

Newsweek Changed Its Article About Me. But ...

In my last column, "Newsweek Hits a New Low," I wrote about Newsweek's dishonest description of what I had said on one of my weekly PragerU "Fireside Chats." A viewer had asked me to respond to a statement Anne Frank made in her epic Holocaust diary. Frank said, "Despite everything, I believe that people are really good at heart."

The Newsweek headline, "Conservative Radio Host Ridicules Anne Frank," was simply a lie. In order for readers to appreciate the level of mendacity, I had my entire response transcribed and placed it in the column.

A few days later I received a message from Nancy Cooper, global editor-in-chief of Newsweek. She emailed me her personal cellphone number and asked me to call her. I did, and we had a good conversation. She agreed that what Newsweek published mischaracterized my remarks and corrected both the headline and the article, written by deputy editor Benjamin Fearnow.

She changed the headline to "Conservative Radio Host Counters Anne Frank's View That People Are 'Good at Heart.'"

In addition, she deleted Fearnow's sentence characterizing me as having mocked Anne Frank. And she deleted another Fearnow falsehood: "He also brings up Nazi comparisons frequently on his radio program, *The Dennis Prager Show*, to criticize modern Democrats and liberals."

I told Cooper that in 37 years of radio, I have never compared Democrats or liberals to Nazis; Fearnow had made that up out of whole cloth.

In its place, she wrote the truth: "He also brings up Nazi

comparisons on his radio program, *The Dennis Prager Show*, saying the left 'cheapens' Nazi evil by using the term to dismiss political opponents or that liberals focus on Nazism while failing to acknowledge the horrors wrought by Communism."

The following notice now appears at the end of the article: "Update 1/8, 4:45 p.m. ET: The original headline on this story misrepresented Prager's comments; the headline and story have been edited to reflect that Prager did not 'ridicule' or 'mock' Anne Frank but took issue with her view."

As I wrote to Cooper, "Your attention to this says a lot about you and your hopes for Newsweek. Thank you."

But the story doesn't end there.

First, has Newsweek disciplined Fearnow in any way? (I never heard from Fearnow.)

Second, and more important, the original lie about me has taken on a life of its own. It was conveyed on numerous left-wing sites.

Wonkette, under the sarcastic headline "Dennis Prager Will Not Be Bullied by Anne Frank," wrote a deceit-filled article about my comments about Anne Frank. At this writing, the column is followed by 654 reader comments – virtually every one of them repeating the lie started by Newsweek and continued by Wonkette.

There has not been a word on Wonkette about Newsweek's correction.

The Daily Dot – "conceived as the Internet's 'hometown newspaper,' focuses on topics such as streaming entertainment, geek culture, memes, gadgets and social issues, such as LGBT, gender and race," as Wikipedia describes – reprinted the original Newsweek charge.

There has not been a word on The Daily Dot about Newsweek's correction.

Under the headline "Dennis Prager on Anne Frank: 'I Don't Get My Wisdom from Teenagers,'" the Patheos website's Friendly Atheist page wrote, "Leave it to right-wing commentator Dennis Prager, founder of a fake online 'university' ... to dismiss Frank's comment ... because she was a child and therefore too dumb to understand anything."

There has not been a word on Patheos about Newsweek's correction.

Inquisitr, which claims 40 million readers a month, headlined its disparaging article "Conservative Pundit Dennis Prager Ridicules Anne Frank."

There has not been a word on Inquisitr about Newsweek's correction.

Democratic Underground's headline read, "Conservative Radio Host Dennis Prager Ridicules Anne Frank." It features a tweet from @Kokomothegreat that has 499 retweets.

There has not been a word on Democratic Underground or from Koko about Newsweek's correction.

I note all of this to make three points.

First, as I have said for decades: While truth is a conservative value and a liberal value, it has never been a left-wing value.

Second, the left's primary response to those with whom it differs is to smear.

Third, smears cannot be undone.

This was brilliantly brought home to me in a famous Jewish story I first heard when I was a student in yeshiva.

The tale is told of a Jew in Eastern Europe who had slandered his rabbi but soon regretted it. So, he went to his rabbi, told him what he had done, sincerely apologized and asked the rabbi's forgiveness.

"Bring me two feather pillows," the rabbi responded.

The man did.

