

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

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In this paper I explore what I take to be 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, founded by men very different in ideology, style, and temperament, in many respects 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 differ, here I pay close attention to their affinities. If at times I appear to be unduly stressing the latter, it is because by and large they have been overlooked.² 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. Also, to the reader who wishes I had carried out the analysis in the context of the large literature on regime transitions or the traditional distinction

between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, or attempted to draw from it more by way of theoretical insights or practical applications, I say that my objective, in this, my second paper on Franco and Castro in two years, has been more modest, namely, to offer the first systematic juxtaposition of their regimes in one brief essay. In other words, it is only an installment of what I see as a work in progress. If I have been anywhere near successful with it, then this study can serve as a stepping stone for me or, better still, other scholars, to do additional work on a neglected topic.

In the next several sections, the parallels and contrasts between the two regimes are grouped into three categories: the founders, regime structures and policies, and the consequences for Spaniards and Cubans of being ruled by Franco and Castro, respectively. Be it noted that throughout this paper I have relied heavily on Stanley Payne's indispensable books on Franco's Spain. Rather than footnote his work at every turn, I pay special tribute to it here.

1. An earlier version was presented in October 2003 at the 5th Annual Meeting of Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, the Cuba Research Institute, Florida International University. Many thanks to Mrs. Shannon Sims, Graduate Assistant in the Department of Government at The University of West Florida, for gathering most of the data shown in Table 1. Thanks, also, to Juan del Aguila, Charles W. Anderson, Yvon Grenier, Brian Latell, Juan López, Carlos Alberto Montaner, Silvia Pedraza, and Jaime Suchlicki for their criticisms and encouragement. Needless to say, I am solely responsible for errors of fact or interpretation.

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

THE FOUNDERS

In *The Prince*, Niccolò 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 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” 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 a country.

Both Franco and Castro appear to have suffered from the Oedipus complex, both having had conflictual relations with their fathers.³ 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 about 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 very well.

Franco and Castro both risked their lives in combat,⁴ 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 original 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 overturned. Fortune favored both of them by eliminating rivals within their movements on the road to power. Both men took over, purged 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.⁵ *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,

3. 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.

4. Brian Latell demurs on this point, saying that, except possibly at Moncada, Castro never put his life on the line, always staying well behind the front lines. Huber Matos goes further, alleging that in the *Sierra* the *comandante* took great care for his personal safety. See, e.g., Matos (2002), pp. 100, 176-177.

5. 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.

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 them 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 great-power sponsor went down to defeat or imploded.

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 phalanx armed to the teeth. 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).

Franco and Castro both 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 (as we shall see, 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 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.⁶ Born into a respectable Navy family of modest means from the northwest coast of Spain, Franco pursued the profession of arms, enrolling as a teenager in the infantry academy. By virtue of combat promotions in Spanish Morocco, he rapidly rose through the ranks to become the youngest general in Europe, earning royal recognition. In 1934, two years before his break with the

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

Second Republic, as special adviser to the Minister of War under a center-right government Franco acted as *de facto* Chief of the General Staff, exercising operational control over the troops that put down a left-wing insurrection in Asturias and Catalonia. His diet was Spartan, his drinking measured. Religious and puritanical, his personal life was conventional, having married for life and taking great pleasure in grandchildren. 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.

Beginning in the 1950s, excluding times of pomp and circumstance, Franco 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 a reaction, although on more than one ceremonial occasion, overcome with emotion or nostalgia, he would cry in public.

For his part, Fidel Castro was the stereotypical professional revolutionary. Born into an illegitimate union of a self-made Spanish immigrant (who hailed, incidentally, from Galicia, like Franco) and a maid (they were married after the death of the first wife), Castro belonged to a wealthy but not respectable family from a remote part of the country. He studied but did not practice law, picked up 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 at least into middle age led 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 constitutional government, Castro organized an attack on a military base in Santiago de Cuba. The operation was a failure, resulting in the massacre of dozens of his men, but he escaped unscathed. 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 a hideout in the Sierra Maestra mountains. To this day, only occasionally, mostly when he is abroad (the papal visit being a notable exception), 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." 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 Sánchez. 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 Cuban population is drafted to serve as cheerleaders and foot soldiers for his latest obsession.⁷

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

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

labor organizations (Castro more effectively than Franco), and both repressed domestic dissent and opposition harshly, crushing incursions and 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 close to that number escaped Cuba in the first three to five years of Castro's rule alone (they were to be joined by another half-a-million more). Hundreds of thousands of people spent time 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 rhetoric about their alleged achievements; and both claimed to have given birth to 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 well as rigorous press censorship. As a consequence, many of the most creative and talented Spaniards and Cubans in whatever field, 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 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 of its life (a shorter time in Spain), in each case the regime implemented autarchic policies, either imposing rigid bureaucratic controls, as in Spain, or carrying 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 Guantánamo, respectively). Both 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 nuclear missiles in Cuba during the Cold War. Both weathered periods of regional or international and both exploited external opposition to the regime or the dictator in order to whip up nationalistic fervor. Both encountered an intransigent adversary, Mexico in the case of Franco, the United States of America 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 to the latter. Both regimes sent thousands of troops ("volunteers" in Spain's case) to fight in distant lands on behalf or in conjunction with a great-power ally (Germany's eastern front and Africa, respectively) although fewer than 50,000 Spanish officers and men did this compared to six times as 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.) In the Middle East, both took the Arab side against Israel. 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, respectively).

