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Lenin Rises in Germany: Time for the Good Guys to Take Down a Few Statues

Doug Bandow

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Tearing down statues has become the latest nihilistic pleasure in America. Never mind legal process, property ownership, and democratic decision. Unthinking mobs with little knowledge and less judgment wander America's streets claiming the mandate of heaven to violently impose wokedom upon the rest of us.

The assault on Confederate figures goes without saying, even though most Northerners were equally racist and Abraham Lincoln originally intended to preserve slavery, calling out the troops only to invade the southern states and maintain the union, irrespective of the human cost. The idea that people, like Robert E. Lee, could genuinely feel loyalty to their states that trumped nationalism, and abhor the willingness of Washington to use military force to subjugate people seeking to change their political system, is well beyond the thought processes of the typical statue Stalinist.

Of course, the Founders were next. Thomas Jefferson and George Washington have suffered humiliating falls. They were slaveowners, like so many others at the time. Never mind their accomplishments, however. Which included forming a nation and writing a Constitution that set the stage for eliminating slavery, something they understood to be necessary but also viewed as politically unattainable at the time. Even Ulysses S. Grant became a target. One suspects that many of the happy destroyers thought he was a Confederate. After all, another uniform, another horse, another Civil War figure. What's the difference? Why should it matter that he was *the North's* commanding general, who did more than anyone else to end Southern military resistance? And, anyway, he was not perfect, as are today's many social justice mobsters and poseurs.

Perfection is demanded by the Left's roving gangs. This leaves a target-rich environment. Let me suggest some new targets. Without question, anything commemorating the sanctimonious, racist, anti-civil libertarian and warmonger Woodrow Wilson should be destroyed. (I would be happy to assist in this endeavor, with great pleasure!)

So should the woke army destroy any statues of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who did little to combat segregation, imprisoned Japanese-Americans, turned away Jewish refugees before World War II, did nothing to interfere with Nazi Germany's death camps, and enjoyed a political romance with Joseph Stalin, one of history's greatest mass murderers. Then there is Lyndon

Johnson, corrupt and power-mad, who sent tens of thousands of Americans to their deaths in Vietnam. Almost any southern Democratic politician elected before, oh, 1970. And even Barack Obama. He didn't believe in gay marriage until the popular majority shifted. No profile in courage was he!

But the German city of Gelsenkirchen is in even more desperate need of someone to tear down a statue. Last Saturday the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany, or MLPD, erected a monument to Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin, the man most responsible for the Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet Union, and ensuing parade of horrors. "The time for monuments to racists, anti-Semites fascists, anti-communists, and other relics of the past has clearly passed," declared Gabi Fechtner, the slightly deranged "chair" of the MLPD. (No word on what the party's "table" and "lamp" think about Lenin!) Lenin, she explained, "was an ahead-of-his-time thinker of world-historical importance, an early fighter for freedom and democracy."

Gelsenkirchen is located in what was West Germany, so Fechtner can't blame East German indoctrination for her hilarious views. (Lenin fought for freedom and democracy? On what planet? In which solar system?) And, at age 43, she was old enough to view the joyful response of her brethren in the east to the fall of the Berlin Wall, allowing them to escape their national prison. (Maybe she was angry that a bunch of them later moved west and crowded her town.) Or perhaps Germany's educational system is simply overrated. Or Fechtner is a slow learner. Very slow.

The MLPD defends not just Marx and Lenin but also Mao and Stalin. While the party insists that it doesn't endorse everything about them — mass murder involving tens of millions of people is a bit much even for a committed commie ideologue today to stomach! — the MLPD still relies on their teachings. Maybe the party's identification with mass killers is why it has been less than wildly successful. It averages 0.1 percent of the vote in national Bundestag elections. In the last European Parliament contest, the MLPD got 0.05 percent. It has elected a few members to city councils. Its biggest victory: taking three of 38 seats in Neukirchen-Vluyn with an impressive 7.5 percent of ballots cast.

But perhaps the Lenin statue will trigger a new revolution. It is the first one to Lenin to be erected in western Germany, which was the front line facing the Red Army throughout the Cold War. Next up will be a statue of Marx, said Fechtner. At least he was simply a nitwit intellectual without the slightest idea how his ridiculous ideas would play out. (You didn't know how much of a nitwit? Read Paul Johnson's *The Intellectuals: From Marx and Tolstoy to Sartre and Chomsky*.)

If the MLPD is serious, how about a statue of Stalin? Museums and parks throughout Eastern Europe have more than a few available, presumably for sale. And the Chinese Communist Party is still producing Mao idols, before which the Chinese people are expected to genuflect. No doubt, Beijing could spare a couple for the MLPD, perhaps gratis as long as accompanied by a plaque praising the genius and greatness of Chinese President and CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping.

Alas, not everyone was happy with the MLPD's loving gesture for the Bolshevik paragon. The district council in Gelsenkirchen-West passed a resolution in March stating the obvious: "Lenin stands for violence, repression, terrorism and horrific human suffering." Germany, however, apparently in contrast with America, is a country in which law prevails, property is respected, and mobs are not tolerated. Explained the city council's spokesman, Martin Schulmann, "only a very few people around the Marxist Party want [the statue], no one else." But "we have no choice but to accept the court's rulings, since the piece of land where the statue is due to be installed is privately owned."

None of this is surprising. Reported Euronews: "In decades of experience addressing the country's Nazi and communist pasts, 'things have always been done properly, it all seems very German' with official applications to local authorities and orderly dismantling of monuments, said Urte Evert, head of Berlin's Spandau Citadel museum where many old statues are on display."

