

Episode 91 – Dr. Mary Grabar and Jarrett Stepman “Howard Zinn’s War on History”

Bill Walton ([00:01](#)):

I just completed a show with Dr. Mary Grabar and Jarrett Stepman. Both have written excellent books on the distortions in American history. And as you know, we're in the middle of a crisis time that I think is largely a product of a battle of ideas. And unfortunately, I think the battle of ideas that support the constitution, the founding of the country, the declaration and the essential freedoms that Americans have enjoyed for over 250 years are in jeopardy. And they're in jeopardy because of the ideas that are being taught by historians and the universities and the elementary schools, public schools. And a lot of these ideas can be laid at the foot of the one person, in my view a very bad guy, Howard Zinn who wrote the History of the American People which is filled with distortions. So join me as I learn more about Howard Zinn's book and the resulting influence he's had and the impact on our culture today. And hopefully some of the things we might do about it.

Speaker 2 ([01:06](#)):

Welcome to the Bill Walton show featuring conversations with leaders, entrepreneur, artists and thinkers. Fresh perspectives on money, culture, politics and human flourishing. Interesting people, interesting things.

Bill Walton ([01:26](#)):

Welcome to the Bill Walton Show. An existential question is now dividing America, is the essence of our civilization, our culture, our morals fundamentally good and worth preserving? Or is it in the words of one of the great enemies of the American idea, Howard Zinn, a story of defeat, despair, domination. The tragedy in three acts, what we did to the Indians, what we did to the African Americans and now what we've done to everyone else. And that's a pretty fair description of his book, Peoples History of the United States. With me to dig into this, deconstruct it, get at the truth, is Dr. Mary Grabar who's a resident fellow of the Alexander Hamilton Institute of the Study for Western Civilization and the author of a book I highly recommend, Debunking Howard Zinn, exposing the fake history that turned a generation against America. Also joining is Jarrett Stepman, a columnist with The Daily Signal, the multimedia publication of The Heritage Foundation and the author of another book that I highly recommend, The War On History, the conspiracy to rewrite Americas past.

Bill Walton ([02:38](#)):

Mary, Jarrett, welcome. Mary, we were joking before we come on. Howard Zinn, some people, they talk about they're rolling in their graves because how badly things are going. Well Howard Zinn must be dancing in his grave. He's been dead about 10 years and his ideas are finally coming into the mainstream, unfortunately. Tell us who, Mary, Howard Zinn was and what he means for us now. And we'll dig a little . Keep going, yeah.

Mary Grabar ([03:11](#)):

Well, the late Howard Zinn was born in 1922. So he was a teenager. He grew up in Brooklyn, his parents were Jewish Russian immigrants. And in the 1930s it was the heyday of communist recruitment. And so these older fellows would come into his neighborhood and recruit him and he was a teenager, he participated in some of the mass marches they had. And he worked in a shipyard after high school and

then he joined service, he was a bombardier in World War II. And when he came back, he went to college on a GI bill. Eventually obtain his PhD from Columbia University. And he also became a member of the Communist Party, so he was an official member. He always denied it, but according to the best evidence we have, the interpretation of his over 400 page FBI file by Ron Radish, who himself was a former member of the Communist Party, Howard Zinn was a member of the Communist Party.

Mary Grabar ([04:26](#)):

In 1956, he was interviewed for a position at Spelman College, which was a small Christian college for black women in Atlanta. He got that job in 1956 and he moved to Atlanta and taught there for seven years. Now he dropped his official membership as many Communist party members did because he wanted to infiltrate the institutions per the orders of the Communist party honchos. He was there for seven years and he was apparently fired by the first black and the first male president for that college for insubordination because he was radicalizing the students. Under the pretext of fighting for civil rights, he led them into dangerous protests. He also had them rebelling against the administration, telling them that they didn't need to follow curfews, that they shouldn't follow the dress code. That attendance at chapel was just a meaningless ritual. And so he was fired with a years salary. He fought that, and I go into that in my book. There are these questions of a morals charge against Howard Zinn in regarding one of his students. But he landed at Boston University where he taught until he retired in 1988.

