

## FIDEL CASTRO

(The most famous modern Latin American leader.)

### I. Background.

1. Cuba, the largest of the Caribbean islands, was the last Spanish colony in America to gain independence. Independence followed the 1898 revolution but the independence struggle had begun in 1820, gaining momentum, especially after 1868 and 1895. Probably success came in 1898 only because of US help. (US history refers to the 1898 Spanish American War, not the War of Independence. According to the then US Secretary of State John Hay, it was "a splendid little war", lasting only 114 days, and with but 25,000 deaths, mostly from disease.) US occupying forces left Cuba in 1901, but the Platt Amendment, giving the US the right to intervene in Cuba when its interests required, was written into the 1901 Cuban constitution, and the US gained Guantanamo Base in perpetuity. President Teddy Roosevelt's 1904 Corollary of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine arrogated to the US the power to intervene anywhere in Latin America in order to forestall European intervention.

In 1934, President Franklin Roosevelt removed the more humiliating parts of the 1901 treaty. But this made little difference and after 1901 Cuban governments, whether theoretically democratic or dictatorial, were all corrupt and dominated by the US, which on several occasions sent in US marines (for example, 1906-09 and 1917-19). According to E.I. Smith (US Ambassador 1957-59) in August 1960, the US ambassador was "sometimes even more important than the Cuban President". In short, Cuba was a virtual US colony. Not surprisingly, US power and its attitude were generally resented.

2. US domination of Cuba was part of general US interest and involvement in the area. Cuba was strategically located 100 miles opposite the Panama Canal and was a home for US investments, worth over over \$800 million in 1959. Much of Cuban industry and the public utilities (for example, phones) were US-owned. US business controlled 90% of the mines and haciendas (farms), nearly 40% of the sugar industry, 80% of the public services, and 50% of the railways. In 1958, the increase in the profits of Standard Oil in Cuba was larger than US aid to the whole of Latin America. With regard to agriculture, 40% of the land was owned by North Americans (the US United Fruit Company after 1898 bought up the best land at \$2 an acre) and 55% was owned by absentee landlords. 90% of foreign trade was with the US and 80% of Cuban foreign exchange came from sugar, with 3/5 of the crop (that is, about 3 million tons per annum) going to the US, which thus had a powerful economic hold. (However, David Detzer, in "The Brink",

1962, took the view that US economic domination was generally exaggerated. For example, US investment in the Cuban sugar industry was reduced from 70% of the total in 1928 to 35% or so in 1958, and in 1958, US companies employed only 70,000 out of 2 million workers. US companies also paid generally higher wages. However, partly because of American tourists, there was a feeling of US domination.)

3. The most recent example of US interference in Latin America had been the removal in 1954 of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman in Guatemala, because of supposed Communist sympathies. Allan Dulles of the CIA and his brother, John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, organized a small force under Carlos Castillo Armas, and with the US ambassador in Guatemala City John Puerifoy directing the rebellion from the inside, easily toppled Arbenz. This action doubtless inspired Castro to think that governments could easily be overthrown.

4. Fulgencio Batista y Zaldivar, 1901-73. Although an army sergeant, he had taken no part in the "sergeants' revolution" of August 1933, which, with Franklin Roosevelt's connivance, overthrew the dictator Gerardo Machado, who retired to Bermuda. However, thereafter he took an increasingly important role behind the scenes as president succeeded president, often after a coup, and rose to the rank of colonel and then chief-of-staff. From 1940 to 1944 he was President, having arranged his election. In 1952, dropping his democratic facade, he seized power from President Carlos Prio.

Batista became notorious for brutality (police cruelty included hanging children and leaving bodies dangling, as examples to others), graft and corruption, allegedly salting away abroad 200 million dollars. Demonstrations against Batista increased (in one, in 1953, his son Ruben was killed), although trade union leaders and farmers remained loyal to the end (Batista was a Mulatto of low social origins, and was generally popular among Blacks and union leaders, whose interests he looked after). He became increasingly careless, overeating, and concentrating on cards (canasta) rather than affairs of state. According to President Kennedy's aide Arthur Schlesinger Junior in 1961, "The character of the Batista regime made a violent popular reaction almost inevitable ...rapacity ...corruption ...brutality ...regime's indifference to the needs of the "people".

5. In 1959, Cuba, "the Pearl of the Antilles", was the 3rd richest country in Latin America after Venezuela and Argentina, in terms of per capita income, with a wide range of consumer goods available, a relatively large middle class, and low illiteracy (43%) and birth rates. However, the wealth was poorly distributed, and there was much corruption, foreign profiteering and dependence on sugar, so

that there was no work for many people for much of the year. 8% of the population owned 71% of the land, the average rural income was 91 dollars per annum, and only 4% could afford to eat meat; 46% of rural houses had dirt floors and only 2.3% had running water and 9% electricity.

6. Negroes and Mulattos were  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the population, but there was little separatism, except at the highest social levels.

7. There was a tradition of violence, revolution, and readiness to die for a cause.

## II. Fidel Castro (1926- ).

1. His early life. (nb. There are many stories and surprisingly the facts are unclear.)

i. His father Angel (died 1956) was a sugar plantation owner (23,300 acres), who in 1898 had emigrated from Galicia in Spain. Fidel was one of seven children by Angel's second wife (there were two by the first wife) who died 1965, and, like Angel opposed Castro's policies. His mother was a Cuban Creole of Galician descent. (nb. Francisco Franco, the ruler of Spain 1939-75, was also a Galician.)

ii. Fidel, apparently on his insistence, was educated in Jesuit schools in Santiago (the second town of Cuba), where he stayed with godparents, and then in Havana. History, geography and agriculture were his best subjects, and 1933-34 he was Cuba's best school athlete.

iii. In October 1945, he enrolled as a law student at the University of Havana. He claims to have studied little, and was active politically, but he received brilliant reports. He gained his doctorate in 1950, and 1950-52, worked as a lawyer, favouring political cases and those involving poor people, and becoming increasingly involved in politics. He was accused of involvement in political killings, but, through lack of evidence, no court case ever resulted. In 1947, armed with a machine gun, he was a member of a Cuban force which planned to overthrow General Trujillo, the tyrannical President of the Dominican Republic, but the force was arrested on the orders of the Cuban President Gran San Martin, although Castro himself narrowly escaped.

iv. In 1948, he married a fellow student (of philosophy), Mirta Diaz Balart. In 1949, their only child, Fidelito, was born. 1954 she divorced him. Fidel later gained custody of their son, who gained no favour, and entered Havana University on his own merit.

