

Around the world, fascism and far-right authoritarianism are on the rise. People speak out for democracy while the boot of the oppressor tries to stomp them down. There have been significant upticks in far-right and white supremacist movements making traction in governmental positions. As we prepare to enter the 20s again, there are more and more appalling allusions to the 1920s. One hundred years ago, Benito Mussolini coined the term 'fascism' and within twenty-five years, seventy-five million people would be dead in the resulting war far-right fascists, and Nazis started to spread their authoritarianism. America and its allies lauded the spread of democracy and spent millions building up other nations to resist the spread of Russian communism, another form of authoritarianism. Since 1776 we have prided ourselves on promoting freedom and democracy. And yet it seems the very forces we fought against are rising again around the world.

We frequently look to our president as being the Leader of the Free World, yet we are silent when Hong-Kong protesters plead for support. We are silent in the face of corporations destroying native lands. We are silent in the face of children being slaughtered in the Yemen civil war. We were silent after the Saudi's dismembered a member of the press, a journalist killed for utilizing his right to free speech and free press. The American government plays a critical role on the world stage. Like it or not, the United States has the power to drastically sway international policy. If we move in one direction, other states tend to follow. Encouraging personal freedoms, civil rights, equality, and democracy should be the basis for our international presence and we should not tolerate

I have always been of the belief that one's love for their country should not make one blind to its faults. Rather, it should make them seek out those faults in an effort to be constantly improving the nation they love. One should not aspire to be patriotic to the point of blind loyalty but to love their country enough to always wish it to be better than it is. In addition, America's position on the world's stage as one of, if not the most, powerful nations should lend to a motivation to improve life not just at home but around. Americans can only claim to be the best nation in the world, if not true through normal statistical measurement, but then for the desire to soar higher than everyone else and the continuing efforts to make it true. Land of the free, Americans cheer, and yet what is the morality of being a hegemonic power merely for neocolonial capitalistic gains when it has all the power and resources necessary to change the world?