Mary Grabar ([06:03](#)):

He really did not teach [inaudible 00:06:06] imagine, he radicalized students. And at Boston University, he led students on anti-Vietnam war protests, basically handed out A's like candy and had students go to prisons and interview prisoners to right reports about how the system is unjust and we should abolish prisons and police and so forth. He died in 2010, worked up till the last minute. Was featured by his next door neighbor, Matt Damon, who grew up next to him in Good Will Hunting. His book took off. It start off slowly, but with cultural references, it gained in popularity. And as schools became increasingly radicalized, teachers felt freer to use it. I used to go to these teacher conferences where they would talk about sneaking pages. [crosstalk 00:07:10]-

Bill Walton ([07:09](#)):

So Jarrett, I'm just going to give Jarrett a chance.

Mary Grabar ([07:12](#)):

Okay.

Bill Walton ([07:13](#)):

Jarrett, you used Howard as a source for your book and some of the other people. Why are we talking about Howard Zinn?

Jarrett Stepman ([07:25](#)):

Well it's interesting because Howard Zinn started to move his way into our education system. Obviously the book came out in 1980, but I think it kind of, as Mary said, it started slowly seeping into our system at the higher education level but also at the high school level in America school. And I think there were a lot of teachers who themselves were perhaps radicals and introduced a lot of teachings into their classrooms. I mean you can look today, go on amazon.com and The Peoples History of the United States

is always a top best seller. This is used in classrooms around the country. And I think for many young Americans, if they get any kind of instruction history at all, it often comes from Howard Zinn or something akin to Howard Zinn. I think you've seen a severe decline in civics knowledge in this country.

Jarrett Stepman ([08:16](#)):

I mean you could look at every poll, you could see a steep decline from the older generations to the younger ones, the actually civic knowledge has declined rather precipitously. While at the same time, whatever contact people get with history, it's often the teachings of Howard Zinn or a derivative of it. And I think for Millennials, my generation and Gen Z, they've been left without a lot of the traditional teachings about our history of the past and are left with nothing but Zinn, and that's their go-to. That's now the baseline. Whereas at one time, teachings of Zinn were seen as a radical outsider. I mean his works were I think debunked by even many liberal historians in his own day and certainly now. But those are the teachings that really took off, especially among a lot of mainstream Americans. I think his ideas are becoming mainstream whereas at one time, they were seen as incredibly radical.

Bill Walton ([09:08](#)):

So what makes it compelling? I mean how did it happen that everybody said, "Well forget the Constitution, forget the founding of America." We've got the 1619 project that the New York Time has launched which says the founding of America started when 20 slaves showed up on the shores of Virginia and not at 1776. How big and deep is this movement?

Jarrett Stepman ([09:40](#)):

Well I think it's interesting that the 1619 project, which to a certain extent, is a derivative of what Zinn worked on. It's more of a capstone than something new. I mean obviously the arguments that are put forth in 1619 run very similar to what Howard Zinn was saying, that America is based on something rotten. Which you've been taught, as a young person, that America is good and great is completely wrong. The 1776 is not our true founding, it's 1619. It's all these terrible things like slavery and tyranny and all these awful things. I think it's a compelling narrative, especially those who I think have a kind of, I would say utopian view of human nature of possibility.

Jarrett Stepman ([10:23](#)):

And I think that narrative that America was fundamentally broken and flawed, that the past is ugly, full of imperfections worked it's way very well for especially young people who think that they can create this whole new world, this kind of perfect world where the sins of the past are washed away. Zinn is kind of that perfect [inaudible 00:10:42]. I mean he goes right out and lays out the case against traditional American culture, traditional American institutions, western civilization itself and obviously leading Americans toward a new path. What that new path is, obviously given his Marxism and socialist connections, I mean it doesn't take long to guess at what that new path is. But I think that's really how it's taken off is because to a certain extent, I think there has been a lack of education about traditional American ideas. I talked about the civics knowledge decline, I think this was just ready to be opened up for the teachings of somebody like Zinn who now has a cult-like following.

Bill Walton ([11:22](#)):

Mary, you've written... You mentioned utopia Jarrett, basically prevents anything that isn't immediately utopian is a result of hypocrisy and greed. So we're appealing to the youthful idealism and if it's not perfect, there's some bad people there that are responsible for it. You both have written, and we're in

the midst of seeing all these statues torn down, you've both have written at length, and interestingly about Christopher Columbus. How did this start? He became the central historical figure that they had to deconstruct and then we've moved through history to others. Mary?

