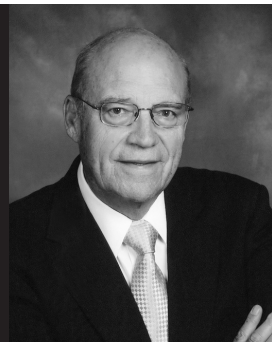




Dr. Fred Schwarz

# The Schwarz Report



Dr. David Noebel

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## The Butcher of Havana

by Humberto Fontova

Fidel Castro jailed and tortured political prisoners at a higher rate than Stalin during the Great Terror. He murdered more Cubans in his first three years in power than Hitler murdered Germans during his first six.

Fidel Castro shattered—through mass-executions, mass-jailings, mass larceny and exile—virtually every family on the island of Cuba. Many opponents of the Castro regime qualify as the longest-suffering political prisoners in modern history, having suffered prison camps, forced labor and torture chambers for a period three times as long in Fidel Castro's Gulag as Alexander Solzhenitsyn suffered in Stalin's Gulag.

Fidel Castro and Che Guevara beat ISIS to the game by over half a century. As early as January 1959 they were filming their murders for the media-shock value.

Fidel Castro also came closest of anyone in history to (wantonly) starting a worldwide nuclear war.

In the above process Fidel Castro converted a highly-civilized nation with a higher standard of living than much of Europe and swamped with immigrants into a slum/sewer ravaged by tropical diseases and with the highest suicide rate in the Western hemisphere.

Over TWENTY TIMES as many people (and counting) have died trying to escape Castro's Cuba as died trying to escape East Germany. Yet prior to Castroism Cuba received more immigrants per-capita than almost any nation on earth—more than the US did including the Ellis Island years, in fact.

Fidel Castro helped train and fund practically every terror group on earth, from the Weathermen to Puerto Rico's Macheteros, from Argentina's Montoneros, to Colombia's FARC, from the Black Panthers to the IRA, and from the PLO to AL Fatah.

Would anyone guess any of the above from reading or listening to the mainstream media recently?

In fact, from their reactions, all that dancing in the streets of Miami's Little Havana this weekend seems to strike some talking heads as odd, if not downright unseemly.

But prior to the big news this weekend many of those same celebrants could be found with itchy noses and red-rimmed eyes ambling amidst long rows of white crosses in Miami's Cuban Memorial. It's a mini-Arlington cemetery of sorts, in honor of Fidel Castro's murder victims.

The tombs are symbolic, however. Most of the bodies still lie in mass graves dug by bulldozers on the orders of the man whose family President Obama just consoled with an official note of condolence.

Some of those future celebrants were often found kneeling at the Cuban Memorial, others walking slowly, looking for a name. You might remember a similar scene from the opening frames of "Saving Private Ryan." Many clutched rosaries. Many of the ladies would be pressing their faces into the breast of a young relative who drove them there, a relative who wrapped his arms around her spastically heaving shoulders.

Try as he might not to cry himself, this relative usually found that the sobs wracking his mother, grandmother, or aunt were contagious. Yet he was often too young to remember the young face of his martyred father, grandfather, uncle, cousin—or even aunt, mother grandmother—the name they just recognized on the white cross.

"Fusilado" (firing squad execution) it says below the name—one word, but for most visitors to the Cuban Memorial a word loaded with traumatizing flashbacks.

On Christmas Eve 1961, Juana Diaz Figueroa spat in the face of the Castroite executioners who were binding and gagging her. They'd found her guilty of feeding and hiding "bandits." (Castro and Che's term for Cuban peasants who

took up arms to fight their theft of their land to create Stalinist kolkhozes.) Farm collectivization was no more voluntary in Cuba than in the Ukraine. And Cuba's kulaks had guns—at first anyway. Then the Kennedy-Khrushchev pact left them defenseless against Soviet tanks, helicopters, and flame-throwers. When the blast from Castro's firing squad demolished Juana Diaz' face and torso, she was six months pregnant.

