The Cuban Revolution

Cuba is an island nation located 90 miles south of Florida. It has been a hotbed of political problem for most of the 20th century. Until the 1950’s, Cuba had a constant flow of leaders that would take over and then be ousted by someone else. During this time, American businessmen were trading with Cuba. Most of Cuba’s trade came from the United States. This was due to the large amounts of Cuban land owned by Americans.

In the 1950’s, Fulgencio Batista was the dictator of Cuba. He had been elected President, but gained so much power he named himself dictator. During his dictatorship, poverty was very high and health care and education was very poor. Batista became a very unpopular man.

Fidel Castro led a rebellion against Batista and because he had
such strong public following, was able to overthrow Batista’s government. In 1959, Castro became dictator of Cuba. Castro formed a communist government and declared all property owned by Americans now belonged to the Cuban government. Castro also declared all farms, factories, and businesses owned by Cubans were now owned by the government.

Followers of Batista were arrested. Most were executed by firing squad, while others spent decades in prison. People no longer had the right to protest and newspapers, radio and television studios were shut down. The government became the only source for news. Churches were outlawed and closed. All church property was seized
by the government. The United States placed an embargo on Cuba. This meant that sugar cane could no longer be sold to the United States. The Soviet Union (another communist country) became friends with Cuba and bought their sugar cane. The Soviet Union also sold weapons to the Cubans and educated and trained Cubans in military service.

All was not bad under Castro’s rule. Healthcare was much improved. Education became better and women and blacks were able to get better educated and better jobs. On the downside, most people’s lives were controlled by the government. People who practiced Christianity were discriminated against. Income was very low in Cuba. Cuba became one of the poorest nations in the region.
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Guided Reading Questions

1) Who was the dictator of Cuba in the 1950’s? ________________

2) Why was Bautista an unpopular man in Cuba during his leadership? _______________________________________________________________________

3) Who took over as dictator in 1959? ________________

4) How did Fidel overthrow Bautista? _______________________________________________________________________

5) What type of government does Cuba have (BE SPECIFIC USE GOVERNMENT VOCAB)? _______________________________________________________________________

6) What changes occurred when Castro took over Cuba? _______________________________________________________________________

7) What did the U.S. do when Cuba took over American owned property? _______________________________________________________________________

5) Which country helped Cuba become a communist country? _______________________________________________________________________

6) What positive thing happened to Cuba after Fidel came to power? _______________________________________________________________________

7) What happened to Cuba’s economy after Fidel came to power? _______________________________________________________________________