Mary Grabar ([12:07](#)):

Well Howard Zinn actually says that the United States has no right to exist, that it's a pretense. And he started this trend of starting off U.S history textbooks with Columbus. That didn't used to be the case. So if you can go way, way back to the arrival of the first European, you can show that this country is rotten to it's core. So that has been his message. What I did in analyzing his chapter on Christopher Columbus was I went back his sources. He claims that he read the logs and then he read Bartolomé de las Casas, the priest who wrote about this. But he actually didn't. He plagiarized the first five and half pages of the famous opening page of his book from a buddy who was a Marxist and a novelist and an anti-Vietnam war protestor, Hans Conning. And it was a book that was written for high school students. It's about 100 pages long.

Mary Grabar ([13:30](#)):

So it's plagiarized from that and that in itself is not a reputable book, it's a polemic. So right from the get-go you have the origins of the United States based on false information, but it's done in order to present the United States as rotten from it's origins. And I might want to add, that William Z Foster, whose book, there's many similarities to Howard Zinn's, which was written in 1950 or 51. Now Foster was a CPU essay chairman and he starts with Columbus and the discover of America. So Zinn takes his cue I think from him.

Bill Walton ([14:23](#)):

I think you're making a very important point. It's not like just in the last couple of decades, new scholarship has uncovered startling facts about the founding of American or the discovery of America. Somehow it's now there's a new set of facts in history to combat with what we'd already thought. This was made up pretty much out of a whole cloth based on a pre-existing biased against America and it's ideals by somebody who was a communist and an SDS guy in the 60s. Jarrett?

Jarrett Stepman ([14:56](#)):

Yeah, I mean it's interesting. Actually it even goes farther back. I mean Engels actually wrote quite a bit about Columbus and he blamed Columbus [crosstalk 00:15:04]-

Bill Walton ([15:04](#)):

Engels and is in Marx and Engels.

Jarrett Stepman ([15:06](#)):

Marx and Engels. Because he saw this opening up a kind of global system of capitalism. And I think to a certain extent, Zinn and others took cues from those early Marxist writings. I mean what Columbus has come to symbolize... I mean it's interesting, they do so much to demonize the man Columbus, but I think it really is about something larger. It's about what Columbus brought to the world and how he transformed the world is what they blame for all the worlds current ills. I mean I think that's why they really started with Columbus and they need to demonize him and they need to make everything that he did seem like something wicked, something that we should all revolt against.

Jarrett Stepman ([15:43](#)):

And I think Mary's right, it really was questioning the very existence of the United States of America from its very beginning. And that's why it needs to start and that's why the attacks are so ferocious against Columbus. To a certain extent, it doesn't really make sense. I mean this is a figure that actually predates the United States very much. But they see that as the seed for what is the New World, for the United States and everything that's come thereafter.

Bill Walton ([16:09](#)):

You're watching the Bill Walton show and I'm here with Mary Grabar and Jarrett Stepman and we're talking about American history as rewritten by Howard Zinn. And we're now talking about Christopher Columbus. The thing I think is, I don't know if amusing is the right word, but there weren't any statues of Columbus until the Italians began immigrating to America. And they showed up, what 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920. Then the politicians in New York and everyone else, in order to make the Italians feel patriotic about their new country and maybe to get some votes, started putting up these statues of Columbus really mainly to celebrate Italian Americans. And so we had a hyphenated group that was initially part of the underclass, that now presumably part of the elite and the oppressor class. And so it wasn't exactly like this has been around forever. This is just in the last century. Mary?

Mary Grabar ([17:13](#)):

Well, Washington Irving wrote that famous biography of Christopher Columbus. Before he was an Italian American, I think he was celebrated as an American. The discovery of America was celebrated in sermons. I think it was Franklin Roosevelt, I'm pretty sure, made it into a national holiday. And I think around 1892 there were 11 Italians who were lynched. It's the largest lynching in American history, talking about group lynching, on suspicions of having murdered someone. So they were persecuted. Italians were not thought of as being white at one time and there were notices sent out to not hire them on government construction sites. So I think it's the combination. I think there always was pride in the fact that Christopher Columbus had discovered America but there was an added emphasis I believe with the persecution of the Italian immigrants.