"Am I now forgiven?" he asked.

"Now cut open the pillows," the rabbi responded.

The man had no idea why the rabbi made these requests, but deeply wanting the rabbi's forgiveness, he did as he was told.

"Am I now forgiven?" the man asked.

"Now let the feathers fly away," the rabbi responded.

Once again, the man did as the rabbi requested.

"Am I now forgiven?" the exasperated man asked.

"Just do one more thing," the rabbi responded. "Bring back the feathers."

Benjamin Fearnow and the left-wing websites cannot bring back the feathers. Nor, apparently, do they want to.

Dennis Prager is a nationally syndicated radio talk-show host and columnist. His latest book, published by Regnery in May 2019, is "The Rational Bible," a commentary on the book of Genesis. His film, "No Safe Spaces," came to theaters fall 2019. He is the founder of Prager University and may be contacted at dennisprager.com.

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Newsweek Hits a New Low

If decent people working in mainstream American media want to know why many Americans do not trust them and are willing to use the term “fake news” to describe the mainstream media, I offer one of the most glaring examples of a lie in my lifetime.

Last week, Newsweek headlined the following: “Conservative Radio Host Ridicules Anne Frank: ‘I Don’t Get My Wisdom From Teenagers.’”

Now, imagine how that must have struck any reader not familiar with the “conservative radio host” or with what he actually said. “Ridicule Anne Frank” – what kind of terrible human being would do that?

Well, it turns out the “conservative radio host” was me. Yes, me – a religious Jew who has devoted much of his life to the welfare of the Jewish people, served on the board of the U.S. Holocaust Museum, made the most widely viewed pro-Israel video in the world, written a book on anti-Semitism that is in its third printing, and founded a synagogue and a Jewish day school.

To understand how terrible a lie this is, you need to know what happened: Every week I do a video podcast for PragerU called “The Fireside Chat.” In it, I offer thoughts on life and then take questions from around the world (we have received questions from 52 countries). A few weeks ago, I received the following question from Sam in Meridian, Idaho: “On your most recent Fireside Chat, you said that people are not basically good. We’ve heard you discuss this topic before. Anne Frank is quoted as saying, ‘Despite everything, I believe

that people are really good at heart.’ How do you respond to her quote?”

Here is my response (this is a word-for-word transcription, except for the words in parentheses added for clarity): “She wrote that in her diary, the most famous Holocaust document. (She was) a teenage girl, a Dutch Jewish girl, who hid with her family until they were betrayed by someone to the Nazis, who then shipped them to death camps. And she died, murdered by the Nazis in the death camps. She was about 16 years old, maybe 15. Her diary is very famous. It gives a face to the horror of the Holocaust.

“I know she wrote that, and my answer is it doesn’t matter that she wrote it. I don’t get my wisdom from teenagers. That she was a wonderful young woman and wrote an unbelievably powerful document that will last forever is beside the point. I don’t expect 16-year-olds, unless they grew up in a religious Jewish or Christian home (where it is taught as basic religious doctrine that people are not born basically good). She was a secular Jew. Most kids believe that (people are basically good). But it is not true. So, it has never been an issue for me – ‘Well, you disagree with Anne Frank.’ So what?

“And, by the way, to be very serious for a moment, I would be very curious – I’ve thought about this a lot – if I were to be able to visit Anne Frank while in a concentration camp, would she have still believed that? We don’t know.”

Readers can watch the actual video [clip](#) (starting at 19:04).

Only someone who deliberately seeks to smear someone would claim that what I said ridicules Anne Frank.

The person who wrote this is Benjamin Fearnow, a deputy editor at Newsweek, who previously worked for the left-wing site Mediaite.

When I looked up Fearnow, I came across this December 2018 tweet from talk show host Mark Levin: "Newsweek's Benjamin Fearnow is a very, very sick person."

And Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, one of the most revered Jewish scholars in America – author of such Jewish classics as "Jewish Literacy" and "Biblical Literacy" – called me to say that Fearnow's article saying I ridiculed Anne Frank is "the most despicable lie I recall reading in a mainstream news source."

Yesterday, Newsweek published Fearnow's column headlined, "Top Iranian Presidential Adviser Says Tehran's 'Sole Problem Is Trump,' Not Average American People."

