

here as in Morison's history as a whole there is a depth and unexplored dimension which he wisely did not attempt to explore. His resources are unequal to the task.

Finally, the book is marked by a petty and loquacious vanity expressed with disarming candor in Chapter I, "Receiving the Balzan Award." Written in the vein of "Boston Boy Makes Good and Sees the Pope; Wife Dressed for Occasion in Bergdorf Gown," it lends the distinction of humanity to an uncontested eminence.

Reviewed by STEPHEN J. TONSOR

Batista: His Rise and Fall

The Growth and Decline of the Cuban Republic, by Fulgencio Batista; translated from the Spanish by Blas M. Rocafort. *New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1964. xi+300pp. \$6.50.*

Farewell to Foggy Bottom, by Ellis O. Briggs; foreword by Christian A. Herter. *New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1964. xii+306pp. \$4.95.*

GENERAL BATISTA'S apologia for his regime is for the most part a translation of his *Piedras y leyes*, but it contains some supplementary material that did not appear in the Spanish edition, including statistical information that should prove very useful to students of Cuban history and of the Cuban economy.

He begins his narrative with the revolution of 1933—the so-called "revolt of the sergeants"—which saw Batista rise overnight from non-commissioned rank to the head of the army. His boast that in the aftermath of this revolution Cuba attained the first time to a status of full sovereignty is, as far as it goes, correct. The possibility of intervention by the United States armed forces to assure the protection of lives and property, favored at the time by some Americans and hoped for by some Cubans, was averted. Some months after this revolution the Platt Amendment, incorporated into the treaty of 1903, and under which military occupation of the island was undertaken in the troublesome years 1906-1908, was abrogated in new treaties negotiated by the revolutionary government with

the administration of Franklin Roosevelt and ratified by our Senate. Batista awards to himself most of the glory for this achievement, but he should in fairness and for the historical record have mentioned several other distinguished personages, notably Dr. Carlos Márquez Sterling, whose efforts helped to bring it about.

In a subsequent chapter Batista describes the short-lived "pacification of spirits" which made possible the Constitutional Convention of 1940. The constitution was approved on July 5 of that year and on the following October 10 Batista assumed the presidency. Earlier, in what he designates as the "period of transition" from provisional to constitutional government, he had unmade and made presidents—*viz.* Miguel M. Gómez (impeached in 1936) and Federico Laredo Bru (chosen in the same year). He gives his own interpretation of the rise and growth of the oppositionist *auténtico* party and his own characterizations of some of the prominent leaders of that movement, including Ramón Grau San Martín, Eduardo Chibas and Carlos Prío Socarrás.

In 1944 the *auténticos* were strong enough to elect Grau San Martín to the presidency over Batista's candidate, Carlos Saladrías, though not strong enough to control the congress. Batista proudly cites the assertion of Emil Ludwig that Grau's election "could easily have been prevented by violence, through the army, or by guile," but that by forbidding any fraud in the voting the retiring president had proved to the world that Cuba was at last "a true democracy." Thus in Ludwig's view, expressed some years before the rise of Fidel Castro, "the defeat of Batista (in 1944) was his greatest victory."

Whatever the case, Batista when his term expired went on a tour of South America and then took up residence in Florida as a "voluntary exile," having learned, as he says, that President Grau had taken measures to prevent his return to Cuba. Batista, not unnaturally, considers this a poor return for his magnanimity in having permitted a free election. It was during his exile, he says, that the Communists became an influential factor in Cuban politics and that the island began to swarm with Communist conspirators. The Soviet Embassy was full of "agitators, propagandists, spies, couriers, organizers and secret agents." The University of Havana—where there were "no rational restrictions on matriculation," and which after the downfall of Machado enjoyed virtually complete autonomy—became a refuge for "hoodlums, terrorists and murderers and professionals of dubious standing."

Plans for the 1948 Communist insurrection in

Bogotá, including one for the assassination of the late General George C. Marshall, head of the United States delegation to the Inter-American conference, were hatched in Havana during Batista's absence, or so he alleges, and were directed by a Soviet agent named Bashirov. Among the conspirators was Fidel Castro who took a prominent part in the insurrection itself. President Grau and his Labor Minister Prío were very well informed about what was going on, Batista insists. He tells us that

Fidel Castro was arrested at Havana International Airport just as he was about to leave for Central America and thence to Colombia. When searched a map of Bogotá with all strategic points marked was found in his possession. . . . Because of powerful political pressures Castro was released. . . . When the insurrection failed and Castro and his accomplices were wanted by the Colombian authorities for subversion and murder, they flew back to Cuba in an official government plane and under the protection of the Cuban government.

Actually, it was Dr. Guillermo Belt, then Cuban ambassador to the United States and a delegate to the Bogotá conference, who contrived to get Fidel Castro safely out of Colombia. In doing so he was indeed, as Batista says, acting on instructions from his government.

