Current

IS AMERICA EVIL?

by Kenneth Lee

Is America evil? Listening to the droning cries of the politically correct crowd, the United States and more broadly, Western culture, seems responsible for virtually all societal ills—from racism to sexism to the success of the New Kids on the Block.

They paint bleak images of a WASP-infested America that implacably denies opportunity and equality to minorities: black Americans and other minorities are unable to procure jobs, women are denigrated, and homosexuals are treated as second-class citizens.

A close scrutiny of their claims exposes their spurious “facts” and assumptions. Cries of racism are often stemmed from isolated incidents or from unreliable studies based on statistical chicanery. Homosexual groups hurl epithets whenever one refuses to swallow their hook, line and sinker. And charges of sexism often amount to nothing but irrelevant pouting.

Regardless of what the special interest groups may say, America remains the most tolerant society in the world. As a service to the Cornell community, we at The Review will debunk every spurious myth.

Myth #1: Mike Tyson’s rape conviction and William Kennedy Smith’s acquittal demonstrates the lack of justice for blacks.

The Truth: This argument doesn’t work. In the case of Tyson, the jury believed the black woman in the Tyson case, while it did not believe the white woman’s case in the Kennedy trial, the American justice system is racist and biased against whites!

Furthermore, the protest behind Tyson’s conviction reveals that sympathy for white women is not always a virtue. According to The New York Times, Tyson’s accusers were exonerated by a verdict. And besides, the liberals forgot one thing: William Kennedy is a Kennedy, and the Kennedys can get away with it.

Clinton says. This myth epitomizes how liberals and even some conservatives often skew statistics to suit their ideology. A quick perusal at these numbers at first gives credence to their claims, but close inspection of their statistics reveals its mendacity. In America, Puerto Ricans have the lowest income by race. Does this mean that Puerto Ricans face more discrimination than blacks? Likewise, Jewish and Asian families earn significantly more than their WASP counterparts. Using this hare-brained logic, the WASPs represent oppressed victims.

One important factor is the race-regional distribution. Most blacks live in the South, where median income tends to be lower than the rest of the country. (To be fair, cost-of-living and the tax burden are also lower in the South). On the other hand, median income ranks higher in states such as New York and California. Another discrepancy comes from the decline of the two-parent family. Black families suffer from a higher incidence of single-parent households than their white counterparts. Naturally, a family with two wage-earners instead of one will have a higher income. Numerous other factors affect the income, such as the median age by race, size of family, etc.

Since the opposition deftly juggles numbers to corroborate its case, so can we. Contrary to the liberal media’s myth of a raging black underclass, nearly 44% of the black Americans live in families earning above $25,000. Blacks are no different from other races. They work hard to

The vast majority of welfare recipients are white”

Myth #5: The patriarchal society not only treats women as inferiors, but it also denies them economic suffrage.

The Truth: In the past few decades, women have made great social and economic strides. Today, women-run businesses employ more workers than the Fortune 500 companies combined. As for the income inequality, statistical subterfuge once again emerges. Numerous factors account for the disparity. For instance, women are eleven times more likely to voluntarily leave work than men, and thus are likely to have less job experience and consequently lower wages.

Some egalitarians have charged that women should be treated equally in all cases; this would include getting women into the front-line battlefield. Unfortunately, no matter how many times they cry that both genders are equal, the reality is that men and women are biologically different, and women are usually innately physically stronger than women (albeit exceptions to that rule exist, especially in the author’s case). Any one who disputes that fact disputes nature. Some tasks are better suited for men, and others for women. This is not sexism; it is reality.

Other radical feminists mean that the United States as well as Western culture have propagated and now perpetuate sexism. According to them, evil phallocentric, Euro-centric men have for years subjugated the opposite gender. A prime example of the pervasive cultural sexism is the talking Barbie doll that says math is difficult. But compare the Barbie doll with the sexism of other cultures. For instance, the Koran states that “men have authority over women because Allah has made one superior to the other.” Or consider the rituals in some traditional

Continued on Page 12
Myth #2: Ronald Reagan's attack on social programs was racist in nature.