Apparently, Fearnow has chosen to serve as a useful idiot for the Iranian regime, which hates America, not only Trump. (Does Fearnow believe that the Iranian chant "death to Israel" only means "death to Netanyahu"?) The Iranian regime has gathered millions of Iranians to chant "death to America" since long before it ever heard of Donald Trump. It has been wishing death on us and killing Americans (not to mention Iranians) since it came into power in 1979. But Fearnow cites the Iranian dictator, Ayatollah Khamenei, as having said last February that "'Death to America' means death to Trump, (National Security Adviser) John Bolton, and (Secretary of State Mike) Pompeo," as if it were credible.

Meanwhile, multiple left-wing sites have picked up Fearnow's and Newsweek's lie that I ridiculed Anne Frank.

If Newsweek has any honor, it will remove Fearnow's article and apologize to me.

But neither is likely. As I wrote 30 years ago, "Being on the left means never having to say you're sorry."

Next time someone challenges you for using the term "fake news" to describe mainstream media, just cite Newsweek and

Fearnow.

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Greta Thunberg: A Living Explanation of the Left

It is not easy to understand what the left – as opposed to liberals – stands for. If you ask a Christian what to read to learn the basics of Christianity, you will be told the Bible. If you ask a (religious) Jew, you will be told the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud. If you ask a Mormon, you will be told the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Ask a Muslim and you will be told the Quran.

But if you ask a leftist what one or two books you should read to understand leftism, every leftist will give you a different answer – or need some time to think it over. Few, if any, will suggest Marx's "Das Kapital" because almost no leftists have read it and because you will either not finish the book or reject it as incoherent.

So, then, how is one to understand what leftism stands for?

The truth is it is almost impossible. What leftist in history

would have ever imagined that to be a leftist, one would have to believe that men give birth or men have periods, or that it is fair to women to have to compete in sports with biological males who identify as females?

There are two primary reasons it is so difficult, if not impossible, to define leftism. One is that it ultimately stands for chaos:

- Open borders.
- “Nonbinary” genders.
- Nonsensical and scatological “art.”
- “Music” without tonality, melody or harmony.
- Drag Queen Story Hour for 5-year-olds.
- Rejection of the concept of better or worse civilizations.
- Rejection of the concept of better or worse art.
- Removal of Shakespeare’s picture from a university English department because he was a white male.
- The end of all use of fossil fuels – even in transportation (as per the recent recommendation by the head of the U.N. World Meteorological Organization).
- The dismantling of capitalism, the economic engine that has lifted billions of people out of abject poverty.

And much more.

The other major reason it is impossible to define leftism is that it is emotion-based. Leftism consists of causes that give those who otherwise lack meaning something to cling to for meaning.

Two things about Greta Thunberg, Time magazine’s 2019 person

of the year, embody these explanations.

With regard to chaos, here is what Greta Thunberg wrote at the beginning of the month: "The climate crisis is not just about the environment. It is a crisis of human rights, of justice and of political will. Colonial, racist and patriarchal systems of oppression have created and fuelled it. We need to dismantle them all."

Greta Thunberg, like all leftists, seeks to dismantle just about everything. As former President Barack Obama said five days before the 2008 election, "We are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America."

As regards emotion and meaning, the Guardian reports, this is what Thunberg's father just told the BBC: "Greta Thunberg's father has opened up about how activism helped his daughter out of depression ... how activism had changed the outlook of the teenager, who suffered from depression for 'three or four years' before she began her school strike protest outside the Swedish parliament. She was now 'very happy', he said ... 'She stopped talking ... she stopped going to school,' he said of her illness."

The post-Judeo-Christian world the left has created has left a vast number of the West's citizens, especially more and more young people, with no meaning. This Grand-Canyon-sized hole is filled by leftist causes.

The fact is life is better, safer and more affluent, and offers more opportunities for more people, than ever before in history. Just about all emotionally stable, mature people should be walking around the West almost delirious at their good fortune. Americans in particular should feel this way. But leftists (again, as opposed to many liberals) are not usually emotionally stable and are certainly not mature. That is why depression among young Americans (and perhaps Swedes) is at the highest levels ever recorded. So, like Greta, they

look to left-wing causes to find meaning and emotional fulfillment. Until she embraced climate crisis activism – a chance, as she sees it, to literally save the world – Greta Thunberg was so depressed “she stopped talking.” But thanks to climate activism and other left-wing activism, she is now “very happy” (an assessment I suspect many observers find hard to believe).

