



# BETTER OFF RED?

**TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL, RECALLING  
THE LIBERAL MEDIA'S BLINDNESS TO THE EVIL OF COMMUNISM**



**A Special Report from the Media Research Center**

# Better Off Red?

## Twenty Years After the Fall of the Berlin Wall, Recalling the Liberal Media's Blindness to the Evils of Communism

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**T**wenty years ago this week, the Berlin Wall fell, tearing down the Iron Curtain that had sliced Europe in half since the end of World War II. Barely two years later, the Soviet Union itself disintegrated, ending the Cold War. Yet before, during and after those momentous events two decades ago, many in the liberal media continuously whitewashed the true nature of communism, or suggested free-market capitalism was somehow worse.

The record compiled over 22 years by the Media Research Center demonstrates how some liberal journalists utterly failed to accurately depict communism as one of the worst evils of the 20th century, and often aimed their fire at those who were fighting communism rather than those who were perpetuating it. The MRC's archives reveal:

- Before it collapsed, these journalists insisted those enslaved by communism actually feared capitalism more. "Despite what many Americans think, most Soviets do not yearn for capitalism or Western-style democracy," CBS anchor Dan Rather asserted in 1987.
- As the Soviet system began to totter, a few journalists claimed it as proof that the threat of totalitarian communism had never existed. "Gorbachev is helping the West by showing that the Soviet threat isn't what it used to be, and what's more, that it never was," *Time's* Strobe Talbott argued in a January 1, 1990 piece.
- After Eastern Europe was liberated, these leftist journalists attacked capitalism for "exploiting" the newly-freed workers. A *Los Angeles Times* reporter touted "communism's 'good old days,' when the hand of the state crushed personal freedom but ensured that people were housed, employed and had enough to eat."
- Some journalists refused to connect the economic misery caused by communism with communism itself. As the Soviet coup unraveled in 1991, NBC's John Chancellor lectured how "the problem isn't communism; nobody even talked about communism this week. The problem is shortages."

■ Viewers heard perverse arguments that the end of communism was a setback for human rights. “Yes, somehow, Soviet citizens are freer these days – freer to kill one another, freer to hate Jews,” CBS’s Harry Smith deplored in 1990: “Doing away with totalitarianism and adding a dash of democracy seems an unlikely cure for all that ails the Soviet system.”

■ The Soviet dictator Mikhail Gorbachev was treated with more respect than the dissidents and freedom fighters who had opposed communism all along. CNN founder Ted Turner said Gorbachev was “moving faster than Jesus Christ did,” while *Time* magazine fawningly described him as both “the communist Pope and the Soviet Martin Luther.”

■ Even after communism’s failure in Europe, liberal journalists continued to shower Cuba’s communist dictatorship with good press. “For all its flaws, life in Cuba has its comforts,” the Associated Press insisted in 2006: “Many Cubans take pride in their free education system, high literacy rates and top-notch doctors. Ardent Castro supporters say life in the United States, in contrast, seems selfish, superficial, and – despite its riches – ultimately unsatisfying.”

■ Few in the media offered the same praise for the lunatic regime in North Korea, but in 2005 Ted Turner went on CNN to lamely defend dictator Kim Jong-il’s treatment of his citizens. “I saw a lot of people over there. They were thin and they were riding bicycles instead of driving in cars,” Turner obtusely related. Anchor Wolf Blitzer informed him: “A lot of those people are starving,” but Turner insisted: “I didn’t see any brutality.”

■ The one-party dictatorship that still rules China seems to bother many reporters less than the regime’s move away from a communist economic system. “Workers’ Rights Suffering as China Goes Capitalist,” claimed a 2001 *New York Times* headline. In 2009, *Times* columnist Thomas Friedman admitted that “one-party autocracy certainly has its drawbacks. But when it is led by a reasonably enlightened group of people, as China is today, it can also have great advantages.”

As the anniversary of the toppling of the Berlin Wall approaches, it’s worth recalling how the liberal media failed to accurately portray the evils of communism, with coverage that often tipped in favor of the oppressors, not the oppressed. At the very least, journalists should take this opportunity to investigate the human rights abuses and oppression that still exists in the world’s last totally communist states, Cuba and North Korea. The gauzy, romantic coverage of the communist regime in Cuba should end – unless the media once again wish to be on the wrong side of history when that dictatorship is also finally swept away.

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# Better Off Red?

## Twenty Years After the Fall of the Berlin Wall, Recalling the Liberal Media's Blindness to the Evils of Communism

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Exactly 20 years ago, the world rejoiced as the suffocating grip of communism in Europe was finally broken. The pivotal year was 1989, as Soviet-installed dictatorships in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and East Germany all retreated in the face of largely peaceful democratic revolutions; the Romanians also threw off their shackles that year, but in a spasm of violence that killed more than a thousand people. On November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall, which had imprisoned the people of East Berlin for 28 years, was finally opened. Two years later, the Soviet Union itself fell apart, four months after an attempted coup against party boss Mikhail Gorbachev dissolved in the face of popular opposition.



The media fancy themselves as those who give voice to the voiceless, who stand as a check on those in power. But looking back at the media's track record on communism, one sees a press that was too willing to act as a mouthpiece for the world's worst dictatorships, and too accepting of the perverse claim that communism meant safety and security for its people. The evils of communism are well documented. According to *The Black Book of Communism*, even Hitler's Holocaust pales in comparison to the human toll of the world's communist dictators: 65 million killed by Mao, another 20 million killed by Stalin, and millions more who perished in Eastern Europe, North Korea, Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa.

What follows is the record of the media's communism coverage, as compiled by the Media Research Center over the past 22 years. Before, during and after those momentous events two decades ago, the liberal media too often whitewashed the true nature of communism, or suggested

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capitalism was somehow worse. Even as European communism was gasping its last breaths, reporters touted its supposed success stories. After the Iron Curtain lifted, the media disparaged the uncertainty of life without the “guarantees” and “safety net” provided by the former communist masters. Journalists kept singing the praises of the remaining communist police state of Cuba, and a few even offered propaganda opportunities to the lunatic dictatorship in North Korea. And liberals continued to heap scorn and ridicule on American anti-communists, obviously unembarrassed by their own blindness to the reality of the 20th century.

