

guerrillas until rather late in the struggle. Close ties between Castro and the PSP developed after his seizure of power, as he came to realize the need for a disciplined organized political party in order to consolidate his power.

Initial Soviet statements on the victory of the revolution were generally positive, though notably cautious. They suggest that the Soviets knew little about Castro, were uncertain about the degree of his commitment to social revolution at home and to a "progressive" posture in foreign policy, and had more important things (such as the simmering Berlin crisis and the growing tension with China) on their minds. They had apparently opposed the use of armed force at that stage of the revolutionary process. There is good reason to believe that the PSP's opposition to Castro's armed revolution reflected Moscow's own reservations.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, the USSR was notably slow (see below) to establish diplomatic relations. The view that the Soviet Union was behind the Cuban Revolution bears little scrutiny.

Once in power, Castro displayed a preoccupation with internal social transformation and a concern to reduce economic dependence on the United States. The Cubans were to a significant degree dependent on the US sugar quota and on preferential pricing of Cuban sugar for foreign exchange, giving the United States significant leverage over Cuban decision-making. US goods enjoyed tariff preferences in the Cuban market; US interests controlled approximately 40 percent of Cuban sugar production, 90 percent of telephone and electrical services, and 50 percent of public railroads, statistics similar to those of Guatemala which were discussed above. Castro was somewhat less circumspect, however, in pursuing his objectives.

In March 1959, Castro took over management of the Cuban Telephone Company, revoking a recent rates increase. He subsequently lowered power rates charged by the Cuban Electric Company. Both of these actions directly affected US investors. This was followed in May by the first agrarian reform act, which allowed seizures of the property of both Cuban and US landowners. No compensation was paid to those Americans affected, providing further cause for anti-Castro feeling in the United States.

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<sup>32</sup> An article written by a leading PSP member and critical of several aspects of the Castroite guerrilla was printed in a leading CPSU journal in 1958. P. Lopes, "Za Edinyi Front Bor'by protiv Krovavoi Diktatur Batisty" *Partiinaya Zhizn'* (*Party Life*) (1958), #20, pp. 52-3.