

1917-2017：百年の共産主義に対する反省*

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1917-2017: Reflections on 100 Years of Communism

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As George Santayana stated, “those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” This adage speaks directly to communism. The year 2017 marked the 100-year anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the first communist uprising that did not immediately fail. This led to the creation of the Soviet Union, which ultimately dissolved in a period of 70 years. Although the concept of communism can be traced back in history, communism as we know it was authored in 1848 by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Both Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels saw history from the perspective of a 19th century white male with bias and bigotry against minority groups instilled in their political philosophy. In Chapter II of Marx and Engels outline of communism, titled *Proletarians and Communists*, it is stated that “Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality.” This abolishment of morality speaks volumes on how communism conflicts with human rights. Communist dictators have decimated the population of every country that has ever endorsed a communist rule. The Paris Commune was used as a platform to promote communist ideas under the hope to reform societies around the world; however, nothing happened for 23 years as the concept of communism was not readily supported. The Paris Commune of 1871 was the closest reform to what Marx and Engels had envisioned. However, this revolution lasted for only ten weeks. In those ten weeks, the communist

insurrection was only productive in burning down over a quarter of Paris, murdering the public and destroying countless artistic treasures.

Vladimir Lenin authored communism in the Soviet Union when the Czar was overthrown in the February 1917 revolution which was in turn overthrown eight months later by the Bolshevik Revolution also led by Lenin. Lenin also began the *Red Terror*—a campaign of mass murder and torture that killed up to 1.5 million people. Terror continued under Joseph Stalin when the gulag system of labor camps was introduced, raising the number of the population murdered to 23 million people. Elected dictator Adolph Hitler of Germany killed over 16 million people but his campaigns in Russia raised civilian death due to the Soviet Union not allowing civilians to leave the cities that were being attacked. After World War II, the Soviet Union set up communist governments in satellite states such as Poland and East Germany. Governments were also set up in Eastern Europe, Africa, and parts of Asia. When the communist rule in the Soviet Union collapsed, satellite states also followed suit.

In the case of the People’s Republic of China, after World War II, Mao Zedong was in a position to “liberate” the war-ravaged country from the ruling nationalist party. History will remember Mao as the dictator for having killed more of his own population than any other dictator—over 78 million people. After the death of Mao Zedong, the Chinese communist party adopted capitalist ideology in order to save the Chinese economy. Unfortunately, government reforms were not targeting the

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greater needs of the population when considering civil liberty as mass surveillance, labor camps, media control, corruption, and murder continue to be the result of communist rule in China. Even in the year 2018, one can be tortured to death for “crimes” such as meditating or praying in public. North Korea, or the “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” is the result of a stalemate between the Soviet communist influenced north and the democratic south. After over 5 million deaths, a border was drawn dividing the peninsula. Leadership and government of North Korea are more adequately described as being a “cult” started by Kim Il-Sung. His successor Kim Jong-Il, and the latest dictator in the Kim family, Kim Jung-Un, maintain terror and control over the country.

Khmer Rouge carried out by Pol Pot, was a bloody campaign in Cambodia in the 1970s. Pol Pot modeled his violent campaign after Mao Zedong. Pol Pot decimated a quarter of Cambodia’s population in four years, killing over 2 million people. Pol Pot murdered his own population for capricious reasons including the indiscriminate killing those who wore glasses or spoke a foreign language. Cambodia was toppled four years later by communist revolutionary Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam in 1945. After a decade of war, Ho Chi Minh was responsible for the death of over 2 million Vietnamese. In spite of U.S. intervention, Vietnam fell to communist rule. Other countries such as Laos and Cuba have also endorsed communism.

History has proven that communist rule decimates the population of the state by instating control through violence, torture, murder and other coercive measures. Moreover, in the 100 years that communism has been instated, communism eventually fails as populations ultimately want to be free of dictators and tyrant rulers. Communism appears on the ballots of many countries around the world, including Japan, under the pretense that “it hasn’t worked well since it hasn’t been done correctly”. However, as a political system,

it demands scrutiny—especially when considering civil liberty and the life and liberty of the people. There is a direct correlation between democracy and civil and human rights.

However, it should be known that a democracy under a presidential system can also lead to potential corruption. Power is at question—is power delegated entirely by the president, or is power maintained in the constitution or held by congress? A presidential democracy can be the same totalitarian rule as a communist dictatorship depending on how power is distributed. Trump and Hitler were both *elected* as presidents—the result of *common* opinion. In the United States, the electoral vote versus the popular vote is a heated debate. The opinions of U.S. citizens are not properly represented under the current election policy. Americans only have the power to select local representatives, but no power over the ultimate vote. George W. Bush’s campaign for second term against Al Gore resulted in a fiasco that started many Americans to become disillusioned in the voting system. Halliburton and its political and financial control on America has become a common concern for many citizens. Donald Trump winning the 2016 election has many citizens, including this author, questioning the validity of the voting system and the fallibility of the entire political system. It makes one question what standards are in place to determine who qualifies to be in the position of being a political candidate. Educated and populated States were against Trump as low-populated States that blindly vote Republican gave Trump power. Hillary, the intellectual choice, was seen as an extremist. Civil rights have already declined under the Patriot Act causing Americans to fear further loss of rights. Congressional power to maintain control is also a debate. A democracy as a presidential-democracy is the same as a dictatorship. Power should be in the constitution and congress.

