

## Rise and Rule of Fidel Castro

- I. The *Machadato*, 1924-1928
  - A. The *Platt Amendment*
    1. Effectively made Cuba a protectorate of the United States
    2. Cuba could make no treaties without US approval
    3. Cuba's national debt was limited
    4. US permitted to intervene in Cuba for "the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property and individual liberty." (Perez "Cuba 1930-1959" 57)
    5. Cuba's sugar crop was limited to a single market, the US
    6. Cuba's economy opened to US penetration
      - a. Mining
      - b. Transportation
      - c. Banking
      - d. Agriculture
        - (1) sugar
        - (2) tobacco
      - e. Utilities
        - (1) telephone
        - (2) gas
        - (3) electricity
        - (4) water (Perez "Cuba 1930-1959" 57-8)
  - B. *Gerardo Machado* had first been elected President in 1924 to a four year term.
    1. Growing disaffection with the status quo
      - a. The *Junta de Renovación Nacional Civica* denounced graft and corruption in public life in 1923
      - b. University students also organized in 1923 as the *Federación Estudiantil Universitaria (FEU)*
      - c. In 1925, workers organized the *Confederación Nacional Obrera de Cuba (CNOC)*
      - d. Also in 1925, the Cuban Communist Party (**PCC**) was founded. (Perez 1930-1959 59)
  - C. Re-election campaign.
    1. The Conservative and Popular parties up to this time had tended to alternate power among themselves. Therefore, the re-election of Machado would draw opposition.
    2. Machado succeeded in united the traditional elites to re-elect him in order to block the dissidents.
  - D. The Great Depression
    1. Sugar production declined 60 %
    2. The **Hawley-Smoot Tariff** (1930) raised the tariff on Cuban sugar, and Cuba's share of the US market dropped from 49.4 % to 25.3 %

3. Sugar produces cut wages and laid off workers
  4. The *zafra*, the sugar harvest upon which many workers depended, was reduced to 62 days
  5. “Some 250,000 heads of families, representing approximately 1 million people out of a total population of 3.9 million, found themselves totally unemployed..” (Perez 1930-1959 60-2)
  6. Agricultural wages dropped 75 %
  7. Urban wages declined 50 % (Perez 1930-1959 62)
  8. Not surprisingly, suffering led to serious unrest
- E. **General Strike 1930**
1. Organized by the CNOC, involved 200,000 workers
  2. Machado declared a state of siege, organized a secret police, and sent out death squads.
  3. Various resistance organizations arose in response:
    - a. **ABC** (students, intellectuals, and professionals)
    - b. *Organización Celular Radical Revolucionaria (OCRR)*
    - c. *Ala Izquierda Estudiantil (AIE)*
    - d. Sugar workers formed the *Sindicato Nacional Obrero de la Industria Azucarera (SNOIA)*
  4. By 1933, civil war and chaos were very close. The Cuban ambassador appealed to Washington for help.
- F. **The Good Neighbor Policy**
1. FDR had just announced the Good Neighbor Policy, and was unwilling to intervene.
  2. In addition, FDR wanted to restore US market share (that is, beginning to reverse the effects of Hawley-Smoot)
    - a. Cuba had begun Import-Substituting Industrialization in 1927
    - b. US share of imports to Cuba declined from 74.3 % to 53.5 % (Perez 1930-1959 63)
  3. FDR sent **Sumner Welles** as ambassador to Cuba with the goal of negotiating Machado’s resignation
  4. Machado, naturally, did not want to go.
  5. A strike in 1934 brought matters to a crisis. Welles withdrew US support for his regime.
  6. The army intervened, demanding Machado’s departure.
  7. **Carlos Manuel de Céspedes**, a rather colorless figure, becomes President
- II. **The Revolt of the Sergeants 1934**
- A. Cespedes had no solutions to the Depression either.
  - B. One area of opposition grew among junior officers and senior NCOs of the Army, who hoped to be promoted if the Army were purged of Machadistas.
  - C. Mutiny broke out on September 3 in Havana. The mutineers were led by Sergeant **Fulgencio Batista**

- D. The **DEU** joined, and soon other civilian groups joined as well.
- E. A revolutionary junta deposed Cespedes
- F. The junta dissolved itself in September, naming Ramón Grau San Martín, a member of the junta, as President.
- G. -Batista was promoted to Colonel. (Perez 1930-1959 )
- H. Reforms
  - 1. The Platt Amendment was abrogated
  - 2. Utility rates lowered by 40%
  - 3. Women gained suffrage
  - 4. Universities gained autonomy
  - 5. Labor reforms
    - a. Minimum wage for cane cutters
    - b. Labor arbitration
    - c. 8 hour day
    - d. Workman's compensation
    - e. Ministry of Labor
    - f. Nationalization of Labor (50% of all employees must be Cuban)
  - 6. *Colono* associations and peasants had permanent rights over the land they occupied. (Perez 1930-1959 )
- I. US Ambassador **Sumner Welles** saw all of this as destabilizing. He appealed to FDR for intervention, but was turned down. He then turned to encouraging - Batista to overthrow Grau. (Perez 1930-1959 70-72 )
  - 1. Batista threw his support to an older politician, Carlos Mendieta, and the US promptly recognized him, which brought Grau down.
- J. New political parties
  - 1. **Partido Revolucionario Cubano (PRC / Auténtico)**
  - 2. **Joven Cuba**, led by Antonio Guiteras, a clandestine organization espousing revolutionary violence is formed.
- K. 1935 Crackdown
  - 1. A general strike triggered a massive crackdown.
  - 2. Martial law was declared,
  - 3. Unions outlawed
  - 4. Leaders tortured and imprisoned.
  - 5. Antonio Guiteras was killed by the army
  - 6. The crackdown discredited Mendieta, who resigned in 1935
- III. ***Batista's Shadow Government 1935-1940***
  - A. Washington accepted the *Pax Batistiana* and recognized the governments of
    - 1. Jose A. Barnet 1935-6
    - 2. Miguel Mariano Gómez, 1936
    - 3. Federico Laredo Bru 1936-40
  - B. Batista reached a *modus vivendi* with the Communists, who founded the ***Confederacion de Trabajadores Cubanos (CTC)***

- C. Batista engaged in a number of social programs
    - 1. A rudimentary rural education system
    - 2. A Three Year Plan was inaugurated to reform agriculture, public health, education, and public housing
    - 3. The **Jones-Costigan Act** (1934) substituted sugar quotas for tariff protection.
  - D. This was accompanied by massive graft. (Perez 1930-1959 74-75)
  - E. Batista successfully renegotiated the **Permanent Treaty** (the legal form of the Platt Amendment) abrogating the amendment except for Guantanamo Bay
  - F. **The Constitution of 1940**
    - 1. A progressive constitution which provided for referenda, universal suffrage, free elections, and “which sanctioned a wide range of political and civil liberties. The charter’s social provisions included maximum hours and minimum wages, pensions, workers’ compensation, the right to strike and state guarantees against unemployment.” (Perez “*c. 1930-1959*” 77)
- IV. **Presidency of Fulgencio Batista** 1940
- A. Batista ran against Grau, and won easily in the most honest election in a decade.
  - B. Batista’s presidency benefitted from war time conditions.
- V. The **Auténticos** in Power
- A. Grau San Martín and the Auténticos won the election of 1944
  - B. He was succeeded in 1948 by Carlos Prío Socarrás
  - C. Graft, embezzlement, and corruption were again rife, just with different people enriching themselves.
  - D. The government payroll doubled, 11% of the workforce were in government service, and 80% of the budget paid their salaries (Perez 1930-1959 80)
  - E.
  - F. The Communists had renamed themselves the *Partido Socialista Popular (PCP)* but declined under the Auténticos
  - G. In 1947, **Eduardo Chibás** founded the **Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo)** to attack the corruption of the Auténticos
    - 1. Chibás’ decision in 1951, however, to cap his radio show by blowing his brains out on the air, did not help the political climate very much.
  - H. *As was the case in Argentina, such circumstances led to widespread disgust at civilian government and politics. Under such circumstances, the way is paved for a military takeover.*
- VI. **Dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista** 1952
- A. July 26, 1953 Attack on the Moncada Barracks
    - 1. A spectacular failure, it gave Fidel Castro national publicity.
    - 2. Defiant “History will absolve me”
  - B. Batista was re-elected (unopposed) in 1954
  - C. 1955 saw student demonstrations against Batista and the formation of the

