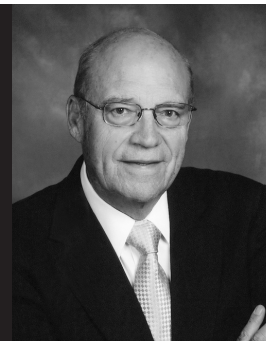




Dr. Fred Schwarz

The Schwarz Report



Dr. David Noebel

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Fidel: Marxist from the Start

by Elliott Abrams

In 1953, a young Fidel Castro was tried for his armed attack on the Moncada military barracks in Santiago de Cuba during the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. The attack was a dismal failure, though its date—July 26—was later taken as the name of Castro’s revolutionary movement. At the trial 24 lawyers represented the roughly 100 defendants, but Castro, who had a law degree, defended himself. He spoke for four hours, ending with the famous phrase “History will absolve me.”

The court sentenced Castro to 15 years in prison, 1 of only 31 defendants who were convicted. And Castro and his brother Raúl were in fact released less than two years later. From their release in 1955, it was not even four years to the overthrow of the dictator on January 1, 1959. That day, Castro pledged, “I am not interested in power nor do I envisage assuming it at any time. All that I will do is to make sure that the sacrifices of so many compatriots should not be in vain, whatever the future may hold in store for me.”

This was of course a lie and he immediately seized power. Two years later Castro acknowledged, “Do I believe in Marxism? I believe absolutely in Marxism! Did I believe on January 1st? I believed on January 1st! Did I believe on July 26th? I believed on July 26th!” January 1, 1959, and July 26, 1953, were the famous dates to which he was referring. Castro’s trial under Batista was not fully fair in the Anglo-Saxon sense, but consider the facts: He was allowed to defend himself in court and to speak as long as he wished; all defendants had lawyers; most defendants were acquitted; and Castro was soon released in an amnesty.

From this, Castro learned not that justice should be blind, or lenient, but that it should be eliminated. As soon as he took power the killings began. Not until his “revolution” has been overthrown and Cuba is free will the records emerge, but it is clear that there were hundreds of summary executions. When criticized for the kangaroo courts (“revolutionary tribunals”), Castro replied, “Revolutionary justice is not based on legal precepts, but on moral conviction. . . . We are not executing innocent people or political opponents. We are executing murderers and they deserve it.”

A good example, cited in Glenn Garvin’s masterful obituary of Castro in the *Miami Herald*, is the March 1959 trial of 44 officers and men from Batista’s air force. Oddly enough, the tribunal acquitted them. But as Garvin writes, “An enraged Castro instantly created a right of appeal for prosecutors. . . . A second tribunal sent the men to prison for 30 years. At that, the airmen were lucky. Though Cuban law did not permit capital punishment, the revolutionary tribunals were sending a steady stream of men to the firing squad.”

That was 1959, and nothing changed as the decades passed. Garvin writes:

When Cuban government ships spotted a tugboat full of refugees headed for Florida on July 13, 1994, they blasted it to pieces with high-pressure fire hoses. “Our tugboat started taking on water,” recounted one of the survivors, María Victoria García. “We shouted to the crewmen on the boat, ‘Look at the children! You’re going to kill them!’ And they said, ‘Let them die! Let them die!’” Forty-one of the refugees did.

The story of Castro’s Cuba is in substantial part the story of refugees, and there are stories enough to break one’s heart. From December 1960 to October 1962, more than 14,000 Cuban children arrived alone in the United States in “Operation Peter Pan,” or “Pedro Pan” as they called it. It was organized by the Catholic church in Miami, at the request of parents in Cuba who wanted their children to get to the United States and thereby escape Marxist-Leninist indoctrination. Were these the children of the rich? No; those children were already in Miami with their parents. These were middle- and lower-class children whose parents could not see a future for them in a Communist Cuba. Half were reunited with some family member in Florida immediately; the church cared for the other half.

