

WHY DO OBAMA AND CLINTON (BUT NO REPUBLICANS) EULOGIZE GABRIEL GARCIA-MARQUEZ?



The eulogies to Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel Garcia-Marquez upon his death last week make two points official:

- 1.) No amount of moral and intellectual wretchedness will earn an artist even the mildest rebuke from most of his professional peers and their related institutions—so long as the wretch hires himself out to communists.
- 2.) The masochism (to sidestep more “McCarthyite” terms) of Democratic U.S. Presidents is boundless.

Not that the media eulogies sidestep Garcia-Marquez's politics. Most are quite upfront about it. Let's take the one run by the *New York Times* as emblematic:

“Like many Latin American intellectuals and artists, Mr. García Márquez felt impelled to speak out on the political issues of his day. He viewed the world from a left-wing perspective, bitterly opposing Gen. Augusto Pinochet, the right-wing Chilean dictator, and unswervingly supporting Fidel Castro in Cuba. Mr. Castro became such a close friend that Mr. García Márquez showed him drafts of his unpublished books.”

Notice the word “dictator” above. But with whom does the *New York Times* associate it? Pinochet, of course. Does Fidel Castro also qualify as dictator? The *Times* does not tell us.

“Mr. García Márquez's ties to Mr. Castro troubled some intellectuals and human rights advocates,” continues the *Times*. “Susan Sontag wrote in the 1980s, ‘To me it's scandalous that a writer of such enormous talent be a spokesperson for a government which has put more people in jail (proportionately to its population) than any other government in the world...He attributed the criticism to what he called Americans' “almost pornographic obsession with Castro.’ But he became sensitive enough about the issue to intercede on behalf of jailed Cuban dissidents.”

In fact, fully contrary to the *New York Times*' whitewash, Garcia Marquez's “intercession” is what got some of those dissidents jailed and tortured by his friend Castro in the first place. Let's not mince

words. Let's call out Garcia-Marquez categorically: on top of his decades of *pro-bono* propaganda services for Castroism, Garcia-Marquez was also a volunteer snitch for Castro's KGB-mentored secret police.

Here I'll turn over the floor to someone intimately familiar with the issue Armando Valladares, who himself suffered 22 torture-filled years in Castro's prisons and was later appointed by Ronald Reagan as U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Human Rights Commission:

"Many years ago Garcia Marquez became an informer for Castro's secret police," starts a recent exposé by Valladares. "At the time, back in Havana, Cuban dissident and human-rights activist, Ricardo Bofill, with help of the then-reporter for Reuters, Collin McSevengy, managed to enter the Havana hotel where García Márquez was having a few drinks. In a quiet corner, with absolute discretion, Bofill gave García Márquez a series of documents relating to several Cuban artists.

"A few weeks later Castro's police arrested Ricardo Bofill—and displayed on the table right next to Castro's secret-policeman —*were the very documents which Bofill had given Garcia Marquez.*"

Bofill, a peaceful human-rights activist inspired by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, went on to suffer 12 years in Castro's prisons—thanks to Gabriel Garcia-Marquez. On October 13, 1968, the Spanish newspapers ABC and Diario 16 published Bofill's disclosures and headlined that: "García Márquez's revelations led to the imprisonment of numerous Cuban writers and artists." Seems all this

was all conveniently “forgotten” by most media outlets last week.

But enough from me. Instead let’s hear from some folks much closer to this issue. Let’s hear from Cuban writers who were suffering in Castro’s KGB-designed dungeons and torture chambers while Gabriel Garcia-Marquez contributed his literary influence and might towards glorifying their torturer.

The late Reynaldo Arenas’ autobiography *Before Night Falls* was on the *New York Times* (no less!) list of the ten best books of the year in 1993. In 2000 the book became a movie starring Javier Bardem, Johnny Depp, and Sean Penn (no less!) Throughout the 70s, Arenas was jailed and tortured by Castro’s police for his rebellious writings and gay lifestyle. He finally escaped on the Mariel boatlift in 1980. Here’s his take on Gabriel Garcia Marquez from 1982:

“It’s high time for all the intellectuals of the free world (the rest don’t exist) to take a stand against this unscrupulous propagandist for totalitarianism. I wonder why these intellectual apologists for communist paradises don’t live in them? Or is it that they prefer collecting payment there and here, while enjoying the comforts and guarantees of the western world?”

In fact, Garcia-Marquez did live on and off in Cuba, in a (stolen) mansion Castro gifted him, where he frolicked with adolescent girls between traveling through Havana in a (stolen) Mercedes, also gifted him by Castro.

Here's Cuban-exile author Roberto Luque Escalona, briefly an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience who escaped Cuba in 1992:

“Only a five star-scoundrel would put his literary fame in the service of a cause as vile and malignant as the Castro tyranny. Simple frivolity cannot possibly justify an embrace so long and strong as the one Garcia-Marquez gave someone who devastated a nation, murdered thousands, jailed and tortured tens of thousands dispersed an entire nation and debased the rest.”

Now let's hear from some people who fate allowed a more detached view of Gabriel Garcia Marquez than Arenas and Luque Escalona: Bill Clinton and Barack Obama.

“I once had the privilege to meet him in Mexico,” President Obama was quoted in *Politico* last week, “where he presented me with an inscribed copy that I cherish to this day. As a proud Colombian, a representative and voice for the people of the Americas, and as a master of the ‘magic realism’ genre, he has inspired so many others....I offer my thoughts to his family and friends, whom I hope take solace in the fact that Gabo's work will live on for generations to come.”

“I was saddened to learn of the passing of Gabriel García Márquez,” mourned Bill Clinton. “From the time I read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* more than 40 years ago, I was always amazed by his unique gifts of imagination, clarity of thought, and emotional honesty. I was

honored to be his friend and to know his great heart and brilliant mind for more than 20 years.”

In an interview with France’s *Le Monde* in 1981, Garcia-Marquez remarked that, “the problem with visiting men like Fidel Castro is that one winds up loving them too much.” A few years earlier he was denouncing the desperate Vietnamese boat-people as “war-criminals,” “Yankee-lackeys,” and worse.

Gabriel Garcia-Marquez shared all of Fidel Castro’s hatred against the U.S., a passion that contributed much to their long and warm friendship. Given this rabid hatred for the nation that elected them, you’d really think—especially given White House speech writing budgets— that these U.S. Presidents could have found a way to express their admiration for Garcia Marquez’s art without so warmly embracing the wretched artist himself.

But maybe 1984 hit by The Eurythmics nailed the Democratic presidential mindset: “Some of them want to be abused.”