

V

More meditating on the Cold War and Global South (including Latin America).

After 1945 and more so from way of emerging available opportunities rather than by way of global strategic initiation there would eventuate economic or military assistance from Moscow for such liberation struggles which like in other parts of the world - depending on the level of commitment by both superpowers to support competing sides - would be ideologically reframed as 'proxy hot wars' within the overarching global framework of the Cold War. (Although with the Cuban Missile Crisis there directly was with the two superpowers the near thing of an all out nuclear war). Although there was Soviet support in Latin America during the Cold War by revolutionary movements against U.S. sponsored reactionary governments the hysterical rhetoric by extreme minded U.S. war hawks in regards to say the Central American Wars of the 1980s where upon it was argued that once the 'dominos' of El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua had fallen Soviet sponsored Marxist revolutionaries would next have Mexico in their sights and then once on the U.S. border the commies would soon be coming to retake the Alamo and whatever else they could get just north of the border and so on. (I remember seeing on the Honduran Nicaraguan border in 1986 a red and black poster of a profile of Augusto Sandino who was Nicaragua's national hero from the 1920/30s - who fought the *Yanquis* - standing over the words SOVIET IMPERIALISMO which was pure propaganda as the Nicaraguan Revolution which ousted a local dictator had nothing to do with Soviet foreign policy). Yes, Central American guerrilla movements did have a Marxist strain in their political character and yes there had even been a democratically elected President in Chile who had an ideological disposition towards Marxism but there had not been Soviet cadres clandestinely travelling over to Latin America to educate such revolutionary minded Latin Americans about the tenets of Lenin Marxism but as was the case internationally and especially after the Bolsheviks successfully came to power in 1917 there would be leaders of other revolutionary struggles and liberation movements throughout the course of the twentieth century (and to this day) that would *independently* look towards Marxist theory to substantiate their own political rationales; whether adopting a Marxist rationale - rather than say a more local or indigenous one - was actually the best approach in order to gain independence as well as to secure human liberty was the best approach for any revolutionary struggle can be debated yet so often to adopt a Marxist outlook was a local choice not a foreign introduced one; to state otherwise is to deny the political agency of local actors. If to be critical it could be suggested that there perhaps arose a misguided hopeful aura around a hard line pseudo-Marxist version of revolution after the Bolshevik takeover - even though what befell in Bolshevik Russia under Leninism was a dictatorial approach to 'freeing the workers from their chains' which was ruthlessly even more methodically refined by Stalinism. What is not really in question is Marxist economic theory which one can argue is mostly still valid in a globalized 21st century but rather what is debatable is how to best politically apply Marxist economic theory when able to do so. Personally, in post-WWII Europe it is a pity the social democratic spirit of Rosa Luxemburg that died with her murder did not have a chance to take the lead over Lenin's anti-democratic 'philosopher-king' path. Striving towards human liberation was the rhetorical claim of every revolutionary credo which was to bring about a new society here on earth. Nevertheless, in Central America after the horrendous civil wars of the 1980s no satisfactory new society emerged although there were briefly intimations of one in the short reign of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua when there was a pluralistic approach to political power which unfortunately eventually gave way to full Sandinista control which would not have really been a problem except that Daniel Ortega was leader and it can be argued that he was not someone who when the contra war was ever over (as the economy etc. was negatively skewed by it with

for instance an emphasis on defence spending) would steer Nicaragua towards a fully blossoming democracy. After all in Nicaragua with the electoral return to power of Daniel Ortega in the 2000s he has unfortunately only brought about in reality the return of yet another Latin American *caudillo* or strongman who is a 'Sandinsta' in marketing brand name only and who has, for instance arrested or forced into exile the so called 'real Sandinistas' who have been critical of Daniel Ortega's betrayal of the original liberating spirit of the Sandinista Revolution; having also hollowed out Nicaragua's judicial and democratic institutions to singularly secure his long term authoritarian rule.

Daniel Ortega, Nicaragua's Nov. 6 Election, and the Betrayal of a Revolution. Dan La Botz. New Politics. (2016).

