

## Fidel Castro Time-Line

[PBS Documentary](#)

[Miami Herald Timeline](#)

[History Will Absolve Me Speech and Timeline](#)

*The problem of the land, the problem of industrialization, the problem of housing, the problem of unemployment, the problem of education and the problem of the people's health: these are the six problems we would take immediate steps to solve, along with restoration of civil liberties and political democracy*

- Born August 13, 1926
  - Father was wealthy sugar plantation owner
  - Mother was maid to the Father's household
  - Father married his Mother when Fidel was 15. Fidel's surname was changed from Ruz to Castro.
- Early-1940s
  - Education in private Jesuit boarding schools, where he played baseball.
  - [1940 letter to FDR](#)
- Mid-1940s
  - 1945—entered law school at the University of Havana. Became involved in student movements focusing on nationalism, anti-imperialism, and reform.
  - 1947—joined an international effort to overthrow dictator Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic (responsible for the massacre of 30,000 Haitian migrants). The effort failed miserably.
- Late-1940s
  - 1948—returned to Cuba. Badly beaten in protests over the killing of a student by the government. Joined *Partido Ortodoxo*, a nationalist and anticommunist party. Planned to run as an Ortodoxo Party candidate for the Cuban parliament prior to the coup by Batista.
  - 1948—traveled to Colombia at the time of the political assassination of leftist leader Jorge Gaitan.
  - 1948—marries daughter of the lawyer for United Fruit. Became very focused on the enclave, preferential, and profitable status of United Fruit (despised “company town” which divided the residents from the U.S. from the Cubans).
- Early-1950s
  - Fulgencio Batista (military leader and dictator)
    - 1933. Led military coup
    - 1940-44. Elected President (ironically, with the support of the fledgling Communist Party)
    - 1952. Batista ran again for the presidency. In a three-way race, Roberto Agramonte of the Ortodox Party led in all the polls, followed by Dr. Carlos Hevia of the Autentic Party. Batista's United Action coalition was running a distant third. On March 10, 1952, three months before the

elections, Batista staged a coup and seized power. He ousted outgoing President Carlos Prío Socarrás, canceled the elections, and took control of the government as "provisional president." Shortly after the coup, the United States government recognized his regime.

- 1950—Castro begins his law practice, focusing on the less fortunate elements of the Cuban population
- 1952—Castro nominated as a candidate for the House of Representatives, and put all his energies into the election (which was cancelled by Batista). Castro brought several cases against the Batista dictatorship (with no success).
- 1952—Castro establishes “The Movement,” which includes a military wing.
- **July 26, 1953**—Castro and some 150 followers attacked the Moncada Barracks (with a much smaller group planning an attack on the Bayamo Barracks). The attacks fail miserably. Castro had contacts with the Communist Party (his brother, Raul), but not embrace it. Many were killed or captured during the attacks, and the remainder were killed or captured in the days after the attacks.
- September 21, 1953—Castro (and brother Raul) and many other “leftists” not involved in the attacks were put on trial. Castro argued during the trial that they were justified in their effort to overthrow Batista—that the Castro forces were the protectors of the Cuban Constitution, which had been grossly violated by Batista. Information regarding the torture of those standing for trial with Castro was exposed.
- October 16, 1953—Castro is sentenced to 15 years. At his sentencing, he delivers his famous [“History Will Absolve Me”](#) speech (lasting five hours). In essence, he defended his actions and said he was committed to the reinstatement of the 1940 Cuban Constitution (democracy and civil liberties), land reform, and labor rights. *Condemn me. It does not matter. History will absolve me.*
- 1953-54—In prison, Castro organizes the “July 26 Movement.”
- 1954—To diminish opposition to fraudulent elections, Batista grants amnesty to Castro and other imprisoned followers. Castro organizes opposition once free in Havana.
- July 7, 1955—Fearing for his life, Castro flees Cuba for Mexico (along with Raul and a small number of other followers). They meet Ernesto “Che” Guevara ([Argentine medical student and converted revolutionary](#)) and Alberto Bayo (exiled leader in the Republican--or anti-fascist--side during the Spanish Civil War against Franco).
- November 25, 1956—Castro and 80 followers set sail from the Mexican state of Veracruz for Cuba in a run-down and over-crowded yacht (the *Granma*, later the name of the state newspaper in Cuba).

[Castro interview, Feb. 1, 1961 with Arminio Savioli](#)

We also destroyed the philoimperialistic bourgeois state apparatus, the bureaucracy, the police, and a mercenary army. We abolished privileges, annihilated the great landowners, threw out foreign monopolies for good, nationalized almost every industry, and collectivized the land. We are fighting now to liquidate once and for all the exploitation of man over man, and to build a completely new society, with a new class contents. The Americans (Cubans say just that, los americanos, to mean the United States) the Americans and the priests say that this is communism. We know very well that it is not. At any rates, the word does not frighten us. They can say whatever they wish. There is a song, which is popular among our peasants, that goes more or less like this: "Bird of ill omen — of treason and

cowardice — that are throwing at my joy — the word: communism! — I know nothing about these 'isms'  
— Yet, if such a great welfare conquest — which can be seen by my own eyes — is communism, then —  
you can even call me a communist!

[Fidel Castro began working for the Soviet Union in 1943.](#)

[Matthews not believing Castro's confession of Marxist faith](#)

[December, 1961, Castro declares he is a Marxist-Leninist and has been since the beginning](#)

[Castro said that as a student at Havana University he was not a Marxist because he was 'influenced by imperialist and reactionary propaganda against the Communists. "](#)

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