In a sense this operation was a success, as the Cuban migration to Florida was a success: Miami was reborn with the energy of the Cuban arrivals. Statistics show how remarkably that immigrant group raised itself from poverty to middle-class status and beyond. But the human misery is of course immeasurable—families broken up, homes and relatives and professions and lives left behind in Cuba. All for what?

For freedom, one of the many commodities that could not be found in Castro's Cuba. There were many, many others that could not be found, ranging from justice to sugar. Yes, sugar. As Garvin notes, "In 2007, production of 14 of Cuba's 20 key products was lower than in 1989. One, the sugar crop, was the smallest in a hundred years."

This should not be a surprise, for Castro's Marxism and his command economy destroyed the productivity of the island just as communism destroyed so many other economies. This was a fact carefully hidden by Castro and his apologists, who spewed out endless propaganda about the wonderful social and economic advances made under his rule. From the very beginning, he realized that the international press—and more broadly global public opinion and political leaders—were important, could be fooled, and were often craven. The first example came in the 1950s, when Castro took in Herbert L. Matthews of the *New York Times*, who famously became a propaganda tool for Fidel. As Garvin reports, "Though the rebels had barely 20 bedraggled men, Castro marched the same group past Matthews several times and also staged the arrival of 'messengers' reporting the movement of other (non-existent) units." Matthews's story in the *Times* in February 1957 said that Castro's "program is vague and couched in generalities, but it amounts to a new deal for Cuba, radical, democratic, and therefore anti-Communist."

There is not a very long distance between Matthews and people like Justin Trudeau, prime minister of Canada, whose remarks on the occasion of Castro's death have rightly been the subject of global ridicule. Here is the heart of his statement:

Fidel Castro was a larger than life leader who served his people for almost half a century. A legendary revolutionary and orator, Mr. Castro made significant improvements to the education and healthcare of his island nation. While a controversial figure, both Mr. Castro's supporters and detractors recognized his tremendous dedication and love for the Cuban people who had a deep and lasting affection for "el Comandante."

Trudeau was very far from alone: Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the British Labour party, said, "From building a world-class health and education system, to Cuba's record of international solidarity abroad, Castro's achievements were many." Ban Ki-moon at the U.N. said Castro "was a strong voice for social justice." Presidential candidate Jill Stein proved herself more red than green by tweeting, "Fidel Castro was a symbol of the struggle for justice in the shadow of empire. Presente!" President Obama decided the United States needed to be "presente" at Castro's funeral, sending a deputy national security adviser down to Havana to pay his respects. And Jimmy Carter weighed in as well: "Rosalynn and I share our sympathies with the Castro family and the Cuban people on the death of Fidel Castro. We remember fondly our visits with him in Cuba and his love of his country."

So much for Carter's reputation for supporting human rights. In fact, Fidel Castro was even by global standards an exceptionally brutal dictator. Vicious and despicable actions that would have made page one of the *Times* and would never be forgotten had they been undertaken by Augusto Pinochet or any of a dozen other Latin military dictators have been buried in memory holes. Here's just one: The Inter-American Human Rights Commission stated in 1967, "On May 27, [1966,] 166 Cubans—civilians and members of the military—were executed and submitted to medical procedures of blood extraction of an average of seven pints per person. This blood is sold to Communist Vietnam at a rate of \$50 per pint with the dual purpose of obtaining hard currency and contributing to the Vietcong Communist aggression. A pint of blood is equivalent to half a liter. Extracting this amount of blood from a person sentenced to death produces cerebral anemia and a state of unconsciousness and paralysis. Once the blood is extracted, the person is taken by two militiamen on a stretcher to the location where the execution takes place." As the Center for a Free Cuba has noted, "By 1995, blood exports of US \$30.1 million were Cuba's 5th export product after sugar, nickel, crustaceans, and cigars."

