize national monuments? Both Herbert Matthews and Fidel Castro, author and subject of these books, stand in a special relationship to any critic. Herbert Matthews has had a long and distinguished career as a journalist. Whether he is a U.S. national monument is hard to say. He has, however, played an important role in the history of the Cuban revolution, and a review of this book must be informed by knowledge of that role.

At the beginning of 1957 Fidel Castro's guerrilla forces in the Sierra Maestra mountains in easternmost Cuba were few and relatively unknown to the world. The Batista government

claimed that Fidel Castro had been killed and his forces dispersed. Matthews climbed into the mountains, and subsequently published, in the *New York Times*, articles about Fidel Castro, his guerrillas, and what they hoped to accomplish. This was one important shift in the fortunes of the Cuban revolution. The Cuban government was proven to be demonstrably deceitful; Castro's guerrillas were portrayed attractively.

Matthews has returned to Cuba many times since February, 1957. The last visit, in 1972, provided fresh data for the book. Matthews is a Cuban national monument in yet another re-

happy with the revolution. Indeed they were unhappy. No less than a fifth of the national work force was "absent" from work, and a majority of the Oriente province cane cutters, that most loyal group of that most loyal province, was "absent" from work in the early fall of 1970; as many as a third of these cane cutters were still "absent" at harvest time in late 1970. Three-quarters of the local union leaders were new faces after the late 1970 labor elections—the freest held in revolutionary Cuba, before or since.

Matthews notes that conditions have improved vastly since the dark days of 1970, and he is right. But one reason those conditions improved was the profound discontent of the Cuban workers, expressed throughout the length of the island. Matthews dismisses critical statements on the failure of the Cuban economy to grow throughout, only to rely on the selective information supplied in speeches by government officials. He accepts the argument that Cuban prerevolutionary health statistics suffered from underreporting. There is some reason for that. But Matthews does not say that the revolutionary government's own statistics, without further changes in reporting procedures, showed the infant mortality rate worsening through the end of the 1960's. Matthews is quite right that conditions are improving in the 1970's. But this judgment, which I share at least provisionally, is based on weak data. The "harder" data, the data for the 1960's, deserved more respect than Matthews accorded it:

The book's technical deficiencies have a moral implication, because one is much less certain that the achievements of revolutionary rule are as clear as Matthews makes them out to be. The chief moral weakness of the book, however, is the evaluation of the problem of civil liberties in Cuba. Matthews is a liberal. He does not shy away from noting the illiberal characteristics of a system he calls "totalitarian." And yet his discussion of the problem is bizarre at times. "It has been one of the most puzzling features of the Cuban Revolution to Americans that civil liberties have been taken away one by one without any but the mildest objections from the Cuban people as a

whole....Cubans did not place the value on civic liberties that Americans did."

Where has Matthews been? There was civil war in Cuba in the early 1960's—with little foreign reporting—and the government won. That is the explanation, and not the lack of "objection." Leaving aside those who chose to leave Cuba, somewhat over a half million people (there were 8.5 million in the 1970 Cuban census), the Cuban government acknowledged the presence of thousands of guerrillas in every one of the six provinces in the first half of the 1960's, of whom between three and four thousand were arrested or killed and an undetermined additional number killed or exiled. In the mid-1960's the government acknowledged there were twenty thousand political prisoners.

Matthews criticizes those who criticized the arrest and confession of political sins of poet Heberto Padilla in 1971. He denies that torture was ever authorized in Cuba, even in the early 1960's, dismissing the testimony of many that it was, and some that it is. He merely offers the statement that "I am as certain as I can be of anything that Fidel Castro and his close associates would not authorize or knowingly stand for the use of physical torture."

