

ZEITGEIST

“THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES”

SPRING EDITION - 2021

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The background of the entire page is a photograph. In the foreground, there are branches of cherry blossoms in full bloom, with white and light pink flowers. In the background, across a body of water, is the Jefferson Memorial, a large white circular building with a dome and columns. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

AN ADDRESS FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF, LUIS BREA '23

**THIS ZEITGEIST EDITION IS DEDICATED
TO THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS WHICH
APPEAR IN WASHINGTON D.C. EVERY
SPRING, MAKING OUR CAPITAL A MORE
BEAUTIFUL AND BRIGHTER PLACE.**

**IT IS MY SINCEREST HOPE THAT THIS
EDITION OF ZEITGEIST WILL SERVE AS A
SIMILAR FORESHADOWING OF A BRIGHT
FUTURE FOR POLITICAL AWARENESS.**

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*(Please Note: the views expressed in Zeitgeist are not
endorsed by the Fairfield Prep administration.)*

“WE ARE JESUITS”: AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. MILAZZO



The Following is the of a six question of interview with Mr. Milazzo. The interview was conducted by Luis Brea and held on May 17th, 2021.

LUIS BREA:

What led you to go into theological education?

MR. MILAZZO:

I thought that it was my vocation. It's something that one way or another I found myself doing since my youth, all before I even knew what the word Theology was. My faith has always been an important part of my life. My mother taught CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) for over two decades, and I grew up in an Italian-American, Catholic household, so it was always something very common to me. I went to Catholic school third through fifth grade and again throughout high school. Going to Fairfield University is where those seeds of faith were really fertilized. I always enjoyed talking about faith and spirituality, but I remember having a young Theology teacher at school named Mr. O'Leary whom I used to speak with-- not particularly formal, it would just be me stopping to talk with him during lunchtime-- and he was a really great teacher. That was when I first thought about teaching Theology. I remember coming up to him during a lunch period when he was on duty and asking, "Mr. O'Leary, what do you think about, one day, me doing what you do?" and he responded "I think you'd be great at it, just don't take my job!" It really was not until senior year at Fairfield University that I decided that that was something that I was going to do. It was due in large part to the Spiritual Exercises -- the catalyst in making that decision.

LUIS BREA:

Why do you think it's important for students in your class to learn about world religions and cultures?

MR. MILAZZO:

I think that there are few things more valuable. No matter what path you take career-wise in life you are going to encounter people ... who come from different perspectives and different lived-experiences. Those different experiences are informed by culture and faith. I just mentioned-- my culture, my background is Italian-American/ Catholic and that has made me who I am today. So learning about someone's culture, where their roots were first planted, can reveal a lot about why they are the way they are today. In my opinion, I'm Catholic, and Jesus tells us to love one another. So, to love one another, you have to respect them and you have to be able to communicate with them. To really communicate with them, you have to see the world through their shoes and from their lived experiences. That all starts with learning about different faiths, not just what makes you alike, but your differences as well. Faith really is the most vital part of getting to know another person. You have to know where they come from and-- I don't necessarily mean a physical place -- but their culture and what has been passed down to them. So, not only do I think that it is important to learn about the different religions and cultures to respect and love others, but I also think it is vitally important for a person to learn more about ourselves as well.

Luis Brea:

What is the Jesuit stance on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict? Also how can both sides come to peaceful conclusion to all the aggression?

MR. MILAZZO:

So the Jesuits are always going to be proponents of peace. In this situation-- which is one of the most complex-- the Jesuits are always going to put as a number one priority the sanctity of human life. It doesn't matter if they are Palestinian or Israeli. So the Jesuits are always going to look for a resolution to the conflict built on the foundation of the sanctity of human life, the protection of human life. Now, how to solve this issue? If I knew the answer I would not be teaching high school

