



To Dodd: Education Is Not Always the Answer

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Dennis Prager

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At the Democrats' presidential debate last week, the candidates were asked to comment on issues pertaining to education. This was Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd's response:

"I've been asked the question over the years, 'What's the single most important issue?' I always say education because it is the answer to every other problem we confront as a people here."

Needless to say, no other candidate took issue with Sen. Dodd, and it is likely that most senators, all the Democrats and many Republicans, would agree with the sentiment.

But the sentiment is not only wrong, it is destructive.

There are, of course, links between education and professional success,

between education and the ability to read and write. And obviously we need well-educated people in order to be able to compete with other countries. But for at least the few generations in the Western world there has been no link between higher education and human decency.

Period.

This is one of the many myths believed by the educated in Western society (people are born good is another). But there is not a shred of evidence to support it.

In fact, the record of the last hundred years -- if it argues for any link between higher education and goodness -- argues for an inverse link. Put simply, the higher educated in Western society have been more likely to have awful moral va-

lues and more likely to support massive cruelty than the less well educated.

The two greatest evils of the 20th century -- fascism and communism -- were often headed by well-educated individuals. And communism was supported in the West almost exclusively by intellectuals. You almost had to be an intellectual in order to support the mass murderers Lenin, Stalin and Mao.

Ask any well-educated person to identify the educational backgrounds of the Nazi mass murderers who made up the *einsatzgruppen*, the mobile killing units that massacred Jews and anti-Nazi dissidents before the gas chambers were invented. It is a safe bet that most would respond that the vast majority of *einsatzgruppen* members were poorly educated. In fact, however, of the four *einsatzgruppen* sent into Russia, for example, "Three of the four commanders held a doctorate, whilst one was a double Ph.D." (HolocaustResearchProject.org). These Nazi mass murderers "included many high-ranking officers, intellectuals and lawyers. Otto Ohlendorf, who commanded *Einsatzgruppe D*, had earned degrees from three universities and achieved a doctorate in jurisprudence" ("The *Einsatzgruppen* Reports," Holocaust Library, 1989).

According to Professor Michael Mann -- whose book, "Fascists," published by Cambridge University Press in 2004, was declared by the *American Historical Review* to be "by far the best comparative study

of interwar fascisms" -- "all fascist movements during the interwar period appealed disproportionately to the well educated, 'to students in high schools and universities and to the most highly educated middle-class strata.'"

To the extent that many people graduate Western universities with good values, it is despite, rarely because of, their university education.

Yet, all the evidence of higher education's vast moral failure notwithstanding, most liberals deny the link between immoral values and higher education and continue to perpetuate the myth of education as the solution to society's problems.

They do so for a number of reasons.

First, the university is to the secular liberal what the church is to a religious Christian or a *yeshiva* (Talmudic academy) is to a religious Jew -- a place of holiness and the epicenter of his values.

Second, it is through control of higher education (and the media) that liberal and leftist values are most effectively communicated to the next generation. Even the media have somewhat more ideological diversity than Western universities, which almost exclusively convey a leftist worldview.

Third, a secular liberal education is the best antidote to the Judeo-Christian value system that the left most fears.

And there is a fourth reason why a Democratic senator, in particular, would say that education is the "the answer to all other problems." Teachers unions and the National Education Association provide major political and financial support to the Democratic Party.

There is, of course, a form of education that can indeed solve most of society's problems: moral education. That would consist of teaching young people what is good and what is bad, how to develop personal integrity and providing them with the life stories of the best individuals in history.

But little or none of that is now done in schools. "Good" and "bad" are terms that are rarely used, and usually derided as "Manichaeian." Personal integrity is essentially defined as taking liberal positions on social issues such as global warming, same-sex marriage and income redistribution. And the best Americans -- those who laid the foundations of our liberty -- have generally been vilified as slave owners and racists.

So, Sen. Dodd, education as it presently exists, is not the answer to all of society's problems. Indeed, it is at least as often the source of many of them.

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