Feminism and “fighting patriarchy” (in an age when American women have more opportunities than ever before and more opportunities than women almost anywhere else in the world), fighting racism (in the least racist multiracial society in history), fighting white supremacy (which has almost disappeared from American life) and fighting on behalf of myriad other leftist causes – in other words, fundamentally transforming society – gives meaning to people with no meaning.

None of that is morally or rationally coherent. But it is very emotionally satisfying. Just ask Greta Thunberg’s dad.

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A Response to the Editor of Christianity Today

The editor-in-chief of Christianity Today, Mark Galli, wrote an editorial calling for the impeachment of President Donald Trump.

In my view, this editorial only serves to confirm one of the sadder realizations of my life: that religious conviction guarantees neither moral clarity nor common sense.

The gist of the editorial – and of most religious and conservative opposition to President Trump – is that any good the president has done is dwarfed by his character defects.

This is an amoral view that says more about Galli than it does about the president. He and the people who share his opinion are making the following statement: No matter how much good this president does, it is less important than his character flaws.

Why is this wrong?

First, because it devalues policies that benefit millions of people.

And second, because it is a simplistic view of character.

I do not know how to assess a person's character – including my own – outside of how one's actions affect others. Since I agree with almost all of President Trump's actions as president and believe they have positively affected millions of people, I have to conclude that as president, Trump thus far has been a man of particularly good character.

Of course, if you think his policies have harmed millions of people, you will assess his character negatively. But that is not what never-Trump conservatives or Christians such as the

Christianity Today editor-in-chief argue. They argue that his policies have indeed helped America (and even the world), but this fact is far less significant than his character.

In the words of Galli: "(I)t's time to call a spade a spade, to say that no matter how many hands we win in this political poker game, we are playing with a stacked deck of gross immorality and ethical incompetence."

This rhetorical sleight of hand reflects poorly on Galli's intellectual and moral honesty.

Galli and every other Christian and conservative opponent of the president believe their concerns are moral, and that the president's Christian and other conservative supporters are political.

This is simply wrong.

I and every other supporter of the president I know support him for moral reasons, not to win a "political poker game." Galli's view is purely self-serving; he's saying, "We Christian and other conservative opponents of the president think in moral terms, while Christian and other conservative supporters of the president think in political terms."

So, permit me to inform Galli and all the other people who consider themselves conservative and/or Christian that our support for the president is entirely moral.

– To us, putting pressure on the Iranian regime – one of the most evil and dangerous regimes on Earth – by getting out of the Iran nuclear deal made by former President Barack Obama is a moral issue. Even New York Times columnist Bret Stephens, who loathes Trump, has written how important the president's rejection of the Obama-Iran agreement has been.

– To us, enabling millions of black Americans to find work – resulting in the lowest black unemployment rate ever recorded

– is a moral issue.

– To us, more Americans than ever being employed and almost 4 million Americans freed from reliance on food stamps is a moral issue.

– To us, appointing more conservative judges than any president in history – over the same period of time – is a moral issue. That whether the courts, including the Supreme Court, are dominated by the left or by conservatives is dismissed by Galli as “political poker” makes one question not only Galli’s moral thinking but also his moral theology.

– To us, moving the American embassy to Israel’s capital city, Jerusalem – something promised by almost every presidential candidate – is a moral issue, not to mention profoundly courageous. And courage is a moral virtue.

– To us, increasing the U.S. military budget – after the severe cuts of the previous eight years – is a moral issue. As conservatives see it, the American military is the world’s greatest guarantor of world peace.

Yet, none of these things matter to Galli and other misguided Christians and conservatives. What matters more to them is Trump’s occasional crude language and intemperate tweets, what he said about women in a private conversation and his having committed adultery.

Regarding adultery, that sin is for spouses and God to judge. There is no connection between marital sexual fidelity and moral leadership. I wish there were. And as regards the “Access Hollywood” tape, every religious person, indeed every thinking person, should understand that there is no connection between what people say privately and their ability to be a moral leader. That’s why I wrote a column for the Wall Street Journal 20 years ago defending Hillary Clinton when she was charged with having privately expressed anti-Semitic sentiments.

