

Statue destruction is cultural genocide

By Andrea Seastrand

Our cultural heritage is literally under assault with vandals tearing down and destroying statues and monuments throughout the country. It started with the destruction of Confederate statues, and has quickly spread to vandalism or calls for the removal of monuments to the founding fathers, past presidents and trailblazers like Christopher Columbus and Junípero Serra.

A week ago the Serra statue at the Old Santa Barbara Mission was decapitated and splashed with bright red paint. It won't be a surprise if other Serra statues in California, including the life-size bronze statue of Serra overlooking the entrance to Mission Plaza in San Luis Obispo, suffer the same fate. Those who consider Serra evil may also take their wrath out on the missions he founded, including Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa on Palm Street. The end game may be elimination of all references to Serra and his missions throughout the state, renaming cities, streets, schools, etc. You might think that far-fetched. But in 2015 state [Sen. Ricardo Lara, D-Bell Gardens, introduced a bill to remove California's Serra statue](#) from the U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall. Lara agreed to pull the bill for now after facing opposition from Catholics, who were celebrating Serra's canonization, and from Gov. Jerry Brown.

What happened that suddenly turned this saint into a sinner needing to be blotted from history? The ascendancy and militancy of anarchists and their fellow travelers on the left who hate Western civilization, including Christianity. Fascistic groups like Antifa, Black Lives Matter and By Any Means Necessary are waging war on America's history, culture and institutions, including using violence to shut down conservative speech on college campuses.

The oldest Columbus monument in North America, which was erected in 1792, was [recently destroyed in Baltimore](#) and replaced with signs, including one reading "Racism: Tear it Down." On Tuesday a century-old Columbus statue in New York City's Central Park was defaced and spray-painted with "Hate will not be tolerated."

Even Abraham Lincoln, who freed the slaves, is not safe. [A giant bust of our 16th president in Chicago was burned by someone spraying it with flammable liquid.](#) Other presidents may soon follow. [A Chicago pastor has called for the renaming of Washington Park and Jackson Park and removal of Washington's statue.](#) "I wonder is it George Washington next week and is it Thomas Jefferson the week after?" asked President Trump. "You know, you really do have to ask yourself, where does it stop?"

Apparently there's a long way to go and many statues and monuments to be destroyed before the America-haters will be satisfied. In addition to calls for the [removal of Confederate statues from the Capitol and elsewhere, there is a push](#)

[for the removal of Mount Rushmore and an end to funding for the Jefferson Memorial.](#)

It's reminiscent of the cultural genocide engaged in by the Nazis with their book burnings, the destruction of churches and other religious buildings by ISIS and the Stalinist removal of photos of discredited communist leaders from Soviet history books.

It's also reminiscent of the dystopian world of George Orwell's "1984" where "[e]very record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right."

Fortunately, the vast majority of Americans oppose what is happening, according to a [recent Rasmussen poll](#). Nearly nine out of 10 likely voters oppose removing the names of Washington and Jefferson from public places and taking down their statues. Ninety percent oppose the closing or changing of Mount Rushmore, and 94 percent agree that it is better to try to learn from the wrongs of the past than to erase them.

Yes, many of our founding fathers were flawed, and our country has had a checkered past. But America also has been a tremendous force for good, spreading wealth and freedom far beyond anything the world has ever seen. That is a cause for celebration, not desecration.

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