"I have never believed," writes Matthews, "that the Revolution had to be measured primarily in economic, materialistic terms. Ideally, the rule of man over men is to be justified by reconciling power to ethics." One might agree with the second sentence without seeing it in contradiction to the first. Because Matthews has this perspective, his book is interesting and important. Yet, for the same reason, it is not as good as it might have been, thus leaving his *oeuvre* on Cuba still unsatisfactory. We should, with Matthews, strive to understand the Cuban revolution; more than Matthews, we owe it to ourselves, as well as to those who will later judge whether history's absolution is in order, to understand the warts too.

In this light one reads what Fidel Castro, the undisputed national monument of the Cuban revolution, told Mankiewicz and Jones. This is

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perhaps his longest, certainly his most interesting, interview since Lee Lockwood's *Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel* was published in 1965. It is about evenly divided between internal and external affairs. Fidel Castro, as ever insightful, describes the life of his people well: "In brief, they have not a minute free during the day"—by which he obviously meant only that "everyone here has many social obligations and many political obligations." I have said enough here on the topic of individual freedoms.

While what Castro says about internal conditions is fascinating, most people will probably be more intrigued by what he says about external relations. Castro makes a strong appeal to the United States. He speaks warmly of President Kennedy, the Bay of Pigs and Missile Crisis notwithstanding. And, though history may not absolve Henry Kissinger for Chile, that apparently does not make any real difference to Fidel Castro: "...objectively and independent of these unfortunate events, I continue to have a positive evaluation of his international role." The interview's sections on the United

States and Cuba must be taken as the most carefully articulated and extensive effort on Fidel Castro's part to reach out for reconciliation with the United States.

The chief contribution of interviewers is to ask good questions and to be faithful in reporting the answers. Mankiewicz and Jones did; indeed, ask some very good questions and, within the limits of courtesy, pursued some of the soft spots. As to the faithfulness of their reporting, the Cuban press has not complained. It is, then, with some regret that one notes that their concluding essay is not up to the high quality of their questions. There are differences of opinion and interpretation on a number of points where reasonable people may disagree. But perhaps the single most important factual disservice of this last section is that it fails to point out that the trend toward equality in the 1960's occurred amidst the lack of economic growth, while the trend toward economic growth in the 1970's is occurring amidst a retrenchment of egalitarianism, following its formal denunciation in 1973. Mankiewicz and Jones leave us with the

impression that Cuba is achieving growth and equity simultaneously, whereas that is not the case. There is far more equity, 'despite inegalitarian trends, than before the revolution. But we should not confuse one undoubted achievement of the coming of the revolution to power with a different choice made under consolidated revolutionary rule.

How then can one judge today's Cuba? As both books make abundantly clear, Cuban economic growth performance has improved considerably since 1970—sweetly paved by the high world sugar prices we all pay. World sugar prices are still higher, relative to their 1968 level, than respective petroleum prices. The deteriorating, though egalitarian, public health system of the late 1960's is still egalitarian and now at last ahead of pre-revolutionary performance. Education continues to be the showcase of revolutionary rule. But it is well to remember Matthews's injunction that this is not all the Cuban revolution has claimed to be about. The revolution is not to be evaluated only in "materialistic" terms, important though these are. It is also necessary to justify it "by reconciling power to ethics." Fidel Castro told Mankiewicz and Jones that he believes "man can be free only if he is equal." Perhaps so. But it is arguable that men and women are not free only by being equal.

And equality in Cuba, especially in politics and decision-making, is far from the norm. These two books are weakest in their discussion of political inequality in Cuba, the talk about democracy notwithstanding. Despite the formalization of the revolution and the introduction of periodic elections, the evidence of élite control over all public life is overwhelming. The party and government élites retain authority to decide who can be a candidate and under what circumstances; they can remove those who are elected; they permit no public discussion among candidates; they continue to exercise a monopoly of communications. This is a political system that remains intolerant of much variety and individual freedom beyond carefully set government-prescribed limits.

