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The truth about Castro and Trudeau's sickening indifference to reality

Justin Trudeau has praised the late Cuban communist dictator Fidel Castro as a “remarkable” and “controversial” leader, a “legendary orator” who was “larger than life.”

Mr. Trudeau has probably never met Dr. Óscar Elías Biscet, who describes Cuba as a “totalitarian socialist regime” that uses “terror and extreme police control over its citizens.” A medical doctor and founder of the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights, Biscet has spoken publicly about enduring the torture meted out by a dictatorship seeking to coerce him to stop promoting human rights in Cuba.

Released from prison in 2011, he has spoken of the abuse that he suffered at the hands of the political police, who savagely beat him, disfigured his face and broke his foot.

In Cuba, political prisoners are held alongside those who have committed actual crimes, to make them feel as though they are also criminals. According to Biscet, “they are stripped naked and tortured with taser guns, left in the dark with no medical attention, drinkable water or ventilation.” Biscet has described how some prisoners are left dangling with their hands bound above their heads and their feet barely touching the ground.

One can safely assume Mr. Trudeau has not read *Against All Hope*, the prison memoirs of Cuban poet Armando Valladares. For peacefully

speaking out against communism, he was arrested and endured a 22-year nightmare in Castro’s prisons. Valladares writes that he and other prisoners who refused “political rehabilitation” were forced to live in the greatest heat and the dampest cold without clothes. They were regularly beaten, shot at and sometimes killed. Guards dumped buckets of urine and feces over the prisoners, who warded off rats and roaches. Fungus grew on Valladares because he was not allowed to wash off the filth. Sleep was impossible. Valladares’ poems were smuggled out of prison and published in the West. Amnesty International and others took up his case. He was eventually released.

According to Human Rights Watch, “The Cuban government’s refusal to reveal the size of its prison population, and its bar on domestic and international human rights monitoring, impedes the collection of precise information on the numbers and condition of Cuban political prisoners.”

René Portelles was arrested in September 1993 and released into exile in Canada in April 1998. Cuban prison authorities repeatedly used isolation and beatings to punish him for opposing Castro.

The truth about Castro was proclaimed on an ongoing basis by thousands of people who risked their very lives to escape his socialist paradise.

Yet Mr. Trudeau asserts the Cuban people “had a deep and lasting affection” for Castro. As in other brutal dictatorships, this “affection” was never tested by an election.

Stalin, Pol Pot, Franco, Mussolini, Mao and any number of dictators of the left and of the right could also be described, accurately, as “remarkable” and “controversial” leaders who were “larger than life.”

Trudeau claims Castro improved education and health care. Even if true, it’s like saying Hitler built the autobahn, got rid of unemployment and rectified the injustice of the Treaty of Versailles, as though these achievements justify or mitigate horrific evil. Trudeau praises Castro’s “tremendous dedication and love” for his people — a twisted cliché used by every tyrant throughout history.

No ideology, and no political program, no matter how well-intentioned, is justification for violating fundamental rights and freedoms: the right to life, freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the right to own and enjoy property under the rule of law.

Trudeau’s weasel words display a sickening hostility to the difference between good and evil. His remarks are not merely childish and embarrassing, but testify to a dark mind that has no respect for human rights, human dignity, or human life.

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