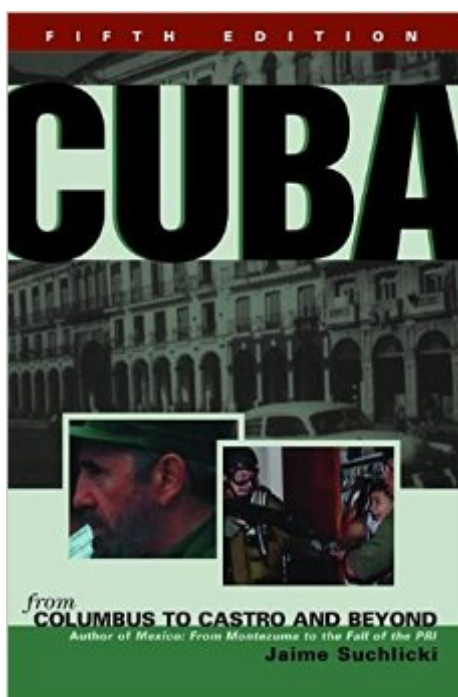


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Cuba: From Columbus To Castro And Beyond, Fifth Edition, Revised



Synopsis

In Jaime Suchlicki's engaging style, *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro and Beyond* provides a detailed and sophisticated understanding of the Cuba of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. In addition to its concise narrative history, CUBA details the current political climate, economy, and the regime's future. Suchlicki discusses the domestic and international events that have affected this island nation in recent years. This highly readable history is perfect for students, travelers, and anyone else who seeks to understand more about Cuba and its people.

Book Information

Paperback: 278 pages

Publisher: Potomac Books; 5th ed. edition (April 1, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1574884360

ISBN-13: 978-1574884364

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.7 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (12 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

With developments in Cuba moving faster, this book provides the reader with a clear and informative perspective on the past. I'm struck by the numerous miscalculations that have been made by people on all sides of the Cuba issue. Anyone seeking an informed view of Cuba and the US-Cuba relationship should read this book.

I found myself reading much of this book as I would a novel. I was interested in it primarily due to my own ties to Cuba, however, the style and in-sight into the history and mind set of the Cuban people is truly intriguing. I especially enjoyed the descriptions of the earliest Cubans and the other indigenous people in the Caribbean.

Jaime Suchlicki does the professional and academic communities a great service by updating his

book, *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro and Beyond*. A meticulous researcher, Suchlicki gives us over three decades of his experience on Cuba, particularly US-Cuba relations. A superb one-volume source for students of Latin American affairs, teachers, businessmen and diplomats. Suchlicki does not just bring alive the past, he speculates (from an informed perspective) on much broader issues, such as the future of Cuba. A must read for those interested in Cuba, a country which is sure to interest US administrations for years to come.

The author purports to update the previous (third) edition of his book. However, there are numerous places (see pp. 81, 176, 186, 193, and 197) in the book that suggest that there was no update other than Chapters 15-17 which are actually in a different type from the rest of the book. For example, the book stills discusses the Soviet Union in the present tense. With respect to the content of the book, the author spends all of 10 pages, 12 pages if one includes the map of Cuba, discussing the indigenous people of Cuba. The discussion of Castro's rule is tedious. The analysis of the future of Cuba after Castro is obvious and superficial. Save your money.

This was a pretty good book, up until the period that came after 1959. The historical narrative up to that point is brisk and easy to read, as well as informative, condensing many centuries and events into a limited amount of pages. This is to be expected from any history, and in this case it suffices. After the period of Castro's takeover of the island, the narrative descends into a series of personal opinions and observances peppered with historical facts. It seems the author patched together this part of the book from a few articles and lectures he has given. The coverage of the Bay of Pigs is practically non-existent, as is focus on Che Guevara and the impact he had on the fledgling Communist state. Toward the end of the book, the author descends even further into a minor rhetorical battle with the tenets of Cuban Communism. I finished the book in spite of that, and there's a good section in the back on books for further reference. My guess is that the Cuban threat still lingers in the author's mind, and for various political reasons he felt he had to water down the post-1959 section of the book. Keep in mind that the book was written around the mid-80's and the Cold War was still in full bloom. In fact, the Nicaraguan contra war against the Sandinistas was also a shadow war against Castro, who had greatly aided the Sandinistas as they took power, and this was happening simultaneously as the release of this book. It seems that Mr. Suchlicki is currently an adviser to officials in the Bush administration. These officials are drawing up plans for a "democratic transition" in Cuba even as we speak. Anyone searching for differing viewpoints on Cuba is definitely advised to shop around and check the credentials of the author before beginning a book.

Although the book provides a good skeletal overview of Cuban HISTORY, it is done throughout with conservative speculation often leaving out evident truths leading to a view that would introduce the reader to both sides of the revolution; something strongly needed in a history of Cuba. Additionally, the great lack of revolutionary writings from Castro, Guevarra, and Cienfuegos is a strong sensor that the whole story has not been told.

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