- Directorio Revolucionario** which began a guerrilla war
- D. The Auténticos also produced a guerrilla organization
- E. November 1956 Castro lands in Cuba on the *Granma*.
1. He and his followers are attacked, and the remnants flee into the Sierra Maestra
  2. Batista had little more than Rural Guard outposts in the region, which were quite unpopular with the peasants
  3. Two outposts were taken in 1957, provoking military pursuit in the mountains.
  4. The army's behavior simply created more animosity.
  5. 1958 saw Castro's revolution expanding with new columns led by **Raúl Castro, Camilo Cienfuegos** and **Che Guevara**.
- F. In the cities, a Civil Resistance movement coordinated sabotage and terror.
1. Repressive measures merely made the regime more unpopular.
- G. Economic and Social Issues
1. "By the 1950s, sugar had ceased to be a source of economic growth and lacked the capacity to sustain continued economic development. Yet all sectors of the Cuban economy remained vulnerable to the effects of price fluctuations in the international sugar-market. The decline of sugar prices between 1952 and 1954 precipitated the first in a series of recessions in the Cuban economy in the course of the decade." (Perez "*c. 1930-1959*" 87)
  2. Between 1955 and 1958, an expanding population put 200,000 young men into the job market, while only 8,000 new jobs were created. (Perez "*c. 1930-1959*" 87)
  3. Capital investment tended to flow out of the island
    - a. Profits from foreign owned companies
    - b. Investments from wealthy Cubans in the US
      - (1) \$150,000,000 in South Florida real estate
  4. US investment in Cuba
    - a. "90 % of the telephone and electricity services"
    - b. "50 % of railroads"
    - c. 40 % of sugar production"
    - d. 25 % of all bank deposits held in US branch banks
    - e. Total investment in 1958 was \$1,000,000,000
      - (1) \$386,000,000 in services
      - (2) \$270,000,000 in petroleum and mining
      - (3) \$265,000,000 in agriculture
      - (4) \$80,000,000 in manufacturing (Perez "*c. 1930-1959*" 87-88)
  5. Unemployment and Underemployment
    - a. Labor's share of net income declined from 70.5% to 66.4 %
    - b. By 1957, 17 % of the labor force was unemployed

- c. By 1957, 13 % of the labor force was under-employed
  - d. The sugar industry provided 25 % of all jobs.
    - (1) “60 % of the workers were employed for only six months or less” (the *zafra*)
      - (a) “The average sugar worker was employed less than 100 days of the year.”
      - (2) “Only 30 % were employed more than ten months”
  - e. Under such conditions, labor resisted innovations (such as mechanization) which would have improved productivity, and therefore, Cuba’s position in the world marketplace. (Perez “*c. 1930-1959*” 88)
6. Inequities between rural and urban Cuba
- a. Agricultural workers averaged 80 pesos / month; urban workers 120 pesos plus fringe benefits / month
  - b. 33% of the population lived in the countryside, where
    - (1) 15 % had running water (80 % urban)
    - (2) 9 % had electricity (83 % urban)
    - (3) Medical and dental services were concentrated in the cities, absent in the countryside
    - (4) 40 % were illiterate (national rate was 20%) (Perez “*c. 1930-1959*” 88)
7. Land distribution
- a. 22 large sugar companies owned 20% of the agricultural land, much of which was not planted, but held in reserve for boom times.
  - b. Cattle ranchers also held considerable land in disuse
  - c. Peasants are excluded from these lands as workers or farmers. (Perez “*c. 1930-1959*” 89)
8. The Middle Classes
- a. The Cuban middle classes were well off by Latin American standards, but their standard of comparison was the US, not Latin America.
  - b. Comparison to Latin America
    - (1) 2<sup>nd</sup> in per capita income (\$374) to Venezuela (\$857)
    - (2) Third in radios and televisions / thousand (behind Mexico and Brazil)
    - (3) 1<sup>st</sup> in telephones, newspapers, and passenger motor vehicles
    - (4) 3<sup>rd</sup> in daily average food consumption (behind Argentina and Uruguay)
    - (5) Consumption of foreign imports was increasing, to \$777,000,000 in 1957
  - c. Comparison to US

- (1) Per capita income in Mississippi, the poorest state, was \$1,000 (Perez "*c. 1930-1959*" 89)
    - (2) Per capita income was stagnant, or even declining in Cuba.
  9. The corruption and incompetence of the Batista government, plus the internal instability that it spawned, were serious barriers to economic improvement.
  10. 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement's strategy
    - a. "It was in 1958 that the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement opened a war against property and production across the island as a means to isolate Batista from the support of economic elites, both foreign and domestic. The message was clear: conditions of normality would not return until Batista departed. In February the guerrilla leadership announced its intention to attack sugar mills, tobacco factories, public utilities, railroads and oil refineries. The destruction of the sugar harvest in particular emerged as the principal goal of insurgent strategy. 'Either Batista without the zafra or the zafra without Batista', the 26<sup>th</sup> of July intoned again and again." (Perez "*c. 1930-1959*" 90)
- H. **The Pact of Caracas July 1958**
  1. Fidel Castro recognized as the principal leader of the opposition to Batista
  2. At the same time, Batista sent 12,000 men in a major offensive into the Sierra Maestra.
  3. But the end of summer saw the offensive collapse.
  4. Batista's armed forces began to disintegrate.
  5. The insurgents launched their own offensive following this failure, moving generally east to west. (Perez "*c. 1930-1959*" 90)
- I. **US Attitude**
  1. By March 1958, the US had concluded that Batista had to go. An arms embargo was set in place, which hurt Batista.
  2. More serious, the suggestion that Batista no longer had US support was psychologically devastating to the army. (Perez "*c. 1930-1959*" 90)
  3. By this point, with widespread opposition among the population and disintegration of the army, Batista is doomed.
  4. It was also clear at this point, that Castro was the most important figure in the revolution
  5. On December 9, the US offered Batista asylum if he would leave Cuba.
- J. **Batista departs**
  1. January 1, 1959, Batista fled the country
  2. The military attempted to create a new government, but Castro rejected and called for a general strike.
  3. The army quit fighting
  4. **Che Guevara** and **Camilo Cienfuegos** occupied the military base at

Havana.

