

American Thinker

January 14, 2014

Cuba: Cemetery of Hopes

By [Eileen F. Toplansky](#)

It is with deep melancholy that one reads about the ongoing suffering of Cubans under communism. January 1, 2014 marked the 55th anniversary of Cuba's communist revolution. In fact, Cuba is "the only full-blown [dictatorship](#) in the Western hemisphere" and "no other country in Latin America is ruled by a regime that 'represses virtually all forms of political dissent.'" In Freedom House's annual index of political and civil liberties worldwide, Cuba is "consistently rated 'Not Free.'"

The "Future of Freedom in Cuba" was a March 2013 Cato Institute event that highlighted the continuing repression in Cuba. Cuban dissidents Orlando Luis Pardo Lazo and Yoani Sanchez spoke. The 24-minute event can be [heard here](#). If you cannot hear the entire program, begin at 35:07. In essence, Sanchez asserts that in order for true democratic transition, "Cubans must lose their fear" and "the great majority of Cubans must realize that the country belongs to them and changing [Cuba] is their struggle. As long as opportunism, wearing a mask of doublespeak and silence are the ways that Cubans survive under a repressive regime we cannot expect a great change in the country."

Orlando Luis Pardo Lazo asserts that because the regime has successfully repressed the population over the years, there are too many people who are not interested in politics and change. He fears the "great sense of apathy -- of not belonging." Thus, "the idea of emigration as an end in itself is a sad commentary but it is a realistic one." Nonetheless, Lazo declares to the Cuban government that he "is not going to stay in another country nor will he fear the cowardly acts of repudiation against him by the Cuban regime" even though he is fully aware about the overwhelming number of "car accidents" against many who speak out against the repression.

Lazo has been traveling throughout America highlighting the "social activism and emerging civic society under the [digital censorship](#) that exists in present-day Cuba."

In Cuba, telephone companies are state-run and there is no such thing as a private Internet account. Cubans do not have access to .com domains. Consequently, the Cuban government controls the domains of information in order to "be faithful to the revolution of Fidel and Raul Castro." In Cuba, Lazo cannot print or sell issues of his e-zine, *Voces* or he would be imprisoned. Yet, he risks jail in order to give voice to those millions of Cubans whose fundamental rights continue to be denied. He is the author of [Boring Home](#) (2009) and his blogs can be [read here](#). In his September 30, 2013 blog entitled "Che: Until Defeat Always" Lazo maintains that the continuing promotion of Che Guevara as a hero when in fact, Che's "more serious biographies and his own diaries reveal a bloodthirsty personality" is very, very troubling. For so many to immortalize Che is a horror to those who know the venal acts perpetrated by Che and the regime he supported. Thus,

At the beginning of 2010, to promote an LGBT party/fundraiser in Barcelona, a designer digitally dressed Ernesto Guevara up as a gay Che, despite the fact that Ernesto 'Che' Guevara was a radical, misogynist homophobe. In reaction to the scandalous image, Mariela Castro, the daughter of Cuban President-General Raúl Castro, and the woman with a monopoly on the Cuban LGBT movement as Director of the Cuban National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), decried the 'degrading use of Che's image' and hurried to [cut all ties with Col•lectiu Gai](#), the organization behind the Cuban gay festival.

Moreover, in the past

Mercedes Benz [placed its logo](#) on the beret that Che famously wore as a commander and minister of Cuba. As protests from the Cuban diaspora started mounting against the usage -- especially from big customers in the United States -- Mercedes' directors were forced to make a public apology and to close down the CarTogether publicity campaign.

And yet, the West still has not learned. [Humberto Fontova](#) writes how [A&E glorifies](#) Che Guevara and totally ignores the fact that in communist Cuba "tens of thousands of Cuban youths were jailed and tortured for nothing worse than long hair, tight pants and fondness for 'Yankee-imperialist' Rock & Roll. Any gay mannerisms made their punishment all the worse. Those Hollywood stereotypes of bigotry and brutality by backwoods American bigots against 'long-haired queers! 'Dirty hippies! etc.' were indulged 90 miles from U.S. shores by the very heroes of those hippies: Che Guevara and Fidel Castro." Fontova deplores this hypocrisy when he writes that one would "never get an inkling of this rollicking irony from A&E's lengthy Biography programs (i.e., glorifications) of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara."

Che Guevara was appointed Cuba's Minister of Industries in 1961 and within a year "a previously prosperous nation was rationing food, [closing factories](#), and losing hundreds of thousands of its most productive citizens, who were happy to flee with only the clothes on their backs." The denial, at the time, by the Western media of the murderous intent of Fidel and Raul Castro and Che Guevara is only too reminiscent of the malfeasance seen in today's media about the radical left-wing tilt of Washington.

In August of 1960, a year and a half after Che Guevara entered Havana ... *Time* magazine featured the revolutionary *comandante* on its cover and crowned him the 'Brains of the Cuban Revolution.' ([Fidel Castro](#) was 'the heart' and Raul Castro 'the fist.')

'Wearing a smile of melancholy sweetness that many women find devastating,' read the *Time* article, 'Che guides Cuba with icy calculation, vast competence, high intelligence and a perceptive sense of humor.'

