

FRANCO'S SPAIN AND CASTRO'S CUBA: PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS

Alfred G. Cuzán
Department of Government
The University of West Florida
Pensacola, FL 32514
acuzan@uwf.edu

Paper presented for presentation at the 5th Annual Meeting of Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, the Cuba Research Institute, Florida International University, Miami, Florida, October 29, 2003. Many thanks to Mrs. Shannon Sims, Graduate Assistant in the Department of Government at The University of West Florida, for her skillful assistance in gathering most of the data shown in Table 1.

FRANCO'S SPAIN AND CASTRO'S CUBA: PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS

Alfred G. Cuzán
Department of Government
The University of West Florida
Pensacola, FL 32514
acuzan@uwf.edu

1. Introduction.

In this paper I explore important similarities as well as significant differences between two dictatorial regimes separated by the Atlantic Ocean in space and a generation in time: Franco's Spain and Castro's Cuba. Located at opposite ends of the conventional left-right ideological spectrum and founded by men very different in ideology, style, and temperament, these two regimes are, as one would expect, a far cry from each other. Yet, they also exhibit surprising similarities. Without neglecting the ways in which they are unlike, in this paper I pay close attention to their affinities. If at times I appear to be stressing the latter, it is because, in my judgement, they have been neglected.¹ Thus the reader is warned in advance: if it seems that in places I overstate the case for congruence between certain aspects of Franco's and Castro's regimes, it is simply for the purpose of highlighting what has tended to be obscured by their more readily observed disparities in the personalities of the rulers and the structures of control. In the next several sections, the parallels and contrasts between the two regimes are grouped

¹I have found no comprehensive comparisons of Francisco Franco and Fidel Castro in the academic literature, but in a study of 20th century politics in Spain and Cuba, Montaner (2002) avers that they have the following traits in common: messianic self-image, rejection of his country's past, and adoption of a foreign ideology to justify a personal dictatorship. **For a study of Castro and Stroessner, see Sundrol (1991). Geyer (1991) notes that, gallegos both, they were a classical Spanish caudillos wielding absolute political power.**

into three categories: the founders, regime structures and policies, and the consequences of being ruled by these regimes for Spaniards and Cubans, respectively.

2. The founders.

In *The Prince*, Niccolo Machiavelli professed admiration for self-made rulers, even if the means employed to attain their ends, such as treachery and cruelty, were not always praiseworthy. What impressed Machiavelli the most were men who, though their origins be humble, obscure, or even shameful, were so endowed with the *virtue* of courage, audacity, and cunning as to manage, through force and fraud, to exploit opportunities presented by fortune to climb from private station to the rank of founders of new states or regimes. Even a prince who attained power by criminal methods, such as Agathocles the Sicilian, who seized the crown of Syracuse after massacring the city's rich and notable, earned the Florentine's grudging respect as long as he was his own man, relied on his own resources, trusting nothing to fortune, and displayed the *greatness* of his spirit in bearing and overcoming adverse things (Machiavelli, 33).

Francisco Franco and Fidel Castro are both self-made princes in the Machiavellian sense. That is, exhibiting the political *virtues* Machiavelli admired and employing the methods which go by the adjective of *Machiavellian*, both rose from private station to become absolute rulers of their countries. Both men were born in a place and into a family far removed from the center of political power and social prestige, yet both managed to make themselves masters of their countries. In this section, similarities and differences in personality, family life, education, likes and dislikes, and other personal characteristics are noted.

Both Franco and Castro suffered from the Oedipus complex, both having conflictual relations

with the father.² Neither was particularly ascetic, although Castro pretended to be and Franco was, although venal and partial to pomp and circumstance, rather austere in his eating and drinking habits. Both enjoyed leisure activities requiring physical exertion such as hunting or fishing, and both were avid sports *aficionados*. Neither knew much economics, though both thought they did, and both resisted enacting market reforms recommended by their advisors until circumstances made it unavoidable, Franco beginning in the mid 1950s and Castro four decades later. Neither managed to learn to speak English well.

Franco and Castro both risked their lives in combat, although only Franco fought at the head of his troops and only he was wounded (combating Moroccan insurgents as a young officer). Both exhibited traits of cruelty and cunning, using, manipulating and then discarding people when they no longer served their purpose. Both deceived their coalition partners during the struggle for power, betraying their former sponsors or benefactors once they had triumphed. Franco pretended that his appointment as chief of state and head of the military during the Spanish Civil War was provisional, and led monarchists to believe that he would restore the monarchy soon after victory and Falangists to think that he shared their program of social reform. For his part, Castro feigned lack of political ambition and promised to restore the 1940 Constitution which Fulgencio Batista had violated. Fortune favored both of them by eliminating rivals within their movements on the road to power. Both men took over, purged

² **Unlike Franco, who is, of course, dead and buried, Fidel Castro is still alive; but for the sake of grammatical or stylistic simplicity, most of the time, especially when the two dictators are juxtaposed in the same sentence or paragraph, the past tense will be used with him, as well.**

and thoroughly subdued pre-existing political parties, turning them into instruments of their personal power (the Falange and the Popular Socialist Party, respectively).

Franco and Castro both admired and emulated Mussolini.³ *Il Duce* came to Franco's aid during the Spanish Civil War and Franco wrote him warm words of gratitude. In his university days Castro owned a complete edition of the Italian fascist's works, and later, when he got to speechify for hours on end, partly modeled his histrionics after him. Both Franco and Castro had delusions of grandeur, both attempted to rewrite their personal histories in romantic and heroic terms, and both surrounded themselves with adulators and sycophants who showered their lord and master with extravagant encomiums. Both used the media to build a personality cult on paper and electronic images. Rhythmic chanting of "Franco, Franco, Franco" and "Fidel, Fidel, Fidel," respectively, interrupted their long speeches at mass meetings.

Both Franco and Castro exploited their countries' strategic value to play important roles in wars between the great powers, in the course of which they manipulated men far more powerful than they (Hitler, Khrushchev). Each outfoxed his ally (Nazi Germany, the USSR) when it appeared to be flirting with the idea of conspiring with regime discontents to replace him with a more pliant figure. Against all expectations both survived economic and international crises when their big power sponsor went down to defeat or imploded.