2. His political career. (He was the romantic revolutionary and the Jefe Maximo or Big Leader. He was in the tradition of Simon

Bolivar, 1783-1830, "the Liberator" of Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.)

i. In May 1947, he was a founder member of the anti-Communist Cuban People's Party, also called Ortodoxos, established by Eduardo Chibas to fight government corruption. (As a gesture of opposition and in the hope of raising revolution, Chibas committed suicide in 1951, shooting himself in the head after a speech on Havana radio.)

ii. In 1952, he stood for election to Congress, although without Ortodox blessing as he was considered too radical. However, March 1952, before the election, General Fulgencio Batista staged a coup, seizing power from Carlos Prío, President 1948-52.

iii. Castro, using the name Alejandro, began to publish a bulletin, *El Accusador* (The Accuser) and by January 1953 had 200 followers training for battle at university and on an isolated farm near Havana.

iv. On 26th July 1953, the day after Carnival Day (chosen in the hope of escaping notice), Castro and about 150 men and 2 women, mostly university students, made a foolhardy attempt, intended as a prelude to the seizure of other buildings, to seize the Moncada Barracks in Santiago, capital of Oriente Province (which had led in the 1868-98 revolution against Spanish rule); a simultaneous attack was mounted on the army garrison at Bayamo, 80 miles north-west of Santiago. Both attempts failed. A patrol came out of the barracks just as Castro's force arrived and the second half of Castro's forces got lost on the way. Three Castro men were killed in the attack and 68 executed, after torture, before executions were halted because of public opinion and the intercession of the Archbishop of Santiago. 32 survived in prison, and 50 had escaped, including Castro. Thereafter, Castro's hitherto unnamed movement was called "the 26th July Movement" (cf. the symbol of the Bastille in France).

v. Castro, who had fled westward into the Sierra Maestra mountains, was captured on 1st August 1953 by Lieutenant Pedro Sarria, a humane Negro, who, then and later, prevented Castro from being killed. Castro's trial September-October 1953, in secret after his oratory in his defence, resulted in a 15-year prison sentence. His defence was expanded, smuggled out of prison, and, printed as "History will Absolve Me", proved very effective propaganda.

vi. In May 1955, pressed by liberals and anxious to improve his public image, while at the same time underestimating the danger, Batista released Castro. Castro launched an opposition campaign, but in July 1955, went into exile in Mexico for safety. In Mexico, where he was lucky to survive hostile authorities, he began to train a force. In 1956, the Argentine doctor and revolutionary Che Guevara (who in 1967 went to Bolivia where he was killed) was recruited, as was the Spanish Civil War veteran Alberto Bayo, to help train the force. In the meantime, Frank Pais ran things in Cuba.

vii. In February-March 1956, the 26th July Movement separated (permanently) from the Ortodoxes (see 2 i above), who had entered into discussions with the Batista government. In general, older politicians bargained with Batista, while the younger ones turned to violence.

viii. On 25th November 1956, with 82 men and supplies, Castro left Mexico on board the small motor yacht Granma, which he had bought in September 1956. On 2nd December 1956, they landed in the Oriente Province of Cuba. Finance for the expedition came from supporters in Cuba, but ex-President Carlos Prío paid the 50,000 dollars in Mexico for the Granma. The landing was timed to coincide with a general strike and a national rebellion, which would be begun by his supporters in Cuba. Although his supporters were dubious about the chances of success, Castro exuded confidence.

ix. Surprisingly, Castro's band of insurgents not only survived in Cuba but grew in number, forcing Batista in January 1959 into flight to Spain (and then Portugal). At first, José Miro Cárdenas became Prime Minister and Manuel Urrutia President. However, Castro did not stay long in the wings and in February 1959 made himself Prime Minister.

### 3. His personality.

i. Egoistic (as a child he had been spoiled and had had tantrums if he did not get his way!); rarely took advice; confident and determined (never giving up and never doubting the rightness of his cause); a man of action, and courageous and daring to a foolhardy extent; unpredictable; ruthless; opportunistic; idealist (he could have led a life of wealth and ease), with a capacity for undue optimism and self-deception (for example, in January 1959, asking: "How could I do harm? We have the most wonderful plans for Cuba". He also spoke of overtaking the US economy!); pragmatic, considerable political nous (for example, in 1957 co-operating with the Ortodoxes) and skill in oratory; a lone wolf unwilling to take orders or to confide in others, even his brother Raul; very hard worker (in a crisis, he would be everywhere, rallying; as President, he would regularly help for two or so weeks to gather the annual sugar harvest); a great reader (especially history) but interested in sport rather than culture; good memory for places (this helped greatly in the early days in the Sierra mountains); never has any money and lives very simply (in the house of Celia Sánchez's, with whom he apparently has a platonic relationship).

ii. He is very reticent about his private life (for example, in 1956, he told no-one about his father's death), but strong family feelings, even keeping in touch with an old aunt in Spain. His elder brother Ramón ran the family plantation and opposed Fidel's burnings and the 1959 agricultural reforms, but he helped Fidel and later directed the agricultural reforms in the east. However, his

sister Juanita was never reconciled; in 1962-63, having helped the counter-revolutionaries, she left Cuba.

4. His views. (nb. He has read the 19th century nationalist poet and writer Jose Marti more than anyone else.)

i. In December 1961, he publicly proclaimed Marx-Leninism as the solution to Cuba's problems, much to the surprise of Communists! (The Cuban Communist Party had been established in 1925 by Juan Antonio Mello.) It is hard to establish when and how far Castro came to be influenced by Communism. According to Richard Gott (the Guardian correspondent and Latin American expert), it was clear in retrospect that Castro always intended more radical reforms than he at first indicated. The Ortodoxes, of which Castro was a founder member, were anti-Communist and, in April 1959, Castro, on a visit to the US, emphasized that he disagreed with Communism. Hugh Thomas, author of the detailed "Cuba, or the Pursuit of Freedom", is convinced that Castro was not communist in 1959, but was dragged into the Marxist camp by the developments over the next 2 years.

Possibly Castro was influenced by his brother Raul, who had been a member of the Communist Youth. Che Guevara was never in the Communist party or a student of Communist ideas, and was a revolutionary rather than a Communist, so he was not responsible for Castro's conversion. Probably Castro concluded that he needed Communist support, as, once the old administration had gone, the Communist cadres were the best organized; moreover, the removal of US influence was dangerous, if not impossible, without the support of the Russians, whose views of US imperialism coincided with his own. Also, Communists in Cuba very moderate, some even having served in Batista's government! Communists co-operated with Castro no doubt as they hoped to take over, but Communist initiatives in 1962 and 1968 were slapped down.

ii. Castro is a Castroist rather than a Communist and Communist leaders (Carlos Rodriguez and Blas Roca) have been kept subordinate. No programmes were announced, just vague promises of social revolution (i.e., a pragmatic approach). Admittedly, in 1953 in "History will Absolve Me", he outlined a programme: agricultural reform, rent reductions, industrial, economic and social development, elimination of unemployment, much of which was later achieved; however, the promise of free speech and a free press, and operation of the 1940 constitution which was moderately liberal, were never achieved. The keynotes of his policies have been: social revolution by the redistribution of wealth, agrarian reform, equality of opportunity, and independence from foreign political, economic and social domination.

iii. He has an overwhelming desire for independence from foreign domination and especially the removal of US influence. His plans for social reform inevitably upset US interests. (Richard Gott

suggests that Castro deliberately upset the US in order to achieve fame and to unite people behind him.)

iv. He is convinced that he represents the will of the people.

