

# DESCRIPTIONS OF PERNICIOUS ATTEMPTS TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE WORLD WIDE WEB: THE CUBA CASE

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Distortion of history to aid control by a central government is a thousands-of-years-old technique. Since at least the times of Pharaoh Ramses II, rulers have successfully altered the historical record. In more recent times, George Orwell (1949) wrote:

And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed—if all records told the same tale—then the lie passed into history and became truth. “Who controls the past” ran the Party slogan, “controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.”

Less obvious are attempts to control the internet in countries we view as “democratic.” Here mechanisms are emerging to control expression of opinion and coerce diversity.

The internet is a source of unfettered information and thus freedom. However, as most technology the internet is neutral with regard to its use. Thus, while there are forces promoting freedom on the internet, there also are influences promoting totalitarianism.

Ideas duel in electronic spaces. In theory as in formal duels, conditions on the web allow balance; this way the resulting freedom of expression of opinions

should allow factual data to emerge. In reality, interests of some weight promote national or even international based censorship. In the case of mainland China, dubious relationships with such internet giants as Yahoo.com and Google.com (e.g., Anonymous, 2006; Wikipedia: Advice to Tor users in China, 2006) aid in this. Other interests exist throughout the world, e.g. the United Nations’ wish to exert control over electronic space in a process which places dictatorial regimes in positions of influence (e.g., DiPippo, 2005).

My interest arose after attempting to correct what was initially perceived as uninformed errors of fact about Cuba in publications. (One notes in passing that Wikipedia is, by far, not the only source of misinformation on the Cuban circumstance. For example, Kapur and Smith, 2002,<sup>1</sup> and some even in the U.S. government, e.g., Robson, 1996,<sup>2</sup> place distorted ideas onto the web.) In Wikipedia, ignorance seemed to be a significant factor; for instance some anonymous editors removed references because they were in Spanish (“Mensch,” 2006).<sup>3</sup> In this venue, it became apparent that the factual and referenced data

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1. Example of false statement from Kapur and Smith (2002) on housing: “Most former owners were fully compensated for their losses, but landlords of slum tenement buildings received nothing from the government.”

2. Example of distortion from Robson (1996) on Cubans coming to the United States: “Many wealthier Cuban families came here, both because they disagreed with the goals and methods of the revolution, and because it was the only way to salvage their financial assets.”

3. Mensch (2006) writes: “All the links referring to non-English sources are removed from the article. If necessary I can compile a list of the resources taken out of the article for Spanish speaking people who would like to validate them. But still, I’m unsure if non English sources qualify as material for an English Wikipedia entry, so it’s probably better to find equivalent English sources.”

that I inserted was removed or altered with less than scholarly purposes (“Splash,” 2005).

More recently, for example in the article on Che Guevara, some assumed the “right” to remove some references in Spanish and yet leave others. They ignored that: Guevara wrote in Spanish, many primary sources of study are in Spanish, and Cuban government sources may well have differing external (English) and internal (Spanish) variants of “official truth.” Clearly ideologues sought or had gained control of such topics.

This circumstance strongly indicated that supporters of Castro do not limit input to promoting their ideas in Wikipedia. They are using all means at their disposal to engage in extremely aggressive repression of the ideas that differ from their own. Thus, they extend the political controls on the island into international cyberspace. Unfortunately, the methods used provide models for the control of the internet in democratic countries.

The above seemed an interesting phenomenon worthy of study. To study this matter in scholarly focus, the treatment in Wikipedia of selected aspects of Cuban History were examined.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Venue

According to Ahrens (2006) “Wikipedia is an open-format Internet encyclopedia available to just about anyone who wants to write and edit an article. It was launched in English in January 2001 and now has millions of articles in several languages. ...Unlike, say, the Encyclopedia Britannica, Wikipedia has no formal peer review for its articles. They may be written by experts or insane crazy people. Or worse, insane crazy people with an agenda and Internet access.” However, use of Wikipedia continues to expand enormously (e.g. Rubel, 2005).

Wikipedia’s basic premise is that many anonymous amateurs can replace a few specialists in the field to reach statistically approximated truth. Wikipedia has the support of Yahoo.com and Google.com, providing advertising, funding, and “bandwidth” (e.g. Green, 2006). This premise is weak and subject to

challenge, since it: (1) neglects mature scholarship; and (2) is vulnerable to group activity and political manipulation. For these and other reasons, “expert” knowledge is not only challenged but often overwhelmed by controlling activities of political action groups. Absolute ridicule is only avoided by the countervailing contributions of a few devoted, but anonymous, experts.