Rigoberto Hernandez was 17 when Castro's prison guards dragged him from his jail cell, jerked his head back to gag him, and started dragging him to the stake. Little "Rigo" pleaded his innocence to the very bloody end. But his pleas were garbled and difficult to understand. His struggles while being gagged and bound to the stake were also awkward. The boy had been a janitor in a Havana high school and was mentally retarded. His single mother had pleaded his case with hysterical sobs. She had begged, beseeched, and finally proven to his "prosecutors" that it was a case of mistaken identity. Her only son, a boy in such a condition, couldn't possibly have been "a CIA agent planting bombs."

"Fuego!" and the firing squad volley riddled Rigo's little bent body as he moaned and struggled awkwardly against his bounds, blindfold and gag. "We executive from Revolutionary conviction!" sneered the man whose peaceful death in bed President Obama seems to mourn.

Carlos Machado was 15 years old in 1963 when the bullets from the firing squad shattered his body. His twin brother and father collapsed beside Carlos from the same volley. All had resisted Castro's theft of their humble family farm.

According to the scholars and researchers at the Cuba Archive, the Castro regime's total death toll—from torture, prison beatings, firing squads, machine gunning of escapees, drownings, etc.—approaches 100,000. Cuba's population in 1960 was 6.4 million. According to the human rights group Freedom House, 500,000 Cubans (young and old, male and female) have passed through Castro's prison and forced-labor camps. This puts Fidel Castro's political incarceration rate right up there with his hero Stalin's.

It's not enough that liberals refuse to acknowledge any justification for these Miami celebrations. No, on top of that here's the type of thing the celebrants are accustomed to hearing from the media and famous Democrats:

"Viva Fidel! Viva Che!" (Two-time candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination Jesse Jackson, bellowed while arm in arm with Fidel Castro himself in 1984.)

"Fidel Castro is very shy and sensitive, I frankly like

him and regard him as a friend." (Democratic presidential candidate, Presidential Medal of Freedom winner, and "Conscience of the Democratic party," George McGovern.)

"Fidel Castro first and foremost is and always has been a committed egalitarian. He wanted a system that provided the basic needs to all. Cuba has superb systems of health care and universal education. . . We greeted each other as old friends." (Former President of the United States and official "Elder Statesman" of the Democratic party, Jimmy Carter.)

"Fidel Castro is old-fashioned, courtly—even paternal, a thoroughly fascinating figure!" (NBC's Andrea Mitchell.)

"Fidel Castro could have been Cuba's Elvis!" (Dan Rather)

"Castro's personal magnetism is still powerful, his presence is still commanding. Cuba has very high literacy, and Castro has brought great health care to his country." (Barbara Walters.)

"Fidel Castro is one helluva guy!" (CNN founder Ted Turner.)

—*FrontPageMag.com*, November 29, 2016

## The Depravity of the Left

by Lloyd Billingsley

In Fidel Castro's Cuba, Vincent Canby of the *New York Times* noted in his review of Nestor Almendros' *Improper Conduct*, "playwrights, doctors, poets, and painters as well as more ordinary folk such as tour guides and hairdressers, a number of whom spent time in one or more of the country's forced-labor camps."

And as the late Susan Sontag observed: "The discovery that homosexuals were being persecuted in Cuba shows, I think, how much the left needs to evolve."

More than three decades later, the response to the death of Fidel Castro confirms that the left has not evolved at all, and may even be worse than during the dictator's heyday. As Paul Hollander showed in *Political Pilgrims*, that was about as bad as it gets.

"Fidel sits on the side of a tank rumbling into Havana on New Year's day," wrote New Left icon Abbie Hoffman. "He laughs joyously and pinches a few rumps. . . Fidel lets the gun drop to the ground, slaps his thigh, and stands erect. He is like a mighty penis coming to life, and when he is tall and straight, the crowd immediately

is transformed.”

For American leftist writer and academic Saul Landau, Fidel Castro was “a man who has been steeped in democracy,” and “a humble man.” For Angela Davis, American academic and Communist Party candidate for vice-president in 1980 and 1984, “Fidel was their leader, but most of all he was also their brother in the largest sense of the word.” And so on, to a pitch of absurdity perhaps best captured by Norman Mailer, who said of Castro:

“You were the first and greatest hero to appear in the world since the Second World War, the answer to the argument of commissars and statesmen that revolutions cannot last, that they turn corrupt or total or eat their own.” Castro did all that, and more, but on his exit, more than 60 years too late, the left cut loose a torrent of hagiography.

