



WHY I SUPPORT THE CONTRAS

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I've never been to Nicaragua. My knowledge of what is now going on there is second-hand, circumstantial and very incomplete. Does this mean that I should suspend judgement about who to back, the Sandinista government, or their Contra enemies? I will now explain why my answer to this question is no, why I strongly support the Contra rebels in their quest for American treasure and guns, and hope that the Sandinista government collapses.

I hope that this collapse is not bloody and prolonged, but if it is bloody and prolonged, I'm still for it. I'd prefer a prolonged and bloody Sandinista collapse to Sandinista victory.

AXIOMS AND CONCLUSIONS

How did I arrive at this opinion? I did it by making maximum use of the facts about Nicaragua that are known to me. Facts such as:

Communism is gigantically evil and destructive.

Communists are not just ordinarily bad and destructive. Despite some very serious efforts at mass murder by non-Communist rivals, Communists have been *by far* the most murderous people ever to have lived. Not even Hitler murdered as many innocent civilians as the Soviet Communists have, and if the Chinese Communists are included in the calculation as well, then the difference becomes even more vast.

Foreign Policy Perspectives No. 9

ISSN 0267-6761 ISBN 0 948317 84 1

An occasional publication of the Libertarian Alliance,
25 Chapter Chambers, Esterbrooke Street, London SW1P 4NN
www.libertarian.co.uk email: admin@libertarian.co.uk

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FOR LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY

Here's another fact.

Right Wing, US supported governments are, at their worst, not as bad as Communist governments at their best, and not remotely as bad as Communist governments at their worst.

I know of no conventionally "right wing" US supported despotism, of the Chilean, South Korean, Guatemalan or Salvadorean variety, whose body count gets anywhere near what Communists at their worst are capable of. On the contrary, Cuba, one of the mildest Communist regimes (in terms of mass murder), seems to be arithmetically at least as nasty as these right wing despotisms, while more vicious Communist regimes like Vietnam are far worse, and places like Ethiopia and Cambodia several orders of magnitude more destructive than any regimes backed by the Americans and claiming to be members of the "Free World".

Communism makes life hell for almost all of those who are subjected to it, even if they aren't murdered.

The most powerful evidence for that is the huge numbers of people who risk death to escape from Communism.

These miseries are not accidental, any more than the mass murdering is. They are the predictable and many times predicted result of Communist ideas about how people should be governed, and how economic life should be organised.

(I have recently visited a couple of East European Communist countries, so I have some direct experience of this particular fact.)

The Sandinistas are Communists.

I cannot quote you chapter and verse, but I definitely recall reading in *The Guardian* and other publications sympathetic to the Sandinistas (a) many quotes from Sandinista leaders of an unmistakably Communist kind, and (b) numerous explanations of why being Communists is *not their fault*. They were, we are constantly told, *compelled* to become Communists. The Americans put them in the position where their natural pride as Nicaraguans, their desire to remain in power instead of take their orders from the US ambassador, or even their simple desire to remain alive, gave them *no choice*. They *had* to accept military aid from the Russians and the Cubans. They had to allow the East Germans to run their secret police force. What do I expect them to do?

This is an interesting and important argument. However, pointing out that someone is *entitled* to be a Communist, or *not to be blamed* for being a Communist, is anything but evidence that he is *not in fact a Communist*. It is true that a person might be accused of being a Communist, "defended" at great length as being entitled to be a Communist, while still not actually being a Communist. Such a person might even be a strong anti-Communist, falsely claimed by Communists as a supporter. But when a self-proclaimed non- or even anti-Communist, who also claims to know more of the facts about Nicaragua than I do, tells me that the Sandinistas are not to be blamed for being Communists, I take this as powerful, even if indirect, evidence that they are Communists, whatever else they might have been in the past.

To use a much used (because very appropriate) analogy, Communism is like a disease. Whether you are to blame if you catch it is a logically quite separate question from whether you've now got it, and what ought to be done about this.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT IT IS COLD AT THE SOUTH POLE?

At this point, I'd like to expand a little on the question of evidence. Here's another fact.