III. The Seizure of Power (nb. Castro was only 32 at the time and had only about 800-1,000 men at the most, in the main middle-class university students. His was the first revolution to gain power in a technically advanced society by force in peacetime. Throughout, he was extremely lucky.)

1. His return to Cuba. (cf. The US Bay of Pigs fiasco-see V below.)

i. On 25th November 1956, 82 men and supplies on a 12-crew motor yacht, the Granma, left the port of Tuxpan in Mexico, planning to land in Cuba at the same time as the start of a national rebellion. Storms delayed the arrival by 2 days to 2nd December, by which time the rebellion, the Pais Rising of 30 November, had been crushed. (Pais was killed by police in July 1957.) Castro's 26th July Movement supporters were waiting north of Niquero, but Castro landed to the south near Belic, where he was unable to land all the supplies as the area was swampy, and he was surprised by government forces. The government forces were on the alert after the rising and Castro's boast in Mexico of landing before 31st December. A spotter plane gave the alert, and a frigate was sent.

ii. Castro managed to escape from the landing with the loss of only 7 men. His force then marched for 3 days without food or water. On 5th December, while resting without sentries in a cane field at Alegria del Pio, they were surrounded by government forces. Many of the 26th July force were shot, or burnt when the cane was set alight, but a number, including Castro, escaped and in late December 1956, 30 men (not the 12 of legend) with 7 weapons reached the safety of the Sierra Maestra Mountains in the east, the most backward area of Cuba.

2. The early build-up of the Campaign (to March 1958).

i. Like Lenin, Castro was, and still is, able to inspire despite the hopelessness of the situation. His followers came to be called the "barbudos" ("the bearded ones": the beard became a sort of revolutionary trademark and uniform). He had the good fortune to gain the support of the local leader Crescencio Perez, and therefore of the local peasants, who resented the way government soldiers robbed them. A number of air-strips (vital for supplies) were set up.

ii. Although raids were made from the rural mountain base on government property, communications and personnel, the main strength of the movement to mid-1958 was in the towns, a fact later played down by Castro. Urban terrorism was organized

from the headquarters in Santiago. However, Castro mistrusted the towns, especially after the lack of response to his call in April 1958 for a general strike. Only the peasants had shown enthusiasm and anyway, their training in Mexico had been for jungle fighting! Castro is quoted by Regis Debray (a French left-winger) as saying that "The city is a cemetery for revolutionaries and resources". Certainly it was the fixed Sierra base, established in March 1958 that won Cuba. (nb. The myth put out by Regis Debray that the Cuban contribution to revolution was the "foco", meaning a constantly moving rural base, which clearly failed with Che Guevara in Bolivia.)

iii. Castro wisely developed a "second front" of propaganda. In February 1957, he acquired publicity, in view of government censorship, by arranging an interview with the US journalist Herbert Matthews of the New York Times, in which Castro insisted he was fighting for a democratic Cuba; the resulting publicity brought the lifting of censorship in Cuba, which in turn brought growing support for Castro. At the time, Castro had only 18 men, but Matthews was led to believe there were more. Castro also established and used to good effect the rebel Radio Rebelde (Rebel Radio), run by the Marxist intellectual, Carlos Franqui. In March 1958, Castro set up 400 small schools and the Tumbasiete Political School to train people in indoctrination.

iv. In July 1957, Castro arranged a meeting with Raul Chiblas of the Ortodoxos, and Dr. Felipe Pazos, ex-President of the National Bank of Cuba. This resulted in the July Sierra Maestra Manifesto; Castro thus gained an air of respectability, plus the support of the more conservative opposition, which Castro found useful in thwarting the growing attempt of the urban leaders to challenge his authority. Castro was also lucky that on 30 July the ex-schoolteacher Frank Pais was killed by police, thereby giving him complete control and avoiding a split in the Movement.

v. Batista's response was increased repression, with the arrest of suspects, terror, torture, executions and, in January 1957, suspension of all civil rights. This only increased Castro's support!

vi. The first important Castro victory was the battle of El Uvero on the south coast of Oriente Province in May 1957, when the rebels overwhelmed the garrison, seized arms, and then melted back. The rebels also suffered many setbacks, such as in September 1957 when they failed to seize the naval base at Cienfuegos.

3. The final steps. (nb. Castro was convinced that he represented the will of people.)

i. In February 1958, the rebels began a kidnapping campaign, commencing with the Argentine racing driver Juan Fangio, who was abducted before the Cuban Grand Prix. He was released after the race and was sympathetic to Castro. June-July 1958 and October 1958, kidnapping was at its height, especially against US oil workers.

ii. On 17th March 1958, Castro issued his manifesto to the Cuban people of "total war versus the Batista Tyranny", followed by a stepping up of his campaign. Then 9th April 1958 saw a general strike, especially in Havana and Santiago, with much street fighting; for a time in Havana, the rebels held the radio and TV station. At the same time, Castro, who still had possibly only 100 men (although, more likely, 800, and according to some sources, 4,000), announced the opening of two new fronts, one under his brother Raul in the north in Oriente Province, and the other under Juan Almeida in the east.

iii. On 24th May 1958, Batista opened a massive offensive with 10,000 troops supported from the air against Castro's 100-300 rebels, who were pushed back, burning the sugar harvests and plantations as they went. By mid-August 1958, Batista's offensive was crumbling, with the onset of torrential rain and the hurricane season, and was over by August. The effectiveness of the offensive had been reduced by the US suspension on 14th March 1958 of arms shipments and US pressure to end the air attacks on the rebels (although US advisers continued to assist Batista's forces). The more benign US stance increased after the rebels in June 1958 captured 50 US miners, sugar workers and servicemen from Guantanamo base, and released them unharmed in July.

iv. As before, Castro did not neglect the political front. He called for a common strategy of armed insurrection, a general strike, and an end to US aid to Batista. In June 1958, he organized the Caracas Pact (also called the Unity Pact of the Sierra Maestra) which he announced over the rebel radio. This was a general multi-class union of 8 opposition groups and included the former presidents Carlos Prío and Gran San Martín, who organized supplies from Miami. The Pact called for a provisional government by a "Junta of Unity", with the lawyer José Miro "Co-ordinator" (Prime Minister), Judge Manuel Urrutia as President, and Castro as Commander-in-Chief. It was promised that those guilty of crimes would be punished by the provisional government.