British Labour Party boss Jeremy Corbyn said Castro “will be remembered both as an internationalist and a champion of social justice.” He did have “flaws” but Corbyn did not elaborate.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Fidel Castro was a “remarkable leader,” who “made significant improvements to the education and healthcare of his island nation.” He was also “a controversial figure,” but the prime minister, son of pro-Castro prime minister Pierre Trudeau, did not say what might have caused the controversy.

Former Soviet boss Mikhail Gorbachev said Castro “strengthened his country at the time of the toughest American blockade” and led his country “onto the road of independent development.” For Chinese president Xi Jinping, “dear comrade and true friend” Fidel Castro made “immortal contributions to the development of socialism around the world.”

Likewise, for French president Francois Hollande, Fidel Castro “represented, for Cubans, pride in rejecting external domination.” Vladimir Putin, called Castro, “a wise and strong person,” an “inspiring example for all countries and peoples,” and a “sincere and reliable friend of Russia.”

President Obama, who like those Olympic referees in 1972 put time back on the clock for the Castro dictatorship, recalled, “the countless ways in which Fidel Castro altered the course of individual lives, families, and of the Cuban nation.” The US president also hailed “the enormous

impact of this singular figure on the people and world around him.” Muslim leaders were also fond of the man.

In 2006, the Nation of Islam’s Louis Farrakhan wrote to Fidel Castro:

“I firmly believe that Allah (God) has chosen you and the Cuban people to begin this process of servicing human needs, thus setting the stage for all people of goodwill to emulate this mode of service to others.”

In 2014 Farrakhan said: “Fidel Castro made solidarity among the peoples the reason of his existence.” In similar style in 1992, Iranian Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khomeini said “it is his personality to believe and rely on people.”

The apologists might have consulted the various Amnesty International reports, which hardly capture the full picture. With no apology to Francois Hollande, Fidel Castro allowed the Soviet Union to impose complete domination of Cuba. That helped Fidel Castro drive a prosperous nation to sub-Haiti levels of poverty. His repression was such that Cubans flee at the first opportunity, leaving everything behind, at great risk to their own lives. That is why the Straits of Florida have become a graveyard without crosses.

The social justice crowd might have a look at Orlando Jimenez-Leal’s documentary 8A, which captures Castro’s show-trial of General Arnaldo Ochoa and other officers. Their government lawyers pleaded with the court that their clients must receive the death penalty, duly carried out with no appeal.

The entertainment and artistic communities might recall that Fidel Castro called American jazz the “music of the enemy” and jailed trumpeter Arturo Sandoval for listening to the Voice of America. Saxophonist Paquito D’Rivera defected in 1981 but it was ten years before the Castro regime would allow his family to join him.

Meanwhile, as Susan Sontag said, the left needs to evolve but at Castro’s death the left remains essentially uncritical of this truly porcine figure. If leftist politicians are so wrong about a sado-Stalinist dictator and his totalitarian Communist regime, why should anybody listen to them on anything else?

“Fidel Castro’s legacy,” said Donald Trump in a statement, “is one of firing squads, theft, unimaginable suffering, poverty, and the denial of fundamental human

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rights. While Cuba remains a totalitarian island, it is my hope that today marks a move away from the horrors endured for too long, and toward a future in which the wonderful Cuban people finally live in the freedom they so richly deserve.”

The president-elect should tap Arturo Sandoval and Paquito D’Rivera to put together a band for the inauguration.

—*FrontPageMag.com*, November 26, 2016

## Absolving Fidel Castro

by Manny Alvarez

When I heard this morning that Fidel Castro had died, I honestly felt numb. He has been dead to me since the day I left Cuba for America, and over 40 years later, my feelings have not changed. As I worked to start my new life here and raise my beautiful family, I would sometimes hear snippets from grossly misinformed people around the world about the good that came from Fidel’s so-called Cuban revolution, and I’d be reminded to count my blessings that I had escaped his horrors.

Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez was one of those jaded individuals who lauded Fidel’s work. Under his tenure, he tried to implement some of Fidel’s Cuban socialist ideals in Venezuelan society, which has left the country in economic ruin. Venezuelans are starving, simple needs like toilet paper are considered a luxury, medicine is impossible to find, and the country is experiencing a mass exodus. All of this can be considered a legacy of Fidel Castro.

As I’m reading about the millions around the world celebrating Fidel’s death, my thoughts are with the thousands who died before him, often at the hands of his own doing. I think of the brave Cubans who fought for democracy, those who drowned at sea while pursuing liberty and freedom, and those who did reach American shores, but died before ever being able to return to their homeland. And yet, in a move signaling that Cuba still has a long way to go in establishing domestic bliss, the government of Fidel’s brother, Raul Castro has announced that the country will undergo nine days of mourning in preparation for the ruthless dictator’s funeral.

It has also been brought to my attention that the Cuban people currently have a government-enforced curfew, and that they are being discouraged from congregating or making any comments about Fidel’s death that may escape the island. How ironic, that despite the death of the man who

has oppressed them for nearly five decades, the Cuban people are still being told what to do and how to do it.

In the coming days, I will be very interested to see how America reacts, specifically President Obama, who worked to re-establish ties with Cuba, but whom I have been critical about in the past. Obama believes that the relationship between America and Cuba can be forged with an all-access pathway, but fails to recognize the 50 years of blood, imprisonment, and lack of individual rights that stand in the way. I do believe that Fidel’s death will give President-elect Donald Trump an advantage in working to see to it that the only surviving Castro brother is stripped of his power on that island.

Obama said that “history will record and judge the enormous impact” Fidel has had over his lifetime, but let me share with you a story from my childhood that is telling of how he will be remembered, at least by my family. When I was a young boy in Havana, my father was reading a published version of a four-hour speech Fidel gave called “History Will Absolve Me.” He was reading it in secret, as it was banned reading material that would have seen him serve jail time if he had been caught. The book was controversial because it was Fidel’s speech about the importance of human rights, due process, and fairness of the law in a civilized society. He spoke eloquently during the speech, which he gave while facing charges for a terrorist attack during the Cuban Revolution.

My father had to explain to me that Fidel never wanted anyone to know that he once said those things about individual freedom and equality. How ironic, that the man who once recognized that individual liberties are an enormous part of a productive society, took away each one of them from his people, and died thinking that he did the right thing. History will not absolve Fidel, and neither will we.

—*Fox News*, November 26, 2016

## The Monster Dies

by Jamie Glazov

It is never a sad day when a monster dies.

Fidel Castro, the mass murderer who sadistically tormented the Cuban people for nearly fifty years, died on Friday at the age of 90. Thousands of Cuban exiles understandably celebrated in the streets of Miami. Leftists around the world, meanwhile, dutifully mourned their fallen secular deity. Progressives always grieve when the vicious enforcers of class hatred die.

While leftists sob for one of the most evil tyrants of the

modern era, those who cherish freedom and human rights are never sad to have one less monster walking the earth.

And so, on this significant occasion, it would do well to offer a reflection on the pain and blood that this particular monster left in his wake.

On July 13, 1994, 72 desperate Cuban citizens, including seniors and young children, floated on a wooden tugboat in a turbulent sea, trying to make their way to Florida and dreaming of the freedom that now lingered within their grasp. Their aspirations were met with a nightmarish jolt when Castro's patrol boats suddenly rammed the back of their vessel. The frightened women held up their little children in the air to let Castro's thugs know what the situation entailed. And the thugs returned their expected response: on the orders of the head beast in charge, they blasted the mothers with children in hand with their water cannon, mowing them—and all the other escapees on board—into the merciless waves.

Maria Garcia lost her son, Juanito, that tragic day. She also lost her husband, brother, sister, two uncles, and three cousins. In all, 43 people drowned—11 of them children. This evil murderous act became known as Castro's Tugboat Massacre. Yisel Alvarez was 4 when she drowned. Carlos Anaya was 3. Helen Martinez was 6 months old.

