

Nice People Do a Lot of Damage

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By Dennis Prager

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—It can be said that gaining wisdom is a process of gaining some dark insights into life.

One such insight is this: A lot of evil has been abetted by nice people.

By "nice," I am referring to the way people comport themselves in the personal realm. We refer to people as being "nice" if they are friendly to strangers, more or less honest in their dealings with others, take care of their families, support friends and are pleasant to be around. We all want nice neighbors.

To put it another way, "nice" generally refers to the micro, the personal, realm. It does not generally refer to the macro realm—that is, to the views and values people hold about moral and social questions.

The human being is composed of two moral components—the micro and the macro. In a truly good human being—"good" is not the same as "nice"—one is good in both realms. It is therefore quite possible to be nice in the micro and hold awful values for society; and it is quite possible to have excellent macro values and not be a particularly nice person.

Take communism, for example.

Communist regimes killed some 100 million people in the 20th century—none of them combatants in war. Add to that number more than a billion devastated lives: the friends and family of the murdered, the generations deprived of elementary human rights and the countless number of innocent people imprisoned and tortured, and you have as pure an evil as is imaginable.

You might therefore think that no one who supported communism, let alone was a member of a communist party anywhere in the world, was a nice person. But you would be wrong. There were many nice people who supported communism. There were even nice people among the Westerners

who provided Josef Stalin with the secrets to making an atom bomb.

The only competitor with communism for pure evil was, of course, Nazism. While the communists murdered far more people, the Nazis' systematic industrial murder of almost every Jewish man, woman and child in Europe remains the most horrific crime ever committed by a nation.

One would therefore assume, especially given the absence of moral rhetoric that characterized communist rhetoric, that there could hardly have been any nice supporters of Nazism.

But you would be wrong again. There were nice Germans who voted for Hitler and the Nazis in 1932, the last free election in Germany until after World War II. Historians are in general agreement that Germans who voted for the Nazis did so primarily for economic reasons, not because they were Jew-haters, let alone sought the murder of all of Europe's Jews. In any event, the plans to exterminate European Jewry were not even drawn up for almost another 10 years.

So, yes, there were even nice Nazis. There is a well-known example of one—Oskar Schindler. A German industrialist who was a member of the Nazi Party, Schindler personally saved about 1,200 Jews—Jewish workers in his factories in Nazi-occupied Poland, Bohemia and Moravia. He is the subject of the famous Steven Spielberg film, *Schindler's List*.

Obviously, no communist or Nazi who participated in communist or Nazi evils was nice; each was despicable. And so were many, though not all, supporters of communism and the Nazi Party. But "nice" did not preclude abetting pure evil.

This was also true of supporters of slavery and even some slaveholders. As with communism and Nazism, there were some nice people who supported slavery and even some who owned slaves. Like communism and Nazism, the institution of slavery was evil, but not every supporter of slavery or slave owner was personally vicious. George Washington owned slaves, and he was not merely a nice man, he was a great man.

Moreover, unlike communist and Nazi evil, which were unique in history, slavery was universal and practiced throughout history. It took thousands of years for much of humanity to recognize just how evil slavery was. And people must always be judged in the context of the time and place they lived.

The reason this issue of nice people doing harm has become important to me is that I have been trying to explain how it is that millions of nice

Americans support left-wing policies that are ruining, perhaps even destroying, America.

Specifically, why do millions of nice liberals support the Left? Leftism and liberalism have virtually nothing in common.

- Do liberals believe in all-black college dormitories?
- Do liberals believe that America is a systemically racist country founded not in 1776, but in 1619?
- Do liberals believe that Israel is the villain in the Middle East?
- Do liberals believe that capitalism (the only economic system to lift billions of people out of poverty) should be replaced by socialism, whose moral record is horrific?
- Do liberals believe that little children should be taught that "boys" and "girls" are subjective categories and that "nonbinary" is normal?
- Do liberals believe that defunding police reduces violent crime?

No, they don't. Yet millions of nice liberals support those who believe those nihilistic, anti-American, anti-human ideas.

Many on the Left are neither nice nor good. But America is being destroyed by vile doctrines supported by a lot of nice people.

Postscript: After saying these things about nice people who support evil on my radio show, the Left declared that I think slave owners were nice people and that I support slavery.

- One of the most popular left-wing podcasts, "The Young Turks," spoke about me above the chyron: "Pro-Slavery Prager: Religious radio host argues slave owners were nice people."
- And the left-wing English publication, *The Independent*, headlined, "Far-right radio host Dennis Prager sparks outrage by saying there were 'undoubtedly many nice slaveholders.' "
- Intellectual honesty and morally sophisticated thought are not hallmarks of the Left.