It was not clear whether Castro was genuine in promising to share power or was just using a tactic. Whatever the case, Castro gained funds and increased strength to about 800 men (although some say 4,000) and he was co-ordinator of a broad front. Actions such as handing over 443 prisoners of war to the Red Cross helped his image.

v. In August 1958, Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos and 150 men were sent west to Las Villas Province (capital Santa Clara) in the centre of the island, and September reached the mountains of Esacambray, where by October they had gained control, dominating the central highway of the island. This success brought Castro more support. This autumn offensive was the beginning of the end for Batista.

vi. In November 1958, Batista held elections, intending to show his popular support, but the elections were so clearly rigged that the opposition grew!

vii. In December 1958, the towns of Sancti Spiritus and Santa Clara fell to Castro's forces under Guevara and Cienfuegos. By 28th December, the rebels were on the outskirts of Santiago, which they occupied on 12th January 1959 with little resistance, although previously the town had seen the most bitter fighting of the war.

viii. On 1st January 1959, Batista fled, initially to the Dominican Republic, leaving power in the hands of General Eulogio Cantillo. Batista had been beaten psychologically rather than militarily. Also on 1st January, Guevara and Cienfuegos occupied Havana and, largely because of Castro's fear of the military attempting a coup, a general strike was ordered for the as yet unliberated areas.

ix. In January 1959, Castro reached Havana from Santiago and a revolutionary government was set up as arranged beforehand (see iv. above).

#### 4. Castro's assumption of personal power

i. Matthews (see 2 iii above) was convinced that Castro did not intend taking over and becoming the new Caudillo or leader. However, there are some indications that Castro wanted power (for example, his refusal to confer with Colonel Ramon Barquin who, April 1956, had led a liberal military plot against Batista and been sent to gaol as a result).

ii. By February 1959, it was clear to Miro that Castro was not going to let the government run the country and that there were in fact two governments. There was also growing division because of Castro's readiness to co-operate with the Communists.

iii. On 13th February 1959, Cardona resigned and 16 February Castro became Prime Minister, implementing at once radical measures ranging from price controls to laws against Havana gaming houses. Within 14 months, Castro had appointed his own men to positions of power.

5. The acquisition of power was not accompanied by mob or other vengeance as happened 1933 in Cuba or in Venezuela 1958 when General Perez was overthrown, although by the end of January 1959 about 300 had been shot. Castro on the radio called for restraint and promised trials. Probably, the Batista forces lost no more than 300 soldiers, and probably not more than 2,000 in all died.

#### 6. Reasons for Castro's success.

i. Castro was not just a man of action but was politically astute, for example, organizing the 1958 Caracas Pact and linking his revolution to the past national hero Jose Marti, who had been killed in 1895 in a Spanish ambush. Castro worked to convince people that

his revolution was the logical conclusion to the 1895 and 1932 revolutions, which he claimed had been thwarted by the US. His propaganda was good, for example, the slogan "Liberty with Bread. Bread without Terror".

ii. Batista was not of the same calibre as Castro and the US turned against him, not anticipating the problem Castro would become.

iii. The rebels were helped by the existence of a good communication system and a uniform language. They, and especially Castro, were extremely lucky; for example, Castro was very fortunate to escape capture and execution on a number of occasions before 1959, and the death of Pais in July 1957 prevented a leadership split.

iv. The Catholic Church was anti-Batista and was not too powerful. On 1st March 1958, the Archbishop of Havana had appealed to Batista for a government of national union.

#### IV. Reinforcement of his position-the establishment of a dictatorship.

##### 1. Factors

i. Batista had concentrated power in his own hands, so it was hard for Castro not to do the same in order to prevent a vacuum.

ii. Castro is pragmatic and had no fixed programme for the achievement of reforms. Despite his promises, probably genuine at the time, he quickly concluded that the country could not afford liberal democracy. Castro is also convinced of his own rightness and always liked to get his own way. Castro is clearly a very charismatic character; Hugh Thomas (author of probably the best book on the Cuban revolution) suggests that he is comparable to a "santero" (a priest of the Afro-Cuban cult), "interpreting the revolution to the faithful like an African deity".

iii. In May 1959, Castro said "Capitalism can kill a man with hunger, while Communism kills a man by destroying his freedom". But he came to rely increasingly on the communists (who, after July 1958, and after much debate, had co-operated with Castro), although at first, there were no communists in his government, and he did not open diplomatic relations with the USSR.

But in April 1961, before the Bay of Pigs, (see below, section V) Castro declared himself a socialist, and then in December, 1961 a Marxist. Cuba became the first country in the Western hemisphere to adopt communism and the only country to become communist of its own accord after power had been seized.

The change was probably initially because of his desire to use the efficient communist organization but he soon came to regard communism as the cure to Cuba's problems, and,

especially after the April 1961 Bay of Pigs episode, saw the USSR as the bastion against the US. He was probably also influenced by the defection of many early supporters, mainly middle class ones such as Diaz Lanz, the air force commander. However, the communists were always relegated to a subordinate position, and Castroism had taken over the communists, not the reverse.

In 1961, the 26th July Movement and the PSP-the People's Socialist Party, the Communist party-were "merged" into the ORI, the Integrated Revolutionary Organization. On 26th July 1962, Cuba was declared to be a one party state, ruled by the new United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution (PURSC). In October 1965, the Party was renamed the Communist Party, but it was clear that Castro, who was always the 1st Secretary, dominated, and relations with the Communists were not always good (especially 1962-5). In 1973, there were only 200,000 party members. The Central Committee of 100 rarely meets, and it is the 1st Secretary, the Politburo and Secretariat that run things. Nowhere else has a leader declared himself a Communist party member, let alone leader of the Party, and been accepted.

iv. There is no real party or doctrine and government is by personal followers (barbudos, Fidelistas) who tend to be yes-men. His brother Raul serves as Defence Minister, deputy party leader and heir.

v. The Fidelistas were untrained and inexperienced in government ("Les enfants au pouvoir", according to the French left-wing philosopher Sartre) but Castro was ready to overrule experts. By nature, he is disorganized and unbusinesslike; for example, in 1959, it took the Treasury Minister Rufo 20 days to get to see Castro about tax reforms. This creates bottlenecks in government.