It is worth a look at those widespread claims that Castro, whatever his "flaws," his "failures," or his "controversial actions," did so much for the health and welfare of his people. The argument from his defenders is that while it's unpleasant that he was a bit tough and frog-marched the Cuban people forward, forward they did go.

But this is false, as are all arguments that dictatorship and brutality are required for economic and social progress. Compare Cuba with Costa Rica, another small Latin country but one that has enjoyed democracy for

all the decades Castro brutally ruled over Cuba. In 1960 both Cuba and Costa Rica had comparatively high literacy rates, just under 80 percent. And today, literacy in both approaches 100 percent. Castro and communism had nothing to do with Cuba's advances in literacy before he took over in 1959, and as Costa Rica shows, further advances were not unique nor did they require a dictatorship. And as to health, one decent measure is life expectancy. In Cuba (according to the World Bank) life expectancy in 1960 was 64 years and has now risen to 79. In Costa Rica in 1960 it was 62 years, and has now risen to the same 79—without political prisons, executions, and the flight of millions of citizens. Final measure: gross national income per capita. Under Fidel, Cuba's rose from \$850 (in 1972) to just under \$6,000. In Costa Rica it rose from \$360, less than half the figure for Cuba, to over \$10,000 today. The myth of Cuba's great socioeconomic advance under Fidel is just that—a myth that can be exploded fast if anyone cares to look. A recent study of the Cuban economy since 1959 looked at the various arguments excusing its failures (excuses such as the US embargo) and concluded that it was communism, meaning especially insistence on central planning and the abolition of private property, that was to blame. The economists (Felipe Garcia Ribeiro, Guilherme Stein, and Thomas H. Kang) concluded “it does not seem that history will absolve the Cuban regime.” And the useful idiots writing about social progress in Cuba must also contend with other aspects of “social life” there, as Garvin notes: “By the 1990s, the island's suicide rate had tripled from pre-revolutionary levels, and one of every three pregnancies ended in abortion.”

So what has been Fidel's appeal? How does a vicious and brutal dictator become a hero to the left? Why is a man who executed his opponents, eliminated any trace of freedom of the press or speech, or of justice, and caused a million refugees to flee their homeland mourned? Why does such a man's death elicit praise from trendy liberals like Justin Trudeau? What is the appeal of a megalomaniac? It cannot really have been his oratory, because no speech that lasts three or four hours is anything more than an expression of control over the audience. Garvin reports that Castro's “record, in 1968, was a meandering discourse

that lasted nearly 12 hours.” That is sadism, not oratory.

There is of course a broader question here, of which Fidel Castro is merely the latest example (though Stalin and Mao are better ones): Why are crimes on the left ignored, minimized, and readily forgiven when abuses on the right are publicized, magnified, and recalled decades later? Certainly in Castro's case his anti-Americanism played a great role in making him a global hero on the left. It is not an accident that the *New York Times's* headline on his death was “Fidel Castro, Cuban Revolutionary Who Defied US, Dies at 90.”

Castro jumped into the Soviets' lap; he was not pushed. Garvin: “He moved almost immediately to confront Washington, while courting surprised Soviet leaders. He brushed aside US offers of economic aid.” Soviet and Cuban propaganda machines built up the Castro myth, and Castro not only “built socialism” at home but sought to export it—to Angola, Central America, Venezuela, and indeed anywhere the Yanqui Empire could be confronted. By 1975 he had put more than 25,000 troops in Angola—and in a classic case of seeing what the left wanted to see, Jimmy Carter's ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, famously called them a force for “stability and order.” In the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, Castro urged Khrushchev to launch the missiles the USSR had put in Cuba against the United States if the island were invaded, and by some accounts even urged a preemptive Soviet attack to prevent such an invasion. But again, all this is forgotten—if it does not indeed add to his legend as one who defied the gringos.

