

Explaining American Leftists

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Explaining American Leftists: Part 1 (written on 7/10/18)

By Dennis Prager

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—As I watch a great number of my fellow Americans and virtually all of the mainstream media descend further and further into irrational and immoral hysteria, I ask myself: What is going on?

People are:

- Regularly calling the president of the United States and all of his supporters Nazis, white supremacists and the like.
- Harassing Republicans where they eat, shop and live.
- Ending family ties and lifelong friendships with people who support the president.
- Declaring their opposition to Trump and the Republican Party the “Resistance,” as if they were American reincarnations of the French who fought real Nazis in World War II; and so on—I ask myself: What is going on?

How does one explain them?

Here are some answers:

1. Naivete

Many Americans are naive, about life, about good and evil and about America. They don’t realize how rare America is and how good they have it.

This mass naivete was vividly expressed by the reaction of tens of thousands of mostly white middle-class Americans to then-candidate Barack Obama in 2008, when he was campaigning in Columbia, Mo. Obama announced, “We are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America.”

I frequently play the recording of Obama's statement on my radio show not only to explain a basic difference between right and left—the left believes America needs to be fundamentally transformed, while the right thinks America needs to be incrementally improved—but also for people to hear the crowd's reaction.

Very few contemporary American recordings are as depressing as the ecstatic and prolonged cheering the crowd gave that terrible promise from Obama.

I believe it is not an exaggeration to say that, had he announced a cure for cancer, the cheering could not have been louder and probably would not have been longer.

Why would middle-class Americans—people who have more affluence, more opportunity, better health, better health care and more liberty than almost anyone alive in the world today, and certainly than anyone who ever lived—thunderously applaud a call to fundamentally transform their decent country?

One answer—one of many, as we will see—is naivete.

Earlier this year, I had a debate/dialogue with two left-wing students at the University of California, Berkeley.

I thought debating left-wing students, rather than giving a speech, would accomplish two objectives: deter left-wing protesters from disrupting my appearance and enable young people at Berkeley and around the world (via the Internet) to hear differences between right and left clearly spelled out. Both aims were achieved.

My final question to them was: "Do you believe people are basically good?"

Without a moment's pause, both students said yes. I told them they think that way because they live in such a decent country.

It is easy to remain naive in America, where most are insulated from the suffering inflicted on so much of humanity in deeply corrupt, poverty-stricken and war-torn societies.

Nevertheless, given the way humans have treated one another throughout history, and only two generations after Auschwitz, only the naive can believe people are basically good.

And since no Western religion (i.e., any religion based on the Bible) has ever posited that people are basically good, this naivete is abetted by secularism, which allows for the pursuit of knowledge but destroys wisdom.

Only the naive—or willfully ignorant—could equate support for Donald Trump with Nazism.

Are most Israeli Jews Nazis?

Are a third of America's Jews Nazis? (Many on the left would probably answer yes, which gives you an idea how mean and sick many on the left are.)

2. Boredom

Boredom, at least in our time, is the most overlooked source of evil. In the past, before people went to college and abandoned religion—the two greatest reasons there is so much moral idiocy in our time—people knew how dangerous boredom was. “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop” was a commonly used aphorism that wouldn’t even make sense to most young people today.

By bored I am not referring to a lack of things to do. There is more opportunity to do and experience things today than ever before. By bored I mean a deep boredom of the soul, what the French call *ennui*. This is the boredom that emanates from lack of purpose and a yearning for excitement.

The combination of affluence and secularism produces boredom as surely as the combination of hydrogen and oxygen produces water. Without affluence, people have a built-in purpose: obtaining food and shelter, supporting oneself and one’s family, etc.

And religion, with or without affluence, likewise has always provided people with meaning. Without religion, therefore, purpose is often lost.

Add to that the number of people who are not married and do not have children (also a result of the combination of affluence and secularism) and you remove another universal source of meaning.

A disproportionate percentage of those on the left (not traditional liberals) do not lack for material needs, have no religion and are single and/or childless.