### ***Before the Fall: Seeing Communism as a “Success Story”***

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Perhaps the most amazing piece of pro-Soviet propaganda produced in the 1980s was Ted Turner’s seven-hour *Portrait of the Soviet Union*, shown in the United States on the CNN founder’s TBS Superstation. Even the *New York Times*, in a March 20, 1988 review, deemed it an embarrassment, saying that the three-part series “is possessed by the same spirit that once led George Bernard Shaw to throw his dinner out the window of a Soviet train – because food was redundant amid socialist milk and honey.”

Narrator Roy Scheider (*Jaws*, *The French Connection*) read a script that would make the editors at *Pravda* blush: “The Soviet Union, draped in history, born in a bloody revolution, bound together by a dream that is still being dreamt. The dream of a socialist nation marching toward the world’s first communist state....Once the Kremlin was the home of czars. Today it belongs to the people....Atheist though the state may be, freedom to worship as you believe is enshrined in the Soviet Constitution....Modernization on a grand scale. A great success.”



When Turner’s *Portrait* made it to the U.S.S.R. later that spring, *Financial Times* Moscow correspondent Quentin Peel reported that Soviet television “introduced [it] with the apology that the film gave an excessively glamorous portrait of the country.” Somehow, Turner managed to create a piece of propaganda that even its communist subjects couldn’t swallow.

While the rest of the media elite would not go as far as the sycophantic Turner, some reporters did push an embarrassingly pro-communist spin that would soon be undermined by events.

- “If suddenly a true, two-party or multi-party system were to be formed in the Soviet Union, the Communist Party would still win in a real free election. Except for certain small pockets of resistance to the Communist regime, the people have been truly converted in the last 68 years.”  
– CNN Moscow bureau chief Stuart Loory in a letter to the *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 3, 1986.
- “Despite what many Americans think, most Soviets do not yearn for capitalism or Western-style democracy.”  
– Anchor Dan Rather on the *CBS Evening News*, June 17, 1987.

■ “The reality is that even if the communist state were to protect individual rights aggressively, many of its people are not prepared to tolerate diversity.”

– Dan Rather on the May 27, 1988 *CBS Evening News*.

■ “East Germany is the Communist world’s vaunted economic success story, hailed as proof that hard work, discipline and thrift can translate Karl Marx’s theories into reality.”

– *New York Times* reporter Ferdinand Protzman in the May 15, 1989 “Business Day” section.

■ “Communism got to be a terrible word here in the United States, but our attitude toward it may have been unfair. Communism got in with a bad crowd when it was young and never had a fair chance....The Communist ideas of creating a society in which everyone does his best for the good of everyone is appealing and fundamentally a more uplifting idea than capitalism. Communism’s only real weakness seems to be that it doesn’t work.”

– *60 Minutes* commentator Andy Rooney in the *New York Times*, June 26, 1989.

■ “Like Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev before him, [Vladimir] Kryuchkov has taken the personal route, talking of his fondness for Bellini’s opera ‘Norma.’ He swoons over the piano mastery of Van Cliburn, and hints that he would arrange a Moscow apartment for the pianist if he would only come here more often. Then he sighs over his exhausting workday at Dzerzhinsky Square: ‘The KGB chairman’s life is no bed of roses.’”

– Reporter David Remnick in *The Washington Post*, September 8, 1989. Two years later, Kryuchkov was part of the hardline “Gang of Eight” that attempted to overthrow Gorbachev.

■ “Marx and Lenin are still revered heroes. Never mind that communism as they conceived it didn’t work. Most Soviets don’t want to dump it, just improve on it.”

– *USA Today* founder Al Neuharth, February 9, 1990 column.

### *The Liberation of Eastern Europe: Missing the “Safety” of Communism*

As communism retreated from Eastern Europe in 1989 and 1990, American reporters seized on the idea that life had suddenly become worse, not better, for those freed from four decades of subjugation. Journalists frequently attacked capitalism as somehow more “exploitative” than the totalitarian communism that had officially controlled all economic life. Viewers were told that communism had provided a “security blanket” for people, who were now “miserable” without the “safety net” and “guarantees” provided by their former masters.

■ “Instead of reveling in the collapse of communism, we could head off economic and social havoc by admitting that for most of us, capitalism doesn’t work, either....Homeless, jobless, illiterate people, besieged by guns and drugs, are as bereft of a democratic lifestyle as anybody behind the old Berlin Wall...If we look within ourselves, we will see that a capitalistic order that is dependent upon cheap labor and an underclass to exploit is too dangerous a concept to continue.”

– *USA Today* “Inquiry” Editor Barbara Reynolds, December 8, 1989.

■ “Few tears will be shed over the demise of the East German army, but what about East Germany’s eighty symphony orchestras, bound to lose some subsidies, or the whole East German system, which covered everyone in a security blanket from day care to health care, from housing to education? Some people are beginning to express, if ever so slightly, nostalgia for that Berlin Wall.”

– CBS reporter Bob Simon on the March 16, 1990 *CBS Evening News*.



■ “If there’s one thing that almost everyone agrees on here [in Hungary] is that the communists must go and as soon as possible. And this is a strange thing, because this is one country that seems to have profited more than any other East European government under years of communism.”

– CBS correspondent Tom Fenton on *Sunday Morning*, March 25, 1990.

■ “This is Marlboro country, southeastern Poland, a place where the transition from communism to capitalism is making more people more miserable every day....No lines at the shops now, but plenty at some of the first unemployment centers in a part of the world where socialism used to guarantee everybody a job.”

– CBS News reporter Bert Quint on the April 11, 1990 *CBS Evening News*.

■ “Communism is being swept away, but so too is the social safety net it provided....Factories, previously kept alive only by edicts from Warsaw, are closing their doors, while institutions new to the East – soup kitchens and unemployment centers – are opening theirs....Here are the ones who may profit from Poland’s economic freedom: a few slick locals, but mostly Americans, Japanese, and other foreigners out to cash in on a new source of cheap labor.”

– Reporter Bert Quint on *CBS This Morning*, May 9, 1990.

■ “These refugees have been told little about the realities of life in the West, including the fact that some people sleep on the street...They will soon learn that jobs are hard to find, consumer goods expensive, relatives in Albania will be missed. Many refugees, according to experts, will suffer from depression, and in some cases, drug abuse.”

– ABC’s Mike Lee on what’s facing fleeing Albanians, July 14, 1990 *World News Tonight*.

■ “East Germany is staggering toward unification, and may get there close to dead on arrival, the victim of an overdose of capitalism.”

– ABC reporter Jerry King on the October 1, 1990 *World News Tonight*.

