Enter Fidel Castro
Personality (Perez)

• Wanted to be judged by history (313)
  – New generation was fulfillment of unmet aspirations and unkept promises of the past
  – Needed a substantive & symbolic break w/ past

• Gifted orator, energetic, told people what they wanted to hear

• Achieved mythical status by 1959 → Doves
Opposition

• **PEREZ**: Autenticos & Ortodoxos part of fall of Batista, but also part of the rise (314)
  – Gets rid of opposition by controlling judges, other means
  – 70% Proletariat, so vast audience for Castro’s message
Reforms (319-321)

• 1500 decrees in first nine months
• Health, education, unemployment relief
• *Urban Reform Law* (March ’59) – Discouraged private housing in favor of public housing
• *Agrarian Reform Law* (May ’59) – Real estate restricted to 1K acres; sugar, rice, livestock to 3333
• **PEREZ**: Proles, Afro-Cubans benefitted greatly & think Castro is a hero → upper/middle class suffer & flee to FLA
Elections? (321-22)

• Che Guevara tells people elections will be held at the appropriate time; Revolution now, elections later
  – Che::Castro similar to Trotsky::Lenin
Economics (326)

- Gov. jobs replaced by PSP members, union leaders
- US threatens CUB w/ embargo → USSR steps in
  – Refineries & assets nationalized, mostly USA owned
- By Oct. ’60, most industry is nationalized
- 2nd Urban Reform Law – Prohibited multiple residence ownership; rest confiscated by state
- Jan. ’61 – US severs diplomatic ties w/ Cuba
A Decided Shift…

• Che’s “Crossroads” (323)
  – Revolution made it as far as they could w/ Liberals/USA
• Cubans focus on nationalization of industry 85% under state control (328)
  – Used new liquid assets to help the rest of the economy
• Middle Class, formerly US dependent, lost its base & left instead of opposing revolution (329)
• Old mass organizations & replaced with new revolutionary ones (330)
Cold War Interlude (331)

- Bay of Pigs & Cuban Missile Crisis further solidified movement → 100K opposition imprisoned

"I am a Marxist-Leninist, and I will be a Marxist-Leninist until the last days of my life."
Fidel Castro

http://www.facebook.com/communism101
Why Castro is Different (332-33)

• Castro survived, unlike Marti in 1890s
• Embraced reform, unlike in 1933
• Didn’t just succeed because of Soviets
  – Employed socialist mechanisms for economic reasons, not in reaction to US hostility or USSR support
• Seized foreign property, and survived
• Internal opposition in disarray; internally secure
• New, secure army & press; church irrelevant
• Revolution had a mind of its own + unique historical conditions
• Middle class flight removed liberal/Western opposition & US embraced them with open arms
• No US bailout like last two times