

Poppies, Propaganda, and Remembrance

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This Remembrance Day there will be no poppy to sit on my lapel. There will be no emotional petition for lasting violence and barbarism, no symbolic acceptance and consent. The bloody conflicts that are instigated through political determination of nations, which use the emotional appeal of “democracy” and “freedom”, are part of the overarching and intelligent propaganda PR campaign, endorsed by the private interests that ultimately profit from the death and malevolence of war. In “remembrance” we hid our shame and participation of the brutality and utter destruction and barbarism that is erected through warfare, wars that are never just. If we truly intend to “remember”, then why do we continue to war?

Canada supports these illegal invasions and occupations. We deal arms to oppressive regimes; Saudi Arabia is a recipient of Canadian armored carriers, in a [deal worth](#) \$15 billion. Here, no media pundit or newspaper takes action to expose Saudi Arabian state human rights abuses, which includes beheadings, violently dispersing protesters, state religious extremism, Gestapo style police, and now is currently engaged in [bombing Yemen](#), killing thousands. What few headlines or stories are reported on, are regulated to the back pages and inner bowels of our corporate medias webpages – minimized. During the federal election it was quickly dropped as [an issue](#), Canadians were made to believe that somehow believe Saudi Arabia are moderates in the region. Our allies are just as brutal and venomous as our alleged enemies in Syria, Iraq, or Russia.

The poppy has now been coopted. Its image and meaning defiled and distorted into a placid and thoughtless appeal to authority, unquestioning and unwavering subservience to an authority that is unchallenged and righteous, with an ability to justify and continue violent policies and military actions in the mostly third world regions. The media and academic institutions that are responsible to hold our government in check are silent. During the federal election, much could have been made about our allies such as Saudi Arabia and their stomping of human rights, but they are allies and we would be right to stay silent.

When “we remember” & “lest we forget” the lives lost in our brutal wars we now largely honor only our veterans, the focus is intentionally narrowed. While predominantly honoring our vets we are distracted from criticizing the political actions that affected them so disastrously, distracting from the most important questions, slogans are used that no one understands, because they mean nothing. You will not hear “We remember – the illegal invasion and occupation that killed thousands” or “Lest We Forget – the thousands of murdered and brutalized from horrid bombing campaigns”. Lost are the names and faces of dead mothers and children of far away lands, the corporate media glossing over them or omitting them completely, unworthy of description and identity. Only worthy victims are to be known, our veterans and the pain their families endure, for they are the only humans affected so grievously by conflict; and victims of our enemies, for surely we demand continued reasons to war. Our victims however, will be ghosts and their faces will be

obfuscated. Their stories and families will not be known and written about, our leaders will not condemn the murderers and we will not levy justice on the war crimes committed by our side – our intentions are noble.

The international laws we defile are not mentioned, the standards we protest others shall follow are not to be held against us. Our clients are brutal dictators and their crimes that are committed in our name and in the image of our country will be hidden from public discussion. How just are we, when we invade and occupy nation states, and murder their citizens? Or when we deliver cluster bombs and other heavy munitions to lands already [despotic and war torn](#)?

We are distracted by emotional appeals from our masters and thusly complicate in support for illegal invasions and occupations, additionally the media leading up to the invasion of Iraq, for example, was [absent in](#) any critical analysis of the governments “facts and evidence” for military action, an invasion that was predicated on a lie. Come Remembrance Day, there will reside still no critique or reference of the illegality of these invasions and military actions, the very actions that leave many more civilians injured or dead. Why is justice only for our enemies?

American veterans returning home are facing increased challenges of access to care and reports suggest an epidemic is occurring amongst US veterans, [suicide rates](#) have risen that affect both old and young veterans, the high number of suicide deaths should be alarming, this should be our call to arms to end this insanity. Instead national issues will be the “war on Christmas” or “what color a dress is” which dominate talking arenas and pulpits. Canada faces a parallel crisis, with many vets confronting PTSD symptoms, combat injuries, and a health care, National Defense Department, and Veterans Affairs system that is unprepared or unable to provide accurate and reliable data concerning veterans statistics, there are now more suicide deaths [compared to](#) combat deaths. Where is the outrage, and where is the discussion? Are we *really* “supporting our troops”?

The red poppies ironically enough are in abundance in Afghanistan, the heroin trade skyrocketing since the US led invasion in 2001. Under Taliban rule, opium production was outlawed. Post 9/11 saw the US and its allies invade and occupy Afghanistan, the pretext and intention was to annihilate those connected to Al Qaeda in a swift and brutal show of force and revenge, the cowboy rounding up his posse to unleash hell upon the “evil doers”. Now producing [90 percent](#) of the world’s opium, Afghanistan has evolved into a narco state. Even though the Taliban have been largely defeated, displaced, and removed in most parts of the country, the drug lords are now able to reap billions in profit, war still reigns supreme in Afghanistan and all under the seemingly auspicious observation of US led NATO security forces. The US backed Afghan government alleged to have many connections with opium producers and drug money paves the way for bribes and police protection. Pablo Escobar and other infamous South American drug lords would be in awe. With marginal security provided to Afghan civilians by US led forces, so too is security given to the Narco Lords.

The poppy now thusly symbolizes our inaction. Our inaction to hold our elected representatives accountable for the war crimes perpetrated while in office, which in effect, is a representation and reflection of us and our insane society. It symbolizes our inaction to stop wars and military conflicts. Our inaction to cease doing business with criminal and corrupt regimes, which enables them to carry out cruel military operations on civilians, the bludgeoning of human rights, and an inaction that spirals into a legacy of death. One of

barbarous acts, maimed bodies, burnt and burned women and children, and economic and social strife that contributes to disease, death, and degraded health in many parts of the world for many people as a result of our overt and covert military actions.

We have given consent. Our patronage and nationalist ideals used to justify military incursions that have yet to reveal us a safer world, the continuous threat of terrorism and the symbiotic relationship of conflict, war, despotism, and the dispossessed has not lessened. We are less safe today than we were on 9/11, our nation made fragile and delicate by invoking the terrible tones of totalitarian echoes and their ghosts, seen through the institution of “security” and “anti-terror” bill that erode our civil rights. Fear resides where reason and truth should stand, and our alleged liberal media and academic institutions have failed to counteract the imperial war machine. Institutions that should condemn and shine a spotlight on the reckless and criminal narrative of war and terror are now instead thrust behind the veil of “security” “terrorism” “threats to Canada”, these are bland and broad terms designed to appeal to our emotions and ensure our participation. Instead we are to “support the troops” and thoughtlessly shield our eyes from the horror of what we’ve become, the horrors that civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and other third world battlefields experience everyday.

This intelligent propaganda uses symbolic poppies and “support the troops” rhetoric and other narratives motivates our support for the state, its crimes and assurances of perpetual war, war that drives immense profits and fuel for its soulless machine. Our returning veterans, home from various combat deployments have [echoed numerous calls](#) for peace, calls that remain unheard. From US Marine Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic to Canadian Forces Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, our vets expose the horrors of war and we should listen to them, we should stop everything and really – listen.

“Politicians who took us to war should have been given the guns and told to settle their differences themselves, instead of organizing nothing better than legalized mass murder”. ~ The Last Fighting Tommy – Harry Patch

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