

# **What is the value of the study of history and how can it enrich your life?**

*Dan Kellar, beingthechange.ca, Wednesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> 2005*

Studying history allows us to view into the past so we may learn our lessons and apply them to our future. Numerous times throughout history, civilizations have had to re-learn that which was lost due to the arrogance of the present humans. Wars, religious ideologies and tyrannical, power hungry rulers have destroyed lessons learned from the past and written down for the future. The destruction of ideas through burning books or murdering progressive thinkers has long crippled or retarded the advance of the human race. Those looking to maintain power and control have stayed the advance of our race for long periods of time not wanting to see their patterns of beliefs swept aside by new information and a better understanding of the truth. As it is said “The killing of a man is not the ending of an ideology, it is just the killing of a man”.

Time and time again old ideas, which were lost and became taboo, have been resurrected. Scientists and scholars have looked into the past on many occasions to revive ideas and bring forward ideologies that were long ago pushed back and forgotten. The revival of Greek ideas about art, freedom, government, and our galaxy brought forth much change in post-medieval Europe, and set the stage for modern western culture.

Recently however it seems history is once again being quickly forgotten or outright ignored so dominant rulers can maintain their power. Early in the last century ‘the war to end all wars’ erupted in Europe, ended after 4 years of bloodshed and it was promised by all sides that there would be ‘peace in our time’. Within 25 years the entire world was being affected by yet another war of even larger proportions. Since the end of the ‘Great Wars’ there has been almost uninterrupted fighting around the world with

millions dying. It does not seem 'modern' man has learned any of the lessons of our ancestors.

Around the globe art, literature and thought is being celebrated like no time in the past, but along with the celebration is the censorship of these things that is of concern. We must look at past times of censorship and realize those as the darkest days of history. New ideas are blocked and only those with the power are allowed to spread their propaganda. Freedom of thought and speech is much celebrated yet widely restricted as current censorship in 'free' countries remind me of the book burnings of Nazi Germany, the witch hunts of the past, and the religious trials meant to keep the word of 'God' and holy mother church as the only way in which life may be lived.

We must look into the past, find what was good, what was bad, and what could lead to our destruction and determine the proper course so our future will be prosperous and safe. The study of history can and does enrich our lives in uncountable ways, but most of all it has the ability to set the present in the right direction to lead to a future in which everyone may enjoy.