

# *The Tragedy of Fidel Castro*

## **Highlights**

### **I**

”If we don’t do anything, something terrible will happen... or even worse, they’ll say it was our fault.”

”Don’t upset yourself. Just as they’ve stripped us of our merits, so they’ll exempt us from responsibilities, you’ll see. Just as they invent theories to explain the beauty of a flower, so they will find a way of justifying killing between men.”

”Fine words, but one day someone will use mathematical formulae and computer programmes to prove that we don’t exist....”

”First of all, there are a great many people that no longer believe, and secondly, that would mean that our problems would be over....”

”And then what would we do? What sense does it make for us to be considered products of the human imagination?”

”Aren’t you the one that usually has an answer for everything?”

This was followed by some moments of somewhat embarrassing divine silence. Then, after millennia of celestial contention, God decided to bare his soul.

”I confess I’m intrigued. Could there be someone above us? Who created me, then?”

”No one, you are the only being that has not been created.”

”But that is completely illogical, an affront to basic rationality....”

”What is fascinating in this mystery of origins and beginnings is that not even we understand it....”

Absorbed in the contemplation of the firmament, God digressed. .”To have no beginning and no end...”

“The specialist books on the subject insist that we are immortal...”

“Would that be a gift or a punishment?” Christ looked confused but God went on with his musings. ”I also wanted to have a father and a mother....”

”You have billions of children....”

”I sometimes wonder if their real father wasn’t someone else....”

”It’s the adoptive father that counts....”

”But, if I created them in my own image, then why do they behave as they do?”

”You’re in no position to complain. Before I was born you were terribly mischievous...and in any case, you gave them the freedom of choice, free will.”

”That doesn’t seem to have been a very good idea....”

”That’s the problem. Only thinking beings can conceive transcendental existence. Can you imagine a turkey in a mystic ecstasy, contemplating his magnificent Baroque sculptures?” God frowned. He’d never been very keen on sacred art. ”We’re getting off the subject....”

”It’s all related, can’t you see? Your creation is trying to break free of its creator. Look, they have already discovered that you didn’t mould them out of clay and that women were

not made from a man's rib. Nowadays almost everyone agrees they're descended from apes. No one believes in hell, no one goes to confession. They've even managed to create test-tube babies and clones."

"Are you telling me I've been fired?"

"You can't be fired because you're the boss. What they want is to set up on their own."

"But why are they so rebellious?"

Christ hesitated before replying, and his countenance grew serious.

"I suspect that none of them, not even those that claim to be believers, are really convinced that another life exists...."

God placed his hand on his forehead and closed his eyes. "So, what do they believe in, then?"

"Oh, they believe in power and money, in the good life, wild parties, things like that...."

God remained silent, lost in eschatological ruminations. "You know, son, maybe you're right. I sent you to Earth to save men, but they ended up fighting amongst themselves in your name, enslaving each other and burning people on bonfires...."

"Even the angels defy you. What do you expect?"

"I might be old but I'm not finished yet. I can still conjure up a plague or two." - God began to sing an old song, "...Look at me, I am old, but I'm happy...." to which Christ countered, "... from the moment I could talk, I was ordered to listen..." - (and their exchange continued)

"Plagues? They would invent a cure right away and say it was all caused by genetic mutations."

“You’re right, the time for anger and revenge is over... This time, we’re going to think before we act.”

”I warn you, father, I’m not going to be the court jester all over again. With me, history doesn’t repeat itself....”

“All right. But don’t forget the great religious, philosophical, and political influence that you have over these two men. JFK doesn’t lift a finger without invoking your name, and Fidel thinks he’s applying the principles of equality that you preached. In their own muddled way, they’re both trying to imitate you. In fact, if we look at the situation carefully, it wasn’t really me that created them, it was you. They’re your kids, Son!”

Now although Christ was used to being accused of all kinds of things and to shouldering the blame for others, his mouth dropped open in stupefaction. “So it’s my fault now? Me? And I . . . not even with Magdalene.”

