

Abandonment Of The American Ethos

Beginning in earnest in the 1960's on American college campuses and continuing thereafter down to the grade school level, public schools have rejected education that inculcates the American ethos of the Founding and New Nation periods. Indeed, American education has become hostile to American exceptionalism, denigrating rather than celebrating the extraordinary achievements that made America a unique place of limited government, freedom, and free enterprise and the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth. As a consequence we now witness the rise of a generation of lost youth, Americans by birth or naturalization only, who do not know what it means to be an American beyond pop culture's distortion of the world, who lack even a basic understanding of American history, and who in numbers higher than in any prior generation subscribe to a view of America as undeserving of its place in the world. This generation of lost youth fail to appreciate that without diligent and intelligent defense of liberty, the American ethos will die and with it the very strictures that limit power and preserve liberty. The abandonment of the American ethos by our lost youth will not be arrested until American education disavows its American apologia and once again fully embraces and celebrates a deep education in and profound respect for the United States, our extraordinary history of limited government, liberty, and free enterprise.

Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, and Madison all subscribed to the view that the survival of liberty and republican government depended on instilling in our youth a deep appreciation for the lessons of the American revolution; for the fight to secure a government instituted for the very purpose of protecting the rights of the governed; for virtue, piety and

industry; and for the need to defend republicanism (a devotion to secure the hard fought gains of the revolution against measures that would invariably aim to destroy it in service to the ambitions of those in power). Educators kept faith with the founding generation and fulfilled that promise well until after the 1930's with a radical departure occurring in the 1960's and continuing to this day.

Our forebears knew that if we did not raise youth to appreciate the ideological origins of the American republic, to comprehend the many hard fought battles for independence, and to appreciate the fundamental differences between liberty and tyranny, a republic and a despotic government, and a mixed constitution and a government of centralized powers, the resulting ignorance would be the greatest threat to the survival of a republican form of government. We would lack the intellectual fortitude and patriotic zeal needed to defend the republic against those ever present threats to liberty at home and abroad that seek to subvert liberty in pursuit of self-interest. Over the last sixty years, we have experienced that grave turn. The new generation that now embraces socialism, that has not even a modicum of understanding of or appreciation for American history, and that does not understand the meaning of liberty or of tyranny are ill equipped to exercise the vigilance required to restore, defend, and perpetuate our republican form of government.

It is that fact which poses the greatest threat to the survival and success of our republic. It is that fact which leads to mind numbing protest without purpose, to disrespect for and destruction of property, and to an insatiable demand for immediate gratification at public expense. Liberty depends on sacrifice in a never ending struggle to limit government power, but we now witness the rise of a generation that takes liberty for granted and, so, lacks any willingness to sacrifice for it.

I write now of the majority. There are still precious youth

who defy the odds, who acquire a deep appreciation for our history, a love of their country, and a willingness to die for liberty if that becomes necessary. They are the last, best hope of the rising generation. They are the few awake as the alarm bells ring while the majority remains asleep unaware of the crisis that surrounds them.

To change direction requires that states across the nation demand that public schools teach youth from kindergarten through high school the history of the American revolution, the doctrines ensconced in the Declaration of Independence, the reasons for a written constitution and the power limiting characteristics of the United States Constitution, the intellectual foundations of liberty and the Bill of Rights, the precise doctrines which underpin republican government, the association between maintenance of limited government and preservation of liberty, and associations between protection of liberty, free enterprise, and prosperity. The aim must be for all those who are educated in American schools to understand the American ethos with the hope that they will come to love it, as a precondition to their fundamental civic duty (to defend the United States from its enemies both domestic and foreign).

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