

# Castro's Plans for Development

1. The independence of Cuba from American influence and economic domination.
2. No private property. All the factors of production would be owned and controlled by the state.
3. Opposition press would be stifled
4. Courts would be purged of middle class judges
5. Health, Education and other social services would be free. Syllabus reflecting the needs and culture of Cuba were written and implemented.

## His policies in Action

- a. **1959 Agrarian Reform Act:** land owned by major American cattle ranchers, sugar and tobacco estates companies were seized without compensation and made the property of the government. Castro then proceeded to redistribute it in smaller parcels to landless locals at the rate of 27 hectares per family.
- b. He installed **interveners in November 1959** to oversee the operations of several large American companies. This he said to prevent them from being tempted to falsify their accounts: tax returns, profits made and so on. The utility companies were also asked to cut their rates and charges.
- c. Most of the senior government officials who had served during the Batista regime were dismissed and those loyal to Castro and the policies of the revolution were hired in their place.
- d. The police, army and navy were purged of corrupt officers. Some 483 of them were found guilty of serious crimes against the Cuban people and were consequently executed.
- e. In order to show their disapproval of Castro's nationalization program the U.S. enforces a **trade embargo**. They refused to sell him any weapons or lend the country any money. The mighty one was buying approximately half a billion tons of sugar from Cuba and paid a bonus of 2 cents above the market price. She refused to buy any more of their sugar. Castro responded by charging that the U.S. was practicing economic aggression and economic slavery. He was right. They

hoped that without oil and parts for the numerous pieces of American machinery on the island Castro would 'come to his senses'.

**f. February 13, 1960: Russia signs a trade agreement with Cuba** to purchase 5M tons of sugar over a five year period and to supply her with needed technicians as well as oil and arms. Krushchev declared that the Munroe Doctrine was dead and suggested that it be buried so that it would not poison the air. The U.S. was outraged at the violation of their Munroe Doctrine and warns Russia.



*Castro and Krushchev*

**g.** The U.S. reacts by refusing to refine the crude oil bought from Russia at her refineries still in Cuba: Texaco, Royal Dutch and Standard Oil or to allow the Cuban government to take them over. Castro's contempt for U.S. superiority and hegemony of the region (Western Hemisphere) was hard for them to swallow.

**h.** March 1960: Castro questioned America's right to the naval base at Guantanamo

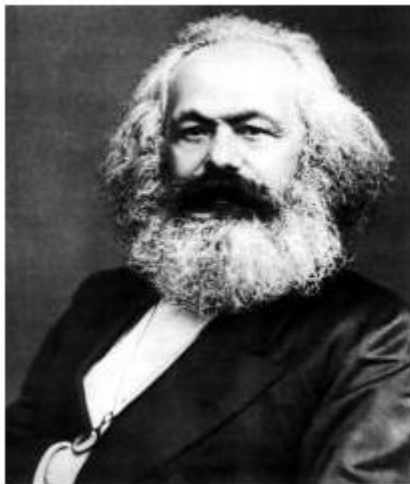
**i.** May 1960 : Castro established formal diplomatic relations with **Communist** Russia

**j.** July 1960 : He nationalized all remaining U.S. nickel plant, rice mills, cinemas and stores.

**k.** August 1960: the government takes over all utilities- phone and light as well as oil and sugar mills. The U.S. responded by placing a ban on all U.S. exports to Cuba except foodstuff. They warned their citizens not to visit Cuba thus stopping the island's income form tourism.

**l.** December 2, 1961: Fidel Castro declares himself to be a **Marxist Leninist**. He begins to implement social programs designed to improve the standard of living of the masses. For example: new affordable housing schemes for the masses and

road works were started as early as 1960.



*Karl Marx*



*Lenin*

m. A number of Cuban middle class went into exile mainly in Florida.

n. January 1961: Castro ordered the U.S. **Embassy to cut its staff** from 300 to 11. President Eisenhower (1953-1961) reacted by severing ties with Cuba on January 3, 1961. He left office 17 days later. It was up to the new President J. F. Kennedy to determine what to do.



*John F Kennedy*

o. He inherited among other things a 'plan' to overthrow Castro and put an end to the revolution. He hoped that the CIA nicknamed the Cuba Invasion Army would have the same success it had in Guatemala in 1954. Some 1500 Cuban refugees were secretly trained to help in the invasion. JKF had two choices: adopt or abandon the plan. Public opinion was in favor of the former. They were tired of Castro's insults.

p. April 11, 1961: **Bay of Pigs Invasion** was a failure and a fiasco. Castro and his army of some 250,000 men and women were well armed and ready to meet the

small invading forces. The CIA bungled the job perfectly. They arrogantly assumed that this would be a pushover.

**q.** 11,000 U.S. men were imprisoned. Castro exchanged them for a hefty ransom price of \$53M in much needed food and medicine.

**r.** Castro then felt the need to fortify Cuba. He thought that the U.S. would never dare to attack the island if Cuba had nuclear missiles and the result would be the annihilation of nearby U.S. cities

**s.** October 1962: aerial photos show hundreds of Russian technicians installing 40 nuclear missiles with estimated range of 1000 to 2000 miles. This was clear chronic wrongdoing in her backyard.

**t.** The U.S. acted quickly and decisively. Krushchev and Kennedy met and negotiated a settlement. On October 28, 1962 the Russian President agreed to pull his weapons out of Cuba while Kennedy agreed to lift the quarantine on Cuba and promised not to invade the island.