

Why do Media Ignore Communism's Criminal Past?

It seems more and more Western leaders are going to Cuba to prostrate themselves at the feet of the ruling dynasty, the Castros. UK Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond went there on April 28, about a month after US President Barack Obama paid obeisance.

Which raises the question of "why"? They hardly need Cuba's vast wealth, which is non-existent, it being one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, with more than 10 percent of its population in exile according to Cuba Archive, a reconciliation and memory website. So what explains this strange behaviour?

It seems to make no sense. Rich nations, whose leaders claim to stand for human rights, paying visits to a country notorious for human rights violations. And it is poor. They aren't paying state visits to Haiti, after all. Could it be linked to their youthful zest for Marxism?

Bearing that in mind, it comes as no surprise that the death in March of a leading Communist figure passed with hardly a whisper in the mainstream media. Béla Biszku was a member of the Hungarian Communist Party's Interim Executive Committee which gave the orders for the secret police, the ÁVH, police and military units to fire on protesting civilians.

During the actual uprising, Biszku was involved with raising a Communist militia known for its brutality. They were called "pufajkás" after their Soviet-style padded coats.

He was also Minister of the Interior from 1957 to 1961 and actively interfered with judicial cases involving Freedom Fighters. Thus those who had taken up arms against Communist (mis)rule and the invading Soviet Army he sought to execute

where possible. He is believed to have had an active role in ordering more than 400 deaths.

His death occurred at the time US President Barack Obama was visiting Communist Cuba, which promptly imprisoned political activists committed to democracy – the same democracy the US is supposed to stand for.

Is it a surprise, then, that the death of this murderous gent went more or less unnoticed?

Here is a sampling of the top mainstream international (English-language) media's headlines. "Former Hungarian politician Bela Biszku has died" (*Euronews*). "Bela Biszku, Hungarian Official Tried in 1956 Uprising, Dies at 94" (*New York Times*). This last is misleading, making it look as if Biszku was tried in 1956, whereas he did the "trying", so to speak.

Broadcast media didn't say much either.

To be fair, some less "liberal" media called a spade a spade. The Mail said: "High-ranking Hungarian communist Bela Biszku dies at 94" and The Jurist was honest. Its headline read: "Former communist leader convicted of Hungarian revolution war crimes dies at 94".

Certainly, the PC Prize should go to Euronews, which described him as a "politician". I can imagine the brouhaha if an ex-Nazi who had killed hundreds died, and a newspaper wrote: "Politician in former German regime dies."

So why the soft-peddling on Communists, whether convicted criminals or just responsible for mis-managing nations?

I must confess that this is not only mysterious to me, but also very painful. My first reaction was, and remains, that the powers-that-be feel that my relatives who suffered in the Gulag were not as important as those who suffered at the hands

of right-wing dictators, whether under Franco, Hitler or some Latin American "Presidente".

Why are their lives important, and ours not?

But as I looked into the matter, I began to think it might be ideological. I confess I don't want it to be. There are other reasons. Western people have seen films about the Holocaust; they've watched *Blood Diamonds* and *Hotel Rwanda*.

I can only think of one film that showed a Communist crime against humanity, *The Killing Fields*. But I can't think of a major Hollywood movie showcasing Lenin's, or Stalin's crimes, nor the rest of the bloody-handed bunch.

I do know Che Guevara is popular with Hollywood. Not his bloodthirsty murders as chief executioner of the Castro Regime, but more glamorised versions of the killer such as *The Motorcycle Diaries* do show up on occasion.

Television is no help in informing people either. (And in this day and age, most people sadly get their "education" from movies and TV.) There are always television documentaries on the History Channel or similar popularising history and related material, but these tend to overlook Communism with very few exceptions.

News media are not much help to the innocent bystander either. True, mainstream media carried obituaries on the April 26 death of Harry Wu, a Chinese dissident who spent 19 years in "Lao Gai" forced labour camps, but it was hardly a media frenzy. Other examples from the same week the reader likely hasn't heard of are the state funeral (no less!) of Polish resistance fighter Colonel Zygmunt Szendzielarz who fought both Nazis and Communists and was executed and tossed into an unmarked mass grave for his pains in 1951. Not the lead item on CNN? Of course not. (An search of its website shows no mention of the name.)

Nor have we heard much (if anything) about the renewed house arrest by Communist China of Tibetan writers Tsering Woeser and Wang Lixion.

So again, why?

One thought is that to Western people, most of the victims of Communism are not household names and their deaths did not take place in London, Paris or New York. After all, does the average American or Belgian really worry about how many Kazakhs or Mongols were killed by Stalin, or how many Uygurs or Tibetans were killed (and are still being killed and tortured) by China?