■ “Poles had hoped that the long wait had ended, but it has not. After four decades of standing in communism’s food lines, capitalism has created a new place to wait: at the unemployment office.”

– NBC reporter Mike Boettcher, November 16, 1990 *Nightly News*.

■ “Under communism few grew rich, but few went hungry; in many cases people enjoyed surprisingly high levels of prosperity. In Poland, for example, wealthy entrepreneurs were able to afford Western luxury automobiles; in Czechoslovakia ownership of second homes was common. Now many may no longer be able to enjoy such extravagance.”

– *Time* Warsaw correspondent John Borrell, December 3, 1990 news story.

■ “Falling through the cracks: With demise of communism, Budapest’s poor lose their safety net”  
– Headline in the *Boston Globe*, December 31, 1990.

■ **Connie Chung:** “In formerly communist Bulgaria, the cost of freedom has been virtual economic disaster. Peter Van Sant reports.”

**Reporter Peter Van Sant:** “Thousands of socialists rally in Sofia, Bulgaria. It may look like a rally from communism’s glory years, but it’s not. It’s an expression of frustration, a longing for the bad old days when liberty was scarce, but at least everybody had a job.”  
– *CBS Evening News*, December 29, 1991.

■ “By every political and economic measure, Bulgaria is in crisis and there is no end in sight to its troubles. Living conditions are so much worse in the reform era that Bulgarians look back fondly on communism’s ‘good old days,’ when the hand of the state crushed personal freedom but ensured that people were housed, employed, and had enough to eat.”  
– *Los Angeles Times* reporter Carol J. Williams in February 6, 1994 “news analysis.”

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### ***“The Workers’ Paradise Has Become a Homeless Hell”***

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On August 18, 1991, the hardline communist “Gang of Eight” arrested Soviet party boss Mikhail Gorbachev in an attempted coup. Over the next three days, resistance was led by Boris Yeltsin, a one-time Politburo member who was now the anti-communist President of the Russian Federation. The coup collapsed August 21 and Gorbachev returned to Moscow, but over the next few months, several Soviet republics sought their independence from the U.S.S.R. On December 25, 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist; the Cold War was finally over.

Even before the official end, liberal reporters reacted to the sudden end of Soviet communism much as they had to the liberation of Eastern Europe, complaining of the “uncertainty” and “hardship” that the “painful shift” to capitalism and freedom would bring to the ex-Soviet states.

■ “Many Soviets viewing the current chaos and nationalist unrest under Gorbachev look back almost longingly to the era of brutal order under Stalin.”  
– CBS’s Mike Wallace on *60 Minutes*, February 11, 1990.

■ “Congress changed the Soviet Constitution to permit limited private ownership of small factories, although laws remain against exploitation of everyone else.”  
– NBC Moscow reporter Bob Abernethy on *Nightly News*, March 13, 1990.

■ “Soviet people have become accustomed to security if nothing else. Life isn’t good here, but people don’t go hungry, homeless; a job has always been guaranteed. Now all socialist bets are off. A market economy looms, and the social contract that has held Soviet society together for 72 years no longer applies. The people seem baffled, disappointed, let down. Many don’t like the prospect of their nation becoming just another capitalist machine.”  
– CNN Moscow reporter Steve Hurst on *PrimeNews*, May 24, 1990.

### **Soviet Threat Just Conservative Paranoia?**

“Gorbachev is helping the West by showing that the Soviet threat isn’t what it used to be — and what’s more, that it never was.”  
— Subheadline to January 1, 1990 article by *Time’s* Strobe Talbott.

■ “Lines might be long, freedoms might be few, but one thing the state guaranteed was security from the cradle to the grave....But with the novel forces of democratization, decentralization, and freer expression came the hard truths of poverty, dislocation, crime, ethnic hatred and the erosion of the state’s omnipotence. Beggars and cripples emerged from the shadows, the injured and humiliated took to venting their grievances in the streets, and ever-worsening shortages pushed masses over the threshold of poverty.”  
— *New York Times* reporter Serge Schmemmann on the Soviet Union, March 13, 1991.

### **We’re Going to Miss Those Guys**

“We may well over the next 10 or 15 years come to view the Soviet Union as being the power, the only power, that has the capacity of keeping China out of Europe, the only power that has the capacity of keeping Muslim fundamentalism out of Europe, the only power, in fact, we may find ourselves looking back wistfully five or ten years from now at Eastern Europe and saying, ‘Boy, I remember when Eastern Europe used to be nice and quiet.’”

— ABC anchor Ted Koppel on *McLaughlin: One on One*, June 3, 1990.

■ “In towns like Pushkino (pop. 90,000), many Russians view the tumult sweeping Moscow with more anxiety and skepticism than do their big-city compatriots....They wonder if the destruction of Soviet communism will bring them anything more than uncertainty and hardship.”  
— *Time* reporter James Carney, September 9, 1991.

■ “Inefficient as the old communist economy was, it did provide jobs of a sort for everybody and a steady, if meager, supply of basic goods at low, subsidized prices; Soviet citizens for more than 70 years were conditioned to expect that from their government. Says a Moscow worker: ‘We had everything during [Leonid] Brezhnev’s times. There was sausage in the stores. We could buy vodka. Things were normal.’”  
— *Time* Associate Editor George J. Church, September 23, 1991.

■ “It’s short of soap, so there are lice in hospitals. It’s short of pantyhose, so women’s legs go bare. It’s short snowsuits, so babies stay home in winter...The problem isn’t communism; nobody even talked about communism this week. The problem is shortages.”  
— Commentator and ex-anchor John Chancellor on the August 21, 1991 *NBC Nightly News*.

■ “In the old Soviet Union, you never saw faces like these: the poor, the homeless, and the desperation of the Russian winter. Their numbers are growing. Tonight — is this what democracy does? A look at the Russia you haven’t seen before....The people of Russia are learning this winter that the price of freedom can be painfully high.”  
— ABC’s Barbara Walters opening *Nightline*, January 14, 1992.

■ “The painful shift to a market system has pushed thousands of citizens, once able to maintain an acceptable living standard with the help of government subsidies and benefits, below the poverty line. Homelessness, derided by the communists as a plague of the West, is becoming commonplace. The old Soviet guarantees of work, housing, and low fixed prices are gone, and the welfare net, designed to catch the rare social dropout, has sprung gaping holes.”  
— *Time* Moscow reporter Ann M. Simmons in a July 13, 1992 article subheadlined: “The capitalist revolution is bringing the plagues of poverty, homelessness and unemployment to Russians, who miss the safety net of the old system.”

