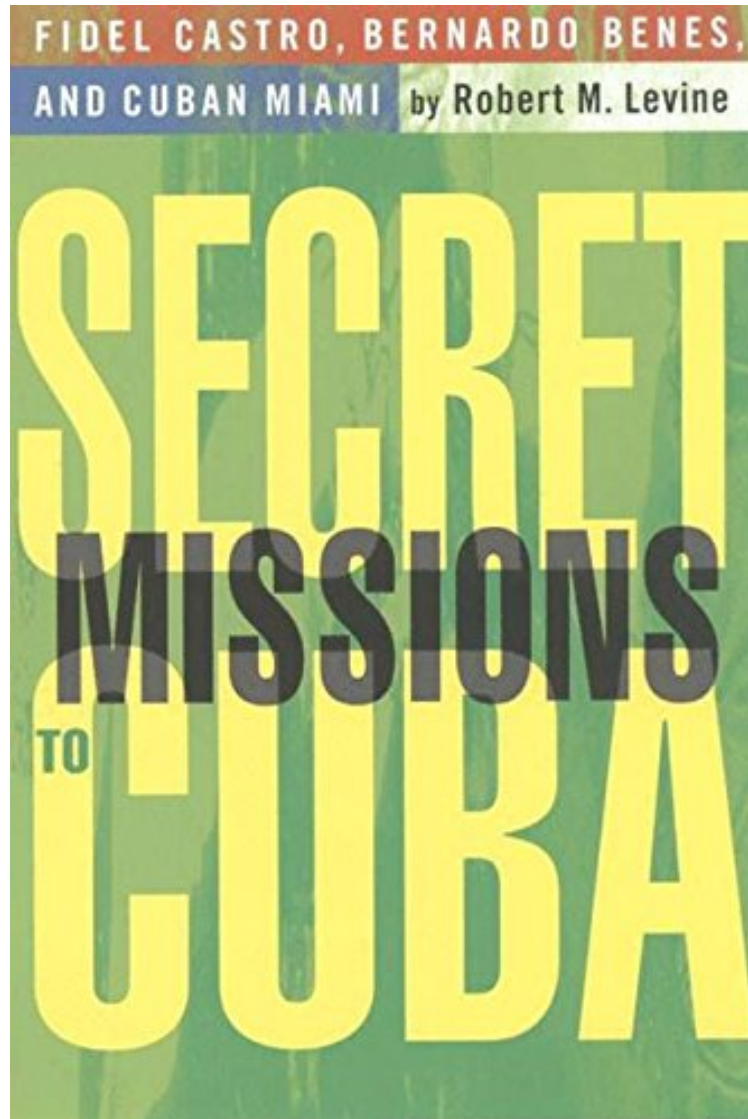


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Secret Missions to Cuba: Fidel Castro, Bernardo Benes, and Cuban Miami

R. Levine

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R. Levine : Secret Missions to Cuba: Fidel Castro, Bernardo Benes, and Cuban Miami before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Secret Missions to Cuba: Fidel Castro, Bernardo Benes, and Cuban Miami:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. From Heroism to HeartbreakBy Dana GarrettNow that the agreement to allow Cuban Americans to visit their families in Cuba has been significantly scaled back by President

George Bush, it is fascinating to consider how many Cuban Americans are correctly bewailing the loss of a right brokered for them by the very man they shunned for making the visits possible: Bernardo Benes. This book tells the story of Bernardo Benes and the times and circumstances in which he operated. We learn of his boyhood in Cuba, his flight to Miami as a young man, his financial successes and humanitarian work in Miami and the deserved notoriety he received. We also learn about his secret missions to Cuba at the USA's behest, his frequent conversations and negotiations with Castro, and how his considerable accomplishments in these matters cost him dearly in the exile community, even endangering his life. Although the author often strikes an oddly detached tone in his descriptions of the violent and inquisitorial nature of some elements of the Cuban exile community, he provides all the salient details and history. By book's end, readers are left wondering why Bernardo Benes isn't esteemed as a great hero in the Cuban-American community. It is here we realize that the real main character of this true tale is the Cuban exile community, not Bernardo Benes, and how their grievance long nurtured by hatred, violence, and dogmatic conformity distorts a hero's triumph into heartbreak.

