

Cuba's New Constitution

Bye-Bye Communism & Gay Rights; Hello Private Property & Censorship

Peter Werbe

2019

Pity the poor Marxist-Leninist militants now bereft of the police states for which they so earnestly apologized. But, not real pity as their dishonesty has caused as much damage to revolutionary possibilities as have the objects of their political ardor.

Only these leftists thought that real communism or socialism existed in the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam or the others which so defined themselves. Certainly, neither the people who live or lived in those countries nor their bureaucratic rulers thought that the system was anything but a racket.

With all of what are called communist countries finally exposed as simply capitalist economies in a period of harsh development and wealth accumulation, the only nation remaining for leftist admiration is Cuba, but now it looks like even the barbudos are failing them.

In a new constitution approved by 80 percent of voters in a February referendum, Cuba maintains its previous commitment to building communism, but contradictorily recognizes the right of private property. The document retains the dominance of the Communist Party as the ruling bureaucracy.

Another difficulty in maintaining adulation for Cuba's system is a new censorship system known as Decree Law 349 which went into effect in December. The statute adds another layer of censorship and control over artistic expression.

The government says it needs to combat "vulgarity, poor taste, mediocrity and low-brow cultural influences" in the arts. This is clearly a move to combat the radical expression that artists and others who bridle against state or religious control present.

Cuban artists have held frequent protests, performances, and events against the law, resulting in multiple arrests, including 11 following a sit-in at the Ministry of Culture in Havana.

Need more? The draft constitution language proposed by Cuban gay rights advocates changing the description in the constitution of marriage as a union of "two people...with absolutely equal rights and obligations" was rejected in favor of the traditional man and woman definition.

More? The Cuban government has allowed the first Roman Catholic church to be built on the island since the 1959 revolution. The internationally scandal-ridden Catholic Church supported Spanish colonialism and then the string of Cuban dictators right up until the Revolution.



Groups like this performing at El Tanque at Havana's Proyecto Cultural Muraleando will soon be subjected to official censorship.—photo: Peter Werbe

There has always been the authentic revolutionary alternative of anarchism present since before the 1917 Bolshevik counter-revolution. Isn't it finally the time for this to be understood by the left?

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Fifth Estate #403, Spring 2019

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