**Purging Diversity**

**Arlington National Cemetery has scrubbed information from its website about dozens of prominent Black, Hispanic, and female veterans, as part of a wider Defense Department purge of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) materials. Among the names removed from Arlington “Notable Graves” page are those of Gen. Colin L. Powell, first Black chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Hector Santa Anna, a World War II bomber pilot. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 28, 2025)***

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**Four and a half years after the killing of George Floyd sparked a racial reckoning, corporate America is going backward, said Perry Bacon Jr. in The Washington Post. “Over the past few months, so many companies, from Meta to McDonald’s to Walmart, have announced that they are ending or scaling back their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts that it’s hard to keep track.” It’s not surprising that DEI initiatives have generated backlash. “Americans desperately want to live in a country where your gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation aren’t barriers to economic success.” I want that country, too. But we don’t have it yet, and the companies abandoning DEI are “now indicating that they are less concerned about hiring women, LGBTQ people, people of color, and those with disabilities” or ensuring positive environments for them to work. What’s happening now is “a mirror image of the 2020 corporate rush to support social justice causes after Floyd’s murder,” said Brooke Masters in the Financial Times. The rush to retreat appears motivated by President Trump, who has “emboldened those who chafed at ‘woke doctrine.’” *(The Week magazine, January 31, 2025)***

**So much for the “national awakening” that followed George Floyd’s 2020 murder, said David Plazas in the Nashville Tennessean. It was admirable of corporations and schools to try to make themselves more welcoming places for minorities. If some of the programs they introduced were flawed, why not reform them? Instead, CEO’s and deans are letting right-wing activists bully them into junking the whole project. “Fear,” not fairness, “is at the heart of these decisions.” *(The Week magazine, December 13, 2024)***

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**Difference is a blessing, not a challenge. We define ourselves by knowing other people. We know our world by learning about difference. What is the word we often use? Tolerance. Is that a positive notion? Not really. “For the time being, I will tolerate you”? I’m against that concept. It means difference is a threat. Difference is a blessing and you don’t tolerate a blessing. You embrace it. (Islamic scholar Mohammad Mahallati of Oberlin College, in BoingBoing.net)**

**Diversity is essential for the military: The Trump administration’s attack on military diversity is “a breathtakingly stupid move,” said Errol Louis. The newly installed defense secretary, former Fox News host Pete Hegseth, has issued “a gleefully malicious memo” proclaiming that “identity months,” such as Black History Month, Women’s History Month, and Pride Month, are now “dead” in the military. The U.S. Military Academy at West Point announced it was also killing affinity groups for women, Latinos, and others. But 31 percent of active-duty personnel in the military are racial minorities, and about a fifth are women. About 25 percent of service members have mixed-race families. The Trumpian project of “stoking racial grievance” and portraying nonwhite males as incompetent DEI hires will only hurt the armed services, which already struggle to fill their recruitment goals; the Army fell short by 25 percent in 2022 and 2023. If we went to war, military officials say, some reserve units would be so short of soldiers that they could not deploy. “Keeping the nation safe means recruiting, training, and retaining young people from every community and social stratum.” Discouraging women and racial minorities from enlisting “would be a suicidal weakening of our national defense.” (The Week magazine, February 21, 2025)**

**“After dominating U.S. politics for a decade, President Trump now appears to be setting his sights on the country’s cultural landscape,” said Alex Gangitano ansd Judy Kurtz in The Hill. In a February 7 post on Truth Social, Trump announced his intent to seize control of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts by removing members of the board of trustees who “do not share our Vision for a Golden Age in Arts and Culture.” He promised that he himself would be voted chairman by the revamped board and later listed the type of programming he’ll terminate: “No more drag shows, or other anti-American propaganda.” By Monday, 18 trustees appointed by Joe Biden as well as longtime chairman David M. Rubenstein had been removed from the center’s official online roster, and a new interim director had been named. (The Week magazine, February 21, 2025)**