<https://newpol.org/daniel-ortega-nicaraguas-nov-6-election-and-betrayal-revolution/>

While to make a general observation on Cuba where in the popular imagination a new society of sorts in Latin America has been instituted (although there is the criticism that it somewhat imitates an Eastern European Soviet model under a tropical sun) a defender of the Cuban Revolution would point out that along with there being a popular overthrow of a military dictator there had also been an improvement in major social indices such as education (high literacy rates) and healthcare (universal, free) as well as to add a lack of a real homelessness problem by which to argue how the lives of Cubans had commonly improved despite ongoing economic hardships (not helped by a U.S. embargo). Yet, on the negative side of the revolutionary ledger to mention just one major issue there is for civil society still a lack of democratic space with restrictive measures on freedom of expression remaining in place for all citizens. e.g. Reporters Without Borders ranks Cuba as having the lowest press freedom in Latin America.

Cuba. Reporters Without Borders. (2023).

<https://rsf.org/en/country/cuba>

While Cuba's education and health sectors are not exactly in their best state at the moment.

Cuba health and education hollowed out as staff join emigration exodus. Ed Augustin. Guardian. December. 2023.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/06/cuba-health-education-workers-leaving>

However, the only point for now that is to be really made is that Marxist orientated liberation movements such as in Latin America were not initiated by the Soviet Union but such Marxist inclined guerrilla groups when they emerged in the twentieth century would mostly turn to the Soviet Union for support and the Soviet Union took up the opportunity to provide it. ¹



A Soviet model helicopter hovering over Esteli for security reasons on the day of the 7th anniversary of the success of the Sandinista Revolution over the Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza. Yet Nicaraguan resistance to the Yanqui goes back well before the Soviet Union existed. e.g. in 1912 there were U.S. marines in Nicaragua. (Photo taken by the author. July 19, 1985).

Yet it was not always inevitable as I do remember reading once long ago how Fidel Castro first attempted to have a genuine rapprochement with his giant imperial capitalist hostile neighbour the United States but alas to no avail so he then strengthened Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union which from the point of view of the U.S.A. could be seen as a political 'self-fulfilling prophecy' and which would eventually draw in the two superpowers to near nuclear mutual destruction with the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. It was a near thing with JFK's generals wanting a 'surgical strike' and to invade Cuba and even mooted on the deployment of nuclear weapons. Yet, JFK would not dare give way to the insanity of his generals and the naval blockade around Cuba - which would quarantine it from Soviet ships with military supplies reaching the island - that JFK had put in place was a creative lateral way to stand up to the Soviet Union without having to necessarily escalate to a nuclear option. A negotiated diplomatic settlement with Khrushchev became a viable option to de-escalate the crisis and so it was eventually mutually agreed that Soviet missiles would be removed from Cuba if U.S. missiles were removed from Turkey which neighboured the Soviet Union and that there was also an assurance that Cuba would not be invaded.

Inside JFK's Decision making During the Cuban Missile Crisis. Martin J. Sherwin. TIME magazine. October. 2020.

<https://time.com/5899754/jfk-decisionmaking-cuban-missile-crisis/>

A very interesting article on this matter but which may not be easily accessible (it was when I first came across it) is:

JFK vs. the Military. The Atlantic. Robert Dallek.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/08/jfk-vs-the-military/309496/>

(I couldn't help but think of Stanley Kubrik's *Dr Strangelove* film while reading the above article).

Tito's Yugoslavia split away from Stalin and in western Europe also during the Cold War in countries such as Italy, France and Spain there did emerge Eurocommunism which would not directly follow any Moscow line.

As to the actual political merit of such revolutionary groups (be they Marxist, nationalist, 'non-Western' etc.) in relation to human liberty that is yet another matter as it can be seen at times that despite the best intention of wanting to bring on a 'new society' the overthrow of one form of authoritarianism may in the end only lead to the (unintended or otherwise) establishment of another form of authoritarianism. (For instance in the last hundred odd years there are many tragic examples of such an unwanted dismal political result). This is not to suggest that liberation struggles should not be initiated as it is a first priority that social oppression wherever it may occur be overcome but it is a matter of being aware that usually in the embryonic period of any 'new society' that long lasting societal democratic institutions that separates power be established and that will survive any immediate or later attempt to undermine any singular attempt to return to authoritarian rule no matter its political complexion.

