

CASTRO

Rise:

- I. In 1952, General Fulgencio Batista seized control of Cuba and cancelled the elections
- II. Castro was a candidate for a seat in the House of Representatives in the election
- III. He saw no other alternative than to lead a rebellion (because he had tried legal means to overthrow the dictatorship)
- IV. On July 26, 1953, he led some 160 men in a suicidal attack on the Moncada military barracks in Santiago, Cuba, which was intended to ignite a popular uprising. Most of the men were captured and brutally tortured and killed
- V. Castro was captured and the trial gave him an opportunity to voice his opinion (History will absolve me!), criticize the government, and gain sympathizers
- VI. Castro and Raul were released in a political amnesty in 1955, and they went to Mexico to continue their campaign against the Batista regime
- VII. There, Castro organized Cuban exiles into a revolutionary group called the 26th of July Movement (the day of the Moncada attack)
- VIII. On December 2, 1956, Castro and an armed expedition of 81 men landed on the coast of Cuba
- IX. They retreated to the Sierra Maestra mountains to wage guerilla war against the army of Batista
 - a. Batista reacted to the revolt by torturing and killing potential sympathizers, so that many from the middle classes began to support Castro as a preferable alternative
 - b. Batista's army was poorly led and badly paid... morale was low
 - c. Batista's cruelty embarrassed even the Americans, and they stopped supplying him with arms
- X. Castro invited journalists to meet with him and trumped up the number of rebels there were as well as gave manifestos to the Cuban people. This gained him support
 - a. Castro was an effective, charismatic leader
 - b. Castro was a fiery orator who would often have 4-hour speeches
- XI. In July 1958, a government battalion was trapped in a narrow valley, surrounded, and forced to surrender
- XII. After this major defeat, volunteers flocked to them from all over the island, as the dictator's forces suffered successive military defeats
- XIII. Denounced President Urrutia through the Diaz Lanz incident, a Air Force commander who defected because of the spread of communism. Urrutia was against the defection, but made an attack on

communism himself. Castro asked a crowd if they wanted him to resign and they said “no.” As a result, Urrutia resigned, giving Castro full power

Rise/Consolidation of Power

- I. Castro would make speeches in front of a crowd and like a direct democracy ask them questions. After whipping the crowd in a frenzy, they were never to answer a question the way Castro didn't want it to be answered
- II. He would imprison or execute anyone against the regime
- III. Show trials would allow the prosecution to appeal an “unjust” verdict
- IV. Castro also made it seem as if Raul and other potential successors would be more radical than he
- V. He suspended all political parties, but promised elections in the future. Castro still holds political prisoners today
- VI. The Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) were placed in every village, street, and block. They were composed of trusted residents who were to keep an eye on other local residents and to report to the authorities any sign of unusual activity or disaffection
 - a. The “Cumulative School File” documents whether or not the child and family participate in mass demonstrations, belong to a church, etc.
 - b. The file accompanies the child for life and is continually updated (later is becomes an “employment record”)
- VII. Rough treatment, solitary confinement, hunger, threats, and other forms of psychological torture were used in the name of state security
- VIII. Castro liked having a foreign enemy (the U.S.) because it was useful in consolidating support and national unity
- IX. At Havana University, troublesome professors were expelled or neutralized
- X. Trade unions were infiltrated by communists
- XI. Arrests of outspoken journalists caused hostile newspapers, television, and radio stations to conform or close down
- XII. Foreign priests were expelled, Cuban priests harassed and imprisoned, seminaries closed won, publications prohibited, and security men places in churches
- XIII. Security services placed bugs
- XIV. Nationalized U.S. businesses

Previous Conditions That Led To Castro's Rise

- I. Resentment of the U.S.:

- a. Although promised their independence by the U.S. after the Spanish-American War, Cuba was quickly turned into a protectorate. The U.S. was afraid that another country would take control of the island
- b. The Cuban government was forced to include in its constitution the right of the U.S. to intervene on the island to preserve independence and maintain law and order
- c. Guantanamo Bay was taken as a U.S. naval base to establish a permanent military presence in the region
- d. By the 1950s, the U.S. controlled the Cuban economy because they owned half the land and all the industry

II. Poor Conditions:

- a. Unemployment was over 30%
- b. There was no social security
- c. Fewer than 50% of Cuban children received an education
- d. Wealth was concentrated in the hands of a privileged few collaborators with the Americans

III. The poor conditions led General Fulgencio Batista to seize power in 1952:

- a. Was corrupt and brutally suppressed opposition
- b. Had connections to the mafia
- c. Suppressed democracy and cancelled the 1952 elections in which Castro intended to run for the House of Representatives
- d. Encouraged investment of U.S. capital, so had the support of the U.S. government

Successes

- I. Castro used his trial from the failed Moncada revolt to gain publicity and supporters
- II. Organized a group in Mexico that would later go to Cuba to revolt against the government again
- III. Waged guerilla warfare in the Sierra Maestra mountains against Batista's army. Small outposts in the region were abandoned because of it
- IV. Met with foreign journalists in the mountains in secret, who relayed propaganda to the Cuban people since the foreign press couldn't be censored in Cuba
- V. Played upon Batista's reluctance to restore freedoms because of criticism, student agitation, and demands for the release of political prisoners
- VI. Created their own schools, army, hospital, printing press, and radio station

