

My revived hatred of communism
Dennis Prager

It was difficult to control my emotions – specifically, my anger – during my visit to Vietnam last week. The more I came to admire the Vietnamese people – their intelligence, love of life, dignity and hard work – the more rage I felt for the communists who brought them (and, of course, us Americans) so much suffering in the second half of the 20th century.

Unfortunately, communists still rule the country. Yet, Vietnam today has embraced the only way that exists to escape poverty, let alone to produce prosperity: capitalism and the free market. So what exactly did the 2 million Vietnamese who died in the Vietnam War die for? I would like to ask one of the communist bosses who run Vietnam that question. "Comrade, you have disowned everything your Communist Party stood for: communal property, collectivized agriculture, central planning and militarism, among other things. Looking back, then, for what precisely did your beloved Ho Chi Minh and your party sacrifice millions of your fellow Vietnamese?"

There is no good answer. There are only a lie and a truth, and the truth is not good.

The lie is the response offered by the Vietnamese communists and which was repeated, like virtually all communist lies, by the world's non-communist left. It was (and continues to be) taught in virtually every Western university and was and continues to be spread by virtually every news medium on the planet: The Vietnam communists, i.e., the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, were merely fighting for national independence against foreign control of their country. First, they fought the French, then the Japanese and then the Americans. American baby boomers will remember being told over and over that Ho Chi Minh was Vietnam's George Washington, that he loved the American Constitution, after which he modeled his own, and wanted nothing more than Vietnamese independence.

Here is the truth: Every communist dictator in the world has been a megalomaniacal, cult of personality, power-hungry, bloodthirsty thug. Ho Chi Minh was no different. He murdered his opponents, tortured only God knows how many innocent Vietnamese, threatened millions into fighting for him – yes, for him and his blood soaked Vietnamese Communist Party, backed by the greatest murderer of all time, Mao Zedong. But the moral idiots in America chanted "Ho, ho, Ho Chi Minh" at antiwar rallies, and they depicted America as the real murderers of Vietnamese – "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?"

The Vietnamese communists were not fighting America for Vietnamese independence. America was never interested in controlling the Vietnamese people, and there is a perfect parallel to prove this: the Korean War. Did America fight the Korean communists in order to control Korea? Or did 37,000 Americans die in Korea so that Koreans could be free? Who was (and remains) a freer human being – a Korean living under Korean communist rule in North Korea or a Korean living in that part of Korea where America defeated the Korean communists?

And who was a freer human being in Vietnam – those who lived in non-communist South Vietnam (with all its flaws) or those who lived under Ho, ho, Ho Chi Minh's communists in North Vietnam?

America fights to liberate countries, not to rule over them. It was the Vietnamese Communist Party, not America, that was interested in controlling the Vietnamese people. But the lie was spread so widely and so effectively that most of the world – except American supporters of the war and the Vietnamese boat people and other Vietnamese who yearned for liberty – believed that America was fighting for tin, tungsten and the wholly fictitious "American empire" while the Vietnamese communists were fighting for Vietnamese freedom.

I went to the "Vietnam War Remnants Museum" – the Communist Party's three-floor exhibit of anti-American photos. Nothing surprised me – not the absence of a single word critical of the communist North Vietnamese or of the Viet Cong; not a word about the widespread threats on the lives of anyone who did not fight for the communists; not a word about those who risked their lives to escape by boat, preferring to risk dying by drowning, being eaten by sharks or being tortured or gang-raped by pirates, rather than to live under the communists who "liberated" South Vietnam.

Equally unsurprising is that there is little difference between the history of the Vietnam War as told by the Communist Party of Vietnam and what just about any college student will be told in just about any college by just about any professor in America, Europe, Asia or Latin America.

I will end with the subject with which I began – the Vietnamese. It is impossible to visit Vietnam and not be impressed by the people. I hope I live to see the day when the people of Vietnam, freed from the communist lies that still permeate their daily lives, understand that every Vietnamese death in the war against America was a wasted life, one more of the 140 million human sacrifices on the altar of the most bloodthirsty false god in history: communism.