

MAD's IDIOT OF THE ISSUE!

ANTONIO PROHIAS



As far as MAD is concerned, Fidel Castro has always gotten something of a bad rap.

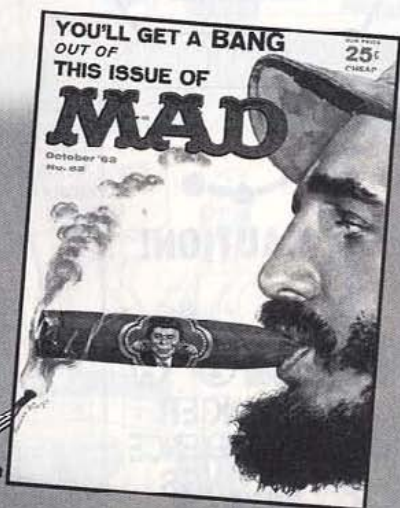
Soon after the shaggy-bearded dictator seized control of Cuba in 1958, he became angered by the cartoons in the Havana newspaper *El Mundo*, which were critical of his politics. The offending cartoons were created by none other than Antonio Prohias.

Aware that his presence at *El Mundo* was endangering both the lives of himself and his colleagues, Prohias resigned and fled to New York with his family. He soon showed up at the offices of MAD, and with his daughter Marta serving as translator (Antonio no habla Ingles!), introduced *Spy Vs. Spy*.

Our point? If Castro had never taken over Cuba and become a ruthless, intolerant despot, Prohias probably would have never left his homeland and created the infamous Spies. That's why among all the world's cigar-chomping, bearded, communist dictators, old Fidel is #1 on our list!

Born in Cienfuegos, Cuba, in 1927, Prohias studied art briefly at San Alejandro Academy before becoming a newspaper cartoonist. At age 25 he won the National Association of Newspaper Journalists' first award for cartoon of the year. He won again in 1959 and, ironically, the award was presented to him by Castro.

Besides *Spy Vs. Spy*, Antonio created many other articles for MAD. We have included several in this collection and on the back cover, some of which have not appeared in print for over 20 years. Our friend Antonio passed away on February 24, 1998.



THE STATS:
First MAD appearance:
MAD #60, January 1961
Number of MAD issues
appeared in: 172
Number of *Spy Vs. Spy*
encounters by Prohias: over 220
Number of *Spy Vs. Spy*
encounters by Prohias: a precious 21
Number of MAD articles
in this spotlight section: 12
SALUD, ANTONIO!

THIS IS THE VERY FIRST SPY VS. SPY!

(The very first *Spy Vs. Spy Vs. Spy* from MAD #73, September 1962 is on page 38!)