## VII. The Cuban Revolution 1959

### A. Political Developments

1. “The leadership framed social goals in nonutilitarian terms. Collectivist themes were constantly articulated, and efforts to deepen mass revolutionary consciousness were earnestly pursued. Militancy was stressed in politics, culture, state-labor relations, and Party development. Coercive measures were employed against ideological nonconformists and others whose behavior deviated from revolutionary norms.” (Del Aguila 84)
2. 1959: Trial and executions of Batista supporters draws sharp criticism from US for lack of procedural safeguards and concern for rights of the accused (Dominguez 97)
3. **June 1959 Cabinet Crisis** –Air Force head Pedro Luis Diaz Lanz and President Manuel Urrutia both were forced out, both complaining of Communist influence.
  - a. That month, **Che Guevara** made first official contact with USSR.
- 4.
5. October : **Raúl Castro** takes over the military as well as second in command of the state and heir designate.
6. October 19 **Huber Matos**, a leader of the revolutionary war resigns as commander of Camagüey province, citing Communist influence. He is arrested;

### B. Economic Developments

1. **Redistributive economic policies– urban rents sharply cut and real wages rise. Utility rates were sharply cut.** (Perez Reform 319)
2. Property held by Batista supporters expropriated, creating a state sector in the economy (Dominguez 103)
3. October 13: Cuban owned firms, such as sugar mills, banks, large wholesale and retail enterprises are socialized. (Dominguez 103)
4. October 16: **Urban Reform Act** socialized all commercially owned real estate. (Dominguez 103)
5. **First Agrarian Reform Act**: created the **Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria (INRA)** , and set a limit to landholdings at 1,000 acres [more than 402 hectares], with government expropriation of the remaining land. Large and medium estates were taken over, which were later converted into state farms on the Soviet model, with the peasants receiving a salary and a small share of profits. (Suchliki 138)
6. **INRA** was to organize the land reform, and eventually came to control most rural programs, including health, credit, housing, and education. (Perez 320)
7. All entrepreneurs were assumed to be anti-revolutionary, and steps are

taken to put loyal revolutionaries in charge, even if they were completely incompetent.(Dominguez 103-4)

8. “Such decisions were justified on the grounds of national security and also because direct ownership and control over the means of production were deemed necessary for economic planning. Economic centralization was viewed as a rational step to generate economic growth. The revolutionary leaders were not compelled to socialize the economy: they acted autonomously and, in their view, prudently to implement an ideological vision of society of the society they wished to build. Power had to be concentrated in the hands of the few to achieve the aspiration of the many.” (Dominguez 104)

C. Social Developments

1. Prostitution, gambling, the lottery and cockfighting were banned
2. A workers’ organization, the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) is established.
  - a. “Given the fusion between the state, the Party, and theoretically the proletariat, workers’ organizations in Marxist societies cannot assume adversarial or independent economic and political roles.” (Del Aguila 177)
  - b. The goals of the CTC are “(1) support of the government (2) participation in vigilance and defense activities, (3) cooperation in order to improve managerial efficiency, (4) maintenance of labor discipline, and (5) raising workers’ political consciousness.” (Del Aguila 178)
3. A **Federation of Cuban Women, (FMC)** led by **Vilma Espín**, Raul Castro’s wife, was formed.
  - a. “ ‘The FMC has been characterized as a mass organization directed from above, with women’s goals pursued only when they coincide with those of the government and coming always after national goals and priorities have been set by the regime.’” (Del Aguila 176)
4. By 1986, 3,100,000 women had joined, or 80% of all women.
  - a. 37% of the active labor force are women
  - b. 55% of the technical labor force are women
  - c. 14% of party members are women (Del Aguila 176-7)
5. Half a million Cuban women entered the work force. (Suchlicki 140)
6. “Relations between husband and wife have been undermined and the family has largely lost control of the children. Large numbers of children attend free boarding schools and see their parents for only short periods of time during the year. There is, therefore, not only frequent separation of husband and wife due to the work demands of the revolution, but also separation of parent from children. *The regime has systematically encouraged these developments, perhaps aware that the only way to*

*develop Cuba's new socialist man is through the destruction of the culture-transmitting institutions, such as the family and the church.*" (Suchlicki 140) (emphasis added)

7. "That Afro-Cubans made up a disproportionate share of the uneducated, unskilled, and unemployed meant that they were among the principal and immediate beneficiaries of the early distributive policies of the revolution. Moreover, in March 1959, the revolutionary government abolished legal discrimination." ((Perez 321)

D. Foreign Policy Developments

1. April 1959: Castro's trip to the US, "En route to the United States Castro told his economic cabinet that they were not to seek foreign aid from officials of the U.S. government, the World Bank or the IMF, . . . The purpose of the trip, therefore, changed from acquiring aid for capitalist development to gaining time for far-reaching transformations the specific form of which was still uncertain. There is no evidence that the United States, or these international financial institutions, denied aid to Cuba that its government had requested. In fact, Cuba did not ask them for aid. . . . A small number of revolutionary leaders, therefore, concluded well ahead of the rest of the citizenry that it was impossible to conduct a revolution in Cuba without a major confrontation with the United States. " (Dominguez 98)
2. October : **Anastas Mikoyan** visits Cuba and signs a bilateral trade agreement.

VIII. The Cuban Revolution: The Decade of the 1960s

A. Political Developments

1. In 1965, the ORI is transformed into the **Communist Party of Cuba (PCC)**, which the only party permitted.
2. "The Communist euphemism that the state will 'wither away' is nowhere to be found in Cuba. On the contrary, the state is monolithic and its managerial capabilities depend on the party and a new class of technocrats." (Suchlicki 166)
3. "A highly intolerant and hierarchical party structure has developed." (Suchlicki 166)
4. "Castro has never shown any concern over the use of coercion and deceit. He justifies these techniques as necessary and correct under Marxist-Leninist doctrine to protect the revolution against foreign and domestic enemies and to expand its influence abroad. . . . He believes that the preservation of his revolution requires massive doses of coercion and the use, for a long time, of techniques of centralized administration and repression to crush any resistance." (Suchlicki 166)
  - a. Castro told a US journalist in 1965 that there were 20,000 political prisoners in Cuba. In the 1970s, French photographer Pierre

- Golendorf estimated the number at 20,000, but said older prisoners thought it was 80,000 to 200,000. (Del Aguila 202)
5. Fidel Castro's rule was and remains *charismatic* in the sense that it depended on the conviction that he did not depend on election by his followers but had been 'elected' by a supernatural authority or some 'historical force.' He also depended on the citizenry's sharing that conviction. . . . '**History will absolve me.**' History-as-god elects the revolutionary leader to act with and for his followers." (Dominguez 124) [emphasis added]
  6. "Subjective will was the fundamental resource for revolutionary leaders to overcome objective obstacles in war, politics, or economics. A vanguard, and elite, must lead the people and awaken them to their historical responsibilities. Moreover, only the maximum possible effort toward the optimal goal was worth pursuing. . . . An activist determined vanguard would reach for the future –and conquer it." Dominguez 125)
  7. "This style of leadership bred intolerance toward critics, dissenters, or even those who were just somewhat unconventional. This style of rule rejected out of hand the hypothesis that the great leader's policies might be in error – until disaster struck." (Dominguez 125)
  8. The Revolution also legitimizes itself on the basis of performance, particularly in redistribution of benefit in health care and education. Nationalism is also a powerful legitimizing tool.
  9. In 1967, Castro 'discovered' a "**micro faction**" within the PCC.
    - a. It was led by **Anibal Escalante**, and were mostly former PSP members who thought Cuban policies were wrong.
    - b. They were imprisoned for their opinions.
    - c. "Since their diagnosis of mistaken Cuban policies would eventually prove correct, they were punished for having the right ideas at the wrong time." (Dominguez 131)
    - d. *This episode strained relations with the USSR, but Cuba was forced to toe the line by the 1970s, since the regime could not survive without Soviet aid.*
  10. "Castro's decision to reach the arbitrary and entirely unrealistic goal of harvesting 10 million tons . . . of sugar in 1970 revealed the prime minister's *poor knowledge of economic affairs, his penchant for grandiose campaigns, his view that nature would conform to the will of one man, and his belief that enormous sacrifices are justifiable* on behalf of necessary goals." (Del Aguila 94) (emphasis added; I hope you noticed the influence of Schopenhauer there)
    - a. The largest previous harvest had been in 1952, 7.2 million tons.
    - b. "Castro stated that '9,999,999 tons' would 'constitute a moral defeat.' The regime's prestige, its credibility of its leaders, the

pride of the nation, and the rosy expectations of the future—if not the very vindication of the development strategy followed in the late 1960's—were at stake.” (Del Aguila 95)