It is very cold at the South Pole.

I take it we are agreed about this, but how do we know? Perhaps, unlike me, you've been there, and felt the cold. But assuming that you haven't been to the South Pole, what "facts", what "evidence", do we have at our disposal which enables us to be so certain of this truth? For truth it most definitely is.

Who among us can remember when or how we first learned of the coldness of the South Pole, or remember a fraction of the numerous further learning experiences that caused us to go on accepting this truth as true?

Could either of us cite any books (complete with publisher and year of publication) in which the whole question of the temperature at the South Pole is exhaustively gone into, and the conclusion demonstrated beyond any doubt that the place most definitely is cold? Faced only with the books I have on my desk in front of me, right now, I might not be able to do even this, and even if I could it might prove very laborious.

But more fundamentally, "proving" the coldness of the South Pole with an item of scholastic overkill would be rather pointless.

So certain are we of the South Pole's coldness that if some one item of "scholarly" evidence, complete with the exact and true title of the book, the exact and true date of publication, the exact and true publisher, exact and true ISBN number, the lot, was presented to us, which said that actually the South Pole is hot, *we'd be fools to accept this*. The *overwhelmingly* obvious conclusion to be drawn from this item of "scholarship" would simply be that for all its incidental scholarly exactitude, it was nonsensically wrong.

My belief concerning the Communism of the Sandinistas is not as strong as my belief in the coldness of the South Pole, but it is of the same logical type. I recall being told many times that the Sandinistas are Communists, by them, and by their sympathisers. I recall reading about the Sandinista UN rep' voting at the UN in favour of some particularly atrocious Soviet atrocity, but don't ask me to recall which newspaper I read it in, or what its date was, or which Soviet atrocity. I remember reading in all kinds of books about Communist propaganda techniques, and thinking that these Sandinista guys sure seemed to be using the same tricks. I have many times heard it said, and never so far as I can recall heard it denied, that the Sandinistas possess a hugely expensive army, paid for by the USSR. Again, don't expect me to recall all the places where I read this, all the radio bulletins where I heard it. I recall undoubtedly Communist Communists listing Nicaragua as one of the places where the imperialist warmongers were doing their warmongering worst, which Communists only do if the people the imperialist warmongers are warmongering against are indeed genuine Communists. I recall *The Guardian* (I think it must have been) arguing that since the Nicaraguan cabinet contained *poets*, they must all be nicer people than their enemies. The claim that being a poet makes you a nice politician is a sure sign of Communism at work, in my experience.

As to my understanding of the nastiness of Communism, this is only fractionally less in its certainty than my understanding of the coldness of the South Pole.

I have never witnessed a Communist famine like the one now afflicting Ethiopia, or a Communist slaughter such as happened in Cambodia. I have read many books about Communism, the titles of which I couldn't list from memory if I spent the rest of my life trying to do that. I recently, to fail to name but one, read a book by (I think) Robert Conquest, of whose title, as I say, I am unsure and whose publisher I never noted in the first place, about the horrors of the Ukrainian famine. Does my failure to recall the facts *about* this book mean that my belief in the truth of the facts *in* it, such as the fact of, and the horror of, the Ukrainian famine is unreasonable, and even fallacious?

I possess a book called *Breakfast in Hell*, which is an eyewitness account of the Ethiopian famine. I haven't yet read this book, nor can I even recall its author's name. I could go and get it, but this would be to concede the exact point I'm refusing here to concede. I recall reading an article in *The Spectator* (don't ask me when) by the author of *Breakfast in Hell* (I remember him being identified as such, but not his name) in which he said that a lot of the blame for the famine must be placed upon the Communist government of Ethiopia. I don't recall the exact details, but I recall that they were ghastly. Is my present belief that the rulers of Ethiopia are a gang of murderers made unreasonable by my failure to remember everything about one of the many experiences which enabled me to acquire this item of truth? I think not.

Here's another important truth:

Communism is just as capable of mass murder now as it ever was.

If Communism is in fact not destroying quite as many people as it used to, this is because it is now better understood by its enemies and intended victims, not because the thing itself is inherently any less dangerous.

