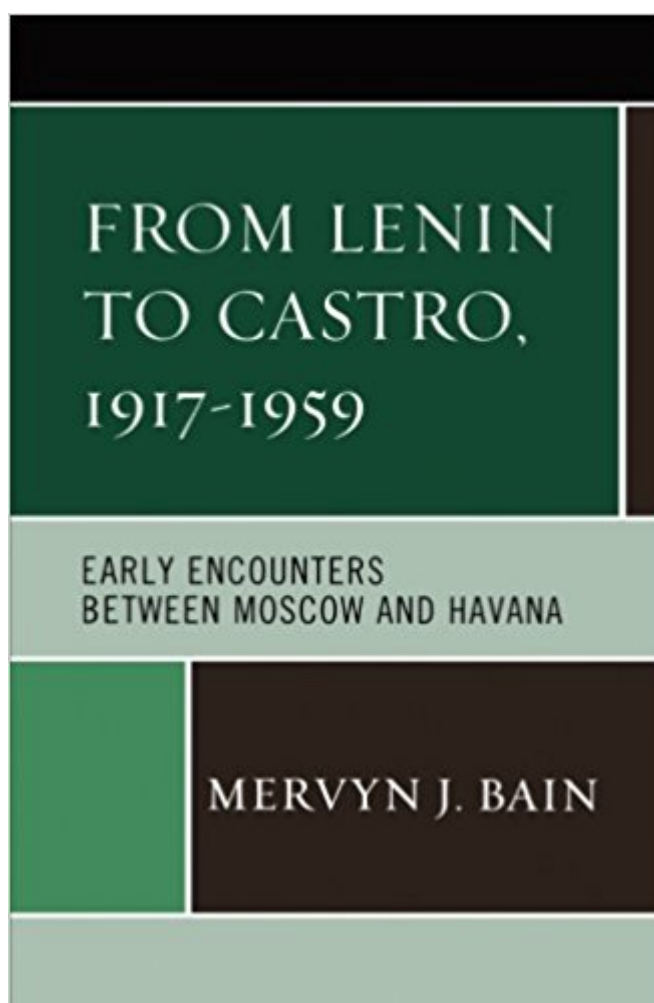


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From Lenin To Castro, 1917-1959: Early Encounters Between Moscow And Havana



Synopsis

This book addresses the relationship between Moscow and Havana in the period between the Russian and Cuban Revolutions, i.e. from November 1917 to January 1959. It analyzes the reasons why in this era before the Cuban Revolution, which is traditionally thought to have ignited Moscow's interest in the Caribbean island, a relationship existed between the two countries at a variety of different levels. In order to do this, both the attention that the Third International, or Comintern, gave to Cuba, as well as Moscow's formal state-to-state relations with Havana, are examined. In addition, United States policy towards both socialism and the Soviet Union are analyzed, due to the role that Washington played in Cuba prior to the Cuban Revolution. Following this, an examination of the events, process and dynamics that characterized the nature of the relationship between Moscow and Havana from 1917 to 1959 will be conducted. A number of conclusions will be given, but the primary one is that prior to January 1959, the Kremlin took considerable interest in Cuba and did not suffer from "geographical fatalism," as has traditionally been thought. This is significant in itself, but also in light of the relationship that rapidly developed between Moscow and Havana in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, as a number of factors that were important in the pre-1959 relationship would also be significant after 1959. Furthermore, this analysis is also important for the contemporary bilateral relationship between Russia and Cuba, as both governments have made increasing reference to the multifaceted relationship that existed prior to 1959.

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Bain makes a strong case for greater Soviet interest in pre-revolutionary Cuba. . . . Mervyn Bain has succeeded splendidly by dint of careful archival research in revising the standard view of Soviet lack of interest in Cuba before the dramatic transformation in relations wrought by the 1959 revolution. (International Affairs) Surprisingly little work has been done on the Soviet Union and Cuba. Mervyn Bain's work is a rare and welcome exception. . . . There is much to admire about this effort; scholars in this field need more histories of Soviet relations with Cuba, Latin America, and the third world in general . . . The interesting detail Bain has uncovered in archives in Russia and in Cuba will be of interest to specialists. (The Historian) From Lenin to Castro is a first-class book on foreign policy that sheds light on the relationship between two of the most important socialist countries of the twentieth century. Bain's account will undoubtedly lead to more revelations regarding Soviet diplomacy, not only with Cuba but also with other Latin American countries. Both political scientists and historians will find the book useful in the classroom and for research, as will scholars in international studies programs and programs including study of foreign affairs. Due to Bain's analysis and use of various theories, the book will prove instructive in historical methodology courses. General audiences and readers with an interest in the Cold War, foreign relations, politics and history will also find this book informative. (The NEP Era: Soviet Russia, 1921-1928) Bain is one of the few scholars who have used Comintern records for the 1921-1943 period; he is to be congratulated for his insistence on seeing the importance of the ties between u.s. Communists and their Cuban counterparts. . . . Scholars will find Bain's monograph a useful introduction to a little explored dimension of twentieth-century Cuban history. (New West Indian Guide) Too often we believe that Soviet interest in Cuba began in the early 1960s. In this highly original, meticulously researched book, Mervyn Bain documents that this is not the case. The book analyzes bilateral relations from the Russian Revolution to the Cuban Revolution. This groundbreaking study, based upon previously unpublished documents found in Russian archives, reveals a longstanding interest in Cuba by Moscow. It is essential reading for all who are interested in the pre-revolutionary politics of Cuba, and Soviet interests in the island. (John M. Kirk) This book by Mervyn Bain, one of the foremost authorities in his field, fills a glaring hole in the extensive literature on Soviet/Cuban relations the period from 1917 to 1959. His central thesis is that this relationship was broader and more important than previously assumed as a foundation for the more heavily studied ties between Moscow and Castro's revolutionary government. The case which he presents is very thoroughly researched, making extensive use of primary Russian sources that have only become available in the post-Soviet period. In the process,

Bain nicely combines the use of various academic paradigms (e.g., realist approaches and dependency theory) with well-reasoned policy analysis. The result is a compelling survey of a largely overlooked era in the evolution of a complex and controversial relationship which ultimately would have a dramatic impact on the dynamics of the Cold War world. Specialists in both Soviet and Cuban affairs as well as international relations analysts in general would be well-advised to add this book to their libraries. (Michael Erisman, Professor of Political Science, Indiana State University) This book utilizes a number of previously unused sources to examine the relationship between Moscow and Havana in the period between the Russian and Cuban Revolutions. It provides a number of important conclusions including that prior to the January 1959, Moscow took considerable interest in the island as a multifaceted relationship existed. These findings are important for both the relationship that rapidly developed after the Cuban Revolution and for contemporary Russian-Cuban relations.

Mervyn J. Bain is senior lecturer in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Aberdeen (United Kingdom). He has published various articles on Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union and Russia in journals including the Cuban Studies, Journal of Latin American Studies, Communist and Post Communist Studies and The Latin Americanist amongst others. He is also the author of the two books Soviet-Cuban Relations 1985 to 1991. Changing Perceptions in Moscow and Havana, and Russian-Cuban Relations Since 1992. Continuing Camaraderie in a Post-Soviet World, both published by Lexington Books in January 2007 and July 2008 respectively.

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