theology, I would be in a room right now in front of the leaders of many nations. I think ultimately, the resolution is-- and I am very much oversimplifying this for the sake of time-- you cannot have peace without peace education ... So much of the fighting in the world ultimately comes from fear. We fear what we don't understand. We fear what we don't know. We fear losing access to resources we deem vital. So, when we don't understand another culture or religion, our natural human response is to fear. The natural human response to said fear? Fight or flight. I am either going to want to segregate or separate myself from you, or I am going to want to destroy you. We are seeing that, and have seen that, in this situation. So how do we solve it? I don't think that there is any quick solution. It has to start with the youth and educating them with peace education. Not necessarily saying be passive, I mean most of the people who fought for justice were not passive; but, teaching young Palestinian and Israeli boys and girls to respect each other's faith or culture. I mean, there are even textbooks at the moment that teach these children that their enemy lives only a few miles away from them -- that their neighbors are the root cause of their suffering and struggles. Until you stop that, there is never going to be peace there. So you have to have that peaceful education. Again, this situation is so complex, and I would probably need a whole year to talk about this. But to summarize: the Jesuits are always going to be on the side of defending the sanctity of human life.

LUIS BREA:

Should the Church be more of a traditional system or a progressive body?

MR. MILAZZO:

Yes, the Jesuits have always been on the front lines with regard to change in the Church. You go back to the Council of Trent and you see the Jesuits, who were only just a few years old when they performed a role in that council. The Holy Spirit, among many other roles, moves to preserve Tradition while allowing change with changing times when necessary. Whatever "builds up the Church," so to speak. The Church sees itself today as not separate from the world, but operating within it. The goal is to meet the people of God in their own situation. So, should the church completely change in order to relate to the people of the world? Not necessarily. When certain traditions and values are changed, you lose the identity of the Church. So, the Church should preserve certain traditions. For example, as I mentioned before, the protection and sanctity of human life are things that Jesus talked about all the time; of course, we can't change that. The

defense of the poor and marginalized, going to meet the people who are in need and serving them where they are, celebrating the Sacraments -- these things cannot change. But there are also some things that the Church should be allowed to alter. I have been blessed with being able to celebrate Mass in several different countries throughout the world and there are few Masses where the Mass is celebrated in one country in the same way as it is in another. The personality and culture come through. I think back to immersion trips through Prep to Ecuador that I have been on and seeing how the Ecuadorians celebrate Mass, which is different from how I celebrated Mass with the Filipinos when I was in college, or in my own Italian-American, Catholic community growing up. Wherever you go, the Church is meeting the people where they are and using the natural gifts and talents of their cultures to reach the people. The Church pre-Vatican II did have advantages -- that, no matter where you were in the world, you'd celebrate Mass the same as your sisters and brothers on the opposite side of the globe. There's unity in that, there is value to that, but at the same time, there is something great about post-Vatican II where people are able to hear the word of God in their own language. In that way, the Church allowing change was ultimately advantageous. The Holy Spirit was at work there. You have to be able to meet people where they are, but as we change, we must not be tempted to try to change the teachings taught by Christ Himself.

Luis Brea:

How can underclassmen begin to make their mark at Prep?

MR. MILAZZO:

Get involved, and I know it is a cliché answer but taking a part in a new student organization or even starting your own is a great way to become a leader. Every club at Prep is required to host an event to talk about what their club is all about and connect with the rest of the Prep community. That is one of the best ways to become a leader in our community. Do we have fantastic athletic leaders at Prep? Absolutely, no doubt, but that is a different type of leadership. Underclassmen often hold themselves back; their teachers see in them great talent and potential, but sometimes underclassmen tell themselves that it's not their time and place, which is nonsense. Take the first step towards that leadership role and get to know your teachers, who will elevate you once they see your potential. Teachers at Prep are always looking for future leaders to help the student body, students just have to take that first step.

SIMPLICITY AND THE PANDEMIC

BY: LUIS BREA '23

As Coronavirus cases drop after the second curve, the phrase “back to normal” has re-entered conversations about politics. I reject this idea. The pandemic has not caused issues, so much as it has revealed them. Therefore, these issues will not disappear when the pandemic ends.

In healthcare, stories of many going bankrupt circulated; in police reform, protests after cases of police brutality were revealed; in immigration, images of mistreatment of migrant children leaked to the press. These newly revealed truths are painful to confront, but they deserve our attention and efforts to fix them.