It is so often the case a leader who has the military skills to organise a well disciplined force to defeat a seemingly more powerful regime may not necessarily also have the political skills that are needed that will allow for a pluralistic civil society to thrive. You could argue it is not always so much a deficiency of ideology but rather of a human nature that has socially evolved along hierarchical lines especially with the rise of socially complex human environments that can if unchecked undermine any long lasting egalitarian quest for universal human freedom.

Democracy as it is known today also strictly maintains a social hierarchy with a difference being that institutionally an arbitrary time limit is often mutually set so power becomes temporal and then such executive power is further institutionally limited with parliamentary and judicial checks and balances while also even then power is verified not abstractly by a 'divine will' but concretely by the 'people's will' and on a regular basis with the accepted availability of other candidates so that such temporal power does not automatically devolve back into an autocratic or monarchic form of life-long absolute power which ultimately will also have all checks and balances removed (what need for 'God's chosen ruler' to seek after any human approval...?). In the latter autocratic scenario (or oligarchical whereby absolute power is shared by a few rather than just by one) a dissatisfied or inevitably oppressed population is only left with taking up a revolutionary alternative rather than an electoral one to have any transfer of power and, as well, ideally, for it to be from the few to the many. Yet, even then it is the case of trusting whoever – individual or elite that leads such a popular revolution – which will still leave such a freshly liberated society with hierarchical settings - is not interested in power *per se* but will allow for the universal accommodation of power and so accordingly will establish the necessary institutions in such a 'new society' so the 'people's will' flourishes rather than to be suffocated. Although I am talking generally and somewhat abstractly in regards to the issue of state power it does come up in the novella or at least it was on my mind when I wrote it. The following whether rightly or wrongly are some of the

countries or movements that arbitrarily came to mind while presently writing and which a reader (who definitely can think of other examples) may wish to review by way of some introductory articles that are a random collection. Mugabe's Zimbabwe, Ortega's second Nicaraguan presidency; Sukarno's Guided Democracy then Suharto's New Order both in Indonesia; post-Mandela's ANC, Mao & Xi's China, Khomeini's Iran, Said's Tunisia, Orbán's Hungary, Sisi's Egypt, Modi's India and Colombia's FARC. Notably many countries are from the Global South (or what was more commonly referred to as the Third World thus reflecting the world wide process of decolonisation that occurred after the end of the WWII).

"Let Freedom Reign..." - especially for the 'Global South' (and elsewhere).

To make a general remark on what is politically complex (and looking over what I have already written which has been rushed and clumsy): decolonisation is welcome but what is not welcome is when an oppressive colonial elite is only replaced by an oppressive local elite (which may have also been nurtured by the coloniser & which is too often the case to be equivalently coercive or in many cases much worse which calls for a further effort by a populace and perhaps by any means possible - although by non-violent, mass democratic means is preferred - to eventually be truly liberated in economic, political, cultural and social spheres.

In regards to the term 'third world' there is Hannah Arendt's comment that the 'third world is not a reality but an ideology' has also come to mind.

To make yet another off hand comment in previously referencing Reporters Without Borders one has also randomly come across how Vietnam in 2023 ranks as the third worst in imprisoning journalists.

<https://rsf.org/en/country/vietnam>

From the above link one can scour the webpage to look at other countries and it is of interest to see that with Australia the sanguine observation is made that press freedom is fragile:

<https://rsf.org/en/country/australia>

General information links to some of the countries previously mentioned (links that one has come across after doing a less than exhaustive randomised web search. Thus one is aware that one is held captive to the information that the algorithms readily provide while always holding back other web links. Thus one may wish to surmise that although information is more readily available to the general public by way of the internet it is still not wholly a neutral, objective space. One also imagines if similar web search was initiated at another point of time a different set of results would occur. It should also be kept in mind that the subjective unconscious/conscious biases of the author have to also be taken into account even though there is a mindful nominal attempt to be objective):

Zimbabwe's Mugabe: from liberator to oppressor Reuters. (September. 2019).

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN1VR0HO/>

Guided Democracy. Sukarno. Country Studies.

<https://countrystudies.us/indonesia/18.htm>

Soeharto: the giant of modern Indonesia who left a legacy of violence and corruption. The Conversation. 2021.

