**CASTRO’S IDEOLOGY:**

**What did Castro believe?**

**When was his conversion? How?**

**Did ideology play a part in power?**

**What were his ideals?**

* Fidel Castro insisted his ideology was, first and foremost, Cuban. "There is not Communism or Marxism, but representative democracy and social justice in a well-planned economy," he said at the time.

Together with Che Guevara, Fidel Castro developed a new theory; The New Man's Theory, which was basically that Cubans should no longer work for personal benefits, but for the good outcome for everybody in the society. The literacy rate was increased remarkably, and almost all Cubans could have free quality health care. He also controlled strictly the ideological propaganda machinery of Cuba, putting out neighborhood watch groups and controlling the media, even banning such books as The Diary of Anne Frank.

His ideology was basically socialistic; he wanted to redistribute wealth and gain back US controlled property in the nation, support social justice, strengthen the national identity, provide for economic independence, and clear the nation of damaging influence from powerful foreign nations in Cuba's affairs. In 1961, Cuba was declared a socialist nation.

**VALUES AND BELIEFS:** anti- Americanism, independence, respect for the constitution.

His philosophy evolves over many years;

* Initially a passionate nationalist at university.
* Keeps a distance from the communist regime at university.
* Travels in Latin America, meeting up with other student groups, he begins to see the value of a Marxist organization, although is still not 100% communist. He is able to see repression first hand (BOGOTA, 1948)
* Real philosophy emerges in the Sierra Maestras period: concept of *CENTENARIO (main ideology developed);* adopting mantle of Marti to create a new just and free Cuba, ready to share equally with others in a just community.

Castro came to power in 1959, during 1959 and 1960, Castro made radical changes in Cuba including nationalizing industry, collectivizing agriculture, and seizing American- owned business and farms. Also during these two years, Castro alienated the United States and established strong ties with the Soviet Union. Castro transformed Cuba into a communist country.

"You can be sure that we have no animosity towards the United States and the American people... we are fighting for a democratic Cuba and an end to the dictatorship. We are not anti-military... for we know the men are good and so are many of the officers." 37

Claims he wasn’t communist. But could be a plot to conceal the socialist revolution he had planning.