Bill Walton ([18:36](#)):

Well Zinn writes and his crew is writing about how Columbus and the European civilization, when they showed up at the shores of north, I don't know what we called it then, was in North America. They were the serpent that destroyed a Garden of Eden. And he writes about, I think Mary you've written here that he writes basically at a second grade level where he talked about happy topics like sharing, farming, hunting and fishing. And so this was so pristine Garden of Eden that the evil white people from Europe ruined. Jarrett?

Jarrett Stepman ([19:18](#)):

Yeah, I mean it's those kind of simplistic narratives. I mean, to me, it seems rather amusing, especially studying history beyond just a book from Howard Zinn. But to a lot of people, this kind of clarity makes a lot of sense. I think it prays upon a misunderstanding of human nature, of misunderstanding of the larger world history. I mean some of those narratives about this kind of pacifist seal being broken by Christopher Columbus are downright laughable to a certain extent. But that's part of his message and I think it's a very powerful one. Especially again, to people don't have a larger education in the kind of deeper parts of history. To the radicals, to the communists, they know some of this and they're willing to construct narratives to suit their purposes. But for a lot of the faithful, a lot of the followers, these

stories, they make perfect sense and they're part of this kind cult like status of this movement. And unfortunately, a lot of young Americans have bought into it. I think, again, I stress because they don't have a deeper understanding often of human nature over larger history, of the history of human kind which is full of violence and tyranny, bloodshed. I mean oppression. I mean new world or the old world, much of the world was the same in that sense.

Jarrett Stepman ([20:38](#)):

So this idea that Christopher Columbus showed up here in the Americas, that was just this wonderful place of harmony and peace. There was no slavery and violence and suddenly this horribly Hitler of the 1490s shows up and commits genocides and is almost a demonic character, I mean it's almost laughable to a certain extent. But again, many have bought into this narrative where I think if you asked, unfortunately your average school age child in America right now what think of Columbus, they'll have a lot of bad things to say about him. They won't know much else about, but they'll know he's a villain.

Bill Walton ([21:10](#)):

Well the romanization of the Aztec culture, there's a terrific book and I can't remember the authors name, it's called Constant Battles. He was an archeologist and studied ancient cultures all over the world in every continent and found evidence of warfare in every single one of them. And not only some warfare, but a lot. In some cases he estimated that as many as 25% of the men in these cultures died from wounds or battle, things like that. So there's this mythology of happy stated nature, I guess Russo helped bring that idea about. Mary?

Mary Grabar ([21:57](#)):

Yeah. I mean that is the human condition and I think the behind this desire to see American history as this sort of Manichean battle is this faith that we can about utopia, we can bring about paradise. We can return to this pristine kind of culture where people share, there's no greed, there's no murder, all sin is abolished. And I think the willingness to accept that kind of narrative comes from other things that we aren't teaching in school. So back when I was still allowed to teach, I was teaching at Emory, and I remember mentioning Adam and Eve. And this was Emory University, this is not your community college. And several of the students did not know who Adam and Eve were. I'm serious. This was around 2012 or 2013. So there is no base of knowledge from which to pick up Howard Zinn's book and say, "Wait a minute." As I think you had mentioned to me, once you pick it up, you're disgusted with it. You say, "This is nonsense. This is nasty, it's a bunch of lies." And they don't have that sense anymore and they're not introduced to-

Bill Walton ([23:32](#)):

Well that's why-

Mary Grabar ([23:33](#)):

... [crosstalk 00:23:33].

Bill Walton ([23:33](#)):

That's why you've given us such a public service. I guess my view is thank you Mary. You've read Howard's book and written about it very lucidly so we don't have to. It's really hard to get through it. Did you read all the way through it Jarrett? Can you stand it?