<https://theconversation.com/soeharto-the-giant-of-modern-indonesia-who-left-a-legacy-of-violence-and-corruption-164411>
Old state and new empire in Indonesia: debating the rise and decline of Suharto's New Order. Mark. T. Berger. Third World Quarterly. Vol 18, No 2, pp 321-361, 1997. <https://library.fes.de/libalt/journals/swetsfulltext/11220681.pdf>

The Political Economy of Oligarchy and the Reorganization of Power in Indonesia. Vedi R. Hadiz and Richard Robison.

(2013). https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/54629/INDO_96_0_1381338354_35_58.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Feudalism in Indonesian Democracy. Indra Fauzan and Fernanda Putra Adela Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. (2020).

<https://www.scitepress.org/Papers/2019/100021/100021.pdf>

ANC corruption is a major cause of South Africa's failure – and the polls will show it. William Gunede. Guardian. 2019.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/08/anc-corruption-south-africa-failure-polls>

FARC. Colombia. Insight Crime. 23 (Nov. 2023)

<https://insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/farc-profile/>

Et Tu, Daniel? The Sandinista Revolution Betrayed. Roger Burbach. NACLA (2009). <https://nacla.org/news/et-tu-daniel-sandinista-revolution-betrayed>

The Arab Spring: why did things go so badly wrong? Adam Roberts. Guardian. (Jan. 2016)

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/15/arab-spring-badly-wrong-five-years-on-people-power>

Egypt: A Move to Enhance Authoritarian Rule. Human Rights Watch. 2019.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/12/egypt-move-enhance-authoritarian-rule>

In Tunisia, Ticking the Authoritarian Checklist. Under President Saied, Demonstration Banned, Foreign Critics Expelled. Human Rights Watch. March. 2023.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/03/13/tunisia-ticking-authoritarian-checklist>

Does Hungary Offer a Glimpse of Our Authoritarian Future? Andrew Marantz. New Yorker. June 2022.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/07/04/does-hungary-offer-a-glimpse-of-our-authoritarian-future>

The Authoritarian Roots of India's Democracy. Tripurdaman Singh. Journal of Democracy. (July. 2023).

<https://journalofdemocracy.org/articles/the-authoritarian-roots-of-indias-democracy/>

Khomeini Factcheck: Forty Years of False Promises in Iran. IRANWIRE. Feb. 2021.

<https://iranwire.com/en/fact-checking/68822/>

China: Back to Authoritarianism. Ian Johnson. China File. September. 2022.

<https://www.chinafile.com/library/nyrb-china-archive/china-back-authoritarianism>

Iran: 1988 Mass Executions Evident Crimes Against Humanity. Human Rights Watch. June. 2022.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/08/iran-1988-mass-executions-evident-crimes-against-humanity>

The Kurdish Roots of a Global Slogan. Shukriya Bradost. /First Person Iran. New Lines Magazine. December. 2022.

<https://newlinesmag.com/first-person/kurdish-roots-of-a-global-slogan/>

New Lines Magazine which I discovered by way of social media can be a starting point to read up on current issues relating to the Middle East although I see that its journalism can also extend beyond this particular region. (I say 'starting point' as one may not always agree with everything that is presented which, of course, can apply to all media).

<https://newlinesmag.com>

_As an example of an article which takes up a local view versus a view that is not local but uncritically treated as valid - or even more so - is the following whereby a Syrian academic criticizes analysis by Noam Chomsky who is based in the United States.

Chomsky's America-Centric Prism Distorts Reality. Yassin al-Haj Saleh. New Lines Magazine. (Review. Syria. June. 2022).

<https://newlinesmag.com/review/chomskys-america-centric-prism-distorts-reality/>

A couple of links to Haiti has also been included as the Haitian Revolution which was an African slave revolt against the French plantation owners who exploited them should be as well known as the American and French Revolutions. However, although it was successful it would be a case of the oppressed becoming the oppressors due to a mixture of domestic and international causes. Although the colonists had been defeated the inherited colonial social structure basically remained (while there had also been much economic carnage had also occurred during the prolonged duration of this resistance; financial restraints, threat of invasion etc. from powerful nations who saw the success of this black revolt as a threat would also further impede any possibility of social progress on the island. The reader is encouraged to

further examine Haiti's history as the social crisis that exists today can be traced back to its historical roots).

Haiti's revolution was betrayed by greed, graft. The East African. (August. 2023).