## 2. Government system.

i. Despite early promises and the theoretical continuation of the 1940 constitution, a democratically elected government was declared "unnecessary". Castro runs the government, being Commander-in-Chief, Prime Minister and minister for a number of other things, including Interior, Defence, Health and Culture, while his supporters fill other posts. Government is through a centralized bureaucracy.

a. June 1959 saw the replacement of several moderates and liberals in the Cabinet by communist supporters. Castro, once the old regime had gone, rapidly came to the conclusion that the moderates were too reluctant to reform and that the communist cadre network was needed.

b. In July 1959, President Manuel Urrutia was replaced by Oswaldo Dorticos, a member of the 26th July Movement and an ex-Communist. (Apparently as a tactic to remove the remaining moderates, on 17th July 1959, Castro resigned as Prime Minister and accused President Urrutia of causing disunity by his anti-communism. This brought messages of support to Castro and

the demand for Urrutia's resignation for betraying the revolution. Urrutia gave in and resigned. Dorticos became President and Castro returned as Prime Minister.)

c. The judiciary was replaced.

d. In November 1959, a non-revolutionary expert, Felipe Pazo, was replaced as head of the National Bank of Cuba by the amateurish but politically acceptable Che Guevara.

e. In November 1959, the Cuban Workers' Confederation, the CTC, appointed a pro-Castro leadership; the former leader, David Salvador, was later gaoled.

f. In October 1959, Castro's chief lieutenant Camilo Cienfuegos disappeared on a flight inside Cuba and the plane was never found; Castro, according to his opponents, was responsible for the disappearance and had had incriminating evidence against him removed. In 1961, Castro accused the communists (especially the Secretary Blas Roca) of trying to take over and in 1962 reasserted his independence of the communists, exiling Anibal Escalante who had almost established a stranglehold on government administration.

ii. In 1972, an Executive Committee was established to take over many of Castro's functions, for example the Ministry of the Interior, but in 1980 Castro resumed control of a number of important ministries.

iii. In 1975, in an effort to get people to "learn to take on responsibilities and resolve problems of government", the Communist Party Congress, the first to be held, was opened to the people and a programme debated up and down the country. Then in 1976, a new constitution, officially replacing the 1940 one, was promulgated and approved by a referendum. This recognized that Marx-Leninism was the directing force of the state and established "People's Power" (Poderes Populares), which meant limited elections, by all over 16, for local representatives.

iv. In 1989, Castro made it clear that there would be no political or economic relaxation in Cuba, despite what was happening in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as part of Gorbachev's "perestroika" (restructuring) policy. But in fact, there was relaxation; for example, Elizardo Sanchez, of the unofficial Cuban Human Rights and National Reconciliation Commission, was fined, not gaoled, for campaigning for perestroika, and, Martinez Lara, who had earlier been imprisoned, was only fined for producing the fourth edition of a sheet called Franquaza (meaning frankness and freedom).

3. Popular support. (Castro, especially at first, was clearly supported by the majority, who made considerable economic and social gains, although there was no political freedom.)

i. Castro and his reforms have been generally popular with the working classes. His was the first government where leaders did not enrich themselves, although in 1966, Castro cracked down and

punished those who had adopted "dolce vita" ways. June-July 1989 saw the most serious corruption cases since 1959: June 1989, eight Ministry of the Interior officials were arrested for involvement in drug trafficking and the Minister of the Interior Jose Abrantis had to resign for negligence; in July 1989, General Arnaldo Ochoa, the former Commander-in-Chief of Cuban troops in Angola, and other officers were executed for black-marketeering and drug trafficking. Liberty of the press and similar freedoms had little meaning to most Cubans after years of virtual dictatorship. Castro is always spoken of as Fidel or Commandante. Admittedly, on 16th June 1962, housewives in Cardenas demonstrated (after the imposition on 12th March 1962 of food rationing) and there have been attempts to assassinate Castro, for example in 1966.

ii. "Propaganda is...the soul of every struggle" (Castro) and there is no freedom of speech etc., although the papers increasingly reported complaints of economic inefficiency and poor quality goods.

a. Castro is a good speaker - quiet and with the knack of imparting the feeling of sharing his thoughts in quest of answers.

b. Effective use of TV has been made and there are more TVs per capita than in France. There was "Government by television" (Matthews). Posters are widely used.

c. Press censorship, largely by virtue of the Communists running the printing unions. The government news agency is called Granma and the party newspaper is the only daily.

d. Education was developed.

iii. He has united people behind him by stirring animosity against the US.

iv. The Catholic Church was weak in Cuba (cf. three priests per 100,000 people in Cuba and 52 per 100,000 in Poland) largely as it was too associated with wealthy and anti-nationalist sentiment. It has not challenged Castro and in turn has been left alone. Admittedly, 1960-61, saw the expulsion of a number of priests, mostly Spanish, but for political reasons, and relations with the Vatican have been retained. Castro respects religion but has no personal convictions.

4. Repression. (This was not as bad as under Batista, or Papa Doc in Haiti, or in Indonesia, where 100,000 communists were killed in one month.)

i. In the autumn of 1959 and the spring of 1960, there were summary mass trials and executions of opponents and Batista supporters or officials who had not fled. There were numbers in prison without trial and, although they were not in fact authorized by Castro, cases of landowners being roughed up. The disdain for legal impartiality was illustrated in December 1959 in the trial of Major Hubert Matos, a former teacher, who protested at growing communist influence and resigned from the Rebel Army, only to be arrested for engineering a plot and given a 20 year sentence. Castro

in 1968, admitted that 20,000 political prisoners were held on the Isle of Youth (the new name for the old Batista prison called the Isle of Pines) and elsewhere. In 1978, 4,500 political prisoners were admitted. In 1988, according to Amnesty International, there were 600. Many opponents accused Castro of betraying the revolution by denying political freedom. Castro was thus opposed by people on both right and left.

ii. Castro is aided by an efficient secret police, established in June 1961 as part of the Ministry of the Interior, and led initially by the able Ramiro Valdes, who was helped by 600 Soviet advisers. This was responsible for public order and supervision of the "Committees for the Defence of the Revolution", which had been set up to inform the authorities of counter-revolutionary activity and in 1963 allegedly had 1- million members in factories, offices, etc.

iii. In 1959, Castro replaced the Batista army with the Rebel Army, supplemented by a 250,000 strong paramilitary militia of workers, peasants and students.

iv. Repressive measures increased after the April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, and opposition was virtually eliminated. Further repression came with the start of rationing in March 1962.

v. The strength of the opposition was weakened by the flight of refugees, who by 1968 numbered 350,000-800,000 (5-10% of the population). In 1979, Castro allowed over 100,00 Cuban exiles in the US to visit relations in Cuba; this was a disaster as it apparently encouraged many Cubans in 1980 to seek asylum in the Peruvian and Venezuelan embassies. Consequently, in April 1980, Castro lifted the ban on emigration. This was intended to teach the US a lesson, but it rebounded on Castro as there was a flood of refugees, about 125,000 in number, from the Cuban port of Mariel ("the Mariel bombshell"). This showed the degree of discontent with the regime and worsened relations with the US. It did, however, bring some liberalisation until 1982.

vi. Guns are much in evidence. The car belonging to a secretary at the British embassy was shot up when it unwittingly tried to overtake a weaving car, not realising that it was the end of Castro's cavalcade.

vii. In 1989, Castro defended the Chinese suppression May-June 1989 of the Pro-democracy Movement, in which perhaps several thousands were killed.

