PATRIOTISM VERSUS THE GOLDEN RULE by Dick Bennett

Patriotism, the preference for one’s own country, typically expresses one or both of these two feelings: the superiority of your country and the desire for your country to flourish. These are separate issues. Ask these questions: Does either attitude mean you would have your country flourish and be superior to another country? I suspect most citizens would answer yes, though their reasons might vary considerably. But if the question was: Would you have your country flourish and be superior at the
expense of another country, of another people, then many would hesitate and even say no. One might wish well for your country, for the people, for enough food, shelter, and health for all in your country, without wishing less for another, and sincerely, without cant.

But is that actually possible? Tolstoy believed not. You may intend to be sincerely loving of all, but patriotism inevitably becomes exclusive for the well-being of one’s own nation. It is this that makes one a patriot, argues Tolstoy in his essays “On Patriotism” and “Patriotism, or Peace?” Comparatively, patriots have no effective concern for other countries, and in practice prefer their countries to those of others exclusively.

But is Tolstoy being himself too severe, too narrow in defining patriotism, by assuming inevitable national indifference to and desire for dominance over others? The question carries great importance because Tolstoy also believed that war is the inevitable consequence of patriotism.

Might we find a solution by identifying three types of patriotism? A special, a higher concern for one’s country? An exclusive concern that adds indifference or hostility to others? And an aggressive concern, requiring benefits to one’s country as part of dominance? Not to Tolstoy. All three patriotisms violate the fundamental moral law of the Golden Rule, which asserts the equality and fraternity of all men. All three justify better treatment for “our” people than for others. The Golden Rule does not say “do unto your countrymen” but “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” It’s a universal rule, just as are the Ten Commandments, applying equally to all nationalities.

But patriotism is inescapably hierarchical, even in its milder manifestations promoting one country over another, that is, valuing egoism, inequality, and dominance, and inevitably war, appropriation, destruction, slaughter over brotherhood and peace. There is no way a person can simultaneously claim adherence to patriotism and to concern for the people of the world because national egoism and universal altruism are incompatible.

So what are conscientious, thoughtful people to do—and not only Christians, since the Golden Rule exists in all religions?

References


MURDER IN DEFENSE OF PATRIOTISM  By Dick Bennett

Anders Behring Breivik murdered 77 people in Norway on July 22, 2011. Why? He thought they were Muslims; he thought Muslims were taking over his country. “I acted in self-defense on behalf of my people, my city, my country.” “I am a member of the Norwegian resistance movement….We demand that our ethnic rights not be taken away from us.” It was a “suicide attack,” he said; he had not expected “to survive that day.”

He sounds like bin Laden: he too was defending his faith and people. And like the followers of bin Laden, who murdered thousands of people, Breivik was willing to give up his life.

In court Breivik argued that “he had acted in his country’s defense” and compared himself to U.S. commanders who authorized the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.” On
this basis he asked the court “that I be acquitted.” “As long as you call me evil, you should call the U.S. commanders during World War II evil as well when they decided to drop the bomb on Japan.” But the U.S. was not evil because “they tried to have noble motives to try to save people’s lives.” just as he did. He was protesting “the ‘Islamic’ ‘colonization’ of Norway,” “I did this out of goodness, not evil.” Nor were the murders psychopathic but were a “preventive strike.”


Formerly a high value, the idea of “defense” has been so outrageously sullied and abused by extremist nationalistic and ethnic fanatics and xenophobes, let us banish the word until the idea loses its power to motivate mass murder. A major beginning would be accurately naming the Pentagon the Department of War.

PATRIOTISM: WORLD-WIDE DEFINITIONS AND COMMENTS

The love of one’s country is a splendid thing. But why should love stop at the border? Pablo Casals

Our country is not the only thing to which we owe our allegiance. It is also owed to justice and to humanity. Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong. James Bryce

Heroism on command, senseless violence, and all the loathsome nonsense that goes by the name of patriotism—how passionately I hate them! Albert Einstein

To me, it seems a dreadful indignity to have a soul controlled by geography. George Santanyana

Patriotism is the willingness to kill and be killed for trivial reasons. Bertrand Russell

Patriotic societies seem to think that the way to educate school children in a democracy is to stage bigger and better flag-saluting. S.I. Hayakawa
Patriotism is often an arbitrary veneration of real estate above principles.

George Jean Nathan

Patriotism is your conviction that this country is superior to all other countries because you were born in it.

