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Why I Am a Communist!

By Andre Vltchek
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There are several essential messages literally shouting from the screen, whenever one watches ‘The Last Supper’ (*La Ultima Cena*), a brilliant 1976 film by a Cuban director Tomas Gutierrez Alea.

The utmost one: it is impossible to enslave an entire group or race of people, at least not indefinitely. Longing for freedom, for true liberty, is impossible to break, no matter how brutally and persistently colonialism, imperialism, racism and religious terror try to.

The second, equally important message is that the whites and the Christians (but mostly the white Christians) have been behaving, for centuries and all over the world, like a horde of savage beasts and genocidal maniacs.

At the end of April 2016, on board *Cubana de Aviacion* jet that was taking me from Paris to Havana, I couldn't resist opening my computer and watching *La Ultima Cena* again, for at least the tenth time in my life.

Gutierrez on my screen, *Granma Internacional* (official Cuban newspaper named after the boat which brought Fidel, "Che" and other revolutionaries to Cuba, triggering the Revolution) and a glass of pure and honest rum on my table, I felt at home, safe and blissfully happy. After several depressing days in Paris, I was finally leaving that gray, increasingly depressing, oppressive and self-righteous Europe behind.

Latin America was waiting for me. It was facing terrible attacks organized by the West. Its future was once again uncertain. "Our governments" were bleeding, some of them collapsing. The appalling extreme right-wing government of Mauricio Macri in Argentina has been busy dismantling the social state. Brazil was suffering from the political coup performed by corrupt right-wing lawmakers. Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution was struggling, literally fighting for its survival. Treasonous reactionary forces were confronting both Ecuador and Bolivia.

I was asked to come. I was told: "Latin America needs you. We are fighting a war for survival". And here I was, on board the *Cubana*, going 'home', to the part of the world that has always been so dear to me, and has shaped me into what I am now, as a man and as a writer.

I was going 'home', because I wanted to, but also because it was my duty. And I damn believe in duties!

After all, I'm not an anarchist but a Communist, 'educated' and hardened in Latin America.

But what does it mean when I say: 'I'm a Communist?'

Am I a Leninist, a Maoist, or a Trotskyist? Do I subscribe to the Soviet or the Chinese model?

Honestly, I have no idea! Frankly, I don't care much for those nuances.

To me personally, a true Communist is a fighter against imperialism, racism, 'Western exceptionalism', colonialism and neo-colonialism. He or she is a determined Internationalist, a person who believes in equality and social justice for all people on this Earth.

I'll leave theoretical discussions to those who have plenty of time on their hands. I never even re-read the entire *Das Kapital*. It is too long. I read it when I was 16 years old. I think that reading it once is enough... It's not the only pillar of Communism and it is not some holy scripture that should be constantly quoted.

More than *Das Kapital*, I was influenced by what I saw in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America. I saw the entire world, some 160 countries; I lived on all continents. Wherever I went, I witnessed the horrors of ongoing Western plunder of the Planet.

I saw the Empire forcing countries into bestial civil wars; wars sparked so the multi-national companies could comfortably loot. I saw millions of refugees from once proud and wealthy (or from potentially wealthy) countries that were ruined by the West: Congolese refugees, Somali refugees, Libyan and Syrian refugees, refugees from Afghanistan... I saw inhuman conditions in factories that looked like purgatories; I saw monstrous sweatshops, mines, and fields near feudally run villages. I saw hamlets and townships, where the entire population vanished – dead from hunger, diseases, or both.

I also spent days and days listening to shocking testimonies of victims of torture. I spoke to mothers who lost their children, to wives who lost husbands, to husbands whose wives and daughters were raped in front of their eyes.

And the more I saw, the more I witnessed, the more shocking the stories I heard; the more obliged I felt to take sides, to fight for what I believe could be a much better world.

I wrote two books compiling hundreds of stories of terror committed by the West: "*Exposing Lies Of The Empire*" and "*Fighting Against Western Imperialism*".

It didn't bother me how derogatorily the Empire has been in depicting people who are still faithful to their ideals; ready to sacrifice everything, or almost everything, for the struggle against injustice.

I'm not afraid of being ridiculed. But I am terrified of wasting my life if I put selfishness on a pedestal, elevating it above the most essential humanistic values.

I believe that a writer cannot be 'neutral' or apolitical. If he is, then he is a coward. Or he is a liar.