The United States is the only country in the world besides Eritrea that levies taxes based on citizenship rather than on residence or the source of revenue. The author, as an American

citizen by birth, having spent most of his life abroad—which amounts to almost 25 years abroad as an expatriate in Asia, pays taxes to the country that he resides in, but still has to go through the complex process of filing IRS returns. The author doesn't make enough money to owe tax in the U.S.—in fact, he continually pays more to CPA tax preparers than he owes in tax. Long-term expatriated American colleagues have given up their citizenship in order to avoid the stress of filing such paperwork on taxes. This is not tax evasion, since it is not about the tax expatriates owe, but rather the burden of filing and fear of penalties that often make United States expatriates question the merit of maintaining U.S. citizenship. U.S. Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) is now reaching across the ocean and digging into U.S. citizen's pockets to pay taxes on savings that such citizens have already paid taxes on. Taxed to relinquish citizenship and taxation based on citizenship instead of income or residence is a concept that is extremely repressive. It is ironic that it was this very issue of taxation that served as America's desire to gain independence from England.

Political state of the world is an ongoing drama. Countries lose or gain civil rights at a whim. The civil rights in Japan and South Korea is a slow process. Patriotism and nationalism blind us as a species. Race and nationality are a social construct. Gender and racial discrimination, although improved, over the past 20 years is still evident. In Japan, foreigners and permanent residents were finally counted in the country's demographics with the governmental issuance of the 住民票 *juminhyo* or family register. This movement began when the Nishi district of Yokohama city gave citizenship to a bearded seal known as "Tama-chan" on February 12, 2003. Many international residents felt that it was not fair that tax-paying foreign residents are not officially recognized while the bearded seal "Tama-chan" was granted resident status. After a decade of demonstrations, protests, and international

movements, the Japanese government finally agreed to acknowledge foreign residents on July of 2012. Foreign residents, while carefully monitored, were never officially counted or included in Japanese demographics until July 2012. The government's motives are not transparent; however, this author feels that changes were more of an interest by the government to somehow counter the population decline by including foreigners in the nation's demographics and perhaps as a response to pressure by international groups.

Communism is a philosophy of extremism. Dictators thrive where chaos reigns. Whether left-wing or right-wing, truth doesn't take sides. Communism is found appalling in the Western world due to communist countries not caring for their citizens, ignoring international laws, and creating a threatening military that destabilizes world order. Communism resorts to a nepotistic military rule designed to keep its paranoid isolationist leaders in power. The policing military under a communist rule murder citizens without cause or remorse. Citizens are spied upon and work camps and prisons are filled with those who have dared to protest the established system. Military might is used in place of diplomacy as xenophobic fear of foreign invasion is cultivated to maintain power.

Communism is a form of extremism. Extremism takes on many forms as Donald Trump's America is also an example of extremism. In the United States today, citizens are spied on for political purposes. The government goes beyond allowing this to take place, it actively participates in the spying which is politically sanctioned through the Patriate Act conveniently passed in 2001 in the aftermath of September 11. Edward Joseph Snowden, as a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employee and former contractor for the United States government confirmed this in 2013 when he exposed the U.S. government's mass surveillance and government spying on citizens.

Nepotism also rules the U. S. government. A "Clinton" or a "Bush" has been in every election

campaign since 1981. The “Kennedy” family has a political dynasty that has held high office in government uninterrupted for almost a quarter of history of the United States. President Trump’s staff is composed of his own family, friends, and known business associates. Currently, Trump’s own sons are being promoted as his successor.

The United States has taken on a new paradigm of isolationism and has openly insulted allies including the U.K., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, South America, and Germany. The United States has declared economic war on its closest trading partners and has broken past alliances. Hate speech and violence toward minorities is on the rise. Xenophobia is rampant. Aggression against blacks and minorities, the continued marginalization of Mexicans, immigration closing its doors as tax revenue is wasted on building walls. The authors own spouse and children have been openly criminalized and discriminated against by immigration officials. Crossing the U.S. border has become an invasive, traumatic experience even for its own citizens and citizens of friendly nations.

Evan Hadfield (2018) describes the United States as a police state capitalizing on its penal system in brutally honest detail in his documentary series “Rare Earth” by stating the following:

“Objective truth under the Trump administration is cast aside for propaganda. There are more society members in prison in the United States today than anywhere else on the planet. Inmates are paid an average wage of 63 cents an hour—slavery at the point of a gun. At 4.4% of the world’s population, the United States hosts 22% of the world’s prisoners—more than any communist government has ever attempted. More than China, Russia, Albania, or North Korea. It is a 74 billion dollar industry. The United States is currently engaged in seven wars. The military budget is larger than the next 10 nations combined. 5.6 trillion dollars

has been spent on war. However, poverty in the United States is running rampant. Over 46 million Americans live below the poverty line. Two million residents are below the international poverty line living on less than 2 dollars a day.”

Hadfield’s opinion resonates with this author. Extremism will not go away on its own accord. For extremism to be countered, it must first be acknowledged and scrutinized. Communist rules and dictatorships do not occur in a single moment. Nazi Germany did not suddenly appear—it evolved out of an ideology that was tactfully rationalized. Emerging negative changes in government and leadership should not be ignored. No citizen of a free government expects their system to collapse.

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