Castro gave the orders for this evil massacre—and the deaths of Carlos, Yisel, and Helen made him especially proud. That is why he personally decorated one of the water-cannon gunners himself.

Fidel had always derived special pleasure from sending helicopters to drop sandbags onto the rafts of would-be escapees from his prison-island, or to just gun them all down. The Tugboat Massacre, however, proved to be a special delight for him, because there were children involved. And the blood of innocent children, as Anna Geifman documents, is always a special delicacy for totalitarian death cults, whether they be of the communist or Islamist variety.

The Tugboat Massacre was a perfect reflection of the nature and history of Castro's barbaric regime. From the day he seized power on January 1, 1959, execution, torture, and slavery became the norms of the day. Half a million Cubans have passed through Cuba's Gulag Archipelago, giving the regime the distinction of having the highest political incarceration rate per capita on earth, even higher than Stalin's and Hitler's. There have been more than fifteen thousand executions by firing squad. Torture has been institutionalized. The use of electric shock, dark coffin-sized isolation cells, and beatings is routine. The horror is best epitomized by the Camilo Cienfuegos plan, the communist nightmare that was implemented in the

forced-labor camp on the Isle of Pines. Forced to work almost naked, prisoners were routinely tortured, made to cut grass with their teeth, and to sit in latrine trenches for long periods of time.

Typical of the horror in Castro's Gulag was the experience of 25-year-old political inmate Roberto López Chávez. When he went on a hunger strike to protest the abuses in the prison, the guards withheld water from him until he became delirious, twisting on the floor and begging for something to drink. A guard then urinated in his mouth. Roberto died the next day.

But there were not to be any tears shown for Roberto. In public anyway. For just as in Mao's China and Pol Pot's Cambodia, Castro's Cuba has always warned family members of murdered dissidents to never cry at their funerals. Grief is just not right in a utopia, and especially the kind shown for the deaths of the enemies of state.

But grief is ultra-necessary, of course, if the head monster dies. And that is why Raúl has now announced nine days of mandatory mourning for Fidel.

The horrors of Castro's Cuba have been solidly documented by Humberto Fontova in *Fidel: Hollywood's Favorite Tyrant* and by Pascal Fontaine in *The Black Book of Communism*.

Armando Valladares's memoir, *Against All Hope*, meanwhile, serves as Cuba's version of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. A Cuban poet, Valladares endured twenty-two years of torture and imprisonment for merely raising the issue of freedom. Valladares recounts how prisoners were beaten with bayonets, electric cables, and truncheons. He vividly details how he and other prisoners were forced to take "baths" in human feces and urine. *Against all Hope* is a must-read for all those seeking the truth about the demon that Castro was.

Together with the atrocious political repression, Cubans have also suffered from the miserable economic devastation caused by Castro's communist economics. Cuba became one of the poorest nations in the world under Castro. Its sugar, tobacco, and cattle industries were all major sources of exports in the pre-Castro era. Castro destroyed them all and turned Cuba into a beggar nation. Even Haitian refugees avoid Cuba.

Orwell's *Animal Farm* could not have more accurately captured the sorry reality of "equality" in this pathological communist environment, as it manifests itself in all communist environments. Indeed, it became clear very quickly after the revolution that while all Cubans were equal, some were more equal than others. And that is why, while ordinary Cubans scrape for crumbs, the privileged communists in Castro's nomenklatura live like millionaires.

Thus, we begin to understand why Cubans relentlessly try to escape from their living nightmare. And since they are not allowed to leave freely, they have to try to escape. It is telling that pre-Castro Cuba had the highest per-capita immigration rate in the Western hemisphere. Under Castro, approximately two million Cuban citizens (out of eleven million) have escaped their country. Many have done so by floating on rafts or inner tubes in shark-infested waters. Tragically, an estimated fifty thousand to eighty-seven thousand have lost their lives in this effort.