11. Following the admission of failure of the **Ten million Ton Sugar Crop**, the military increases its role in the country very significantly.
12. Castro signals a change in his policy toward the Soviet Union by forcefully supporting their coup in Czechoslovakia.
  - a. This aligned him with the Soviets and against China, Vietnam, and Korea.
  - b. Closer Soviet ties soon followed.
13. “Under the control of Raúl Castro, the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces became one of the most powerful and influential Cuban institutions.” (Suchlicki 160)

B. Economic Developments

1. July 15: **Bank for Foreign Trade** becomes sole agency for foreign trade.
2. The results of the shift from a private enterprise system to a command economy led to “growing inflation, disorganization, and bureaucratic chaos and inefficiency.” (Suchlicki 140)
3. Agricultural production declined.
4. Food rationing introduced.
5. 1962 **Che Guevara** becomes **Minister of Industries** with the goal of rapid industrialization.
6. “Guevara “advocated centralized control of state enterprises, extensive planning, complete collectivization of the means of production and the gradual phasing out of money and other material incentives. . . . Insisting that one could not reach communism using market mechanisms, Guevara held that a radical abolition of market forces induced essential transformations in individual attitudes and, over time, in mass behavior.” (Del Aguila 86-87)—in other words, the New Socialist Man
  - a. “The idea of working harder in order to benefit oneself was censured.” (Del Aguila 89)
7. “The plan for 1962 and the plan for 1962-5 were both fantasies.” (108) Cuba’s technical personnel were now in the US or in prison
8. “The shift in 1966 to the radical model produced neither satisfactory economic gains, prudent resource allocation, increased labor productivity nor *lasting* political consciousness. Cuba’s economic system deteriorated rapidly, a victim of improvisation and mismanagement, Castro’s own ‘microplans,’ and bureaucratic snafus. Sugar output fell short of planned targets from 1966 to 1970. Production of tobacco, the second cash crop, dropped as did the production of major food crops such as beans, yucca, and a tuber, *malanga*. Citrus production failed to improve markedly

during the four-year period, and declines in the production of vegetables such as tomatoes were also registered. Pork and chicken production fell, and between 1967 and 1970, milk production went from 565 to 520 thousand metric tons.

9. “Some declines in key agricultural commodities, sugar, livestock, pork and other items can be attributed to bad weather, poor inputs (such as lack of fertilizer or lack of knowledge of soils), or unskilled labor; nonetheless, much of it resulted from poor planning decisions, incompetent management of state farms and enterprises, and a tendency to overestimate labor’s effective contribution. By 1969, labor absenteeism itself was a major problem.” (Del Aguila 90)
10. Ration cards become a staple of Cuban life, representing the “relative failure to generate economic growth coupled with relative success in protecting the needs of the poorest Cubans and reducing inequalities in access to basic goods and services.” (Dominquez 108)
11. The government changed currencies by surprise, which left all money not in state banks worthless.
12. Continued crisis in the economy in 1963 led to a balance of payments crisis. The sugar crop fell to 3.8 million tons.
13. ***Second Agrarian Reform Law*** 1963: expropriated middle farmers, leaving the state owning 70% of all land. All holdings larger than 67 hectares were expropriated.
14. ***Ten Million Ton Sugar Crop***: target is set for 1970 over objections of technicians.
15. This was really a political decision aimed at validating the revolution rather than an economic decision. In other words, politics rather than economics drove the decision, which is not good Marxism.
16. Guevara argued that the economy should be viewed as a single unit, money used only for accounting, moral incentives used for labor and material incentives phased out, the market economy eliminated, and central planning would be key. In other words, he is an economic idiot.
17. His opponents saw the economy as a variety of state owned enterprises whose decisions involved buying and selling, and where money accounts needed to be used to control production. Greater autonomy of units would be allowed.
18. Guevara leaves in 1965 to demonstrate his ineptitude at revolution in Africa and South America until his death in 1967. Guevara’s policies are adopted however.
19. The Cuban regime abandoned year to year planning in the 1960s, abandoned a central budget, accounting was abandoned, and statistics kept only for quantities.
20. 1968: Collectivization peaks when 57,000 individually owned enterprises

(customer service shops, bars, even street vendors) are taken over. All productive activity became owned and managed by the state

a. Castro announces “Gentlemen, we did not make a Revolution here to establish the right to trade ! . . . When will they finally understand that this is a revolution of socialists, that it is a revolution of communists? . . . Clearly and definitely, we must say that we propose to eliminate all manifestations of private trade, “ (Del Aguila 92)

21. The **Ten Thousand Ton Sugar Crop** was a colossal failure, reaching an official 8.5 million tons, and very seriously dislocating the economy in the process (rather like Stalin’s first FYP)
22. The Labor Ministry announces that, due to low worker productivity, the cost of producing the crop was 300% than its world market value. (Suchlicki 234)
23. Faced with the economic disaster, Castro took responsibility for the failure in his July 26, 1970 speech, and changed the policies for the 1970s.
24. Among the problems Castro admitted to were low productivity and worker absenteeism. Somehow the New Socialist Man had not manifested himself.
25. *The poor sugar harvests of 1967 and 1968 underscored Castro’s dependence on outside help—in this case, the Soviet Union’s*
26. The decade of the Sixties began and ended with a sharp economic recession
27. Following Castro’s gesture to improve relations with the Soviets (support for the invasion of Czechoslovakia), Soviet technicians and managers became very common, and the Cuban economy is integrated into that of the Soviet Union.
28. Not only did the Soviet purchase sugar at above market prices, but they also sold Cuba oil and below market prices. (Suchlicki 160-1).
29. Soviet style economic planning was adopted, with the **first FYP** in 1976.

#### C. Social Developments

1. All means of mass communication are in government hands by now, and Castro has issued the motto on cultural issues: “Within the revolution, everything; against the revolution, nothing.” (135)
2. The chief newspaper and organ of the government was *Granma*.
3. Guevara’s approach to the economy was to rely on the **New Socialist Man**, who would work as a result of moral incentives rather than material incentives. Everyone was paid the same regardless of the quantity or quality of their work. Not surprisingly, productivity and efficiency plummeted
4. The **Ten Million Ton Sugar Crop** required mass mobilization of