■ “But for the simple folk of Uzbekistan, people like Kurban Manizayov, these are mind-wrenching times. Their simple wants were nicely cared for by the communists. But now they’ve been thrust into the hurly-burly world of market capitalism, and nobody even bothered to ask if it was all right.”

– CNN Moscow reporter Steve Hurst, August 31, 1992 *World News*.

■ “Many here long for the days of Brezhnev. At least then, they say, they had their dignity.”

– CBS reporter Tom Fenton, September 24, 1993 *Evening News*.

■ “For more than 70 years, Russia dreamed the Soviet dream: the dream of a classless society, the dream of a workers’ paradise. The classless state is now a state with a growing population of haves and an exploding population of have-nots. For many, the workers’ paradise has become a homeless hell.”

– ABC’s Morton Dean, January 14, 1994 *Good Morning America*.

### The KGB: “Honorable” and “Worthwhile”

“We have an FBI, and we’re not prejudiced against somebody who’s worked at the FBI. It’s an honorable place to work. And the KGB, I think, was an honorable place to work. It gave people in the former Soviet Union, a communist country, an opportunity to do something important and worthwhile.”

— CNN founder Ted Turner on NBC’s *Meet the Press*, November 30, 2008.

## Whitewashing the Communist Record on Human Rights

In her 2003 book *Useful Idiots*, conservative writer Mona Charen described the communist state as a “comprehensive tyranny. The Soviet Union was not so much a state as a vast criminal conspiracy. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Vladimir Bukovsky, Natan Sharansky, and others are the great chroniclers of the grotesque inhumanity of the Gulag and Communist rule....[The record shows] mass murders, deportations, political persecutions, abuse of psychiatry, and other depredations committed by the Communists.”

Yet during the Cold War, the harsh repression that invariably accompanied communism was often given short shrift in favor of stories about the need for détente or peaceful coexistence. Some correspondents working in the Soviet Union were not eager to shine their spotlight on the plight of anti-communist dissidents. Nicholas Daniloff, the Moscow correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report*, told the *Washington Journalism Review* in June 1985: “I don’t consort with dissidents. The magazine considers them a passing phenomenon of little interest.” Ironically, Daniloff himself was imprisoned by Soviet authorities in September 1986 as a supposed “spy,” in retaliation after the U.S. arrested a Soviet spy working in Washington, D.C. The Reagan administration secured his release after three weeks of confinement.

In spite of communism’s appalling human rights record, journalists perversely suggested that the repressive totalitarian system was somehow superior — better for women’s “rights,” for example, or better than the “conservative” Catholic Church.

■ “Yes, somehow, Soviet citizens are freer these days — freer to kill one another, freer to hate Jews....Doing away with totalitarianism and adding a dash of democracy seems an unlikely cure for all that ails the Soviet system.”

– Co-host Harry Smith on *CBS This Morning*, February 9, 1990.

■ “One year after crowds swept through the streets of Eastern Europe toppling communist dictators with demands for more freedom, the region’s women have found democracy a less than liberating experience....Part of the reason many women feel let down by their revolutions is the emergence of conservative forces, including the Catholic Church, following the toppling of communist regimes.”

– *Boston Globe* reporter Jonathan Kaufman in a December 27, 1990 front-page news story.

■ “But most of his fellow countrymen do not share John Paul’s concept of morality....Many here expect John Paul to use his authority to support Church efforts to ban abortion, perhaps the country’s principal means of birth control. And this, they say, could deprive them of a freedom of choice the communists never tried to take away from them.”

– CBS reporter Bert Quint on the June 1, 1991 *Evening News*.

■ “Like many other women in what used to be the German Democratic Republic, she worries that political liberation has cost her social and economic freedom....The kindergartens that cared for their children are becoming too expensive, and West Germany’s more restrictive abortion laws threaten to deny many Eastern women a popular method of birth control....East Germany’s child-care system helped the state indoctrinate its young, but also assured women in the East the freedom to pursue a career while raising a family.”

– *U.S. News & World Report* special correspondent John Marks, July 1, 1991.

■ “There is a danger that the forces of democracy, as they are called, will now go too far. There is a spirit of revenge in the air [after the failed Soviet coup].”

– Former *New York Times* reporter Hedrick Smith, August 26, 1991 *Good Morning America*.

■ “The economic and political turmoil that has swept the former Communist East Bloc has hit women the hardest. There’s been a strong backlash against the idea of women’s equality....Under the Communists, women in the workplace were glorified. And if they needed time off to give birth and raise families, they got it at full pay.”

– ABC reporter Jerry King, April 6, 1992 *World News Tonight*.

■ “Open societies, it turns out, haven’t been as generous as socialism and communism to women who want to serve in public office. From Albania to Yemen, the number of women in power plummeted after the transition from socialist governments, which sought to develop female as well as male proletariats. As those governments died, so went the socialist ideals of equality and the subsidies for social programs that aided women. In many countries, traditional patriarchal cultures resurfaced.”

– *Los Angeles Times* correspondent Robin Wright, October 2, 1997 *Philadelphia Inquirer* op-ed.

### **“A Gulag Breeds Rage, Yes, but Also Serenity”**

— Headline over *New York Times* story on the last five Soviet political prisoners being released, February 12, 1992.

## Journalists Distressed by China's Shift Towards Capitalism

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Starting in the 1980s, the communist government in China began instituting economic reforms that moved away from state control of the economy and towards a more market-based system that includes private property and even foreign investment. But the government of China remained firmly under the control of the Communist Party and People's Liberation Army, a fact underscored by the government's killing of several hundred pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

Even though China is still ruled by a one-party dictatorship, journalists seem more distressed by the move towards a capitalist economy. Reporters fret about the "gap between rich and poor," and the new burdens capitalism places on a "once-pampered work force." As for the lack of democracy, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman recently marveled at the "great advantages" of China's "enlightened" one-party rule. And some journalists reacted to the bloody attack in Tiananmen Square with astonishing relativism, inately equating it to the shooting at Kent State or the problem of under-funded schools.

■ "Will the military leaders there be embarrassed by this [the Tiananmen Square massacre]. Will this be something like Kent State was for our military?"

– CBS reporter Eric Engberg on *Nightwatch*, June 7, 1989.