That the editor of Christianity Today thinks the president's personal flaws, whatever they might be, are more important than all the good he has done for conservatives, for Christians, for Jews, for blacks and for America tells us a lot ... about Galli and the decline of Christian moral thought.

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Why the Left Doesn't Like Christmas

Many on the left (as opposed to liberals) have been warring on Christmas for more than a generation. Leftists always deny there is a war on Christmas and mock those who claim there is.

There is a mind-blowing chutzpah or lack of self-awareness when people do something and yet deny that they are actually doing it. But the evidence is overwhelming. The left has stopped schools from calling Christmas vacations by that name – the name schools called them throughout American history until the last couple of decades. Almost every non-Christian school in America now calls Christmas vacation "winter break." Fewer and fewer Americans, stores, companies or media wish people "merry Christmas," preferring the neutered "happy

holidays” (despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of Americans celebrate Christmas). And in but one generation, virtually every American business has gone from having a “Christmas party” to having a “holiday party.”

Having written in the past about the falsehood of “merry Christmas,” “Christmas vacation” and “Christmas party” not being “inclusive,” I will not reiterate the point here. Suffice it to say that it takes a breathtaking level of narcissism for a non-Christian to be offended by mentions of Christmas and a breathtaking level of meanness to seek to deprive the vast majority of fellow Americans of the public mention of their holiday.

Rather, I want to try to explain why this has happened.

The “inclusive” argument is so absurd – I am a religious Jew and cannot even fathom being offended or feeling “not included” by an invitation to a Christmas party – that there have to be other, or at least additional, reasons for the left’s neutering of Christmas.

There are.

One is that the left sees in Christianity its primary ideological and political enemy. And it is right to do so. The only large-scale organized opposition to the left comes from the traditional Christian community – evangelical Protestants, traditional Catholics and faithful Mormons – and Orthodox Jews. Leftism is a secular religion, and it deems all other religions immoral and false.

From Karl Marx to Vladimir Lenin to George Soros, the left has regarded religion in general and Christianity in particular as the “opiate of the masses” – a drug that dulls the masses into accepting their oppressed condition and, thereby, keeps them from engaging in revolution.

The left understands that the more people believe in

Christianity (and Judaism), the less chance the left has to gain power. The left doesn't concern itself with Islam, because it perceives Islam as an ally in its war against Western civilization, and because leftists do not have the courage to confront Islam. They know that confronting religious Muslims can be fatal, whereas confronting religious Christians entails no risks.

Second, the left regards Christianity in America as an intrinsic part of American national identity – an identity it wishes to erode in favor of a “world citizen” identity. The left has not only warred against Christmas; it has sought to undermine other national identity holidays. For any number of reasons, not only including the left, Americans no longer celebrate George Washington's birthday (it has de facto been replaced by the utterly meaningless “Presidents Day”) or Abraham Lincoln's birthday, as they did when I was a child, my father was a child and his father was a child. The only American celebrated in a national holiday is Martin Luther King Jr., which is acceptable to the left since he is not white. One proof of the left's desire to undermine specifically American national holidays is its war on the two remaining specifically American holidays: July Fourth and Thanksgiving.

The left deems Thanksgiving a historical fraud and an immoral celebration of “genocide” of the American Indians – which is what American children are now taught in many American public schools. And “happy Thanksgiving” has been replaced by “happy holidays.” As for July Fourth, The New York Times is leading the undermining of the celebration of America's birthday by declaring that the real founding of America was 1619, the year, The Times asserts, African slaves first arrived on the American continent.

Of course, there is still Veterans Day and Memorial Day, but they are not specifically American national holidays; just about every country has such holidays.

But Christmas is a problem for the left. It celebrates religion, and it does so in quintessentially American ways (take American Christmas music, for example).

The third and final reason is that the left is joyless. Whatever and whomever the left influences has less joy in life. I have met happy and unhappy liberals, and happy and unhappy conservatives, but I've never encountered a happy leftist. And the further left you go, the more angry and unhappy the people you will encounter. Happy women and happy blacks, for example, are far more likely to be conservative than on the left.

Christmas is just too happy for the left. "Holly, jolly" is not a left-wing term.

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