

Is LA Mayor Karen Bass Still a Communist

From Roger L Simon

It's worth asking whether LA's Mayor Karen Bass is still a communist as we try to understand her odd, defensive behavior regarding the ongoing wildfires in her city, also her ill-timed trip to Ghana when the possibility of these fires was already predicted.



I recalled she was an admirer of Fidel Castro, but had forgotten how recent her fulsome praise was, less than a decade ago. From left-leaning Politico August 2020 :

“Rep. Karen Bass on Sunday walked back 2016 comments praising Cuban leader Fidel Castro, as scrutiny of her views toward the Communist government threatened her potential selection as former Vice President Joe Biden’s running mate.

“On ‘Fox News Sunday,’ the California Democrat faced questions about several visits to Cuba in the 1970s and a statement she released after [Castro’s 2016 death](#) saying, ‘the passing of the Comandante en Jefe is a great loss to the people of Cuba.’

“Bass told Fox host Chris Wallace that her perspective

‘developed over time’ and that she now understood that the Castro government ‘was a brutal regime.’ Bass said she spoke with colleagues from Florida who raised concerns about her comments and that she ‘would not do that again, for sure.’”

Okay, we’re grownups here and I will admit that I at first thought Fidel was pretty cool too. I even went to hear him speak in Central Park. But I was still in high school then and it was 1960.

It wasn’t long, only a few years, that I realized he was a brutal dictator who, along with his buddy El Che, took his old comrades who varied in even minor ways from his party line and lined them up against a wall and shot them. I further learned he imprisoned homosexuals or sent them to re-education camps. This only ended around 2010 after Fidel had had years of criticism.

I saw his Cuba for myself in 1979 when I was a delegate to the First Festival of the New American Cinema or some such (can’t remember the exact name) and saw an island beautiful in nature but absolutely totalitarian in the way its regime treated its impoverished people. Havana itself was completely run down, its paranoid citizens spying on each other. My small group was delayed at the airport getting out and I well recall being scared that I would be trapped there, a feeling I later had in the Soviet Union.

This was obviously considerably before then Rep. Bass was still singing the praises of Fidel, her Comandante en Jefe who died a billionaire while his people languished in misery.

I knew people like her when I was living in Los Angeles during the 70s and 80s. Some of them, like now Mayor Bass, went to Cuba again and again, signifying their allegiance while ignoring or downplaying the “excesses.” They did the same with Mao. You have to break a few eggs and all that.. None of them that I recall called themselves communists explicitly but they

really were at heart. Maybe they thought of it as a way to stay cool and young, but for many it was more than that. They were serious about it.

Some, I'm not going to name names to protect myself actually, rose to prominent positions in LA city politics, also in education. It was a good way to do it. Everybody winked. They were the people around something then called the Echo Park Food Conspiracy who would come up and clap me on the back, saying, "Roger, the struggle continues!"

Others, the wealthy Hollywood ones, were almost comically hypocritical. I knew the wife of a famous director, again I'm not naming names, a very nice bourgeois lady and not particularly a sexpot, who went to Cuba, was introduced to Castro at some reception and immediately swooned, kissing him full on the lips in adoration. This was told to me by the director himself who found it amusing.

I didn't and I don't. I look at myself in those days as a bit of a phony. I didn't really believe any of the lefty stuff, not in a real way, but I was more a fly on the wall looking for material for my writing. Some of it appeared in the early Moses Wine mysteries.

But when I watch Karen Bass on television from Nashville—I don't know her personally—I definitely recognize her as a character out of those days. It's easy to imagine her having virtually no interest in the day-to-day activities of a mayor like making sure there's enough water in the pumps or that brush is cleared, but only in "continuing the struggle by whatever means necessary."

So that is what I see when watching the city where I lived for all but the last few years of my adult life go up in smoke. The struggle continues indeed.

First published in [American Refugees](#)