After this disconcerting dialogue, God retired into the clouds with an infernal headache. Now he had two problems to sort out. Christ remained where he was, paralyzed by the unexpected dilemma that his father had thrust upon him yet unable to push away the chalice that was offered.

As these two reactions to adversity (movement and quiet) were quite different, even opposing, we might deduce that when the gods, like men, find themselves under pressure, just about anything could happen. Indeed, that might explain the frequent bouts of divine ire in the Old Testament, the slaughtered lambs, Christ’s rage at the moneylenders, the cruel vengeance exacted by mythological gods, and Orisha’s sudden fits of fury. In fact, only Buddha, who’s not really a god at all, has managed to keep out of brawls when he finally managed to liberate himself from all desires except food!

## II

“Comrades, the capitalist oppression is over,” the commandant began, holding up a finger in warning before an audience that was desperately trying to find meaning in his words. “Starting today, the people are in charge. No more landowners will exploit you, and no financial speculators. All businesses will be nationalized and tax havens closed down.”

As the speech went on, the crowd grew more and more confused. “Maybe it’s not us he’s talking to,” they muttered. “This reminds me of one of the padre’s sermons.” “It would’ve been better if the Chinese had invaded us.”

However, all their doubts evaporated when the speaker moved on to more concrete subjects, things of common interest and general understanding. “The land belongs to all of us now.”

This unexpected declaration struck the ears of all those present and was followed by a collective murmur that gradually overwhelmed the voice of the commandant, forcing him to speak louder to make himself heard. As the wall of whispers increased in intensity, isolating the orator’s words, he found his vocal cords wavering until eventually, like a flame in a bell jar, his voice was extinguished into silence. A few moments of great confusion followed, a tumult soldiers were unable to control with their pushing and threatening. The people then began to put the revolutionary theories into practice by issuing orders. “No one touches my pig!” shouted one irate farmer, brandishing an imaginary hoe. This ignited the others, who protested heatedly against the proposal for agrarian reform and Castro-inspired collectivization.

Surprised at the fanatical response from the people, who were proving more reactionary and bourgeois than welcoming, as the oppressed were supposed to be with their liberators, the commandant experienced the first signs of a tremendous headache. He took a deep breath and replied as sweetly and gently as he could: "The pig belongs to the people, comrade." (He said this while imagining himself savoring slices of cured ham.) But as he was getting ready to explain the benefits of abolishing private property and dividing up personal wealth and capital equipment, another man called out rudely, "What about the women? Do they belong to the people too?" This raised a roar of coarse laughter. Having definitively lost their fear of intervening, the masses erupted in a chorus of spoken thoughts, revealing their innermost feelings. "You can have my wife any time!" "Let's get down to it then. Drop your drawers, Maria!" "Oh, my poor daughters!"

Worn out and bad tempered, given the failure of the debriefing session, the commandant felt like ordering half a dozen men to be shot to set an example. He tried to restore order by saying the first thing that came to mind. "From now on, pornography is banned." This got him embroiled in an argument with the protesters, who were getting noisier by the minute.

"But we haven't got that here yet."

"An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure."

"Sorry, I'm not sure about something."

"What is it?"

"Does a romp in the hay with the neighbor's wife count as pornography?"

"Well . . . not if she's a comrade. But if she's a capitalist, then yes, obviously it does."

“And if she’s neither?”

“That’s impossible. Anyone who is not with us is against us.”

“That’s very complicated.”

“And what about doing the five-knuckle shuffle?”

“Enough!” shouted the commandant, furious at the people’s lack of discipline.

“This rabble is completely ungovernable,” he ruminated. He was at a loss as to how to deal with the chaos he had created.

In the meantime, some of the people had begun to insult each other, reviving old feuds, scoffing, and generally threatening to transform the debriefing session into a pitched battle. Soldiers, unused to such attitudes, suspected these must be very strange and complex people, maybe even a little crazy. They hesitated about what to do. Once more, the commandant proved he could deal with the most sensitive situations with enviable *sangfroid*: Two shots into the air were enough to calm people down and reduce the clamor to a deathly silence.

