

# The New Hampshire Gazette

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## The Fortnightly Rant

### Uneasy Lies the Dunderhead

Neil Postman once wrote a book entitled *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. In it, according to our old friend *Wikipedia*, Postman notes that “many of the first fifteen U.S. Presidents could probably have walked down the street without being recognized by the average citizen, yet all these men would have been quickly known by their written words. However, the reverse is true today. The names of Presidents or even famous preachers, lawyers, and scientists call up visual images, typically television images, but few, if any, of their words come to mind. The few that do almost exclusively consist of carefully chosen soundbites.”

“Carefully chosen soundbites”—what an innocent age that was. As Postman was writing, Donald Trump, Jr. was just merely exploiting a few hundred undocumented Polish workers to destroy art deco sculptures on the facade of the Bonwit Teller building to make way for the erection of a gold-plated Ego Palace.

These days it's gibberish that brings instant recognition. Only one person on Earth could or would have written what follows:

“As only one of two people left who could become President, why wouldn't the FBI or Department of Justice have told me that they were secretly investigating Paul Manafort (on charges that were 10 years old and had been previously dropped) during my campaign? Should have told me!

“...Paul Manafort came into the campaign very late and was with us for a short period of time (he represented Ronald Reagan, Bob Dole & many others over the years), but we should have been told that Comey and the boys were doing a number on him, and he wouldn't have been hired!”

Sure signs of an easy conscience

doing the work of a grateful nation.

#### Not a Circus, But a Sideshow

It has been dismally clear for some time now that if we set aside the job description laid out in the Constitution—a little maneuver the nation's oligarchs are always itching to pull—and focus instead on how power in Washington is actual wielded, Job #1 for Occupant, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, is to dazzle the rubes in the cheap seats with Olympic-level grotesqueries while Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan get on with the real work, like deciding what Granny's terminal velocity should be when they shove her wheelchair off the Social Security cliff.

What exactly are the oligarchs' minions up to, as the Geek-in-Chief diverts our attention? Oh, just the usual litany of unimaginable horrors. There are so many of them it's hard to tell which ones are true—which seems to be part of the plan. When there are too many outrages for anyone to count, you can get away with a lot more of them.

According to a May 24th posting on the website *WashingtonPress*, immigration authorities are now tearing families apart and “forcing detained immigrants to wear yellow insignias.” Critics say this Administration has no class. They're right, of course. It does, however, have an ear for historical resonance.

*Snopes.com*, granddaddy of online fact checkers, offered an anodyne assessment of that inflammatory claim, seeing the situation on the border as a continuation of business as usual. The “use of wristbands and the implementation of Operation Streamline has persisted under Donald Trump's presidency, and the Trump administration has vowed to ramp up criminal convictions for illegal border crossing,” *Snopes* wrote May 28th, but “neither the use of the wristbands nor Operation Stream-



DREAMING BIGLY - REVISING THE COVER OF THE FIRST SUPERMAN COMIC BOOK, 1938

line began under President Trump.”

The Right's years-long attack campaign against *Snopes* seems to be paying dividends. The Right's next step will be a Constitutional Amendment establishing that facts and feelings are interchangeable.

The AP reported weeks earlier, on May 7th, that “Attorney General Jeff Sessions recently announced a new ‘zero-tolerance policy’ in which it will press criminal charges against all people crossing the border illegally, even if they have few or no previous offenses. More children are expected to be separated from their parents as a result.”

On Sunday, Senator Jeff Merkley [D-Ore.] went to Texas to see for himself. He attempted to visit a detention facility in Brownsville, operated by a non-profit called Southwest Key Program [SKP]. The staff refused to let Merkley in and called

the cops for good measure.

The ensuing furor revealed that SKP's CEO was paid \$770,860 in fiscal 2016. *Newsweek* quoted Charity Navigator's explanation for the high salary: “the bigger a non-profit's budget is, the greater the CEO's compensation will be.” SKP had Federal contracts worth \$227 million in 2015, of which \$193 million went to SKP's “unaccompanied alien children” program.

The same day Sessions announced his “Lock the Kids Up” program, Ambassador Richard Grenell arrived at his new post in Germany. He recently gave *Breitbart News* an exclusive interview in which he said he “absolutely want[ed] to empower other conservatives throughout Europe, other leaders.” Many Europeans found that offensive, since meddling in other nations' politics is near the top of the list of things

ambassadors aren't supposed to do.

To smooth things over, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert made a statement about the U.S.'s “very long history with the government of Germany.” As an example, she cited the D-Day invasion of Normandy.

Simultaneously locking up brown children and encouraging neo-Nazis in Germany: it's probably just a coincidence. What's really hurtful is Americans' lack of gratitude. *The Hill* quoted one of the President's offspring recently—Beavis or Butt-head, we forget which—saying, “My father's life became exponentially worse the minute he decided to run for president.”

“Ours too!” tweeted a famous person, “Finally, something in common.” We have no idea how Chrissy Teigen became famous, but she earned her glory with that remark.

## The Alleged News®

### We Are Not Ready To Be Rumbled

Nothing quite says “Summer's Here” in downtown Portsmouth like a certain low-pitched rumbling noise lasting nearly all the damn day long. Our own semi-informed and admittedly misanthropic guess is that on fine Sundays such as the one just past, knuckleheads, panheads, and s\_\_heads\* can be heard almost continually between 10 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Any competent and motivated sound engineer could probably determine pretty easily and accurately just what percentage of that time those big V-twins do or do not reach certain decibel levels. The exact percentage of any given day that's mechano-flatulated must

vary, of course, depending on the weather—because half of these *faux* tough guys are apparently made out of sugar.

We would wager that on pleasant weekend afternoons that percentage would amount to between half and three-quarters of the time. Because we enjoy an insatiable curiosity, we're issuing a standing offer to any and all persons who are qualified to do the work: whoever shall take on and complete this task will find us ready to publish their findings and lavish praise upon them.†

Since Laconia Motorcycle Week® starts tomorrow, and the weather

† Such expertise deserves appropriate compensation, of course, but alas, we are in no position to provide it. Considering the impact on our visitors' experience, however, perhaps the Chamber of Commerce would consider subsidizing that work.

forecast looks promising, we're sure to see plenty of bikes and bikers this weekend. We're not likely, though, to see anything like the Laconia Riot.

#### The Forging of An Image

Largely forgotten now, that single night of mayhem forged, for this region, anyway, that edgy image to which today's Harley-riders aspire.