What in fact did Castro do for Cuba? The great social and economic gains are delusions. The grand international adventures resulted in many deaths—of Cubans, to be sure, but as well of Latins and Africans in wars he fed. He created a system of neighborhood spies, political tribunals and political prisons, viciously harsh sentences and chronic maltreatment of prisoners, that was a miniature version of the nastiest Communist regimes anywhere. It is impossible to believe that Cuba—whose Leninist system was always unique in the Caribbean and indeed in the hemisphere—will not some day be free of all this, just as Germany is free of the Stasi system.

Founded in 1953, the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, under the leadership of Dr. Fred C. Schwarz (1913-2009) has been publishing a monthly newsletter since 1960. *The Schwarz Report* is edited by Dr. David A. Noebel and Dr. Michael Bauman and is offered free of charge to anyone asking for it. The Crusade's address is PO Box 129, Manitou Springs, CO 80829. Our telephone number is 719-685-9043. All correspondence and tax-deductible gifts (CACC is a 501C3 tax-exempt organization) may be sent to this address. You may also access earlier editions of *The Schwarz Report* and make donations at www.schwarzreport.org. Permission to reproduce materials from this Report is granted provided that the article and author are given along with our name and address. Our daily blog address is www.thunderontheright.wordpress.com.

What will then remain? Two things. The first is, again, Miami—and more broadly a Cuban diaspora in the United States, Spain, and elsewhere that enriches every country to which Cubans fled to escape the clutches of Fidel Castro. And the second is heroes.

Communism always produces heroes—like Anatoly Scharansky and Vladimir Bukovsky and Andrei Sakharov in the Soviet Union, Lech Walesa and Václav Havel among the Soviet satellites, and Liu Xiaobo in China. So it has been in Cuba. Huber Matos was a comandante just like Fidel in the Cuban revolution, but opposed the Castros when he saw that they were Communists. For this he was sentenced to 20 years in prison and made to serve every last day (there were no amnesties for Fidel’s enemies). Matos later wrote that “I had to go on hunger strikes, mount other types of protests. Terrible. On and off, I spent a total of sixteen years in solitary confinement, constantly being told that I was never going to get out alive, that I had been sentenced to die in prison. They were very cruel, to the fullest extent of the word.” But he survived, and when he emerged he continued his struggle for freedom in Cuba by founding Cuba Independiente y Democrática, which he led until his death two years ago. Armando Valladares served 22 years in solitary confinement in Castro’s prisons and emerged to write the classic prison memoir *Against All Hope: A Memoir of Life in Castro’s Gulag*—and was then named by President Reagan to represent the United States at the UN Commission on Human Rights. There are, as always with communism, too many heroes to mention—from the “Ladies in White” who have marched each Sunday to bring attention to imprisoned relatives and who are routinely detained and beaten, to individuals like Oswaldo Payá, who started the “Varela Project” to demand multiparty democracy and was killed in a 2012 automobile “accident” that was pretty clearly staged by the regime.

It may be that on the far left internationally, Fidel Castro will always be a heroic figure, like his comrade Che Guevara, and perhaps they will continue to adorn walls in the dorm rooms of college students who know no better; it may be that fools in the West will celebrate him for decades to come, as they have in the past week with their ignorant eulogies and tweets. But in Cuba, the truth about Fidel Castro is lived each day as it has been since January 1, 1959, and the truth will emerge when the regime falls—however long that takes. Then the statues will all be brought down and the murals will be painted over, and the story of Fidel Castro will be told by those who suffered most from his brutality, his hatreds, and his megalomania: the people of Cuba. Today’s obituaries can-

not reflect their views, but in due time they will have their say. And they, like history, will not absolve him.

—*The Weekly Standard*, December 12, 2016, p. 19f

Cuba Today

by Mary Anastasia O’Grady

On a trip to Cuba in the late 1990s I met a young man who was trying to earn hard currency as a tour guide in Old Havana. It was obvious he wasn’t trained for the job. But I didn’t care. I wanted to hear from locals and, as I discovered, he wanted to be heard.