The square now looked as if it were filled with stiff statues modeled by an mediocre sculptor. Dazzled by his own magic, the commandant savored the moment, more convinced than ever that one shot was worth a thousand words.

With arms outstretched as if to embrace the crowd, he addressed the protesters again, this time with more confidence. “I can see that I didn’t make myself clear, comrades. This can all be summed up as a process of dialectic, whereby the opposition of contrary concepts gives rise to the perfect synthesis. That is to say, what used to be mine and yours is no longer mine or yours; it’s now ours. Do we understand each other?”

The pig owner, who greatly appreciated sausages and brined meat, was visibly distressed and muttered: “He won’t eat pig feed.” But all others remained silent. This subtle example of popular wisdom, where silence can mean anything at all, from a given thing to its exact opposite, left the commandant wary. He then realized that facing a silent crowd could be a much more difficult undertaking than confronting a noisy mob.

Meanwhile, accustomed to simple yet incontestable language, the people were waiting to be given clear orders and specific instructions. For the selfsame reason, they became more rowdy when the commandant urged them to speak up, in what he called a session of criticism and self-criticism. “Comrades, to perfect our new classless society, each of us will say what he or she thinks about himself or herself and about others.” This unexpected invitation was received with astonishment by those present, now entirely convinced that some sort of plot was being hatched against them.

“I told you he was a padre in disguise.”

“He just wants to know where we keep our money.”

“Anyone who speaks will be hanged.”

With the sentiment of the people explained, verbalized in collective fears, no one dared open their mouth.

Helplessly watching as his strategy crumbled around him, the commandant controls a new urge to draw his gun recalling the old psychological manipulation techniques he had learned at elementary school. “Anyone who finds his tongue gets some chocolate,” he cried, his face trapped in a satanic angelic smirk. “Some chocolate?” the people called out, unable to contain the saliva pouring from their lips.

“Yes, some chocolate.”

“The good stuff?”

“The best money can buy.”

A huge tumult broke loose once again in the throng, with everyone jostling for position, leaping in the air and trampling on each other's feet as they struggled to be granted the right to speak. This time the soldiers, themselves deprived of the pleasure of the capitalist invention known as chocolate, had no qualms about unleashing their rifle butts on the crowds. What was the point of eating delicacies once your teeth had been bashed out? Finally, when everyone had settled down, the commandant ordered everyone to sign up to talk. To his surprise, the process was all very civil, without any insults or blows. The only break in the proceedings came with some angry voices proclaiming, “Exploiters and the exploited will only cease to exist on the day everyone eats chocolate mousse!” “Pastry chefs of the world unite!”

### III

When he returned, he found the devil, sitting cross-legged in the now-cold chair where J. E. Hoover had once sat, tapping his fingers on the table. He gazed at him naturally, as if they were old acquaintances at a scheduled meeting. "It's just as well you came."

Charming as ever, the devil replied beguilingly, "Unlike others, I am always available when I am needed."

"I have often been on the point of calling for you, so many afflictions have I suffered, but I have always managed to extricate myself on my own..."

"You know, you and I are similar, we have much in common. We started off as good-hearted angels that knew no evil, one obedient, the other already a little rebellious, until one day, knowing that we were the most intelligent, we got fed-up and decided to taste the pleasures of evil. From then on, so sweet are the delights of being evil, there was no way back. However, your resistance even surprises me..."

"But I'm tired. I don't have the energy I had before, and I need your help so as not to lose the meaning of my life."

The devil stroked his goatee and gazed idly at the ceiling. "Nobody knows this, not even you, but I have lent a hand to all the great leaders that have gone down in posterity, filling them with vigour when they wanted to give up, removing a powerful enemy from their path, ensuring that they received boundless affection from their people and sometimes even from those they had conquered. So now it's your turn. Just ask what you want and it shall be granted."