While Castro starved his people and kept them in their painful chains, his evil machinations took many other directions. The Cuban tyrant also distinguished himself as a major drug kingpin who perpetually smuggled drugs into the US, among into various other places. He used nerve gas (Sarin) against Jonas Savimbi's UNITA troops in Angola. He armed and trained terrorists worldwide, including Palestinian terrorists, Colombia's FARC, and the IRA. "Carlos The Jackal," known as the world's most notorious terrorist throughout the 1970's, received his training in Cuba and lived there for years. Throughout Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, some 42,000 terrorists received their training in Cuba. It is no great surprise, therefore, that the US State Department listed Cuba prominently among its "State Sponsors of Terrorism" from 1982-2015.

But even for evil men, not all their diabolical yearnings achieve earthly incarnations. And so it was to be that the highest sinister achievement that Fidel craved remained unfulfilled, seeing that Nikita Khrushchev did not oblige to the Cuban dictator's shouts and screams during the October missile crisis in 1962 when Fidel vehemently plead with the Soviet leader to launch a pre-emptive nuclear attack on the United States.

It is not difficult to see why, then, Nov. 25, 2016 marks such a special day.

A monster died.

It was a day on which it seemed most appropriate for our hearts to harken back to the memory of 72 desperate Cuban citizens who dared to dream of freedom and who set out, on July 13, 1994, with little children in tow, on a wooden tugboat into the turbulent sea.

Their fate represented the fate of all ordinary Cubans who, over the last half-century, suffered and bled at the hands of a vicious sadist running a killing machine.

And that is why Nov. 25, 2016 delivered a poignant lesson: Though the Castro tyranny remains firmly intact even with its head founder gone, the death of a monster serves as a crucial notice that while tyrants may think they are gods, they are, in the end, just mortal monsters

—awaiting their final summons.

And we can be rest assured in whose hot-iron hands Fidel finds himself squirming now.

We can also be rest assured that, despite all of the human blood and pain that Fidel left in his murderous path, a light of redemption now flickers on the horizon, because some quiet, yet reassuring whisper manages to tell us, from on high, that no man-made Gulag or water-cannon gunners can ever suffocate the freedom that lies in the heart of man.

It is that same whisper that consoles us about that terrible day on July 13, 1994, telling us that, despite the tears and grief that the Tugboat massacre spawned, that still, in those fateful hours, we can be sure that Yisel Alvarez, Carlos Anaya, and Helen Martinez touched the face of God.

It is never a sad day when a monster dies.

—*FrontPageMag.com*, November 28, 2016

## Fidel Castro's Legacy

by Bruce Thornton

*Bruce Thornton is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center.*

To paraphrase the old VE jump-rope rhyme, "A-tisket, a-tasket, Castro's in his casket." The last of the Cold War Soviet stooges has gone the way of his communist masters.

Encomia from the usual useful idiots are lighting up the internet, but don't mind them. Like tantrum-throwing college students and George Soros rent-a-protestors, they are a machine for producing Republican voters. The Dem-wits, on the other hand, should pay attention to the Cuban immigrants and expatriates celebrating in Miami. They might find there a clue to how they lost Florida and the whole government. Opening up trade, as their messiah Obama did, with a regime that pockets all the profits while it jails protestors, that gives workers eight cents of every starry-eyed tourist's dollar, makes for bad optics. Canoodling with a brutal dictator who crushes dissent, persecutes homosexuals, excludes blacks from the government, abuses the church, monopolizes wealth, and tortures dissidents in his gulag is not the way to win American votes.

And discount the extravagant praise for Castro's political genius. For all his Marxist-Leninist rhetoric and international fan-boys, Castro was a typical, but savvier, Latin American dictator—a cacique, caudillo, jefe, El Señor Presidente, El Gran Chingon, a glorified version

of the General Mapache from The Wild Bunch. If not for the Cold War, he would long ago have met the same gruesome fate as those other strutting, bombastic oppressors. Only with billions of dollars in Soviet support and cash for overpriced sugar—and John Kennedy’s foreign policy bungling—was he able to leverage being 90 miles from the US into a geopolitical significance far beyond his deserts, along the way almost igniting a nuclear war. He paid the Soviets back by letting them use his soldiers as imperialist mercenaries in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique. After the USSR vanished like Trotsky from a May Day photo, oil and \$18 billion in loans and grants from his fellow dictator Húgo Chavez, along with foreign investment from running-dog capitalists, kept Cuba from collapse. Castro repaid Húgo by skimming thousands of his doctors and other skilled professionals needed at home, and sending them to Venezuela.