Wikipedia supporters (e.g., BBC staff, 2005) tout a reputation for accuracy based on certain studies (Giles, 2005), setting aside rebuttals characterizing these studies as contrived (Encyclopædia Britannica staff, 2006). Even unfavorable press (e.g., Bachelet, 2006) is touted as favorable in Wikipedia (e.g., Snow and Snow, 2006). Over time, Wikipedia has gained a reputation for malicious inaccuracy (e.g., Seelye, 2005; Ahrens, 2006).

### Scientific Approach

A scholarly study was undertaken using verifiable and referenced data probes of various kinds (see Box 1 for examples). A “semi-transparent” Wikipedia persona, “El Jigüe” (User IP 205.240.227.15, for definition and origins of “Jigüe” see Daley, 2006), slowly developed and eventually was used to place test material on Wikipedia sites. Responses made clear that there was more involved than mere ignorance of Cuban matters, scholarly rivalry, or the usual academic style infighting, since significant proportions of non-factual insertions and deletions were placed by supporters of the Castro government (e.g., “Colle” 2006). These changes (see below) were used to establish an “ideologically coherent false truth,” in which the Cuban circumstance was presented as a caring parliamentary democracy.

Pro-Castro ideologues eliminated factual data using very irregular excuses and enforced permanence of their changes through coercive practices. These practices were supported by spurious accusations of various sorts, usually “vandalism,” repeated corrections, lack of neutral point of view (NPOV in “Wikipedian”), for example “Lbmixpro,” 2005, and summary Wikipedia style “trials” were held (Box 1). “El Jigüe’s” access was blocked repeatedly. During this time, a number of other Wikipedia personas present-

**Box 1. Excerpts from Wikipedia Trial of “El Jigüe”**

Some Wikipedia notation and website URL are retained. Text references are included in References cited section. Addresses in [square brackets] are from Wikipedia or other web sites. Statements are in italics. Some material has been edited for brevity and order of rebuttal of charges section reversed to chronological order.

**Accusation:** This is a summary written by users who dispute this user’s conduct. “*Anon user is a self described Cuban counter revolutionary, who edits from an anti-Castro point of view. Claims his edits are ‘merely a penance for my youthful support of Castro in the mountains.’*” [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User\_talk%3A205.240.227.15&diff=39125226&oldid=39119325]. *The user has made some valuable edits, but has shown no interest in ending his anti-castro campaign, or following NPOV policy —In fact, he takes offense from being asked to stop.*”

**Charges:** “*Evidence goes back ONLY to mid-January, these type of edits have gone since 15 September*” http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:Contributions&target=205.240.227.15&offset=20050919195304&limit=50]. **Repeated insertion of anti-Castro propaganda:** *Many statements are compleate (sic) fabrications, others are insertion of pov statement/commentary, and yet others are accusations from Cuban dissident websites.”...:Evidence goes back ONLY to mid-January, these type of edits have gone since 15 September* “ [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:Contributions&target=205.240.227.15&offset=20050919195304&limit=50].

“Evidence” of disputed behavior:

- #1. Blanking [2 specific instances cited]
- #2: Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications [7 specific instances cited]
- #3. Hostile editing [10 specific instances cited]
- #4. Misrepresenting source [1 specific instances cited]
- #5 Vandalism [2 specific instances cited]

**Witness Testimony**” (sign with <nowiki>-----</nowiki>:#[[User:Master Jay ([[User talk:Master Jay|Reply]])]” 23:36, 12 February 2006 (UTC)

**El Jigüe’s response and attempted rebuttal of charges:** “*I suggest each interested person read each item in detail and evaluate it independently. As to “Lying about content of source” I suggest you read the citation completely.* El Jigüe 2–11–06

Response 1 # is most puzzling I merely describe my background which should contribute, not detract, from the discussion. Here I am accused of holding a number of political opinions against Castro. This charge reads: “*Anon user is a self described Cuban counter revolutionary, who edits from an anti-Castro point of view. Claims his edits are “merely a penance for my youthful support of Castro in the mountains. [1] The user has made some valuable edits, but has shown no interest in ending his anti-castro campaign, or following NPOV policy —In fact, he takes offense from being asked to stop.*” It is noted that my accuser aggressively promotes Castro and his “works” commonly without citation.

