

Circa 1905

American philosophers William James and John Dewey develop intellectual foundations for service-based learning.

1910

American philosopher William James envisions non-military national service in his essay "The Moral Equivalent War"

"The Moral Equivalent of War" essay is an allegedly monumental ditty, and a founding building block for the concept of "service learning", as it is embodied in today's NCSC and the GIVE Act. As a matter of fact, the NCSC cheerfully lists the GIVE Act as one of their legislative achievements right on their home page. In other places, the essay is claimed to be "based on a speech delivered at Stanford University in 1906, is the origin of the idea of organized national service. The line of descent runs directly from this address to the depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps to the Peace Corps, VISTA, and AmeriCorps." AmeriCorps is what the GIVE Act seeks to enlarge and further empower.

So what of William James and his mighty essay? Like all else Mr. James gave birth to with his cumbrous brain, it is quite pointy headed and longwinded. It can be read in full by the interested at [www.des.emory.edu/mfp/moral.html](http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/moral.html). But here's the gist of it for the less than interested; "War is hideous and must come to an end some day. But we can't be wimps about it, because the brutes among us insist it is an essential part of being a true man. War is hideous in all but one respect. It is really good at kicking the childishness out of people. It is really good for organizing and centralizing. I think we need to create pseudo-wars where people don't die, so we can use this positive element of war to help us centralize power in the hands of the unbrutish, like myself, for the good of all mankind." That really is about it. This rather juvenile concept is more fully documented in such books as Johan Goldberg's *Liberal Fascism*.

We are full to the gills with these pseudo-wars in this liberal-socialist American society we presently live in, are we not? As Mr. James says in this article, H.G. Wells puts it best:

"In many ways military organization is the most peaceful of activities. When the contemporary man steps from the street, of clamorous insincere advertisement, push, adulteration, underselling and intermittent employment into the barrack-yard, he steps on to a higher social plane, into an atmosphere of service and cooperation and of infinitely more honorable emulations. Here at least men are not flung out of employment to degenerate because there is no immediate work for them to do. They are fed a drilling and training for better services. Here at least a man is supposed to win promotion by self-forgetfulness and not by self-seeking. And beside the feeble and irregular endowment of research by commercialism, its little shortsighted snatches at profit by innovation and scientific economy, see how remarkable is the steady and rapid development of method and appliances in naval and military affairs! Nothing is more striking than to compare the progress of civil conveniences which has been left almost entirely to the trader, to the progress in military apparatus during the last few decades. The house-appliances of today, for example, are little better than they were fifty years ago. A house of today is still almost as ill-ventilated, badly heated by wasteful fires, clumsily arranged and furnished as the house of 1858. Houses a couple of hundred years old are still satisfactory places of residence, so little have our standards risen. But the rifle or battleship of fifty years ago was beyond all comparison inferior to those we now possess; in power, in speed, in convenience alike. No one has a use now for such superannuated things."

This alone is beneficial from war for the pointy headed cowards. Not that war is ever a self-sacrificial endeavor to save other human beings from servitude or death at the hands of tyranny. True, very often that is not the case, but sometimes it is. The disembodied concept of war though is much more about being "drilled and trained for better services." So all one needs is to be "drilled and trained" without the war, and then one may magically possess "martial virtues".

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