George Bernard Shaw

Each man must for himself alone decide what is right and what is wrong, which course is patriotic and which isn’t. You cannot shirk this and be a man. To decide against your conviction is to be an unqualified and excusable traitor, both to yourself and to your country, let me label you as they may.

Mark Twain

You’ll never have a quiet world ‘til you knock the patriotism out of the human race.

George Bernard Shaw

If I knew something that would serve my country but would harm mankind, I would never reveal it; for I am a citizen of humanity first and by necessity, and a citizen of France second, and only by accident.

Montesquieu

I am not an Athenian or a Greek. I am a citizen of the world.

Socrates

Borders are scratched across the hearts of men

By strangers with a calm, judicial pen,

And when the borders bleed we watch with dread

The lines of ink across the map turn red.

Marya Mannes

Nationalism is a silly cock crowing on his own dunghill.

Richard Aldington

“I do not expect the country will change the war because of my standing here. I stand here to make sure the country doesn’t change me.” Rev. Robert Cromey, St. Luke’s Episcopal church, San Francisco. paraphrasing A. J. Muste.

“I have no country to fight for; my country is the earth, and I am a citizen of the world.

Eugene V. Debs

Our country is the world, our countrymen are all mankind. We love the land of our nativity, only as we love all other lands. The interests, rights, and liberties of American citizens are no more dear to us than
are those of the whole human race. Hence we can allow no appeal to patriotism, to revenge any national insult or injury.

William Lloyd Garrison

Declaration of Sentiments

Boston Peace Conference

1838

Patriotism is a kind of religion; it is the egg from which wars are hatched.

Guy de Maupassant

Can anything be stupider than that a man has the right to kill me because he lives on the other side of a river and his ruler has a quarrel with mine, though I have not quarreled with him?

Tolstoy

It is lamentable, that to be a good patriot one must become the enemy of the rest of mankind.

Voltaire

Patriotism means to stand by the country. It does not mean to stand by the president or any other public official, save exactly to the degree in which he himself stands by the country. It is patriotic to support him insofar as he efficiently serves the country. It is unpatriotic not to oppose him to the exact extent that by inefficiency or otherwise he fails in his duty to stand by the country. In either event, it is unpatriotic not to tell the truth, whether about the president or anyone else.

Theodore Roosevelt

I suggest that a patriotic American who cares for his country might act on behalf of a different vision. Instead of being feared for our military prowess, we should want to be respected for our dedication to human rights.”

Howard Zinn

Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is to tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.

Hermann Goering (Hitler’s Reichs-Marshall, 1939)

“Matriotism” by Cindy Sheehan

Much as I wish I could take credit for the word "matriotism," another woman wrote to me and gave me the concept. I was so intrigued by the word that I have been meditating on the possible ideology behind it, and a new paradigm for true and lasting peace in the world.

Before I dive into the concept of Matriotism, let's explore the word "patriotism." Dictionary.com defines it as: love of country and willingness to sacrifice for it. When we all know that patriotism in the US means: exploiting others' love for country by sending them and their children off to sacrifice for my bank balance!
There have been volumes written about patriotism, defining it, supporting it, challenging the notion of it, etc. I believe the notion of patriotism has been expediently and nefariously exploited, and used to lead our nation into scores of disastrous and needless wars. The idea of patriotism has virtually wiped out entire generations of our precious young people and has allowed our nation's leaders to commit mass murder on an unprecedented scale. The vile sputum of "if you aren't with us, then you are against us" is basically the epitome of patriotism gone wild. After the tragedy of 9/11 we were on our way to becoming a fledgling Matriotic society until our leaders jumped on the bandwagon of inappropriate and misguided vengeance to send our young people to die and kill in two countries that were no threat to the USA or to our way of life. The neocons exploited patriotism to fulfill their goals of imperialism and plunder.

This sort of patriotism begins when we enter kindergarten and learn the nationalist "Pledge of Allegiance." It transcends all sense when we are taught the "Star Spangled Banner," a hymn to war. In our history classes the genocide of the Native American peoples is glossed over as we learn about the spread of American Imperialism over our continent, though it wasn't named until the 1840's, when the doctrine of Manifest Destiny was expounded to justify the USA's conquest of and "civilizing" of Mexican territories and Native American populations. Manifest Destiny sought to spread the "the boundaries of freedom" to the American Continent, with the notion that we have a special mission from God. Sound familiar?