Jarrett Stepman ([23:51](#)):

I have. I've read most of it a few times over my life. I do think that's a great point Mary. We just a United States senator, Tim Kaine from Virginia say basically that the United States invented slavery, that essentially we created slavery which is laughable, if anybody's read the book of Exodus, but frankly laughable if you've studied human history period that the idea of the United States created slavery. But this is said, something that was said in the senate. And again, whose if the leaders of these things really do know the truth and they just assume that the followers don't. But I think you have that real problem is that there are lot of young Americans and really young Westerners in general who don't have a clear grasp of history. I mean they don't have the civics knowledge, a lot of these kind of firewalls that were in place for previous generations for a lot of kookier crackpot ideas, they just don't exist anymore.

Jarrett Stepman ([24:51](#)):

The kind of informed patriotism that Ronald Regan spoke about in his farewell address, we haven't really had that. In a lot of our schools across this country, we haven't done a good job of teaching about American history so that young people will have a critical eye when they're told that Christopher Columbus was a monster, that the founders were no good. And I think that's become a real crisis in this country. I mean that's, to a certain extent, some of the locusts of our crisis is that failure of civics.

Bill Walton ([25:19](#)):

Let's move forward in history to the founding, 1776, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution. The notion that somehow this is a new history that we were terrible means they haven't read real history. And real history recognizes that people are widely imperfect, there's some good people, there's some bad people, it's always a struggle to make things better, to build a civilization. In the Constitution, Deceleration of Independence, but the Constitution really is build on a very pragmatic realistic understanding of people's darker natures as well as their better nature, better angels if you will. And that's what makes that document so great is it keeps any one group from accumulating power to wield power over others. Mary?

Mary Grabar ([26:13](#)):

Yes. Well, and going back-

Bill Walton ([26:16](#)):

You can't top that one.

Mary Grabar ([26:22](#)):

What he does is he operates from Marxist premises and he says, "Well how could there be equality when some people had more wealth than others?" He tosses out these loaded questions. And so he makes typically adolescent readers, or very naive uninformed readers think that they're smart by presenting questions in a row. Like a good propagandist, he makes the reader believe that he has come up with the answers all on his own and he's arrived at this brilliant insight. So what Zinn promoting is this mob democracy which is what we're seeing now which is exactly what the founders were afraid of. So he constantly refers to the fact that there are these checks and balances and hey, why do you think that this? Is it because they really were afraid of reform and the oppressed masses rising up. And the people who are rioting and rising up are the real heroes in his book.

Bill Walton ([27:43](#)):

Jarrett?

Jarrett Stepman ([27:44](#)):

Yeah. It's interesting to me. I mean you talked about he founding and what that started, the bedrock. There's this old saying that Martin Luther King Jr actually this quote, the arch of history bends towards justice. Well, I think it seems that way to a large extent in the United States because we've had a system and a culture that allows us to correct wrongs, that allows us to develop ourselves in a way that leads not to tyranny, which was where most revolutions end up, but to greater liberty and things like this. And I think our history has formed that out, even though we do have flaws, we've been able to correct them through a constitutional system. A system of limitation on government, defense of private property, all these things which have created more prosperity for more people. It's why the United States has had phenomenal and incredible growth for the past two centuries.

Jarrett Stepman ([28:35](#)):

And it makes me think too, I mean look at one of our sister republics. We look south at the Caribbean at the history of Haiti which was actually the second republic created new world. Their revolution was very violent. They committed a genocide toward the white planters that happened there, the first sort of president made himself dictator for life and with the ability to appoint successors. The country has a long sad history following that of mostly revolution, violence, oppression, dictatorship and hopelessness and where the United States was founded on something very different. Something that had a bedrock that would produce results and prosperity for generations of people, many of whom have no ancestry with the original founding, but have inherited that system, inherited that culture from them. And it's created something truly precious here in the United States.

Jarrett Stepman ([29:29](#)):

I think that's what's entirely lost in Howard Zinn's narrative where every sin is just because of the inherent wickedness of the United States. I think the real attitude should be quite the opposite. That wickedness and violence and tyranny are the norm whereas the liberty that we have here and the good things that we have here have been the exception. America has been an exceptional nation and has done incredible things in the really barely over two centuries of its existence. Where we've come in that time is one of the miracles of human history, completely lost, of course, in Zinn's narrative.

