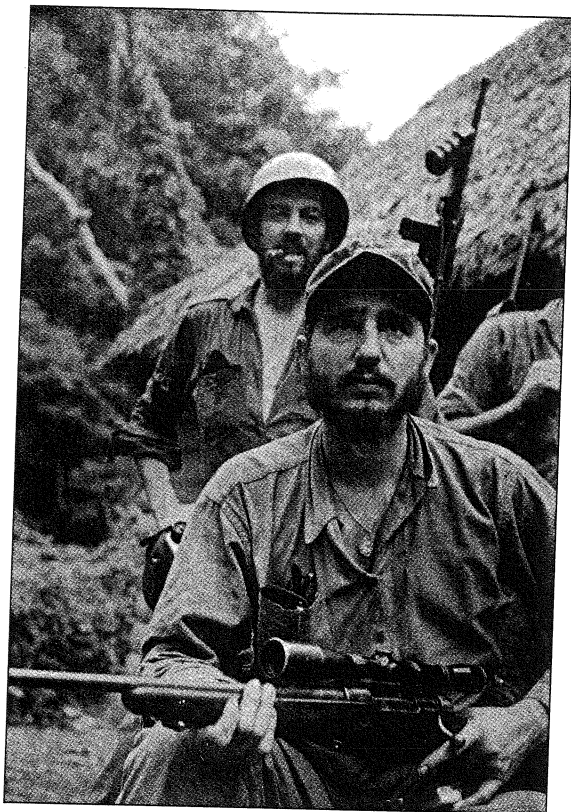


Source 9.8

Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra, 1958



Questions

Study Source 9.8.

- Describe the image of Castro that this photograph creates.
- Compare this image with that of Source 9.7. What was the effect of the publication of both images?
- How do other sources of information support the information given about Castro's activities in Source 9.8?

Castro in power

From January 1959, Castro and the new Cuban government began to transform Cuba. The Fidelistas came to power in a country rife with inequality and social problems. Unemployment was high, half a million children did not go to school, 43 per cent of all Cubans could neither read nor write, 5 million Cubans (out of a population of 6 million) did not own

homes and lived in huts without light, water or sewage. In Havana there were more than 300 brothels and over 15 000 prostitutes. Most Cubans could not go to the beach, as they were privately owned.

Castro became prime minister and introduced popular measures such as land reform, wage increases and rent reductions. Roads, schools and hospitals began to be built in rural areas. The casinos were closed. Private beaches and country clubs were opened to all. Batista's supporters who had not fled Cuba were jailed and had their assets seized. Those accused of political murders and torture were put on trial and executed. It is estimated that 550 executions took place.

Revolutionary Cuba

Once Castro's power was firmly established a process of consolidation began.

- The July 26 Movement replaced the Cuban Army and filled key positions in the Cuban police force.
- Elections were postponed indefinitely.
- Activities of political parties, apart from the Communist Party, were suspended.
- Neighbourhood Committees for the Defence of the Revolution were established and Cubans were encouraged to report dissent.
- The Cuban media was nationalised.
- The Labour Ministry declared strikes illegal.
- Trade unions were absorbed into a state labour organisation.
- By 1965, the leadership of the Communist Party was replaced with supporters of Castro.
- Land reforms were introduced.
- American investments were confiscated.
- Wage rises were introduced.
- Rents were reduced by law.
- 'Pro-Batista' civil servants, academics and teachers were dismissed.
- Batista's supporters were imprisoned and their property seized.
- The concept of 'the enemy of the people' was introduced and 'show' trials and executions held.

Achievements of the revolution

- Better health services were established.
- Higher standards of living were reached.
- Illiteracy was reduced from 25 per cent in 1958 to 4 per cent in 1970.



- Education levels improved. Between 1960 and 1970 the number of secondary schools within Cuba trebled; enrolments in industrial schools rose from 6000 to 30 000, and university enrolments doubled.
- By the end of the 1970s, Cubans enjoyed one of the highest standards of living in Latin America.

Source 9.9

Fidel Castro speaking on 1 January 1959

This time Cuba is fortunate: the revolution will truly come to power. It will not be as in 1895 when the Americans intervened at the last minute and took over our country ... It will not be as in 1933 when the people believed the revolution was in the making and Batista took power ... It will not be as in 1944 when the masses were exuberant in the belief that they had at last come to power but thieves came to power instead. No thieves, no traitors, no interventionists. This time the revolution is for real!

From M Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution, Origins, Course and Legacy*, Oxford University Press, 1994.

Questions

Study Source 9.9.

- What events in Cuba's history are being described?
- What is significant about the date of this speech?
- What do you think Castro means by the phrase 'This time the revolution is for real'?
- What is Castro promising in this speech?

Source 9.10

Fidel Castro and the media

Fidel understood the skill with which leaders such as Franklin Roosevelt and Benito Mussolini had used radio as a means of mass communication, and had learned firsthand ... how the same methods could be effectively applied in Cuba. He was, however, the first world leader to appreciate the full potential of television in this regard. During the summer of 1959, he made repeated speeches aimed not so much at the live audience, although it was often massive, but at television viewers all over the country. Through this medium he was able to develop a sense of rapport with his people, even when serious errors were being made ... He acquired

immense skill at reading the mood and feelings of the country from the reactions of the mass audiences.

From Peter Bourne, *Castro*, Macmillan, 1987.

Questions

Study Source 9.10.

- What kind of source is this? Give a reason for your answer.
- What skill is referred to in this source?
- Why was this skill vital, according to Bourne?
- Which other sources of information support the arguments in this source?