Naturally, some of the greatest modern writers were or are Communists: Jose Saramago, Eduardo Galeano, Pablo Neruda, Mo Yan, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, to name just a few. Not a bad company, not bad at all!

And I believe that living and struggling for others is much more fulfilling than living only for one's own selfish interests and pleasures.

I admire Cuba for what it has done for humanity, in almost six decades of its revolutionary existence. Cuban Internationalism is what I personally see as ‘my Communism’.

Cuba has heart and it has guts. It knows how to fight, how to embrace, how to sing and dance and how not to betray its ideals.

Is Cuba ideal? Is it perfect? No, of course it is not. But I don’t demand perfection, from countries or from people, or from the Revolutions for that matter. My own life is very far from ‘perfect’. We all make errors and bad decisions: countries, people as well as revolutions.

Perfection actually horrifies me. It is cold, sterile and self-righteous. It is ascetic, puritanical, and therefore inhuman, even perverse. I don’t believe in saints. And I feel embarrassed when someone pretends to be one. Those small errors and ‘imperfections’ are actually making people and countries so warm, so loveable, so human.

The general course of the Cuban Revolution has never been ‘perfect’, but it has always been based on the deepest, most essential roots of humanism. And even when Cuba stood for some short time alone, or almost alone (it was China at the end, as I wrote and as Fidel shortly after confirmed in his “Reflections”, that extended to Cuba its mighty fraternal hand) – it bled, it suffered and shivered from pain brought by countless betrayals, but it did not stir from its path, it did not kneel, it did not beg and it never surrendered!

This is how I think people and countries should live. They should not exchange ideals for trinkets, love for security and advantages, decency for cynical and bloodstained rewards. *Patria no se vende*, they say in Cuba. Translated loosely: ‘The Fatherland should never be sold’. I also believe that Humanity should never be sold, as well as Love.

And that is why I am a Communist!

Betraying what we – human beings – really are, as well as betraying the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable among us is, I believe, more frightening than suicide, than death.

A person, a country or a culture that thrives on the suffering of others, is defunct, thoroughly immoral.

The West had been doing exactly that, for decades and centuries. It has been living from and thriving on the enslavement of others and usurping everything on and under the surface of our Earth. It has corrupted, morally and financially, millions of people in its colonies and client states, turning them into shameless and spineless collaborators. It has ‘educated’, indoctrinated and organized huge armies of traitors, on all continents, in almost all corners of the world.

Betrayal is the most powerful weapon of the Western Empire – betrayal and oblivion.

The West turns human beings into prostitutes and butlers, and those who refuse, into prisoners, slaves and martyrs.

Indoctrination is well planned. Dreams are poisoned and ideals dragged through dirt. Nothing pure is allowed to survive.

People are made to fantasize only about hardware; phones and tablets, cars and television sets. But the messages are empty, full of nihilism, repetitive and shallow. Cars can now drive very fast, but there is nothing really significant waiting at the end of the journey. Phones have thousands of functions and applications, but they are broadcasting increasingly trivial messages. Television sets are regurgitating propaganda and intellectually toxic entertainment.

It all brings profits to big corporations. It guarantees obedience. It strengthens the regime. But in many ways, humanity is getting poorer and poorer, while the Planet is almost entirely ruined.

Beauty is replaced with images full of gore. Knowledge is spat on, substituted by primitive pop. Or it is confused with those official-looking diplomas and stamps of approval issued by the indoctrination centers called universities: “Graduated: ready to serve the Empire!” Poetry is gone, from most of bookstores, and from life.

Love is now shaped on pop culture images, anchored in some ‘retro’, oppressive and outdated Christian dogmas.

It is clear that only Communism has so far been strong enough to confront the essence of the mightiest and the most destructive forces on our Planet: Western colonialism/ imperialism, which is locked in a disgusting and incestuous marriage with its own offspring – cruel feudal, capitalist and religious gangs of ‘local elites’ in conquered and ruined countries all over the world.

Both the Empire and its servants are betraying humanity. They are ruining the Planet, pushing it into the state where it could soon become uninhabitable. Or where life itself could lose all its meaning.

To me, to be a true Communist means this: to be engaged in the constant fight against the incessant rape of human brains, bodies and dignity, against the plunder of resources and nature, against selfishness and consequent intellectual and emotional emptiness.