More importantly, Castro, like many other Third-World communists or the PLO jihadists, was a genius at exploiting the romance of revolutionary violence and the radical chic endemic among Western bourgeois parlors and caviar communists. For Europeans, Canadians, and a small number of Americans before Obama’s recent softening of travel restrictions, carefully orchestrated and surveilled tours of Cuba were like the hajj to Mecca for Western lefties. Like their political ancestors in the twenties and thirties gaping at the Soviet’s Potemkin economy, these rich, well-fed, politically free beneficiaries of liberal democracy and free-market capitalism ignored or rationalized away the poor, hungry, repressed Cubans hidden behind the pastel-colored belle époque hotels and the restored ’57 Chevies.

Indeed, Cuba under Castro was perhaps the premier example of progressive moral idiocy and intellectual incoherence. Style and empty slogans like “A revolution is a struggle to the death between the future and the past” trumped consistent principle and morality. Castro’s simple military uniform, his field cap, his cigar, his bushy beard; Che Guevara’s similar get-up improved by his matinee-idol looks and martyr’s death, seduced and thrilled comfortable Westerners who never worried about their next meal, or losing their freedom to slander their countries while giving aid and comfort to their enemies; who never feared the rifle-butts pounding their doors in the night, or the feel of El Che’s cold pistol on the back of their necks. So they strained authoritarian gnats allied with the West, while swallowing totalitarian camels working to destroy the West and the very freedom they enjoyed. That’s why psychopaths like Che and Mao still adorn hipster tee shirts, while Ronald Reagan, who helped free millions from com-

unist tyranny, is still the left’s favorite “fascist.”

Of course, it was Castro and his regime who had more in common with fascism. The state’s control and plundering of the economy, the repression of human rights, the secret police, and the cult of personality surrounding the messianic leader are classic fascism. Likewise, apologies for Castro’s brutality always ring changes on those for Mussolini: “he made the trains run on time.” Bernie Sanders is a Castro fan, and even when he dialed back his praise during the Democrat primary, he had to say, “it would be wrong not to state that in Cuba they have made some good advances in healthcare, they are sending doctors all over the world. They have made some progress in education.”

We see here the morally bankrupt utilitarian calculus of progressives like Thomas Freidman, who waxes lyrical on China’s airports and wishes we could have a tyrant for a while. Historically illiterate, they don’t realize that for five thousand years, tyrants who monopolize resources and force can achieve a lot, at least in the short term. Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin in the thirties were admired for the great leaps in economic and infrastructure development, even as they murdered millions and turned their societies into police states. But all that improvement cost about 65 million dead.

And Hitler’s and Stalin’s regimes ultimately collapsed, as do all governments eventually that oppress their peoples and deny them freedom, the most important resource for human development and flourishing. It’s no surprise that Pharaoh could build the Great Pyramid or the Great King of Persia erect Persepolis, able as they were to coerce battalions of forced labor. The real miracle is the Athenian Parthenon, constructed by free citizens who voted in the Assembly to pay for it. More important, today Persepolis and the pyramids are Ozymandian fragments of long-lost greatness. But the Parthenon, though battered by time like the others, represents not the power and ego of a great king, but the ideals of political freedom and citizen self-rule it celebrated 2400 years ago, and that are still vibrant in our political order today.

Finally, the enduring fascination of the Western left with Cuba and Castro demonstrates their unhealthy lust for totalitarian power. To paraphrase Sylvia Plath’s slur against her own sex, they “adore a fascist, the boot in the face, the brute.” They may call it progressivism, dress it up with pseudo-science and pretenses to rational thought, perfume it with duplicitous calls for “freedom” and “equality,” but deep in their lizard brains is an ancient love of power, their seduction by Satan’s lie that we can be as gods. No matter the cost in freedom and human

dignity, progressives will always choose the Great Leader and admire his willingness to break any number of eggs for the mythical utopian omelet.