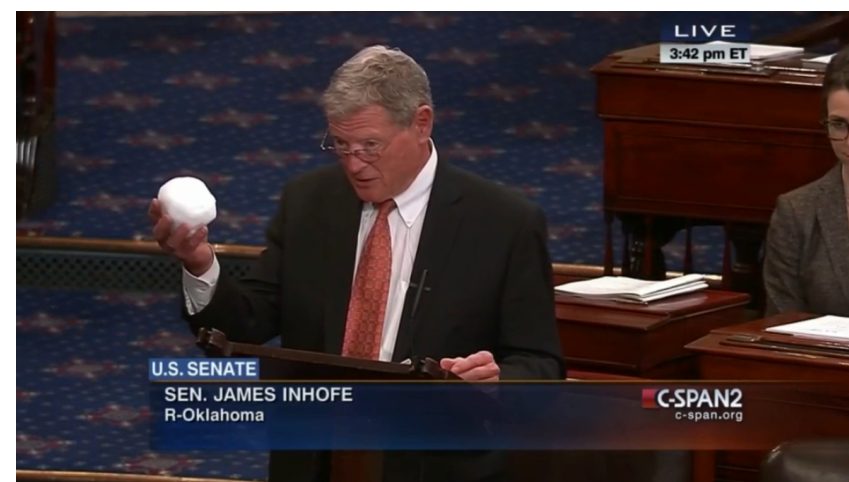
Migrant children at a detention center. Hundreds of migrant children detained at the border have tested positive for COVID-19.

To begin the process of making just reform to our laws though, we have to take a look at the source. Specifically, one core issue in American politics has been exposed during the pandemic: the disregarding of complex truths for simple talking points.

Snowballs & Senators

On June 2, 2016, 11:50 AM, Sen. James Inhofe walked into the Senate chamber and proceeded to deny climate science. His evidence? A snowball he proudly showed CSPAN cameras.^[1]

This political stunt, while funny on the surface, ultimately had some scary implications about how we talk about politics. Of course disagreement in politics is an American tradition. However, Sen. Inhofe's pivotal snowball stunt opened the door to even simpler, more polarizing talking points to be thrown around.



Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) holding a snowball in the Senate chamber

The Fauci Feuds

Four years later, nearly every objective truth is under attack. The most glaring example of this is the mask debate. Despite the consensus of the World Health Organization^[2] and the Center for Disease Control^[3] on the efficacy of masks, according to Newsweek “only 51 percent of people said they wear a facial covering in public.”^[4]

To understand why so many do not understand the importance of mask wearing despite the science, just look to the talking points of high ranking political figures. For example, Sen. Rand Paul frequently spars with the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and Jesuit, Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Most recently, Sen. Paul challenged mask wearing in a public hearing without accounting for coronavirus variants.^[5] These talking points damage the safety of Sen.

Paul's constituents and reveal the long standing decay of truth in national American politics.

However, Rand Paul's remarks are merely a symptom of the issue of cheap talking points that runs far deeper than current events. This "post truth" era was not sprung up by the coronavirus, but by the low standard of evidence our representatives have held for years.

"The truth ... cannot be confined to bumper stickers or campaign slogans. "

The truth is rarely convenient for politicians as cannot be confined to bumper stickers or campaign slogans. Nonetheless, the nuanced truth of the intricate issues that plague us today have always been steamrolled by our leaders with dreadful talking points. As Jon Stewart described the condition of American politics years before the pandemic: "when the problems get harder, the solutions get simpler."^[6]

The Beginning of a Solution

One thing that is for certain is the need for citizens to hold their representatives accountable. In Connecticut, our representatives have done a better job than most in providing clear information about the coronavirus. However, the only way we can ensure the right people represent us is through the voting booth, where we have to show up for elections both national and local.

I cannot pretend to know all of the answers, but the need for a better dialogue is clear. "Back to normal" no longer exists. But this is for the better. "Back to normal" implies a time where we were not fully aware of the issues that plague America. With the fall of "back to normal" in sight, we have an obligation to each other to explore our complex faults beyond our talking points.

Let us, then, take the first step away from simplicity and towards better, more complex solutions that work for all Americans. ■

Luis Brea the Editor-In-Chief of Zeitgeist. He is very grateful for the opportunity to develop his writing skills and political opinions with the Political Awareness Society.

For any questions or comments about Luis' work, please contact: p23lbrea@fairfieldprep.org



BLACK LIVES MATTER, IN REVIEW

BY: FARRELL NIVROSE '24

The trial of Derek Chauvin, the killer of George Floyd, has concluded. As a result, Chauvin has become the seventh police officer to be prosecuted for murder while on the job since 2005.

