

Castro, Cuba and the United States

Introduction:

Fulgencio Batista seized power in 1952. This was his second term of office. He seized this second opportunity to squeeze all he could from the Cuban coffers for his personal aggrandizement. That meant that he had to encourage heavy American intervention in order to ensure their continued support for his corrupt regime. The U.S. was willing to support him as long as her backyard remained stable and the profits continued to pour in from their investments on the island.

The U.S. not only recognized his dictatorship; they sold him arms and continued to provide military training missions. It was this band of trained soldiers that was used to silence Batista's opponents such as Castro and his band of soldiers.



Fulgencio Batista

Explain clearly how Batista abused the Cuban people

1. The U.S. operated plush hotels, gambling casinos and tourist resorts, nightclubs and racetracks all over Havana. Some argued that there was even gangster capital involved.
2. The average Cuban could not enter these hotels or use the beaches. They were exclusively for tourists, American tourists! The blacks- Afro-Cubans could only work at these places.
3. The press was heavily censored
4. There was high unemployment and seasonal unemployment for those who worked in the agricultural sector, especially sugar. In 1959 was 37.5%

5. Batista banned the meeting of any of his opponents. His rule became gangster like. Court martial and pre-dawn firing squads were common.
6. The mortality rate was high, especially infant mortality. The children were infected with parasites. Malaria and Tuberculosis ruled the countryside while the urban areas received the benefits of American eradication.
7. There was an inadequate number of hospitals and clinics. The ratio of doctors was woefully inadequate as well.
8. American imports totaled \$577M seriously competing with similar Cuban products.
9. Despite the presence of a number of millionaires the island was heavily in debt. Wealth was unevenly distributed.
10. Not surprisingly therefore, in **1957** the sugar and bank workers went on strike. This industry is traditionally the MAIN employment area. In 1957 there was a general all island strike.
11. A survey in 1956 showed that the Americans owned over 90% of the telephone and electricity services, 50% of public transport and railways and 40% of raw sugar production. In addition she held a quarter of all Cuban bank deposits. The staff in all these enterprises was largely American.
12. There was racial discrimination, victimization, prostitution, execution and exile of opponents.

On **January 1, 1959**, Castro staged a successful revolutionary overthrow of the corrupt regime. It was Castro's **third** attempt.

1. 1956 **Fidel, Raul, Che** and 81 ***fileditas*** from Mexico in the Granma but only 12 survived the onslaught of Batista's soldiers. They escaped into the Sierra Maestra mountains.



Che Guevara and Fidel Castro

2. 1953 attack on Monocado barracks. Castro spent 2 of the **15** years in jail along with his brother Raul and more than **100** others in a failed attempt.

3. January 1, 1959. But this time, the 'graft rotten' dictatorship toppled and the deposed tyrant allegedly fled to Florida with over \$200M. Guerilla warfare, support from the peasants in the country side who provided him with information and food along the way. Use of two way radios, continuous supplies of arms from Mexico and supporters in the U.S. kept the struggle alive. Some members of the middle class joined the rebels.

Castro wished to have a real revolution. He did not wish to be bound by U.S. gifts and policies. He made that clear from the very beginning. He used the radio and television to announce his programs.