So good riddance, Fidel. Our totalitarian wannabes will have to find another thug to admire.

—*FrontPageMag.com*, November 28, 2016

## Fidels' Communist Utopia

by *Wall Street Journal* Editorial

Fidel Castro's legacy of 57 years in power is best understood by the fates of two groups of his countrymen—those who remained in Cuba and suffered impoverishment and dictatorship, and those who were lucky or brave enough to flee to America to make their way in freedom. No progressive nostalgia after his death Friday at age 90 should disguise this murderous and tragic record.

Castro took power on New Year's Day in 1959 serenaded by the Western media for toppling dictator Fulgencio Batista and promising democracy. He soon revealed that his goal was to impose Communist rule. He exiled clergy, took over Catholic schools and expropriated businesses. Firing squads and dungeons eliminated rivals and dissenters.

The terror produced a mass exodus. An April 1961 attempt by the CIA and a small force of expatriate Cubans to overthrow Castro was crushed at the Bay of Pigs in a fiasco for the Kennedy Administration. Castro aligned himself with the Soviet Union, and their 1962 attempt to establish a Soviet missile base on Cuba nearly led to nuclear war. The crisis was averted after President Kennedy sent warships to intercept the missiles, but the Soviets extracted a US promise not to invade Cuba again.

The Cuba that Castro inherited was developing but relatively prosperous. It ranked third in Latin America in doctors and dentists and daily calorie consumption per capita. Its infant-mortality rate was the lowest in the region and the 13th lowest in the world. Cubans were among the most literate Latins and had a vibrant civic life with private professional, commercial, religious, and charitable organizations.

Castro destroyed all that. He ruined agriculture by imposing collective farms, making Cuba dependent first on the Soviets and later on oil from Hugo Chávez's Venezuela. In the past half century Cuba's export growth has been less than Haiti's, and now even doctors are scarce because so many are sent abroad to earn foreign currency. Hospitals lack sheets and aspirin. The average monthly

income is \$20 and government food rations are inadequate.

All the while Fidel and his brother Raúl sought to spread their Communist revolution throughout the world, especially in Latin America. They backed the FARC in Colombia, the Shining Path in Peru and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Their propaganda about peasant egalitarian movements beguiled thousands of Westerners, from celebrities like Sean Penn and Danny Glover to Secretary of State John Kerry, who on a visit to Havana called the US and Cuba "prisoners of history." The prisoners are in Cuban jails.

On this score, President Obama's morally antiseptic statement Saturday on Castro is an insult to his victims. "We know that this moment fills Cubans—in Cuba and in the United States—with powerful emotions, recalling the countless ways in which Fidel Castro altered the course of individual lives, families, and of the Cuban nation," Mr. Obama said. "History will record and judge the enormous impact of this singular figure on the people and world around him." Donald Trump, by contrast, called Castro a "dictator" and expressed hope for a "free Cuba."

Mr. Obama's 2014 decision to normalize US-Cuba relations has provided new business opportunities for the regime but has yielded nothing in additional freedom. Americans can now travel and make limited investment in Cuba but hard-currency wages for workers are confiscated by the government in return for nearly worthless pesos. In 2006 *Forbes* estimated Fidel's net worth, based on his control of "a web of state-owned companies," at \$900 million.

The hope of millions of Cubans, exiled and still on the island, has been that Fidel's death might finally lead to change, but unwinding nearly six decades of Castro rule will be difficult. The illusions of Communism have given way to a military state that still arrests and beats women on their way to church. China and Russia both allow more economic freedom. The regime fears that easing up on dissent, entrepreneurship, or even access to the internet would lead to its inevitable demise.

Castro's Cuba exists today as a reminder of the worst of the 20th century when dictators invoked socialist ideals to hammer human beings into nails for the state. Too many Western fellow-travelers indulged its fantasies as long as they didn't have to live there. Perhaps the influence of Cuba's exiles will be able, over time, to reseed the message of liberty on the island. But freedom starts by seeing clearly the human suffering that Fidel Castro wrought.

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