³ As well as admiring Mussolini, Franco and Castro also held each other in high esteem (Geyer 1991). Castro went as far as to declare a week of mourning in Cuba to mark Franco's death.

Both dictators were subjected to death threats and assassination attempts, none of which came close to getting anywhere near their intended target. Rather understandably, each took precautions to protect his life. When, during the Spanish Civil War, one of his rivals in the Nationalist camp died in a plane crash, Franco resolved not to fly again and, indeed, never did. His only ventures out of the country were for a brief encounter with Hitler in a French border town during World War II and another to Portugal to visit Salazar. Most of the time he stayed at his official residence, going out only occasionally to visit other cities or during his long vacations. For his part, Castro also took precautions. He is said to have changed residence and schedules at a moment's notice. Although he traveled widely, he surrounded himself with a protective entourage. In planning a visit to Brazil some time ago, for example, he shipped a plane-full of weapons and security guards (they were turned back by the Brazilian authorities, who said they would take responsibility for protecting him).

Both Franco and Castro exhibited Bonapartist behavior, making themselves *de facto* dictators for life and putting personal power above all other considerations. Their policies adjusted with time and circumstances (more fundamentally so in Franco's case than in Castro's), but one thing remained untouchable: the inviolability of their own primacy. Neither tolerated challenges to his absolute rule, which extended 39 years in the case of Franco, longer than that in Castro's. Both made their persons exempt from criticism, jailing anyone who crossed the line, and both put a premium on loyalty, appointing or retaining for decades as ministers veterans of the struggle for control of the state. Each dictator described his regime as a true democracy, and painted foreign hostility to him or his regime as an attack on national sovereignty and dignity.

As well as similarities, there are significant differences between the two men. Most, though not all, correlate with Rejai and Phillips' dichotomy of political leaders, divided into loyalists and revolutionaries (Rejai and Phillips, 1988). **A revolutionary is one who takes a leading role in the mass violent overthrow of a political regime in the interest of broad societal change.** By contrast, **a loyalist is the counterpart of a revolutionary in a key political (elective) or governmental (appointive) position.** Juxtaposing the two types, **Loyalists extol the established order; revolutionaries denounce it, articulating an alternative vision embodying, in their view, a superior (perhaps even utopian) society** (Rejai and Phillips, xiv, 12).

In several important respects, Francisco Franco was the consummate loyalist.⁴ He came from a respectable military family, adored his mother, pursued a military education, distinguished himself in the battlefield combating anti-colonial forces, was religious and puritanical, his diet was spartan and his drinking measured, and lived a conventional married and family life, deriving great pleasure from his grandchildren. Having attended military school and, by virtue of combat promotions, rapidly risen through the ranks to become the youngest general in Europe, Franco received royal recognition for his military exploits in Spanish Morocco. In 1934, two years before his break with the Second Republic, Franco acted as *de facto* Chief of the General Staff when he was appointed special adviser to the Minister of War under a Center-Right government. In that capacity Franco exercised operational control over the troops that put down a left-wing insurrection in Asturias and Catalonia.

⁴ For an analysis of Franco and Castro in terms of Rejai and Phillips' framework, see Cuzán (2003).

Franco's ideology was eclectic, a veritable *olla podrida* of ideas and sentiments drawn from traditional Catholicism, a romanticized conception of Spanish imperialism, military-style authoritarianism, and centralist models of economic development, including quasi-fascist syndicalism, with anti-British, anti-American, and anti-Masonic prejudices thrown into the mix. Other than a bit of paranoia, understandable in a man under frequent death threats and the object of assassination attempts, he seems not to have suffered from mental disturbances.

From the 1950s on, except in ceremonial occasions, he shed the military uniform, dressing in nicely tailored business suits. He settled into a comfortable routine, a fixed schedule of daily or weekly meetings with the cabinet, individual ministers, other officials, and foreign dignitaries. His annual rhythm allowed for long vacations, which he spent hunting, fishing, and playing cards. Except when he wished to exploit it to whip up nationalist fervor, for the most part Franco maintained a studied indifference to criticism aimed at him and his regime from abroad. He took pains not to overreact to provocations, be they from monarchists, Falangists, or workers going on strikes. He was generally imperturbable, taking the best and the worst news without betraying any hint of a reaction, although at times, such as a ceremonial occasion, overcome with emotion or nostalgia, he would cry in public.

For his part, Fidel Castro was the stereotypical professional revolutionary. He belonged to a wealthy but not respectable family, was not particularly close to his mother, studied but did not practice law, learned the art of war as he went along, was not at all puritanical, giving free rein to his enormous appetite for food and sex, and had a very disordered personal life. He studied law at the University of Havana, where he joined one of the political gangs that were the bane of the institution. In 1953, one year after Batista staged a *coup* against the constitutionally elected government, Castro led an attack on

a military base in Santiago de Cuba. The operation was a failure, resulting in the massacre of dozens of his men. Sentenced to 15 years in prison, of which he served only two, Castro went into exile in Mexico before returning to Cuba to lead a successful two-year guerrilla and propaganda campaign against the dictatorship from his hideout in the Sierra Maestra mountains of his native Oriente province. To this day only occasionally, mostly when he is abroad, does he wear anything other than a military uniform.

Castro consistently has reacted angrily to even the mildest of international criticism, furiously heaping a torrent of abuse and vituperation on those who dare to find fault with him or his regime. Insults and ridicule are his stock in trade, the signature of his regime's diplomacy. More than Franco, he seems to suffer from mental disturbances. It's been noted that he fell into a deep depression following the death of his mistress and confidante, Celia Sanchez. Also, at times he behaves erratically, and frequently as if seized by mania: into his old age Castro acts unpredictably, given to outbursts of frenzied agitation into which the entire population is drafted as cheerleaders and foot soldiers for his latest obsession.⁵

⁵ Interestingly, the apparent difference between Castro and Franco on mental stability conforms to the average difference between two types of dictators, the visionary and the authoritarian. In a study of 1,000 20th century rulers, Ludwig (2002) found that whereas 76 percent of visionaries exhibited one of more psychiatric syndromes (the second highest of six groups), authoritarians exhibited the lowest rate of all, 48 percent. Visionaries are totalitarians who promote a

