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Michael Moore and American self-hatred

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Did you ever notice that there are no Germans going around the world saying, or making movies about, how awful Germany is or has been? Given that Germany unleashed two world wars and invented industrialized genocide, why has there been no German Michael Moore?

Are there any Japanese making films about the absence of Japanese soul-searching or expressions of sorrow over their country's enslavement, torture and murder of Asians in World War II? Has anyone ever encountered any Japanese self-hate?

Any Belgians telling the world how bad their country is? Argentinians? French? France surely has reason to produce people ashamed of their country.

The answer, of course, is no. In fact, among all the world's peoples, only two produce large numbers of individuals who have greater sympathy for those who hate their country or national/ethnic group than for those who love it – Americans and Jews.

Many on the American Left loathe America (they love the Constitution and their vision of what America could be) and have contempt for the average American. That is why most of the Left has such admiration for Michael Moore, who has said, among so much more, the following:

Americans "are possibly the dumbest people on the planet ... in thrall to conniving, thieving, smug p----s" (London Daily Mirror).

"Should such an ignorant people lead the world?" (open letter to the German people in Die Zeit).

Elsewhere, he speaks of America as bringing immeasurable misery and sadness to the world and as essentially deserving attacks on it.

There are no comparable self-haters in any other country except Israel, whose leftists have the same contempt for their country, nor among any other group except the Jews, whose Left also generally loathe the Jewish state (and America).

Israeli professors in the West are often the leaders in anti-Israel demonstrations and movements. Jews such as professors Norman Finkelstein and Noam Chomsky devote much of their lives to trying to harm the one Jewish country in the world (and America) and express deep hatred of Jewish institutions.

Here is Finkelstein:

Jewish organizations "steal, and I do use the word with intent, 95 percent of the monies earmarked for victims of Nazi persecution" (Counterpunch, Dec. 13, 2001).

Jews "are not Zionist by conviction, they are Zionist because it is useful for their political and more recently financial self-interest" (same).

In a lecture delivered in Beirut, Finkelstein likened Israeli actions to "Nazi practices" during World War II, albeit with some added "novelties to the Nazi experiments" (Commentary, June 2002).

And Noam Chomsky wrote the foreword to a book denying the Holocaust. This is the same as a black professor writing the foreword to a book by a Ku Klux Klansman.

This self-loathing on the part of Americans and Jews is all the more remarkable when you consider that leftists of every other group strongly affirm their national, cultural and ethnic identities. For example, while American and Jewish leftists ceaselessly attack America and Israel, black and Hispanic leftists ceaselessly defend blacks and Hispanics.

How, then, to explain this anomaly of American and Jewish self-loathing?

I offer four explanations in no order of importance.

First, those Jews and Americans who loathe Israel and America are virtually always on the Left, and the Left around the world hates America and Israel. You can't be a leftist and strongly defend America or Israel. The Left will shun you. And since most of these individuals' primary identity comes from being a leftist, being ostracized from fellow leftists is hell on earth.

Second, many leftists are psychologically adolescents. And one feature of adolescent psychology is anger at a parent who claims very high ideals and turns out to be flawed. Many on the Left are angry at America and Israel for being imperfect and therefore disappointing them.

Third, the words "American" and "Jewish" both represent distinctive value systems, not only national and ethnic identities. And these value systems clash with leftist values. Both American and Jewish identities are rooted in religion and divine chosenness. And the further left one goes, the greater the hostility to religion – especially to Judaism and Christianity (not to Islam, which the Left often defends, because many Muslims hate Judaism and Christianity as much as the Left does) – not to

mention to any notion of national or religious exceptionalism. When you add to this that America also represents capitalism and holds liberty higher than equality, you can further understand why America elicits so much hatred from its own leftists.

Fourth, since America and Israel are the two most hated countries in the world, and the Jews are the most hated ethnic/religious group, many Americans and Jews would rather identify with the haters than with the hated. That is why, for example, so many American leftists base a large part of their case against George W. Bush on his having increased anti-American sentiments around the world. This makes leftists livid – again, like adolescents, they yearn to be part of the in-crowd (meaning America- and Israel-haters) and fear being disliked.

There may be other explanations. But what is certain is that American self-hatred and Jewish self-hatred are unique phenomena that play a particularly destructive role in our world.

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