

Opinion & Politics

Letters

Resurgence of authoritarianism

Dear Editor:

The just-passed 80th anniversary of the end of World War II reminded me of the debt of gratitude we owe that generation. Not just for their service but for the world they created after the war.

They came home and, with their hard won experience and maturity, rebuilt their lives and communities. They joined churches, lodges, service clubs, and veterans' organizations. They learned new trades and started new businesses. They ran for office and served on boards. In Winterset, they built a hospital and a golf & country club where the annual dues were \$36.

I grew up here (WHS Class of '66). My father, Leo Gillespie, was in the Lions Club and the American Legion, so I know a little about those organizations. The Lions collected used eyeglasses and distributed them all over the third world. They raised money and bought street signs for all of Winterset. If you look, many of them still carry the Lions logo. As the long-time service officer of the Legion post, my dad helped other veterans access their VA benefits.

In a thousand other ways, working with cooperation, compromise and a positive attitude, that generation made this town (and this country) a great place to live and raise a family. After risking life and limb defeating authoritarian regimes around the world, I wonder what they would make of Donald Trump, whose political career is an eerie echo of Adolph Hitler's rise to power.

A compelling orator, Hitler stoked grievances and offered simple solutions to Germany's problems. He blamed everything on the Communists and the Jews, whom he labeled subhuman parasites. After serving time in prison for trying to overthrow the Bavarian government, he and his Nazi Party were allowed back into the political arena, even though his manifesto "Mein Kampf" expresses nothing but contempt for democracy.

In 1933, the Nazis received 1/3 of the vote and formed a coalition government with the Conservatives who thought they could control Hitler. As Chancellor (president), he used the office to suppress his opponents. The Nazis burned down the Reichstad (parliament building) and blamed it on a retarded man who thought he was a Communist. This was the excuse for declaring martial law, arresting political opponents and gagging the press. This resulted in no more elections, annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia, and eventually World War II, causing unimaginable death and destruction.

Like every dictator, Trump preached the politics of grievance, anger, division and racism.

After losing the 2020 election, Trump planned and attempted a violent overthrow of the government. A conservative Supreme Court, on a technicality, ignored the intent of the 14th amendment to prevent insurrectionists from running for federal office. Once again in office, Trump pardoned all of the January 6 rioters, no matter how serious their crimes. He has claimed unprecedented dictatorial powers. He has deported people without Due Process of law. Trump is using Charlie Kirk's killing as the excuse to punish political opponents. He is using the levers of government to send troops into American cities, muzzle news organizations and fire late night TV hosts who expose his venality and lust for power. His denial of human caused climate change could have even more devastating consequences than Hitler's war.

I guess the resurgence of authoritarianism, here and abroad, had to wait until the World War II generation was gone.

—Thomas Gillespie, Winterset

Have something to share with the community?

Send your letter to editor@wintersetmadisonian.com

Letters must be signed by the author. Guidelines below.

Illegal immigration

Dear Editor:

It has been less than a year that we had a presidential election, where overwhelmingly, the number one voter issue/concern among Democrats and Republicans was illegal immigration into our country, an easy 80/20 issue. Recent Quinnipiac poll of voters showed the Democratic Party hit a new record low, receiving 30% approval rate among likely voters, with a 54% disapproval rate, both records from the inception of their polling. Why? The Democrats continue to defy the will of the majority of voters.

Just look at the looming "shutdown" of the federal government, so why won't the Democrats vote to fund the government? The Republicans offered a clean continuing resolution allowing government to spend like it has for the next seven weeks. The Democrats counter offer was, get ready for this, they demanded \$1.4 Trillion in new spending that among other things reinstates free healthcare to all illegal aliens and funding for extreme left NPR and PBS and also to fund the mutilation of confused kids to appease the demonic forces of the radical left. What part of this is incomprehensible to the author of "Brass Tacks?"