Response 2 #”*Evidence goes back ONLY to mid-January, these type of edits have gone since 15 September [2]. Repeated insertion of anti-Castro propaganda” \* Many statements are compleate (sic) fabrications, others are insertion of pov statement/commentary, and yet others are accusations from Cuban dissident websites.*” Apparently the accuser believes that Cuba “dissidents” do not offer insight and only pro-Castro authors offer valuable information.” Apparently my accuser neglects to visit the web sites used which commonly also include Cuban government web sites.

**Box 1. Excerpts from Wikipedia Trial of “El Jigüe” (Continued)**

Responses 3 and 4 “# Section blanking.” are merely interrupted editing of a section I introduced. Why I would want to delete a section that I introduced and wrote, and then promptly rewrote is not explained by accuser.

Response 5 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” is merely the addition of link to a section of another contributor who describes censorship in Cuba

Response 6 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” relates to a modification of a tabulation of battle casualties (Daley was witness to events at 1958 Guisa, see “Narrations of War in Cuba”) was which reads: “*At Guisa the still fighting Batista army lost perhaps 200 men, while in the armored train (shades of [[Trotsky]]) that Guevara attacked the demoralized Batista army only offered token resistance. Later wars when Castro changed to regular USSR style military tactics caused his forces to have far higher losses. During the [[Bay of Pigs Invasion]] Castro’s losses were very high, Triay (2001 p. 110) mentions 4,000 casualties; Lynch (p. 148 50X or about 5,000) (as statistics only comparable to Soviet loss ratios at the beginning of WWII). Other sources indicate over 2,200 casualties* [<http://www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2002/4/29/34913.shtml>]. In one air attack alone Castro forces suffered 1800 casualties caught on an open causeway in civilian buses and hit by napalm (and thus mostly horribly dead) [<http://www.serendipity.li/cia/bay-of-pigs.htm>][<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1984/EJR.htm>] [<http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/articles/bay-of-pigs.htm>]. *Thus over 2,000 militia died defending Castro at the [[Bay of Pigs]]; and perhaps ten fold that again Cubans were lost in the War in [[Angola]]. These statistics are comparable to Soviet loss ratios at the beginning of WWII, and reflect the Eastern Bloc training these militia were receiving. Despite the fact that he was not involved in the fighting at the Bay of Pigs, the victorious government declared Guevara “a Cuban citizen by birth”; he divorced his [[Peru|Peruvian]] wife, Hilda Gadea, and married a member of the 26th of July movement, Aleida March.* {{ref\_label|Children|&rsaquo;|none}}

Response 7 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” refers to insertion of mention of a European art exhibit of propaganda art and states: “*Cuban propaganda print art is of the highest quality* [<http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/iiasn8/eastasia/chairman.html>].”

Response 8 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” refers to a tactful restatement of a previous contributors’ comments on repression in Cuba and reads: “*In Cuba political police are generally referred to as [[La Seguridad del Estado]]. One could readily infer that all reference to this agency is so discomforting to some Cuban government supporters that it is being systematically erased here.*”

Response 9 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” is the mention of the apparent defection (from the Cuban Communist party see Amador Morales, 2006L.D)) of the son of Vladimiro Roca). This insertion reads: “*Supporters of the Cuban government will compare the human rights record to the authoritarian rule under the previous US backed regime of Fulgencio Batista, and they argue that the overall current situation would of been far better if it not for U.S. sanctions. They also argue that the electoral system in Cuba today is more democratic than the in most western nations, where the corporate elite hold much political clout. However, these arguments have become even less convincing since (such other defectors as) the son of Ramiro Valdes (Díaz Castro, 2004), a former high Cuban State Security official (who) now works for US funded Radio Marti.*”

Response 10 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” is the mention former Soviet and present Chinese bases in Cuba “*The USSR long after the [[Missile Crisis]] had bases in Cuba (e.g. at Bejucal and Bahía Honda), and the Chinese government still maintains a large [[electronic surveillance]] presence especially at a base in Havana Province.*”

Response 11 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” is an earlier version of charge 12

**Box 1. Excerpts from Wikipedia Trial of “El Jigüe” (Continued)**

Response 12 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” relates to the mention of Vladimiro Roca and reads: “*comments on the present legalities follow. However, Cuba is ruled by a one party authoritarian system, which will ignore these very controlling rules if they believe the survival of Communist state is threatened. The most famous recent instance is the Vladimiro Roca et al petition* [<http://www.cidh.org/annualrep/2004eng/Cuba.12127eng.htm>], *where even Vladimiro’s status as son of a founder of the Cuban Communist Party, was not enough to fully protect him*” (see Amador 2006).