The fun began with a few smoke bombs at about 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 19, 1965, according to a report sent two days later to W. Marvin Watson, Special Assistant to President Lyndon B. Johnson, and to the U.S. Attorney General. The crowd of 6,000 to 10,000 men and women in their 20s and early 30s, “became disorderly and defied the local police,” according to the report, and “taunted police officers with vulgar and profane remarks.”

By 9:00 p.m., “the crowd had become an unruly mob completely defiant of police orders. Members of the mob fought among themselves, threw firecrackers, [and] rocked and overturned two automobiles, one of which caught fire. An unsuccessful attempt was made to burn a bowling alley by pouring gasoline into the air-conditioning system of the building and igniting it. At 9:30 p.m., traffic was completely stopped in the area and some of the motorcyclists were drag racing amid the mob.”

The City of Laconia had become accustomed in prior years to, shall we say, certain excesses of exuberance. Accordingly it had established a Riot Squad in response. On the night of June 19th the Riot Squad moved in at about 10:10 p.m. “They

were met with a barrage of flying objects from the mob which refused to move,” said the FBI report to the White House. Sixty State Police were then called in, and tear gas was used, “with little effect, the mob still refusing to disperse. Shotguns were then brought into play by the police who fired birdshot at the feet of the rioters.”

At this point in the narrative—well before midnight—three and one-third lines are redacted in the FBI report. Order was not restored, according to news reports, until several hours after midnight. Immediately following that redaction comes this sentence: “Approximately 200 members of a National Guard de-

\* The first two terms refer to engine types; specifically, how the valves are configured. The third means just what you think.

**The Alleged News®**

from page one

tail assisted the police in the cleanup operation.”

How intriguing is that? One moment about 100 cops with shotguns are blasting away at some 8,000 rioters. Then, after a mysterious hiatus of about four hours—the proceedings of which have been deemed too sensitive for public consumption—hundreds of National Guardsmen are on the scene and the mob is subdued.

This memo needs to be FOIA’d.

**Commie-Trained Outlaw Bikers!**

Of course, it would be foolish to just assume that what’s hidden beneath that black rectangle bears any resemblance to actual events.

A second FBI report, dated June 22, 1965, citing the *Boston Record-American* of June 22, quoted Laconia Mayor Peter R. Lessard “as having reliable reports that instigators of Saturday night riot were Communist-trained ‘riot-mongers’ and that he has information that at least seven members of the notorious California motorcycle band, the Hell’s Angels, had been in Mexico for ‘special training on how to start riots.’” According to Lessard, the

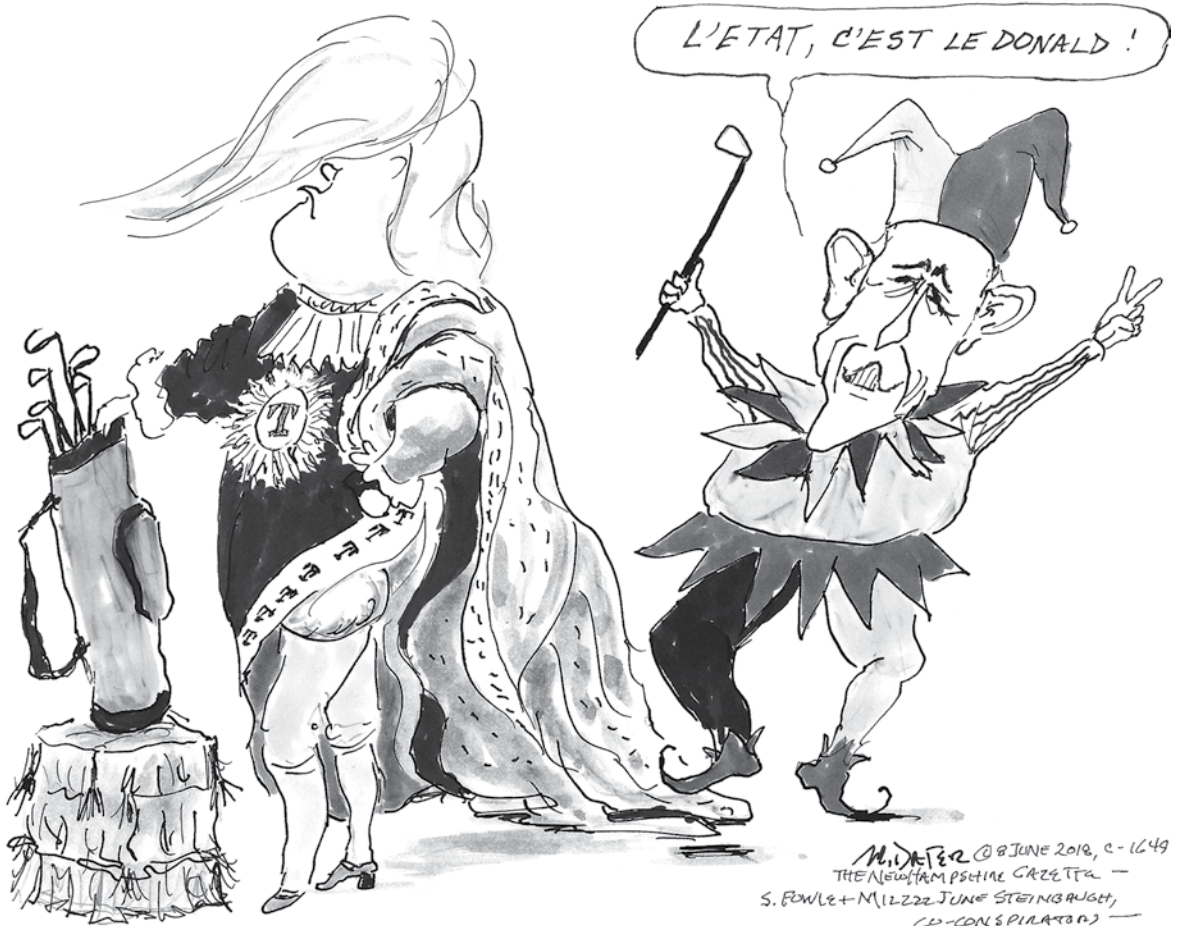
Hell’s Angels were “so well prepared that they chained fire hydrants day before, sprayed gasoline over highways, were equipped with shotguns and chains and passed out paper bills whose headlines screamed ‘kill a cop Saturday night.’”

**The Deportment of Pale Imitation**

That bad boy image still persists, 53 years after it was forged in tear gas, buckshot, and fire. These days, though, it’s mostly a forgery, perpetrated afresh every summer. In place of the truly bad boys of old, most of today’s bikers appear to be moderately affluent older men whose outlaw behavior is restricted to violating the noise ordinance.

