



GOODBYE, AMERICA

JAMES ROBBINS

Do you remember America?

If you read about it in a history textbook, you probably learned about a land of oppression, racism, sexism, income inequality, police brutality, and imperial wars. (Aside from that, it was a great place.)

That is how America is portrayed in most American high schools and colleges—and in America’s media, films, and by its progressive politicians.

In the words of filmmaker Michael Moore, America is “a nation founded on genocide, built on the backs of slaves, and maintained through the subjugation of women to second-class citizenship and economic disempowerment.”

Is that America’s history? Is that who Americans were—and are?

George Orwell understood that the “most effective way to destroy a people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history.”

History is much more than a collection of facts. History, and our understanding of it, tells us who we are as a people in the same way your personal memories and experiences define and shape who you are.

Wipe out your memory, and you wipe out your identity.

When you raise a generation of Americans to hold their country’s past in contempt by exaggerating America’s faults and ignoring its triumphs, then they will have no respect for American institutions or the beliefs on which the nation is based.

It hasn’t always been this way. Until the last few decades, liberals and conservatives alike shared a common understanding of America’s origins, its history, and its mission of spreading liberty—within America and around the world.

They recognized America as the country of the Pilgrims and Jamestown, of the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence, of the individual rights won through revolution and secured in the U.S. Constitution.

This was the country of the frontier spirit and of almost unlimited possibilities; the country that paid for the sin of slavery with the carnage of its Civil War; of economic dynamism and endless

invention; of unparalleled individual opportunity; and the country that defeated fascism and communism in the 20th century.

Previous generations took all this for granted and reveled in it.

So what changed?

Starting in the 1960s, a new, so-called “progressive,” narrative took hold that sought not to uplift, inspire, and unite, but to demean, degrade and divide. It sought to replace the pride of American achievement with shame.

Ironically, this all happened while America was making extraordinary strides in civil rights—especially for minorities and women.

But anything less than perfection—which can never exist, given that every society is composed of flawed human beings—is now considered a total failure; and victims of the past are elevated as an indictment of the present.

Along the way, all the classic American touchstones have been undermined. According to the progressive narrative, Christopher Columbus discovered America only to despoil it; the Founders wrote the Constitution only to codify their ownership of slaves; the great captains of industry enriched themselves only by exploiting the poor.

American traditions that were perfectly acceptable even a few years ago—pledging allegiance to the flag, singing the national anthem, even saying “Merry Christmas”—have been called into question, mocked, and sometimes banned.

The outcome of this new, non-violent civil war between those who hold America and its history in contempt and those who, without denying its flaws, revere America, will determine the future of the American experiment—the new history we will make.

Is America a country that was built by slavery? Or a country that overcame and abolished slavery at the cost of 600,000 lives? Is America a country of rampant discrimination? Or an accepting people in active pursuit of a more perfect union? Is it a country of grinding exploitation? Or a land of limitless opportunity?

The time has come to choose.

How will *you* remember America?

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