Bill Walton ([30:08](#)):

Well and they've also, using the Marx trope, which is that capitalism caused racism and racism didn't exist before the capitalist system. And of course Marx was the one who coined the term capitalism because free markets and volunteer exchange didn't work very well with the rhetoric so he began demonizing it right out of the box. Where do we go from here? We've sort of painted this bleak picture. I think there are a lot of stories we could tell about statues being torn down. How do you see this evolving? What's the last act of this play?

Jarrett Stepman ([30:53](#)):

Well, to me, first of all, I do ultimately believe, as Lincoln once said that right makes might and I think that at this moment, especially as we see American history coming under question, we've seen riots, we've seen a breakdown of the rule of law. I think the moment cries out for leadership, for those who still believe in what this country stands for, those who are willing to stand for 1776. I know it's a crazy thing that we even have to say that in modern America. But I do believe that leadership and showing

some backbone against the rioters and those who want to tear down American history and civilization will do a lot of good in rallying Americans who still believe in that system and rallying them to the cause. We need articulate defenders of what this country has done, where it is going. And I think [crosstalk 00:31:41]-

Bill Walton ([31:41](#)):

Do you think that the cities where these riots are happening and where the statues are being torn down for the most part are run by democrats, been run by democrats for decades. They obviously don't want to see Donald Trump reelected. I think that maybe they're just letting this thing run in order to make him look as bad as possible so they can win in November.

Jarrett Stepman ([32:09](#)):

Well I think they also more or less agree with the protestors and they're will to concede to them whatever they want. I think it's deeply shameful to see cities stand by as history's being destroyed, statues are being destroyed, in some cases even people are being violently attacked. I mean we had a congressman in Wisconsin who was violently attacked by a mob where basically the authorities just stand by or very hurriedly go and take down the statues in the dead of night, sometimes against the law themselves. I think that that definitely shows, first of all their sympathy with the protestors and the riots, a total disregard for the rule of law for this country. Those cities are going to pay a price. There's going to be a long term price to this breakdown.

Jarrett Stepman ([32:53](#)):

If you think you can control a mob and channel it for your political... Yeah, maybe anarchists and communists like that. But for those that want a system of future prosperity and success, that is not the formula. And I think a lot of our big cities that are allowing this happen and have not shown leadership, they're going to suffer not just this year and next year but 10 years from now because of these decisions.

Bill Walton ([33:16](#)):

I'm really worried. I think it's so much easier to destroy than to create. You're watching the Bill Walton Show. I'm here with Mary Grabar and Jarrett Stepman and we're talking about what's happening in our cities today and the movements to tear down statues and what people think they're going to replace American civilization with. Mary, your thoughts?

Mary Grabar ([33:38](#)):

Well I obviously want people to buy my book.

Bill Walton ([33:43](#)):

So do I. And Jarrett, I want them to buy... Let's plug your book right again.

Mary Grabar ([33:48](#)):

Well, one of the things I think-

Bill Walton ([33:51](#)):

Let's do it again. It's the Debunking Howard Zinn, exposing the fake history that turned a generation against America. We'll find that on Amazon? Yes. And Jarrett, your book is The War on History, the conspiracy to rewrite Americas past. And thing, we haven't talked as much about Jarrett, but thing's very interesting is the biographies you give of all these Americans, including Andrew Jackson, whose also in the list of bad guys according to this group. Mary, continue. I'm sorry I interrupted you.

Mary Grabar ([34:24](#)):

Well for four decades, 40 years now, people have been complaining about Howard Zinn. I went to this conference and there were a bunch of professors around. And I held up my book as we were making introductions and they applauded because someone had gotten down into the muck and the mud and gone though Howard Zinn's pages. And I what I found is that he's not only biased, but he leaves out critical facts. The way he quotes is he leaves out critical words and so he changes the meanings. He even uses David Irving, a Holocaust denier as one of his sources for his chapter on World War II. So the way to get his book out of the classroom, which I think is critical, is to give out on the basis of it being faulty history. The counter argument always is, well, you are overlooking the regular people, this is a corrective to this triumphalist history that's been taught in our schools. That's their argument. But would we use a book by David Irving in the classroom, which is written in a sympathetic vein to the Nazis? Would we use that in our classroom?

