

26th of July Movement

The **26th of July Movement** (Spanish: *Movimiento 26 de Julio*; **M-26-7**) was a Cuban vanguard revolutionary organization and later a political party led by Fidel Castro that in 1959 overthrew the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in Cuba. The Movement fought the Batista regime on both rural and urban fronts. The movement's main objectives were distribution of land to peasants, nationalization of public services, industrialization, honest elections, and large scale education reform.

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Origins

The 26th of July Movement's name originated from the failed attack on the Moncada Barracks, an army facility in the city of Santiago de Cuba, on 26 July 1953.^[1] This attack was led by a young Fidel Castro, who was a legislative candidate in a free election that had been cancelled by Batista.^[2] The attack had been intended as a rallying cry for the revolution. Castro was captured and sentenced to 15 years in prison but, along with his group, was granted an amnesty after two years following a political campaign on their behalf. Castro travelled to Mexico to reorganize the movement in 1955 with several other exiled revolutionaries (including Raúl Castro, Camilo Cienfuegos, and Juan Almeida Bosque). Their task was to form a disciplined guerrilla force to overthrow Batista.

Role in the Cuban Revolution

On 2 December 1956, 82 men landed in Cuba, having sailed in the boat *Granma* from Tuxpan, Veracruz, ready to organize and lead a revolution. The early signs were not good for the movement. They landed in daylight, were attacked by the Cuban Air Force, and suffered numerous casualties. The landing party was split into two and wandered lost for two days, most of their supplies abandoned where they landed. They were also betrayed by their

26th of July Movement	
Movimiento 26 de Julio	
Participant in Cuban Revolution	
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Active	1955–1965
Ideology	Anti-imperialism Left-wing nationalism Vanguardism
Leaders	Fidel Castro (head) Raúl Castro Che Guevara Camilo Cienfuegos Juan Almeida Bosque
Headquarters	Tuxpan, Veracruz, Mexico (first) Havana, Cuba (second)
Area of operations	Caribbean Sea
Became	Communist Party of Cuba
Opponent(s)	Fulgencio Batista's Government, Cuban Army
Battles and war(s)	Operation Verano, Battle of La Plata, Battle of Las Mercedes, Battle of

M-26-7

peasant guide in an ambush, which killed more of those who had landed. Batista mistakenly announced Fidel Castro's death at this point. Of the 82 who sailed aboard the *Granma*, only 12 eventually regrouped in the Sierra Maestra

Yaguajay, Battle of
Santa Clara

mountain range. While the revolutionaries were setting up camp in the mountains, "Civic Resistance" groups were formulating in the cities, putting pressure on the Batista regime. Many middle-class and professional persons flocked toward Castro and his movement.^[3] While in the Sierra Maestra mountains the guerrilla forces attracted hundreds of Cuban volunteers and won several battles against the Cuban Army. Ernesto 'Che' Guevara was shot in the neck and chest during the fighting, but was not severely injured. (Guevara, who had studied medicine, continued to give first aid to other wounded guerrillas.) This was the opening phase of the war of the Cuban Revolution, which continued for the next two years. It ended in January 1959, after Batista fled Cuba for Dominican Republic, on New Year's Eve when the Movement's forces marched into Havana.

Post-1959

After the takeover, anti-Batistas, liberals, urban workers, peasants, and idealists became the dominant followers of the M-26-7 movement, which gained control over Cuba. The Movement was joined with other bodies to form the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution, which in turn became the Communist Party of Cuba in 1965. Cuba modeled itself after the soviet-bloc countries of eastern Europe, becoming the first socialistic government in the Americas. Once it was learned that Cuba would adopt a strict Marxist–Leninist political and economic system, opposition was raised not only by dissident party members, but by the United States as well.^[4] Fidel Castro's government seized private land, nationalized hundreds of private companies—including several local subsidiaries of U.S. corporations—and taxed American products so heavily that U.S. exports were cut half in just two years. The Eisenhower Administration then imposed trade restrictions on everything except food and medical supplies. As a result, Cuba turned to the Soviet Union for trade instead. The US responded by cutting all diplomatic ties to Cuba, and have had a rocky relationship ever since.^[5] In April 1961, a CIA-trained force of Cuban exiles and dissidents launched the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs Invasion against Cuba.

The flag of the 26th of July Movement is on the shoulder of the Cuban military uniform, and continues to be used as a symbol of the Cuban revolution.

See also

- Political movement
- Moncada Barracks

References

Notes

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2. "Cuba – The Republic of Cuba | history – geography" (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Cuba/The-Republic-of-Cuba#ref515701>). *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved 22 November 2016.
3. "26th of July Movement | Cuban history" (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/26th-of-July-Movement>). *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved 22 November 2016.
4. DeFronzo, James. *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*. (University of Connecticut. 2007) pp. 207–08

5. Suddath, Claire (15 April 2009). "U.S.-Cuba Relations" (<http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1891359,00.html>). *Time*. ISSN 0040-781X (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0040-781X>). Retrieved 22 November 2016.

External links

- [Guide to the Cuban Revolution Collection, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library](http://drs.library.yale.edu/HLTransformer/HLTransServlet?style=yul.ead2002.xml&pid=mssa.ms.0650&query=&clear-stylesheet-cache=yes&hlon=yes&big=&adv=&filter=&hitPageStart=&sortFields=&view=all) (<http://drs.library.yale.edu/HLTransformer/HLTransServlet?style=yul.ead2002.xml&pid=mssa.ms.0650&query=&clear-stylesheet-cache=yes&hlon=yes&big=&adv=&filter=&hitPageStart=&sortFields=&view=all>)
 - [Fidel Castro and the founding of the 26th of July Movement](http://www.haciendapublishing.com/articles/fidel-castro-and-26th-july-movement) (<http://www.haciendapublishing.com/articles/fidel-castro-and-26th-july-movement>)
 - *El Cubano Libre* Articles by Che Guevara from the Sierra Maestra (<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43b/066.html>)
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