'This is not a Communist Revolution in any sense of the term,' [The New York Times](#) had declared a year earlier. 'Fidel Castro is not only not a Communist, he is decidedly anti-Communist.'

A few months earlier the *London Observer* had observed: 'Mr. Castro's bearded youthful figure has become a symbol of Latin America's rejection of brutality and lying. Every sign is that he will reject personal rule and violence.'

Time magazine was in perfect sync with her major-media peers -- utterly wrong.

And Yoani Sanchez and Orlando Luis Pardo Lazo attest to this. At her blog entitled "[Alchemy and Lies](#)" Sanchez writes that because of the oppression and rationing imposed upon them, Cubans live "in a society of alchemists."

They don't turn iron into gold, but they are skilled at replacing ingredients and adulterating almost everything. Their goal is to cheat every client or to steal from the State itself.

Some of these ingenious formulas deserve an Anti-Nobel in Chemistry, especially for their negative effects on human health. Such is the case with a lengthy recipe for tomato sauce that includes beets, boiled sweet potatoes, spices, cornstarch and red hair dye. When a curious observer asks, 'And the tomato?' the inventors respond, almost scolding, 'No, there's no tomato.'

Needless to say the imitations of Cohiba cigars and other brands are sold to naive tourists as if they were authentic. Nothing is what it seems. A good part of the

population accepts these deceptions and feels a certain solidarity with the cheaters. 'People have to live somehow,' they justify, with even the most injured treating it like a joke.

Within the long list of what is falsified, rationed bread occupies first place. This is the most adulterated product in our basic food basket, its formula lost decades ago due to standardization and the diversion of resources.

In the bakeries, the 'alchemists' have reached the heights of true genius. They add huge amounts of yeast to the dough to make it rise so much that we get 'air bread,' which leaves us with sore gums and unfilled stomachs.

And "nearly six years after they were begun, the so-called 'Raul reforms' have not managed to significantly improve [Cubans'] individual standard[s] of living or the national economy." This one-hour [You Tube](#) at Henry Pollack's site entitled "The Cuba Agenda: Myths, lies and propaganda" depicts Cuba's deterioration and how Western media has ignored the facts of Cuban misery. It begins in Spanish but at 4:08 the site continues in English. At 19:50, Pollack speaks about the "outright lies" about Cuba taught at American universities as academics come under scrutiny. Pollack also talks about Hollywood's culpability. Pollack queries that "there are so many horror stories -- why haven't they been told?" He wonders why America pushed for "Project Iraqi Freedom" -- but why hasn't there been "Project Cuba Freedom?"

Even [Gloria Estefan](#) is "at the vanguard of the second generation of the Cuban exile" and she "carries the burden of suffering and sacrifice her parents made for freedom."

Thus, [Theodore Dalrymple](#) asserts that "no tyranny has enjoyed such a [good press](#), and for so long, as Cuba under the Castro boys." Hence, "[p]ractically all cinemas have shut down. Of the 135 cinemas that Havana had -- more than Paris or New York -- no more than 20 remain open. With nationalisation, they closed one by one, for lack of maintenance, films or electricity... Havana, Cubans complain, is a cemetery of cinemas. It is also a cemetery of bookshops, markets, shops... In short, Cuba is a [cemetery](#) of hopes."

The mendacity of Castro's history is out there for people to read. First person [accounts](#) of the horrors of Castro's tyranny exist. Nevertheless, the fabrications are aided and abetted by certain American factions which should know better.

Castro "deceived his followers and lied his way to absolute power." Yet western intellectuals still won't acknowledge the authoritarian tyranny that continues. [Albert Luzarraga](#) writes that "Cuba is the sole tyranny in the American continent and Castro is the world's longest reigning tyrant. It should be enough to prove that the US policy

is [seriously lacking](#)." Luzarraga asserts that America should "tell the truth in a systematic, persistent and clear way. Castro is an affront to American principles and a perturbing anachronism in this hemisphere." We should not be deceived by "[good tyrants](#)!" Deeds, not words, do matter.

Which brings me to the title of this article. [R.J. Rummel](#) in *Death by Government* presents an historical sketch of the major cases of genocide and government mass murder throughout the world. Rummel calls genocide and government mass murder democide. This democide is only limited and curtailed when freedom is fostered. Thus, Rummel's research "clearly and decisively shows that democracies commit less democide than other regimes. The underlying principle is that the less freedom people have, the greater the [governmental] violence; the more freedom, the less the violence. The problem is power. The solution is democracy. The course of action is to foster freedom."

As our own country's [freedoms](#) are [whittled](#) away each day, it behooves us to seriously consider our neighbor to the south. Will the non-violent [Operation American Spring March](#) being planned by retired Col. Harry G. Riley for May 16, 2014 be an important step in stopping our own government from continuing to perform as a lawless entity? Will we heed the words of Col. Riley who asserts that "America is sinking desperately closer to a dictatorship [since] Barack Obama has no intention of adhering to the U.S. Constitution?"

Will we shake off our apathy and rally and march in this "gigantic movement to action in D.C." or will we look back and wonder why we didn't listen to those who have experienced the ruthlessness of tyranny and not do something when we still could?

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