All though school, we are brainwashed into believing that some how our leaders are always right and certainly have our best interests at heart when they wave the flag and convince us to hate fellow human beings who stand in the way of making immense profits from war. As Samuel Johnson said, patriotism is the "last refuge of a scoundrel."

Matriotism is the opposite of patriotism not to destroy it, but to be a yin to its yang, and balance out the militarism of patriotism.

Not everyone is a mother, but there is one universal truth that no one can dispute no matter how hard they try (and believe me, some will try): Everyone has a mother! Mothers give life, and if the child is lucky, mothers nurture life. And if a man has had a nurturing mother he will already have a base of Matriotism.

A Matriot loves his/her country but does not buy into the exploitive phrase of "My country right or wrong." (As Chesterton said, that's like saying, "My mother, drunk or sober.") A Matriot knows that her country can do a lot of things right, especially when the government is not involved. For example, I know of no other citizens of any country who are more personally generous than those of America. However, a Matriot also knows that when her country is wrong, it can be responsible for murdering thousands upon thousands of innocent and unsuspecting humans. A true Matriot would never drop an atomic bomb or bombs filled with white phosphorous, carpet bomb cities and villages, or control drones from thousands of miles away to kill innocent men, women and children.

There is one most important thing that matriots would never do, however, and this is the key to stopping killing to solve problems: a matriot would never send her child or another mother's child to fight nonsense wars and would march into a war herself that she considered just to protect her child from harm. Aha! Matriots would fight their own battles, but take a dim view of having to do so, and would seldom resort to violence to solve conflict! Patriots cowardly hide behind the flag and eagerly send young people to die to fill their own pocketbooks.

War will end forever when we matriots stand up and say: "No, I am not giving my child to the fake patriotism of the war machine which chews up my flesh and blood to spit out obscene profits."

"It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole
world. The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens." ~ Baha'u'llah
Matriotism above all is a commitment to truth and to celebrate the dignity of all life.

PHILOSOPHY OF PATRIOTISM

--STEPHEN NATHANSON. Several books on patriotism.  
Is patriotism a worthy ideal, one that we ought to promote and support? Or is it a dangerous and destructive notion that leads to war and hostility? "Patriotism, Morality, and Peace" provides the first sustained philosophical treatment of these questions, distinguishes different forms of patriotism, and shows why some forms are indeed dangerous, while others can be valuable and constructive.

Michael Parenti: Superpatriotism

Posted on July 5, 2011 by dandelionsalad

by Michael Parenti
Dandelion Salad
www.michaelparenti.org
July 5, 2011

City Lights Books, 2004
How hype, fear, and mindless flag-waving are supplanting informed debate, commitment to democracy, and real patriotism.

"In this skillfully argued book . . . with wit and humor and penetrating analysis, Parenti invites the reader to connect the dots." — Rufus Browning, co-author of Protest Is Not Enough

“Michael Parenti has done it again. By dissecting the imperial worldview of the people running our country, Michael provides us with all the intellectual tools we need to engage them in democratic debate and give them the spanking they so desperately deserve.” — Kevin Donaher, Co-Founder, Global Exchange

Superpatriots are those people who place national pride and American supremacy above every other public consideration, those who follow leaders uncritically, especially in their war policies abroad. Superpatriotism is the nationalistic hype propagated by officialdom, the media, and various flag-waving groups.

Michael Parenti demonstrates how superpatriotism attaches itself to religion, sports, the
military, the schools, and big business. He questions whether its top politico-economic propagators are themselves really patriotic, given how they evade taxes, export our jobs, pollute our land, and plunder the public treasury. With incisive probing, fine style, and humorous touch, Parenti treats such urgent questions as: What does it mean to love one’s country? Why is it so important to be Number One? What determines America’s “greatness?” And are we really God’s gift to humanity? He examines how US leaders and the corporate media fan the flames of fear to win support for huge arms budgets, global aggrandizement, and the suppression of political dissent at home and abroad. Finally, Parenti poses an alternative to superpatriotism, arguing that the real patriots are those who care enough to educate themselves about our country’s history and its present plight. He reminds us that it is not “anti-American” to criticize unjust social conditions at home or oppose global policies pursued by our rulers. Rather it is our democratic right and patriotic duty to do so.

