

Cuba: US Involvement, 1903- 58

"Independent" Cuba, 1903 -34

US involvement in Cuba 1903 - 34

= direct eg:

1. The measures to establish control pre 1903
2. US uses Platt to restore influence:
1906-9: USA occupy Cuba following revolt against Palma. US leaves only after imposing new President
1909-21: USA occupies 4 other times
3. Direct economic investment
Ownership of industry is concentrated more & more in fewer (US) hands.
1928: 75% sugar mills = US owned

The Big Stick policy:

The Caribbean & c America seen as an area of US influence by late 1890's. The Big Stick was most attached to Theodore Roosevelt and the policy of using direct force & show of military might to apply pressure in this area ensuring that US influence was dominant

The Sugar Boom and Prosperity

US investment and trade = prosperity
1914: Cuba supplies 25% world sugar
Sugar = 80% of Cubas foreign earnings

Impact of sugar boom:

- Economy becomes sugar dependant
- Growth of rural proletariat, unemployed for most of year after harvest. (little planting needed)
- Ownership of industry is concentrated more & more in fewer (US) hands.
1928: 75% sugar mills = US owned

These become the two features of 20th C. Cuba:

1. Dependency on a major outside power (USA, then USSR)
2. Dependency on a single crop (sugar)

The end of direct involvement: 1929-34

1. 1929-34: Collapse of order
 - Wall St Crash = Protection in USA = 1930 quotas on Cuban sugar imports = unemployment & fall in wages on land
 - = discontent in towns aimed at US influence and corruption in Machado govt
 - Student groups demand change and govt takeover of sugar. Violence emerges in towns
ie a rev situation (Russia in 1900?)
2. US Pres Hoover = isolationist (Republican foreign policy in 1920's)
3. Situation worsens. Students & extremists take over = extreme govt of Pres Grau.
Demands: Cuba for Cubans, seizures of farms & factories
4. Batista's coup
Batista = soldier, overthrows Grau supported by Cubans fearful of Grau extremism.
5. US had a new President, FD Roosevelt.
FDR supports Batista and ends Platt Amendment 1934

Batista's Cuba 1934-58

US involvement in Cuba 1934-58

= indirect eg:

1. 1934 US navy off the Cuban coast
2. Indirect support for Batista, 1934 and 1952 keeps him in power
3. Lack of support in 1957 & 8 leads to his collapse
4. Continued economic involvement

This was part of:

The Good Neighbor policy of FDR.

FDR was non interventionist in a direct sense.

- But GNP was not a policy for no intervention (eg US navy off the Cuban coast in 1934)
= a policy for involving the USA indirectly only when the "welfare" of the other country was being threatened
- Policy was applied to all of Latin America

Batista's reforms

in 1930's

- Land redistribution for plantation workers
- Rural education programme
- Links with Trade Unions
- Public work schemes to help unemployed
- 1940 new constitution
Produces 2 clean elections 1940 & 1944

(1944-52 in USA)

1950's

- Starts programme of cubanisation of sugar, encouraging Cubans to invest in Cuban sugar

Signs of success: 80% literacy, Cuban health spending = amongst highest in Latin America

But:

In 1952 he returns with US backing after a coup & his later govt is seen as

- Corrupt
- US dependant
- Undemocratic as he suspends constitution, dissolves Congress
- Arrests opposition leaders
- Places military in key areas (eg Press)