By the amount of media coverage, I can't help thinking, "very little". Which is very disappointing. After all, human rights are supposed to apply to all humans just because they are human and should not depend on whether they are Western or Eastern Europeans, Asians or Africans!

Reluctantly, having considered ignorance (likely) a total lack of human feelings (unlikely) and other causes one must come to the conclusion that there is more to it. Hollywood, documentary film makers and the news media are hardly in some grand conspiracy (I'm not a lover of conspiracy theories.) But then, what?

One thing that ties the above groups together is that they are all predominantly left-wing. Or liberal. Or identify themselves in similar ways. While clearly liberals are not automatically Communists, they do seem to be awfully soft on them.

It seems that since the much-vaunted "Collapse of Communism" (which was the end of the one-party state, but not the end of Communists) has not only ended doctrinaire Communism, but has cast a shadow over doctrinaire democracy.

(Of course, it is important to point out at every opportunity

that Communism was not the opposite of capitalism, as it is so often stated. It was the opposite of freedom, in every form, such as democracy.)

As 2008 sparked the Global Financial Crisis, so people were talking of the collapse of capitalism” and the end of liberal democracy.

The left, having taken a huge hit after 1989 and continued to suffer as Communist crimes were revealed as archives in the former Soviet Bloc and the Soviet Union itself were opened, was given a reprieve by this crisis.

Add to that the rise of Vladimir Putin, who shut all Soviet archives, rewrote Soviet history (cutting out the work of his KGB cronies – who were still called NKVD and MKGB at the time). This led to a drop in publications about the crimes of the Soviet government, and additionally, has led to a false propaganda-history being taught in Russia, alongside the rehabilitation of Stalin as witnessed by the raising of numerous Stalin statues all over the Russian Federation. As Jana Bakunina writes in the New Statesman:

“The Russian government ostensibly does not object to the new statues of Stalin being erected just 60 years after they had been taken down. The nation that has forgotten its own history is terrifying.”

Another scary element is the ideology of the West. In decades past, say in the 1970s or 80s, people who were “socialist” or “liberal” could say what they believed, in so many words. Some might quote Karl Marx or Noam Chomsky, while Conservatives might point to Thomas Jefferson or Karl Popper. But today, it’s all about what one is against, and it appears no one is against Communism.

Thus modern feminists have to my knowledge, never protested against what is the recorded biggest mass rape of women in

history, committed by the Soviet Red Army in the aftermath of WWII, which is in the millions. In Germany an estimated two million women were raped. In Hungary some 800,000 got the same treatment and it is unlikely to have been much better in Rumania or Poland (even though Poland was one of the Allies, it was treated as an enemy nation by Stalin).

That's just one example. Nor do I see left-wing protesters demonstrate against the genocide of Yazidis or Christians in Iraq (or indeed, Christians worldwide, these being the most persecuted group in the world, as the World Tribune points out.)

But then, can we expect a fair critique of the crimes of Communism by people who use Communist terminology? The term "Politically Correct" is a specialised Communist term. To be "PC" under Lenin and later other Communist leaders meant to literally follow the Communist Party line. If the Party said: "Stalin is the Saviour of Mother Russia" then anyone saying something different was not "PC" and could suffer all kinds of punishments, including execution. After Khrushchev's rejection of Stalin, anyone saying the old "PC" line would again be "Politically Incorrect."

To illustrate: In 1950s Hungary, the joke went around about the execution of Communist leader László Rajk, who was judicially murdered by his comrades in 1949 and "rehabilitated" in 1956:

There are two men in prison. One asks the other: "What are you in for?" The other says: "I said Rajk was a good man, and you?" The first one says: "I said Rajk was a crook!"

Which underlines that in both Marxist-Leninist Communism and modern "PC" leftist thinking, what matters is not whether this person was good or bad, but what is in fashion at the moment.

There is also a Nazi thread in PC thinking. The Nazi

philosopher Martin Heidegger became a left-wing icon and inspired such existentialist (and left wing) thinkers as Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre. Heidegger considered the free movement of global capital as the “international Jewification” of society, as the American Thinker points out.

Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels ruled that reporting in Germany needed to come under state control 1934. He said, as the Washington Post tells us:

“All journalists must have a permit to function, and such permits are granted only to pure ‘Aryans’ whose opinions are politically correct.”

So there is an answer to the puzzling question of why Communist crimes are not important. It goes along with other matters (small things like genocide) that don’t count. And the answer is that the West has imported totalitarian ideologies wholesale, from Communism to Nazism.

So, in that spirit, I’m not sure how to end my article. Should I say “Sieg Heil” or “Long Live Comrade Stalin!” I suppose it will depend on which is politically correct on the day!

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