

Ceausescu, Tito, Pol Pot, Deng--are these proper allies for a free people? What a disgrace. What a shame. What a lesson.

Religion in the Post-Communist Era

Next to the Party elite, the biggest losers in Communist countries may be the officially approved churches. In the Soviet Union, no one respects the heads of the Russian Orthodox Church. They are collaborators if not members of the KGB, and many believers regard the entire church as having been compromised.

It is the persecuted who have moral authority in such a situation. In this case, that includes the Ukrainian Catholics, Orthodox Jews, and Russian Baptists and Pentacostals.

The meeting between Pope John Paul II and Mikhail Gorbachev had a tremendous effect. The leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church had opposed the meeting, but they didn't expect to be left out in the cold. Why did Gorbachev call the Pope "the greatest moral authority in the world"? He was baptized in the Russian Orthodox Church, but perhaps he too thinks it is compromised.

I am fascinated by the religious imagery that peppers the speech of Gorbachev, who has vastly increased religious freedom in the U.S.S.R. For example, he said that the Soviets should not react to the idea of a multi-party system the way "the Devil reacts to incense." Some say this means nothing, and that many non-believing Russians talk this way.

Maybe. But it seems to me that is not the apt comparison. When did Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Breshnev, or Andropov talk that way? The answer is never. Such talk would have been considered in very bad taste, and an implicit violation of official atheism.

And given that the Communists, from their early days, have always been arch-feminists, how do we react to this Gorbachev statement: "I think it is time to review the role of women as mothers versus producers. Women are more important as producers of good people than as producers of fabrics or whatever." He sounds, says conservative columnist Don Feder, "like Phyllis Schlafly."

The Coming Race War

Black leaders sure are radical in this country. Benjamin Hooks, president of the NAACP, is considered a moderate, but he's an arch statist who wants government programs to abolish black unemployment, poverty, and low levels of education, and he calls the Supreme Court "racist" for slightly questioning preferential treatment for blacks.

Another "moderate" is Coretta Scott King. On Martin Luther