3. Regimes.

Although at opposite ends of the conventional left-right spectrum, one being dedicated to the preservation of private property and the other to its abolition, the Francoist and Castroite regimes had certain characteristics in common. Both regimes were anti-democratic and anti-liberal, both suppressed independent labor organizations (Castro more effectively than Franco), and both repressed domestic dissent and opposition harshly, crushing guerrilla resistance supported from abroad (France in Franco's case, the U.S.A. in Castro's). Their regimes were equally deadly to their subjects, ruthlessly stamping out those who resisted their power: exile, beatings, torture, long prison terms, forced labor camps, or death was their fate. Some 300,000 Spanish Republicans fled their country in the closing months of the Civil War while something like that number escaped Cuba in the first three to five years of Castro's rule. Hundreds of thousands of people spent life in prison for political reasons under both regimes. In fact, the rates of what Professor Rummel calls "democide" (deaths attributable to the regime by execution, extra-judicial killings, conditions in prison or labor camps, and so on) are about the same in both countries (see Table 1, Section 4). Even after the regime was consolidated, in neither case did the regime reach out to conciliate the opposition. On the contrary, in both cases the dictatorship maintained a permanent division between victors and vanquished, or revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries. Both regimes employed mass mobilization, incessant propaganda, and orchestrated adulation to glorify the dictator; both engaged in bombastic, triumphalist rhetoric, divorced from reality,

A particular political ideology through social engineering, while authoritarians are dedicated to preserving social stability, emphasizing law, order, and tradition (Ludwig, 2002: 41).

about their alleged achievements; and both claimed to have given birth to a true democracy and a society that was superior to that of bourgeois capitalism.

Both regimes made use of an official party (the Falange, the Communist Party) enlisting a small minority of the population (between three and ten percent) in order to staff portions of the bureaucracy and the transmission belts tying various sectors of the population (workers, women, youth, etc.) to the regime, as well as to mobilize the population in adulation of the dictator at periodic rallies and anniversaries. After decades exercising political monopoly, in both cases the official party suffered from ideological disenchantment or exhaustion, cynicism, and corruption.

As well as banning all parties but the official one, for most of their lives both regimes imposed stultifying controls on academic life and on intellectual, artistic and cultural activities, even as they both stimulated the cinema as a propaganda tool (Franco even wrote a script for a movie, *Raza*, a romanticized version of his family as he would have liked it to have been), as well as rigorous press censorship. As a consequence, many of the most creative and talented Spaniards and Cubans in whatever field, be they historians, writers, poets, composers, scientists, artists, and so on, went into exile. Both regimes made disrespect of the dictator a crime, sentencing violators to prison. Neither regime allowed labor unions to form, organize, or operate freely; on the contrary, both sought to envelop workers in regime- or party-controlled organizations (although in Spain this policy was relaxed beginning in the late 1950s and was, in any case, never completely successful, as evidenced by the repeated waves of illegal strikes—see below).

For at least part its life (a shorter time in Spain), in each case the regime implemented autarchic policies and either imposed rigid bureaucratic controls, as in Spain, or carried out large scale

expropriations of property, as in Cuba, that had disastrous economic effects. In both countries a large percentage of the population experienced severe privation, even hunger, for years at a time. Shortages, rationing, black markets and associated corruption, to which both dictators turned a blind eye, plagued both countries for at least part of the time. Both regimes were forced by circumstances, not least a foreign exchange crisis and the government's inability to service its debt, to open the economy to foreign investment (although the policy was strictly limited in Castro's case), and both regimes relied on tourism and remittances to infuse foreign exchange into a stagnant or moribund economy (1950s in Franco's Spain, 1990s in Castro's Cuba). Both regimes experienced high rates of emigration for economic as well as political reasons.

Both regimes painted their countries as historic victims of an English-speaking imperialist power, the United Kingdom in the case of Spain, the United States in Cuba's, against which they unsuccessfully pressed irredentist claims (Gibraltar and Guantanamo, respectively). Each regime exploited the subject country's geopolitical value to enemies of its English-speaking nemesis: Franco allowed German U-boats to use Spanish ports during World War II and Castro conspired to place Soviet bombers, submarines, and even missiles in Cuba during the Cold War.

Both regimes weathered periods of regional isolation (Cuba in Latin America during the 1960s and most of the 1970s) or even international isolation (Spain in the immediate post-World War II period), and both exploited external opposition to the regime or the dictator in order to whip up nationalistic fervor. Both regimes encountered an intransigent adversary, Mexico in the case of Franco, the U.S.A. in Castro's case, which refused to normalize relations during the life of the dictator. Both regimes allowed nuclear weapons to be stationed on its territory (America's in Spain's case, the USSR

in Cuba's), although for a much briefer period but at considerably greater risk in Cuba's case. Both regimes sent thousands of troops (volunteers in Spain's case) to fight in distant lands on behalf of its ally (Germany's eastern front and Africa, principally Angola and Ethiopia, respectively), although fewer than 50,000 Spanish officers and men did this compared to six times that many Cubans. (Since Cuba's population was between one fourth and one third of Spain's, this means that the former's direct military participation abroad was almost 20 times larger than the latter.) Both took the Arab side in the Middle East. Finally, both were resilient enough to survive the demise of their big-power sponsors (Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, the Soviet Union and its East European satellites).

As to regime differences, they parallel the classic distinction between an authoritarian and a totalitarian regime.⁶ The Franco regime never attempted to control all of society, and even those parts that it did try to subject to its will, such as organized labor, often eluded its grasp. Franco faced domestic constraints to his arbitrariness and power. Throughout the life of the regime he played a balancing act, juggling contradictory elements of his coalition. Initially these included the Army, the monarchists, the Falange, and the Catholic Church. Over time Franco managed to subjugate the Army and the Falange to his will, but the monarchists and the Catholic Church had an independent life of their own. Even within the Falange Franco had to deal with elements that were not subordinate to himself, namely the *camisas viejas*, or old party stalwarts, including the family of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the Falange leader executed by the Republicans during the Civil War. Tensions between the monarchists and the falangists, and the falangists and the Catholics, periodically erupted into public acrimony and even outbreaks of violence. As time passed and conditions changed, the Falange and the

Army took back seats to authoritarian technocrats and political reformers, and the Church went increasingly into opposition. Franco's last cabinets were composed almost entirely of Catholic technocrats and monarchist reformers. None but the armed forces ministers themselves had a military background.

