



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on February 24, 2020

Bernie Sanders Still Praises Communist Cuba

While conceding that he opposed the “authoritarian nature” of Communist Cuba, Senator Bernie Sanders told CBS’ *60 Minutes* on Sunday night, “When [communist dictator] Fidel Castro came into office, you know what he did? He had a massive literacy program. Is that a bad thing? Even though Fidel Castro did it?”

Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) retorted in a tweet, “It really makes a difference when those you murder at the firing squad can read and write.” Cruz’s father, Rafael Cruz, was among the hundreds of thousands of Cubans who left that country in the 1950s and 1960s, and have expressed disdain for the Castro brothers. Perhaps some Americans still remember the woman who died trying to cross the waters of the Caribbean to get herself and her six-year-old son, Elián González, to America to escape the communist tyranny in Cuba.



This most recent comment about Castro is really nothing out of the ordinary for Sanders. While he claims to be a “democratic socialist” rather than a communist like Castro, Sanders has a long history of praising outright communist governments such as those of Cuba, the Soviet Union, and Nicaragua under the Ortega brothers in the 1980s.

In a speech to the University of Vermont in 1986, Sanders even praised the socialist polices of Castro’s Cuba, and even condemned efforts of the Democrats and the Republicans that opposed the spread of communism by the Castro regime. He said that, in the 1960 presidential debates, when then-Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy criticized the Eisenhower administration for not doing enough to stop Castro, Sanders said it made him want to “puke.”

Sanders has insisted that his “democratic socialism” is not the same thing as communism. Yet, when Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Joseph Stalin, and the rest of the Bolsheviks took over Russia in 1917, they were one wing of the Social Democratic Party of Russia. While Sanders was correct in calling Cuba under Castro’s communism “authoritarian,” it was more than that. It was, and is, *totalitarian*. Authoritarian governments do not allow the general public any say in the personnel and policies of the government. Totalitarian regimes go further, and attempt to control the total lives of their people.

Indeed, Sanders’ love affair with totalitarian communist dictatorships has a long history. During his speech at the University of Vermont in 1986, he said, “I remember, for some reason or another, being very excited when Fidel Castro made the revolution in Cuba. I was a kid ... and it just seemed right and appropriate that poor people were rising up against rather ugly rich people.” Perhaps Sanders thought they had nothing to lose “but their chains,” as Karl Marx put it in *The Communist Manifesto*.



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Over the years, Sanders has praised the bread lines and the public transportation in the old Soviet Union, the education and healthcare in Cuba that “totally transformed the society” there, and defended the Sandinista dictatorship in Nicaragua by the Ortega brothers, who were avowed allies of Communist Cuba and the Soviet Union.

Sanders was so enthralled with communism that when he got married in 1988, he and his new bride traveled to the Soviet Union during the Cold War for their honeymoon. While there, the newlyweds joined several others in a sauna, in which all the participants were naked. After exiting the sauna, Sanders and his Russian friends sat around a table, still naked (but with towels), drinking vodka and singing Russian folk songs. Sanders and the other Americans responded with their own American folk song, “This Land Is Your Land,” written by Woody Guthrie. Guthrie wrote “This Land Is Your Land,” a song which denigrates the concept of private property, in angry response to Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America.” Guthrie is a favorite of left-wingers, despite (or perhaps because of) his being a columnist for an official Communist Party newspaper. In one of his columns, Guthrie even defended the invasion of Poland by the Soviet Union in 1939.

When Sanders returned to the United States, where he was mayor of Burlington, Vermont, he told reporters, “We appreciate the fact” that housing was cheaper in the Soviet Union. After honeymooning in the totalitarian communist nation of the Soviet Union, Sanders made a trip to Cuba the following year.

“Under Castro, enormous progress has been made in improving the lives of poor people ... I did not see a hungry child. I did not see any homeless people,” Sanders told the *Burlington Free-Press*. He particularly was impressed by the “free health care.”

This is the man now considered the front-runner to get the nomination of the Democratic Party.

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