

Synopsis :

**CUBA**  
**« HAY QUE LUCCHAR... »**  
(*You have to keep fighting...*)

Photographic essay by  
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"Hay que luchar" is the beginning of a legendary quotation attributed to Comandante Guévara : "*Hay que luchar, siempre, hasta el final*" (*You have to keep fighting, right up to the end*). A quotation that Cuban people repeat frequently, even though the resigned or sceptical look on their faces betrays the disenchantment and fatalism that have long since replaced the euphoria of the revolution.

At the same time, the advertising aimed at tourists portrays a very colourful and attractive image of Cuba: cigars, rum, music and dance, welcoming young ladies, old American cars, colonial architecture. All of that is indeed real, and Cuba lives well from it, but it hides another less attractive reality that one hears less about: there are also poor people here, with no future, worn down by the weight of day-to-day problems and the ever-present demands of bureaucracy, even if Cuban socialism can be justifiably proud of its successes in education or medicine, totally free and accessible to all. Public services such as transport and electricity are also quite inexpensive.

I have visited Cuba several times over the past ten years, staying each time for a few weeks, off the tourist trail and without taking any photos. I was able to develop close relationships with the humble people I met and they told me of the terrible conditions in which they lived. These people are warm and friendly, showing great dignity in the face of life's difficulties. The precarious nature of their living conditions, and the fact that we talk in Spanish, reminds me of my own poor childhood with my paternal grandparents, who were Spanish political refugees themselves.

Today, Cuba is opening up to the Western world, and my experience has shown that in the past, elsewhere in the world, this sort of evolution changes people's behaviour. However it can also lead to a loss of traditions or even a loss of collective memory.

So in January 2014, I went back to Cuba to photograph those people in their own familiar environment, in order to record their reality which can leave no-one unmoved. I spent my days with them to record their habits, their attitudes and the archaic tools they use, which soon will all be reduced to memories of a by-gone era.