As early as 1947 Franco had a Law of Succession enacted declaring Spain a kingdom with himself as regent for life who would, in due course, select the monarch. Yet, put to a referendum in an all-out propaganda campaign in which the outcome was, of course, assured, still over one million Spaniards, or 7 percent of those turning out, either voted no or cast blank or defaced ballots (Payne 1987: 375). In the 1950's the monarchists began publicly to play the role of loyal opposition. In the municipal elections of 1952, they managed to win 50,000 votes (vs. 220,000 for the official ticket). Since the government had thrown its propaganda weight behind its candidates, the substantial minority of votes won by the monarchists resulted in a public relations defeat for the regime. Also, with seemingly infinite patience Franco suffered periodic outbreaks of internal dissidence, plots and conspiracies among all members of his coalition, not excluding the Army. Forced retirement, dismissal from their posts, and brief periods of internal exile were the worst punishment he meted out to those responsible.

Franco strove to accommodate the Church, granting it a privileged position in Spanish society, an arrangement that worked to the advantage of the regime at first, but against it later. As the falangist flavor of the regime faded after World War II, conservative Catholicism filled the ideological vacuum.

⁶ See Sondrol (1991) for a somewhat similar contrast between Castro and Stroessner.

The Church supervised the content of education, and its proselytization and communication activities were subsidized by the regime. At its peak in 1961, almost half of secondary students attended Catholic schools. A university was established in Navarre by the Opus Dei (Work of God), a Catholic lay organization. Its publications, including dozens of newspapers, were free of censorship, even as Church officials participated in the censoring of others. Catholic organizations played an active role in cultural affairs, and *técnicos* from Opus Dei in economic policy.

At the same time, Franco intermittently had to withstand criticism from one or more members of the Catholic hierarchy and many parish priests for specific violations of human rights. Also, the Church organized several tens of thousands of workers, and these organizations vigorously denounced labor abuses. As the regime entered its last decade, to Franco's consternation the Church and Catholic intellectuals played more of an oppositionist role. Hundreds of clergy openly engaged anti-regime activities, including publicly supporting Basque regionalists. They did so not with impunity, as more than a score of the most brazen of them were jailed. Even then, they were kept in separate facilities designed just for them and treated relatively gently, which did not prevent the prisoners from rioting at one them, an event that won them clerical solidarity throughout the country. The Bishop of Bilbao even excommunicated several policemen who had beaten up one of his priests. Given the privileges and influence of the Church in Spain, and Franco's own professed Catholicism, which he proclaimed to this dying day, the oppositionist stance of the Church presented the regime with a flagrant contradiction which could not but undermine the very foundations of its claims to legitimacy.

As well as the Church, Franco had to contend with deep-seated regional cleavages, underground labor unions fomenting illegal strikes, and university unrest which steadily escalated during

the last decade and half of the regime's life. In 1951, several hundred thousand workers walked out of their jobs in Catalonia and the Basque country. Successive waves of industrial strikes buffeted the regime in 1958, 1962, 1968 (when more than a million workers walked out), and nearly every year after that. In time the strikes spread to teachers, doctors, and other professionals. In 1974, the number of hours lost to strikes peaked at 18 million. These labor stoppages overlapped with regionalist tensions, particularly in Catalonia and the Basque country. The regime responded with a combination of repression and concessions, the latter becoming an increasing proportion of the mix as time went on (although not in the Basque country, where a resurgence of nationalism was countered with more arrests in the last two years of the regime's life). Beginning in the 1960's, the workers were allowed increasingly free representation in the lower levels of syndicalist organizations, to which they elected increasing numbers of opposition elements, although those engaged in open political activity still risked being fired from their jobs.

To govern, Franco appointed competent ministers to whom he delegated considerable discretion as long as they were loyal. To some extent he reigned rather than ruled, doing more presiding than directing over the government. Starting in the 1950's, with increasing tempo through the mid-1960's and then again in the 1970's, some of these reformist ministers persuaded Franco to implement significant economic and political reforms. As early as 1952 rationing was abolished, and with it the black market disappeared. By the end of the decade heavy-handed controls were lifted, autarchy abandoned, and the Spanish economy became increasingly integrated with the rest of Europe and, indeed, the world. During the regime's last 15 years, as foreign investment flowed in and millions of tourists visited, Spain became an urban country and an industrial power. The economic boom raised

the Spanish standard of living significantly (more about in Section 4). Although the economic benefits were not evenly distributed (they never are), a measure of their generality is indicated by the dramatic drop in infant mortality (again, see Section 4). Also, the boom gave rise to a new middle class and reversed the direction of emigration: in the last three years of the regime almost 150,000 more people moved to Spain than left it. Politically, the boom had the effect of dampening old animosities, and a new climate of moderation settled upon the country.

Explicit political measures also played a role. The regime enacted a law of succession that restored the monarchy and designated a successor—the future King Juan Carlos. The choice was made official in 1969, six years before Franco's death. The Prince was allowed great freedom, which he used with prudence and discretion. Nevertheless, like a magnet, Juan Carlos began to attract courtiers, including, to Franco's annoyance, several of his own ministers, already planning for a career after the *caudillo* was no longer around. Thus a second and very different center of legitimate authority was born within the regime itself which grew more luminous as Franco's own light dimmed in anticipation of the inevitable. Also, during his last year of life Franco yielded the presidency first to one, then another (after the assassination of the first) trusted appointee. Although Franco remained as head of state, cabinet appointments and reorganizations for the most part slipped out of his hands.

During its last decade the regime lifted pre-publication censorship, and although political criticism would bring newspaper closings and temporary exiling of editors, the press pushed on the boundaries of the possible, becoming, in effect, a shadow congress, where various currents of public opinion were represented and given expression. Publication of books skyrocketed and some bookstores even carried leftist publications. A protest culture took root in the universities, where

student enrollment more than doubled in the last decade of the regime. Nominally non-political associations were allowed to form, and as civil society recovered its vitality, a domestic opposition revived which the regime treated with increasing leniency, though not without occasional throwbacks to a harsher era, especially after killings of policemen, a frequent tactic of the Basque underground, often assisted by Communists. The military, which throughout the 1950's had seen its share of the budget decline, was de-politicized and increasingly professionalized, its size gradually reduced so that by 1970 on a per capita basis it was one of the smallest in Europe (about the size of Norway's, and half as large as neighboring Portugal). As the regime demilitarized, it took an altogether civilian cast. The courts became increasingly mindful of their responsibilities to protect civil rights, so that the police no longer had the free rein they once had enjoyed. In its last eight years, the regime executed only three people, all guilty of carrying out assassinations.

