

Waking Up in the Middle of the Night of Totalitarianism

Sometimes events converge in my life and explode into revelation.

A few weeks ago, I edited an [interview](#) with Elizabeth Spalding, one of the founders and now the director of the Victims of Communism Museum in Washington, D.C. About this same time, I read [Under a Cruel Star](#), Heda Kovály's account of life in Czechoslovakia under first the Nazis and then the Soviets. Finally, I watched the film [Mr. Jones](#), the true story of Welsh journalist Gareth Jones, who uncovered the Ukraine Famine, the Holodomor, in the early 1930s. In exposing this crime against humanity, Jones also pulled apart the spider's web spun by the lies and coverups of Moscow's Western press.

The convergence of these works made me realize more than ever how much I despised collectivism, the power of the state over individual liberties, and the current condition of what passes for journalism.

Many people today, especially the younger generations, [look favorably](#) on socialism and communism, a viewpoint surely based on ignorance or willed stupidity. They want a government dispensing everything from advice and wisdom to handouts and favors, believing that charity comes free of charge.

If they listened to people like Elizabeth Spalding or read works like [The Black Book of Communism](#), they would realize that in the last century leftist ideology killed approximately 100 million people, and imprisoned or squashed the dreams of many millions more.

If they investigated writers like Heda Kovály, they might discover that when you surrender your natural, God-given rights to government, you become part of a machine that values

you only for the good you bring to the state, and will otherwise throw you away. Kovály describes the ease with which the ideological state chews up individuals sleepwalking into their own doom:

We had listened with only half an ear when our history teachers discussed torture or the persecution of innocent people. These things could only have happened a long time ago, in the dark ages. When it happened in our time and in a form far worse than we could imagine, it felt like the end of the world. It seemed to us that we were witnessing a total break in the evolution of mankind, the complete collapse of man as a rational being.

Mr. Jones vividly portrays that type of collapse. Not only does the film give us horrific and vile scenes of the famine in the Ukraine, which starved several million people and was deliberately inflicted by Stalin and his Soviet henchmen, but it also examines the willful participation of the West in that genocide. Walter Duranty, a liar and a Satanist who won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting, was only one of the “journalists” who covered for Stalin’s atrocities. He decided to play it safe and was allowed to remain in the Soviet Union, rather than dig for the truth and bring it to the public.

Spalding’s interview, Kovály’s memoir, and *Mr. Jones*, plus scores of other such resources, are a mirror for our times, reflections and warnings of what can happen when “we the people” allow ourselves to become slaves to ideological masters. Like Kovály and her classmates in the history class, some people listen “with only half an ear,” but that inattention can easily drop us into a nightmare.

Just this past month, for instance, three actions taken by our government should shake us awake:

- Whatever we think of Donald Trump, the FBI’s raid on his home at Mar-a-Lago should terrify us. That a former

president's home can be invaded in this way bodes ill for the future of what remains of our republic.

- The laughably named Inflation Reduction Act promises to create many more Internal Revenue Service agents. The intention here, especially regarding the middle-class, is obvious: a tighter grip by government on the purse strings of citizens.
- Finally, the mainstream media continues to carry the water for leftists and prevaricators. One small example: When Trump reported that the FBI had stolen some passports, the mainstream press simply echoed the Feds' denials. Though it was later revealed that the FBI had indeed taken the passports—supposedly by “mistake”—rather than investigating Trump's claim, some [members of the press](#) immediately sided with the government without question.

All totalitarian governments begin with promises of serving the people. Fascism, communism—it makes no difference. They pledge to bring about better times, equality and justice, and often prosperity. They make no mention of the fear and paranoia they will instill, much less the concentration camps, gulags, or killing fields.

In [The Bodies of Others](#), a book about the threat of authoritarianism today, enabled by factors like our technology and the COVID pandemic, Naomi Wolf writes, “In this moment when freedom itself is in the balance, when the alternative is servitude forever, the decision on whether to speak up makes all the difference. Tyrannies only fall when there is mass resistance.”

Let's stay awake.

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