Where the original outlaw bikers once created their own machines from whatever engines, frames and parts they could scrounge up or steal, their modern imitators seem to be commissioning a caste of professional builders to create bespoke mobile shrines to their own imaginary renegade selves. Their garb is picked out with equal care.

The originals were truly disaffected outcasts: they and society held each other in mutual contempt. Nowadays their image can be used as a template by anyone with a few tens of thousands to spare. Unfortu-



Having, perhaps, received an inadequate amount of attention for celebrating her graduation from Kent State University by strolling around the Ohio campus with a black AR-10 strapped across her back, Kaitlin Bennett tweeted on May 28th, “Happy Memorial Day! Thank you to all that have served. I’m proud to live in the greatest country on earth that affords us the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness #USA #2A.” Accompanying that tin-eared sentiment—“Happy Memorial Day?”—Bennett posted the photo shown here. Though they hold no hope that anything could ever pierce Bennett’s shell of unwarranted self-regard, the Flag Police bust Ms. Bennett anyway. Standards must be upheld.

nately, an important element of this fashion statement is apparently an audible assault on everyone else: our ears are their fashion accessories.

**An Exercise in Futility**

Police Commissioner Joe Onosko asked Police Chief Robert Merner last September “if there’s anything local police can do to quiet loud bikes.” According to an article in the *Portsmouth Herald*, “[t]wo days later, Merner had a plan in place.

“The chief said his department has consulted with New Hampshire State Police about equipment and training to enforce exhaust law and said enforcement in Portsmouth will begin this year. Merner said Portsmouth police will get decibel meters with wind screens, anometers [sic] to test wind speed at testing sites and equipment to determine if noise baffles were removed from motorcycle exhaust pipes.

“State police will train designated Portsmouth officers to use the equipment and **a checkpoint will be established in Market Square before the end of this year’s motorcycle season**, vowed the police chief. [Emphasis added.]

“Merner said decibels can not ex-

ceed 92 when a motorcycle is idling. Higher decibels are allowed, based on revolutions per minute and the number of cylinders on the bike, he explained.”

This spring the New Hampshire General Court, in its multitudinous wisdom, passed SB 516. Governor Sununu then signed it into law. Its sole purpose is to prohibit police checkpoints set up to inspect motorcycles only. The pressing need for this legislation somehow escapes us. For some reason it didn’t seem to rate one of those cutesy names so often bestowed on pet legislation. We’d suggest it should have been called the Defend the Deafeners Act.

Undaunted, the AWLD quoted Merner saying, during a Feb. 27 Portsmouth Police Commission meeting, “he’s aware of the proposed prohibition while adding motorcycle checkpoints were ‘never our intention.’” The police chief told the commission he ordered decibel-reading equipment that’s the ‘best in the state’ and has two officers in training to address motorcycle noise complaints in the city.”

We wish the Chief the best of

luck. The real problem is that the decibel limits set by the relevant RSA—266:59-a (2015) Motorcycle Noise Levels—are, like the rent, too damn high.

They’re also based on a national standard which won’t change without an act of Congress. Unless lovers of peace and quiet can somehow get organized enough to chip in and bribe that bunch, well ... just hold your ears.

**Striking at the Root**

This audio-blight is predictable in a society suffering from a critical mass of *Homo americanus* whose disposable income exceeds their imagination. The search for meaning is a human imperative—too bad there’s always someone ready to sell an easy, obnoxious substitute.

**The Flag Police Football Squad Weighs In**

Our good friend Patrick from Dover Point has asked many times why we never have any sports news. Patrick, this one’s for you and your pal Booker. As it happens, it’s also based on a tip from John, a reader in Dover.

During the PBS NewsHour, on May 23rd, Amna Nawaz asked

*“Be joyful though you have considered all the facts.”*

from the poem, “Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front,” by Wendell Berry  
submitted by An Oregon Subscriber

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sportswriter L.Z. Granderson, what's your response to folks who say, "the issues that the players want addressed here aren't worth addressing, we're glad the owners met with players privately, we're glad they agreed to donate tens of millions of dollars to those causes, we just don't want politics on the field."

L.Z. Granderson: "Stop playing the national anthem. It's that simple."

Amna Nawaz: "It's as simple as that?"

L.Z. Granderson: "The national anthem is politicizing sports."

"And, oh, by the way, if you really are concerned about respecting or disrespecting the flag, then perhaps you should probably refamiliarize yourself with the U.S. flag code, because you will see multiple violations that the NFL and other leagues, as a matter of fact, do in terms of how the flag is to be treated."

"We aren't supposed to be having football uniforms with flags on them. We aren't supposed to be having a flag laid down flat. We aren't supposed to be having the flag on tickets or on beer cans and things of that nature, all these things that you can find in an NFL stadium."

"So if you really want to stick to the rule of law about disrespecting the flag, then let's be authentic with

it. I tend to think it's more about what the players are protesting than the actual protest itself."

Amna Nawaz: "So, L.Z., what would have been a better solution or better step, in your mind, for the owners and the league to take?"

L.Z. Granderson: "Be honest. You know, stop trying to pretend as if you truly do care about the issues that the players are protesting, and tell the truth, that we believe these protests are hurting our bottom line, we're a business, we're a private business, and so we're making a business policy to help make sure our bottom line doesn't suffer anymore."

"But certainly don't tell us that you're doing this out of some respect for the flag, or that you're doing this, but we still support what the players are concerned with, because you don't issue a ban like this in the same week that we're bracing ourselves to see video of an NBA player being tased in Milwaukee, reportedly for no reason."