Over the course of several days we walked around the crumbling city while I peppered him with questions about daily life on the island. I got an earful about the absurdity of revolutionary Cuba, the privation, the frustration, the alienation.

He was angry. But when it came to talking about the hypocrisy of Fidel Castro, who everyone knew lived lavishly while his subjects struggled to get by, my guide was more careful. One evening over dinner he whispered, “Maria, don’t put what I say in your newspaper or Fidel will...” and he put his hands around his throat in a gesture of strangulation. He was afraid.

I heard the news around 2 a.m. Saturday that the 90-year-old despot had finally departed. I thought of that young man. And of the many other aspiring 20-somethings I met on my trip who wanted me to know of their longing for freedom.

They were born long after the 1959 revolution and had no use for the “Maximo Lider,” or his mythical socialist paradise. For several years they had been witnessing a surge of European tourists. They knew the world was passing them by.

Those young people are now middle-aged, perhaps with children of their own. When I met them things had seemed hopeless but they were keeping their dreams alive. They were waiting for Fidel to die.

Late one morning I sat down at a coffee bar in one of the swanky, foreigner-only hotels the Hollywood set likes to patronize. As a handsome young barista served me an espresso I looked him square in the eye and deadpanned: “So how’s the revolution going?” He burst out laughing but said no more. He knew that I knew that he knew that the whole thing was a bad joke. But he was going along with it, waiting for Fidel to die.

I left Cuba with the firm conviction that no one under the age of 30 believed in Castro's "Yanqui threat" propaganda or the bogus promise of a communist utopia. Their hope was in the biological solution.

The moment has arrived. Yet the prospects for their liberation are still not great.

They are now ruled by the dead red's 85-year-old brother Raul, and behind him are the next generation of Castros and the military. This ruthless band of criminals owns everything on the island and has no incentive to change. President Obama's normalization of relations and de facto lifting of the US travel ban has funneled fresh resources to them, strengthening their power.

The people are unarmed and have few means of organizing. Food is in short supply. Think Aleppo without the benefit of smuggling over neighboring borders. If dissidents take to the streets, they lose rations and are beaten, jailed, tortured, and exiled.

The international community could help. It pressured South Africa to end apartheid. Cuba is similarly divided by race, with dark-skinned Cubans shut out while a few whites rule—and it is far more repressive. But that's unlikely to happen any time soon, as evidenced by the flow of sympathy notes to the dictatorship from world leaders.

That British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, Russia's Vladimir Putin, and China's Xi Jinping mourned the death of the notorious gangster was no surprise. But sentiments of solidarity coming from Mexico President Enrique Pena Nieto and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who wrote that Castro had "a tremendous dedication and love for the Cuban people," are beyond parody.

President Obama might have denounced Castro's state-sponsored racism and the millions of ruined lives and broken families. He might have said something about the export of terrorism around the world. Instead he wrote: "history will record and judge the enormous impact of this singular figure on the people and world around him." Gutless.

On the flip side, Raul is hated and economic conditions on the island are getting worse. Cuban blogger Yoani Sanchez captured the sentiments of millions when she tweeted about Fidel: "His legacy: a country in ruins, a nation where the young don't want to live." She also observed that "the repression against activists has increased especially in recent days" and that the regime is now preparing for a "canonization."

The appearance of calm and reverence on the island is for consumption by Mr. Obama and friends. But a regime that has lived on fear has cremated its most power-

ful symbol of terror. That's the best reason to hope for a brighter future.

—*The Wall Street Journal*, November 28, 2016, p. A 17

Farewell

by Thomas Sowell

Even the best things come to an end. After enjoying a quarter of a century of writing this column for *Creators Syndicate*, I have decided to stop. Age 86 is well past the usual retirement age, so the question is not why I am quitting, but why I kept at it so long.

It was very fulfilling to be able to share my thoughts on the events unfolding around us, and to receive feedback from readers across the country—even if it was impossible to answer them all.