Fidel, stood a polite distance away, took a deep breath, and took a deep look inside himself. Then finally, he took a step towards the devil. "In the future I want to be remembered as the man that confronted the tyranny of capitalism and rescued the people from exploitation. I want schoolbooks to describe the new society I built and compare it with the previous one. I want my life to be studied, and without hiding my mistakes, to conclude that I did everything possible to give the men and women of this world a more worthy existence." When he had stopped speaking, now almost touching the devil, Fidel was exhausted, on the point of fainting.

"It will be done."

"What do you want in exchange?"

The devil's lip curled and he rubbed an eye, amused at Fidel's naivety. "You have been making part of the payment for many years now. As for the rest, I'll be round to collect that after the battle, in which none of your men will come out alive."

Hardly surprised and knowing only too well who made the rules, Fidel was rebellious to a fault, even to the prince of darkness. Already imagining himself organising a mutiny amongst the condemned souls of hell, he dared ask an embarrassing question that had been niggling him. "Don't take this badly, my dear devil..., but what if God by chance decides to intervene in the battle as well?"

At this, Lucifer's horns, which till then had been hidden by his thick shock of black hair, began to protrude, the hairs on his body stood on end and blue sparks began to fly from his eyes. Vexed, he got to his feet, overturning his chair, and stared furiously at *El Comandante*. Old doubts as to Fidel Castro's malevolence began to stir in him. Before disappearing in the same way as he had arrived, with blood on his bitten tongue, he

thundered a sarcastic retort that made the tent tremble: "Just look at the world and tell me who is the strongest!"

#### IV

"Dearest brethren, the antichrist has returned and is preparing to invade. The forces of evil march over our lands with nothing to stop them. The beast's hordes are unleashing their tentacles, thirsty for conquest. The dragon spews out the burning fire of hell. He comes to steal the fruits of our labor, enslave us, and assault our women. And why is this happening? Because you are unrepentant sinners. Because you don't give decent alms. Because you don't do what I tell you to do. Because you're a bunch of bastards and bitches. If it were up to you, the angels would lose their wings and get lice in their hair, the saints would repent their past lives, and even I would succumb to temptation. So this is your punishment, you mob: Confront Fidel Castro and his armies. Let's get ourselves organized to stop that red devil from ruining our lives."

From high in the pulpit, the priest evangelized vigorously about the Castro invasion, haranguing his flock about the fundamentals of religious practice, reminding them of their successive lapses and justifying the approaching punishment. Strident and booming, his finger pointing to the sky or at his parishioners and waving his slipper threateningly at his terrified congregation, he reminded them of the irrefutable connection between sin and punishment, the consequence for disrespecting divine laws, shooting down bullets of morality, launching bombs of decency.

However, the learned priest and his flock did not realize that this punishment was quite different to the traditional ones. Here, they had the possibility of confronting it and of

preparing some kind of resistance—though the chances of success were slight, unlike the old-fashioned sort that were sudden, violent, and unexpected.

Under command of the priest, the population filled sandbags to form barricades. He chided them as they worked: “Come on, you lazy good-for-nothings! Faster, faster!” The cleric had, in the meantime, exchanged his cassock for full fatigues, tied a black band around his head, and scratched one of his arms to give himself more credibility as a warrior. He was unable, however, to disguise the rolls of fat around his belly, to the disgust of the the female parishioners and some of the men. From the steps of the pillory, the priest shrewdly oversaw the defensive operations while scribbling out schemes to resist the invader interspersed with drawings of naked girls.

The enemy attack had given him an authority he’d never dreamed of before, a power that seemed to have dropped from the sky. Thus, what appeared to everyone else as an ominous black threat was a rainbow of colorful opportunity for the priest, and he ardently wished this situation of attack-not attack / kill-not-kill would prolong indefinitely.