Brass Tacks, attempt to pull on our heart's string, does not address the cost of illegal immigration's to our communities, our cities, our states and our country. Let's start with straining our educational resources, having to hire more teachers, special teachers, administrators in order to assimilate illegals. What about our healthcare system? Illegal aliens are the main users of emergency hospital care, the most expensive healthcare and illegal aliens DO NOT PAY for the services provided to them, thus making our healthcare more expensive for the rest of us. We just removed 1.5 million illegal immigrants from our Social Security (SS) rolls that were receiving benefits illegally, a savings to SS of \$600 billion dollars, benefits meant for U.S. citizens, let that sink in! And there are the economic cost to our citizen blue collar labor force, depriving them of the higher wages employers would have to offer that would allow young able workers to raise a family and achieve the American dream of home ownership. And how about renters that are forced to pay higher rents because of the demand by immigrants of housing? The cost to all of us is incalculable.

Lastly, will Brass Tacks also defend the recently arrested disingenuous Ian Roberts, illegal alien, criminal and Superintendent of Iowa's largest school district, with deportation orders from the Biden administration, he only cost our Iowa taxpayers \$300,000 per year plus a taxpayer provided vehicle.

Mr. Roberts and DM School district Board Chair, Jackie Norris, former WH Chief of Staff to Michelle Obama and her other stooge board members making Iowa's school system the laughing stock of the nation, can Brass Tacks tell us the cost of that?

—Frank Santana, Winterset

Editorial Page Guidelines: We want to hear your perspective and views on local issues. We welcome letters with a unique viewpoint that are supported by facts and offer a solution if applicable. Send your letter to the editor to editor@wintersetmadisonian.com. Letters to the editor should be no more than 600 words. Submissions 200-300 words have the best chance of being published. You must include your name, address, and a daytime phone number for verification. All submissions of letters to the editor become the property of The Madisonian and may be edited for length, redundancy, clarity, civility, and accuracy and may be published or distributed in print, electronic, or other forms. Our intent in editing is not to change your opinions expressed, but to ensure your views are clear, concise, and easy to understand. We will try to contact you if we need to edit your letter, but cannot guarantee we will be able to do so because of time constraints. Not all letters submitted will be published. Typically, we will only publish one letter per writer every 30 days. We will not print letters that make false or damaging statements about another person or that are factually inaccurate.

Relatively Minor

Vicki Minor, Editor
editor@wintersetmadisonian.com

Laughter does not have to come from a major source. It could indeed be ... relatively minor.

...

Red Light, Green Light: The Adult Version

As kids, we had a lot of fun playing all kinds of games that made us laugh, compete, and enjoy each other's company in the neighborhood. One of my favorites was Red Light, Green Light. I remember gathering in someone's backyard and lining up at the starting line, ready to begin. When the leader shouted "Green Light," we would dash toward the finish line like puppies chasing a bouncing ball, but then suddenly they would yell, "Red Light!" and everyone had to freeze in place. If you got caught moving, you were sent back to the starting line — like being gently nudged back to square one in a board game. The game was fast-paced, so you had to stay focused and alert to emerge victorious. Those were the days.

Even as adults, we still see red and green lights. Technological advances have given us traffic signals that indicate when to stop and go, along with the red raised hand symbol or the lit-up stick figure that shows when it's safe to cross at an intersection. Like a quick game of "Mother, May I?" — only now the instructions come from blinking lights instead of a bossy friend.

In a rural town, waiting at a stoplight isn't very long; blink, and you're through. But in a more urban area, the wait can seem endless. The other day, I sat at the traffic light so long that I had time to mentally review my grocery list, plan dinner, wonder if I'd remembered to switch the laundry, and remind myself to schedule an oil change. I even thought about bringing along a couple of knitting needles for future use. When the light finally changed, I could've finished an afghan to keep me warm during the chilly fall nights.

By then, I'd practically sorted out half my week and had a whole conversation with myself about whether I really needed that second jar of peanut butter I picked up in aisle three. And then I turned the corner... It was as if the wait would never end.

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Winterset

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