Whilst the country remains ever so politically divided, one of the most prominent topics of discussion is the effects of systemic racism in the United States. Police forces' impact on minorities, and, most notably, the role of Black Lives Matter have taken center stage in this ever-evolving dialogue. After the murder of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, or BLM, had gained much traction and support, but equally much pushback and disregard.

First and foremost, there is much misinformation about BLM and what its aim is. For the sake of clarity, let us venture directly to the source: the organization's home page claims it,



was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer [with the] mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, [Black Lives Matter is] winning immediate improvements in our lives

Many have claimed that BLM is a terrorist organization, dedicated to spreading hate, going as far as to refer to BLM as “Burn

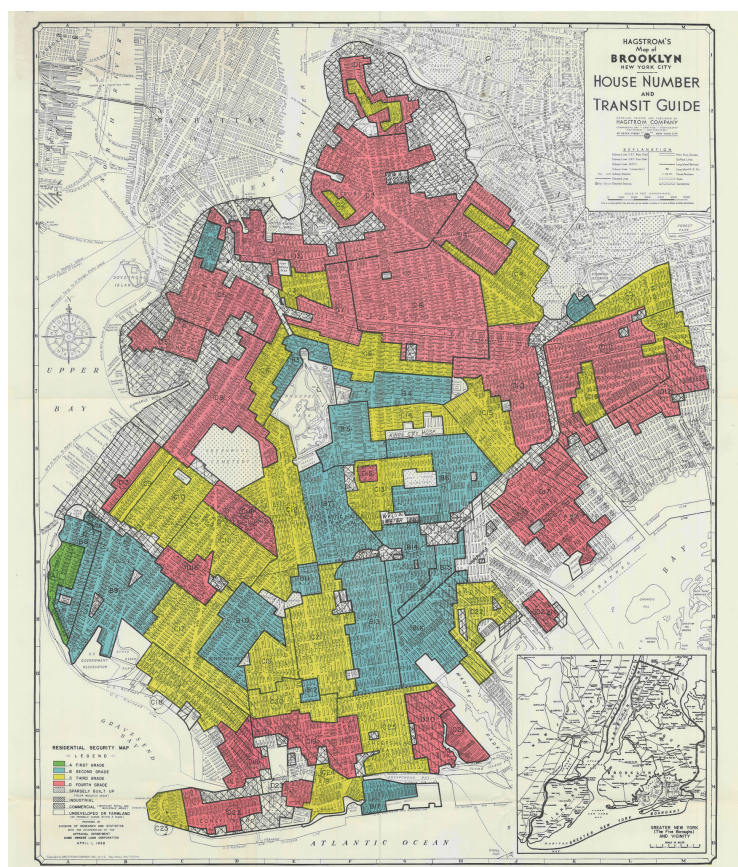
Loot Murder” when this is the furthest from the truth: of the 7,305 documented protests, with over millions of attendees that occurred last year, police made arrests in 5% of these protests, and law enforcement used tear gas/chemical substances in 2.5% of these events. Furthermore, police were injured in 1% of the protests, 3.7% of the protests involved property damage. A portion of these involved neither protestors nor law enforcement, but bystanders who engaged in the vandalism or looting. This suggests that 96.3% of the events involved no property damage or police injuries, and in 97.7% of events, no injuries were reported.^[1] Clearly, BLM is not the violent organization many make it out to be.



A woman marches to the White House with a crowd supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement

Moreover, police forces are enacting “duty-to-intervene” policies as a response to the BLM protests. These policies would provide an obligation to officers to intervene if it is deemed that another officer is acting out of line. They will also be susceptible to punishment for not acting. If these policies were in place previously, many victims of the police would still be alive. Instead, thousands, of all races were robbed of their right to due process as well as their lives. There is a dire need for police accountability, as well as many other necessary changes within the police force.

