

US-EU Interventionism in Latin America and the Klaus Barbie Affair

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In a comprehensive way, Bolivia's coup leaders reincarnate the most sinister ghosts of Latin America and the Caribbean's imperialist torturers and mass murderers. The religious fanaticism of coup figureheads like Camacho and Añez, abject servants of their US owners, invokes the fearsome history of colonial genocide and enslavement of indigenous populations in the name of Christ. Aping events of only forty years ago, the armed forces' role in the coup of last November 10th reenacted the military coups of Hugo Banzer and Luis Meza. Western racism and fascism are inseparable from these sinister historical motifs of European conquest and endless US intervention.

Despite this reality, the European Parliament has just [approved a resolution](#) condemning... Nicaragua. Contrary to fact-free Western media and NGO propaganda, there is no torture in Nicaragua, no arbitrary detention or forced disappearance, no police officers deliberately fire pellets to blind protestors as in Chile, no soldiers fire from helicopters murdering indigenous protestors as in Bolivia. In Nicaragua, the authorities applied minimum force in 2018 to overcome an extremely violent, murderous coup attempt and subsequently amnestied the violent minority opposition's murderers and torturers for the sake of peace.

Nicaragua's minority opposition continue mounting persistent provocations because they have no national political project except to obey their US and EU country owners. By contrast, the respective right wing regimes in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador persecute legitimate political opposition and repress democratic majority political initiatives for change. The governments of Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela defend their National Human Development policies against US intervention and aggression. The right wing regimes in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador have no National Human Development policy, because their US and EU owners have ordered them to prioritize corporate profit.

If one single figure embodies the monstrous sadism and hypocrisy of the Western imperialist elites, the governments they own and the media and NGOs that cover up their crimes, it is Klaus Barbie. In 1983, Barbie was arrested in Bolivia and extradited to France for his crimes as a Nazi police chief during Germany's occupation of France. During that time, Barbie was responsible for overseeing the arrest and torture of more than 14,000 Resistance members. With protection from the US authorities, he escaped prosecution after the war, evading facing trial for the murder of over 4,000 civilians and the deportation of over 7,000 Jews to concentration camps.

Sought by the French authorities in 1956, Barbie escaped to Bolivia with US government

help. Eventually, thanks to his own aggressive activism serving US supported dictatorships in Latin America through the 1970s and 1980s, Barbie was found, extradited and processed through a highly publicised trial in France in which his defense rested on the obvious point that Barbie's crimes were little different from those of innumerable French and other European functionaries in their colonies. Despite, or perhaps as a result of, that cogent defense, Barbie was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, dying in prison four years later in 1991.

As many writers, from Simone Weil to Aimée Césaire, have pointed out, the supreme crime of the Nazis was to mass murder white Europeans rather than people of color in Africa, Asia and Latin America. But the French authorities did so too on their own territory. In France, the authorities desperately seek to obliterate remembrance of the mass murder of Algerians in Paris and elsewhere in 1961, most notoriously at the Charonne metro station. Maurice Papon, head of the Paris police at the time, was a murderous, racist, right wing extremist no better than Klaus Barbie. Even now, even as it is happening still in the former French African colonies, the odious reality of French imperialism is suppressed as if it never happened at all.

The US and the EU value greatly mass murderers and torturers who serve their imperial needs and interests. Their authorities have protected innumerable criminals similar to Klaus Barbie over the years. For example, the US always protected now deceased anti-Castro terrorists like Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles, responsible for blowing up 70 people on a civilian airline flight over Barbados in October 1976, among many other terror attacks. The authorities of the European Union and its member countries have protected their terrorists most obviously in Ivory Coast, Libya, Syria and Ukraine. US and EU protection of terrorist mass murderers is no aberration, but a permanent cynical norm. EU institutions condemning the victims of their terrorist protégés in Nicaragua or in Venezuela and elsewhere should be no surprise at all.

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