This change of mood brought a radical change to his sermons. “My dearest brethren, the will of the Lord is inscrutable, so it is not worth trying to understand it. That is my job. And that is why I am telling you that Fidel’s invasion is a true blessing for us all, the best thing that could have happened to our land, as we shall see. Before, you were all just sniveling black sheep, an undisciplined flock. No one cared about the other. Each of you was obsessed with your own success and with the wealth you wanted to make. Fraternity and compassion were forgotten. Now, though, faced with this hypothetical threat, you have discovered that by stretching out your hands to one another you can find a meaning for your pathetic existence. By putting aside your egoism, you have transformed this miserable village into a model of solidarity, charity, and forgiveness. You’re still

sniveling black sheep, that's for sure. But your hearts are in the right place. Let us pray, then, that the world be populated with Fidel Castros."

Under the stony gaze of the malevolent beings imprisoned in the granite of the church walls, who were themselves intrigued by the sudden about-turn, the preache reinforced the believers' conviction that thinking was something very complicated, only within reach of the elect, and that it was best not to blow their fuses. Resigned, they left the church with little will to reflect upon why some lambs were mystical while others were roasted in the oven with jacket potatoes.

The priest, for his part, doggedly studied Marxist economic theory and pored over authorized biographies of Fidel to make sure he would be ready for his enemy, should Fidel invite him to smoke some cigars. "I am, after all, the only person in this god-forsaken place that can speak Latin."

However, the priest, intoxicated by the inebriating vapors of absolute authority and convinced that no one would ever dare confront him again, had not counted on the appearance of the Revolutionary Movement of Patriotic Whores. It was thus, with amazement and incredulity, that he discovered, right in his own church, an awareness-raising session organized by the recently created RMPW.

Having decided to contribute their knowledge of human relations to the struggle against the invader, they had set up a movement to save the village from communism and limit the psychological suffering of its inhabitants. "We don't want to be nationalized," they said. "The market is never wrong," they claimed. After introducing their project, whose only concrete feature was the provision of a tent equipped with mattresses and mirrors for the emotional support of the brave defenders of the fatherland, they immediately launched an attack on the measures imposed by the priest. Atop a platform

made of rotten planks, dressed in mini-skirts and high-heeled shoes, heavily made up, reeking of cheap perfume, and standing with hands on hips, they issued strident challenges in shrill voices, shaking their blonde highlights: “What stupid strategy is this?” “What qualifications does this gentleman have to decide what we should or should not do?” “Who gave him the power to do that?” “What are his real reasons, anyway?”

Bewildered by these inconvenient questions and not accustomed to challenging authority, the people glanced at one another distrustfully and murmured anxiously. Then, in the taverns, over beakers of wine, roast chorizo, hunks of corn bread, and olives, they heatedly discussed the RMPW’s theories and the priest’s role. In their homes, in the brief truce between outbreaks of quarrelling and mutual scoffing, husbands and wives finally found they had something to talk about. Even the priest, feeling harassed, was obliged to justify himself in his sermons, which he did wearing cassocks emblazoned with the colors of the national flag.

And so it was that, thanks to Fidel Castro, the society was divided into two irreconcilable factions, each as dogmatic and inflexible as the other, which, in the growing tension that preceded the outbreak of civil war, came to be known as the *Padristas* and *Putistas*.<sup>1</sup>

For the *Padristas*, the padre was the only rightful leader of the resistance, the only person with the clear-sightedness needed. He was the richest man in the land and the most successful with the ladies, after all, and so it followed that he was the most able. The people had to obey him without questioning his orders. “Believing, obeying, fighting” became their motto. Having once compared Fidel to a demon, the priest now seemed to

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<sup>1</sup> Whorists.

recognize divine qualities in him. This was entirely natural, since in politics, today's truth is tomorrow's lies. Besides, the padre's defensive strategy was the only possibility.

For the *Putistas*, the padre was a fraud, and maybe even Castro's *Fifth Column*, making it vital to expose him and adopt other ways of fighting the enemy. Piling up sandbags to resist the Castro army was pointless. And so, to avoid unnecessary massacre, they urged everyone to leave town immediately, then set fire to it and joined the forces of JFK. However, in a kind of plan B, they did admit that if their plan was turned down, the best thing would be to welcome Fidel with open arms, calling him their liberator and denouncing the bourgeoisie in a cultural revolution never before seen.