I don’t care under which flag it is done – red with the hammer and sickle, or red with several yellow stars. I’m fine with either of them, as long as the people holding those banners are honest and concerned with the fate of humanity and our Planet.

And as long as people calling themselves Communists are still able to dream!

Western propagandists tell you: “show us one perfect Communist society!”

I answer: “There is no such society. Human beings, as we have determined, are incapable of creating anything perfect. Fortunately!” Only religious fanatics are aiming at ‘perfection’. Humans would die of boredom in a perfect world.

Revolution, a Communist Revolution, is a journey; it is a process. It is a huge, heroic attempt to build a much better world, using human brains, muscles, hearts, poetry and courage! It is a perpetual process, where people give more than they take, and when there is no sacrifice, only a fulfillment of duty towards humankind.

‘Che’ Guevara once said: “Sacrifices made should not be displayed as some identity card. They are nothing less than fulfilled obligations.”

Maybe in the West, it is too late for such concepts to flourish. Selfishness, cynicism, greed and indifference have been successfully injected into the sub-consciousness of the majority of people. Perhaps that is why, despite all those material and social privileges, the inhabitants of Europe and North America (but also of Japan) appear to be so depressed and gloomy. They live only for themselves, at the expense of others. They want more and more material goods and more and more privileges.

They have lost the ability to define their own condition, but probably, deep inside, they feel emptiness, intuitively sensing that something is terribly wrong.

And that’s why they hate Communism. That’s why they stick to self-righteous lies, deceptions and dogmas delivered to them by the regime’s propaganda. If Communists were right, then they would be wrong. And they suspect that they may be wrong. Communism is their bad conscience, and it brings fear that the bubble of lies could one day get exposed.

Most people in the West, even those who claim that they belong to the Left, want Communism to go away. They want to smear it, cover it with filth; bring it ‘to their level’. They want to muzzle it. They are desperately trying to convince themselves that Communism is wrong. Otherwise, the responsibility for the hundreds of millions of lost lives would haunt them incessantly. Otherwise, they would have to hear and maybe even accept that the privileges of Europeans and North Americans are constructed on dreadful crimes against humanity! Otherwise, they would be forced to, on moral grounds, dismantle those privileges (something truly unthinkable, given the mindset of Western culture).

The recent position of the majority of Europeans towards the refugees coming from countries destabilized by the West, clearly shows how morally defunct the West really is. It is incapable of basic ethical judgments. Its ability to think logically has collapsed.

But the West is still ruling the world. Or more precisely, it is twisting its arm, pushing it towards disaster.

Western imperialist logic is simple: “If we rape and loot, it is because if we don’t, others would! Everybody is the same. It cannot be helped. What we do is essential to human nature.”

It is not. It is rubbish. I have seen people behaving better, much better than that, almost everywhere outside the Western world and its colonies. Even when they manage to slip away from their torturers and jailers – the Empire – for only a few years, they behave much better. But usually they are not allowed to slip away for too long: the Empire hits powerfully against those who dare to dream about freedom. It arranges coups against rebellious governments, destabilizes economies, supports the ‘opposition’, or directly invades.

It is absolutely clear to anyone who is still able and willing to see, that if the criminal Western Empire collapses, human beings would want to, they’d be capable of building great egalitarian and compassionate societies.

I believe that this is not the end. People are waking up from indoctrination, from stupor.

New, powerful anti-imperialist alliances are being forged. The year 2016 is not 1996 when there seemed to be almost no hopes left.

The war is waged, the war for the survival of humankind.

It is not a classical war of bullets and missiles. It is a war of nerves and ideals, dreams and information.

Before passing away, the great Uruguayan writer and revolutionary, Eduardo Galeano, told me: “Soon the time will come, and the world will erect old banners again!”

It is happening now! In Latin America, Africa and Asia, in almost all parts of the former Soviet Union and in China, people are demanding more Communism, not less. They don’t always call Communism by its name, but they are crying for its essence: freedom and solidarity, passion, fervor, courage to change the world, equality, justice and internationalism.

I have no doubt that we will win. But I also suspect that before we do, the Empire will bathe entire continents in blood. Desire of Westerners to rule and to control is pathological. They are ready to murder millions of those who are unwilling to fall on their knees. They already murdered hundreds of millions, throughout the centuries. And they will sacrifice millions more.

But this time, they will be stopped.

I believe it, and shoulder-to-shoulder with others, I am working day and night to make it happen.

Because it is my duty...

Because I’m a Communist!