- “volunteers” to work in the fields (I had students who “volunteered” for this; they were not given a choice.)
5. After 1966, the military joined in. They were deployed ineffectively.
  6. Baby boom in the early 1960s, probably as a result of redistributive policies and improving standard of living for the poor. (116)
  7. This of course requires rapid expansion of primary education.
  8. Women were more likely to get married, get divorced, or have an abortion. Their proportion of the labor force doubled by 1970. Women’s part in the education system increases, especially in economics, medicine, and natural sciences (they reach the same % as their part of the population), Some policies did discriminate against them due to the interruption of their career due to pregnancy. (118)
  9. Women are under represented in politics, with evidence of persistence of sexual stereotypes in the home
  10. Since Cuba’s black and mulatto population was overwhelmingly poor, evidence suggests strong support for Castro among them. Until 1980, blacks were very under represented in emigration. (119)
  11. Education has been a great success. All private schools were expropriated, and by the end of 1979, illiteracy had been virtually wiped out.
  12. The difference in access to quality education between urban and rural Cuba was reduced.
  13. The system skillfully managed rapid growth in primary years due to the baby boom, and then shifting demographics as the baby boom ended and birth rates declined.
  14. Higher education emphasized technical training, and neglected social sciences and humanities (especially topics of current political significance) “the universities were organized on a broad ‘industrial model’ to train professional personnel in a hierarchical system. They de-emphasized the liberal arts or the possibility of active intellectual criticism of major political, social, economic, or cultural problems.” (121)
  15. Political criteria were used for faculty appointments and student admissions.
  16. “The educational system . . . was inhospitable to political and intellectual dissent; it restricted freedom of expression and repressed many critics.” (122)
  17. In health care, Castro inherited a mature health care system. However, access to health care was very unevenly distributed. The quality of health care is linked to the success of the Cuban economy as a whole. (123)
  18. By 1980, Cuba’s greatest achievement was equalizing access to health care among regions and social classes
  19. Health care workers were posted abroad in 36 countries abroad.
  20. Following the failure of the **10 Million Ton Sugar Crop**, greater

emphasis was placed on “the need for sacrifice: the building of socialism demands high investment rates coupled with maximum technical and scientific knowledge and minimum consumption. The regime argued that workers’ goodwill was not enough and that in certain circumstances coercion was unavoidable in the interest of ‘building a socialist society.’ A variety of austerity measures were instituted, including further reductions in sugar and coffee rations and cutbacks in consumer goods and imports from Western countries.” (Suchlicki 160)

D. Foreign Policy Developments

1. March 1960 *La Coubre*, carrying arms, blows up in Havana harbor. Castro blames the US.
2. That month, Eisenhower authorizes planning to overthrow Castro
3. June: Castro requests US oil refineries to process Soviet oil; they refuse; Castro expropriates the refineries.
4. July 5: The Council of Ministers authorizes the expropriation of all US property in Cuba.
5. July 6: Eisenhower cancels the Cuban sugar quota.
6. July 9: Nikita Khrushchev declares Soviet missiles would defend Cuba. This is followed by a military agreement with the USSR
7. August 7: All large US-owned industrial and agrarian enterprises expropriated.
8. September 17: All US banks expropriated.
9. October 30: US prohibits all exports to Cuba except non-subsidized foodstuffs and medicines.
10. October 24: All US owned wholesale and retail enterprises expropriated (Dominguez 99-100)
11. March 22: Exiles form the Cuban Revolutionary Council to overthrow Castro. Leaders include anti-Batista leaders such as José Miró Cardona, first prime minister of the revolutionary government, and Manuel Ray, Castro’s former Minister of Public Works.
12. April 15: aircraft flown by Cuban exiles attack Cuban airstrips. Castro imprisons “tens of thousands” of suspected dissidents. (101)
13. April 17: Landing at the **Bay of Pigs**. The landing is destroyed within 48 hours. Castro triumphantly announces that Cuba is a “socialist revolution”
14. Somewhere around 100,000 persons are arrested. (Perez 331)
15. December 2: Fidel Castro announces that he was a Marxist-Leninist and would be so until he died.
16. *The Missile Crisis*: please see my handout on the Cold War. I am not about to copy all that over again!
17. In foreign policy, one of Castro’s goals was to promote revolution around the world. Cuba provided substantial assistance to revolutionaries in Central America and the Andes

18. *(I attended a lecture by Paul Sigmund some years ago, when he was returning from interviewing over 300 former guerrillas; he said that every single one of them had trained in Cuba).*
19. Aid also went to Angola, the Congo, Algeria, and North Vietnam.
20. Castro assailed parties which he regarded as too timid, and split with Venezuelan Communists, demonstrating his willingness to jeopardize revolutionary success in order to maintain his position of influence over leftist movements. (Dominguez 140)
21. However, Che's death in Bolivia represents the failure of Castro's efforts to export revolution in Latin America.
22. Castro signals a change in his policy toward the Soviet Union by forcefully supporting their coup in Czechoslovakia.
  - a. This aligned him with the Soviets and against China, Vietnam, and Korea.
  - b. Closer Soviet ties soon followed.

IX. The Cuban Revolution: The Decade of the 1970s

A. Political Developments

1. The organs of mass mobilization began showing interest group functions by the 1970s.
2. The **CDRs** for example, added self-help functions to revolutionary vigilance. (Dominguez 127) "In actual practice, the CDRs have organized neighborhood work campaigns, outfitted volunteer brigades, and promoted educational and cultural activities. . . . CDR militants have also hounded 'nonintegrated' individuals, denouncing and condemning all forms of parasitic and antisocial behavior, as well as collaborating with local authorities in policing neighborhoods. . . . Among the CDRs' most important functions are monthly meetings of 'political-ideological education circles', during which various materials suggested by the Party leadership are studied and debated. Thus, the CDRs serve as an important agent of political socialization." (Del Aguila 175)

B. Economic Developments

1. **Five Year Plan 1976-80** was still unrealistic, reaching only 2/3s the target growth rate.
2. Central planning reappears. In 1976, the Economic Management and Planning System (Sistema de Dirección de la Economía) **SDPE** is established. A budget is implemented in 1977.
  - a. Material incentives for workers are reintroduced. *Mercado libres* were allowed, which alleviated some consumer shortages. This resembles the NEP or, rather, the permission of private plots on collective land that provided such a disproportionate share of Russian food.
3. The USSR devotes considerable resources to Cuba (about \$12.5 billion for

- the decade) (Del Aguila 99) , subsidizing the revolution by selling oil at below market prices and by buying sugar at above market prices.
4. The USSR also provided immense amounts of military hardware for free, thereby allowing Castro to devote resources into other areas.
  5. After mid-decade, Castro sent troops to war in Angola and Ethiopia, as well as Grenada. Most of these men were reservists, which reduced the domestic work force, and many included their best managers and technicians.
  6. The economy prospered in the first half of the 1970s, but stagnated again after 1976.
    - a. The price of sugar averaged 8¢ in the second half of the decade.
    - b. Once again, Cuba's vulnerability to market fluctuations as a result of its dependance on monocrop agriculture is highlighted.
  7. Castro's rule suffered its third major recession by 1979, which led to the immigration of 1980 (**Marial exodus**)

C. Social Developments

1. In health care, Castro inherited a mature health care system. The quality of health care is linked to the success of the Cuban economy as a whole. (Dominguez 123)
2. By 1980, Cuba's greatest achievement was equalizing access to health care among regions and social classes
3. Health care workers were posted abroad in 36 countries abroad.
4. ***Family Code*** equalized status of spouses.
  - a. This is a legitimate attempt to provide meaningful equality to women. Its success has been limited by deeply ingrained cultural attitudes.
5. Birth rate drops by half by the end of this decade. (Dominguez 116)
  - a. Poor economic performance is part of the reason, but abortion (2 out of 5 pregnancies ended in abortion, the 4<sup>th</sup> highest rate in the world) is another reason. (Dominguez 117)
6. The divorce rate quadrupled.
7. Critical housing shortages discouraged marriages since couples did not wish to live with their in-laws. (Dominguez 117)
  - a. One of my students has told me that her mother blames this housing shortage to the failure of her marriage—although married, they couldn't live together. In the end, she left Cuba pregnant with my student; she was allowed to leave by claiming that she was a prostitute.
8. Lower birth rate plus emigration meant a drop in absolute population by 1980. (Dominguez 118)
9. Earlier baby boom provided the manpower for Cuban overseas military

forces. The baby bust, by reducing need for teachers, etc. allowed those personnel to be exported as part of Castro's foreign policy.