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The Anti-Empire Report
December 2nd, 2011 by William Blum
www.killinghope.org

American exceptionalism — A survey
The leaders of imperial powers have traditionally told themselves and their citizens that their country was exceptional and that their subjugation of a particular foreign land should be seen as a "civilizing mission", a "liberation", "God's will", and of course bringing "freedom and democracy" to the benighted and downtrodden. It is difficult to kill large numbers of people without a claim to virtue. I
wonder if this sense of exceptionalism has been embedded anywhere more deeply than in the United States, where it is drilled into every cell and ganglion of American consciousness from kindergarten on. If we measure the degree of indoctrination (I’ll resist the temptation to use the word "brainwashing") of a population as the gap between what the people believe their government has done in the world and what the actual (very sordid) facts are, the American people are clearly the most indoctrinated people on the planet. The role of the American media is of course indispensable to this process — Try naming a single American daily newspaper or TV network that was unequivocally against the US attacks on Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Panama, Grenada, and Vietnam. Or even against any two of them. How about one? Which of the mainstream media expressed real skepticism of The War on Terror in its early years?

Overloaded with a sense of America's moral superiority, each year the State Department judges the world, issuing reports evaluating the behavior of all other nations, often accompanied by sanctions of one kind or another. There are different reports rating how each lesser nation has performed in the previous year in the areas of religious freedom, human rights, the war on drugs, trafficking in persons, and counterterrorism, as well as maintaining a list of international "terrorist" groups. The criteria used in these reports are mainly political, wherever applicable; Cuba, for example, is always listed as a supporter of terrorism whereas anti-Castro exile groups in Florida, which have committed literally hundreds of terrorist acts, are not listed as terrorist groups.

- "The causes of the malady are not entirely clear but its recurrence is one of the uniformities of history: power tends to confuse itself with virtue and a great nation is peculiarly susceptible to the idea that its power is a sign of God's favor, conferring upon it a special responsibility for other nations — to make them richer and happier and wiser, to remake them, that is, in its own shining image." — Former US Senator William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (1966)

- "We Americans are the peculiar, chosen people — the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. ... God has predestined, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls." — Herman Melville, *White-Jacket* (1850)

- "God appointed America to save the world in any way that suits America. God appointed Israel to be the nexus of America's Middle Eastern policy and anyone who wants to mess with that idea is a) anti-Semitic, b) anti-American, c) with the enemy, and d) a terrorist." — John le Carré, *London Times*, January 15, 2003

- "Neoconservatism ... traded upon the historic American myths of innocence, exceptionalism, triumphalism and Manifest Destiny. It offered a vision of what the United States should do with its unrivaled global power. In its most rhetorically-seductive messianic versions, it conflated the expansion of American power with the dream of universal democracy. In all of this, it proclaimed that the maximal use of American power was good for both America and the world." — Columbia University Professor Gary Dorrien, *The Christian Century* magazine, January 22, 2007

- "To most of its citizens, America is exceptional, and it's only natural that it should take exception to certain international standards." — Michael Ignatieff, *Washington Post* columnist, *Legal Affairs*, May-June, 2002

  - Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Peters, US Army War College, 1997: "Our country is a force for good without precedent".
Thomas Barnett, US Naval War College: "The US military is a force for global good that ... has no equal." — The Guardian (London), December 27, 2005

- John Bolton, future US ambassador to the United Nations, writing in 2000: Because of its unique status, the United States could not be "legally bound" or constrained in any way by its international treaty obligations. The U.S. needed to "be unashamed, unapologetic, uncompromising American constitutional hegemonists," so that their "senior decision makers" could be free to use force unilaterally.

Condoleezza Rice, future US Secretary of State, writing in 2000, was equally contemptuous of international law. She claimed that in the pursuit of its national security the United States no longer needed to be guided by "notions of international law and norms" or "institutions like the United Nations" because it was "on the right side of history." — Z Magazine, July/August 2004

- "The president [George W. Bush] said he didn't want other countries dictating terms or conditions for the war on terrorism. 'At some point, we may be the only ones left. That's okay with me. We are America'." — Washington Post, January 31, 2002

- "Reinhold Niebuhr got it right a half-century ago: What persists — and promises no end of grief — is our conviction that Providence has summoned America to tutor all of humankind on its pilgrimage to perfection." — Andrew Bacevich, professor of international relations, Boston University

- In commenting on Woodrow Wilson's moral lecturing of his European colleagues at the Versailles peace table following the First World War, Winston Churchill remarked that he found it hard to believe that the European emigrants, who brought to America the virtues of the lands from which they sprang, had left behind all their vices. — The World Crisis, Vol. V, The Aftermath, 1929

- "Behold a republic, gradually but surely becoming the supreme moral factor to the world's progress and the accepted arbiter of the world's disputes." — William Jennings Bryan, US Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson, In His Image (1922)

- Newsweek editor Michael Hirsch: "U.S. allies must accept that some U.S. unilateralism is inevitable, even desirable. This mainly involves accepting the reality of America's supreme might — and truthfully, appreciating how historically lucky they are to be protected by such a relatively benign power." — Foreign Affairs, November, 2002

- Colin Powell speaking before the Republican National Convention, August 13, 1996: The United States is "a country that exists by the grace of a divine providence."