**The loss of diversity in any system increases the vulnerability of that system. Single-species forests fall easy prey to beetles or fungi; single-hybrid crops are overly sensitive to changes in temperature or moisture. Similarly, tribal peoples play an important role in the human ecosystem. They're not just here to show “civilized” city / state dwellers which jungle plants may cure cancer. They maintain the cultural and genetic diversity of the human species. Different tribes will look, behave and talk differently. They will practice different religions, eat different foods, create different types of places to live and sleep and wear different clothing. This is a good thing. You don't have to like them, or even, be friendly toward them. But you respect their uniqueness, their traditions and their right to their way of life. And you don't convert them to yours. (Thom Hartmann, in The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight)**

**The Defense Department has ordered NBC, NPR, Politico, and The New York Times to vacate their dedicated offices in the Pentagon. They will be replaced by three right-leaning outlets – Breitbart, the New York Post, and One American News Network – and one, HuffPost, that does not have a Pentagon correspondent and did not request a space. The shift is part of a rotation program to “broaden access,” said the department. *(NBCNews.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 14, 2025)***

**Diversity training is futile: Diversity training is a bust, said Drake Bennett. The “vast majority of Fortune 500 companies now offer training to their employees to eradicate prejudices against racial minorities, gays, and women – at a cost of billions. Sadly, recent studies have found that diversity training doesn’t change attitudes or behavior, and that the programs can “actually decrease the number of women and minorities in management.” How could that be? Social scientists have consistently found that prejudice against “Others” is both deeply rooted and reflexive, and can’t be easily erased. Some researchers have even discovered that mandatory diversity training – often instituted as a result of discrimination lawsuits – backfires, creating resentment against the very groups it is supposed to benefit. There’s nothing wrong with trying to increase the diversity of the workforce, and to open management positions to women and minorities. But companies won’t achieve these goals by locking employees in a room for hours of tedious lectures designed to “train away our deeply ingrained, and often unconscious, biases.” (The Week magazine, March 19, 2010)**

**The Pentagon has ordered that all transgender service members be removed from the military. New Pentagon figures show there are currently 4,240 service members with a diagnosis of gender dyphoria, about 0.2 percent of the 2 million people in uniform. Previous estimates had put the number of transgender troops at about 15,000. *(NPR.org, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 14, 2025)***

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**As part of its crackdown on DEI across the federal government, the Trump administration is deleting any mention of the words "diversity," "equity," and "inclusion." That has led the Internal Revenue Service to remove references in an employee handbook to the potential "inequity" of holding on to a tax payer's money and the "inclusion" of a taxpayer ID number on a form. *(The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 14, 2025)***

**Donald Trump has been back in office only a week, said The Minnesota Star Tribune in an editorial, but he's already "wiped out" a half-century of "gains that had made America a more just place." First, the president signed an executive ordere demanding the termination, within 60 days, of all diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs in the federal government. A day later, hisOffice of Personnel Management ordered agency heads to shutter DEI programs immedietely, place all workers involved on indefinite leave, and, in an Orwellian flourish, to report anyone trying to escape the axe by removing the term "DEI" from their job title. Trump'a assault on federal DEI programs is "no great surprise," said Ed Kilkgore in New York magazine. But his "anti-woke" ambitions go "far beyond" that. Trump also rescinded Presidnet Lyndon Johnson's 1965 executive order banning employment discrimination by federal contractors, and replaced it with one ordering DEI investigations into major private comnpanies and nonprofits. The landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act remains in place, for now. But it may not be long before "MAGA folk" decide that it, too, offends their vision of "meritocracy" as Trump "opens the door to Jim Crow's return. *(The Week magazine, February 7, 2025)***

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**Longtime Donald Teump aide Stephen Miller hs been "filing dozens of legal actions against 'woke' corporations," while activist Christopher Rufo was recently invited to Mar-a-Lago to discuss his plan to punish universities that have diversity programs. Trump is also likely to revive his first-term ban on federal dollars for companies with DEI and his rip line inviting employees to inform on their bossess. The "war on woke America" has just begun. *(The Week magazine, December 13, 2024)***

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