After World War II the regime's foreign adventurism ended. Having survived several years of international isolation, including initial exclusion from the United Nations, in the 1950's the regime buried the hatchet in its relations with Washington, becoming its ally, if an uneasy one, and allowing the U.S.A. to establish bases on Spanish soil in exchange for payments, loans, surplus military equipment, and sundry benefits. Thenceforth the regime pursued an uncontroversial foreign policy, establishing diplomatic or consular relations even with communist regimes in Eastern Europe.

Together the totality of reforms implemented during the last two decades of Franco's life put Spain on a path of politico-economic development toward capitalist democracy. Although the dictator thought he had arranged things in a way that would allow the regime to survive his death, leaving Spain

As well tied to it, in fact the knot became undone quickly, almost painlessly, and Spain surprised the world with one of the smoothest transitions to democracy on record.

By contrast, Castro has never been seriously constrained by domestic actors operating independently of his regime. To this day Castro rules rather than reigns. The regime rests on three pillars, the party, the Army, and the security apparatus, all under Castro's control, none with a power base independent of the regime. Unlike Franco, who presided over a cabinet composed of distinct factions, such as have not existed in the Cuban cabinet since the 1960's (Corrales, 2003: 12). Moreover, unlike Franco, who treated straying members of his coalition leniently, Castro has harshly punished with long prison terms and even death members of his regime or revolutionary movement, including high ranking generals and former ministers, whom he perceived as threats to his power, e.g., Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa, executed in 1989.

From the outset the Castro regime banished the Catholic Church from the schools and otherwise restricted the scope of its activities to small corners of Cuban society. Since the visit of Pope John Paul II, the Church has been granted a little more space, and its public opposition to the regime tolerated. But since, unlike in Franco's Spain, the Cuban Church was marginalized by the regime from the start, its opposition is of necessity feeble in nature and minor in impact.

Beginning with the expropriations of the early days of the revolution and through the several revolutionary offensives against proprietors, by the late 1980's over 90 percent of agricultural land was in the hands of the party-state, a much higher proportion than under any other country in the Soviet empire. Also, economic reforms implemented since the collapse of the Soviet Union have been limited, nothing like what occurred under Franco or neighboring Latin American countries or even China and

Vietnam have done more recently. True, state farms have been turned into so-called cooperatives. But these lack autonomy, even lacking the authority to make decisions on membership, production, prices, inputs and marketing. Most foreign investors operate in partnership with the regime, and must do their hiring and paying its wages through it. It is no longer a crime to hold dollars, but the regime owns all retail outlets selling imported items who those with dollars earned from tourism or received as remittances want to buy. Some self-employment is allowed, but only in approved occupations and under heavy taxes and restrictions, such as the prohibition against hiring non-family members. In any case, far from accelerating the pace or deepening the reforms already in place, within a few years the regime brought them to an abrupt halt and even backtracked on some of them, forcing the closing of hundreds of private eating establishments (*paladares*) and dispersing street vendors and rickshaws. Once the economy bottomed out and began to recover, the regime reversed the direction of economic policy, emphasizing, once again, state monopolization.

Throughout its reign the regime has kept the media, universities, and labor under a tight leash. There are no independent media, save that of the Church, and, in any case, the number of newspapers has been reduced to less than a handful. Cubans may not purchase computers, printers or copiers without a permit from the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Internet access is reserved for the party's most trusted faithful, and then mostly in the workplace, where it is monitored. The universities are reserved for revolutionaries, i.e., those perceived throughout their earlier education as being loyal to the regime. Since the early 1990's enrollment in higher education has actually gone down. As for workers, there are no independent labor unions, and anyone attempting to form one faces penalties ranging from being dismissed from work to being jailed. Foreign firms must contract with the state for labor, and their

workers are prohibited from negotiating compensation or working conditions with management. In Cuba, strikes are unheard of.

Unlike Spain, where the Franco regime relied less and less on the military as a support base, in Cuba the Castro regime has been militarist throughout. Although the size of the armed forces shrunk with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR, they are still one of the largest in Latin America. Moreover, as their foreign adventures wound down, the military took on a more central domestic role, not only in security but in the administration of economic enterprises, including the sugar industry. The Ministry of the Armed Forces manages GAESA, a conglomerate of state enterprises which doing business with multinational corporations in tourism, foreign trade, industry, mining, and technical and engineering consulting.

Rather than ease on political controls over a resurgent civil society and treat the opposition with increasing leniency as the Franco regime did, in what is probably the last decade of Castro's life the regime has reverted to a more repressive policy. In 2003 it clamped down on its domestic opposition, small, disorganized, and thoroughly infiltrated by police agents as it was, arresting dozens of journalists, human rights activists, and others independent voices and, after summary trials from which the foreign press was excluded, sentencing them to an average of two decades in prison each. About the same time, after a one-day trial it put to death three young black men whose only crime was to attempted to hijack a vessel to Florida, even though no one died in the attempt.

In contrast to Franco's Spain, where a booming economy opened up multiple avenues for individual achievements attained independently of the regime and brought about an easing of political tensions and many distractions from politics, in Cuba there is no way around the regime or escaping it

except by fleeing the country. The regime controls the gates to the few paths to material improvement made possible by joint ventures with multi-national companies in tourism and mining. Monopolizing domestic trade, the regime does not allow commerce to develop or a merchant class to grow. Castro continues to thrust itself into people's lives, deliberately maintaining a high level of political tension, periodically mobilizing the country in support of one or another cause, be it revenge for a slight from the President of Mexico, a negative vote before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, or some other of his peevish projects. When, in keeping with a provision of the Cuban constitution, a group collected enough signatures petitioning the regime to conduct a referendum on a restoration of democratic freedoms, Castro countered with a massive collection of signatures in which, supposedly, within a few days nearly the entire adult population signed on to a provision to the constitution that would make socialism a permanent fixture.