- "The US media always has an underlying acceptance of the mythology of American exceptionalism, that the US, in everything it does, is the last best hope of humanity." — Rahul Mahajan, author of: The New Crusade: America's War on Terrorism, and Full Spectrum Dominance

- "The fundamental problem is that the Americans do not respect anybody except themselves," said Col. Mir Jan, a spokesman for the Afghan Defense Ministry. "They say, 'We are the God of the world,' and they don't consult us." — Washington Post, August 3, 2002
"If we have to use force, it is because we are America! We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future." — Madeleine Albright, U.S. Secretary of State, 1998

MANIFEST DESTINY A FOUNDATION OF US PATRIOTISM


PATRIOTISM AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT

--Woehrle, Lynne, et al. *Contesting Patriotism: Culture, Power, and Strategy in the Peace Movement.* Roman & Littlefield, 2009. Rev. *Fellowship* (Spring 2010). A deep grounding of the peace movement is its effort to reclaim the attribution of “patriotic” for criticism of the nation-state when it wages war. The book traces the many ways “in which major groups in the peace movement have advanced this cause in their publications over the past 20 years.”

Recent 2013 Newsletters Related to US Patriotism

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INDEPENDENCE DAY, ENTERTAINMENT FILM

Independence Day (1996)

TOMATOMETER
• All Critics
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61
Average Rating: 6.3/10
Reviews Counted: 56
Fresh: 34 | Rotten: 22
The plot is thin and so is character development, but as a thrilling, spectacle-filled summer movie, Independence Day delivers.

**AUDIENCE**

75 liked it

Average Rating: 3.5/5

User Ratings: 887,179

A group of intrepid humans attempts to save the Earth from vicious extraterrestrials in this extremely popular science-fiction adventure. Borrowing liberally from War of the Worlds, Aliens, and every sci-fi invasion film inbetween, director Roland Emmerich and producer and co-writer Dean Devlin present a visually slick, fast-paced adventure filled with expensive special effects and large-scale action sequences. The story begins with the approach of a series of massive spaceships, which many on ... More

PG-13, 2 hr. 25 min.

Action & Adventure, Mystery & Suspense, Science Fiction & Fantasy

Directed By: Roland Emmerich

Written By: Dean Devlin, Roland Emmerich

In Theaters: Jul 2, 1996 Wide

On DVD: Jun 27, 2000

20th Century Fox - Official Site

**Independence Day Trailer & Photos**

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**Critic Reviews for Independence Day**

All Critics (57) | Top Critics (18) | Fresh (34) | Rotten (22) | DVD (40)

1. [Independence Day 2' given official release date: Expect fireworks ...](www.nydailynews.com/.../independence-day-2-official-release-date-article-...)

   Jun 21, 2013 - “Independence Day 2,” the sequel to the 1996 sci-fi blockbuster that ...Dean Devlin, the brain trust of the original “Independence Day” will be ...

2. [Will Smith not starring in Independence Day sequels | Film ...](www.guardian.co.uk › Culture › Film › Independence Day)

   Jun 24, 2013 - Director Roland Emmerich says star of 1996 alien-invasion blockbuster is too expensive for 2015 followup.

3. [Happy "Independence" Day | The Daily Caller](dailycaller.com/2013/07/03/happy-independence-day/)

   43 mins ago - Isn't it great to live in the land of the free and untrammeled exercise of government power, and the home of the brave public servants who tell us ...

4. [Independence Day Trailer - YouTube](www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZZvtQtdbzM)

   Jun 2, 2008 - Uploaded by TrailerTrashMedia

Release Date: July 2, 1996

Nationwide Distributors: 20th Century Fox

Starring: Will Smith, B
END JULY 4 NEWSLETTER 2013

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Dick Bennett
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War Department/Peace Department
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