■ "Thousands may have been gunned down in Beijing, but what about the millions of American kids whose lives are being ruined by an enormous failure of the country's educational system....We can and we should agonize about the dead students in Beijing, but we've got a much bigger problem here at home."

– John Chancellor's commentary on *NBC Nightly News*, June 20, 1989.

■ "Deng emerged from retirement and launched a campaign for more and faster capitalist-style reform....The burst of development brought with it many of the evils the communists had sought to eradicate: corruption, inflation, a growing gap between rich and poor."

– CNN's Mike Chinoy reviewing dictator Deng Xiaoping's life on *Prime News*, Feb. 19, 1997.

■ "For all of China's economic success, much of the vast country is still either desperately poor or suffering from the excesses of runaway capitalism – or both."

– *Newsweek's* Bill Powell, March 3, 1997.

■ "In a way, the business boom here fueled today's protest. A thin layer of the top of Chinese society has made tons of money, but the masses have been left behind and increasingly lack of housing and unemployment makes those at the bottom very restless. That's why some 200 people boldly demonstrated for about three hours today in a symbolic park in the heart of Beijing."

– Dan Rather reporting from Beijing for the June 20, 1997 *CBS Evening News*.

■ "In the good old days, the Communist Party found a job for everyone. Now young people have to fend for themselves....The future of the Communist Party may be in doubt if it can't ease the pain felt by the once-pampered work force."

– NBC reporter Chris Billing from Beijing on the February 13, 2000 *NBC Nightly News*.

- “Workers’ Rights Suffering as China Goes Capitalist.”  
– Headline over front-page *New York Times* story by Erik Eckholm about low-paid workers employed by private and foreign companies in China, August 22, 2001.
- “One-party autocracy certainly has its drawbacks. But when it is led by a reasonably enlightened group of people, as China is today, it can also have great advantages.”  
– *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, September 9, 2009.

### North Korea: Singing Along with Diane Sawyer

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Along with Cuba, North Korea is one of the last totally communist nations, with an entirely state-owned economy. The human tragedy caused by this regime is monumental. Over the past decade, as many as two million North Koreans have died from famine. In a 2009 report, Amnesty International found “widespread violations of human rights” in North Korea, “including politically motivated and arbitrary use of detention and executions, and severe restrictions on freedoms of expression and movement.”

North Korea’s communist regime does not receive the sympathetic coverage that Cuba enjoys, but in 2005, CNN founder Ted Turner tried to defend the regime’s human rights record. In 2006, ABC anchor Diane Sawyer led North Korean schoolchildren in a bizarre sing-along, a warm and fuzzy photo-op that buried the reality of everyday life.

■ **Ted Turner:** “I am absolutely convinced that the North Koreans are absolutely sincere....I looked them right in the eyes. And they looked like they meant the truth. You know, just because somebody’s done something wrong in the past doesn’t mean they can’t do right in the future or the present. That happens all the, all the time.”

**Wolf Blitzer:** “But this is one of the most despotic regimes and [North Korean dictator] Kim Jong-il is one of the worst men on Earth. Isn’t that a fair assessment?”

**Turner:** “Well, I didn’t get to meet him, but he didn’t look – in the pictures that I’ve seen of him on CNN, he didn’t look too much different than most other people.”

**Blitzer:** “But look at the way he’s treating his own people.”

**Turner:** “Well, hey, listen. I saw a lot of people over there. They were thin and they were riding bicycles instead of driving in cars, but-”

**Blitzer:** “A lot of those people are starving.”

**Turner:** “I didn’t see any, I didn’t see any brutality....”

– CNN’s *The Situation Room*, September 19, 2005.

■ **Diane Sawyer:** “It is a world away from the unruly individualism of any American school....Ask them about their country, and they can’t say enough.”

**North Korean girl, in English:** “We are the happiest children in the world.”

**Sawyer to class:** “What do you know about America?”

**Sawyer voiceover:** “We show them an American magazine. They tell us, they know nothing about American movies, American movie



stars....and then, it becomes clear that they have seen some movies from a strange place....”

**Sawyer to class:** “You know *The Sound of Music*?”

**Voices:** “Yes.”

**Sawyer, singing with the class:** “Do, a deer, a female deer. Re, a drop of golden sun....”

**Charles Gibson:** “A fascinating glimpse of North Korea.”

– Sawyer reporting from North Korea for ABC’s *World News*, October 19, 2006.

## ***Enthralled with Fidel Castro’s Communist Paradise***

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Even as communism was failing in Europe, journalists continued to lavish positive press on Cuba’s communist regime. Dictator Fidel Castro was painted as a romantic revolutionary, as he had been for more than half a century. Back on January 18, 1959, *New York Times* reporter Herbert L. Matthews exulted in Castro’s seizure of Cuba: “Everybody here seems agreed that Dr. Castro is one of the most extraordinary figures ever to appear on the Latin-American scene. He is by any standards a man of destiny.”

In 1997, CNN became the first U.S.-based news organization with a full-time news bureau in Cuba since the communist takeover, but the U.S. network became just another cog in Castro’s propaganda machine. A Media Research Center study of CNN’s coverage of Cuba during the first five years after their bureau opened found that communist officials made up 77 percent of CNN’s talking heads, versus 11 percent for the Catholic Church and 12 percent for dissidents. Of the network’s 212 Cuba stories, just seven focused on dissidents.

Liberal journalists ritualistically repeated Havana’s talking points about their nation having the best health and education systems. During the 2000 custody battle over five-year-old refugee Elian Gonzalez, U.S. reporters weirdly suggested Cuba was “a more peaceable society that treasures its children.” In the 2009 debate over health care policy in the U.S., CNN even went so far as to hold up Cuba as a model because “no one falls through the cracks.”

■ “There is, in Cuba, government intrusion into everyone’s life, from the moment he is born until the day he dies. The reasoning is that the government wants to better the lives of its citizens and keep them from exploiting or hurting one another....On a sunny day in a park in the old city of Havana it is difficult to see anything that is sinister.”

– NBC reporter Ed Rabel on Cuban life, *Sunday Today*, February 28, 1988.

■ “Castro has delivered the most to those who had the least....Education was once available to the rich and the well-connected. It is now free to all....Medical care was once for the privileged few. Today it is available to every Cuban and it is free....Health and education are the revolution’s great success stories.”

– Peter Jennings reporting from Havana on ABC’s *World News Tonight*, April 3, 1989.