When the Cold War ended, Castro did not make peace with the U.S.A. but, on the contrary, continued his anti-American stance, reaching out to American enemies in the Middle East and Asia. As recently as April 2001 he told an audience in Tehran that together Iran and Cuba could bring the United States to its knees. China is now making use of former Soviet spy facilities in Cuba.

In sum, over the span of nearly four decades the Franco regime underwent a considerable change in its very nature. From its harsh, quasi-fascist origins, the regime evolved into an enlightened, modernizing dictatorship allowing Spaniards greater economic and cultural freedom. By contrast, the Castro regime continues to keep Cuban society under a tight grip. Although the implosion of the Soviet empire forced the regime to make deals with capitalist multi-nationals and create inducements for emigrants to send remittances to their relatives in the Island, there has been no change in the essential

nature of the regime. It remains a dictatorship exercising the maximum control over society which resources and circumstances will allow.

4. Outcomes.

Table 1 compares how Spain and Cuba fared under Franco's and Castro's regime, respectively, on certain key indicators of human welfare. The earliest data shown for both countries are from the 1950's. For Spain, the next data point is for the early to mid-1970's, i.e., the last years of Franco's regime. Lastly, the most recent data are also shown for the purpose of assessing long-term trends. However, the change in Spanish welfare under Franco is measured between the two decades from the 1950's to the 1970's only.⁷ As for Cuba, the earliest data shown is for the mid to late 1950's, before Castro's seizure of the state. For nearly all indicators, three additional data points are shown, one each for the 1970's, 1980's, and the most recent. The 1980's data coincide with the regime's highest performance, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the implosion of the USSR and the end of Soviet subsidies to the Castro regime.

.....

Table 1 about here

⁷ It would be ideal to have data on Spain for the 1930's, but at this point the earliest are those of the 1950's. This may underestimate improvements in Spain under Franco. However, when one considers that the first two decades of the regime's life were marked by the Great Depression, World War II, and the isolation to which Spain was subjected in the immediate postwar period, it may be safe to assume that whatever improvement took place during that period could only have been modest at best.

.....

The indicators chosen for examination are grouped into three sets. The first set of variables measures material ingredients that sustain the human body: calories and protein grams consumed per capita on a daily basis. The second set has to do with those things that sustain the human mind: reading capacity, reading materials, and amenities. Reading ability is estimated by the literacy rate, and the availability of reading materials by the number of newspapers and books published. As a surrogate for amenities, I use the number of tourists per 1,000 inhabitants. Tourists are, by definition, people on vacation. They will spend leisure time where they find a variety of sources of amusement and entertainment. A country sought after by tourists is one where people can enjoy a good time. Finally, the third set includes measures of death associated, in whole or in part, with human decisions; that is death that is deliberately induced, as with abortion, suicide, and democide, or to some extent preventable, as with infant mortality. In employing these indicators to evaluate the Franco and Castro regimes relative to each other, it is assumed that the greater the availability of materials that sustain the body and the mind, and the lower the rate of preventable or chosen death, the greater the welfare of the population subject to a regime. Also, it is assumed that the regime plays a part, even if not necessarily the dominant part, in the behavior of these indicators over time.

Taking up the measures of those things that sustain the human body first, the data show that as early as 1961, after a quarter of a century of Franco's rule, Spaniards were eating better than Cubans: the Spanish caloric intake was 20 percent and the protein intake more than 50 higher than the Cuban. Between 1961 and 1975, caloric and protein intake increased faster in Cuba than in Spain (25% vs. 14% and 28% vs. 18%, respectively). The improvement in nutrition during the first 15 years of

Castro's rule, then, was greater than in the last 15 years of Franco's. However, the comparison is deceiving, since the Cubans began at a much lower base and, be it noted, by 1975 the Spanish intake of calories and protein was almost as high as that of the Americans.⁸ Moreover, in 2001, after more than four decades under Castro, Cubans consumed fewer calories and scarcely more protein than in 1961, when the regime got started. In other words, all the gains during the regime's first three decades were wiped out. Thus, according to this indicator of human welfare, the material inputs required to sustain the human body, Spaniards fared much better under Franco than Cubans did under Castro.

⁸ In 1975 Americans consumed 3,023 calories and 97.2 protein grams, although in the U.S.A. the ratio of presumably higher quality animal protein to vegetable protein was almost 2:1.

Taking up the next set of indicators, be it noted that literacy went up under both Franco and Castro, by 12 points between 1955 and 1975 in Spain and by an even larger margin in Cuba. On the other hand, while daily newspapers increased in number under Franco, they practically disappeared under Castro. So while more Cubans became literate, there was less printed matter for them to stimulate their minds with. This does not even address the question of the quality of reading material. Recall that in the previous section it was noted that during Franco's last few years the press was freed from prior censorship. As the number of newspapers increased, so did the diversity of their content, so that the press came to serve as a surrogate congress, an outlet for a variety of viewpoints and ideas. In Cuba, by contrast, the only newspapers available are controlled by the party-state; their content is dreadful and dull, spouting the regime propaganda with every issue. Note, too, that under Franco the publication of books skyrocketed. In the 1950's, Spain published approximately nine times as many titles as Cuba. By 1975, the ratio had more than doubled, to 20 to 1. Note, also, that the number of books published in Cuba in the 1990's is smaller than in the 1970's. Again, this does not address the lack of quality of what *is* published or simply available in the bookstores.⁹ Finally, note that in 1975 Franco's Spain received more than four times the number of tourists per capita than Cuba did in 2002. In fact, the 2002 Cuban ratio is lower than Spain's as long ago as 1960. The numerical difference does not even begin to tell the story, however, because, as if adding insult to injury, in Castro's Cuba, unlike in Franco's Spain, ordinary nationals are barred from tourist resorts and other places frequented by

⁹ **Kerrigan (1988) makes explicit comparisons between Spain and Cuba. During Franco's last years, he writes, the works of Borges could be found in the bookstores whereas in Cuba in 1986 not only were Borges' books not available, neither were those by Bellow, Sartre, Ernesto Cardenal, Unamuno, Ortega y Gasset, not even Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.**

foreign visitors. Thus, as with what it takes to sustain the body, when it comes to what is conducive to sustaining the mind Spaniards fared much better under Franco than Cubans have under Castro.

