

PAD Meeting 02/11/26

- I. **6:10 Welcome**
 - A. **Recognize** elected officials
 - a. Sally Fellows, Janet Lucas, Bill Bolton, Jason Neenos, Peter Lovett, Kate Wood Hedberg, Hon. Charlie Chandler,
 - B. **Recognize** town committee members: Sherrill Howard, Jackie Wolff
 - C. **Recognize new members.**
 - a. Peter Davies (Laconia-ish)
 - b. **Considering running for Lang's seat**
- II. **Minutes** (motion; discussion; all in favor; opposed)
 - A. Passed
- III. **Treasurer's report**
 - A. Bill not here; report next month.
 - B. Donation envelopes on tables.
- IV. **Commissioner's Report**
 - A. Dedication
 - B. County commissioner meeting is on YouTube (Grafton County-Meetings); they are live on Microsoft Teams
 - C. Last summer, Warren-Wentworth Ambulance Service went out of business which has caused many problems. The Plymouth Fire Chief has been working on a plan to help with it including grants for EMS services.
- V. **Upcoming events**
 - A. Looking for candidate for House District 6: Rumney and Wentworth
 - B. Check with Indivisible for ongoing demonstrations (Grace Garvey)
 - a. Signs of Fascism roving event
 - i. Go to their website for information
 - ii. Sign up for participation
 - iii. February 25- Holderness Public Library for Know Your Rights by the ACLU. Limited to 50.
 - iv. February 24- Meredith Public Library for fighting Christian Nationalism.
- VI. **6:30 Main Program**
 - A. Joyce- We live in an historically stressful time, as we all know. There are times when many of us may feel that our Democracy is doomed; our institutions no longer hold the respect they had in the past; our politicians have become cowards; and our Constitution is just a useless piece of parchment.

We have invited you here tonight to put this into perspective for us. And to give us some examples in our history that might provide some hope.

Let me introduce the panel:

- 1) John Lappie, associate professor of political science, with a focus on American politics
 - 2) Jason Neenos, Teaching Lecturer for the School of Integrated Liberal Arts and Teaching Lecturer Union President.
 - 3) Rebecca Noel, Recently retired Professor of History and Department Chair, History & Social Studies Education- **absent due to illness**
- **Q1: To start us off tonight, let me ask each of you a simple question. What period in American history do you consider the worst in terms of the government ignoring the Constitution? Why?**

Jason: Two areas of discussion. 1) Federal actions: Lincoln's suspension of habeas; it is an Article 1 power and does not get challenged until 1863 but nothing comes of it. Nixon's violation of the impoundment act when he did not spend congressionally appropriated funds. Again, nothing came of it. and Adams and the Sedition Act.

2) Private actions: overthrowing the Wilmington, SC gov in 1898; a black majority was overthrown by white nationalists; racism was heavily used to spread propaganda and armed militias to stop black men from voting and holding office; this time has the "White Declaration of Independance"; "essentially a coup de tat"; no prosecution, nothing happens

3) The Tulsa massacre circa 1921, and Forsyth County in 1997 a white woman was allegedly raped by a black man.

John: The Constitution was not ratified by the states until late in the 19th century, only the federal level.

In WWI and WWII, rights were frequently suspended such as with Japanese internment camps.

Jackson and the Trail of Tears. He continuously violated treaties and removed the "Five Civilized Tribes". The army Note, that over 40% of the Cherokee died on the march from the east to Oklahoma.

- **Q2: We hear a lot about the Monroe Doctrine. Can you fill us in on this? How does the assault on Venezuela compare to Roosevelt's Rough Riders and other American excursions into foreign wars? Vietnam? Afghanistan?**

John and Jason: on the details of the Monroe Doctrine. There were many changes from the 1823 writing (Spanish colonies revolted, fear of European dominance). The phrase essentially said that if you had a colony already here, fine, but no more European colonies. Teddy Roosevelt expanded it to include US interference with Latin American governments. Further

expansion in later presidencies to create, essentially, US colonies. Chile, Nicaragua, Panama- many include US companies fearing financial repercussions and taxes. This is where you get banana republics referring to, often, fruit companies wanting their products (current Chiquita and Dole companies).

Dulles brothers with Iranian oil nationalism. Recommends *All the Shah's Men* by Stephen Kinzer.

US did secure Greenland during WWII for Denmark; we did return it.

- **Q3: Can you give us an example of another Supreme Court that operated solely to kowtow to the President?**

John: Dred Scott 1857- Dred Scott, a slave, sued for freedom when his owner moved to the north into a free state. This was pushed by president-elect Buchanan. The Supreme Court said that black people could not be citizens of the United States and thus had no standing. Much motivation from the pro-slavery sects.

George Washington did famously free his slaves in his will but only upon Martha's death; Martha, realizing that she would be surrounded by people waiting for her to die, freed them all immediately.

Jason: the war-time court during FDR with Korematsu and the Department of War; Korematsu, a second generation Japanese-American, challenged the Japanese internment camps because he (FDR) had no investment in Japan as an American. The Court said that someone has to run the war, and that is Roosevelt. Korematsu lost.

Ex parte Quirin was a case of the United States Supreme Court that during World War II upheld the jurisdiction of a United States military tribunal over the trial of eight German saboteurs, in the United States.

Compromise of 1850 (Mason-Dixon line fight)

- **Q4: When have voting rights ever been so severely challenged?**

Jason: Jim Crow anyone? Note that Jim Crow laws were never called that then, but these were a series of laws designed to limit and impact the black man's vote. Note that Reconstruction enacted the 15th amendment. In post-Reconstruction, a series of laws, like poll taxes and literacy tests, were created to severely limit the black vote, often creating a stark difference in the number of votes.

John: There were some bright points in history creating some bi-racial parties in states, like NC, which united working class blacks and whites. Rich

white people did not like that, so they pushed white nationalism, driving a wedge between the uniting parties. George Wallace, famously from Alabama, was considered progressive for the time in the 1950s. When he lost from his progressive policies, he became more racist.

Jason: Guam, Puerto Rico, and DC. They all have taxation without representation.

John: Puerto Rico gained citizenship in 1917 so that they could be drafted.

Q&A

1. **Separate but equal?** Plessey v Ferguson (1896) until Brown v Board of Education (1954). Plessey ruling said separate but equal works because equal is in the title. It is never equal. It took years to have Brown v Board enforced. There are always workarounds with gerrymandering and eliminating public school districts.
2. **Citizens United-** Corporations are people? States can say no.
3. **The present moment feels increasingly volatile. Is there a comparative moment in US history?** Antebellum United States and the push for blacks to have freedom. There was the 3/5th Compromise which was morally reprehensible (ended in Civil War). The more hopeful example is 1960's Civil Rights movement. But the parties were less partisan than today. The Republican party did toss Nixon when his corruption was revealed. Additionally there is a snowballing effect into other groups that want increased rights like Native Americans.
4. **Could you expand on the CIA and Dulles brothers?** The brothers were in the Eisenhower administration in order to combat communism and socialism. Living wage increases were seen as socialism. Democracy was protected in European countries.
5. **There is a difference in the history that she, the speaker, was taught many decades ago compared to today. What's with the differences?** Voice, mechanism, elitism: now we look at history with more lenses.
6. **Are there any democracies which offer an alternative?** Parliamentary democracies tend to do better, they tend to outlast coups; American democracy relies on two parties; former British resource colonies copied the British with parliamentary systems; French and Spanish went with presidents and did not work so well.

Next meeting is March 4 (first Tuesday due to town meetings.)

7:30 adjourn.