■ “He [Fidel Castro] said he wanted to make a better life for Cuba’s poor. Many who lived through the revolution say he succeeded....Today even the poorest Cubans have food to eat, their children are educated and even critics of the regime say Cubans have better health care than most Latin Americans.”

– Reporter Paula Zahn on *Good Morning America*, April 3, 1989.

■ “Considered one of the most charismatic leaders of the 20th century....[Fidel] Castro traveled the country cultivating his image, and his revolution delivered. Campaigns stamped out illiteracy and even today, Cuba has one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world.”

– Katie Couric reporting on NBC’s *Today*, February 13, 1992.

■ “Frankly, to be a poor child in Cuba may in many instances be better than being a poor child in Miami, and I’m not going to condemn their lifestyle so gratuitously.”

– *Newsweek*’s Eleanor Clift on *The McLaughlin Group*, April 8, 2000.

■ “Elian [Gonzalez] might expect a nurturing life in Cuba, sheltered from the crime and social breakdown that would be part of his upbringing in Miami....The boy will nestle again in a more peaceable society that treasures its children.”

– Brook Larmer and John Leland, April 17, 2000 *Newsweek*.

■ “While Fidel Castro, and certainly justified on his record, is widely criticized for a lot of things, there is no question that Castro feels a very deep and abiding connection to those Cubans who are still in Cuba. And, I recognize this might be controversial, but there’s little doubt in my mind that Fidel Castro was sincere when he said, ‘listen, we really want this child back here.’”

– Dan Rather live on CBS the morning of the Elian raid, April 22, 2000.

■ “The school system in Cuba teaches that communism is the way to succeed in life and it is the best system. Is that de-programming, or is that national heritage?”

– NBC News reporter Jim Avila from Cuba on CNBC’s *Upfront Tonight*, June 27, 2000.

■ “For Castro, freedom starts with education. And if literacy alone were the yardstick, Cuba would rank as one of the freest nations on Earth. The literacy rate is 96 percent.”

– Barbara Walters on ABC’s *20/20*, October 11, 2002.

■ “There’s a good chance that Fidel Castro, who marks his 78th birthday today, could keep going for another 40 years, the Cuban leader’s personal physician says....Cuban officials say the same revolutionary zeal that has driven nearly five decades of socialism can overcome the ravages of time....At least 40 different Cuban research groups are said to be at work unlocking the secrets of aging. The research ranges from studying special diets to basic research on genetics.”

– Reporter Eric Sabo in an August 13, 2004 *USA Today* story headlined, “Cuba pursues a 120-year-old future.”



■ “For all its flaws, life in Castro’s Cuba has its comforts, and unknown alternatives are not automatically more attractive....Many foreigners consider it propaganda when Castro’s government enumerates its accomplishments, but many Cubans take pride in their free education

system, high literacy rates and top-notch doctors. Ardent Castro supporters say life in the United States, in contrast, seems selfish, superficial, and — despite its riches — ultimately unsatisfying.”  
— Associated Press writer Vanessa Arrington in an August 4, 2006 dispatch, “Some Cubans enjoy comforts of communism.”

■ **Anchor Don Lemon:** “Cuba as a model for health care reform? Well, we’ll see. It is a poor country. But it can boast about health care, a system that leads the way in Latin America. So, what are they doing right?...”

**Reporter Morgan Neill:** “There are some impressive statistics. According to the World Health Organization, Cuba’s life expectancy is 78 years. The same as Chile and Costa Rica and the highest in Latin America. And its infant mortality rates are the lowest in the hemisphere.... Health officials admit the system isn’t perfect, but, they say, no one falls through the cracks.”

— 12pm ET hour of *CNN Newsroom*, August 6, 2009.

### *Scorning the Anti-Communists: “Nobody Likes a Snitch”*

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Given the vast human suffering caused by communism in the 20th century, one might think that liberal-minded Westerners would have cheered those leading the fight to free those trapped in its grasp. But many liberals — including those in the media — chose instead to attack those fighting communism rather than those perpetuating it. From the *contras* fighting to free Nicaragua from its Marxist government to U.S.-based refugees from Castro’s Cuba, liberal reporters heaped insults and scorn on those who “still” deemed communism evil.

■ “Personally, I think the *contras* are worthless.”

— CBS News producer/reporter Lucy Spiegel quoted in the January 1987 *American Spectator*.

■ “Whittaker Chambers was mostly right about communism and Alger Hiss, but he was a nasty piece of work and nobody likes a snitch. Even Joe McCarthy may have been on to something, but he was a crude and cruel man who ruined people’s lives for 48-point type. You might call this the When Bad People Spoil Good Things school of history.”

— Richard Stengel writing on “Heroes and Icons” for the June 14, 1999 *Time* magazine.

■ “Some suggested over the weekend that it’s wrong to expect Elian Gonzalez to live in a place that tolerates no dissent or freedom of political expression. They were talking about Miami.... Another writer this weekend called it ‘an out of control banana republic within America.’”

— Katie Couric opening NBC’s *Today*, April 3, 2000.

■ “In Miami, it’s impossible to overestimate how everything here is colored by a hatred of communism and Fidel Castro. It’s a community with very little tolerance for those who might disagree.”

— ABC correspondent John Quinones on *World News Tonight*, April 4, 2000.

■ “Communism Still Looms as Evil to Miami Cubans.”

— Headline over April 11, 2000 *New York Times* story.



■ “Cuban-Americans, Ms. Falk, have been quick to point fingers at Castro for exploiting the little boy. Are their actions any less reprehensible?”

— *Early Show* co-host Bryant Gumbel to CBS News consultant Pam Falk, April 14, 2000.

■ “As President [George W.] Bush toured Asia last week, some world leaders worried publicly that the war on terrorism was starting to look suspiciously like the last great American campaign — against Communism....The McCarthy years in some ways were eerily similar to the present moment....

Communists were often conceived as moral monsters whose deviousness and unwavering dedication to their faith made them capable of almost anything....The first victims of anti-Communist hysteria were immigrants, and hundreds of immigrants have been detained since Sept. 11, many with little apparent cause beyond the fact that they were Middle Eastern men.”

— *New York Times* reporter Robert F. Worth in a February 24, 2002 “Week in Review” article headlined “A Nation Defines Itself By Its Evil Enemies.”

■ “In 1952, [film director Elia] Kazan earned a much darker notoriety when he offered the names of colleagues he claimed to be communist to the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Many felt betrayed. Some never forgave him. When he was awarded an honorary Oscar in 1999, a few refused to acknowledge his accomplishments.”

