

Where Will Our Blindness To Ugly History Lead?

My last article was a [brief history](#) of the Selective Service System, a discussion of the draft, Vietnam era draft resisters, and whether recent Department of Defense policy changes and court decisions could change the status of women and Selective Service Registration. I may have touched a nerve or two about an unpopular subject. But when you write about things many Americans lived through, the painted picture is not always a pretty one.

As a people, we've managed to overcome national atrocities of slavery and civil rights. It's ugly history, but it is our history and must not be buried or forgotten. Our early treatment of Native Americans is too an atrocity. It's another ugly piece of our history getting little modern-day attention. The Civil War was an ugly part of our nation's history. We tend to glorify the willingness of Americans killing Americans when we should acknowledge and learn from it. It is estimated that 2.5 percent of the US population of the time died in our war. Calculated by today's population that's more than 8 million. Media and politicians continue to divide our country in a manner not seen since the pre-civil war days. Will their unharnessed quests for control and power push us into another? And sadly, the good history of our country, our founding, the revolution, the creation of a free republic of a kind never before seen in human history is now billed as an abomination created by old white slave owners.

The Vietnam War fought by young men who were told they were saving a people desiring freedom from the onslaught of communism is ugly history. In Vietnam and here at home, it was a political war. It dragged on for 20 years driven by political rather than military decisions. Even with tremendous loss of life and treasure, today's Vietnam is

communist. And on the ugly underside is the military industrial complex first mentioned by President Eisenhower when he warned of the ["danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite."](#) It is a wealth building circle. The defense industry sells the latest and greatest weaponry to the Pentagon. The lobbyists and Generals convince Congress of the need for the latest and greatest. Money flows in a neat little circle from the treasury to the defense industry to political coffers. For everyone except Soldiers, war is a wealth builder. It must always be the absolute last choice for a people – a truly great nation. Our country's poor treatment of Vietnam Veterans is a bleeding wound the guilty are still trying to cauterize. Are we doing it again?

We don't learn from our ugly history. In 2012, I wrote [Just Another Vietnam?](#) Looking back, it's prophetic. Now we have another generation of young men and women with repeated combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq who are committing suicide at an unheard of rate. We are not embracing them, giving them needed counseling and decompression time before we drop them back into their communities as if they've been on a vacation. It is sad to me to that I would even entertain such thoughts but there is great wealth in the military industrial complex and nation building. But at what cost to generations of our young who bear the burden of fighting our nation's wars. At what cost do we continue to fight seemingly unending interventionist wars in such a manner?

What do we do with our ugly history? Instead of learning, healing and moving on, we use it as a divisive bludgeon. We ignore it while many Americans remain destitute on reservations. We try to destroy any reminders of it as if that will remove it. Our military is fighting and dying in a foreign land but just like Vietnam, America isn't. Our politicians do not seem concerned, the media certainly isn't, and because of that the average American isn't either. Every

time we hear the suicide rate our hearts ache for a minute, then we head for the mall.

Not only will ignorance of our history result in our own destruction, ignorance of the world will as well. College kids, media and even politicians nowadays do not hesitate to call someone a NAZI or fascist. What they cannot do is tell you how National Socialism came to power in Germany behind utopian promises from a charismatic monster. They cannot define fascism, which is what they practice each time they riot on campus to shut down voices of those holding different views or ignore facts and real news. They cannot tell you about the failures of Socialism across the world and the millions of deaths left in its wake. They can tell you about an amazing society where everything is beautiful, everyone is equal, college is free, medical care is free, and life is blissful. They do not understand that socialism by its very nature is a failed theory.

It's a hard lesson even the Pilgrims learned. If there is no incentive to produce, no possibility of improving one's stature in life then no one produces and the collective dies. Many Americans are wide-eyed, voting aged and worldly ignorant. It's not only the kids, and that should scare everyone. What they do not understand is that there will always be the wealthy who can afford the good things and pay for the best private medical care. Ironically as living people are the advocates for abortion, the wealthy who can escape it are the biggest advocates of socialism. While they enjoy the good life, the rest of us in the egalitarian utopia are equally destitute, equally miserable and equally unable to raise our stature.

There will always be wild-eyed, charismatic, and angry Pied Piper politicians ready to capitalize on manufactured ignorance of history and the world to sell us a society from which the only escape is death. History suggests we may blindly follow.

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E-Mail JD Pendry: jd@jdpendry.com

Website: [Pendry's American Journal](#)