Going beyond mere speechmaking, political discussion, and putting up posters, the Padristas and Putistas organized street demonstrations aimed at winning over the citizens. The former set up a five-a-side football tournament, for which ten teams signed up. However, before a single game could be played, controversy struck when Putista teams accused the organizers of rigging the draw and refused to accept the referees chosen, as they believed them to be corrupt. This meant that the only games played were between Padrista teams. Even so, the same accusations of unfair refereeing were made and several pitch battles took place, resulting in a volley of broken legs and serious injuries. Faced with such a fiasco, the Putistas protested that the Padristas were incapable of organizing anything, and that the doomed football tournament was a harbinger of bad things yet to befall the town.

The latter organized a beauty pageant, attracting nineteen young ladies, aged sixteen to twenty-five. Both the traditional costume parade and the daring swimwear show went well. The general knowledge questions also went relatively well: "Where is the Tower of Pisa?"

“Erm, in London?”

Even the girls seemed to share their most profound thoughts effortlessly: “I wish for the good of humanity, world peace, I dunno, stuff like that.”

Then a Padrista contestant complained that the Putista contestants had breast implants, and all hell broke loose.

“These tits are natural.”

“Then let’s squeeze them to see if they pop.”

“Girls, girls, please calm down.”

In the confusion that followed, with contestants refusing to undergo a manual and oral examination by the male jury, the contest was suspended. As a result of this mishap, the Padristas branded the Putistas as irresponsible and rabble-rousers, explaining that you didn’t win wars with breasts.

These events deepened the gulf between the two factions, dividing once and for all families, friends, and strangers. Padristas and Putistas cut all ties, choosing to spend their time in separate places, to buy their groceries only from grocers with shared ideological views, and to make up dirty jokes about their rivals. The sisters, mothers, and grandmothers of both parties were systematically insulted and their personal hygiene habits hung out for public perusal. To better distinguish themselves, the Padristas began to wear red armbands, the Putistas, blue ones. On the Padrista side, the padre was the natural born leader. On the Putista side, Madame Lola ruled the roost. While he granted indulgences, she handed out condoms.

With hatred and intolerance intensifying each day, a sensible soul proposed a fight between the two leaders. “I accept,” they both exclaimed, relieved that nobody had thought about organizing a political debate. Specialists appointed by both parties met in secret to define the conditions and rules of the fight. Following several hours of heated discussion, threats of violence, and offers of bribery, the experts, quite sozzled and in the company of girls of dubious reputation, jointly drew up the following document:

To find a peaceful solution to the terrible division corrupting our society, Padristas and Putistas agree to a fight between their respective leaders. The fight will be held tomorrow at 5:00 p.m. under the following conditions:

1. The venue chosen is the central square.
2. To make a real show of it, the ground in the square will be watered until puddles of mud form.
3. The opponents should show up unarmed and in sporting attire.
4. There will be no referee.
5. The first to knock out his or her opponent will be declared the winner
6. All manner of blows are admissible.
7. Ear biting will result in disqualification.

Entry is free.

On the following day, hours before the fight, the square was already packed with supporters for each fighter. The climate of expectation and uncertainty as to the outcome of

the fight had brought out mankind's natural compulsion for gambling and easy profit. Illegal betting was rife. "Five chickens on the padre to win." "Two cows on Lola to win."

The first fighter to arrive was Madame Lola, accompanied by her entourage, which included her trainer, her masseur, and her shrink. Lola, dressed in a leopard-skin bikini and high-heeled boots, triumphantly entered the square, arms in the air. She was received by her fans with a huge round of applause and heckles of encouragement. "Kill him!" they shouted. "Skin him alive!"

Minutes later the padre arrived, joined only by his trainer (the sexton) and two masseurs (the catechists). The padre, sporting a yellow thong, football boots, and an inexplicable nose ring, warmed up by throwing punches in an attempt to intimidate his opponent, while loud applause and cries of encouragement rang around the square. "Kill her!" "Skin her alive!"

