

The Passy Press

Letter to the Editor

From: Mike Wyly pv157@undisclosed.com
To: Gardiner Nick enpg@thepassypress.com
Date: January 16, 2016 at 6:01:39 PM GMT+1
Subject: RE: On Keeping the Faith: Government *by the People*

Dear Sir,

Joseph Novitski's case for national service as a means of curtailing oligarchal control over National policy, offers a large step in the right direction. Manipulation of Government through multi-million dollar Political Action Committees (P.A.C.'s) and like ploys run effectively counter to the desires of the electorate and threaten democracy, itself.

Military service stood through the 20th century as the equalizer that brought Americans, rich and poor, together as a society devoid of political class separation. From the time Harry Truman replaced F.D.R. when I was five through to the election of Bill Clinton in 1996 when I was fifty-six, every President was a military veteran along with a significant number of U.S. Senators and Congressmen. How things have changed!

It was 1957 when I left my all-college-educated family at age seventeen and joined the Marines. My first of a multitude of eye-opening discoveries was that there were males my age who needed to be taught how to tie a neck-tie! And they were as smart as I was and smarter! I showed a couple of them how to tie a "Windsor" and we were thenceforth bonded! Like revelations proliferated from there.

William Manchester wrote most eloquently on how shared military service in his personal experience as a Marine in World War 2 brought "the classes" together:

"No strings were being pulled for anybody; the four Roosevelt brothers were in uniform. The sons of Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's closest adviser -and Leverett Saltonstall, one of our most powerful Senators,--served in the Marine Corps as enlisted men and were killed in action."(Manchester, William; *Goodbye, Darkness: A Memoire of the Pacific War*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1980).

One caveat: were we to implement Mr. Novitski's proposal for national service, planting trees or cleaning up parks through serving in war, an issue not to be forgotten is that few endeavors are on a plane with military service in terms of *honor*. Yet to make the military the exclusive way to serve is not realistic either, for reasons also underlined by Manchester: "In 1940 two out of every five draftees were rejected", he writes, "most of them victims of malnutrition." (Manchester, *Ibid.*)

The large number of physical disqualifications in 1940 were a manifestation of the depression. My current-day Marine recruiter-friends tell me that today the problem is over-eating, under-exercise, and flab. In either case, all cannot and should not wear the uniform. We just need to use care not to make avoidance of military service a "loophole" for the less patriotic.

But that can be done. Volunteers in hospitals and like health-related endeavors and work to help veterans are among several callings that could be honorably fulfilled by obligatory national service on the part of those unqualified for the military.

Something *must* be done. The oligarchy to which Mr. Novitski refers is an outgrowth of human nature. Humans, given power, become greedy to retain it. This is a major thesis in John Adams's and James Madison's writings, so basic to the principles upon which they framed our Constitution. Government by an elite class is the very antithesis of Government by the People and all for which our nation stands. The tyranny of a "ruling class" lurks and will continue to lurk. Every generation must successively stand against it.

Middle class, upper and lower class; these terms are to be eschewed in reference to the United States of America where no "class" of people is to be recognized as lower or upper. On the contrary, "We the People" all of us, serve together, to "secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity"!

Sincerely,

Mike Wyly

Colonel Michael D. Wyly USMC (Ret) U.S. Naval Academy Class of 1962 and Executive Director, CEO and Founder of The Bossov Ballet Theater in Maine