

# “Young Americans Are Not Taught About Evil”

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**By Dennis Prager**

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Most of our schools teach almost nothing of importance, and nothing is more important than the study of good and evil. In the United States today, nearly all schools, from elementary through graduate, concentrate on teaching about racism, sexism, preferred pronouns, homophobia, transphobia, LGBTQIA+, climate change, diversity, equity, inclusiveness and white guilt.

In other words, most of our educational institutions, including the most prestigious, do not educate.

Here are a few proofs.

It is almost certain that the great majority of American high-school and college students (with the obvious exceptions of Christian students) could not name the following.

- The Four Gospels (presuming they even know what they are).
- Five of the Ten Commandments (presuming they know what those are).
- The names of two Shakespeare plays.

Most American students know little about the American Revolution, let alone about the French or Russian revolutions. The same holds true for the Constitution and every other American founding document. It is doubtful that, other than Washington and Jefferson having owned slaves, American students know anything about these men or could name two other founders.

When it comes to evil, the ignorance is enormous, often almost total.

For example, according to Pew, about half of Americans ages 18–39 cannot supply the following information.

- Cannot identify Auschwitz or any other Nazi death camp.
- Cannot identify the Gulag Archipelago (20 million-plus murdered).

- Cannot identify the Ukrainian forced famine (five to 6 million murdered in a little over a year).
- Cannot identify Mao's Great Leap Forward (about 60 million murdered).
- Cannot identify Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge (about one in every four Cambodians murdered).

As noted, almost no one outside of Russia has ever heard of the Russian Civil War, let alone knows anything about it. One reason is that the winners, the communists, had no desire that people know about it. Yet, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, about 10 million people, the great majority non-combatants, were killed.

Why don't students know about evil?

- The first reason is that nearly all the genocides of the 20th century were committed by communists, and the Left, which runs virtually all educational institutions, has always had a soft spot for communism.

If people were to recognize that communism has been the greatest source of evil in the modern age in terms of numbers murdered, number of lives destroyed, liberty stolen and the sheer amount of human suffering inflicted (greater by those metrics than those of the Nazis before they were forcibly stopped), the Left would lose much of its appeal.

- The second reason is the foolish notion that people are basically good.

This has been a left-wing belief since the French Enlightenment leader Jean-Jacques Rousseau came up with the idea. As he wrote in his book, *On Philosophy, Morality, and Religion*, "Man is a naturally good being, loving justice and order; there is no natural perversity in the human heart . . . All the vices imputed to the human heart are not natural to it."

This nonsense had been foreign to the Western mind. Its view of humanity was rooted in the Bible, and neither Bible-based religion—Judaism or Christianity—affirmed the goodness of the human heart. As Genesis states, "The will of man's heart is evil from his youth," and the rest of the Bible repeatedly warns us against following our hearts.

However, as the West began to abandon the Bible, including belief in the God of the Bible, Westerners began to believe in man. As Marx put it, "Man is God." People had no choice. For, if there is no God to believe in, one must believe in man—or one has literally nothing to believe in. Therefore, belief in man's inherent goodness became both psychologically and philosophically necessary.

- The third reason follows from the second. With the exception of the mass murder of the Armenians (which was committed by Muslim Turks), the genocides and the other horrors of the 20th century were committed by secular regimes.

Given the centrality of secularism to leftism, this fact has been kept from young people. Likewise, the fact that all these genocides were committed by big

governments is not taught to young people because big government is also central to left-wing ideology.

In other words, a true depiction of the evils of the 20th century would mean the end of the two pillars of left-wing ideology: secularism and big government.

If you want to make a more moral world, you must begin with the study of evil. But, for the reasons enumerated here, the Left is not—and cannot be—interested in fighting real evil.

So the Left fights made-up evils: American systemic racism, transphobia, capitalism, carbon emissions, sexism and former President Donald Trump, to name a few.

This is why young people know almost nothing about evil. The Left doesn't want them to know about it. Because knowledge of evil inevitably leads directly to rejection of the Left.