Batista says he had intended to retire from politics; but as the elections of 1948 drew near he was urged by his Cuban supporters and their presidential candidate, Dr. Ricardo Nuñez, to stand for a seat in the senate. Again, however, the *auténticos* were victorious and Prío succeeded to the presidency; but Batista was elected from Las Villas province, and soon thereafter returned to Cuba. Presently the *auténtico* party gave evidence of splitting into factions and Grau and Prío found themselves at enmity. Many former *auténticos* were joining a new ultra-nationalist party, led by the fiery and erratic Chibas. Many Communists, among them Fidel Castro, were also infiltrating this new Orthodox movement, as it was called, although Chibas himself, as Batista admits, was no friend of communism. But after Chibas' melodramatic suicide at the end of a radio broadcast, the Communists began to extend their influence in the movement.

The Orthodox party now violently attacked Prío for the alleged corruption of his administration, and its leaders marked him for vengeance when and if they came to power. It became more and more evident that they would do so after the elections of 1952. To forestall this, according to Batista, Prío was contemplating a military coup in

which he invited Batista—once again a presidential candidate in a three-cornered contest—to join. Batista says that he refused on the ground that such an action would plunge the country into civil war; nevertheless on March 10, 1952, he instituted a coup of his own. The fact that it was accomplished without bloodshed proves, he says, that “neither the *auténtico* administration nor the Orthodox opposition commanded any deep allegiance in the hearts of the Cuban people.”

Batista's account of the subsequent “civic dialogues,” held in an effort to work out some *modus vivendi* between his government and the opposition parties, and the reasons he ascribes for their failure strike me as somewhat disingenuous. Also, while claiming to be the champion of honest elections, he ignores the degree of dishonesty that—with or without Batista's *bene placito* or knowledge—characterized the elections of November 3, 1958. Had those elections been honest it might have been possible for another government under Dr. Márquez Sterling—the candidate opposed to Batista's—to have averted the Communist take-over of Cuba, because the Cuban public would have preferred to abide by the result of the election rather than to help Castro. Only because the elections of 1958 had failed to resolve the dramatic conflict between the regime and the political opposition was Castro able to triumph. Batista in all honesty probably never recognized this situation.

Meanwhile our State Department had adopted a role that was to have tragic consequences for Cuba and perilous ones for ourselves. As early as August of 1957, in an article published in *Human Events*, I pointed out that if we continued with what were then our policies we would inevitably bring “Castro, chaos and communism” to Cuba. On October 7 of the same year I went out of my way to warn the highest echelons of our State Department to the same effect.

The policies to which I refer were those of permitting arms to be smuggled out of the United States to Castro and at the same time refusing to permit the export of arms to Batista. These latter arms fell into two categories: first, small arms for police work which Batista had already paid for; second, military weapons ordered by Batista on the recommendations of our military, air, and naval missions in Cuba and largely paid for in advance. Perhaps an excuse can be made out for prohibiting the shipment of arms of the latter type, but none can be made for forbidding the delivery of Batista's purchases in the other category. But above all what was apparent to me and to anybody else who knew the Cubans was that these prohibitions would soon

become public knowledge in Cuba and would be interpreted there as an indication that we preferred Castro to Batista and were in fact seeking the latter's downfall.

All that is now history. The really important part of Batista's book is the detailed account, buttressed by abundant statistics, of the social and economic advances that were made in Cuba between 1933 and 1959, despite widespread corruption and other unfortunate circumstances. The figures show conclusively that except for these advances the Castro regime could never have endured economically for as long as it has.

ELLIS BRIGGS, a career officer, had served through seven ambassadorships and had been appointed to an eighth when he decided to retire and ruminate on his experiences. To anyone acquainted with the ways of the State Department and the Foreign Service his diplomatic memoirs, assembled under the title of *Farewell to Foggy Bottom*, will prove a delight; others will find them informative and highly amusing. Most of his observations are so pointed, so accurate, and expressed with so much wit as to provoke a succession of smiles or even of outright laughter.

There are, however, two matters on which I cannot find myself in agreement with Mr. Briggs. One is his sweeping generalization that all—or nearly all—political appointees are useless as diplomats. The other concerns his hopeful proposals for a solution to the Cuban problem. I am convinced that neither the Cubans nor any other people can rise successfully against Communist tyranny by pitting flesh and blood against tanks, gas, and machine guns. I hold, therefore, that the only solution is to drive the Communists out of Cuba into the sea. It is my opinion that, despite the vast arming of the island by the Russians, this still can be done by an invasion by Cuban forces supported by other Latin American contingents, but with the real weight of the invasion falling on the United States Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines.

Reviewed by SPRUILLE BRADEN