Response 13 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” appears to be reinsertion of: “*==Present State of Cuban Literature== Despite continual state repression, literature is very much alive in Cuba* [<http://www.friendsofcubanlibraries.org/Recent%20News%202.htm#Secret%20prison%20libraries%20>] *Cuban authors continue to produce prolific printed and electronic work inside and especially outside of the island.*”

Response 14 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” is puzzling since the contested editing by the accused varies considerably such as changes in the definition of Guajiro. However the heart of the matter seems to be a reinsertion into “*===Present State of Cuban Literature===*” to read: “*Despite continual state repression* [<http://www.cubanet.org/CNews/y06/jan06/31a4.htm>], *literature is very much alive in Cuba* [<http://www.friendsofcubanlibraries.org/Recent%20News%202.htm#Secret%20prison%20libraries%20>] *These repressive actions of the Cuban government have drawn much international condemnation e.g* [[Ray Bradbury]] [[Fahrenheit 451]] *author* [[http://worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=45050](http://worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=45050)].”

Response 15 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” was a reinsertion of a previously bowdlerized section and the reinsertion reads: “*===Present State of Cuban Literature=== +Cuban authors continue to produce large amounts of government supported printed and electronic work inside the Island. Cuba also has a large number of booths at bookfairs in Latin America. A good number of U.S. university presses continually present scholarly volumes on various Cuban topics. Authors both pro- and against the present Cuban government present their views in the U.S. Amazon.com (directed by Jeff Bezos who was raised by a Cuban family) currently lists 6,026 titles dealing with Cuba; Barnesandnoble.com lists 3,126. Borders book stores carry 1,991 titles on Cuba in stock.*”

Response 16 “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” was a deletion done to prepare a revision in a section I had initiated which is “*===Present State of Cuban Literature===*” the revision was placed immediately in several consecutive edits:

Response 17 and previous “# Anti Castro pov and/or fabrications” seems self-explanatory:

Point 17a “*This output is dazzling and often quite spectacular and scholarly; however, all written material published in Cuba is censored by* [[Seguridad del Estado]] *and other means. Material by dissident authors in Cuba has to be smuggled out and presented on line by Cubans living in exile. These repressive actions of the Cuban government have drawn much international condemnation e.g* [[Ray Bradbury]] *Fahrenheit 451 author* [[http://worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=45050](http://worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=45050)] [<http://www.petrifiedtruth.com/archives/002501.html>] [<http://www.friendsofcubanlibraries.org/Recent%20News%202.htm>].”

17b merely an insert of address Web site discussed

**Box 1. Excerpts from Wikipedia Trial of “El Jigüe” (Continued)**

17c The intent was to demonstrate that in the U.S., even writings by Generals in Castro’s security forces are available in bookstores [<http://www.bordersstores.com/index.jsp>]. *Books in stock at Borders in the U.S. include a volume by a retired Castro General and former head of Cuba’s Counter-Intelligence Unit (1976–1982) [[Fabian Escalante]]* [<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/JFKescalante.htm>]. *Escalante, who more recently has denied a novel theory on the [[John F. Kennedy assassination]]* [[http://es.wikinews.org/wiki/Documental\\_de\\_la\\_televisi%C3%B3n\\_alemana\\_afirma\\_que\\_Cuba\\_estuvo\\_detr%C3%A1s\\_del\\_asesinato\\_de\\_Kennedy](http://es.wikinews.org/wiki/Documental_de_la_televisi%C3%B3n_alemana_afirma_que_Cuba_estuvo_detr%C3%A1s_del_asesinato_de_Kennedy)], *was also a judge in the trial of executed a former Castro [[escopetero]] and African War Hero General [[Arnaldo Ochoa]] Sánchez* [[http://www.cubapolidata.com/cafr/cafr\\_ochoa\\_affair.html](http://www.cubapolidata.com/cafr/cafr_ochoa_affair.html)].”