Bill Walton ([36:00](#)):

Let me do my-

Mary Grabar ([36:01](#)):

The same thing for Howard Zinn. He would not use a book that denies that slavery was horrible and unjust. He would not use a book that kind of glosses that over. Similarly, he should not use a book that is as false [crosstalk 00:36:22]-

Bill Walton ([36:23](#)):

Let me do my first negative plug ever. Do not buy this book. This is a horrible book. It's filled with lies and poisoning your children's minds. What you to is you ought to reads Mary's and Jarrett's book which tells you the truth but also gets into how this book distorts history and why it's such an evil force in America today. So while I had to buy it, you don't have too. So anyway, that's my negative plug. World War II, this is another one that's been... I was not current with this. Apparently we're not teaching that America was just as bad as the Nazi's in World War II. Jarrett?

Jarrett Stepman ([37:05](#)):

Yeah. I think another narrative that's now propping up is that it's really the USSR that won World War II, the United States didn't win the war. It's becoming almost one of those gotcha hipster kind of things, well, did you know, actually the USSR won World War II. Which of course, if you know the nature of the USSR, USSR really did win World War II it would not be a victory for free people on this world. I mean, that's the reality. The reality is we had to face a long twilight struggle, in the words of Kennedy, with that Soviet Union that was based on yet another evil system, that was not one based on freedom that we have. And so I think this kind of idea, fortunately again, it goes to the lack of information. I think a lot Americans still believe World War II as the good war that America was on the right side. But I think a lot of the details about that are being lost.

Jarrett Stepman ([38:01](#)):

The only thing that I think a lot of young Americans get is that the United States interred Japanese Americans. I mean that's literally the only thing. They know we won, maybe. And we also had concentration camps like the Nazis, which I think a malignant narrative about the war and it loses the larger context of what we were fighting and what this country went through at that time. And I think, again, it goes that lack of information. A generation of young Americans who just don't know much except for a few little things and then hear, well America did terrible things too, so we must have been just as bad.

Bill Walton ([38:37](#)):

Well and anybody who reads that history knows the history of the Eastern front and Germany when the Soviets came in. They outdid the Nazis in genocide and murdering millions of people as they marched into Germany. Had the United States and the allies been there, they would've kept going.

Jarrett Stepman ([38:59](#)):

Yeah, I think there's no doubt that they would've kept going. There were a lot of contingency plans for Russian tanks to storm through the tattered remains of Western Europe. I mean is the strength of the United States and Great Britain that ultimately prevented that. Primarily the United States at that point. The U.S was, at that point now, the preeminent superpower, really holding the torch for liberty and did so for a very long time thereafter. Whereas the Soviet Union had aggressive... they talk about the United States as imperialists, well they were very much imperialists and wanted to spread their political systems around the globe, which they did violently. That was the history of the Cold War.

Jarrett Stepman ([39:43](#)):

Unfortunately Millennials, for the most part, were born as that Cold War was coming to a close, the Berlin Wall was coming down. They've lost some understanding of what that larger debate was between the Soviet Union and the United States. They no longer really know the differences I think, sometimes, in the distinctions between what the USSR was based on, what we were based on. So I think you have a whole generation that has been removed from I think an understanding that older ones had about the differences. And so you have revisionist histories now. The New York Times running things praising the revolution of 1917, having this, I think, really disgusting praise of Lennon and all these different figures, really, at one time, probably would have gotten a lot more anger. I think these days it's just, well, I guess the USSR wasn't so bad after all, which is a disgusting idea.

Bill Walton ([40:38](#)):

I'm hopeful we can get a lot of these ideas dislodged. I worry. I see the college board has put Howard Zinn's book in the advance placement US History curriculum. So if you want to do well on that test, you've got to regurgitate these lies. How did this lead up to cancel culture?

Jarrett Stepman ([41:00](#)):

I think a large part of cancel culture is shutting down those who say something different, or have alternative points of view. I think that for a lot of these people, they don't want there to be any contradiction to their narratives. Their truth replaces the truth and I think that that is a big part of this. They don't like the idea, these debates over history and the complexities with it, they don't like that. They want you to simply buy their message and their narrative. I think truth very fortunately I think

destroys a lot of their narratives and their ideas. But they're trying to create a culture that now can simply shut down those who disagree. And I think that very much plays into this whole thing.