— Tom Brokaw on the September 29, 2003 *NBC Nightly News*.

■ “2003 was not the first time dissent, the American virtue, the unique right of us Americans, suddenly became an ugly word....Everybody who ever tried to shut the dissenters up wound up hated and reviled, their accomplishments overshadowed by their lack of faith in freedom of speech....When we talk about the death of [director] Elia Kazan, overshadowing his work was the time he unreluctantly and unremorsefully identified eight of his personal friends as communists during his testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee.”

— Keith Olbermann on MSNBC’s *Countdown*, September 29, 2003.

### **The Cute and Cuddly Communist Boss**

“Elizabeth, his wife of 56 years, applauds him as a good family man. Indeed, how can anyone think ill of Hall when he beams so about cooking pancakes for his grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, or shares his secret for making tasty beef stew. (It’s the apples.)”

— *Time* reporter Michael Riley writing about the American Communist Party leader, Sept. 9, 1991.

“We missed the death of a notable American this week, so we want to catch up. Gus Hall actually died on Friday. The son of a Minnesota miner became head of the U.S. Communist Party at the height of anti-communist McCarthyism in the late ‘40s and ‘50s. He spent eight years in prison and a lifetime in the political wilderness for his views here, but he was a dignitary, dignitary in the Soviet Union. Even after his friends there abandoned the cause, Hall never wavered and he was 90.”

— ABC’s Peter Jennings, October 17, 2000 *World News Tonight*.

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### ***Journalistic Gorbasm*s Over the Last Soviet Dictator**

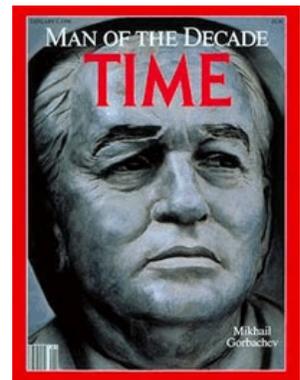
Talk radio host Rush Limbaugh coined the phrase “Gorbasm” for the ecstasy that many reporters felt when covering Soviet dictator Mikhail Gorbachev. While Gorbachev was obviously less brutal than previous communist rulers, his Soviet Union was hardly an enlightened, peace-loving democracy. While Gorbachev relaxed the repression of previous years, he did not shut

down the Gulag, or allow a free press, or permit the free expression of religion. When the Baltic republics pushed for sovereignty in early 1991, Moscow's Brezhnev-esque response was to use tanks to suppress pro-democracy forces in Lithuania and Latvia, killing eighteen.

Yet journalists elevated Gorbachev far above the freedom fighters, dissidents and anti-communist leaders like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. *Time* magazine thought it insufficient to name him merely the "Man of the Year," so in 1990 Gorbachev became their "Man of the Decade." Few, if any, democratic politicians have ever received the plaudits that were flung by journalists towards the last dictator of the Soviet Union.

■ "Gorbachev is the symbol of democracy around the world."  
– *Newsweek* reporter Eleanor Clift on *The McLaughlin Group*, May 20, 1989.

■ "The supreme leader of an atheistic state was baptized as a child. Now, in a sense, Gorbachev means to accomplish the salvation of an entire society that has gone astray....Much more than that, Gorbachev is a visionary enacting a range of complex and sometimes contradictory roles. He is simultaneously the communist Pope and the Soviet Martin Luther, the apparatchik as Magellan and McLuhan. The Man of the Decade is a global navigator."  
– *Time* Senior Writer Lance Morrow, January 1, 1990.



■ "Gorbachev has probably moved more quickly than any person in the history of the world. Moving faster than Jesus Christ did."  
– CNN founder Ted Turner, "TV chieftain with an outspoken conscience," celebrated in the January 22, 1990 *Time*.

■ "He has, as many great leaders have, impressive eyes...There's a kind of laser-beam stare, a forced quality, you get from Gorbachev that does not come across as something peaceful within himself. It's the look of a kind of human volcano, or he'd probably like to describe it as a human nuclear energy plant."  
– CBS anchor Dan Rather on Mikhail Gorbachev, as quoted in the May 10, 1990 *Seattle Times*.

■ "In five years, Mikhail Gorbachev has transformed the Soviet Union from a rigid police state to what he describes as a kind of freewheeling infant democracy."  
– Dan Rather's introduction to a story on making criticism of Gorbachev illegal, May 15, 1990 *Evening News*.

■ "He seems to me to have done more good in the world than any other national leader of my lifetime."  
– Moscow reporter Bob Abernethy on the December 24, 1991 *NBC Nightly News*.

■ "By American presidential standards, Mikhail Gorbachev accomplished enough in his seven-year term to qualify for a bust on Mount Rushmore."  
– NBC's Jim Maceda, December 25, 1991 *Nightly News*.

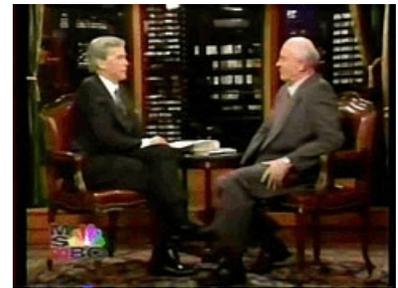


■ “What do you do for an encore after ending the Cold War and reversing the arms race? How about saving the planet? That’s the latest assignment for Mikhail Gorbachev, having assumed the presidency of the International Green Cross, a new environmental organization...”  
– *Time’s* “The Week” section, May 3, 1993.

■ “I like this kind of man and I think we need more of them,” gushed Maria Shriver, speaking of Gorbachev, not [her husband] Arnold [Schwarzenegger].”  
– October 31, 1994 *People* article on the NBC reporter meeting Gorbachev at the Hollywood launching of Global Green USA.

■ “He can still light up any room that he walks into. The eyes are flashy, you know, and the great command of the language and the feel that he has, the very physical presence of him. It’s still fun to be around him.”  
– *NBC Nightly News* anchor Tom Brokaw on PBS’s *Charlie Rose*, May 2, 1996.

■ “Perhaps one day again we’ll see you in political office in Russia. We know that you’ve devoted your life to peace and to changing your country and those of us who have gotten to know you count ourselves among the privileged.”  
– Tom Brokaw closing his October 29, 1996 MSNBC *InterNight* interview with Gorbachev.



