

## S AND HEALING WOUNDS

## Does Castro really need this opiate?

J. KELLY DAVIS  
Back Page Editor

I didn't know what to think when I first heard Fidel Castro, leader of one of the last Marxist-style regimes in the world, had invited the Pope, the most influential religious leader in the world, to come by for a visit.

So in my bewilderment, I came up with a few possible explanations for Castro's actions.

It's possible that Castro sees, when he looks in the mirror, an old man who will not live forever. So, in his old age, is fiery Fidel second-guessing Marx's atheist doctrine that religion is the opiate of the masses—trying to slip into heaven with a "Get out of Hell Free" card from the Pope?

Heaven forbid—Castro would have the best interests of his people in mind, and wish to better their situations by alleviating sanctions placed upon their country.

Or, maybe Castro, the student of history, does not wish to trip down the path of leaders such as Mao Tse Tung and Marshall Tito, whose regimes fell apart after their deaths—causing them to be looked upon as poor leaders post-mortem.

OK. Lets' take a look at the situation and see where I'm right or wrong.

When talking to Bill Schmickle, our local recovering Marxist, about what Castro might be doing down in Cuba he used a Bill Cosby sketch; and, surprisingly enough, it made sense. Cosby tells about his children approaching him, after a visit from the grandparents, and asking why they are so nice and you [the parents] are so mean. Cosby replies that those aren't the people that raised him, those are just some old people trying to get into heaven. I tend to agree with Dr. Schmickle on his analysis of the situation. I doubt that this Catholic educated Marxist who denounced religion for nearly 40 years has suddenly had a divine inspiration. So, if it's not the eternal salvation Castro is looking for then what?

President Kennedy placed sanctions on Cuba creating,

total closure in trade between the island state and the U.S., and these sanctions are still maintained today. This, combined with the loss of support from the former Soviet Union and the Helms-Burton act, a piece of legislature intended to prevent other countries from trading with Cuba [This act was met with international outrage and has been temporarily halted], are taking heavy tolls on Cuba. But, the Cuban people have always been in need of supplies due to the sanctions. If Castro was really concerned with the welfare of his people, then he would have recognized that the communist state was not helping them and changed things long ago.

We can also look at Castro's past to shed some light on his concern for what happens to his image in the future. Castro has never been concerned about maintaining a pristine international image. Actually he has created the opposite. From the Bay of Pigs to meeting with Malcolm X he has proven himself to be a master in the art of publicity stunts. Even in this situation he added a nice touch in the motorcade which brought him to the Vatican—a mounted machine gun on one of the vehicles. All this combined suggests that Castro has always very deliberately created the image he wants. So, he certainly hasn't needed the Pope to help define who Castro was, so why would he need him now?

Ultimately I think Castro believes in Marxism as a way for him to maintain power in Cuba. For nearly 40 years he had a political and economic super power backing him up, but now they are gone. So, what's the leader of this regime to do? I think Castro is gambling that the Pope's visit will help legitimize the Cuban government enough to loosen the sanctions. This would be a major victory in the short term for Castro, but ultimately it seems that communism in Cuba will not last forever. As we see in almost every nation around the world, communism has not been as successful as it was initially thought and as the old communists grow older, new young capitalists are waiting to revitalize economies. Even if communism falls in Cuba, Castro's motive is linked directly to his desire to maintain control as long as possible.

## Fast Facts

**Friction between Hong Kong's present and future leaders:**

On Wednesday, a Chinese-appointed committee was almost certain to name a 59-year-old shipping tycoon the territory's first leader of the post-colonial era.

Billionaire Tung Chee-hwa's appointment will come at a time of renewed friction between Hong Kong's outgoing British colonial administration and its future political masters.

**Pope will miss Christmas day mass:**

According to officials, Pope John Paul II will not celebrate the Vatican's Christmas Day Mass this year.

The 76-year-old pope, who underwent an appendectomy in October, will speak at the traditional Christmas Eve Mass at St. Peter's Basilica and deliver his "Urbi et Orbi" blessing to both the city and the world at noon on X Mas day.

**Russia miner's strike to end soon:**

According to the Itar-Tass news agency, the leadership of Russia's Rosugleprof coal miners' union decided Wednesday to end a nationwide strike launched December 3.

**Zairian troops flee Uganda:**

Zairian troops abandoned their last stronghold in eastern Ziare on Wed. and fled to Uganda. The United Nations reported finding up to 100,000 malnourished refugees.

**More than 400 civilians killed in Burundi army attack:**

According to sources in Burundi, a massacre of civilians was reported in the central Burundian village of Rukago. The sources claim to have witnessed the attack in which 401 men, women, and children belonging to the Hutu ethnic tribe were gunned down by the Tutsi-dominated Burundian army.

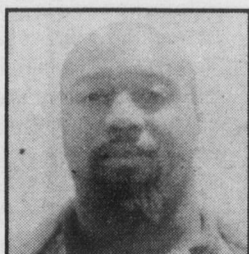
# the inquirin' PHOTOGRAPHER

Being a Quaker school, do you feel that other religions are expressed on campus?



JAZZ MARKS  
first-year

*"Obviously Quakerism is a big part here, but I do feel other religions are expressed."*



LAMONT WILLIAMS  
Junior

*"No, I don't believe that other religions are expressed on campus outside of classes...I've seen a few classes on Buddhism, but that's it."*



AUCIA WARNER  
Junior

*"I've met a lot of people from different faiths on campus...and I find it to be really interesting, and relaxing"*