

BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN CUBA, 1942–75

- 1942 Cuba declares war on Germany, Italy, and Japan.
- 1944 Ramón Grau San Martín is elected president for a four-year term and carries the Auténtico (Authentic) party into power.
- The Communist party is reorganized and changes its name to the Partido Socialista Popular or PSP (Popular Socialist Party).
- 1947 Eduardo Chibás breaks with the Auténtico party to organize a new opposition party, Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo) (Cuban People's Party, orthodox).
- 1948 Carlos Prío Socarrás is elected president for a four-year term.
- 1951 Eduardo Chibás commits suicide.
- 1952 Fulgencio Batista seizes power through a military coup and ousts the Prío administration, thereby ending constitutional government in Cuba.
- 1953 Hoping to spark an uprising, Fidel Castro and 125 of his fellow anti-Batistas attack the Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba on 26 July. The attack fails (even though it is a harbinger of things to come) and survivors are sentenced to fifteen-year prison terms. Castro is sentenced to fifteen years on the Isle of Pines (now Isle of Youth).
- 1954 Running unopposed, Batista is elected to another four-year term as president.

- 1955 Batista proclaims a general amnesty in which Fidel Castro and other participants in the Moncada attack are released from prison on Mother's Day. The leader of the newly organized Movimiento 26 de Julio (26th of July Movement) departs for Mexico to organize armed resistance against the Batista government. In Mexico Castro meets Ernesto "Che" Guevara and together they spell out the philosophical foundations that become synonymous with Castro's revolution. Castro then travels to New York and Miami to raise money for the revolution, gather guns and ammunition, and campaign for support from abroad.
- 1956 In November, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and about eighty other revolutionaries set sail to Cuba aboard the *Granma* yacht and, after landing on 2 December, establish guerrilla operations in the Sierra Maestra mountains of southeastern Cuba.
- Colonel Ramón Barquín is arrested for organizing an antigovernment plot within the armed forces. More than 200 officers are implicated in the conspiracy.
- 1957 In January, Fidel Castro leads the first successful guerrilla operation against the Rural Guard post at La Plata in the Sierra Maestra foothills. In March the Directorio Revolucionario (Revolutionary Directorate), led by José Antonio Echeverría, attacks the Presidential Palace in an effort to assassinate Batista. The assault fails and Echeverría is killed. In July a nationwide strike is called in support of the Rebel Army. In September a naval uprising in Cienfuegos leads to the temporary seizure of the local naval station.
- 1958 In March, Raúl Castro establishes guerrilla operations on a second front in the Sierra Cristal mountains in northern Oriente province. In the same month, the United States imposes an arms embargo against the Batista government. The attempt by the 26th of July Movement in April to topple the Batista government through a general strike fails. In May the government launches a major offensive against guerrilla forces in the Sierra Maestra. Government military operations fail, and the guerrilla columns mount a counteroffensive. In December guerrilla fighters led by Che Guevara take control of the city of Santa Clara in the center of the island, initiating Batista's fall from power.

- 1959 Shortly after midnight on New Year's Eve, Batista flees Cuba for the Dominican Republic and then to Florida, supposedly with U.S. \$300 million tucked away in his suitcase. A general strike in early January forces the military government to relinquish power to the 26th of July Movement. On 8 January, Fidel Castro arrives in Havana. The following month, Castro becomes prime minister and Guevara is appointed president of the National Bank. In May the government enacts the agrarian reform bill, which limits private land ownership. In an effort to end U.S. control of the island, the government confiscates foreign-owned industries. The government also outlaws racial discrimination, creates a low-income housing program, makes free health care and education available for all, and implements new policies in farming, sports, music, art, and defense.
- 1960 In May, Cuba and the Soviet Union reestablish diplomatic relations. In the same month Nikita Khrushchev presents Castro when the latter is invited to deliver a speech to the United Nations in New York. In June, the Cuban government nationalizes U.S. petroleum properties. In July, the United States cuts the Cuban quota. Between August and October, additional North American properties are seized, including utilities, sugar mills, banks, railroads, hotels, and factories. In mid-October, the United States imposes a trade embargo on Cuba. In the course of the year, a number of mass organizations are founded, including the militia, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRS), the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the Association of Young Rebels (AJR), and the National Organization of Small Peasants (ANAP).
- 1961 In January the United States and Cuba sever diplomatic relations. In April the Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón) invasion fails, with some 1200–1500 CIA-trained expeditionaries taken prisoner.
- The Cuban government proclaims the “Year of Education,” inaugurating a national campaign to eliminate illiteracy.
- 1962 October 22–28: the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- 1965 The Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) is formed from the fusion of three revolutionary parties: the 26th of July Movement, the Revolu-

tionary Directorate, and the communist PSP. Che Guevara resigns from his posts in Cuba and settles in the jungles of Bolivia where he and fellow insurgents try to overthrow the government.

1967 Ernesto “Che” Guevara is killed in Bolivia, thereby dealing Cuban advocacy of armed struggle (*foquismo*) a serious and irrevocable blow.

1968 Fidel Castro tacitly endorses the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, announcing the beginning of Cuban reconciliation with the Soviet Union and cementing the bond with this powerful ally.

The Cuban government launches the “revolutionary offensive,” leading immediately to the nationalization of the remaining 57,000 small businesses and preparing for the ten-million-ton crop of 1970.

1970 The sugar harvest totals 8.5 million tons, short of the much heralded and symbolic target of ten million tons (*La zafra de los diez millones*). The economy falls into serious disarray.

1971 Poet Heriberto Padilla is arrested and charged with writing counter-revolutionary literature.

1974 *Poder Popular* (People’s Power) is inaugurated in Matanzas province, establishing local elections for municipal assemblies.

1975 The Family Code is promulgated, establishing a comprehensive body of law regulating family, marriage, and divorce.

The First Party Congress convenes.

Cuban combat troops participate in the Angolan war for national liberation against Portugal and the South African Army.

Sources

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