

Cuba : Castro's Cuba 1959-90

Castro: Rise to Power

Castro: characteristics

- Educated (Jesuit school, law at university)
- Middle class (father = successful Spanish born immigrant)
- Initially = romantic & idealist:
Moncada attack, Granma landing
- Charismatic leadership (especially when combined with Che: young, romantic looking, macho)
- Good use of deputy in Che Guevara
- Philosophy: evolves over many years:
Passionate nationalist at uni
Keeps a distance from communists at uni
Travels in Latin America and meets up with other student groups
= sees value of Marxist organisation
Although not a 100% communist
= sees repression first hand (Bogota 1948)
Real philosophy emerges in Sierra Maestras period:
= Concept of *Centenario*: adopting mantle of Marti to create a new, just and free Cuba, ready to share equally with others in a just community
- Party = 26th July Movt

The making of Revolution, 1956-59

1. Dec 1956: Granma landing to overthrow Batista regime
Disaster, lacking in planning
2. The mountains. Important because:
 - a. Used to increase support: (Matthews of NY Times, romanticizes them and leads to many students joining them)
 - b. Radicalisation: when these middle class rebels see village poverty, upon which they now depend. ("hearts and minds" of Che)
 - c. Ideology developed: centenario
3. Guerilla war
 - Initially attacks only from mountain bases
 - Support for urban opposition terrorist groups
 - Aug 1958: Castro becomes more aggressive and move out of mountains, capturing half of island by mid 1959.
4. Batista undermined.
 - Batista is forced to be more aggressive too = more brutal = loss of US backing and forced to stand down
 - Batista abuses 1958 elections. Loss of even more support
 - Dec 30 1958 Batista flees
5. Havana is open & awaits Castro.
6. Much popular support given reports of mountain life and social policies in the mountain coupled with Castro's anti corruption & US promises

The Decade of Revolution: 1959-1970

Establishment of the authoritarian state

- **New govt** set up Castro = Cin C Army, Prime minister after 3 months
- **Abolition of old parties.** Communist party allowed to continue
- **Neutralisation of key institutions:**
Trade Unions: direct control by Castro
Press: Trade Unions take control
Legal system: Castro selects judges
Church: lost control of education
- **CDR's** (Committees for Defence of Revolution) set up
Local citizen groups used to monitor counter rev behaviour. Controlled by 26th July Movt
- **Economy** controlled: main industries nationalised (no real compensation) out of (mainly US) private ownership
- **Elimination of Opposition:**
 - A. Batista supporters
Che supervises revolutionary trials of Batista officials & supporters. 500 executions in 1959. Those who can, flee to USA
 - B. From his own supporters
Matos jailed for 15 years as traitor for attacking policy.
CDR control of lower party
 - C. Foreign Opposition
USA initially did not oppose Castro
Then: oppose him following
Nationalising of sugar
Oil nationalising and US sugar embargo = US property almost all Nationalised
Castro replaces US trade links with USSR
Bay of Pigs 1961 sees Castro victorious over CIA invasion by Cuban exiles
Cuban Missile Crisis 1962 results in secret part of treaty in which US promises not to invade CubaSo Castro was now secure.

Creating the Socialist state

- Free medical care for all
- Free education for all. Youth volunteers on land
- Racial equality programme
- Sexual equality programme: Family code legalising rights of women in marriage
- Public work programmes
- Programme to restore Cuban pride in Cuba

Economic Reform

Aims:

1. End sugar dependency
2. Replace with a broad based industrial economy

Policies:

- Nationalisation: the profits to provide money to restructure the economy
- Land Reform: May 1959 Estancias and foreign companies siezed and made into cooperatives(= collectives)
- Moral rewards (Che's policy adopted of moral incentives (= stakhananov) A

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revolutionary offensive is launched to
improve sugar harvest 1968

Results of 60 's economic changes:

1. 10 million harvest fails (8.5m)
2. Focus on sugar leads to collapse of other crops: 20% of other agric crops were lower by 1970 than at time of Rev
3. Many workers failed to turn up for harvest: absenteeism = 20% in 1970 harvest
4. Increasing economic help needed from USSR to make up for economic collapse

So, Cuba was still:

- a. **Sugar dependant**
- b. **Equally dependent on a single overseas nation, USSR**

