

Western media miss real focus

By Ali Atoui

The distorting voice of the media has misrepresented conflict in the world. Instead of focusing on the underlying ailments afflicting the Azerbaijani republic in the Soviet Union, Western media and government

Commentary

institutions seem to be more concerned about the implications the latest strife holds for the "political" life of Gorbachev.

With their region now occupied, hundreds of Azeris have been indiscriminately slaughtered (some run over with tanks), and millions lie suppressed under a decadent Communist system, yet the media compel us to see it not as a human tragedy, but as a "dangerous" complication to "Gorby's" reign.

"Gorbachev must prevail," says Bush. Of course, the means to "prevail" (consent to murder), are left to the creative mind of Gorbachev (although Bush, being a former CIA director, can show him a pointer or two). And tanks are subsequently rushed in to crush the slightest whimper of dissatisfaction dared out by the helpless populace. No human cost is too big when it comes to safeguarding the long-term investments of the capitalist West.

Although the media have depicted the recent strife between the Azeris and Armenians as being the primary issue (and one that justifies Soviet military interference), the real problem lies with deepseated grievances which the Azeri people nurse against the Soviet Union.

Their region has been terrorized by KGB agents since its annexation by the infamous Stalin in the 1920s. Since then, their entire history has been falsified, and their Islamic faith suppressed and outlawed to the extent that they were forced to adopt the Russian alphabet.

In the economic sphere, Moscow has plundered Azerbaijan's mineral resources, notably oil while investing very little in return. Azerbaijan is largely left undeveloped, and where it is industrialized it suffers ecological disaster.

Living conditions have declined, while infant mortality is twice the Soviet average and unemployment is 27.6 percent. Appalling health care and educational services complete the

dismal picture of a nation treated as a subject people by the ruling Slav elite of the Soviet Union.

But when the Azeris decide to revolt against this injustice and, like all free human beings, stand up for their rights, they are ruthlessly paid back with death and destruction. And the Western media reward them even more beautifully by misrepresenting their plight and justifying Soviet aggression against them. The Azeris and their struggle for freedom are being killed twice over.

This is not the first revolt against Soviet domination by the Azeris. Many of their past leaders have been assassinated and their liberation movements cruelly suppressed by the Soviet KGB. Who could have ever believed after decades of communist bashing that the Western media would come to the defense of the Soviets?

In the past, Russia was the "evil empire," and evil, naturally, commits evil. But now, thanks to the new kid on the block, evil has "converted." And whenever one enters a new "faith," they are automatically granted all the privileges offered to the rest of that "faith's" members.

So even though the same cruel practices are still being perpetrated by the Soviets, the

new facilities and services (of which media is the biggest) provided by the new "church" (capitalism), step in this time to justify all in the name of the new order. Membership has its privileges.

No one speaks for the oppressed of the world. They are not profitable; they can't afford to advertise. Their side is only taken when it proves profitable to the money launderers of the world, but they are just as easily forsaken when they become a liability to their benefactors. The Chinese students' fight for democracy is one recent example.

As a Muslim, I used to always think that Muslims were being singled out for special cruelty. But to its credit, the capitalist West does not discriminate. All people, whether Muslim, Palestinian, Azeri, Latino or Asian, are equally tyrannizable. They are all devoured with the same appetite.

With a crumbling Communist system, and capitalist gains visibly emerging on the horizon, any people (this time, it happens to be the Muslims) become "politically expedient" to ensure the long trek to capitalism is led by the "man of the decade."

Ali Atoui is a member of the Muslim Student Society.

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



Wildlife day shifts

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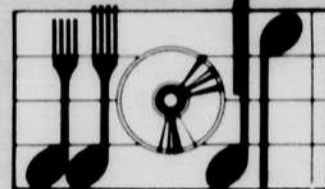
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