■ “He’s only the most important political leader alive in the world today, historically speaking....If you look over the course of our lifetimes, who was the most, well, you go back to Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt....If I look back over my lifetime, who is the world leader who changed things the most, and I don’t actually think it is a close call.”  
– *Newsweek’s* Jonathan Alter on Gorbachev, April 27, 2001 *Imus in the Morning* on MSNBC.

■ “With a Western-style politician’s charm and a homey touch, he became, as *Time* put it, ‘a symbol of hope for a new kind of Soviet Union: more open, more concerned with the welfare of its citizens and less with the spread of its ideology and system abroad.’ What did spread, at home and abroad, was a fever of democratic reform.”  
– *Time* in its double-issue dated Dec. 31, 2001/Jan. 7, 2002, explaining why it selected the former Soviet dictator as “Man of the Year” in 1987 and 1989.

### ***Conclusion: Nostalgic for Totalitarian Communism***

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Ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, reporters marked the anniversary by focusing on how much worse life had become for those freed from communism. CNN’s Christiane Amanpour actually scolded Mikhail Gorbachev in a November 8, 1999 interview. “Ten years later, many are saying the unbridled capitalism that followed communism has unleashed misery on citizens who had all their social needs taken care of, especially in the former Soviet Union,” Amanpour asserted.

She lectured Gorbachev: "Mr. President, you are regarded by many people in this world as a hero for causing the end of tyranny and the collapse of communism. But you are also criticized heavily by those who say you opened a Pandora's Box. And they say, 'Look at the strife now, look at the economic chaos, look at the Mafia structure, look at the corruption.' They say that you opened and started a plan that you did not know how to finish."

The next night on ABC's *World News Tonight*, anchor Peter Jennings struck the same note: "It is probably hard for most Americans to imagine anyone feeling nostalgic about living behind the Wall. It may also be hard to imagine that anyone in the Western part of Germany would miss the Wall either. But miss it, some people do."

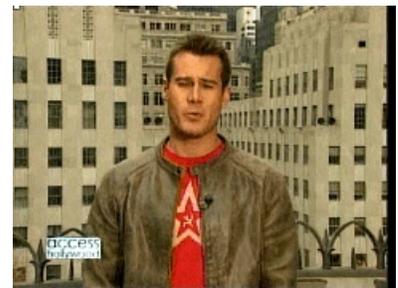
Five years later, Moscow was one of the stops for NBC's Matt Lauer during his annual "Where in the World Is Matt Lauer?" *Today* show feature. Lauer suggested that, for many Russians, the decades spent under communism were the good old days: "We're gonna be talking about the New Russia, how a few people are doing very well and the fear that others are being left very far behind," he teased on the February 12, 2004 morning news program. He later declared: "Russia's rush to capitalism left the vast majority scrambling to survive. For many, life is worse than it was in Soviet times."

In the October 12, 2009, *Newsweek* wondered: "Was Russia Better Off Red?" The magazine answered its own question with a full-page graphic showing that Russia today has fewer hospitals and movie theaters, but more crime and divorce. "Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has seen an increase in oligarchs and Louis Vuitton outlets. But by many other measures, Russians are worse off."

When the Soviet Union existed, the embarrassing puff pieces sat alongside reports of military crackdowns, belligerent speeches from the Kremlin wall, and occasional reports on dissidents and other abuses. But with the Soviet Union gone, the gauzy nostalgia took on an increasing share of what the media continued to say about communism.

The pop culture also contributed to the softening of communism's image. As the *Boston Globe's* Jeff Jacoby noted in a 2006 column, "The glamorization of communism is widespread. On West 4th Street in Manhattan, the popular KGB Bar is known for its literary readings and Soviet propaganda posters. In Los Angeles, the La La Ling boutique sells baby clothing emblazoned with the face of Che Guevara, Fidel Castro's notorious henchman. At the House of Mao, a popular eatery in Singapore, waiters in Chinese army uniforms serve Long March Chicken, and a giant picture of Mao Zedong dominates one wall."

Communist chic hit the national media, too. In April 2006, an entertainment reporter on the NBC-produced *Access Hollywood* wore a hammer and sickle shirt on camera two weekdays in a row. New York correspondent Tim Vincent (shown at right), a veteran of the BBC, wore a jacket over the red shirt with the communist symbol clearly visible inside a gold-outlined red star which (sans the hammer and sickle) would match the Soviet's Red Army emblem.



As Jacoby wondered, "How can people who wouldn't dream of drinking in a pub called Gestapo cheerfully hang out at the KGB Bar? If the swastika is an

undisputed symbol of unspeakable evil, can the hammer-and-sickle and other emblems of communism be anything less?"

One answer may be that the news media have painted communism as far more benign than it really was — an “uplifting idea,” as CBS’s Andy Rooney described it in 1989, but it “got in with a bad crowd when it was young and never got the chance.” Many reporters seem sympathetic to the idea that state control is preferable to a free economy. In the mid-1990s, researchers Stanley Rothman and Amy Black surveyed journalists and found strong support for government intervention, including making sure that everyone has a job and working to “reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor.” Writing in the Spring 2001 *Public Interest*, Rothman and Black concluded: “Despite the discrediting of centrally planned economies produced by the collapse of the Soviet Union and other communist regimes, attitudes about government control of the economy have not changed much since the 1980s.”

The too-fond reminiscences of Soviet communism are at odds with the realities of history. As an economic model, communism was an utter failure. Over the decades the two existed side by side, citizens in the capitalist world enjoyed increasing standards of living, technological innovation, and growing wealth, while the communist world stagnated or worse. But as a political system, totalitarian communism was a true horror, with casualties numbering in the tens of millions. There is nothing in the true record of communism that merits romantic reflection.

Before the revolutions of 1989, journalists informed us that communism was truly popular among the people of Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. After that fallacy was demolished, the media insisted that capitalism was the real catastrophe, with workers victimized by the lack of the “safety net” provided by the ex-dictators. Most perverse, some reporters even cast the Soviet Union’s absence — not its 70-year presence — as the real threat to human rights.

As the anniversary of the toppling of the Berlin Wall approaches, it’s worth celebrating the end of European communism. But it’s also worth recalling at this time how the liberal media failed to accurately portray the evils of communism, with coverage that too often tipped in favor of the oppressors, not the oppressed. At the very least, journalists should take this opportunity to investigate the human rights abuses and oppression that still exists in the world’s last totally communist states, Cuba and North Korea. The gauzy, romantic coverage of the communist regime in Cuba needs to end — unless the media once again wish to be on the wrong side of history when that dictatorship, too, is finally swept away.

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