History Is Not Simple

From Jonah Goldberg at National Review, The Last Straw

> *In the post-Charlottesville tumult, liberals have convinced themselves that the GOP is simply the face of institutional racism. Sadly, Donald Trump has made that an easy charge to levy. But as Kevin Williamson notes, this rush to tear down Confederate statues is really an example of the Democratic party cleaning up a mess it created. I'm reminded of something George Clooney said a decade ago: "Yes, I'm a liberal, and I'm sick of it being a bad word. I don't know at what time in history liberals have stood on the wrong side of social issues." One could be charitable and say, "It depends what you mean by liberal." But as an institutional matter, the Democratic party's history on race is far, far worse than the GOP's. It breaks my heart that the GOP has allowed this to be forgotten. But as an historical matter, the idea that the party of Woodrow Wilson, Josephus Daniels, Robert Byrd, William Fulbright, Richard Ely, et al. has been the great bulwark against racism is laughable.*
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> *The simple truth is that history isn't simple: The universe isn't divided into the Forces of Goodness and the Forces of Evil. That divide runs through every human heart and, therefore, every human institution. Recognizing this fact is the first step toward humility and decency in politics and life. But we live in a tribal moment where people ascribe good and evil to vast swaths of humanity based upon the jerseys they wear. Sometimes, the jerseys do make the case. Wear a Klan hood or a swastika and I will judge the book by the cover. But just because you think you're morally justified to punch a Nazi, don't expect me to assume you're one of the good guys.*