Those left-wing screamers you see in restaurants, the left-wing mobs on campus, the left-wing “antifa” thugs and the left-wing Black Lives Matter demonstrators who close down bridges and highways do not generally consist of married people with children who attended church the previous Sunday.

These people find this lack of purpose assuaged by leftism. It provides meaning and excitement, a very heady combination.

These are a few explanations. In Part II I will offer others.



Explaining the Left: Part II (written on 8/21/18)

By Dennis Prager

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—The governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo, did Americans a favor last week. He provided that which is most indispensable to understanding anything: clarity.

“America . . . was never that great,” he announced.

In one sentence the governor revealed the left’s true view of America.

This is rare—because leftists are masters at hiding what they really believe.

For example, the left's low regard for nonwhites is well-hidden under a mountain of "anti-racist" rhetoric. But people who consistently advocate lowering standards for blacks obviously do not think highly of blacks, and people who believe in separate black dorms and separate black graduation ceremonies obviously believe in a pillar of racism: racial segregation.

Another generally denied—if not hidden—left-wing belief is contempt for America. On a daily basis, the left describes America as xenophobic, misogynistic, imperialist, greedy and homophobic.

And that's on a slow day at *The New York Times*, MSNBC or your local university. Just last week, a *New York Times* column added "barbaric" to the left's view of America.

But for some reason, the average American does not see all this as proof of the left's contempt for America.

So we have to rely on the occasional unguarded and unambiguous statement to know what the left really thinks.

Michelle Obama provided such a statement when, as her husband began racking up victories in early-voting states in the 2008 primary season, she proclaimed, "For the first time in my adult life, I am really proud of my country."

Hillary Clinton provided her example during the 2016 election when she described half of her fellow Americans as "deplorables."

Then-President Barack Obama provided his example in 2015 when he spoke about racism being "part of our DNA." Now, you might argue that he was merely stating a truth, not expressing contempt. But that argument fails for three reasons:

- First, America has developed into the least-racist multiracial, multi-ethnic country in history.

Those who deny this have contempt for truth as well as for America. So much for DNA.

- Second, can Barack Obama or anyone else on the left name a country or group in history that interacted with other races and was free of racism?

Of course not. So, singling out America as having racist DNA is an expression of contempt for America specifically.

- Third, how would Barack Obama or anyone else on the left react to someone saying, "Islamic civilization has racism in its DNA"?

They would not only emphatically deny it; they would charge whoever said it with being Islamophobic. In other words, if one tells the truth about centuries of horrific treatment of blacks under Islamic rule, one is bigoted against Islam. But if one says America has racism in its very essence, racism that is still being passed unconsciously from one generation to the next, one is not an Ameriphobe?

And now Cuomo tells an audience that “America . . . was never that great.”

Cuomo said publicly what virtually every leftist believes. No one—left, right or center—thinks the comment was idiosyncratic. If Cuomo had said, “America was never a sports-loving nation,” everyone would have assumed this was just an odd comment representing no one but him.

The reason this comment hit such a powerful chord in American life is that just about everyone suspects he was saying what all his fellow leftists believe.

After all, we all know what young people are taught from elementary school through graduate school by their left-wing teachers: (1) America is a racist country founded by racists; (2) Americans committed genocide against the American Indians; (3) whites have unique privileges because of America’s “systemic” racism; (4) in the words of Sen. Elizabeth Warren, “the hard truth about our criminal justice system: It’s racist . . . front to back”; (5) police are racist—both white and black cops shoot blacks because of racism; and (6) “American civilization” and “Western civilization” are no more than euphemisms for white supremacy.

Now, why would anyone think the left has contempt for America?

Contempt for America is so central to leftism that there would be no leftism without it. Yet there remains an even more important question: Why?

Why does the left—not liberals, who traditionally revered America—have such disdain for America?

I will address this question in a future installment of this series explaining the left.

America and the West cannot be saved unless those who cherish them understand what motivates those who wish to see them end.



**Explaining the Left:
Part III—(Leftism As Secular Religion) (written on 8/28/18)**

By Dennis Prager

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—One of the most important books of the 20th century—it remains a best-seller 59 years after it was first published—is *Man’s Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl.