As to the death rates, we first take up the democide rate. This metric measures the number of dead, as a percent of the population, total and per year, attributed to the regime, as measured by Professor Rummel. Note that the two regimes are comparably deadly, both having been responsible something under one percent of the population over a three-and-a half decade period. Regarding infant mortality, it is worth noting that in 1956 the Spanish rate was more than 50 percent greater than in Cuba, 51.7 vs. 32. By 1972, however, in Spain infant mortality had been slashed by almost two-thirds while in Cuba it had actually gone up from pre-Castro days. While the Cuban rate is now very low, it is still 50 percent higher than what it is Spain today and, in any case, this figure has to be viewed in the context of one of the highest abortion rates in the world. It is all too likely that the low infant mortality is accomplished by deliberately aborting pre-infants with a low probability of making it past the first few months of life or, what one could not put past a regime as adept at lying as Castro's, that some proportion of infant deaths are being reported as abortions. Be that as it may, the rate at which women are ending their pregnancies in Cuba may have something to do with their lack of confidence in the future of their children under the Castro regime. Finally, note the suicide rate. Ironically, the suicide rate actually *fell* under Franco, by almost one third. By contrast, in Cuba the suicide rate has gone up by 50 percent since 1963 (the earliest year available). Again, the rate at which Cubans are taking their own life may be telling us something about the low value they place in continuing to live under the Castro regime. Prohibited from leaving the country without the regime's permission, unable to avoid its intrusions into their daily lives, a relatively high percent of Cubans appear to be escaping Castro's

control by committing suicide. The high Cuban suicide rate, then, may be a surrogate, if macabre, vote of no confidence in Castro's rule.¹⁰

5. Conclusion.

This paper has shown that there are important similarities as well as differences between Franco's Spain and Castro's Cuba. The two rulers are examples of Machiavellian self-made princes. Both were cunning, deceitful, and cruel, and the regimes they built were equally deadly to their subjects. Ironically, where the regimes differ the advantages are all on Franco's side. His was an authoritarian regime that could never fully subdue labor, university students, or regionalist sentiment, and during its last decade it allowed economy and society, not excluding the press, publishing houses, and bookstores considerable freedom. Under Franco's rule Spaniards had more to eat and to read, and as a proportion of the population far fewer infants died and a smaller number of people took their own life. Under Castro's totalitarian rule, by contrast, Cubans have experienced increasing scarcity of food and newspapers, and if the infant mortality rate has decreased, this improvement, repeated *ad nauseam* by Castro apologists the world over, has to be viewed in the context of extraordinarily high rates of abortion and suicides. In sum, their comparable democide rates notwithstanding, under the Franco regime Spaniards saw an improvement in those things associated with human life, the life of the body and the mind, while under the Castro regime Cubans have experienced a painful erosion in those very

¹⁰ Be it noted that Oswaldo Dorticós, and old-line communist hand-picked by Castro to fill the office of president in 1959, eventually took his own life, as did Haydee Santa María, one of the Moncade veterans.

things. Rather than celebrate or enjoy life, Cubans put an end to it, by abortion and suicide, at alarming rates. It is no wonder, then, that it is said that Cubans, never at a loss for humor, even black humor, are said to deface regime posters proclaiming Castro's slogan, "Socialism or death," so that they read, instead, "Socialism *is* death."

In light of the Franco regime's clear advantage over Castro's, it is interesting to note how the two tyrants are viewed by American academics and intellectuals.¹¹ Whereas they are united in their abhorrence for Franco, a significant number of them admire Castro or at least apologize for him, crediting his regime with bogus "achievements" in health and education.¹² This says more about the academics themselves than about the nature or the performance of the two regimes. It seems as if American intellectuals are susceptible to the myth of revolution and associated egalitarian rhetoric and appearances, and are willing to overlook or excuse despotism if the regime justifies repression as a

¹¹ Goldberg points out that English-language dictionaries label right-wing dictators (e.g. Franco) Salazar, as such, but when it comes to communist dictators, like Castro, they avoid the term, calling them "leaders" and even "statesmen." See Goldberg (2002).

¹² Payne makes a similar point. By any measure, Spain fared better under Franco than Yugoslavia did under Tito. Yet, while the Generalissimo was viewed as the "primary resident ogre of western Europe," the Croat was hailed even in the western press as a great reformer and innovator, a kind of beacon of progressive achievement" (Payne, 1985: 634-635).

response to U.S. Ahostility@ or Aaggression.@¹³ To paraphrase Machiavelli, it appears that if a tyrant succeeds in passing himself off as both Asocialist@ and Washington=s victim, most of the Left, Ataken by what seems@ (Machiavelli, 67), will sing his praises.

¹³ For a critique of what Latin Americanists have said and done about the Castro regime, see Cuzán (1994) and Cuzán (1995).

Table 1. Franco= Spain and Castro= Cuba: Quantitative Comparisons

Indicator	Spain	Cuba
Calories per capita	2,632 (1961)^A	2,171 (1961) ^A
	2,991 (1975)^A	2,714 (1975) ^A
	3,422 (2001)^A	2,643 (2001) ^A
Protein grams per capita	79.0 (1961) ^A	50.9 (1961) ^A
	93.0 (1975) ^A	64.9 (1975) ^A
	112.8 (2001) ^A	75.6 (1985) ^A 60.7 (2001) ^A
Literacy rate	82% (c.1955) ^B	76% (c. 1958) ^E
	92.4% (1975) ^C	95.4 (1979) ^C
	97.9 (2003) ^F	97.2 (2003) ^F
Daily newspapers	109 (1954) ^D	58 (1950s) ^D
	115 (1972) ^D	10 (1971) ^D
	87 (2000) ^C	17 (1985) ^D 2 (2000) ^C
Book production ¹	4,812 (1955) ^G	550 (1950s) ^{1, C}
	17,727 (1975) ^G	883 (1970s) ^{1, C}
	51,692 (1990s) ^{1, C}	1,792 (1980s) ^{1, C} 773 (1990s) ^{1, C}
Tourists (per 1,000)	199 (1960) ^G	??
	841 (1975) ^G	1.5 (1974) ^I
		182 (2002) ^I
Democide, percent ²	0.92% ^H	0.81% ^H
Democide, annual rate ³	0.025% (1939-1975) ^H	0.028% (1959-1987) ^H 0.022 (1959-1995) ^H
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	51.7 (1956) ^D	32 (1957) ^E
	18.6 (1972) ^D	34.4 (1965-1970) ^D
	4.54 (2002) ^F	11.9 (1988) ^D 7.27 (2002) ^F
Abortion rate (per 1,000 women)	N.A.	65.3 (1975) ^J
	3.1 (1988) ^J	58.0 (1988) ^J
	5.7 (1996) ^J	77.7 (1996) ^J
Suicide rate (per 100,000)	5.5 (1960) ^K	10.2 (1963) ^{4, K}
	3.9 (1975) ^K	17.2 (1975) ^K
	8.1 (1999) ^K	18.3 (1996) ^K