"Those two things—just doesn't seem to add up to me."

~~~~~  
**Vets Say "No Emmy" for 'Nam Series**  
Last fall PBS broadcast "The Vietnam War," a 10-part documentary series by Ken Burns and Lynn

Novick. A national veterans' organization is weighing in on this year's Emmy awards with a full-page ad in *Variety*, saying Ken Burns and Lynne Novick's "Vietnam War" series does not deserve a "Best Documentary" award. Veterans For Peace [*VeteransForPeace.org*; VFP], headquartered in St. Louis, with 175 chapters in the U.S. and six overseas, will run the *Variety* ad prior to the awards on September 17th, to generate discussion about the series and the lasting impact it will have if "crowned with an Emmy."

The ad says that because "The Emmy Award is a powerful recognition of truth in art," Emmy judges are asked to consider whether, "In this war-torn world, what is desperately needed—but what Burns and Novick fail to convey—is an honest rendering of that war to help the American people avoid yet more catastrophic wars."

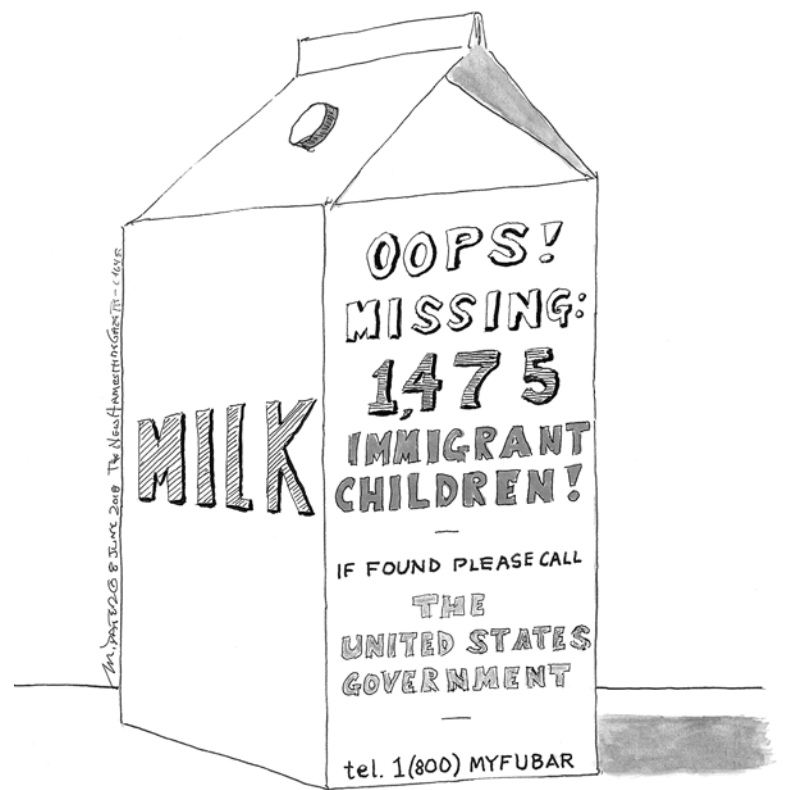
The ad identifies what it considers the fundamental flaw of the PBS series: Burns and Novick "assert at the beginning that the war 'was begun in good faith by decent people, out of fateful misunderstandings.'" Questioned about this in a New York Times interview, Burns admitted that might have been "too generous to our leaders," but he stuck by it.

VFP's ad responds to that "generous" remark, saying, "Even a cursory reading of the Pentagon Papers disclosed by Daniel Ellsberg," (inexplicably missing from this history) "demonstrates the falseness of this claim of American innocence." The painful truth, according to the ad, is that the United States "rained incredible violence on the Vietnamese people merely to replace France as the dominant power in Southeast Asia."

VFP concludes its ad, just above an iconic photograph of protesting G.I.s holding a banner emblazoned with, "We won't fight another rich man's war," by saying that if the Burns/Novick series is "crowned with an Emmy, this defective history of the Vietnam era will become required viewing for generations of young Americans—a seductive, but false, interpretation of events."

VFP is accepting donations to help pay for the ad at this link: <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/VeteransForPeace/vfd.html>.

—Mike Ferner



~~~~~  
**Poetic Justice of the Gaelic Variety**

In the early 1990s a British entrepreneur took an old 250-ton barge, added on a boxy superstructure, slapped on a flimsy-looking stern wheel to mimic a Mississippi steamboat, and began selling week-long cruises up the River Severn from the port of Gloucester. Evidently for marketing purposes, Captain Graham Thompson wished to call his creation *The Duke of Gloucester*. The human who actually held that title, however, declined to grant him permission.

In revenge, Thompson named his boat the *Oliver Cromwell*, after the 1st Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, who saw to it in 1649 that King Charles I, the father of an earlier Duke of Gloucester, was beheaded. Cromwell's offenses against the House of Stuart were but a trifle in comparison to his crimes against the Irish. A fortnight ago, though, the Irish got their revenge.

After a number of years sitting unused at dockside, the *Oliver Cromwell* was recently bought by a resort in Coleraine, Northern Ireland. It never made it to its new home port. It began taking on water just 12 miles off the coast and sank in the Irish Sea.

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**Juneteenth 2018: Law and Order**

The Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire (BHTNH) is hosting a daylong celebration of African American topics and culture for its annual celebration of Juneteenth.

Juneteenth is the oldest and most popular celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States, and for the BHTNH it is an annual event, focusing on a different, timely theme each year.

This year's theme, Law and Order: An American Dilemma was inspired by recent occurrences of racial discrimination throughout the country. The community dialogue will focus on the systemic issues that disadvantage and marginalize communities of color both now and over the history of our nation.

JerriAnne Boggis, Executive Director of the BHTNH, said, "We chose this theme because of the timeliness and importance to not just the Black community, but to our nation as a whole. Through looking back at history we can bring to the forefront relevant topics and have a more inclusive and authentic conversation about law and order as it pertains to all of us."

For more information on the Juneteenth celebration, visit [BlackHeritageTrailNH.org/2018-juneteenth-celebration-law-and-order-an-american-dilemma/](http://BlackHeritageTrailNH.org/2018-juneteenth-celebration-law-and-order-an-american-dilemma/).



Passing by the Athenæum on a pleasant but cool Sunday afternoon our Wandering Photographer espied what at first glance appeared to be a bronze figure of a man holding an old-fashioned folding camera. Upon further observation it proved to be a fake statue; that is to say, it was really a live human—and one adept at his business. The antithesis of, say, a basketball player moving faster than the eye can follow, he stood incredibly still. Until, that is, the gentleman at the right dropped a bill in the bucket. That prompted a deep, gracious, and graceful bow. The verisimilitude of the work was aided by a very convincing mottled-bronze finish.

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**Vertical vs. Horizontal Warfare**  
To the Editor:  
While President Trump implodes and Congress fiddles, Main-Street America continues losing the wealth redistribution battle to the top .01 percent. The reason we're losing is because we are at war with each other rather than the enemy. To know why, it's important to understand the difference between horizontal and vertical conflict.

It's no secret that American is awash in a daily barrage of propaganda designed to counter the voracity of fact-based news gathering. Using media to create false dichotomies and alternate realities, propagandists are enjoying a heyday as they sow the politics of ridicule and resentment among we-the-people. It's important to understand that Main-Street Americans aren't the source of this media-borne drivel. Still, we memorize what we hear like teenagers listening to a popular song on the radio, and then we bristle as we parrot it back at each other.