With the two contestants in place, the master of ceremonies grabbed his microphone. "Ladies and gentlemen, to my right, the whorehouse whirlwind, five feet seven inches, one hundred ninety eight pounds, Madaaaaaame Lolaaaa. To my left, the terror of the confessional, five feet three inches, one hundred seventy six pounds, theeeeeee padreeee."

The first moments of the fight were spent in close and very careful mutual inspection, doing a few turns of the arena until they were giddy. The crowd was growing restless and about to let out a few jeers when the brawl began. Out of the blue, the padre took the initiative, grabbing Lola by the hair and lifting her onto his back before violently throwing her down onto the ground, letting out a roar of biblical proportions. The Padristas whooped and leaped with joy. The Putistas let out a collective "Ooh." Stunned, Lola got to

her feet with difficulty, like a pachyderm far into its siesta being forced to stand, shooting sparks of hatred at the padre.

The long-awaited psychological game began. Pundits believed the padre to have an advantage over Madame Lola, thanks to his experience with tortured souls, which they felt trumped the griping heard by the harlot in brothel beds.

“Did you like that? You’d best throw in the towel while you still can,” the padre called across the ring. But, no sooner had he proffered these words of derision than Lola kicked him in the testicles, causing him to crumple to his knees. The fighter made the most of her opponent’s faint-like state, grabbing him by the scruff of the neck and forcing his face into a filthy puddle for seconds.

“And now? Not smiling now, are you?” They were now level pegging, both in terms of blows given and suffered, and dirt inflicted.

The fight then paused for a commercial break. Young girls paraded around, holding posters advertising alcoholic drinks. Purists of the sport complained that this was absurd. Male members of the audience complained for other reasons: “Couldn’t they have gotten better chicks?”

The fight began at exactly the same point where it had been interrupted, with the priest in a muddy puddle, which seemed to confirm the Marxist theory of history repeating itself in the form of farce. With the fighter voluntarily immersed on the ground, as if “turning the other cheek,” a little sportsmanship was expected of Lola. But, proving that in today’s world there’s no place for altruism and that jungle law prevails, the fighter grabbed the moment to force her booted foot down on his head and screamed victory with clenched fists in the air. The crowd froze: The Padristas were mortified by the imminent defeat of their leader, and the Putistas devastated that the fight could end so quickly. But then, with

winning bets already being paid, the clergyman pulled himself free of Lola's heavy boot, swung around, and leapt from the ground in an acrobatic somersault.

While Lola disconcertedly scratched her chin, trying to figure out what she'd done wrong, the padre, still leaping about, caught her in the eye with a glob of well-aimed spit. The stunned organizers looked at each other in shock, ashamed they hadn't banned the slinging of bodily fluids. "This isn't a porno movie," they retorted. The crowd was divided on the matter. "It even had blood in it," said an outraged Putista. "She should be used to such things," a Padrista scathingly replied.

With little or no ethical or hygienic considerations, the padre dove under Lola's legs, causing her to tumble like a felled tree.

The fight was even once again.

It was then that Fidel Castro's army began its aerial invasion.

## The Author

João Cerqueira, who has a PhD in History of Art from the University of Oporto, has published a number of books in his home country of Portugal. These include scholarly works on history and art – *Art and Literature in the Spanish Civil War* (published in Portugal and Brazil), a biography of the Portuguese queen, Maria Pia of Savoy, and three satirical novels: *A Culpa é Destes Liberdades* (Blame it on too much Freedom, 2007); *A Tragédia de Fidel Castro* (Saída de Emergência Edições, 2008) and *Reflexões do Diabo* (Devil's Observations, 2010). The second of these, translated here as *The Tragedy of Fidel Castro*, was voted book of the month and book of the year in 2009 by the literary magazine *Os Meus Livros*. Excerpts were published in the *Toad Suck Review #2*, *Danse Macabre*, *Literary Lunes*, *All Right Magazine*, *The Liberator Magazine* and *Anastomo*.