Soviet Communism is getting better. (How could it get worse?) But Communism as such is as destructive as ever, just as often as any new country falls into its clutches and starts to be subjugated.

Which, by the way, means that the question of just how completely the Sandinista leaders are the puppets of Moscow is rather incidental in this argument. The Moscow backed Ethiopian regime has unleashed a holocaust similar to the Ukrainian famine. But the anti-Moscow Cambodian regime of Pol Pot was at least as ghastly. Nor would a self-propelled Communist Nicaragua necessarily be any less menacing to America than a Soviet dominated one. Either way, Communism in Nicaragua is bad news for America, in addition to being terrible news for Nicaragua.

Once Communism gets dug in, you only get rid of it quickly with armed force.

Words muster anti-Communist armies, raise money and guns for anti-Communist armies, recruit foreign support for anti-Communist armies, but words cannot *replace* the armies. The only speedy alternative to a Communist regime is another regime that results from the armed defeat of that Communist regime. Fantasising about how nice it might be for an effective Nicaraguan opposition to be formed consisting only of impeccably nice democrats, none of whom have ever done anything remotely nasty in their lives, is, in a country

like Nicaragua, at a time like now, an act of moral cowardice. The only alternative is to wait for about fifty years until everybody in the country - everybody - has become totally fed up with Communism and wants civilisation to be resumed (as seems to be the story in Russia now).

Communists behave least badly when they are treated very badly, and worst when they are treated well.

Grovel to Communists and they trample all over you. Treat them with public contempt, with armed threats, armed attacks and ferocious propaganda barrages, and they switch to doing civilised human being impersonations. Look at the amazingly concessionary Soviet noises now being made on the subject of Afghanistan. It was fighting men armed with ground-to-air missiles that did that, not UN resolutions. Look at Gorbachev's current crop of foreign and domestic policies, all smiles and concessions, when a few years ago we were told that if Reagan didn't switch to being nice to the USSR *at once* all hell would break loose.

Communists behave far better when denied power than when granted it, always and everywhere.

It is even the case that Communists respect fierce fights against them that *they win*. The Finns gave the Soviets a terrible fright in 1940, and now inhabit a genuinely civilised country. The Hungarians spilt as much blood as they could in 1956, and Hungary is now one of the least appalling places in the entire Soviet Empire. The Czechs in 1968 stuck flowers into the guns of invading Soviet tanks, and from then on the Soviets treated them with contempt. Had the Czechs managed in 1968 to lose a few genuine battles, the lives of surviving Czechs would have been far better.

The Contras are now fighting the Sandinistas, with some effect.

With how much, exactly, I do not know. The Contras may or may not also be engaged in smuggling drugs, speculating in the Florida property market and running brothels. What I will end up thinking of these other activities, if they are occurring, depends on whether or not they are being arranged for the benefit of fighting men or of parasitical bystanders, and on what is happening to the profits, if any. Meanwhile, some fighting, genuinely annoying to the Sandinistas, is definitely getting done. Why else would the Sandinistas now be agreeing to talk directly with the Contra leadership?

It is said by critics of the Contras, that they are bad, bad people, former Samozistas, and so forth. Maybe. Do the Contras commit atrocities? Probably, but this is not certain. If they have committed atrocities in the past, are they now behaving better, or worse? Doubtless someone knows, but I don't. Do the Sandinistas exaggerate the nastiness of any Contra atrocities that happen, and in addition to that stage or invent further Contra atrocities themselves? *That* is almost as certain as the coldness of the South Pole. For what are all those East German, Russian and Cuban Communists in Nicaragua playing at, if not games like that? Anti-Contra stories tell us nothing whatever about whether the Contras are or are not behaving in the manner described. Communists can be trusted in such matters no further than they can be spat. What these stories *do* tell us is that the Communists rate the Contras highly as enemies. If the Communists weren't bothered by the Contras, then the Contras could commit all the atrocities they liked and the Communists would ignore the entire subject.

Just as the Communists invariably invent evils committed by their enemies, so they invariably seek to conceal the hugely greater evils which they themselves really do commit.

