

How Was Castro Able to Retain Authoritarian Power and Dictatorship

Introduction:

So Castro gained support in the initial stages from those who were tired of Batista's cruel and oppressive regime. How was he able to retain authoritarian power and dictatorship in a sea of democracy and in the face of external hostility and opposition led by the mighty U.S.?

1. Ironically the aggressive response of the U.S. to the Cuban revolution gained him crucial support in the first five years. The Bay of Pigs invasion and the many attempts to assassinate Fidel not only failed but backfired. A number of Cubans joined the fight, not to support Castro, BUT for **their country and their independence**. Nationalism and national pride grew stronger.
2. The support of Russia
3. Castro's socialist transformation of Cuba won the support of the peasants and masses who experienced real meaningful changes in their standard of living- better health, housing and medical facilities.
4. A strong **army loyal** to Castro and the revolution defended it from both internal as well as external opposition.
5. Castro received crucial support from the island's women. Before this they had largely been ignored. Castro's socialist revolutionary policies proclaimed them as equals! They were drafted in the army, held top ranking government posts that were once considered the exclusive rights and domain of the men. New labor legislations were passed that benefited the women in particular: for example security of jobs for pregnant women.
6. Mothers gave the revolution their support. Why? There was the creation of schools for women. Their children were entitled to free education to include lunch and educational material. By 1964, over 90% of children born in hospitals were immunized as well as students in elementary schools.
7. The common man benefited from the Agrarian Reform of May, 17, 1959, that facilitated the distribution of land to small peasants. They could also access

economic and technical aid through the various associations that were created.



Castro signs the Agrarian Reform

8. We cannot forget the Afro-Cubans. They bore the brunt of the Americans' racial discrimination and prejudice. The revolution destroyed that.

9. A number of businessmen supported Castro for removing their competitor the U.S. and because of his progressive tax policies that favored Cuban over foreign investments.

10. The support of **Grenada, Guyana and Jamaica** came at a crucial juncture. The 1970's was the next decade after the first ten successful years. (1959-1969 and 1970-1980). It gave the revolution not just the momentum but the sort of legitimacy and affirmation that it lacked in the region. It was no longer isolated.

11. Her intervention and involvement in World Affairs: Africa and the Middle East. She showed herself as a force to be reckoned with.