Marx saw man’s primary drive as economic, and Freud saw it as sex. But Frankl believed—correctly, in my opinion—that the greatest drive of man is meaning.

One can be poor and chaste and still be happy. But one cannot be bereft of meaning and be happy—no matter how rich or how sexually fulfilled one may be.

The greatest provider of meaning for the vast majority of human beings has been religion.

In the West, Christianity (and, on a smaller scale, Judaism) provided nearly all people with the Bible, a divine or divinely inspired text to guide their lives; a religious community; answers to life's fundamental questions; and, above all, meaning: A good God governs the universe; death does not end everything; and human beings were purposefully created.

In addition, Christianity gave Christians a project: spread the Good News, and bring the world to Christ. And Judaism gave Jews a project: Live by God's laws of ethics and holiness and be "a light unto the nations."

All this has disappeared for most Westerners.

- The Bible is regarded as myth, silly at best, malicious at worst.
- There is no God, certainly not the morality-giving and judging God of the Bible.
- There is no afterlife.
- Human beings are a purposeless coincidence with no more intrinsic purpose than anything else in the universe.
- In short: This Is All There Is.

So, if the need for meaning is the greatest of all human needs and that which supplied meaning no longer does, what are millions of Westerners supposed to do?

The answer is obvious: Find meaning elsewhere. But where? Church won't provide it. Nor will marriage and family—increasingly, secular individuals in the West eschew marriage, and even more do not have children. It turns out, to the surprise of many, that marriage and children are religious values, not human instincts.

In the West today, love and marriage (and children) go together like a horse and a carriage for faithful Catholics, Orthodox Jews, religious Mormons and evangelical Protestants—not for the secular.

I know many religious families with more than four children; I do not know one secular family with more than four children (and the odds are you don't either).

The answer to the great dearth of meaning left by the death of biblical religion in the West is secular religion.

The first two great secular substitutes were communism and Nazism. The first provided hundreds of millions of people with meaning; the latter provided most Germans and Austrians with meaning.

In particular, both ideologies provided the intellectual class with meaning. No groups believed in communism and Nazism more than intellectuals.

Like everyone else, secular intellectuals need meaning, and when this need was combined with intellectuals' love of ideas (especially new ideas—"new" is almost erotic in the power of its appeal to secular intellectuals), communism and Nazism became potent ideologies.

With the fall of communism and the awareness of the extent of the communist mass murder (about 100 million noncombatants) and mass enslavement (virtually all individuals in communist countries—except for Communist Party leaders—are essentially enslaved), communism, or at least the word “communism,” fell into disrepute.

So what were secular intellectuals to do once communism became “the god that failed”?

The answer was to create other another left-wing secular religion. And that is what leftism is: a secular meaning-giver to supplant Christianity. Left-wing religious expressions include Marxism, communism, socialism, feminism and environmentalism.

Leftism’s guiding principles—notwithstanding the principles of those Christians and Jews who claim to be religious yet hold leftist views—are the antitheses of Judaism’s and Christianity’s guiding principles.

- Judaism and Christianity hold that people are not basically good. Leftism holds that people are basically good.
- Therefore, Judaism and Christianity believe evil comes from human nature, and leftism believes evil comes from capitalism, religion, the nation-state (i.e., nationalism), corporations, the patriarchy and virtually every other traditional value.
- Judaism and Christianity hold that utopia on earth is impossible—it will only come in God’s good time as a Messianic age or in the afterlife.
- Leftism holds that utopia is to be created here on Earth—and as soon as possible.

That is why leftists find America so contemptible. They do not compare it to other nations but to a utopian ideal—a society with no inequality, no racism, no differences between the sexes (indeed, no sexes) and no greed in which everything important is obtained free.

- Judaism and Christianity believe God and the Bible are to instruct us on how to live a good life and how the heart is the last place to look for moral guidance.
- Leftists have contempt for anyone who is guided by the Bible and its God, and substitute the heart and feelings for divine instruction.

There may be a clash of civilizations between the West and Islam, but the biggest clash of civilizations is between the West and the left.