At the headwater of this deluge is a relatively small cabal of wealthy and powerful Brahmins and Barons. Some are well known, others remain largely invisible, but all are multinational Plutocrats on a mission to siphon tax revenue away from government and replace our public institutions with for-profit entities. They are the Mercers, the Kochs, and the others who spend billions assaulting we-the-people from a position of wealth and power in acts of vertical warfare.

Their efforts may be "vertical" in nature, but the chaos they create is responsible for "horizontal warfare" down below. Horizontal warfare occurs when large numbers of relatively powerless co-equals battle it out, usually to their own detriment and defeat. In fact, every minute you and I spend ridiculing each other's political viewpoint is music to the ears of our oppressor.

Curbing the river of wealth flowing to the top will take a very determined vertical counter-assault from the bottom. It's a battle made doubly difficult because we've already waited far too long to respond. Yet, as we learned

during the Viet Nam conflict, wholesale protest can achieve results in a relatively short period of time. Corporate Titans like their privacy and tend to become uncomfortable when the spotlight comes on and the pitchforks come out.

There's an election brewing and we could continue to revel in our current pacified state of abandon while watching our children's futures slip away—or we could redirect our animus where it rightfully belongs. It's a tough question, but the answer should be easy and obvious.

Please, get involved!  
Rick Littlefield  
Barrington, N.H.  
Rick:

*It is actually pretty difficult to see what's going on in this country, largely because there's so much effort being put into making things confusing.*

*You are clearly working against that trend, and quite effectively, too.*

*We salute you. Keep it up.*  
The Editor

=====  
**Asylum-Seeking Families at Our Border**  
To the Editor:

At our Mexican border are asylum-seeking families whose children are being taken from them and placed somewhere by our U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. I've heard Pres. Trump call it an intended "warning" to the parents. He wants to deter the asylum seekers, some number of whom are fleeing such dangers to their lives that the journey north to our border is their last resort. Yes, they come as families. Who would choose not to save one's family rather than just save oneself?

I've just returned from visiting relatives in Lithuania. New country for me, though amazingly it's like New England, with the lilacs just opening when we were there, the maples and oaks and birches getting their leaves. Most villages have a sign somewhere along a road into forest with the word for "genocide" displayed. Lithuania suffered high numbers of people both Jewish and gentile lost to murder and in large-pit burials by either the Nazis or later the Soviets (who more often



sent them to Siberia to work before they died). Awful history.

Yet, according to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), in the definition listing acts that are genocide, is the last act: "forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." An outcome listed is: "causing ... mental harm." We are committing genocide when we take the children from their families. We did this with Native Americans in the 1800s and into the 1900s. Post 1948, we by now should know this is a punishable crime.

Our President bumbles and lurches in his judgments and actions, but this is being done **in our name with our institution**, Department of Health and Human Services that certainly by name and original intent is not about committing genocide.

Lynn Rudmin Chong  
Sanbornton, N.H.

Lynn:  
*It's particularly galling that many Central Americans are merely fleeing chaos that ultimately was fomented by the Banana Diplomacy denounced by Marine Corps General Smedley D. Butler.*

*The Editor*

=====  
**Our Own North Korean-Style Media Outlet**  
To the Editor:

As a linguist (Japanese) in support of HUMINT operations in the Asian theater for a good portion of my military career (which ended 12 years ago), I spent a considerable amount of time watching and reporting on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (aka North Korea). The DPRK, often referred to as a hermit kingdom, was, and still is, one of the most isolated, secretive and oppressive nations on the planet.

The number one goal of the totalitarian DPRK regime is its own survival and a major key to its survival, for the last seven decades, has been its

ability to keep its people in the dark by strictly controlling the flow of information in and out of the country. All radios and TVs are pre-tuned to state-controlled stations under the Korean Central News Agency and all information is presented in the support of the regime and the cult of personality surrounding Kim Jong-Un (and his father and grandfather before him) which is used as a propaganda tool to effectively manipulate the nation's citizenry and to confuse the world. The regime, in order to justify its actions, has successfully demonized, through lies and propaganda, the U.S., South Korea and Japan as existential threats who are forever preparing to attack. Furthermore, all dissenting voices are publically castigated.

Meanwhile, at home in the U.S.A, former U.S. Army Intelligence Officer, Lt. Col. (Retired) Ralph Peters just left his long held "Strategic Analysis" job at Fox News, describing his former outfit in a stinging resignation letter as "being a Propaganda Machine for a destructive and ethically ruinous administration" that "dismiss facts and empirical reality to launch profoundly dishonest assaults on the FBI, the Justice Department, the Courts and the intelligence community ... all the while scaremongering with lurid warnings of 'deep-state' machinations" and "is now wittingly harming our system of government for profit."

The North Korean people have a legitimate excuse but I would be curious to hear the excuses of Americans who have allowed themselves to be brainwashed and indoctrinated by the lies and propaganda told by Fox News for the last 25 years.

Wayne H. Merritt  
Dover, N.H.

Wayne:  
*Due to natural aversion Peters' in-*

*dignant resignation had escaped our notice—thanks for the heads-up.*

*What took him so long?*  
The Editor

=====  
**Honor the Flag: Support the Constitution**  
To the Editor:

It was gratifying to read the responses of over 30 NFL owners and CEO's to President Donald Trump's remarks at a political rally Friday. He said, "NFL fans should boycott games and team owners should fire players who fail to stand for the national anthem prior to games."

Criticism of President Trump's words ranged from implied to the simple and blunt statement of New York Giants owners, John Mara and Steve Tisch, "Comments like we heard last night from the president are inappropriate, offensive and divisive."

All were eloquent in their support of the players. Philadelphia Eagles Chairman and CEO, Jeffrey Lurie, said, "Every day I see the genuine dedication and hard work of our players. And I support them as they take their courage, character and commitment into our communities to make them better or to call attention to injustice."

On Sunday, particularly appropriate during this Memorial Day Weekend, Los Angeles Chargers owner Dean Spanos said, "I have tremendous respect for our flag and the men and women who defend it. Ours is the greatest nation in the world, one in which people are able to speak freely and stand up publicly for their beliefs. Our players, as do all Americans, have every right to speak their mind and from their heart. It was an honor to join them on the field today."

