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## The History Thieves

Lynne Cheney's Oct. 20 editorial-page article "The End of History" draws attention to a process so menacing that it needs to be viewed in a broader context. The prescription referred to as "National Standards for U.S. History" is not unlike an amnesia-inducing drug, to be administered on a national scale without hypodermic needles. To students of the 20th century the concept is familiar. It was developed in the councils of the Bolshevik and Nazi parties, and successfully deployed on the youth of the Third Reich and the Soviet Empire.

The recipe called for schools that dispense not knowledge, but a compendium of selected events, personalities and interpretations. More important, knowledge was eliminated of such events and personalities as were deemed to have no usefulness by the ideologues of the Nazi or Bolshevik party (which also gave us the concept of political correctness). Experience shows that if one persuades impressionable youths that facts do not exist, that history is always arbitrary, then solid ground can be replaced by anyone's brand of quicksand. Soon, no one knows which is up and those in control can reinvent everything as they go. Because it has worked every time, it is this same recipe "National Standards" seeks to dispense to America.

What made Hitler Youth and Komsomol such potent forces was not the young people's worship for Hitler, Lenin or Stalin, rather the phenomenon that history for them began in 1933 or 1917 respectively, and that all data were selected and judged solely on their relevance to those events. Significantly, members of both organizations were brought up to despise anything and everything that spoke English. To all those who would take over the world, Anglo-American principles, attitudes and traditions have been the object of hate, the arch enemy. To all those who would take over the world, Britain and the U.S. have been the main impediment. In my native Hungary, where Soviet occupation followed Nazi occupation, typically the same henchmen jailed the same people for the same crime of listening to an English-language broadcast, whether in 1944 or 1952.

The loss of two world wars and the Cold War made it clear that neither German technological genius nor Soviet numerical advantage was sufficient to carry the day against Anglo-American resolve. The solution: Deprive American consciousness of its solid foundations and remove forever the intractable impediments standing in the way of those who dream of a closed, regimented, controlled world. By divorcing the fruits of Western civilization and of Anglo-American pragmatism from their roots, from the personalities and events which brought them forth, there will be no more need for battlefield victories.

Ours is a unique heritage. Some receive it through birth. Others, like myself, transcend hardship to claim it, but all of us are stewards of great ideas and traditions. Knowledge of them and respect for them have served us like protective armor, yet we are to countenance the creation of generations who will be naked and defenseless. We continue to deceive ourselves, thinking that if we say that we care the same about everyone and everything, we will be "good people." Mrs. Cheney spoke of a battle; I believe we are at war—the one that began in 1914 and has now homed in on its ultimate objective: America's soul.

HALINT VAZSONYI  
Senior Fellow  
The Potomac Foundation

The Potomac Foundation  
1311 Dolley Madison Blvd.  
Suite 2-A  
McLean, VA 22101  
Telephone: (703) 506-1790  
FAX: (703) 506-8085