As to regime differences, they parallel the classic distinction between an authoritarian and a totalitarian regime.⁸ 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 sub-

ordinate 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 violence. As time passed and conditions changed, the Falange and the Army took back seats to authoritarian technocrats and political reformers, and the Church as an institution 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 and himself regent for life who would, in due course, select the monarch. This did not satisfy the monarchists, who in the 1950's began publicly to play the role of loyal opposition. As well as tolerating the monarchists, 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 usually 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. The Church supervised the content of public education and its proselytizing was subsidized by the regime. At its peak in 1961, almost half of all 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 censoring of others. Catholic organizations played an active role in

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

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 were jailed. Even then, they were kept in separate facilities and treated relatively gently, which still did not prevent their rioting one occasion, 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 one 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, all of which steadily escalated during the last decade and half of the regime. In 1951, several hundred thousand workers walked out of their jobs in Catalonia and the Basque country. Successive waves of industrial strikes buffeted the country in 1958, 1962, 1968 (when more than a million workers walked out), and nearly every year after that. In time the stoppages spread to teachers, doctors, and other professionals. In 1974, the number of hours lost to walkouts peaked at almost 20 million. Labor agitation 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 Franco's life). Beginning in the 1960's, the workers were allowed increasingly free representation in the lower levels of trade union organizations, to which they elected increasing numbers of opposition elements, although those engaged in open political activity still risked being fired from their jobs.

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-1960s and then again in the 1970s, 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 that below). 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 below). 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.

Explicit political measures also played a role. As previously mentioned he regime enacted a law of succession that restored the monarch, with Franco as regent. The choice of the future King Juan Carlos was not made official until 1969, six years before Franco's death. Until then 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, and then, after the assassination of the first, another trusted appointee. Although Franco remained as head of state, he delegated more and more functions, and 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, giving relatively free rein to alternative currents of public opinion. Publication of books skyrocketed and some bookstores even carried leftist publications. An adversary culture sprang in the universities, where student enrollment more than doubled in the last decade of the regime. Nominally non-political associations were allowed to form. As civil society gained momentum, opposition elements grew and spread. The regime generally treated it 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 beginning with the 1950's had seen its share of the national budget decline, was de-politicized and increasingly professionalized, its size gradually reduced so that by 1970 in relation to the population it was one of the smallest on the continent. As the regime demilitarized, it took an altogether civilian cast. The courts became increasingly mindful of their responsibilities to protect civil rights, and 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 1950s Madrid buried the hatchet in its relations with Washington (to the consternation of the Falange), becoming its ally, if an uneasy one, allowing the United States to establish bases on

Spanish soil in exchange for payments, loans, surplus military equipment, and sundry benefits. Thenceforth the regime pursued an unexceptional foreign policy, establishing diplomatic or consular relations even with communist regimes, and, interestingly enough, never breaking off those with Castro's.

Together the totality of reforms implemented during the last two decades of Franco's life unwittingly 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 "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, though approaching his 80th birthday, 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 an independent power base. Unlike Franco, who presided over a cabinet composed of distinct factions, such "have not existed in the Cuban cabinet since the 1960s" (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, an erstwhile "Hero of the Revolution," executed in 1989.

From the outset Castro 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 publicly expressed demurs with the regime tolerated. But since, unlike in Franco's Spain, the Cuban Church was marginalized, cowed, and impoverished 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 regime and through the several "revolutionary offensives" against proprietors, by the late 1980s 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 bloc. 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 what China and Vietnam have done more recently. True, state farms have been turned into so-called cooperatives. But these lack autonomy, even the authority to make decisions on membership, production, prices, inputs or marketing. Most foreign investors operate in partnership with the regime, and must do their hiring and paying of workers through it. It is no longer a crime to hold dollars, but the regime monopolizes retail outlets selling imported items. 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 somewhat, 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. Unlike Franco's Spain, where university enrollments exploded, spawning an adversarial student culture, in Castro's Cuba higher education is reserved for "revolutionaries," i.e., those perceived throughout their academic life as being loyal to the regime, and in fact since the early 1990's enrollment in universities 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 the Franco regime, which relied less and less on the military as a support base, Castro's 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 doing business with multinational corporations in tourism, foreign trade, industry, mining, and technical and engineering consulting.

Rather than ease 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 other independent voices. After summary trials from which the foreign press was excluded, the defendants were sentenced 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 crime was to attempted to hijack a vessel to Florida, even though no one died in the attempt.

