

# Letter to the editor

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**Richard House**, Former editor, *Self & Society*

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Dear Editor,

Congratulations on a great theme issue in the spring – it's so important to have these sharings with our existential colleagues, and find and affirm the common ground that existentialism has with Humanistic Psychology.

I did, however, have several concerns about the article by Oana Barnett, 'The silent escape' (pp. 30–34). On page 30, Oana writes, '...compared to the brutal tortures and atrocious genocides that permeated the 20th century and still continue in countries like North Korea, Syria or *Cuba*...' (my italics). In my view this is a grossly inaccurate slur on present-day Cuba, and has no factual basis whatsoever. It sounds like the kind of fake ideological news that emanates from disreputable right-wing propaganda sources associated with Donald Trump, Fox News and their ilk.

Later, we then read that '...Whilst acknowledging the fundamental role that the institutions of democracy and the market society play in protecting civil liberties,...'. Just try selling the idea that market societies 'protect civil liberties' to the brutalised people of Chile, whose democratically elected government was systematically undermined and then violently overthrown by the CIA in 1973, with thousands of Chileans subsequently tortured and murdered by the Pinochet state. As Wikipedia has it, there was 'a United States-backed coup d'état on 11 September 1973 that overthrew the democratically elected socialist Unidad Popular government of President Salvador Allende and ended civilian rule'. Quite.

Many other well-documented historical examples of US-driven atrocities could also be listed. So again, plain historical fact gives the lie to the extraordinary assertion that market societies necessarily protect civil liberties.

I'm glad to be able to set these particular records straight in your journal – thank you.

**Richard House**

Former editor, *Self & Society*