Response 18.# “Vandalism (attack on other editors).” My comment itself seems to suffice, since it was merely restating previous point in more circumspect language: “*In Cuba political police are generally referred to as [[La Seguridad del Estado]]. One could readily infer that all reference to this agency is so discomforting to some Cuban government supporters that it is being systematically erased here.*”

Response 19 (was 18 but another charge was added) “Vandalism (attack on other editors).” The citation was “*although some claim that the full extent of these gains may be exaggerated*” is taken from [[http://archive.greenpeace.org/geneng/reports/hunger/realgreenrevo\\_4.pdf](http://archive.greenpeace.org/geneng/reports/hunger/realgreenrevo_4.pdf)] see page 10 (of web document quoted) under heading Case study 3– Cuba: towards a national organic regime. First paragraph of section starts: “*Cuba has been often cited as an example of the first country to attempt a nation wide conversion to organic agriculture. These claims may be an “exaggeration,” but the Cuban experience...*” my italics. I have not addressed the question of sound agronomic practice which would seem to indicate that “organic” production cannot long sustained high rates of crop production without good sources of nitrogen, phosphate, potassium and minor essential elements.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

El Jigüe 2–12–06

ing material unfavorable to Castro’s government were also banned, e.g. “KDRGibby,” 2006).

Even though he answered at length and in scholarly detail, “El Jigüe” was summarily blocked for increasingly longer periods and much of the material “El Jigüe” had inserted was removed (e.g., “Jay,” 2006). It was clear that these were totalitarian style “trials” where, as in present day Cuba, the accusations of these “prosecutors” were considered factual evidence and not subject to rebuttal. The summary of charges were immediately accepted without query or question by anonymous Wikipedia “Judges” and El Jigüe

was quickly sanction by denying “him” editing access to Wikipedia pages for a period of some weeks.

**WIKIPEDIA BLOCKING SOFTWARE**

Although the technological aspects of the blocking software used by Wikipedia is not understood by this author, it is quite obvious that it is functionally simple, selective, and once set in motion, automatic. Thus any machine that accesses Wikipedia sites can be identified and allowed or disallowed access to these Wikipedia sites.

Tests with anonymizers such as Tor<sup>4</sup> are not successful because Wikipedia maintains a list of Tor com-

4. Dingedine and Mathewson (nd) write: “Tor is a toolset for a wide range of organizations and people that want to improve their safety and security on the Internet. Using Tor can help you anonymize web browsing and publishing, instant messaging, IRC, SSH, and other applications that use the TCP protocol. ... Tor aims to defend against traffic analysis, a form of network surveillance that threatens personal anonymity and privacy, confidential business activities and relationships, and state security. Communications are bounced around a distributed network of servers called onion router.”

puters which it blocks also automatically: “Safe in the knowledge that they cannot be traced, some use Tor to post disruptive messages to Internet message boards, wikis, or chat rooms. As a result, many large providers of such services, such as Wikipedia and many IRC networks, prevent users of anonymizing services from posting to them” (Wikipedia on Tor). Mainland China’s government already blocks access in this way (Wikipedia: Advice to Tor users in China). It should be noted that Wikipedia has blocked Congressional IP addresses in their controlled electronic space (Wikipedia Requests), an action approved by Wikipedia supporters.<sup>5</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

These matters were brought to the attention of media, and Pablo Bachelet (2006) of *The Miami Herald* published a news piece. After this, senior but still anonymous Wikipedians, including far more skilled polemicists than previously encountered, intervened. However, these senior Wikipedians, although more subtle were equally ineffective or/and biased in favor of the present Cuban government.

Although a dubious source, Wikipedia is commonly consulted by undergraduate college and high school students. This makes it the bane of many instructors. Freedom of expression is distorted in the heavily-trafficked Wikipedia sections on Cuba, Castro, Guevara, etc., which with their heavy influence on youth and the uninformed present an inaccurate image biased in favor of the Castro regime. These sections are constantly patrolled by clever, devious, and unscrupulous polemicists for the present Cuban government. Using various tactics, described above, these polemicists have achieved the “banning” of input that differs from their opinions (Bachelet 2006).