It must also be made clear that many incorrect perceptions help the spread of anti-BLM sentiment. Many people believe the statement that “despite making up 13% of the population, African-Americans commit over 50% of the crime. This statistic is not only false but perpetuates the idea that most Black people commit crimes. It has gained notoriety due to being used in many far-right online forums and being used by notable figures like Ben Shapiro, a conservative political commentator. This statistic is attributed to FBI crime table 43, but this notion is entirely false; not only does the table account for arrests made in 2019 but only 26.6% of those arrested were Black. Assuming that every arrestee was guilty, this would account for only about 3.8% of the Black population.[2]



A redlined map of Brooklyn, circa 1938

A Difficult History

Many argue that systemic racism is just an excuse for the Black community when that

is the furthest from the truth. One of the most notorious systemic issues was the practice of redlining. The practice of redlining was to “provide housing to white, middle-class, and lower-middle-class families,” and purposefully left out African-Americans and other people of color.[3] Though the practice of redlining has been banned, its impact is still seen throughout the United States in many areas. Due to the overwhelming wealth disparity, it is difficult for families to move out of these poorer areas, hence the lasting effects of redlining. Redlining works systemically, targeting minorities, and is only one example of the institutional racism that plagues America.

A Jesuit Solution

As men for others, students of Fairfield Prep must use our opportunities available to us to help others. It is of paramount importance that we take a stand against racial injustice. Dr. King believed that to be an ally to the disenfranchised and opponent of injustice, we must strive for true change, instead of preserving the systems and society that allow for citizens to be victims of inequality. Of course, in the last few decades, America has made much progress and great strides towards true equality for all, regardless of race, sex, gender, or religion. However, to deny that there are still issues that require solutions prohibits the progress we need to reach our country’s true potential. ■

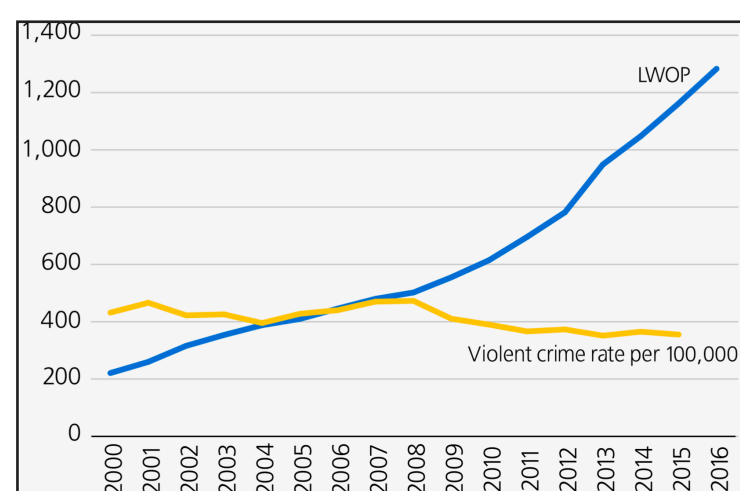
Farrell Nivrose is a Freshman at Fairfield Prep, and is both a writer for Zeitgeist and a team member on the Ethics Bowl Team.

For any questions or comments about Farrell’s work, please contact: p21fnivrose@fairfieldprep.org

LAW AND DISORDER

BY: KYLE ELLIOTT '24

In the 1960s, the US experienced a wave of criminal violence throughout the country with the murder rate rising 44 percent.^[1] As expected, politicians were trusted to respond to this new rise in crime. Lyndon B. Johnson's peaceful and "soft" reply to this situation did not sit well with many Americans. Later Richard Nixon, the Republican nominee for the 1968 election, began the "law and order" rhetoric that is still being used by politicians today.



Statistic on Violent Crime Rates by The Sentencing Project

Ronald Reagan followed in Nixon's footsteps because, for the most part, this language was able to effectively reach voters. Just like that, Republicans had adopted this language and they began winning elections. In the simplest terms possible, what these politicians were promising sounded good for the country overall: there would be fewer criminals in the streets, justice would be served to those who defied the government's authority, criminals would have plenty of time to rehabilitate and reevaluate their life, and the country would be a much safer place. Right? Well, in reality, these problems did not get solved, and this attitude towards crime created a whole new problem that has skyrocketed in the last 20-30 years: mass incarceration.