## V. The Bay of Pigs (Bahia de Cochinos) April 1961)- Operations Fish and Must Go.

1. In March 1960, President Eisenhower authorized aid and training to the 1,400-strong " 2,506th Brigade" of anti-Castro exiles, who wanted to overthrow the Castro regime. Eisenhower was angered by Castro's expropriation of US property and by the establishment of an apparently communist regime in a strategically

important area. On becoming President in 1961, Kennedy continued Eisenhower's policy of support. Similar operations in the past, such as the 1954 one against Guatemala, had brought down regimes of which the US disapproved.

2. The invading force sailed from Nicaragua in 5 US ships, landing 17th April 1961 in the south of Las Villas Province. They were quickly surrounded by 20,000 men, and 19th April, 1,000 surrendered. (They were released in 1962 in return for \$53 million in food and medicines from private US organizations.)

### 3. Reasons for failure.

i. Castro was ready and there was no element of surprise. He rushed to the area, which he knew well, and used air-support effectively; 2 boats were sunk, and the rest left without unloading. The invaders were not welcomed as liberators and the first assault was held in check by peasant militia men who died to the last man waiting for help.

ii. Frank Bender, the CIA Cuba operator, refused to cooperate with the MRP (Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo) the only effective opposition, as it was too left wing, and so they were not even told of the invasion date. The invasion force was inexperienced and led by the inadequate Manuel Artime. Kennedy did not commit US forces (cf. President Johnson, who in 1965 sent 30,000 US marines into the Dominican Republic to overthrow the regime) on the assumption that it would be as easy as Guatemala had been in 1954. Kennedy had belatedly authorized naval air cover but there were different time zones and the US planes arrived 1 hour after the invasion began.

### 4. Results.

i. Castro expected another invasion. Thus, on 6th April 1961, in a speech at the funeral of 7 men killed in a bombing raid by anti-Castro forces, he said that a US invasion was imminent.

ii. It was one reason for Soviet influence and missiles.

iii. There was greater unity and support for Castro, despite his repression of alleged opposition.

VI. Economic and social development. (nb. The population in 1959 was 7 million and in 1967 8 million.)

### 1. Factors

i. "When Castro entered Havana ... no one knew what he was going to do. It is doubtful that he himself knew, except in the most general terms." (T. Draper in "Castro's Revolution".)

ii. He came to see Marx-Leninism (rather than communism) as the solution to Cuba's problems. In December 1961, he unequivocally announced his conversion to communism. Even so,

he was pragmatic in approach and the transformation from capitalism began without consultation with the communists. In 1962, thanks largely to Carlos Rafael, a 5-year plan for industry was adopted, and in 1964 a Central Planning Board (JUCEPLAN, the Junta Centrale de Planificacion) was set up, headed by Castro himself, to control and plan the whole economy. In 1972, Cuba joined COMECON, the Soviet trading bloc, becoming the only member of COMECON outside the Soviet bloc apart from Mongolia. Cuba became the largest recipient of Soviet foreign aid.

iii. The late 1970s and early 1980s saw small capitalist experiments, for example, farmers' markets free of price controls, but these allegedly led to jealousy and ill-feeling, and such experiments were not continued.

## 2. Main problems.

i. Dependence on sugar and the US. (The US had taken 3/5 of the Cuban crop at above market price). Growing world sugar production meant that prices fell and, by 1958, Cuba was producing barely 1/10 of world production, against 1/4 previously. Admittedly the economy was helped by the increase in sugar prices in the 1970s.

ii. The loss of US markets because of the US trade embargo, as well as of US investment and tourism. (See notes VI.2.) The loss could not be entirely made up by the USSR and China (in February 1960, Anastas Mikoyan, the Soviet Vice-Premier, headed a delegation to Cuba, as a result of which a Soviet trade mission was established; in July 1960, Cuba made a trade agreement with China), which increasingly had their own economic difficulties. In October 1960, Eisenhower banned all exports to Cuba except medicines; then in February 1962, a total US trade ban was imposed, to which Castro responded with the Second Declaration of Havana, a call to all Latin America to rise against US imperialism. August-November 1962, all US property was expropriated without compensation, although previously there had been compensation for concerns nationalised, in the form of 20-year bonds.

His recognition of East Germany caused West Germany to end diplomatic recognition, trade and aid.

Soviet and Eastern bloc aid and trade did not make up for the US trade ban, and between 1989 and 1991 communist aid ended.

iii. Financing an ambitious development programme. By mid-1963, Castro was forced to abandon his plan for rapid industrialization and concentrate on increased sugar production to finance development.

iv. The flight of professionals and technicians, especially in 1960. In 1958, 45% of the peasants were illiterate. The new Cuban rulers generally lacked experience and had to learn their jobs. Castro was unwise to appoint Che Guevara as director of the National Bank and then Minister of Industry, in overall charge of

planning; he was not very efficient and wanted an unrealistic, over-ambitious programme.

v. His ambitious foreign policy was a drain on the economy. In 1983, there were officially 123,000 in the armed forces, of whom 70,000 were serving abroad in 35 countries, which admittedly, often, like Angola, paid for the aid.

vi. "We attempted too much at once" (Che Guevara in 1964): for example, redistribution of the land, cuts in rents, free education and health treatment.

vii. The set-back of the October 1963 hurricane, the worst in Cuban history. For example, 1 million out of 6 million cattle were killed and the whole coffee crop was lost. 1968 saw drought.

viii. Sabotage by the opposition.

ix. There are few goods to buy, so there is little incentive to work, which manifests itself in much absenteeism.

x. In the late 1970s, and early 1980s, Castro experimented with capitalist elements. For example, farmers' markets were introduced, free of price controls, and labourers were allowed to fix their rates of pay. However, these reforms apparently caused ill-feeling (one peasant reputedly made 50,000 dollars selling hard-to-come-by garlic), which discouraged further tinkering with the system. However, 1989 saw the start of joint tourist enterprises with foreign companies

### 3. Main goals

i. The development of industry and the end of dependence on sugar; expansion of the export of tobacco, meat, fish, nickel, coffee, fruit. Flood control and irrigation.

ii. Greater equality and all-year employment, not just 6-8 months during the sugar period. Development of health, education and social security.

iii. End of foreign domination and exploitation, although not of foreign investment.