Thus in Wikipedia there are, despite the efforts of many, absurdities such as the insistence that Cuba has “free” elections, the white-washing of Fidel Castro’s biography (e.g., his murderous activities at Havana University are described as “student activism”),

and almost absolute ignorance, or worse, biased descriptions of Cuban history (Castro is never referred to as a Dictator, that designation is reserved for Machado). For example (see also Box 2), to Wikipedia the Liberal Party survived into the times of Grau, Prio, and Batista. The economy (“Cuban poverty increased greatly under Batista’s leadership,” *sic*), health data, and culture (e.g., the removed reference to “palestinos” as a descriptor of internal migrants), and other topics are similarly Bowdlerized (Zlitzten 2006).

Sometimes the rationale for these deletions is overt, sometimes merely puzzling. For example, references to Graham Greene’s 1958 classic novel *Our Man in Havana* are rapidly deleted. One might infer from this that the Castro government has some hidden agenda, since Greene was an openly partisan supporter of the Cuban dictator (Sherry 2004). Yet, Greene did work for British intelligence at one time, and the missiles of 1962, which he so oddly predicted, were in reality not designed as vacuum cleaners.

Castro’s partisans brook little or no corrections, and almost immediately delete such based upon the most ridiculous of reasons. For example, Colle (2006) removed “The police La Seguridad del Estado supports the system.” This was then replaced [Revision as of 04:05, 15 February 2006 70.107.103.226 (Talk | contribs) Present State of Cuban Literature] with “+ There exists censorship in Cuba.” Within 12 minutes it was removed by Colle [\*Revision as of 04:17, 15 February 2006 Colle (Talk | contribs) Present State of Cuban Literature] by Colle with vague comment “there is censorship in every country,” thus removing any reference to censorship in Cuba. An effort to include, in an article on demography, the sentence, “There is internal illegal immigration to Havana seeking greater opportunities; these internal illegals are known as *palestinos*,” was removed by a senior editor (Zlitzten, 2006 in Current Revision).

5. For supporters of this action see, e.g., Davis (2006) and McGath (2006). McGath writes: “Wikipedia has instituted a block against edits from IP addresses in the range 156.33.xxx.xxx. These addresses are assigned to a notoriously dishonest and unethical group of people: the United States Congress. Go Jimbo!” (Jimbo refers to J. Wales, head (CEO?) of Wikipedia).

**Box 2. Ten Examples of Matters that are Consistently Deleted or Inserted by Castro Partisans in Wikipedia Pages**  
*(not necessarily ranked by their relation to importance to activists)*

**1. Mention of Castro's spies in the United States.** Section detailing "Cuban espionage and related extra-territorial activity" was deleted repeatedly. This section mentions background of William Wieland (supporter of Castro in U.S. State Department), Fabio Grobart (Stalin's man in Cuba since the 1920s) and other Castro contacts. Deleted by such as "Splash": *Since then, you added references, I'll admit that. It's plainly a POV screen, however, just as it was before, right down to the words, and is now under its fourth or fifth different title, not counting talk: pages. I endorse all the deletions. If restored, take directly to AfD.*

**2. Reference to Castro's irregular family interactions and fascist influences in his political formation.** These were eliminated from Wikipedia Fidel Castro page although already in the literature cited (Szulc, 1986; Geyer, 1991; Thomas, 1998; Coltman, 2003; Raffy, 2003; Ros, 2003; and Fuentes, 2004). Revision as of 01:30, 23 March 2006 207.188.29.244 (Talk) (reverted to last version by NWOOG).

**3. Citations to rundown condition of Havana Addenda Cuba page Revision as of 18:39, 20 March 2006** Kmf164 (Talk | contribs) (Reverted edits by 205.247.5.97 (talk) to last version by Tawkerbot2) Deleted "- \*[<http://www.therealcuba.com> The Real Cuba photos and commentary] - *Photographs from around Cuba with Anti-Castro commentary.*

**4. Literary Censorship in Cuba:** The following lead sentences in the section: Present State of Cuban Literature "*Despite continual state repression [22], literature is very much alive in Cuba [23]. These repressive actions of the Cuban government have drawn much international condemnation, e.g., Ray Bradbury Fahrenheit 451 author [24]*" was eliminated from the Cuba page by Censor Colle comments at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Colle> (accessed 7/24/2006). These sections greatly offended some pro-Castro ideologues. "*What to do . . . Well, first of all, if any of his [El Jigüe's] contributions are vandalism and violate NPOV, he will be blocked. We can even block him per 3RR rule. The continuation of his contributions is damaging to the Cuban related articles, and we must put a stop to it.* —Jay (Reply) 18:11, 1 February 2006 (UTC)."