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(signed) SUSAN WOOLFSON

The revolution and its leaders claim legitimate rule today, as from the first day, based on the rightness of their cause and of their conduct. This is not, this has never been, and this has never claimed to be, an elected revolution, now or ever before. If we feel it in our bones, as Matthews does, that both cause and conduct are right, then we may take our stand with them. And if we feel that neither the cause nor the conduct are right, then we may take our stand against them. The problem—personal and intellectual—for some of us is that we believe some of the cause and some of the conduct are right and that some of both are terribly wrong. If we try to be faithful to the historical record, we must be alert to the empirical complexity and the moral dilemmas of the Cuban revolution.

I have twice before in the past four years written in this magazine that I believe the Cuban revolutionary leadership has been more wrong than right. I still believe that. But I conclude on a happier note. As these books and my own work point out, many (though not all) of the contemporary trends are to be praised; many (though not all) of the mistakes of the past are being corrected; life is better today for the individual Cuban than it was in the most revolutionarily radical late 1960's. I am not yet ready—because I think it would be morally and empirically unjustified—to shift my aggregate judgment. But I note with hope and pleasure that I have had, and expect to have, reasons for rethinking this judgment, because the Cuban revolution has been changing course. Where the changes will lead, other books will tell.

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Briefly Noted

Can America Win the Next War? by Drew Middleton

(Scribners; 269 pp.; \$8.95)

A deeply disturbing book, as it was no doubt intended to be. Middleton, military writer for the *New York Times*, is clearly in the "realist" school of political thought, as "the Next War" in his title implies. While sympathetic to the problems of the military, and committed to the need for strengthening U.S. military posture, the author is keenly aware of the interaction between moods in the society and military believability. The present mood of "No More Vietnams" is, Middleton believes, an evasion of issues that must be faced politically, and is seriously undermining U.S. military believability. On the first score, those who are not as resigned to warmaking as Middleton seems to be should pay close attention. That is, the military threat posed especially by the Soviet Union cannot simply be wished away. In our society there is a growing gap between the intellectual discourse that does not recognize this and the planners who think they are in charge of our common future by default. Middleton would probably be the last to call himself an intellectual, and he is rather simplistic in the sliver of ethical reflection he permits to intrude his strategic thinking, but he raises questions that need to be more broadly debated if we are to win—or, more important, to avoid—the "next war."

The Gospel of John and Judaism by C.K. Barrett

(translated from the German by D.M. Smith. Fortress Press; ix + 101 pp.; \$5.95)

C.K. Barrett's Franz Delitzsch Lectures, delivered at Muenster, Germany, in 1967. He reviews, interprets, and evaluates much of what scholars

have written about the Gospel of John in the last hundred years, and adds fresh material on the relation of the Gospel to Judaism. Barrett's view of the historical circumstance of the Gospel, that it is not directed chiefly at Jews, is one view among many others, but the reason he offers is not. "In the final reckoning," writes Barrett, "this gospel is to be explained not historically, but theologically. The merit of John does not consist in his having satisfied a passing, practical need by means of a fly sheet, but in his having known abiding elements of theological truth. These evolved out of the tension between Judaism and Christianity, but they led out beyond this original frame of reference." Learned, intelligent, no-nonsense scholarship. And reverent.

—Robert L. Wilken

Contra Marcuse by Eliseo Vivas

(Dell; 236 pp.; \$2.45 [paper])

Issued in hardcover in 1971, this spirited polemic has been used by many as a kind of catechism of Marcusean outrages. Professor Vivas makes no claim to being evenhanded. He is utterly intolerant of Marcuse's intolerance, his obscurantism, his hatred of the world, and, above all, of his contempt for his fellow human beings. It is on the last point that Vivas renders the greatest service, espousing the underlying misanthropy which distinguishes Marcuse from others frequently associated with him, such as Norman O. Brown. Marcuse's moment in the sun seems to have passed with the fading of the counterculture, and thus the intensity of Vivas's indignation seems somewhat dated. But for those who try to understand American intellectual life of the past decade it will remain a book deserving of attention.

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