To honor the flag, patriotic Americans need to go to the polls and vote for candidates who support the Con-

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*"There are those of us left in the  
Seacoast whose histories are  
entwined; we are a community."*

— Bob Halperin, musician, citing his involve-  
ment in Bruce Pingree Appreciation Night



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stitution, freedom of speech, and the right of peaceful protest—ideals for which our lost servicemen and women gave their lives.

Cynthia Muse  
Rye, N.H.

=====

**Old School Angst No Match for This**

To the Editor:

During my 1950's elementary school years in a rural New Hampshire town, us kids had to immediately respond to the unexpected blare of intercom warnings of atomic bomb attacks from the Soviet Union or maybe even China. We dove under our desks with our hands over our heads until the all-clear signaled that the drill was over. This ordeal was known as "duck and cover."

From those fears came the ramping up of municipal Civil Defense facilities, the construction of family bomb shelters and local survival exercises, which continued through the early 1960's high school years.

While concern about annihilation from communists lurked in the periphery, we students never felt threatened at the possibility of being blown away by a heavily armed classmate on a warped whim. The most severe violence might come from a punch in the nose over some ridiculous youthful flashpoint.

All that changed, especially with the Columbine High School shooting rampage in 1999 that killed 15, including 12 students, a teacher and the suicide of both teenaged gunmen. Since then a continuing and random flood of school massacres have taken place across our country, with the most recent assault in Texas on May 18th. Tragically, the next one latently simmers ahead.

Varied reasons for such savagery

have been offered. Flimsy remedies have been suggested by spineless politicians and gun-crazed organizations. Unfortunately, urgent common-sense solutions advocated by students, parents and teachers have gained little traction so far. They have preventative answers from firsthand trauma. May they prevail!

Paul Nichols  
Loudon, N.H.

=====

**Time To Take A Stand For The Rule Of Law**

To the Editor:

It is obvious to many of us that a conspiracy to commit a wide spread obstruction of justice to protect and keep a President from being indicted or impeached is being done right out in open sight. Those involved in the conspiracy are members of a network (talk show hosts who are willing to lie), members of Congress (especially many of the Republican House members), many who voted for Trump (they don't care whether he is a dictator or not), and many of the evangelicals (who show a pretense concern about the right to life of an unborn but no empathy for kids being split from their immigrant parents). If this continues, America will become a Banana Republic. It might be time for Mueller to have a showdown and indict the President; at least the American people with fair minds will be alerted to take a stand for the rule of law against tyranny.

Alfred Waddell  
Marstons Mills, Mass.

=====

**Former Waterkeeper Endorses Messmer**

To the Editor:

New Hampshire Rep. Mindi Messmer and I worked together in the early days of investigating New Hampshire's Coakley dump contamination. As the former Great Bay Pis-

cataqua Waterkeeper, I conducted the surface water testing that showed PFC (perfluorinated chemicals) contamination originating from the dump. Rep. Messmer and I consulted on who dumped what and when in this unlined dump and studied the historical documents on the dump's eventual closure and responsible parties. We followed the money trail to ascertain which taxpayers and businesses were still on the financial hook for a Superfund site that had failed. By the way, there are many Superfund sites in New Hampshire. How is yours doing?

In 2017 Rep. Messmer introduced four bills in the New Hampshire legislature and with citizen support saw three pass and one held over. This was unheard of for a freshman representative. She continues to hold state and federal agencies's collective feet to the fire.

When the New Hampshire U.S. Congressional seat opened up, she asked me what I thought. Should she enter the race? I said absolutely NO. There was too much work left undone in New Hampshire, and I didn't see anyone in the wings who would step up with the same knowledge, enthusiasm, and tenacity.

It turns out that I was categorically wrong. She has done both! Not only has she continued to charge ahead on more protective water quality standards, cancer clusters, safe drinking water supplies, and financial accountability, she has engaged in a campaign for federal office that other candidates should envy. Where does she find the energy? Very few of our elected representatives have the commitment to us that Rep. Messmer demonstrates every day.

And just what qualities do you need to serve in our U.S. Congress? Intelligence? Check! Tenacity? Check! Willingness to listen to and collaborate with anyone? Check! Commitment to science? Check! Compassion? Check!

An actual record of accomplishment and service? Check! Rep. Messmer has it all.

We have the chance to have representation in Washington that we deserve. Someone who serves all people, not just a party or special interest. Indeed, we are Messmer's special interest! Don't be fooled into supporting a candidate who claims to be running a grassroots campaign when they really aren't. Follow the money. Don't support a candidate just because they are anointed by the party elite.

This is your chance to have progressive representation that actually cares about you and your children. Don't miss the opportunity! Remember her name and support Mindi Messmer for U.S. Congress. [www.mindiforcongress.com](http://www.mindiforcongress.com).

Jeff Barnum, Former Great Bay Piscataqua Waterkeeper  
Lewiston, Maine

=====

**Portsmouth Taxpayers Get Good Value**

To the Editor:

While no one wants to pay more taxes, and there is always room for improvement and increased efficiencies, I believe our city is doing a good job managing its finances. Claims that the city budget is obscene or out of control are gross exaggerations, when compared to other towns in New Hampshire. These complaints do have some merit; however, they are the direct result of New Hampshire's lack of a broad-based revenue source such as an income or sales tax. Because our state is incapable of funding its obligations, the cities and towns are on their own and must rely primarily on the property tax to fund city services and institutions that their residents demand. So, when our city attracts more visitors and businesses to town, our police and fire department is asked to provide more services. If they can not add more staff and resources, all of us, both residents and visitors will see longer response times. That is why I support the request of both the police and fire chief for increases to their budgets.

Because Portsmouth offers such high-quality services and institutions, including highly competent fire and

police services, our city is the envy of other towns, which is why people want to move here, and no one wants to move away. I am convinced that if asked, most residents would pay three or four percent more property taxes, rather than have any of their services reduced, because we have seen the value of our homes remain stable or increase at more than a four percent annual rate. More than 17 years ago I moved from Amherst, New Hampshire (considered to be a wealthy community, but with almost no services) to Portsmouth. Although I sold a house in Amherst for an equivalent house in Portsmouth, both priced at approximately \$232,000, my first tax bill was \$1,000 less in Portsmouth than in Amherst. During the last 17 years, I saved about \$17,000 in property taxes. In addition, from 2001 to 2018, the value of my previous home in Amherst has only increased by 25 percent (1.5 percent/yr.), while my new home in Portsmouth has increased by 80 percent (4.7 percent/yr.). I am currently paying \$944/yr. less in property taxes than the owner of my old house.