4. Agricultural development. (Less was done for agriculture than for industrial development.)

i. Land distribution, an old promise, was effected. Previously, in 1959, 8% of the population held 71% of the land. By the May 1959 Agrarian Reform Law, which was more radical than the communist plans had been, estates over 1,000 acres were expropriated (except for land used for sugar or rice production or cattle), with compensation in the form of 20-year bonds at 4% interest. Land was distributed to peasants (13 hectares per family). The National Land Reform Institute (INRA), headed by Castro, was set up to administer the reforms, and in particular, to decide which lands should be expropriated.

ii. Castro realized that compulsory collectivization was not possible, but peasants were encouraged to join collectives and co-operatives. This was part of a plan to establish diversified rural

communities with schools, public health, and other social services. By 1960, about 600 agricultural co-operatives had been set up, with people's shops, where the basic necessities of life were available at modest prices. However, in 1961, the first state farms were set up, soon 300 in number. Then, in August 1962, the 600 co-operative farms, which had been badly managed, were transformed into state farms.

iii. In October 1963, the Second Agrarian Reform Law nationalized and broke up the medium sized land holdings. Farmers grew what the government decreed, and crop prices were fixed by the government.

iv. The reduction of sugar cane production was done too quickly as time was needed for adaptation to new crops. In March 1962, food rationing was introduced (this was partly the result of the effort to achieve a more even distribution of supplies) and 1963 saw a return to emphasis on sugar "monoculture".

v. The attempt in 1967 to do away with wages on people's farms was not a great success.

vi. 1967 saw the initiation of "the rice plan" for the cultivation of miracle rice (from the Philippines) in lands which had been largely uncultivated. The plan was spear-headed by the army, using "columna", columns of young volunteers, who worked for 3 years as an alternative to military service.

## 5. Industry.

i. By 1960, 80% industry had been nationalized and was state-run. After 1965, about 60,000 small businessmen, including street vendors, and shops alone were left in private hands, and these were nationalized in March 1968. Mines (cobalt and nickel) were taken over.

ii. Factories were set up in an attempt to reduce imports and create work, but they were generally inefficient, despite attempted co-ordination by the 5-year plans after 1962.

iii. However, industrial development was disappointing. This was one reason for greater emphasis on agricultural development.

6. Fishing. Deep-sea fishing was introduced, using boats bought from Spain. Lobsters and crayfish were exported.

7. Tourism. In 1983, in view of the disappointing economic progress, difficulty in servicing loans, and shortages, an attempt was begun to develop tourism.

## 8. Social development.

i. In 1959, rents were halved, and free education and health treatment begun. The rent cuts destroyed the private building industry, and state housing projects were not as successful

as hoped. By the 1980s, there was an acute housing shortage. In 1985, 20% of accommodation had no electricity and the cities were crumbling.

ii. 1961 was declared the year of education. A large number of schools was set up, and education taken out of church hands (mostly Spanish priests). In 1959, 700,000 attended primary school and 27,000 secondary school; by 1965 the figures were 1,300,000 and 135,000 respectively.

iii. Cultural freedom (music, art; cf. the USSR).

iv. The 1976 Family Code and an effort to improve the status of women. Both parents, if working, were to share family duties, and all children to be taught the same skills and to be treated equally.

v. Although before 1959 he had opposed the idea, military conscription was introduced in 1963 (3-year service, including 3-4 months per annum in agriculture).

vi. Efforts were made to instill "socialist courtesy".

#### 9. An estimate.

i. Corruption was ended; illiteracy was reduced by the late 1960s from 43% down to 3%; many hospitals, roads, and schools were built; many diseases were eradicated and slums destroyed; there was full social equality to Negroes and Mulattos, and the status of women improved. In short, living standards went up for the majority. "No other Latin American country has achieved what Cuba has over these past 30 years in eradicating illiteracy and putting medicine, books, the arts, and sport within the reach of everyone...the most egalitarian society in Latin America"; but "the ideal of equality is incompatible with the ideal of freedom" (Mario Vargas Llosa, Peruvian novelist and politician, in 1989).

ii. But: the maintenance of a large army (300,000 in 1989) has been an economic drain; he failed to end dependence on sugar and on a foreign power. In 1989, the Russians took 74% of Cuban exports-sugar, citrus fruits, nickel, cobalt-and supplied 100% of its oil, coal and newsprint; according to the US, Soviet aid to Cuba in 1987 was about 5 milliard dollars, plus 1- milliard in military aid. However, the Russians, who by 1988 were owed 8 milliard roubles, rapidly cut and then ended their aid in view of their own economic difficulties, the break up of the USSR, 1992, and Castro's unreformist stance. In 1988, the Czechs and Bulgars decided not to renew their preferential trade treaties with Cuba. Consequently, the economic situation in Cuba deteriorated rapidly, with shortages of almost everything.

iii. There has been considerable dissatisfaction (for example. the 1962 demonstrations by housewives in Cardenas and the 1980 exodus by refugees). There has been a shortage of funds for social development and industry. There has been increasing austerity, and many goods are rationed (bread, eggs, meat, coffee, sugar, rice, beans, tooth paste, toilet rolls), while others are scarce

and expensive, although there is little actual hardship, and rationed goods are available at low prices (rationing is in part the result of an attempt to ensure an equitable distribution of goods to all people and not just to the rich who can afford high prices). However, in January 1990, the bread ration was reduced from 100 grams per person per day to 80 grams (about 3 ounces) because of Soviet failure to deliver grain, the result, according to Castro, of the "non-availability" of ships. There have been no private cars since the revolution.

iv. Industrial development was far below expectations, and by 1989 much of the industrial equipment and transportation system was old and needing replacing. 1960-1984, primary goods consistently provided 95% of exports (cf. Costa Rica which in the same period reduced the percentage from 95 to 66).

## VI. Foreign affairs.

### 1. Factors.

1. Fear of US domination, either direct or indirect.

ii. Soviet influence was the only available counterbalance.

Had he not felt the need for Soviet support, he would probably have supported China.

iii. He was not a Soviet "hired gun". His membership of the non-aligned movement was genuine. In 1960, Cuba apparently aided Latin American revolutionaries against Soviet advice; Castro avoided taking sides in the Sino-Soviet rift; in 1973, when Soviet aid to South Yemen was inadequate, Castro provided more extensive aid than the USSR; and in 1989 he refused to adopt perestroika.

iv. Support for "liberation movements" in Latin America and elsewhere, even to the detriment of the Cuban economy.

v. Surprising lack of interest in newly independent Caribbean countries.

vi. Unpredictable and reckless (e.g., he must have realized the danger in 1962 to the world- see 2 below).

vii. Proud of having the second strongest armed force in the Americas.