Jarrett Stepman ([41:50](#)):

I think that's part of the reason why they go after statues, they go after people, they need to silence any kind of opposition. This is politics of pure power. I mean that's really what it comes down to. You don't try to win through debate and argument and reason, you try to win through simply using might to crush your enemies. And I think that's really what this comes down to.

Bill Walton ([42:13](#)):

Mary?

Mary Grabar ([42:15](#)):

Yeah, I agree. It's all about power. I hate to sound like a I told you so, but I could see this coming. They first started going after some of the classical authors. I was teaching English and Shakespeare was attacked and Milton and Chaucer, they go after the books. And I think we actually arrived at a semi-literate stage in terms of college students, they don't act based on reason, they don't really read a lot. They're taught how to protest and that protest is great. I think a lot of this also comes from the glorification of the 1960s.

Mary Grabar ([43:02](#)):

There is this misperception that there was a free speech movement in the 1960s which started at Berkeley. But I don't think that's true because the free speech that they were advocating was only speech of the political left. And so you had these professors who came from that generation and they brought their ideas into the classroom, this idea of repressive powering or whatever. Ultimately comes from Gramsci and cultural Marxism from the 1930s. So it's been a long time in coming and I think we've just been building up to this stage for decades. And now with the resistance to Donald Trump, I think the left has seen that they have an opportunity. They were waiting for something like the murder of George Floyd to come along. There's really, I don't think ultimately that much concern over him as a person, but rather they have their martyr around whom they could rally. And so it has become this overt revolution, this effort to destroy all reminders of object that unify us, as President Trump in his 4th of July speech.

Bill Walton ([44:35](#)):

You mentioned Gramsci as somebody that people should know about. Almost nobody does, I didn't until last year. Italian cultural Marxist that said, gee, we're not going to... Looking at the results of the Russian Revolution, which turned out badly, New York Times notwithstanding, said, "We can't ever win without taking over the cultural institutions in these countries and we've go over the universities and the media, the grade schools, the newspapers and media," on and on. Gramsci's really been the architect for the forces that we're up against now.

Mary Grabar ([45:16](#)):

Yeah, exactly. I mean that's what they did. They change these young radicals that were evading the draft and went to graduate school, got positions. They changed the way history is written. There was a very famous meeting in 1969 of the American Historical Association and there are two factions. One was led by a Marxist named Eugene Genovese whom I knew before he died in the last several years of life. And though he was a dedicated Marxist, he felt that historians should not distort the facts. And then there

was another group that wanted to use history for social activism and that group has come to dominate. So we have this distortion and Zinn exemplifies that in the extreme. I mean there is this tendency to leave out certain facts, to massage certain ideas by historians. But Howard Zinn, he's an activist and he just throws away this pretense or this claim of objectivity. In fact, he goes on a rant in the first chapter, midway through it, about how objectivity in history leads to genocide and historians who came before him were guilty of that, they were justifying genocide.

Bill Walton ([47:00](#)):

Mary and Jarrett, unfortunately we've run out of time here. I hate to leave on that last very glowing upsetting remark, but I'm afraid we have to. Let's make this part one. I mean we'll do a part two sometime when we have a clear view of what's going to be happening next. Joining me today has been Dr. Mary Grabar whose at Alexander Hamilton Institute for the Study of Western Civilization and Jarrett Stepman with the Daily Signal. They've both written terrific books. Mary's is *Debunking Howard Zinn* and Jarrett's is *The War on History* and I hope you'll both avail yourself of those through Amazon. Anyways, so thanks for joining me on the Bill Walton Show. And Mary, Jarrett, we'll welcome you back soon and thanks for watching.

Bill Walton ([47:53](#)):

I hope you enjoyed the conversation. Want more? Click the subscribe button or head over to the billwaltonshow.com to choose from over 100 episodes. You can also learn more about our guests on our interesting people page. And send us your comments. We read every one and your thoughts help us guide the show. If it's easier for you to listen, check out our podcast page and subscribe there. In return, we'll keep you informed about what's true, what's right and what's next. Thanks for joining. Onward and upward.