When I consider all of the services provided to me by the city, as well as the social and culture life it provides, I can not imagine any town in New Hampshire that could provide a better value to its residents for their tax dollars.

Rep. Peter Somssich, Ward 3  
Portsmouth, N.H.

=====

**WRJ VA Spells it Out**

To the Editor:

As our country spends this holiday weekend with friends and families, I want to take the time to remind us all of why we are enjoying parades, barbecues, and for most an extra day off: our fallen heroes.

Memorial Day, observed on the last Monday in May, honors Veterans who have died in all U.S. wars. Memorial Day differs from Veterans Day even though both federal holidays acknowledge military members. Veterans Day is an opportunity for

*Mash Notes, Hate Mail, &c.*

*to page six*

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The Northcountry Chronicle

From South Conway to St. Mihiel



by William Marvel

Samuel Hazelton was the Squire of South Conway. He served several terms as a Conway selectman and as a representative to the General Court, as well as a *de facto* judge in his neighborhood, certifying documents and settling civil disputes that were not worth taking to court. Before the New Hampshire militia disbanded, he held command of the regiment from northern Carroll County, and carried the title of “Colonel” Hazelton to his grave. As though to emphasize his status, that grave lies in the Center Conway Cemetery rather than in one of the unkempt provincial boneyards of old Goshen. The house where Hazelton was born still stands on the Brownfield Road, right beside the one where he died, but no Hazeltons live nearby because he was an only son and his own children were all girls. In 1881 one of his daughters, Etta, married Frank Gardner Cole,

the son of a farmer from Goshen Corner. They lived together for a quarter of a century, raising seven of their eight children to adulthood. When her father died, Etta sold a portion of his estate and started buying up land and buildings on Pleasant Street in Conway Village, on and near the then-new Chase Avenue. Her husband owned nothing during their marriage: Etta kept the title to all their property. Their youngest son, Thomas Winfield Cole, was born in their house on Pleasant Street on October 13, 1895. By 1909 the marriage ended in divorce, and that year Etta took all her younger children to Berwick, Maine, to live with a new husband. In short order she divorced him, too. By then Tom was already out of the house and supporting himself. Like many boys in their early teens in that part of York County, he took a job in the Goodall Worsted Company, in Sanford. In a few years he worked his way out of the mill and

started driving a team for the company. When the United States first entered World War I, Tom Cole claimed exemption from the draft because of weak eyesight, but peer pressure may have produced a change of heart and a month later he enlisted in the Maine National Guard. He spent his 22nd birthday with the 101st Trench Mortar Battery on a troopship, landing in France on October 29, 1917. Training began two days later. Cole’s battery of 240 mm Newton-Stokes mortars formed part of a Maine brigade in the 26th Infantry Division—New England’s Yankee Division. Before spring opened in 1918, the Yankees were eased into harness on the Western Front between veteran French divisions before the St. Mihiel salient. That sector had been relatively quiet since 1915, but the Germans decided to teach the Americans a lesson for butting into other people’s busi-

ness. Early in April the Maine brigade took a severe beating in a raid on Apremont, and on April 20th German shock troops singled the Americans out for another pounding at Seicheprey, seeking to ruin the morale of the newcomers. The Yankee Division spent six more weeks in that sector, with mortar batteries and artillery on either side keeping up a constant barrage on the opposing trenches. It was probably amid one such random, indecisive bombardment that Squire Hazelton’s grandson was incidentally but fatally wounded on May 8th. He died two days later and was buried in the American Cemetery in nearby Sebastopol. News of Tom Cole’s death reached his boyhood friends by Memorial Day, back when that day still served as a time for reflection. He was the first young man from Conway killed in France, but he was also the first soldier to die in the war who had any connection to

Sanford, so that town claimed him as its own. Veterans who established the Springvale post of the American Legion there named it for him, although he was a Conway boy in ancestry and education. After the war the government brought his remains home, and Legionnaires from Sanford’s Cole Post 19 joined Conway members of Ralph W. Shirley Post 46 to bury their namesake comrade in the Center Conway Cemetery. Along with his mother and some of his siblings, Tom Cole lies in the family plot just a few yards up the lane from his grandfather. One hundred Memorial Days later, he is all but forgotten in his native town amid the hum of the traffic and the excitement of yard sales.

Above: Noon hour at Goodall Worsted Co., in Sanford, Maine, April, 1909 [detail]; photo by Lewis Hine.

from page five

Americans to publicly recognize living military veterans, while Memorial Day is a sincere reminder of the valiant women and men who have sacrificed their lives in service to the country. This Memorial Day, I challenge all those who live in Vermont and New Hampshire to join millions of Americans in returning to hallowed ground in our National and



State Cemeteries and in countless hometown fields of honor, and, with silent prayers and grateful thoughts, remember those interred here who light the way for an even brighter future for our Nation. At the White River Junction VA Medical Center, we take great pride

in providing health care, benefits, and services at our hospital and outpatient clinics. We are proud to add our voices to the chorus of those honoring the one million Americans who have paid the ultimate price to secure the blessings of liberty for our

Nation and for friends and allies around the world. Every day our staff and volunteers throughout Vermont and New Hampshire are reminded of the sacrifices made, are able to look into the eyes of our Veterans, many of which witnessed loss on the battlefield, and

hear stories of the courageous efforts of all our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines. As I pause this Memorial Day to honor those that we have lost, I will be rededicating myself to the mission of serving all of those that served. I ask that you to do the same! Dr. Brett Rusch, Acting Medical Center Director White River Junction VA Medical Center, Vt.

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## How Low Can The Barons of High Finance Go?

by Jim Hightower

"Greed is good," proclaimed Gordon Gekko, lead character in a 1987 film lampooning the low ethics of the high finance barons of Wall Street.

You might think that, surely, this Hollywood portrayal is a gross exaggeration, but check out an egregious example of Gekko-level greed being pushed by today's Wall Street sharks.

Big shot financiers have been going all out to kill a sensible labor department rule meant to protect people's retirement accounts from the self-serving guile of financial manipulators. The rule simply requires firms that manage these accounts to put our money in investments expected to produce the best returns for us, rather than in investments that pay the highest interest fees to them.

It's hardly harsh to require them to treat us common customers with basic honesty, applying what amounts to a Golden Rule for bankers. But—oh, howls of outrage exploded from the Wall Street baronies! Lobbyists swarmed into Washington, and scores of lawyers rushed into courts. To defend their right to be dishonest, the greed-fueled bankers resorted to more dishonesty, claiming that the fiduciary

rule would hurt "smaller investors."