To work out what Communists are doing at any particular moment, find out what the most "hysterical" of "hysterical anti-Communists" are saying, and then double it. You'll be about half way there.

In particular, it is clear to me that the election which the Sandinistas arranged for themselves was a fraud. According to what I've heard, they did it by harassing the serious opposition parties until these parties pulled out. But if all you do is add together the facts in my emboldened paragraphs you get that it must have been a fraud. Communists never get involved in elections like that *without* cheating. My guess is that the Sandinistas, or their East European or Russian advisers, decided in advance on the figure of 60%. This was high enough to be a decisive victory, but low enough to persuade the gullible that the election was a genuine one.

When it comes to fighting against Communism, the most important rule by far is: win. The end justifies the means.

The only excusable argument is about which means will truly achieve the desired end of destroying Communism. (It may well, for example, be *unwise* for the Contras to get caught torturing people, on the grounds that this hurts their support in Congress. But the answer is not for the Contras to surrender; it is for them to fight smarter, and not get caught torturing people. If they can fight successfully without torturing people at all, then they should do that as well.)

If the Sandinistas cling permanently and unchallenged to power they will undoubtedly behave very badly, and quite possibly with spectacular murderousness. If the Contras only manage to cramp the Sandinista style for a few years, that will still do a lot of good. If the Contras win, the Contra installed replacement government could conceivably be thoroughly disgusting, that is, about half as terrible as a nice version of the Sandinistas. If things go better than that, the Contra victory will utterly transform Nicaragua for the better.

Whatever else happens, a Contra victory will undoubtedly mean better, cheaper and more frequent supplies of razor blades, video machines, paper clips, sexy underwear, chocolate bars, cars, bread, drinking water, and so forth and so on. (If you think those things are unimportant then try living in a country where such unimportant comforts are either very rare or else absent.)

FACTS ARE IMAGINABLE WHICH WOULD CONTRADICT ME

The usual complaint about the kind of argument I've been putting forward in this pamphlet is that my opinions are impervious to facts of any kind.

This is quite untrue. Anyone who can show me that Communism is not that bad really, or that governments like those of Chile and El Salvador are definitely worse than Communist governments, or that Communism raises the living standards of those it doesn't murder, or that the Sandinistas are not Communists at all, or that the Contras have made no difficulties whatever for the Sandinistas, or that the Ukrainian famine never happened, or that the Cambodian holocaust was invented by an Oscar seeking film producer, or that the Ethiopian famine is entirely the result of the

weather, will undoubtedly cause me to rethink some or all of my opinions on these matters. Such evidence is, in logical principle, perfectly imaginable. What will *not* change my mind is mere anecdotal evidence about CIA murder plots, Samozista torturing sessions, Contra massacres of villages and so forth. *Even if true* such horror stories are mere pin pricks when set beside the massively destructive nature of the enemy that the Contras are fighting.

A Communist victory anywhere is a catastrophe. To fail to assume this in some particular case is the logical equivalent of seeing an apple travelling upwards from a tree (for some temporarily mysterious reason) and immediately concluding that the laws of gravity have been reversed.

ENERGISING THE GOOD GUYS AND INTIMIDATING THE BAD GUYS

The great virtue of my way of arguing about Nicaragua compared to the usual and wrong way (which is based only on “facts”, eyewitness accounts, footnotes, etc.) is that it *saves time*. I don’t just back the Contras. I back them *now*, while my voice can still make some conceivable difference to the result of their war. My way of analysing things doesn’t require me to sit on the fence and wait for all that “evidence”, and only in about the year 2010 to realise that, dear oh deary me, I was wrong to be so neutral. I’m not going to wait about for Robert Conquest to write this one up. I’m going to do my bit, now, to run him out of business, which I’m sure would suit him fine.