### 2. Relations with the US.

i. Castro before 1959 made no secret of his antagonism to Yankee imperialism and his promise to liberate Latin America; for example, in June 1958, he had promised "a much wider and bigger war" against the US once the war with Batista had been won. Then, despite his unofficial visit to the US in April 1959 (when Eisenhower pointedly went to Florida to play golf and so did not meet Castro) and his anti-communist assertions, in December 1961, he openly espoused communism, having in 1960 established good relations with the USSR. Cuba was also sited strategically opposite the Panama Canal.

ii. Even so, the possibility of reasonable relations was perhaps squandered by the US, which was influenced by an exaggerated concept of the Cold War and the ease with which Castro could be toppled. Castro seemed genuinely surprised that the US regarded his socialism as meaning Soviet domination. Thus Castro confessed to the Algerian leader, Ben Bella, that the Algerians were lucky to have de Gaulle, who had understood the Algerian position; "If only we had a de Gaulle in the US". In July 1964, Castro in a New York Times interview, stated his desire to normalize relations with the US. However, a US policy statement in July 1960 said that the US would not "tolerate the establishment of a regime dominated by international communism in the western hemisphere" and asserted that the 1823 Monroe Doctrine was as valid as ever. According to some experts, Castro deliberately antagonized the US to unite the Cubans.

Castro had said that he would nationalise foreign and Cuban enterprises. True to his word, in May 1959, US-owned land was expropriated, followed by other US assets, such as sugar mills, which were nationalised in June 1959. The US objection seems to have been more the low level of compensation rather than the idea of nationalisation.

After a US company in June 1960 refused to refine Soviet oil, Castro, nationalised the US owned oil refineries in Cuba, in conformity with a new law in July 1960 that all US property in Cuba was to be nationalised when it was in the national interest. The Eisenhower administration retaliated by reducing the Cuban sugar quota by 95% on 6th July 1960 and ending it in December.

On 9th July 1960, the Soviet government publicly pledged that it would defend Cuba and Khrushchev said that Soviet missiles could reach anywhere; already in July 1960, there was talk of Soviet missiles in Cuba. Between August and November 1960, all US property in Cuba was expropriated without compensation. The nationalisation in October 1960 of the US owned Cuban Telephone and Cuban Electric Companies led to the Eisenhower administration banning all exports to Cuba except medicine. Eventually, in February 1962, a total trade ban with Cuba was imposed.

iii. Already, in January 1961, Eisenhower had broken off diplomatic relations when Castro demanded that the US embassy in Havana should have the same number of staff, 11 in all, as the Cuban embassy in Washington.

iv. In April 1961, the Bay of Pigs invasion failed (see V above), although Castro still feared a US invasion after this. The danger of invasion was clearly less after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 (El Crisis del Caribe), after which the gentleman's agreement between the US and USSR promised Cuban safety. (The US denied any intention of attacking Cuba and the Soviet missiles were withdrawn.)

v. Some co-operation was still possible. For example, in 1972, a US-Cuban anti-hi-jack deal was made. Cuban sportsmen continued to visit the US.

vi. Castro considered President Carter (1977-81) a man of "honesty and frankness", and Carter considered establishing relations. However, revelations in the US in 1979 of the presence of 2,000 or so Soviet troops in Cuba prevented the establishment of better relations, although the Soviets had probably been there since 1975.

vii. Relations were not improved when the US invaded Grenada in 1983 and overthrew the Marxist regime there.

### 3. Relations with the USSR.

i. In July 1960, Khrushchev promised "to do everything to support Cuba .... (against) aggressive forces in the Pentagon". Cuba was a useful base for activities in the Americas, which, at the least, would distract the US, and might be used as a lever to get the West out of Berlin. Already, in February 1960, the Soviet Vice-Premier Mikoyan had visited Cuba and signed a trade deal, including the Soviet purchase of sugar and a low interest loan. However, it was only in May 1962 that Cuba and the USSR re-opened diplomatic relations which had been broken off by Batista in 1952.

ii. The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 brought Cuba security, but Castro was convinced that he was being used by Khrushchev and was angered by Soviet removal of missiles without even consulting him; Castro especially resented Soviet agreement to an international force to inspect missile sites and refused to accept this. In addition, the Missile Crisis (and the later Cuban involvement in Angola) made Castro seem a Soviet stooge.

iii. In May 1963, Castro visited Moscow for the first time and relations improved. But relations were strained again in 1965, when the USSR failed to react strongly to the US invasion of the Dominican Republic and involvement in Vietnam. However, in 1974, Brezhnev visited Havana and 1976 Castro on another visit to Moscow, proclaimed Russia the "bulwark of the world's oppressed".

iv. Cuba supported the USSR when it invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1979. Cuban troops were useful where Russians were not suitable (for example, after 1975 in Africa in Angola and Ethiopia).

v. Castro failed to take sides in the Sino-Soviet dispute, and was critical after 1985 of Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost.

### 4. Latin America.

i. Castro openly promoted revolution even at the expense of upsetting moderate liberal regimes such as Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Colombia. For example, he insisted that revolution was the only possible course; he provided training and equipment; he encouraged Che Guevara to go to Bolivia and supported him; he supported the Sandinistas, who in 1979 seized power in Nicaragua,

and in 1988, there were still 500 Cuban advisers in Nicaragua. He apparently supported the overthrow in 1983 of the Marxist Prime Minister of Grenada, Maurice Bishop, in favour of the more radical Marxist, Bernard Coard, the former deputy Prime Minister; Cuban advisers were expelled by the US invasion force which 1983 overthrew Coard. In 1983, the Marxist dictator of Surinam, Desi Bouterse, expelled Cuban advisers, fearing that they might try to engineer his overthrow.

ii. In January 1962, the US engineered Cuban exclusion from the Organization of American States (OAS). By 1965, all Latin America except Mexico had broken off diplomatic relations and trade. In 1967, Cuba was excluded from the Latin American Common Market (which Castro had proposed in 1959!). However, in the 1970s, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, and Argentina re-opened diplomatic relations, and, by 1988, all the larger Latin American democracies, except Colombia, had restored diplomatic relations. In 1974, the OAS voted 12-3, with 6 abstentions (including the US) to readmit Cuba, but the motion failed to achieve the necessary 2/3 majority. In 1987, Mexico once again proposed Cuban readmission to the OAS.

iii. In August 1967, Castro convened the Latin American Solidarity Organization in Havana to promote revolution; at the same time he questioned the Soviet commitment to revolution.

iv. He was less isolated after the Marxist Sandinistas seized power in Nicaragua in 1979 (although in 1990, they surrendered power after holding elections).

v. Despite his dislike of the Argentine military regime, he supported Argentina against Britain in the Falklands War in 1982.

#### 5. Aid to liberation movements.

i. In 1959, he supported Dominican radicals in their abortive "invasion" of the Dominican Republic (and was surprised that it failed).

ii. He gave aid in the 1960s to the Algerian Liberation Front and to revolutionary groups in Latin America (for example, in Nicaragua the Sandinistas). In 1973, he gave support to Yemen and 1975 to Angola (where he may have drawn the USSR in). In 1977, he met Yasser Arafat in Moscow and pledged support for the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization).

6. In September 1960, he established diplomatic relations with People's China. However, relations after 1966 were cool since People's China failed to supply enough rice.60, the Soviet