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By Peter J. Sheldon
Excellent delivery time, reasonably priced, and great book - had the opportunity in talking with the author. He is a very kind man who was very helpful

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. "The Price of Negotiations"
By Luis Hernandez Jr.
Secret Missions to Cuba: Bernardo Benes, Fidel Castro, and Cuban Miami is well researched, insightful, and vividly detailed work that examines the complicated and emotional dynamics of United States-Cuban relations through the unique lens of Bernardo Benes' honest account of secret negotiations with Fidel Castro and then provides analysis addressing the passionately charged sentiments of the exile Cuban-American community in Miami. Explicit narratives shall captivate the reader with the juicy details of high-stakes negotiations. The firsthand account and historical information Dr. Levine has gathered shall serve as an invaluable resource for historians and academics in the years to come. The political dynamics that clearly come into play in the context of these delicate negotiations and emotional relationships is certainly insightful. Secret Missions to Cuba is most certainly a fascinating account of unwavering diplomatic negotiations in a highly emotional and passionate setting. There are certainly lessons from history to be learned by reading this book. Recommended without reservations!

Secret Missions to Cuba reveals new insights into Fidel Castro's personality, details secret missions to Cuba under the Carter and Reagan administrations to negotiate the restoration of US-Cuban relations and provides an in-depth look at Miami's exile community since 1959. This groundbreaking story is told through Bernardo Benes - a lawyer who joined the refugee exodus from Castro's Cuba in 1960. Benes quickly became one of the leading voices advocating the integration of Cubans into the city's Anglo, old-boy power structure. In 1978, Cuban Intelligence recruited him as an emissary between the Carter administration and Cuba. He did the same for the CIA under Reagan in the early 1980s. In all, Benes made seventy-five secret trips to meet with high-ranking Cuban officials, spending about 150 hours face-to-face with Fidel Castro. The 1978 dialogue resulted in the release of 3,600 Cuban political prisoners and the right for Cuban exiles to visit family members on the island. Rather than being received as a hero on his return to Miami, however, Benes was branded a traitor by the Miami Cuban media for having dealt personally with Castro. His career ruined, he became a pariah in the community. Secret Missions to Cuba also examines the motives of those who vilified Benes and explores why so many Cubans in Miami have permitted themselves to be silenced - much in the same ways, Levine claims, as Cubans under Castro. But what differentiates Levine's book from any other is that he is literally breaking new ground by documenting these top-secret missions to Cuba. Furthermore, he has the corroboration of key players like Ambler Moss, who was the Ambassador to Panama under Carter; Bob Pastor, who was Carter's Latin American advisor on the National Security Council, and General Vernon A. Walters, the former Deputy Director of the CIA. The twenty-five photos in the book, some which depict Bernardo Benes with Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, Ted Kennedy and, of course, Fidel Castro, emphasize the importance of Benes' story internationally.

From Booklist
Where interest in Cuba and Cuban American politics is strong, this analysis by the director of the University of Miami's Center for Latin American Studies will circulate and cause controversy. Attorney Bernardo Benes briefly held a post in the Castro government but left for Miami in November 1960. There Benes worked in banking and with civic groups such as United Way and agitated for Cuban American causes. Between 1977 and 1986, with the blessing of the Carter and Reagan administrations, Benes made more than six dozen trips to Cuba, meeting with Castro himself. Benes' most notable achievements were Castro's 1978 decision to free 3,600 political prisoners and an agreement that permits Cuban exiles in the U.S. to visit their families (and Cubans to visit their U.S. relatives). But Miami's Cuban American leaders viciously attacked Benes for "dialoguing" with Castro. Levine suggests that Benes' secret missions and the rancorous community response form the background for the Elian Gonzalez hysteria and George W. Bush's hairbreadth "victory" in Florida. Mary Carroll
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'Levine's detailed and extensive reporting should stand as a valuable contribution to 20th century history.' - Miami Today
'Bernardo Benes is an unlikely but true American hero...this book is a masterpiece of history and reporting which fleshes out one of the great human dramas of our time. Fascinating!' - Edna Buchanan, Pulitzer Prize Winner for General Reporting
About the Author
ROBERT M. LEVINE is Director of the Center for Latin

American Studies at the University of Miami and the author of over a dozen books on Latin America and Cuba including *Tropical Diaspora* and the forthcoming *Cambridge Concise History of Cuba*.