D. Foreign Policy Developments

1. In the 1970's, Castro supported terrorist groups in Puerto Rico, and sent troops to fight in Syria in the Yom Kippur War. Advisers were sent into Palestinian bases, and assistance given to Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. (Suchlicki 156-7)
2. Evidence suggests that Castro took the lead in involving Cuba in Angola, with Soviet help. The Cubans supported the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). (Suchlicki 157)
3. The Soviets took the lead in requiring Cubans as Soviet proxies in Ethiopia (this point is supported by Sigmund's lecture) (Dominguez 143) In both cases, Soviet support was essential.
4. In term of population, Cuba deployed a larger proportion of its troops overseas than did the US at the peak of Vietnam, and for the same length of time. (Dominguez 144)
5. During the 1970s, with a GNP of \$13.3 billion, Cuban defense expenditures were over \$1 billion. (Suchlicki 170)
6. In 1977, Castro announced support for the **Sandinistas** in Nicaragua. He sent advisers and help to **Grenada**, and helped the guerrillas in **El Salvador**.
7. Castro viewed victories in Nicaragua and Grenada as well as the war in El Salvador as evidence that the only path to revolution was through violence.
8. He continued support for revolutionary movements in Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala

X. An Quarter Century Evaluation

A. Writing in 1986, Susan Eckstein made a comparative analysis of the Cuban Revolution

1. As of this writing, it is 44 years since the Cuban Revolution. Eckstein's article was published 27 years after the revolution; it is now 17 years after her article
  - a. Overall, her evaluation was "While the accomplishments of Cuba's revolution may seem disappointing, it is inaccurate to portray the island as a 'basket case,' as President Ronald Reagan did in the summer of 1983." (532)
  - b. She is more critical of economic performance than of social changes. I will be extracting mostly from the social changes.
2. Land Distribution
  - a. "The reform extended property rights to about 100,000 sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and squatters." (519)

- b. “Cuba is the only Latin American country besides Nicaragua to have transformed large estates into state farms. . . . The sugar plantations were initially converted into cooperatives, but within a few years they as well as other large holdings were turned into state farms. Workers on the state farms were granted year-round employment, social benefits, and wage increases.” (519)
  - c. “The two reforms reduced property inequities and changed the bases of property ownership to an extent unequaled by any other country in the region. . . . Also, no other Latin American country has implemented an agrarian reform that has benefited as large a percentage of the farm labor force or distributed as large a percentage of the land area as has Cuba.” (520)
  - d. “In sum, Cuba’s first and second agrarian reforms combined have been the most comprehensive in the region. The reforms reflect the revolutionary leadership’s anticapitalist class bias on the one hand, and its commitment to the peasants who helped make the revolution on the other.” (521)
3. Income Distribution
- a. “Cuba stands out among Latin American countries not only in the equality of its income distribution but also in the significance attached to income. Under Castro, nonwage policies eroded much of the historical significance attached to income . . . . On the one hand, technicians, executives, military staff members, and other persons in high-ranking positions enjoy such work-linked benefits as free cars and opportunities to travel abroad. On the other hand, manual workers enjoy free benefits that their counterparts in other Latin American countries do not. Cuba, for example, is the only nation in the region to provide free and near universal health care, primary school education, retirement pensions, and unemployment insurance, as well as free or low-rent housing to the entire populace. It also regulates the price of many consumer goods and guaranteed access to the goods through rationing.” (522)
  - b. “In sum, available evidence suggests that structural reforms associated with Cuba’s socialist revolution ushered in a significantly more equitable distribution of income, wealth, and consumption than in any capitalist country in the region.” (524)
4. Health Care and Nutrition]
- a. “According to available information, Cuba ranked among those Latin American countries having the largest number of doctors, nurses, and hospital beds per capita, and its regional ranking on each was higher than would be expected were the supply primarily a function of national income . . . .With the exodus of purportedly

- half of the country's stock of doctors during Castro's first years of rule . . . Cuba's population / physician ratio deteriorated. However, by the 1970s the per-capita supply of doctors improved, surpassing the prerevolutionary level. The government had conducted a massive campaign to attract students to medicine. All graduates are guaranteed jobs and nearly all doctors are employed by the government; this planned expansion of the medical profession is a direct reflection of the state's commitment to health care." (525-6)
- b. "[T]he country's stock of nurses and paraprofessionals has increased much more than its stock of doctors. The supply of medical personnel expanded to the point that the island can send thousands overseas in conjunction with its foreign aid program, with little social cost—comparatively speaking—to the domestic population." (527)
  - c. "While facilities for inpatients have not improved, access to high-cost hospital care has been democratized. . . . Cuba is the only Latin American country with an extensive, institutionalized system of free rural and urban health care utilizing a semiskilled medical cadre. . . . [T]he medical needs of low income groups, above all in rural areas, are unquestionably better met in Cuba than in any other Latin American country currently. Hospital facilities continue to be concentrated in the cities, but Cuba is the only country to make access to health care a basic social right.. Thus, Cuba has restructured its health care delivery system in ways that distinguish it—in scope and especially in access—from others in the region. The revolution made the changes possible. The changes reflect the government's distinctive class bias and the reduced power of doctors and other private medical interests to influence state policy; however, sufficient state revenue was essential." (527-8)
  - d. "It has taken about two decades for the average caloric consumption to surpass prerevolutionary levels. . . . The continued rationing of basic foods assures minimal nutritional standards to those with low incomes." (528)
  - e. "Cuba's infant death rate is the lowest in the region, and it declined considerably since 1970." (528)
5. Overall
- a. "The revolution, in fact, has weakened the island's capacity to compete in export markets and it has served to mortgage the country to foreign creditors; the island's regional export diversification and capacity to absorb Western debt deteriorated during the period under examination. Even its regional per-capital national product ranking was lower in 1980 than under Batista.

- b. “Cuba’s over-all social welfare performance under Castro has been more impressive. . . . The greatest impact of the revolution has been on low-income groups. The revolution improved the availability of social services, and it made access to the society’s resources more equitable.” (530)

## XI. The Cuban Revolution: The Decade of the 1980s

### A. Political Developments

1. By 1980, the mass organizations such as the **CDRs** and **FMC** included 80% of the adult population and adult female populations, respectively. Membership was essential for a successful life in Cuba, since scarce resources were allocated according to whether one was a member or not. Since many of the 1980 emigrants were members of such organizations, membership does not necessarily mean deep commitment to Communism. (Dominguez 128)
2. Del Aguila agrees with Dominguez: “Participation in this context, should not be equated either with individual or group autonomy or with genuine mass spontaneity. Participation through membership in the Committees for Defense of the Revolution (CDR), the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) labor unions, or the Communist Youth Union (U.C.) means discussing local affairs, doing volunteer work, receiving ‘guidance’ from party officials, marching in the streets against fellow citizens who choose to emigrate, attending mass rallies, and engaging in other revolutionary duties. In addition, mass political behavior is characterized by coerced or tacitly forced participation, since nonparticipation is costly. In the Cuban context, individual participation signals the depth of one’s commitment to the new order. Social apathy and political indifference are scorned by the revolutionary ethos, which demands ‘full integration’ and ostracizes political bystanders.” (174)
3. Youth Organizations
  - a. FEEM–Federación Estudiantes Enseñanza Media
  - b. FEU--Federación Estudiantil Universitaria
  - c. OPJM–Organización de Pioneros José Martí
  - d. UJC–Union de Jovenes Comunistas
  - e. MTT–Milicias de Tropas Territoriales
4. About 20% of the adult population were excluded, and were viewed as enemies of the state. (Dominguez 137)
  - a. In 1982, **Armando Valladares** was released after 22 years imprisonment on trumped up charges. Valladares had published an account of life in the Cuban prisons, *Against All Hope*, which stands comparison with Alexander Solzhinitzyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.