Being old-fashioned, I liked to know what the facts were before writing. That required not only a lot of research, it also required keeping up with what was being said in the media.

During a stay in Yosemite National Park last May, taking photos with a couple of my buddies, there were four consecutive days without seeing a newspaper or a television news program—and it felt wonderful. With the political news being so awful this year, it felt especially wonderful.

This made me decide to spend less time following politics and more time on my photography, adding more pictures to my website (www.tsowell.com).

Looking back over the years, as old-timers are apt to do, I see huge changes, both for the better and for the worse.

In material things, there has been almost unbelievable progress. Most Americans did not have refrigerators back in 1930, when I was born. Television was little more than an experiment, and such things as air-conditioning or air travel were only for the very rich.

My own family did not have electricity or hot running water, in my early childhood, which was not unusual for blacks in the South in those days.

It is hard to convey to today's generation the fear that the paralyzing disease of polio inspired, until vaccines put an abrupt end to its long reign of terror in the 1950s.

Most people living in officially defined poverty in the 21st century have things like cable television, microwave

ovens, and air-conditioning. Most Americans did not have such things, as late as the 1980s. People whom the intelligentsia continue to call the “have-nots” today have things that the “haves” did not have, just a generation ago.

In some other ways, however, there have been some serious retrogressions over the years. Politics, and especially citizens’ trust in their government, has gone way downhill.

Back in 1962, President John F. Kennedy, a man narrowly elected just two years earlier, came on television to tell the nation that he was taking us to the brink of nuclear war with the Soviet Union, because the Soviets had secretly built bases for nuclear missiles in Cuba, just 90 miles from America.

Most of us did not question what he did. He was President of the United States, and he knew things that the rest of us couldn’t know—and that was good enough for us. Fortunately, the Soviets backed down. But could any President today do anything like that and have the American people behind him?

Years of lying Presidents—Democrat Lyndon Johnson and Republican Richard Nixon, especially—destroyed not only their own credibility, but the credibility which the office itself once conferred. The loss of that credibility was a loss to the country, not just to the people holding that office in later years.

With all the advances of blacks over the years, nothing so brought home to me the social degeneration in black ghettos like a visit to a Harlem high school some years ago.

When I looked out the window at the park across the street, I mentioned that, as a child, I used to walk my dog in that park. Looks of horror came over the students’ faces, at the thought of a kid going into the hell hole which that park had become in their time.

When I have mentioned sleeping out on a fire escape in Harlem during hot summer nights, before most people could afford air-conditioning, young people have looked at me like I was a man from Mars. But blacks and whites alike had been sleeping out on fire escapes in New York since the 19th century. They did not have to contend with gunshots flying around during the night.

We cannot return to the past, even if we wanted to, but let us hope that we can learn something from the past to make for a better present and future.

Goodbye and good luck to all.

—*Creators.com*, December 27, 2016

Castro’s Socialism

by Daniel Greenfield

In the fall of 1962, Fidel Castro urged his Soviet allies to wipe out the United States.

The Butcher of Havana told Khrushchev to “to eliminate this danger forever.” By that he meant destroying the United States of America in a nuclear assault.

“However harsh and terrible the solution, there would be no other,” he reasoned.

The Soviet leader replied warning of a “war of extermination” with “millions of deaths.” He called Castro’s proposal, the “start of a thermonuclear world war.”

Khrushchev flinched from an orgy of death that would have wiped out most of the US, the USSR and Cuba. Castro did not. He was willing to see the world die rather than yield power.

Now the dictator who liked to shout, “Socialism or Death” is dead and out of power.

Castro’s slogan was “Socialism or Death.” But his real legacy was “Socialism and Death.”

The Communist monster brought death to everything his Socialist reign of terror touched. He killed his own people and countless foreigners in wars and acts of terror around the world. Everything he did spread death.