**5. Escapees from Cuba:** Wikipedia persona "Comandante" deleted "*In 2005 an additional 7,610 Cuban escapees from Cuba entered through the "southern border in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30."* [[http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/world/cuba/13512948.htm?source=rss&channel=miamiherald\\_cuba](http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/world/cuba/13512948.htm?source=rss&channel=miamiherald_cuba)]" <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cuba&diff=38486456&oldid=38>

**6. Seguridad del Estado.** "Comandante" deleted "*Such enforcement is the function of [[Seguridad del Estado]] State Security [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\_article=16083] Even members of State Security are not immune from retribution at least 22 are being held in jail at the present time*" <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cuba&diff=37743817&oldid=37743694>

**7. Criticism of Cuban "electoral system."** "Colle" removed: "*However, Cuba is ruled by a one party authoritarian system, which will ignore these very controlling rules if they believe the survival of Communist state is threatened. The most famous recent instance is the Vladimiro Roca et al petition [http://www.cidh.org/annual-rep/2004eng/Cuba.12127eng.htm], where even Vladimiro's status as son of a founder of the Cuban Communist, was not enough to fully protect him.*" <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cuba&diff=37743694&oldid=37742652>

**Box 2. Ten Examples of Matters that are Consistently Deleted or Inserted by Castro Partisans in Wikipedia Pages**  
*(not necessarily ranked by their relation to importance to activists)* (Continued)

**7. Mention of Free Libraries** Colle removed: “*Despite continual state repression [http://www.cubanet.org/CNews/y06/jan06/31a4.htm], literature is very much alive in Cuba. These repressive actions of the Cuban government have drawn much international condemnation e.g. [[Ray Bradbury]] [[Fahrenheit 451]] author [http://worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\_ID=45050].*” <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cuba&diff=37484223&oldid=37477500>

**8. Repeated classification of Ernesto “Che” Guevara as humanitarian:** Che Guevara page. Revision as of 13:42, 11 March 2006 by Swedenman Criticism of Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán \*Revision as of 06:56, 6 March 2006 Polaris999 (Talk | contribs) Guatemala—adding details, copy-edit Deleted “*by sometimes bloody means, to bring about...*” (Refers to killing of Francisco Arana).

**9. Human rights violations:** “\*Revision as of 02:56, 15 February 2006 Colle (Talk | contribs) *Human rights—removed false data, illegitimate (sic) source* Removed: “*Yet, others report that from 1959–1987 there have been from 35,000 to 141,000 [http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/SOD.TAB15.1B.GIF] (table is in thousands) executions.*” Note below use of an odd but commonly used Wikipedia definition of “Vandalism” \*Revision as of 03:00, 15 February 2006 Colle (Talk | contribs) Human rights—style, removed vandalism removed “*The police La Seguridad del Estado supports the system.*”

**10. Public Health in Cuba Revision as of 09:24, 16 February 2006.** KDRGibby (Talk | contribs) “*bs, this is a propoganda (sic) piece for Cuba, the whole thing is nothing but praise on the public health.*” Inserted section below Revision as of 09:27, 16 February 2006. Response by Colle (Talk | contribs) “*baseless views (from anti-socialist organisations) already cited in the article. Also: sources needed. Deleted section below Revision as of 09:32, 16 February 2006. KDRGibby responded (Talk | contribs) an oft repeated view that the communist health care system is terrible for normal Cubans but great for rich Europeans and communist party leadership...quit deleting it. Inserted section below Revision as of 09:27, 16 February 2006. Colle again stated (Talk | contribs) “baseless views (from anti-socialist organizations(sic)) already cited in the article. Also: sources needed.* Thus Colle deleted “*Critics such as the National Review, Cato Institute, and Heritage Foundation, claim that Cuba and its apologists mask the truth behind the Cuban health care system. They argue that real Cuban healthcare is abysmal and that what is shown to non-Cuban foreigners is a healthcare system unavailable to the average Cuban.*” KDRGibby was eventually banned permanently from Wikipedia.

