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William Blum

# Anti-communism 101.

## Hijacking history

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We like to think of death as the time for truth. No matter how much the deceased may have lived a lie, when he goes to meet his presumed maker the real, sordid facts of his life will out. Or at least they should; the obituary being the final chance to set the record straight. But obituaries very seldom perform this function, certainly not obituaries of those who played an important role in American foreign policy; the myths surrounding foreign policy and the deceased individual's role therein accompany him to the grave, and thence into Texas-approved American history textbooks.

In January of this year I commented in this report on the obituary of Lincoln Gordon, former ambassador to Brazil and State Department official. The obituary in the Washington Post painted him, as I put it, as a "boy wonder, intellectual shining light, distinguished leader of men, outstanding American patriot." No mention whatsoever was made of the leading role played by Gordon in the military overthrow of a progressive Brazilian government in 1964, resulting in a very brutal dictatorship for the next 21 years. Later, Gordon blatantly lied about his role in testimony before Congress.

<http://divergences.be/sites/divergences.be/local/cache-vignettes/L197xH297/rogue-3a1e4.jpg>

Now we have the death a few weeks ago of Phillips Talbot, who was appointed by President Kennedy to be Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs and later became ambassador to Greece. In 1967 the Greek military and intelligence service, both closely tied to the CIA, overthrew another progressive government, that of George Papandreou and his son, cabinet minister Andreas Papandreou. For the next seven years the Greek people suffered utterly grievous suppression and torture. Talbot's obituary states: "Dr. Talbot was asleep in his bed while tanks rumbled through the streets of Athens and was completely surprised when Armed Forces radio announced at 6:10 a.m. that the military had taken control of the country. Dr. Talbot was adamant that the United States was impartial throughout the transition. 'You may be assured that there has been no American involvement in or, in fact, prior knowledge of the climactic events that those residing in this country have lived through in the past couple of years,' Dr. Talbot told the New York Times in 1969 shortly before he returned home."

Andreas Papandreou had been arrested at the time of the coup and held in prison for eight months. Shortly after his release, he and his wife Margaret visited Ambassador Talbot in Athens. Papandreou later related the following:

I asked Talbot whether America could have intervened the night of the coup, to prevent the death of democracy in Greece. He denied that they could have done anything about it. Then Margaret asked a critical question: What if the coup had been a Communist or a Leftist coup? Talbot answered without hesitation. Then, of course, they would have intervened, and they would have crushed the coup.

In November 1999, during a visit to Greece, President Bill Clinton was moved to declare:

When the junta took over in 1967 here the United States allowed its interests in prosecuting the cold war to prevail over its interest — I should say its obligation — to support democracy, which was, after all, the cause for which we fought the cold war.(sic) It is important that we acknowledge that.

Clinton's surprising admission prompted the retired Phillips Talbot to write to the New York Times: "With all due respect to President Clinton, he is wrong to imply that the United States supported the Greek coup in 1967. The coup was the product of Greek political rivalries and was contrary to American interests in every respect. ... Some Greeks have asserted that the United States could have restored a civilian government. In fact, we had neither the right nor the means to overturn the junta, bad as it was."

Or, as Bart Simpson would put it: "I didn't do it, no one saw me do it, you can't prove anything!"

After reading Talbot's letter in the Times in 1999 I wrote to him at his New York address reminding him of what Andreas Papandreou had reported on this very subject. I received no reply.

The cases of Brazil and Greece were of course just two of many leftist governments overthrown, as well as revolutionary movements suppressed, by the United States during the Cold War on the grounds that America had a moral right and obligation to defeat the evil of Soviet communism that was — we were told — instigating these forces. It was always a myth. Bolshevism and Western liberalism were united in their opposition to popular revolution. Russia was a country with a revolutionary past, not a revolutionary present. Even in Cuba, the Soviets were always a little embarrassed by the Castro-Guevara radical fervor. Stalin would have had such men imprisoned. The Cold War was not actually a struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was a struggle between the United States and the Third World. What there was, was people all over the Third World fighting for economic and political changes against US-supported repressive regimes, or setting up their own progressive governments. These acts of self-determination didn't coincide with the needs of the American power elite, and so the United States moved to crush those governments and movements even though the Soviet Union was playing virtually no role at all in the scenarios. It is remarkable the number of people who make fun of conspiracy theories but who accept without question the existence of an International Communist Conspiracy.

### **The United States' annual self-imposed humiliation**

For years American political leaders and media were fond of labeling Cuba an "international pariah". We don't hear that any more. Perhaps one reason is the annual vote in the United Nations General Assembly on the resolution which reads: "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". This is how the vote has gone (not including abstentions), this year being the strongest condemnation yet of Washington's policy:

[http://divergences.be/sites/divergences.be/IMG/png/Capture\\_d\\_ecran\\_2010-11-06\\_a\\_09.19.04.png](http://divergences.be/sites/divergences.be/IMG/png/Capture_d_ecran_2010-11-06_a_09.19.04.png)

Is the United States foreign policy establishment capable of being embarrassed?

Each fall, however, the UN vote is a welcome reminder that the world has not completely lost its senses and that the American empire does not completely control the opinion of other governments.

How it began: On April 6, 1960, Lester D. Mallory, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, wrote in an internal memorandum: "The majority of Cubans support Castro ... The only foreseeable means of alienating internal support is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship. ... every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba." Mallory proposed "a line of action which ... makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government." Later that year, the Eisenhower administration instituted the suffocating embargo against its eternally-declared enemy.

<http://divergences.be/sites/divergences.be/local/cache-vignettes/L238xH369/killing-hope-william-blum-cia-covert-ops-2eef5.jpg>

(From William Blum's Anti-Empire Report, November 2, 2010)

William Blum is the author of:

*Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War 2*

*Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*

*West-Bloc Dissident: A Cold War Memoir*

*Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire*

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