10. “The Cuban revolutionary government sought to generate economic growth from the moment it arrived in power, but except for the recovery of the early 1970s these policies did not succeed. There was no growth at all during the 1960s. The economy’s performance after 1975 failed to reach many planned targets. It generated only modest real economic growth and suffered a major recession as well as serious international debt problems. The structure of production diversified only a little. Sugar remained king . . . . However, the government had also implemented a strategy of import substituting industrialization. . . . [These factories were inefficient and the products were of poor quality.] There was overwhelming dependence on one product (sugar cane) and one country (the Soviet Union) The tendency in the late 1970s and 1980s was to retain dependence on both.” (Dominguez 115)
  - a. “On the other hand, government economic performance was impressive with respect to redistribution. . . . “ (115)
    - (1) rationing provided access to basic goods at low prices
    - (2) standard of living for rural poor rose
    - (3) Cuba is egalitarian by Latin American standards

C. Social Developments

1. 1980 saw the **Mariel boatlift**. Over a million Cubans have voted with their feet and left the country.
  - a. The first wave was from 1959-1962, the second wave from 1965-70s; the third is the **Mariel boatlift**.
  - b. A fourth wave came in the 1990s with the *balseros*.
  - c. Considering the shutdown of the Brothers to the Rescue, this is obviously a running sore with Castro.
  - d. Negotiations with the US government led to restrictions on Cuban immigrants to the US.
2. 1981: 20% of the population lived in Havana, and the country is predominantly urban. (Dominguez 117)
3. The government has done a very poor job in housing construction, owing to inefficiency and confusion. Construction was not a high priority.
  - a. In the 1970's, the expansion of the military, and deployment of construction workers abroad helped lead to declining rates of construction throughout that decade.
  - b. Emigration helped some by opening up units. Pre-revolutionary housing was in poor condition to begin with.
  - c. Evidence is that thousands of housing units collapsed due to poor maintenance.
  - d. The decade of the 1980's saw a terrible shortage of housing and overcrowding. (Dominguez 124)
4. One third of the population, according to the census of 1981 is black.

- a. One fifth of the Central Committee was black.
      - b. Since racism is officially defeated, it is considered subversive to suggest that it still needs to be studied. (Dominguez 119-2)
    5. Increased accessibility to health care is one of the successes of the Cuban Revolution. However, the quality of health care is linked to the success of the Cuban economy as a whole. (123)
      - a. In the 1990's and into the 2000's, Cuban health care has deteriorated very seriously. In practice, a patient needs to bring his or her own medicine to the hospital.
  - D. Foreign Policy Developments
    1. Mid-1980s saw cutbacks in Cuban forces in Africa, but 50,000 remained in Ethiopia until the end of the war in 1988. (115)
- XII. The Fall of the Soviet Union and the Cuban Revolution 1990s
- A. Political Developments
    1. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. is the most important event in Cuban history since Castro's accession to power.
    2. Politically, the response of the government to the economic crisis was to demand further sacrifices from the populace (increased rationing), to allow Cubans to hold dollars, and to attract foreign investment. (Suchlicki 196)
    3. The influence of the military in the economy greatly increased.
    4. Cuba began to try to attract investment with laws permitting Foreign Direct Investment (**FDI**)
      - a. Implementation took place beginning in 1992.
      - b. Most FDI are in tourism, and the majority of investors are Spanish
      - c. Suchlicki believes that this program will ultimately be of limited success compared with similar efforts by China. (198-200)
      - d. The investment is mostly in tourism, and has not been linked to technology transfer.
      - e. No relaxation of individual freedom has been allowed (on the contrary, repression has increased significantly).
      - f. Individual Cubans cannot participate in the investment—only the government can partner.
      - g. Foreign companies cannot hire their own workers. Instead, the government provides the workers (thus keeping a strong hold on the worker). Wages are paid to the government in US \$, and paid to the worker in Cuban pesos, with the government pocketing the balance. (Suchlicki 198-199)
      - h. **“While Castro and hard-liners recognize the need for economic recovery, they also see the likely erosion of political policy and control that accompanies the restructuring of the economy along free-market rules.”** (Suchlicki 200, emphasis added.)

5. In the mid-90s, Castro renewed contacts with radical Middle Eastern countries and with Venezuela's Hugo Chavez.
6. In 1996, Castro introduced a new political crack down (which at this writing, 2003, is still going on.)
  - a. This is in the context of efforts by the Clinton Administration to improve relations with Cuba.
  - b. 100 dissidents were arrested.
7. In February 1996, two airplanes flown by **Brothers to the Rescue** were shot down by MIGs over international waters.
  - a. While **Brothers to the Rescue** had in fact on occasion violated Cuban air space to drop pamphlets, their primary mission (and the mission they were on at the time of the shoot down) was to spot *balseros* and notify the Coast Guard
  - b. Subsequent investigations proved that (1) the pilots were indeed over international waters, not Cuban air space as originally claimed. (2) the shoot down order came from the highest level (3) a Cuban spy who had infiltrated the **Brothers to the Rescue** had set the ambush up.
  - c. It is worth noting that international law does not permit the shoot down of an unarmed civilian plane under any circumstances.
  - d. I was at an IB conference at the time in Calgary, Canada, and I found it disturbing that most teachers there were of the opinion that Brothers had gotten what they deserved! It demonstrated that the Castro they thought they knew came from Fantasy Land.
  - e. The Clinton Administration's response was to support the Helms-Burton Law, which punishes companies which invest in Cuba, which previously it had opposed.
8. "In February 1999, he introduced the most severe legislation Cuba has ever experienced, condemning dissidents, journalists, and others who deviate from the party line to twenty to thirty years of prison." (Suchlicki 206)
9. The purpose of this crackdown is to prevent the growth of a Cuban civil society (such as **the Varela Project**) independent of government control.
10. In this respect, he seems to have learned some lessons from the experience of Poland with Solidarity.
11. "The regime explicitly sacrificed freedom in order to improve equality, seeking order over political pluralism, statization over a mixed economy, and ideological secularization rather than openness and diversity. After a generation, there is substantial evidence that the original choices have produced political inertia and permanent austerity, so that the argument that the present *has* to be sacrificed in order *perhaps* to save the future has lost its credibility." (Del Aguila 191)