Scholarly critics of Castro, even when they write from the ASCE forum, are often not considered reliable sources by senior Wikipedia editors. For example senior editor Zleitzen (2006), disagreeing with contributor “Ultramarine” over an article on Fidel Castro’s wealth published in *Cuba in Transition*<sup>6</sup> says:

That’ll be this Maria C. Werlau, the woman who wrote “Cuba: Safe Haven for Fugitives and Hotbed for Terrorists.” Who states: “Castro’s virulent hatred

of the United States goes back far before he even came to power.” Who ends with “The Bush Administration should exert maximum pressure on the Castro regime to guarantee U.S. and hemispheric security.” OK, Ultramarine, your idea of scholarly research differs from mine. ... As an aside, Werlau appears at length in the infamous “Los Muertos de Castro” documentary. One of the most audacious pieces of propaganda and misinformation I have ever seen, on any subject. Take a look if you can find it. All material by Werlau should be treated with extreme scepticism;

6. María C. Werlau, “Fidel Castro, Inc.: A Global Conglomerate,” *Cuba in Transition—Volume 15* (Washington: Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, 2005), pp. 376–395.

that Ultramarine describes her work as real criticism does not make it so.

Given the situation in China, where that government's approach to web censorship, is openly supported by Google and Yahoo, one can readily imagine this kind of collective censorship approach extending to all those societies where information is under some level of government control. However, this is a free country and one might expect that here countervailing forces will prevail. Yet, this is not so, for a number of reasons.

- First is the massive advertisement, promotion, exposure and support for Wikipedia by Google and Yahoo.
- Second is the prevalence of Wikipedia mirror sites, and other less original URL that present the same or similar material; these sites give the impression that the information is “universal” and thus sound. I was able to trace, using my own insertions verbatim copies of information at such other “informational” web sites (information not presented here).
- Third, and perhaps most important, is the lack of critical evaluation by present day youth when accessing web site information, as illustrated by a recent comic strip by Scott and Borgman (2006). In this cartoon Jeremy's mother see her son constantly spending his time in front of a computer screen asks her son “Why don't you read the newspaper, play cards or go to the library.” Her son responds “It's like you live in some alternate universe where people actually read the newspaper, play cards or go to the library.”

### CONCLUSIONS

Clearly, already Wikipedia selectively blocks access to editing by those who oppose the government of Cuba. Lists of such users' computers are maintained by Wikipedia. Wikipedia style software can be, and seems to be, used to politically control internet traffic in general in certain non-democratic countries (see above). In these countries this kind of control extends to other similar electronic media (Becker, 2006). In addition, in democratic countries, such a system—if coordinated by mayor information providers on the internet such as Google.com or Ya-

hoo.com—could be applied to heavily influence the general internet. Such links between Wikipedia and the above mentioned companies already exist. AOL, in one notorious case four years ago, blocked Harvard admission correspondence.

Solutions proposed here to this interesting problem naturally do not include censorship. Benign persuasion within the Wikipedia “world” appears too weak promote effective change. The author of this paper notes with approval recent efforts of some ethical Wikipedians to address this problem.

However, it is my opinion that these valiant efforts, as were those attempted by others and myself previously, will ultimately fail. For instance references to the massive arrests during the “Bay of Pigs” and the “The War Against the Bandits” have been moved to remote secondary sites.” Mention of this “War Against the Bandits” (a conflict that lasted longer and involved far more insurgents and Castro militia than the original Castro forces and Batista soldiers in the war against Batista) has been tagged as “needing clean up,” and thus is in danger of being removed.

Now notice is placed at the head of the Raúl and Fidel Castro discussion sections with the warning (see below) not to criticize the Castros, since any criticism smuggled out of Cuba or written in Cuba may be labeled “poorly sourced” or “potentially libelous” even though U.S. law specifically diminishes recourse of public figures in libel law litigation.

This article must adhere to the policy on biographies of living persons. Negative material that is unsourced or poorly sourced must be removed immediately, especially if potentially libelous. The three-revert rule does not apply to such removals. Concerns relative to this policy can be addressed on the living persons biographies noticeboard. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Ra%C3%BAI\\_Castro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Ra%C3%BAI_Castro), accessed 9–24–06)

It seems ineffective to merely concentrate on correcting details within Wikipedia, since these details are commonly removed or bowdlerized; it is suggested that it is necessary to make the general public aware that Wikipedia's articles on Cuba and similar or related subjects are not accurate, complete, or reliable. Perhaps in this way higher quality competing web

products will emerge. Another remedy, which is slowly growing, derives from the presence of readily available, computer-searchable, scholarly texts on the

web. Legislation may be required to limit monopolistic practices on the internet.

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