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/oped/comment/haiti-s-revolution-was-betrayed-by-greed-graft-4392254>

The Haitian Revolution: The Slave Revolt Timeline in the Fight for Independence. Matthew Jones. History Co-operative. (Nov. 2023).

<https://historycooperative.org/the-haitian-revolution/>

Although the democratizing knowledge project Wikipedia is not always seen as a reliable source by its critics a look at the Wikipedia article on the Haitian Revolution does seem to provide a general overview including the aftermath. (In fact on all the subject matter mentioned in these notes the reader may wish to refer to wikipedia and other online encyclopaedia websites to garner further information).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian_Revolution

The novel *The Kingdom of this World* by Alejo Carpentier (1949) captures some of the dictatorial mood of this historical period. Haiti – like all nations - has a complex history which a co-opted ‘reductionist romanticism’ of its initial revolutionary success does it no service to the island and its people.

It is refreshing to come across a guerrilla leader like who has had the self-awareness to realise that a successful military leader may not always be the best political leader. I am talking about Xanana Gusmao who was the leading guerrilla commander in the East Timorese independence struggle against occupying Indonesia military forces.

East Timor resistance heroes look to the younger generation. Mark Dodd. Sydney Morning Herald. (January. 2000) by way of the East Timor and Indonesia Action Network.

<http://etan.org/et2000a/january/1-7/3ethero.htm>

Xanana Gusmao led FALANTIL which was the East Timorese military faction which fought against the Indonesia TNI (Indonesian National Military) certainly had stronger democratic credentials to bring about a pluralistic democracy than FRETILIN whose leadership ended up being mainly in exile and which was authoritarian in its political character having a Marxist-Leninist outlook of which has so often been the case such ‘avant-guard’ (or elite) minded parties tended towards an autocratic rather than multi-party approach to national governance. Thus there was a philosophical schism in the political approach between FALANTIL & FELENTIL on how a liberated Timor-Leste should be governed and thus it is worthwhile if the reader is able too to peruse - for instance - the following two chapters: *10 Independence for Timor-Leste & 11 The FALANTIL Tragedy* in Bernard Collaery's OIL UNDER TROUBLED WATER. In these two chapters one also learns how the Australian government preferred FELENTIL to govern Timor-Leste as it was perceived to be more feasible to gain an advantageous position in regards to any negotiations over energy resources in the waters between Timor-Leste and Australia. As it was Mari Alkatiri from FRETILIN

would be the new country's first Prime Minister and Xanana Gusmao would be the first President.

Two other references arbitrarily selected from many other links to look at:

The Origins and Onset of the 2006 Crisis in Timor-Leste. Ruth Elizabeth Nuttall. (February, 2017).

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/117527/2/Nuttall%20Thesis%202017.pdf>

Divided leadership in a semi-presidential system. Dennis Shoemith. Asian Survey. ProQuest. (2003).

<https://www.proquest.com/openview/07537f82df9274f974d119059c26f5cd/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=35614>

Counter-revolutionary movements that are inevitably anti-democratic include 1918-19 Germany which although there would afterwards be a return to a fragile semblance of parliamentary democracy it did rely on the *Freikorps* to ruthlessly suppress the German Revolution a right-wing militia that can be viewed as a fascist precursor to the Nazis; there is General Franco in Spain and General Pinochet in Chile both of which had pre-emptively militarily overthrown *elected* left-wing republics while the Whites that fought the Reds in the Russian Civil War if they had won and as well inevitably an autocratic, monarchy or military faction gained the upper hand - rather than adopting any alternative social democrat position - there was then no certain guarantee that there would be a straightforward return to the embryonic parliamentary democracy of the Provisional Government which, in any case, was for the long term an untenable union between Left and Right and had by near its end taken on an increasingly authoritarian tone under the foolhardy, incompetent leadership of Alexander Kerensky who would help to inadvertently widely open up the way for not only a professional political autocrat like Lenin to easily grab power and which even Bill Hayden's proverbial 'drover's dog' could have done so as well.*

**With Australia in a state of economic malaise making the LNP government increasingly unpopular Bill Hayden had publicly stated a dog could have led the then ALP opposition into government when he publicly announced he had relinquished the ALP leadership to Bob Hawke who would soon enough commandeer a landslide ALP victory over the LNP then led by Malcolm Fraser in 1983).*