



This ‘Pride’ Stuff Isn’t Healthy

COMMENTARY BY [Dennis Prager](#) / May 24, 2023

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I’ve never understood ethnic, race, gender, or [sex pride](#). Even as a kid. For my bar mitzvah, someone gave me a book titled “Great Jews in Sports” or something like it.

Aside from the usual jokes—it was not a long book; the print and the photos were very large—what I remember best was that I had little interest in the book. I loved sports. And I strongly identified as a Jew—I was raised in an Orthodox Jewish home and attended yeshivas until the age of 19. So, my disinterest in the book didn’t emanate from either disinterest in sports or disinterest in Jews. I was keenly interested in both.

But even at the age of 13, the idea of ethnic pride meant little to me.

As far as I could tell, my friends—and, of course, the relative who gave me the book—considered the book quite meaningful. They were proud of Detroit Tigers Hall of Famer Hank Greenberg, of the great Cleveland Indians third baseman Al Rosen, of the lightweight boxing champ Benny Leonard, and of the other Jews who were featured.

I apparently marched to the beat of a quirky drummer. It turned out, however, that my attitude at 13 wasn’t a quirk. Though I didn’t realize it then, it was actually the dawning of a conviction—that maybe group pride wasn’t a great idea.

The next time that view hit me was when I was in college and the slogan “black is beautiful” was becoming popular. This time, I did more than not relate to group pride; I objected to it. How could a race be beautiful? Isn’t the idea of a beautiful race itself racist?

When I raised these questions in my college and graduate school years, I was given one of two answers: After being put down for so many years, blacks needed to bolster their self-image. And since blacks—especially black women—had suffered greatly because white beauty was the normative standard of physical beauty, “black is beautiful” was a much-needed corrective.

These were entirely understandable explanations. But I still recoiled. Perhaps being a Jew born only a few years after the Holocaust rendered race-based pride scary.

It turned out my instinct was right: It is scary. “Black is beautiful” soon morphed into “black power,” a phrase that, often accompanied with a raised clenched fist, was meant to be scary. And then, in an echo of Aryan racism, terms like “race traitor” were thrown around to describe any black who wasn’t into “black power” or “black solidarity.”

Soon, feminist women joined the group solidarity bandwagon with “girl power;” “I am woman, hear me roar;” “A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle;” “Any job a man can do, a woman can do better,” and other puerile celebrations of “sisterhood,” a term that applied only to women who shared feminist views. Women who didn’t share those views were not just gender traitors; they weren’t even women. Ms. magazine founder Gloria Steinem famously called conservative Texas Republican Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison a “female impersonator.”

Group pride is a characteristic of all left-wing thought and activism.

The most recent incarnation of group pride is [LGBTQ pride](#). Every company, every professional sports team, every Democratic politician, and even the armed forces and American embassies around the world are expected to celebrate Pride month, Pride night, and year-round [LGBTQ Pride](#).

This is problematic for at least two reasons.

First, what exactly is one proud of? What accomplishment is involved in being gay, lesbian, or bisexual? [Even “transgender”](#) is allegedly built into one’s nature.

Isn’t the entire premise of the [LGBTQ movement](#) that one does not choose one’s sexual orientation or sexual identity? Wasn’t anyone who argued that homosexuality is a choice declared a hater and a science denier?

So, then, if no choice is involved, no effort on the part of the individual—let alone no moral accomplishment—what is there to be proud of? Maybe I couldn’t identify with Jewish pride over great Jewish athletes, but at least they all actually accomplished something.

The other problematic element has to do with why the LGBTQ movement does everything possible to bludgeon every institution into celebrating Pride nights, days, weeks, and months. The reason is the totalitarian nature of all left-wing movements.

Unlike liberal and conservative movements, every left-wing movement is totalitarian. Therefore, it is not enough for people to tolerate or even show respect to LGBTQ individuals. We must all celebrate lesbianism, male homosexuality, [the transgendered](#), and queers. No left-wing movement is a movement for tolerance. They are movements that demand celebration.

For the first time in any of our lifetimes, the Left may have met an immovable obstacle. Americans are prepared to tolerate just about everything and everyone. But at least half of us will not celebrate girls who have their breasts removed—or the therapists and physicians who facilitate it. At least half of us will not celebrate men dressed as women, especially those who dance in front of 6-year-olds. And while some medical schools have been cowed into saying “birthing person” rather than “pregnant woman,” at least half of us will hold the cowards who run these medical schools in contempt.

I return to my opening point. I have devoted much of my life to helping my fellow Jews. It started when I was 21 years old and the Israeli foreign office sent me into the Soviet Union to smuggle in Jewish items and smuggle out names of Jews wanting to leave the Soviet Union. I have brought many disaffected Jews back to Judaism. And I have constantly fought for Israel’s security.

I am very happy to be a Jew. But I don’t quite relate to being proud of it—it was not my achievement; it was an accident of birth. That is equally true of your race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, and orientation. You don’t get credit for, shouldn’t be proud of, and have no right to demand others celebrate something you had nothing to do with.

Finally, if you’re honest, group pride must be accompanied by group shame. Yes, a disproportionate number of Nobel Prize winners were Jews. But a disproportionate number of Western spies for Stalin were also Jews. If you’re not prepared to be ashamed of your group, don’t take pride in it. That rule applies to blacks, gays, women, Christians, and every other group in the world.