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Cuba, 1970 - 1990: The Pragmatic Cuba

Castro's response to the 10m. failure:

- public announcement of guilt "Let the shame be Welcome"
- offer to resign: refused

Reality of situation:

radical & experimental period of Rev had failed
reality = in econ terms, Cuba needed USSR
So political & econ policy reflecting even more the econ styles of 1970's soviet bloc

How Cuba increasingly reflected the orthodox soviet model:

Position & role of Comm Party strengthened:

- Castro supporters enter & dominate the CP. Castro dominates these supporters through July 26th movt
- In 1970's CP then given greater role in running of country: CDR's, bureaucracy, legal system

Revolutionary army becomes organised on

- classic military lines: badges, orders from officers, not councils

1976 Constitution: based on that of USSR agreed by plebiscite

Economy

- i. Central state planning assumes key significance
- ii. Dependent on USSR for raw materials/ aid/ support
- iii. Price & wage control with subsidies to help the poor
- iv. Centrally planned state measures to maintain employment: eg: direction of labour to public works, army enlarged & sent overseas
- v. small scale capitalist enterprises allowed (as in USSR, Hungary) in services and agriculture (local produce markets)
- vi. exports developed with capitalist non embargo states (eg Mexico, Spain, France, Japan, Canada)
- vii. borrowing begins from western banks
- viii. from 1980's: tourism encouraged (tourist ghettos)
- ix. Tighter control of TU's. Using CP and CDR's

Increase in Dissidence

Cuba also reflects another feature of post 1970's soviet style society: growth in the number of dissidents eg Heberto Padilla

This situation intensified by a (restricted) opening up of contact with the west (as in eastern Europe)

- 1979 Cuba opened to visits from US relatives
- When Cubans saw their wealth = exodus from Cuba (pressure so great that Castro allowed 125,000 before closing again)

Cuban Foreign Policy after 1970:

US embargo = no contact with USA- however, US promise after 1962 crisis not to invade Cuba provided: security for Cuba to get involved elsewhere

- In 1960's = FP which reflected Che's ideals of spreading revolution directly = direct support for groups across Latin America eg: Bolivia
- In 1970's = less revolutionary, more 'traditional' but still direct = sending regular troops & advisers wherever useful to revolutionary (and at times Cold War) Soviet interests = Cuba becomes stooge of USSR?
Eg Angola
Ethiopia
Nicaragua/Jamaica/Grenada
Cuban involvement appreciated by these govts: = disciplined, and brought medical, technical & educational support. Often stayed, long after conflict was over

Involvement not appreciated by: USA

Result:

- US support for forces opposed to Cubans
- Continues US boycott of Cuba

Castro: a balance by 1990

- ✓ Pride in Cuba as an independent nation (seen best in Sports success)
- ✓ Improved standard of living (illiteracy gone, basic health care for all, no famine, life expectancy rises 63-76, infant mortality falls 66%)
- ✓ Better gender & race equality
- ✓ US dependency broken

- ☒ Cuba still dependant on a patron state: USSR. USSR lends more to Cuba in 1980's than to any other. 1989: 25% Cuban GNP depended on USSR
- ☒ Enormous overseas debts \$3.5Bn to World Bank, \$7Bn to USSR
- ☒ US embargo continued. Led to economic problems. eg
Housing incomplete
Food shortages & rationing
- ☒ Sugar dependency continued as main cash crop

Since collapse of USSR position = worse. By 1992:

- ☒ no USSR loans or cheap imports, no replacement parts for USSR products
- ☒ Cuba faced by double embargo (USA and ex USSR)
Rationing cut by half
Electric cuts daily in Havana
Chinese bikes replace bus travel

But Cubans stoical. Many fled but more did not. Castro's Cuba to them is poor but proud, and independent = Castro's real legacy

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THE ANSWERS?????????

- **ANDES**
- **BATISTA**
- **BOGOTA**
- **CENTENARIA**
- **CENTURION**
- **CHE GUEVARA**
- **ENGELS**
- **GLADIATOR**
- **HISTORY**
- **JESUIT**
- **JULY**
- **JUNE**
- **LAW**
- **LIMA**
- **MAESTRA**
- **MARTI**
- **MATTHEWS**
- **MINDS**
- **MONCADA**
- **QUITO**
- **UK**
- **US**
- **ZAPATA**