- VII. By 1958, after an important defeat of the government's army, volunteers flocked to join Castro
- VIII. On January 1, 1959, Batista fled the country – Castro had beaten a much larger army
- IX. Would use terror and fear to consolidate power:
 - a. Show trials
 - b. Imprison, torture, and execute anyone against the regime
 - c. Suspend all political parties
 - d. Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR's) would have a file on everyone
- X. Used the U.S. as a common enemy to unite the people
- XI. Ousted President Urrutia by discrediting him, thereby acquiring sole power
- XII. Foreign priests were expelled, Cuban priests harassed and imprisoned, seminaries closed, publications prohibited, and security men placed in churches
- XIII. Arrests of outspoken journalists caused hostile newspapers, television, and radio stations to conform or close down
- XIV. Got Soviet assistance to help Cuba militarily
- XV. Nationalized all U.S. companies, but incurred the wrath of the U.S. government
- XVI. Resisted the Bay of Pigs invasion because he learned of the plans to invade
- XVII. Gained more rights for women and equality for blacks
- XVIII. Social services
 - a. Education was made available to Cubans for free (even meals at school)
 - b. Health services were made available to Cubans for free
 - c. Housing was improved
 - d. Improvements were made in sanitation
- XIX. He used a type of "direct democracy" that made millions of Cubans feel involved and consulted in a way that had never happened under previous governments. He did this by gathering crowds during speeches and asked them to approve or disapprove his policies. In a frenzy, they would never disapprove his policies

Failures

- I. To run for a seat in the House of Representatives in 1952 because Batista cancelled the election when he overthrew the government

- II. Moncada revolt was unsuccessful because Castro underestimated the number of troops that would be at the barracks
- III. The beginning of the 2nd revolt went poorly, as all but Fidel, Raul, and 10 others escaped death or capture (out of 81)
- IV. Didn't get Soviet nukes in the Cuban Missile Crisis because Khrushchev backed down
- V. Attempts to build agriculture failed because Cuba had rough land, China pulled out of a deal for sugar, and Castro decided to concentrate on more expensive milk production rather than beef
- VI. Economy
 - a. Failed to achieve significant growth
 - b. Nothing to buy
 - c. Failed to reduce its dependence on the country's chief export, cane sugar
 - i. This was because:
 - 1. Economic warfare was waged by the U.S. – allies were pressured to join the embargo
 - 2. Economic decision making power was concentrated in a centralized bureaucracy headed by Castro
 - d. Malnutrition was rampant, causing disease. Food was scarce
- VII. An oppressive atmosphere as well as the poor living standards led to many people leaving the country without consent of Castro

Comparing Hitler to Castro

Event	Hitler and Castro
Rise to power	<p>Comparison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both acquired resentment – Hitler from the Versailles Treaty; Castro from the Batista government for supporting the U.S. and having a corrupt government • Both promised to solve economic problems and played upon the inability of the Weimar government/Batista government to deal with these problems • Both tried to overthrow the government illegally and both • Both were put on trial and gained sympathizers from the publicity • Both had sentences that were unusually short – Castro was granted amnesty by Batista because times were economically prosperous and he didn't want the atmosphere ruined by sympathy for the rebels; Hitler's judges were sympathetic and gave him a light sentence • Both wore military uniforms, were charismatic and great orators • Used a common enemy to unite the people – Hitler used Jews and Communists; Castro used the U.S. • Both eliminated political parties/opponents – Hitler through the Reichstag fire, concentration camps, and Night of the Long Knives; Castro through <p>Contrast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only Castro successfully overthrew the government by force; Hitler was appointed chancellor by Hindenburg because he and Von Papen believed he could be controlled • Castro went into exile after his arrest and gained support in Mexico; Hitler gained support legally through speeches and propaganda • Castro was left-wing and Hitler was right-wing • The Weimar government was a democratic government that Hitler overthrew. It was ineffective because the political parties put their beliefs above the nation's beliefs. Batista's government was a dictatorship that Castro overthrew. It was ineffective because it was violent, corrupt, and supported the U.S.
Domestic policies	<p>Comparison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education is controlled by the government and ideologies are indoctrinated in school • Schools emphasize values of hard work, self-discipline, courage, love of country • All forms of art, media, film, etc. are censored • Created public works projects – Castro created a project to drain a swamp; Hitler – 4-Year Plan • Committees for the Defense of the Revolution used to suppress opponents through violence and terror; SA and SS did the same

Event	Hitler and Castro
	<p>Contrast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cult of personality has been less built up than Hitler – no statues or money with Castro’s likeness on it • Castro nationalized industry and broke up estates • Hitler played upon Jews and the Aryan race • Castro gained more rights for women and equality for blacks; Hitler used women to make Aryan babies and thought of blacks as inferiors • Concentration camps used in Hitler’s regime; Castro imprisoned political opponents
Foreign policies	<p>Comparison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made alliances with the Soviet Union – Hitler the Nazi-Soviet Pact; Cuba and the Soviet Union had trade and defense pacts <p>Contrast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitler never liked the Soviet Union and attacked them, ending the pact; Castro’s relationship ended with the Soviet Union with the fall of communism • Hitler desired lebensraum; Castro wanted the spread of communism in Latin America and Africa • Castro purposely attacked the policies of the U.S. and vice versa; Hitler was more concerned about Europe • Castro didn’t provoke an invasion, yet there was one through the Bay of Pigs; Hitler provoked an attack through his invasion of Poland