Huh? Well, they prevaricated, only by misdirecting small retirement savers into high-fee investments can we make enough profit to give "affordable financial advice" to workaday folks. Again, huh? These banks are wallowing in unconscionable levels of profits, but the only "affordable" advice they want to offer to us is bad advice, funneling our retirement stash into deals that benefit

them at our expense.

Bankers claiming that they have a legal right to profit by cheating their own customers is a level of gluttony so gross that it would even gag Gordon Gekko. For more information, connect with Consumer Federation of America: [www.ConsumerFed.org](http://www.ConsumerFed.org).

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### Fix It or Flip It?

Remember all the political lip-flap about repairing America's infrastructure? Today it's a dim memory with congress telling us there's nothing left in the pot for repairs.

And, what about governmental oversight? We face enormous challenges, but instead of streamlining regulatory structure, the Trump Administration gave us incompetent human wrecking balls with names like DeVos and Pruitt. We may have a two-party system, but the old political dichotomies no longer apply. Today, America is in dis-repair and we must decide whether to fix it or flip it.

The "pro-fixers" are an emerging breed who advocate following science and applying technocratic solutions to the nation's problems. They are patriotic, in that they believe it's better to repair than destroy America's civil institutions and safeguards.

The "pro-flippers" are politicians who would do away with all forms of public-sector regulation and civil service, replacing it with for-profit privatization and plutocracy. Wealthy Fascists like the Koch brothers spend billions annually infiltrating the public sector to achieve this end.

We all know the big bad wolf is out there looking for ways to exploit the many in order to enrich an elite few. And, regardless of what we may think, Oligarchs don't discriminate. Main-Street Republicans, Democrats, and Independents are equal-opportunity targets. So why do we continue to take the bait, buy into their propaganda, and squabble amongst ourselves?

There's an election coming and



I'm looking for "fixers" rather than "flippers. I don't even care what party they may belong to, as long as they get the picture.

Rick Littlefield  
Barrington, N.H.

### The Financial Cost of Freedom

To the Editor:

The oft-repeated aphorism "freedom is not free" is considered patriotic by some folks but it's actually paradoxical. It's paradoxical because true freedom is, by definition, truly free.

Financially speaking, however, American freedom is certainly not free. Thanks to Donald J. Trump, who signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) into law on Dec. 12, 2017, freedom is currently costing U.S. taxpayers \$1.92 billion per day, on average.

The NDAA for fiscal year 2018 totals just under \$700 billion. It represents an increase of tens of billions of dollars over last year's defense budget.

While \$700 billion isn't exactly spare change, such a large number tends to sound abstract. It fails to hit home for ordinary citizens. So, to put that staggering amount of taxpayer dollars into proper perspective, why not apply some creative thinking to the problem?

Try this experiment: stand on the edge of the Grand Canyon and toss \$100 bills, one at a time, into the vast expanse. Do this nonstop, at a rate of \$100 per second, 24/7, and by the year 2240 you'll have successfully

tossed all \$700 billion to the wind and the rattlesnakes below.

Don't worry—222 years will go by in the blink of an eye. After all, you'll be having fun with other people's money!

Alex J. Boros  
Rochester, NH

### Stupidity More Dangerous Than Malice

"Stupidity is a more dangerous enemy of the good than malice. One may protest against evil; it can be exposed and, if need be, prevented by use of force. Evil always carries within itself the germ of its own subversion in that it leaves behind in human beings at least a sense of unease. Against stupidity we are defenseless. Neither protests nor the use of force accomplish anything here; reasons fall on deaf ears; facts that contradict one's prejudgment simply need not be believed—in such moments the stupid person even becomes critical—and when facts are irrefutable they are just pushed aside as inconsequential, as incidental. In all this the stupid person, in contrast to the malicious one, is utterly self-satisfied and, being easily irritated, becomes dangerous by going on the attack. For that reason, greater caution is called for than with a malicious one. Never again will we try to persuade the stupid person with reasons, for it is senseless and dangerous.

"If we want to know how to get the better of stupidity, we must seek to understand its nature. This much is certain, that it is in essence not an intellectual defect but a human one. There are human beings who are of remark-

ably agile intellect yet stupid, and others who are intellectually quite dull yet anything but stupid. We discover this to our surprise in particular situations. The impression one gains is not so much that stupidity is a congenital defect, but that, under certain circumstances, people are made stupid or that they allow this to happen to them. We note further that people who have isolated themselves from others or who lives in solitude manifest this defect less frequently than individuals or groups of people inclined or condemned to sociability. And so it would seem that stupidity is perhaps less a psychological than a sociological problem. It is a particular form of the impact of historical circumstances on human beings, a psychological concomitant of certain external conditions. Upon closer observation, it becomes apparent that every strong upsurge of power in the public sphere, be it of a political or of a religious nature, infects a large part of humankind with stupidity. It would even seem that this is virtually a sociological-psychological law. The power of the one needs the stupidity of the other. The process at work here is not that particular human capacities, for instance, the intellect, suddenly atrophy or fail. Instead, it seems that under the overwhelming impact of rising power, humans are deprived of their inner independence, and, more or less consciously, give up establishing an autonomous position toward the emerging circumstances. The fact that the stupid person is often stubborn must not blind us to the fact that he is not independent. In conversation with him, one virtually feels that one is dealing

not at all with a person, but with slogans, catchwords and the like that have taken possession of him. He is under a spell, blinded, misused, and abused in his very being. Having thus become a mindless tool, the stupid person will also be capable of any evil and at the same time incapable of seeing that it is evil. This is where the danger of diabolical misuse lurks, for it is this that can once and for all destroy human beings.

"Yet at this very point it becomes quite clear that only an act of liberation, not instruction, can overcome stupidity. Here we must come to terms with the fact that in must cases a genuine internal liberation becomes possible only when external liberation has preceded it. Until then we must abandon all attempts to convince the stupid person. This state of affairs explains why in such circumstances our attempts to know what 'the people' really think are in vain and why, under these circumstances, this question is so irrelevant for the person who is thinking and acting responsibly. The word of the Bible that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom declares that the internal liberation of human beings to live the responsible life before God is the only genuine way to overcome stupidity.

"But these thoughts about stupidity also offer consolation in that they utterly forbid us to consider the majority of people to be stupid in every circumstance. It really will depend on whether those in power expect more from people's stupidity than from their inner independence and wisdom."

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in a circular letter to three friends and co-workers in the conspiracy against Hitler, on the tenth anniversary of Hitler's accession to the chancellorship of Germany.

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