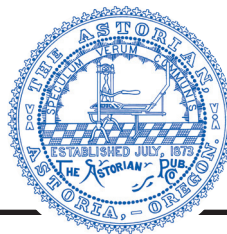


OPINION

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't be fooled

In response to worldwide protests against the horrific police killing of George Floyd, the Democratic congressional leadership has introduced their Justice in Policing Act of 2020. Don't be fooled. It's political theater designed to calm the angry masses, not real reform like defunding or demilitarizing the police and ending their qualified immunity.

The title of a recent article, "The Democratic Party exists to co-opt and kill authentic change movements," by Caitlin Johnstone, says it best. While President Donald Trump is a buffoonish authoritarian dictator, he is not the disease, but rather the symptom of a broken two-party system.

Continued nonviolent protests in the streets are the only hope of seeing real change happen. America is witnessing brutal police tyranny against peaceful protesters. The real looting wasn't by the few angry protesters. It was by Congress, with its Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, that gave a huge, no-strings-attached corporate bailout to the very rich, and crumbs to the people.

Unemployment above 25% is soon likely in our country. Germany has much lower unemployment because their government is paying many workers' wages. The pandemic and the economic fallout has hit communities of color much harder.

But don't look to Congress to save the people. Join the Movement for a People's Party at peoplesparty.org to create a new third party beholden to we, the people. It is time to take our country back from the corrupt political two-party system beholden to Wall Street and the war machine.

MARK ROLOFSON
Gearhart

Individual accountability

There was an interesting front-page story in The Astorian, "Warrenton teen behind local Black Lives Matter protests: 'I like doing what is right'" (June 9). It concerned the Black Lives Matter movement about the killing of George Floyd.

Now I'm just an old man, and maybe don't understand the younger generation. But I thought "doing what is right" meant arresting, charging and prosecuting the killer regardless of race, creed or color. I thought that was justice.

Apparently I'm out of step; "doing what is right" is now reported as standing on a corner and shouting at people — "No justice, no peace." Or maybe rioting, burning and vandalizing in an effort to terrorize people into some sort of subservience. I wonder how that helps.

From my point of view, this is about individual accountability. It is about one man's murder of another. Let's deal with those instances, without threatening the peace of our country.

We, all of us, of all races, creeds and colors, actually have it pretty good here. Now before I get jumped on for that statement, I know there is injustice. But "doing what is right" is to confront and bring to justice the criminals in each instance — individually.

ROBERT LIDDYCOAT
Seaside

Whichism?

George Floyd could have been just another example of a Black man dying in the hands of law enforcement, decrying the issue of brutal racism in our country, but what separates this from so many previous incidents is the needless brutality, and three seemingly unrelated contextual factors.

One is the coronavirus debacle; second, the growing tribalism in our land; and third, the growing specter of fascism in President Donald Trump's administration.

Trump has been fomenting an imbalance of power in this country by repeated attempts to usurp the Constitution and achieve dominance by promoting social discord through tribalism, where boundaries are no longer determined just by race, but political and economic factors as well.

Trump makes brutal threats to withhold needed funds from blue states and those who don't pay homage to him. He refuses to champion testing for the coronavirus, which continues to cause thousands of needless deaths. What people see in the Floyd video is the symbolic representation of how they, too, can be dismissed, immobilized and crushed under the hubris of fascism that viciously subdues anyone who opposes them.

Trump displays these traits, and more, towards the very people he swore an oath to serve. Gen. James Mattis, his own ex-secretary of defense said, "Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people — does not even pretend to try. Instead he tries to divide us."

People are waking up to Trump's brutality. Don't forget the duplicity of the Republican Congress in allowing this abomination to continue. We need patriots, not partisans.

BRENTON KAHLE
Astoria

Looking for justice

With the coronavirus and all the rallies and rioting, most of us are asking, "What is going on?" It seems to me many are restless, anxious and just plain concerned. Is our nation in free fall?

What are people really looking for? The Scriptures say, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." People are crying for justice and righteousness, for firm and truthful and just leadership at all realms of government.

We live in a great nation. To remain great as a nation and as individuals, "What does the Lord require, but to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God."

JIM BERNARD
Warrenton

Famous Anti-Fascists

1.
GEORGE ORWELL

"In a time of universal deceit telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act."



Before writing "1984" and "Animal Farm" Orwell went to fight fascists in the Spanish Civil War. He wrote about the experience (and getting shot in the neck) in "Homage to Catalonia".

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Famous Anti-Fascists

2.
VIRGINIA COWLES

"[I was told] in Germany there was no need for people to have opinions; they had the Führer's opinions and the Führer was 'inspired'."



Cowles was an American correspondent covering Europe in the 1930s. Her 1941 memoir "Looking for Trouble" details the rise of fascism and ends with a heartfelt appeal for the U.S. to enter the war to save democracy.

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Famous Anti-Fascists

3.
Woody Guthrie

"I suppose Old Man Trump knows just how much Racial Hate He stirred up In the bloodpot of human hearts When he drewed That color line Here at his Beach Haven family project." -1954



The man who wrote "This Land is Your Land" once rented from Donald Trump's father. He even wrote lyrics for a song about it.

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Standing against racism

The Astoria branch of the American Association of University Women joins AAUW's national and state organizations, members across the nation and peaceful protesters everywhere who are standing against racism.

Astoria AAUW joins the nation in mourning the death of George Floyd, and so many other people who have been victims of racial violence.

As an organization, we condemn racism. We hold as our organization's vision equity for all. We will continue to stand firmly for gender equity for women and girls, and safety and justice for everyone. We will continue to examine our own practices.

Our organization is certainly not unique in issuing such a statement, but it must be said again and again.

LIZ BARTELL
President, Astoria AAUW

unveiled the Justice in Policing Act of 2020, promising future bills to further remedy racial injustices.

Both houses of Congress are considering the bill by Sen. Chris Murphy and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer requiring federal agents to be identifiable. And Senate Republicans are still holding up passage of the much-needed Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act.

If you want equity and equal human rights, public health and public safety to replace racism and police brutality, please join me in urging Congress to pass all of these bills by calling and emailing your representatives. Our silence is not an option.

ANDREA MAZZARELLA
Astoria

Missed the point

When people hear "Black Lives Matter," and reply "all lives matter," they have missed the point of the statement, and the movement for justice.

By all measures — health, education, poverty, as victims of state-sanctioned violence — the lives of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color (BIPOC) do not matter like those of white people.

If you believe that all lives matter, please join the work to dismantle white-centered systems and build systems that serve our BIPOC neighbors, and us all.

If you oppose the peaceful protest of your neighbors calling for justice for Black people, Indigenous people and other People of Color, that's racist and white supremacist.

KATE ALLEN
Astoria

Demand change

Police brutality and COVID-19 are both public health crises. These issues disproportionately impact Black, indigenous and other people of color communities because racism is systemically embedded in every facet of our culture.

It begins with whitewashed versions of this country's history taught in public schools, continues with marginalized groups having decreased access to things like health care and the voting polls (to name just a few), and often ends in taking the lives of innocent humans. In this moment, we must join together to demand change.

One way to begin the work is to name the problems and enact solutions. Congressional Democrats recently