The Truth: Out of the numerous lies told about the prosperous 1980s, this myth is the most heinous. Although Reagan wanted to slash social spending, very little of his proposed cuts came to fruition. Domestic spending continued to rise at an incredible rate, albeit at a slower pace than the previous administrations. Furthermore, it is deceptive to associate racism with the desire to slow the government growth. Ideology, not racism, is the main motive. Republicans and conservative Democrats want to cut spending not because of racist intentions, but because they believe in rugged individualism and believe that the private sector can use the money better to create jobs, instead of the government’s illusory, make-work boondoggle. The liberals’ assumption that slashed spending would hurt minorities is racist: it implies that minorities leech off the taxpayers and benefit from the smorgasbord of social programs. In reality, the opposite is true. Although a higher percentage of blacks stay on welfare, the vast majority of the welfare recipients are white. So if Reagan’s agenda “hurt” more whites than blacks, how can his policies be construed as racist?

Myth #3: The average black family garners only $18,098, while the average white household earns $32,274. This statistical disparity is proof of America’s racism.

The Truth: Mark Twain once said three types of lies exist: lies, damn lies and statistics. Some may argue that the old adage needs to be amended for the 1990s: The three types are lies, damn lies and anything that family, etc.

Since the opposition deftly juggles numbers to corroborate its case, so can we. Contrary to the liberal media’s myth of a raging black underclass, nearly two-thirds of the black Americans live firmly entrenched in the middle class. Like any other family, they work hard to meet their mortgage, pay their taxes and raise their families. Moreover, blacks with advanced degrees earn 25% more than their white counterparts. The media’s portrayal of blacks can be construed as racist: blacks can’t succeed on their own and therefore need social programs.

Myth #4: The military’s “hostile” policy toward homosexuals shows America’s homophobia.

The Truth: To hurl epithets such as “homophobe” and “bigot” for opposing gays in the military is unscrupulous. Many tolerant, rational-thinking people oppose the lifting of the ban not because they detest homosexuals, but because they believe that such an integration would diminish the camaraderie of the military’s macho ethos. Furthermore, in comparison with other country’s policies, the United States has a stellar record. Other non-Western countries view homosexuality as a moral deviance, and unfortunately treat them as social pariahs. For ex-
IS AMERICA EVIL?

Continued from Page 7

African tribes where a widow burns herself to show the worthlessness of her life. Those charges seem trivial in comparison.

Myth #6: Western culture is responsible for slavery and racism.

The Truth: Contrary to popular belief, Europeans did not create slavery nor are they the only ones guilty of practicing it. The term “slave trade” implies that reciprocity existed: morally depraved Europeans as well as unscrupulous Africans engaged in selling human lives. Many Africans were unfortunately willing to sell their own people for money. And as Cornell’s own L. Pearce Williams stated, Western culture is the only one to have abolished slavery. Slave trade continues today in other parts of the world.

Myth #7: The white man’s past slave practices and segregation have caused today’s social turmoil.

The Truth: As black economist Thomas Sowell has stated, past injustices do not necessarily hinder future progress. A prime example involves the Japanese. In addition to the notorious internment camps, US law prevented Asian residents from owning any property until the mid-1940s. Yet today they enjoy one of the highest per-capita incomes. On the other hand, Puerto Ricans have been treated benevolently by U.S. with the conferment of citizenship. But their income level hovers at the cellar.

Furthermore, it is utterly ironic that under the guise of multiculturalism, resegregation has occurred. Even at Cornell, the exclusive study halls and residences cleave the student body and threaten to upset the melting pot.

Myth #8: The Willie Horton ads during the 1988 election show the racism of George Bush and his fellow Republicans.

The Truth: That statement teems with deception and blatant lies. First of all, the Bush campaign never ran any ads featuring Willie Horton. Floyd Brown, independently of the Bush campaign and the Republican National Committee, used his own money to fund the ads. But more importantly, most people viewed Willie Horton as a criminal set loose by a flawed legal system, not as a black criminal. In fact, even Al Gore criticized Michael Dukakis’ furlough program during the Democratic primaries. So is he now racist?

Myth #9: The Cornell Review is filled with racists, sexists and homophobic hate-mongers.

The Truth: No, that’s the Cornell American. The Review champions equality and the truth.

So is America racist, sexist and homophobic? To a certain extent, yes. Any country with 250 million people will bound to have its share of bigots. Hence we will hear stories of racist bank officers and bigoted landlords. But those cases are for the most part aberrations and not the norm. Judged as a whole, American remains the beacon of opportunity and equality in a sea of bigotry.

Kenneth Lee is a freshman in the College of Arts and Sciences.