Again in contrast to Franco's Spain, where a booming economy opened up multiple avenues for individual achievements attained independently of the regime and offered many distractions from politics, in Cuba there is no way around the regime or escaping its suffocating controls except by fleeing the country. The party-state operates the gates to the few

paths to material improvement made possible by joint ventures with multi-national companies in tourism and mining. Nearly monopolizing domestic trade, apart from a few farmers' markets, the regime does not allow commerce to develop or a merchant class to grow. Castro continues to thrust himself into people's lives, deliberately maintaining a high level of political tension, periodically mobilizing the country in support of one or another of his obsessions, be it revenge for a slight from the President of Mexico, a negative vote before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, a tightening of the U.S. embargo, or some other pet peeve or project. When, in keeping with a provision of the Cuban constitution, a group collected enough signatures petitioning the regime to conduct a referendum on the restoration of democratic freedoms, Castro countered with a massive collection of signatures in which, supposedly, within a few days nearly the entire adult population endorsed an amendment to the constitution that would make "socialism" a permanent fixture. Like Franco, Castro would like to think that Cuba is "well tied" to *his* vision.

When the Cold War ended, Castro did not make peace with the United States. On the contrary, he persevered in an intransigent 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 was transformed into an enlightened, modernizing dictatorship, allowing Spaniards greater economic, intellectual, and cultural freedom, and even some public forums in which to contemplate alternative post-Franco scenarios. 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 its limited resources and circumstances will allow.

OUTCOMES

Table 1 compares how Spaniards and Cubans have fared under Franco's and Castro's regimes on certain indicators of human welfare. The earliest data shown for both countries are from the 1950's. For Spain, the next data point shown 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.⁹ As for Cuba, the earliest data shown are 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 1970s, 1980s, and the most recent. The 1980s' data coincide with the regime's highest performance, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the implosion of the USSR, and the end of Moscow's subsidies.

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 mind: literacy, reading materials, and amenities. The availability of reading materials is measured 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

9. It would be ideal to have data on Spain for the 1930's, but at this point the earliest are those of the 1950s. It is possible that this underestimates 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.

Table 1. Franco's Spain and Castro's 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) 2 (2000) ^C
Book production ^a	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 ^b	0.92% ^H	0.81% ^H
Democide, annual rate ^c	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) ^{D, K}
	3.9 (1975) ^K	17.2 (1975) ^K
	8.1 (1999) ^K	18.3 (1996) ^K

Source:

^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); ^HRummel (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/.

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

b. Democide rate excludes the war leading up to the regime's establishment in both countries. 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.

c. 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, counterfactually, no more regime-attributed deaths in Cuba after 1987, and hence underestimates the annual democide rate for the Castro regime.

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 half again higher as 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.¹⁰ Moreover, in 2001, after more than four decades under Castro, Cubans consumed fewer calories and scarcely more protein than in 1961, about the time 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 under Castro.

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 previ-

ous 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 presented a genuine variety of viewpoints and ideas, even if certain limits could not be crossed. In Cuba, by contrast, the only newspapers available are controlled by the party-state; their content is dreadful and dull, spouting the regime line with every issue. Note, too, that under Franco the publication of books skyrocketed. In the 1950s, 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.¹¹ Finally, note that in 1975 Franco's Spain received more than four times the number of tourists per capita than Cuba did as recently as 2002. In fact, the 2002 Cuban ratio is lower than what it was in 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 many tourist resorts and other places frequented by foreigners. 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 under Castro.

As to preventable death, 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 for doing away with 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

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

11. 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 *Don Quixote* was for sale.

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 in today's Spain 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 hardly fanciful to suspect that the low infant mortality is accomplished at least partly by deliberately aborting babies 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 the aforementioned scarcity of material resources and women's lack of confidence in the future of their children. 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. 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.¹²

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 political opponents. 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 allowed economy and society, not excluding the press, publishing houses, and bookstores considerable freedom. Under Franco 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 than before. By contrast, under Castro Cubans have experienced increasing scarcity of food and newspapers. If the infant mortality rate has decreased, a datum repeated *ad nauseam* by Castro apologists the world over, this has to be viewed in the content 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 while under Castro Cubans have experienced a painful erosion in those things that sustain the body and the mind. 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 "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 dictators are viewed by American academics and intellectuals.¹³ 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.¹⁴ It seems as if American intellectuals are sus-

12. Be it noted that Osvaldo Dorticós, an old-line communist hand-picked by Castro to fill the office of president in 1959, eventually took his own life, as did Haydeé Santa María, one of the Moncada veterans.

13. Goldberg points out that English-language dictionaries label right-wing dictators (e.g. Franco and Portugal's 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).

14. 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).

ceptible 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 response to U.S. “hostility” or “aggression.”¹⁵ To paraphrase Machiavelli, it appears that if

a tyrant succeeds in passing himself off as both “socialist” and Washington’s victim, most of the Left, “taken by what seems” (Machiavelli, 67), will sing his praises.

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

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