The Cuban intervention in Angola brought back AIDS to Cuba. The disease quickly spread to Cuba’s vast network of prostitutes. Castro had boasted that his regime’s prostitutes had college degrees. In reality they were children who were the children and grandchildren of prostitutes who had known no other life under Communism. Left-wing tourists visiting the Socialist paradise were known to pay \$30 to abuse a child. But they left carrying the disease with them and Socialism once again became death.

Castro had always thrived on the death and misery of others. Once everyone understood that.

President Kennedy, who faced down Castro in that terrible hour, had once called Castro’s regime a “Communist menace” that “threatens the security of the Western Hemisphere.” And he laid out a firm objective. “Cuban communism will be resisted, isolated, and left to die on the vine.”

Barack Obama, who often likes to pretend that he is the second political coming of JFK, overturned that policy decisively, pouring money into Communist Cuba and bailing out its brutal regime.

Obama offered “condolences to Fidel Castro’s fam-

Armando Valladares

in May accepting the Canterbury Medal from the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty:

When I was 23 years old I refused to do something that at the time seemed very small. I refused to say a few words, “I’m with Fidel.” First I refused the sign on my desk at the postal office that said that, and after years of torture and watching many fellow fighters die, either in body or in spirit, I still refused to say those words.

If I just said those three words, I would have been released from prison.

My story is proof that a small act of defiance can mean everything for the friends of liberty. They did not keep me in jail for 22 years because my refusal to say three words meant nothing. In reality those three words meant everything.

For me to say those words would have constituted a type of spiritual suicide. Even though my body was in prison and being tortured, my soul was free and it flourished. My jailers took everything away from me, but they could not take away my conscience or my faith.

—*The Wall Street Journal*, November 28, 2016, p. A 19

ily” after his death and described his plot to murder over a hundred million Americans as “political disagreements” and “discord.” He described Castro’s atrocities around the world and at home as “the enormous impact of this singular figure on the people and world around him.”

All this for a brutal dictator who had remorselessly butchered his own people, exported terrorism internationally, and plotted to wipe out the United States. But these are precisely the reasons why the left has always loved Castro. They did not love Castro in spite of his atrocities. But because of them.

The worship of Castro, like that of Stalin, always made it easy to distinguish what the left claimed to believe from what it really believed. At the height of the young left’s love affair with Castro in America, the Cuban authorities were rounding up men for having long hair and women for wearing miniskirts. Local propaganda accused these “rebels” of using drugs and defacing the flag. Western Castro lovers were cheering a regime that would have locked them up for their own displays of non-conformity.

Castro made a mockery of human rights. His minions murdered children and the left cheered. It locked up black people and gays. And the left couldn’t get enough because it didn’t really believe in protecting minorities or in the freedom to wear long hair without being arrested. It believed in its own power.

A convoy of celebs has passed through Cuba while lavishing praise on Castro’s genius and even his physique. When Obama began to illegally dismantle the embargo, the left mourned that the Socialist paradise would be de-

spoiled by consumerism. And it was out of concern for that “paradise” that Obama took steps to bail out Castro to preserve the Communist dictatorship as a theme park for the left.

Obama recently praised Cuba’s health care system. The superiority of Cuban medicine is one of the left’s obsessions because it proves that tyranny and slavery in the service of progressive goals works. Cuban doctors are slaves and not only does the left know it, it supports and defends it. That is why the same left-wing media outlets that lecture us incessantly on our moral obligation to accept Syrian Muslims who hate us and this country, urged against accepting Cuban doctors defecting from Castro.

The reality of Cuban medicine, dying patients deprived of basic health care while slave doctors tend to the needs of left-wing tourists looking for a little lift and tuck, matters less than the myth. The myth of Cuban medicine, like Chinese infrastructure, is that the methods of the totalitarian left get results.

And that is why the left loved Castro.

Ho Chi Minh’s successors, once the darlings of the left, sold out and want Uncle Sam to help protect them from the People’s Republic of China. China also seems to be more interested in selling the capitalists rope than hanging them with it. But Castro never compromised or sold out.