So the Lenin statue, produced more than six decades ago in Czechoslovakia, which had been communized courtesy of occupying Soviet troops after World War II, was erected. It was even purchased in the most capitalistic fashion — with a bid of \$18,000 on eBay. *Deutsche-Welle* reported that the celebration of Lenin, whom it politely described as the "controversial Soviet leader," was accompanied by music, flag-waving, and, of course, speeches. Appropriately enough, Lenin was covered with a red cloth before the unveiling.

Apparently Fechtner noticed the spate of statue-hate elsewhere and said the faithful commies had reinforced Lenin: "I won't say exactly how but it has been very firmly fastened in place." But there presumably is nothing that a couple of blowtorches and a bulldozer could not handle.

It is worth remembering the real Lenin — still at rest in his celebrated Moscow tomb, with many other unworthies, including Stalin, buried nearby at the Kremlin. After the USSR collapsed, there was serious discussion about burying Lenin and closing his tomb. Boris Yeltsin, Russia's first democratically elected president, dropped the honor guard from the mausoleum but with fading health and political capital was unwilling to face down the mythologists who opposed dismantling communism's most holy site.

Lenin is one of history's most important and consequential individuals. Without him there probably would have been no Bolshevik Revolution. There were other talented, intelligent, and determined revolutionaries. But he was unique. He had drive, charisma, and appeal, which is why Wilhelmine Germany recognized that he was an early weapon of mass destruction, worth transporting in a sealed train to Russia to spread the virus of radical revolution. And he did, with devastating effect.

He also ruthlessly acquired and manipulated power. When leading Bolsheviks opposed Germany's harsh peace terms in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, he was almost alone in forcing the revolutionary regime's acceptance. He understood that the people desperately wanted peace and would oust the Bolsheviks if the latter failed to deliver. And all that mattered was holding on to power. He also drove the communists to victory in the brutal civil war that ensued. Others, including Stalin and especially Leon Trotsky, played important roles. But it was Lenin who

would allow nothing to divert the communist party from its essential task in consolidating its control.

He died at only 53 in 1924. But what a legacy! The Bolshevik Revolution. Slaughter of the Czarist royal family. Brutal triumph over the Whites in the civil war. Bloody suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion against communist repression. Empowering Joseph Stalin, leading to pervasive party purges, mass starvation of Ukraine, the Hitler–Stalin pact, and conquest of Central and Eastern Europe. And an intense Cold War, filled with hot conflicts, Third World dictatorships and revolutionary movements, and superpower confrontations. Creation of murderous communist regimes in China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and elsewhere. The Berlin Wall. And the Evil Empire, as Ronald Reagan called the Soviet system at its zenith.

Some modern communists, who, unlike Fechtner's MLPD, have airbrushed Stalin from their ranks of communist heroes, claim that Lenin was a poor, misunderstood humanitarian whose utopian promise was perverted by his unprincipled successors. Yet Lenin drove the Bolshevik revolution by ousting, arresting, and suppressing all opposition, even liberal and elected. He wasted no time on "freedom and democracy," contra Fechtner's claim, enforcing Bolshevik rule, crushing dissent even within the party, establishing the Cheka secret police, which later morphed into the monstrously murderous NKVD and only slightly more discrete and polite KGB, and leading the victorious side in one of the world's most horrific civil wars. He likely ordered the murder of the deposed Czar and royal family, including children and servants.

Other than that, Lenin was a real sweetie, loved his family, and adored pets.

It is worth emphasizing that Lenin was responsible for Stalin's rise, choosing the latter to run the party. Before strokes disabled and ultimately killed him, Lenin dictated a testament suggesting Stalin's removal, but mostly for being coarse and rude, including to Lenin's wife, not for abusing power, or demonstrating murderous ambition, or threatening "freedom and democracy." Even amid his criticism Lenin praised Stalin as an "outstanding leader" alongside Trotsky. In practice, Lenin was not bothered by terror as a revolutionary weapon. And he shed no tears for the victims.

What did Lenin's Soviet Union ultimately become? The late social scientist R. J. Rummel described how the communist leader's beloved Cheka, since renamed, operated: "murder and arrest quotas did not work well. Where to find the 'enemies of the people' they were to shoot was a particularly acute problem for the local NKVD, which had been diligent in uncovering 'plots.' They had to resort to shooting those arrested for the most minor civil crimes, those previously arrested and released, and even mothers and wives who appeared at NKVD headquarters for information about their arrested loved ones." A believer in freedom and democracy, indeed!

Fechtner and her handful of fellow party members are free to enjoy their delusions. There was a time when many others were taken in by communism's false promise. "I have seen the future and it works," declared journalist Lincoln Steffens in 1919. After seven decades of brutal, bloody, oppressive experience, the band of true believers dwindled. By the time the Berlin Wall fell, the few real communists left were in academia — and working in Burlington Mayor Bernie

Sanders' office. They certainly weren't in the Soviet Union or the desolate provinces of its far-flung empire. And, thankfully, there aren't many in Germany today, as evidenced by the MLPD's dismal vote totals.

Nevertheless, Lenin's statue now stands in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. It is calling out to the world to be disrespected, painted, vandalized, and torn down. Who is with me? A field trip to Gelsenkirchen? A weekend of sight-seeing highlighted by a bulldozer joy ride and fireworks finale featuring a couple of blowtorches? It's time for the rest of us to do something to really promote "freedom and democracy," which Lenin did so much to destroy.

Doug Bandow is a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute and former Special Assistant to President Ronald Reagan. He is the author of Foreign Follies: America's New Global Empire.