

ORIGINS OF THE ASSAULT ON COLUMBUS

In recognition of Columbus Day, October 11, we are offering a three-part series on this subject.

Today we will address the origins of the assault on Columbus. Tomorrow, we will offer a review of how schools across the nation are addressing this day. On Friday, we will take a politically incorrect look at Indigenous Americans.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue considers the intellectual origins of the war on Columbus:

In the 1990s, Yale University gave up \$20 million given to them by Lee M. Bass: he wanted the money spent on efforts to expand the Western civilization curriculum, but highly politicized members of the faculty wanted to replace it with a multicultural program. The faculty won and Bass got his money back.

The fact is that many professors, especially in the humanities and social sciences, hate Western civilization; they have a particular animus against the United States. That this is happening at a time when many poor people from Latin America are crashing our borders is perverse. Yet the pampered professors still keep railing against the U.S. They just don't get it.

The attack on Columbus, and on Columbus Day, is traceable to the ideology of multiculturalism. Pope Benedict XVI rightly observed that multiculturalism has bred not only a contempt for the moral truths that adhere to the Judeo-Christian ethos, it has led to "a peculiar Western self-hatred that is nothing short of pathological."

No intellectual is more responsible for distorting the

historical record of Columbus than Howard Zinn. His 1980 book, *A People's History of the United States*, sold millions of copies and has been the go-to book for left-wing faculty and students for decades. He is the inspiration behind the attacks on Columbus Day and the one most responsible for replacing it with Indigenous People's Day. The Zinn Education Project, which disseminates his work, is the force behind the Columbus bashing in the schools.

Zinn is falsely regarded as a man who hated oppression. He did so only selectively. He found it almost impossible to condemn atrocities committed by the Communist regimes of Stalin and Mao, owing, no doubt to his membership in the Communist Party. According to Ronald Radosh, one of the most prominent students of Communism, "Zinn was an active member of the Communist party (CPUSA)—a membership which he never acknowledged and when asked, denied."

Mary Grabar, who wrote the definitive book exposing Zinn as a fraud, *Debunking Howard Zinn*, notes that there are plenty of glaring omissions in his writings. Zinn would never acknowledge what Carol Delaney, a Stanford University anthropologist had to say about Columbus. She maintained that Columbus acted on his Christian faith and told his crew to be kind to the Indians.

It is not as though Zinn was unaware of this side of Columbus—he just glossed over evidence that contradicted his thesis. Here's a quote from Columbus he never mentions. "I want the natives to develop a friendly attitude toward us because I know that they are a people who can be made free and converted to our Holy Faith more by love than by force."

Another one of the left-wing intellectuals who has contributed mightily to the assault on Western civilization is the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. In 1970, he released his bestselling book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. His Marxist-inspired volume, which has been used to train teachers

beginning in kindergarten, holds that society is divided between the oppressors and the oppressed.

This is the kind of thinking that appeals to children and intellectuals. Children understand black and white, night and day, good guys and bad guys. Intellectuals do, too, the only difference is that they get to decide who the good guys are (the oppressed like Indians) and who the bad guys are (oppressors like Columbus).

Any objective scholar knows that the ideas of Marx and Lenin were put into play by Mao Zedong, Che Guevara, and Fidel Castro. To Freire, just like Zinn, they are his heroes. That's right, the same man who is known for sympathizing with the oppressed adores some of history's most vicious oppressors.

Mao murdered 77 million of his own people, yet according to Freire and his professor clones, China's Communist genocidal maniac is to be exalted and Columbus condemned.

To top things off, those who are bashing Columbus are simultaneously lauding the legacy of Indigenous peoples. Yet a closer, and independent, examination of their historical record raises serious questions about their assigned "oppressed" status. But given the Manichean dualism that is operative—the good guys are non-whites and the bad guys are white—the outcome is predictable.

We will have more to say about this subject over the next few days.