The purpose of this pamphlet is twofold. Its number one aim is to encourage and energise all those whose understanding of the nature of Communism is sound, but who have been intimidated by their lack of “evidence” and worries about Contra nastiness from supporting the Contras as effectively as they could and should. To these noble but flawed persons I say: my friends, you know what I know. You agree with my conclusions just as you agree with my axioms. Your only problem is that until now you haven’t quite had my grasp of the impeccably logical way in which these axioms and conclusions are connected. I am proud and delighted to have been of service by pointing out this connection to you. Let us march onwards together to victory, and towards that great world of the future in which Communism is no more a live political issue than Anabaptism is now.

And the second purpose of this pamphlet is to intimidate the supporters of the Sandinistas into silence, and maybe even into changing sides, sooner than might happen otherwise, and soon enough to make a difference.

I concede nothing to the pro-Communists, nor to that enormously greater flock of sparrow-brains who have been aptly dubbed “anti-anti-Communists”. My opinions are true, and those of these other persons are false. I am morally and intellectually superior to them, and I want them to know that I know this. The evidence, in the true meaning of that word, is all of it on my side. Them yelling at me about the Contras being murderers backed by the CIA convinces me only of their stupidity, gullibility, and immorality, and of their all-round inferiority compared to me and to the CIA.

I also despise any “neutral” (anti-Communist *and* anti-anti-Communist!) who, having read this article, fails to grasp its point and continues to sit on his bloodstained fence. Why wait for the Communists to prove themselves *yet again* to be what everybody with any intellectual guts already knows

them to be, and for the hysterical anti-Communists *yet again* to be proved entirely right, and their critics *yet again* entirely wrong? Why choose evil, again? Why choose to walk the middle path, between good and evil, again?

As a rule I resist the language of moral duty. I prefer to behave as I please. If I spend as much time as I do arguing that others should also be allowed to do as *they* please, well, that’s because because doing this is one of the things that pleases me. But when any averagely decent person confronts that gigantic evil called Communism he surely ought to do something, if he can, to trip the monster up, slow it in its path, and generally do his bit to attack the evil. This is especially true if there is something fairly simple that he can do, which won’t cost him much, as is the case with me. I write pamphlets for the Libertarian Alliance, which has a quite large and disproportionately influential mailing list. We have the technology and can just about afford the stamps. As you can tell from the small print on page 1 of this I am extremely well placed to get whatever I write for the LA published and spread around. What I can do, I have done. The same should apply to you.

MORALITY AND STYLE

So, there we have it. I think that Communists ought to be crushed, that Communism is like a disease, that virtually any means are morally justified when opposing Communism, that the contest between Communism and its enemies is for all practical purposes a straight fight between good and evil, that we all have a moral duty to pitch in on the side of the good guys, and that any piece of verbiage which seems to suggest otherwise can be ignored because it is either irrelevant or a pack of lies or both.

From these opinions hostile readers may choose to deduce other things about me. So I will now add, by way of contrast, that I do *not* have a large handlebar moustache. I do *not* wear a dark blue blazer with gold buttons and a shield on its front pocket. I *never* exaggerate the contribution I made to such events as The Battle of Britain. I have *never* driven a sports car, and do *not* describe the wrecking of such a vehicle as a “prang”. When asking someone what he wishes to drink I do *not* say “What’s your poison?”

But, neither does anybody who does behave in the above rather tasteless fashion have anything very much to be ashamed of.

It is, in particular, quite wrong to think that someone who is an anti-Communist *with a handlebar moustache* somehow ranks below you on the ladder of human excellence, if all you are is a *pro-Communist without a handlebar moustache*. That many people do think in exactly this kind of way really is a genuine obscenity, far more disgusting than a bit of mere car door slamming and puking on the carpet, followed by some loudmouthed boasting about it all.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not in favour of people puking, any more than I’m against footnotes. It’s just that there seems to me to be something especially nasty about free, comfortable people choosing to decide questions of overwhelming historical and moral significance as if they were arguing about hemlines.

But then again, if part of the way to smash Communism is to make the smashing of Communism trendy, and the support of it untrendy (“My *Go-o-o-d* you’re not an *anti-anti-Communist* are you, how *emba-a-a-rassing!!!!!!*”) well, fine, that’s what we good guys should be doing. Whatever wins.