Table 1. Franco's Spain and Castro's Cuba: Quantitative Comparisons
(continued)

Explanatory notes.

¹ Except for 1955 and 1975 in Spain, the number is the annual average for the decade using years of available data.

² Democide rate excludes the war leading up to the regime's establishment in both countries. Thus, it is based only on the number of deaths attributable to the regime itself, not the fighting or killing leading up to its establishment. Thus, in Spain only deaths from 1936 forward and in Cuba from 1959 on are counted.

³ Rummel's data series for Spain covers the entire life of the Franco regime but for Cuba it ends in 1987. Thus, the first number in the Cuba column is Rummel's; the second number has been calculated over 36 years, which is the same length as Franco's regime. This second number assumes, counter-factually, no more regime-attributed deaths in Cuba after 1987, and hence underestimates the annual democide rate for the Castro regime.

⁴ Earliest available.

Sources:

^A Food and Agriculture Organization, *Food Balance Sheets*, 1961-2000.

^B ***World Illiteracy at Mid-Century: A Statistical Study Authorized by UNESCO. Greenwood Press, 1957. Reprinted 1970.***

^C **UNESCO *Statistical Yearbook*, various years.**

^D United Nations *Statistical Yearbook*, various years.

^E **Smith and Llorens.**

^F **CIA, *World Factbook*.**

^G Payne (1987: 474).

^H Rummel (1997).

^I Sanders and Long (2002).

^J Henshaw et. al. (1999)

^K World Health Organization, Suicide rates and absolute numbers of suicide by country, Country reports and charts http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/

REFERENCES

- Corrales, Javier. 2003. Gatekeeper State: Limited Economic Reforms and Regime Survival in Cuba, 1989-2002. Amherst, MA: Amherst College. Javier Corrales= Works in Progress.
<http://www.amherst.edu/~jcorrale/The%20Gatekeeper%20State%203.pdf>
- Cuzán, Alfred G. 2003. Francisco Franco and Fidel Castro: Loyalist vs. Revolutionary? A Preliminary Exploration. Paper presented at the 2003 meeting of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, Coral Gables, FL, August 8, 2003.
- Cuzán, Alfred G. 1999. *Is Fidel Castro A Machiavellian Prince?* Miami, FL: The Endowment for Cuban-American Studies.
- Cuzán, Alfred G. 1995. *Dictatorships and Double-Standards: The Latin American Studies Association on Cuba.* Miami, FL: Endowment for Cuban American Studies, The Cuban-American National Foundation, Paper #13.
- Cuzán, Alfred G. 1994. The Latin American Studies Association vs. The United States: The Verdict of History. *Academic Questions*, 7 (3), 40-55.
- Falcoff, Mark. 2003. *Cuba. The Morning After.* Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press.
- Geyer, Georgie Ann. 1991. Fidel and Franco: The Ultimate Odd Couple. *Wall Street Journal*, July 12, p. A11.
- Goldberg, Sidney. 2002. Leaning Lexicons --- How Do You Define `Dictator'? Not Easily, It Seems. *Wall Street Journal*, July 5, p. W11.

- Henshaw, Stanley K., Susheela Singh and Taylor Haas. 1999. Recent Trends in Abortion Rates Worldwide. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 25 (1), 44-48.
- Kerrigan, Anthony. 1988. What Are the Newly Literate Reading in Cuba? An Individualist Memoir.. The Kellogg Institute for International Studies. Working Paper #111.
- Ludwig, Arnold M. 2002. *King of the Mountain*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Machiavelli, Niccolo. 1997. *The Prince*. Translated and edited by Angelo M. Codevilla. Yale University Press.
- Montaner, Carlos Alberto. 2002. La Transición Española y el Caso Cubano. Paper prepared for the Cuban Transition Project of the Institute of Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL, Summer 2002.
- Payne, Stanley G. 1987. *The Franco Regime*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Payne, Stanley G. 1967. *Franco's Spain*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Preston, Paul. 1994. *Franco. A Biography*. New York: Basic Books.
- Quirk, Robert E. 1993. *Fidel Castro*. New York: Norton.
- Rejai, Mostafa and Phillips, Kay. 1988. *Loyalists & Revolutionaries: Political Leaders Compared*. New York: Praeger.
- Ripoll, Carlos. 1999. *El Otro Fidel Castro y Otros Ensayos Sobre Fidel Castro*. New York: Editorial Dos Ríos.

Rummel, R. J. 1997. *Statistics of Democide: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900*. Table 14.1

D (Spain) and Table 15.1B (Cuba). <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/NOTE5.HTM>

Sanders, Ed and Patrick Long. 2002. Economic Benefits to the United States from Lifting the Ban on

Travel to Cuba. Washington, D.C.: The Cuba Policy Foundation.

<http://www.cubafoundation.org/CPF%20Cuba%20Travel%20Study.htm>.

Smith, Kirby and Llorens, Hugo. 1998. Renaissance and Decay: A Comparison of Socioeconomic

Indicators in Pre-Castro and Current-Day Cuba. *Cuba in Transition*, Volume 8, 247-259.

The authors cite as their statistical sources two United Nations publications, the *Statistical*

Yearbook and *Demographic Yearbook*. The paper is available on the web:

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/asce/cuba8/30smith.pdf>

Sondrol, Paul C. 1991. Totalitarian and Authoritarian Dictators: A Comparison of Fidel

Castro and Alfredo Stroessner. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 23, 599-620.