12. “The regime’s failure to recognize civil or individual rights as well as its refusal to expand the limits of cultural, intellectual, or political freedoms reveals deep-seated insecurities as well as a striking degree of historical arrogance and an undiminished appetite for total power. Institutionalization [of the Revolution] turned out to be the opposite of democratization, because it is plain that the regime governs without explicit or recurring consent. With their survival increasingly dependent on a monopoly of raw power rather than on a necessary articulation of a new social contract, the regime and its leader have lost considerable popular support. Predictably, their legitimacy is rapidly slipping away as well.” (Del Aguila 182)
  13. At the Party Congress in 1997, “once again as he has done for the past forty years, Castro showed that in Cuba politics dictates economic decisions.” (Suchlicki 206)
  14. **“Commitment to a command and communist economy, violent revolution, internationalism, anti-Americanism, and personal rule remain the cornerstones of Castro’s policies.”** (Suchlicki 204) (emphasis added)
- B. Economic Developments
1. The collapse of the Soviet Union “was a devastating blow. Cuba lost not only the protection of the Soviet political umbrella but also the economic support that had been the lifeline of the Castro regime. Soviet aid and subsidies suddenly vanished. Access to Eastern European and Soviet products at subsidized prices disappeared. The Eastern Europeans . . . demanded cash payments for their goods. The weakness and dependence of Cuba’s economy became painfully apparent.” (Suchlicki 195)
  2. “Severe shortages of Russian and Eastern European petroleum, fertilizers, spare parts, raw materials, and foodstuffs crippled the economy. Sugar harvest production declined to the lowest levels since the revolution. Nearly three quarters of factories on the island stopped or reduced production for lack of spare parts and raw materials. Transportation and communications suffered drastic cuts. Cuba’s imports and exports fell by 70 to 75 percent. Unemployment and underemployment increased drastically. The low standard of living of the Cuban people sank to new levels of misery and suffering.” (Suchlicki 196)
  3. In the mid-1990's, Castro once again allowed farmer’s markets where produce could be sold directly to consumers. He had allowed these once before in the mid-1980's, but shut them down because Cubans were becoming “capitalists” and thus threatened the revolution (think of the NEP) (Suchlicki 196)
  4. Castro suspended payments on his international debt in 1986, which makes it very difficult to obtain further credit.

5. Hugo Chavez of Venezuela has provided Cuba with subsidized oil.
  6. “Castro called for Cubans to work harder, sacrifice more, and expect less in the years ahead. At the same time he continued strategies based on tourism, remittances from abroad, and foreign investment to help him survive the difficult times.” (Suchlicki 206 )
  7. The US Embargo is Castro’s excuse for his economic failures. This has far more to do with propaganda than any economic reality.
    - a. “The embargo neither precluded Cuba from aggressively pursuing its revolutionary objectives nor caused major economic difficulties as long as Cuba’s economy was heavily subsidized by the former Soviet Union. In fact, some scholars argue that the embargo helps the Castro regime politically by reinforcing a siege mentality among Cubans—allowing Castro to blame the United States for his regime’s economic failure..” (Del Aguila 194) [I love it when scholars agree with me]
    - b. Cuba can obtain anything it wants or needs from other countries, notably, Spain, Canada, and Mexico.
    - c. However, he has no hard currency with which to buy it. By defaulting on international loans, he cannot obtain further credit for development
  8. Current failures in housing, health care, and the standard of living are all linked to his abject failure with the economy.
  9. Some have argued that Castro has succeeded in liberating Cuba from US imperialist domination. He has.
  10. He replaced dependence on the US with an even greater dependence on the USSR, which was much less able to assist the country. Furthermore, since the USSR no longer exists, it is also clear that Fidel backed the wrong horse.
  11. If that is a success, I would hate to see a failure.
- C. Social Developments
1. In 1992, the government expanded the list of goods which exiles could remit to their families on the island—including foodstuffs.
  2. In 1995, they increased the number of visas for Cuban-Americans to travel to Cuba, since such visitors usually brought dollars and consumer goods for their families.
  3. This tends to create a division within the population: between those with access to US dollars from relatives, and those without.
  4. In 1994, the government tacitly allowed Cubans to attempt to flee to the US on rafts (the *balseros*)
  5. Studies of the Gulf Stream at the University of Miami suggest that very few *balseros* came close enough to be picked up by the Coast Guard.
  6. *Balseros* picked up at sea were interned at Guantanamo Bay.

7. The Clinton Administration, trying to avoid another Mariel, reversed policy and began to limit immigration to the US. Current policy is “wet foot / dry foot” Those picked up at sea are usually returned.
8. “Youth apathy and absenteeism increased. Pessimism and cynicism replaced revolutionary fervor.” (Suchlicki 206)
9. Opposition to the regime is primarily passive not active: apathy, low worker productivity, worker absenteeism, graft, corruption, and a desire to leave.
  - a. In order to survive, Cubans steal from the government and sell to the black market.
  - b. These qualities, the product of nearly 50 years of Castro’s rule, will not be reversed easily or quickly, and surely presage a very rough transition to a market economy some time in the future.
10. From the perspective of the mid-1990s, Cuba’s indexes of life expectancy (seventy five years), literacy (96+ percent) and infant mortality (10 per 1,000 live births) are among the highest in Latin America, comparing favorably with those of more advanced nations.” (Del Aguila 192)
11. Whether these gains can be sustained into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, given the failure of the economy is open to question. From the late 1980's to the mid-1990s, Cuba’s Gross Domestic Product per capita (\$1,200) was a drop of 25% (Del Aguila 192-3)
12. Writing in 1994, Del Aguila is very pessimistic about the future of the Revolution: “In conclusion, the 1990s are shaping up as a horrible decade for Cubans. The task of ‘rebuilding everything we have lost with that universal catastrophe’ (the collapse of the socialist world) is unachievable. No economic relief is expected and no prospects for an economic upturn are around the corner. **Without new sources of wealth to replace the lost \$6 billion in economic and technical assistance, the government is unable to maintain social welfare levels. Minimum social guarantees cannot be met and investment levels cannot remain adequate when consumption is so urgent. This was the fundamental promise of revolutionary socialism—that is, the key to the social contract on which regime legitimacy and Castro’s leadership rested.** As it demonstrably slips away, so does the view that Cuban socialism has any future.” (105) [emphasis added]

D. Foreign Policy Developments

XIII. Afterword

- A. The July 14, 2003 issue of the Miami Herald had an interesting report on the status of the Cuban economy, based on government figures.
- B. Cuba owed \$12.21 billion in foreign debt by 2002, a record.
- C. Direct foreign investment in Cuba dropped to \$38.9 million in 2001, with no

improvement in 2001

- D. Real wages have dropped 50 % from 1989, and in 2003 amounted to \$10 / month
- E. 100,000 jobs in the sugar industry have been lost.
- F. The 2002-2003 sugar harvest was the worst in 70 years.
- G. Tourism is now the most important source of hard currency. Gross income from tourism was \$ 2 billion, meaning the government received 10-15 % of that figure—\$300,000,000
- H. Remittances from Cubans abroad are the chief source of hard currency in Cuba: \$400,000,000 to \$ 1,000,000,000
- I. Unemployment reached 12 %, with as many as 30 % workers displaced or underemployed.
- J. 13 % of the population is clinically undernourished.
- K. Rationing provides only a week to ten days of basic needs per month
- L. There is an acute housing shortage of 1.66 million dwellings
- M. University enrollment has dropped 46 % as students get jobs in the tourist industry
- N. Cuba will have the oldest population in Latin America by 2025. This looming problem is compounded by a decline in real pensions of 42 %

Works Cited

Del Aguila, Juan M. Cuba: Dilemmas of a Revolution. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994.

Dominguez, Jorge. "Cuba Since 1959." Cuba: A Short History. Leslie Bethel, Editor. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. 95-148.

Eckstein, Susan "The Impact of the Cuban Revolution: A Comparative Perspective." Comparative Studies in Society and History. 28:3 (1986): 502-534.

Perez, Louis A. Jr. Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Perez, Louis A. Jr. "Cuba: c. 1930-1959." Cuba: A Short History. Leslie Bethel, Editor. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. 57-93.

Suchlicki, Jaime. Cuba: From Columbus to Castro and Beyond. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2002.