Instead his paradise became a parasite, shifting its dependency from the USSR to Venezuela to Obama. It degenerated over the decades until it had become little more than a museum of Communism making money

through human trafficking in its vaunted doctors, promoting child prostitution to left-wing tourists and occasionally overthrowing other governments and feeding off their resources.

Castro's Cuba was dying of its own disease.

The death of Castro will take away much of the romance of Cuba for the left. The left likes to believe that it lives by theories that are as scientific as anything to be found in the study of the universe. The truth is that it is a movement of emotions that gravitates to personalities. Castro, like Stalin, had a cult of personality because he appeared to embody the indomitable spirit of Socialism.

But Castro, like his regime, didn't thrive. They persisted. They lingered long after their time had ended.

Now Castro is dead. Venezuela, whose dead leader had also adopted Castro's "Socialism or Death" slogan, is also dead. Obama has fallen. Castro has fallen. America still exists despite both of them.

And that leaves Cuba without a powerful left-wing patron to subsidize its Museum of Communism.

JFK had made the moral stakes of the conflict clear. "The first thing we have to do is let the Cuban people know our determination that they will someday again be free."

The choice isn't Socialism or Death. It's Socialism and Death. Or Freedom and Life.

—*FrontPageMag.com*, November 28, 2016

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Note from the Editor:

I only wish I had the proper words to say "thank you" for all your support these past few months. Your gifts and comments were more than I could ever imagine and mean a great deal to me personally. They more than encourage me to keep our Christian AntiCommunism Crusade movement going forward in spite of a great push to destroy all "anti" anything or anyone. Many of you wanted me to know that you were not embarrassed with the words "Christian," "AntiCommunism," or "Crusade." All three are so politically incorrect, but obviously this did not bother you. Anyway, I'm taking it that you want me to keep you informed of the barbarians seeking to scale the walls of Western Civilization and especially the USA. We will do our best to do so and invite you to check out *The New York Times*, January 4, 2017, p. A7 for a partial list of our home-grown barbarians who have already scaled our walls and are parading in our streets.

—David A. Noebel

Venezuela Today

Fidel Castro's death has elicited a flood of commentary about his legacy, including predictable tributes to his alleged achievements in health care and education. Readers interested in a more accurate accounting should read current headlines about life and death in Venezuela.

Except for Nicaragua in the 1980s, Venezuela has more wholly adopted Castro's economic and ideological model than any other Latin American nation. The late Hugo Chavez took his cues from Castro on everything from his fondness for army fatigues to his 10-hour speeches. Chavez also adopted the Castro model of seizing private property, suppressing the independent media, hounding political opponents, and making cause with rogues in Damascus and Tehran.

For a while Venezuela escaped some of the inevitable consequences thanks to a flood of petrodollars. That's over. Inflation is forecast to reach 1,640% next year. Caracas is the world's most violent city. Hospitals have run out of basic medicines, including antibiotics, leading to skyrocketing infant mortality. There are chronic and severe shortages of electricity, food and water, as well as ordinary consumer goods like diapers or beer. Nicolas Maduro, Chavez's handpicked successor, has put his leading political opponents in jail.

And there's hunger. An estimated 120,000 Venezuelans flooded into neighboring Colombia to buy food when Mr. Maduro briefly opened the border in July. Desperate Venezuelans are trekking through the Amazon hinterlands to make it to Brazil. And, like Cubans, they are taking to boats, risking their lives to make it to the nearby Dutch colony of Curacao. Where there's socialism there are boat people.

Not long ago young leftists were hailing the achievements of Chavez's "revolution," much as a previous generation celebrated Castro's. Western credulity about socialism is eternal, which perhaps explains the tearful eulogies for Castro. Those less easily suckered need only look at Venezuela's desperate boat people to know the truth of Fidel's legacy.

—Editorial, *The Wall Street Journal*, December 1, 2016, p. A 16

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