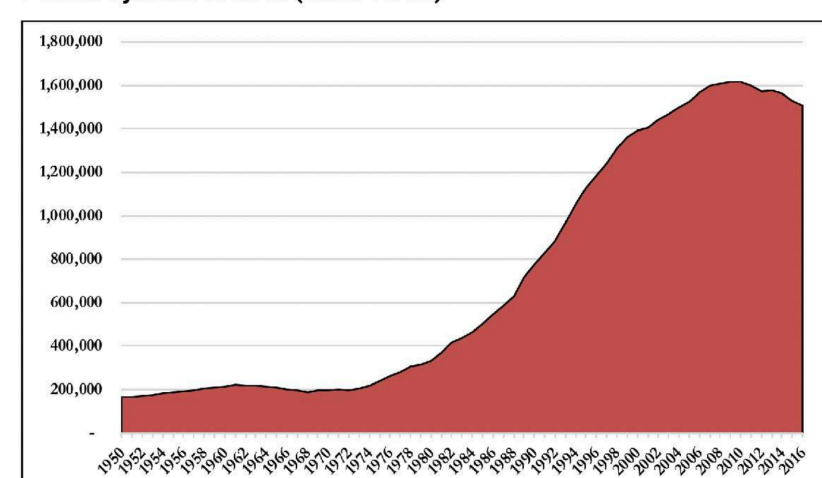
Although the tough-on-crime rhetoric got people fired up and made them show up to the ballot boxes, this was not exactly the best way to go about controlling crime, and the US has felt the ramifications. US prisoners make up 25 percent of the world's prison population while its total population makes up only four percent of the world. We have the highest incarceration rate despite being known for being the richest developed nation in the world. So how exactly did this happen, and why are we yet to fix it?

The Purpose of Prisons

Prisons only really serve two purposes when they should be serving many more: providing a feeling of security for citizens and, as inhumane as they are, a place for people to live when they realize they have no other option.

However, the problem with prisons is that they are designed to keep individuals society considers bad as far away as possible and for as long as possible. Their other design flaw is that life for current and former inmates is made to be as cruel as possible in a misguided attempt to lower the incentive to commit a crime and thus go to jail.

Prison System Growth (1950-2016)



Statistic on Prison Population Growth by the Brennan Center for Justice

What this leads to is a harsher environment both in jail and outside jail despite inmates trying to make a life for themselves. If prisoners are treated like a statistic and just another problem to throw in the closet, how can the government and private prison companies expect for them to be hardworking and productive members of society when they get released? Further, countries with nicer prisons actually have a lower crime rate. Within three years of their release, two out of three people are rearrested and more than 50 percent are incarcerated again, in contrast to Norway which had a recidivism rate of only 20 percent.^[2] Prisons shouldn't be inhumane as they should reflect life in the real world as much as possible if we want them to live in the real world later down the line.

When discussing the US prison system, it's important to include the controversy of private prisons. In 2017, private prisons housed 8.2 percent of US prisoners, or 121,420 total.^[3] While state prisons are generally non-profit and are managed by the government, private prisons are owned by a corporation but are still aided by the government, and normally make a profit similar to how a business would.

The main reason why private prisons are opposed by many politicians and even many large banks and universities is that they damages communities and focuses more on turning a profit than rehabilitation. If they did their job effectively, they would run themselves out of business, and that business is inmates. The Sentencing Project discovered that between 2000 and

2016, the number of people held in private prisons increased five times faster than the total US prison population. The real profit is going to these corporations: In less than 20 years, the largest operator of private prisons in the US, CoreCivic, had its revenue increase by more than 500 percent, from about \$280 million in 2000 to \$1.77 billion in 2017. On top of everything else, private prisons have a reputation for violence and poor conditions, and support for their existence is questionable when humans are being used as employees for a business they did not apply for.^[4]

Although the United States needs to address the large amount of both violent and nonviolent crimes committed, the prisons also have to do their part to make sure that when people do commit crimes, they learn from it and get the help they need.

To end this trend, prisons need to start focusing on enforcing the correct values. This means rewarding good behavior and hard work, helping prisoners find a job and keep that job, helping those with no families to turn to acquire homes and other living necessities, educating them with skills so that they can be responsible and productive citizens who can give back to their communities. ■

Kyle Elliott is a current Freshman at Fairfield Prep, and is an active member of the Political Awareness Society. Next year, he will be the Editor-in-Chief of Zeitgeist.

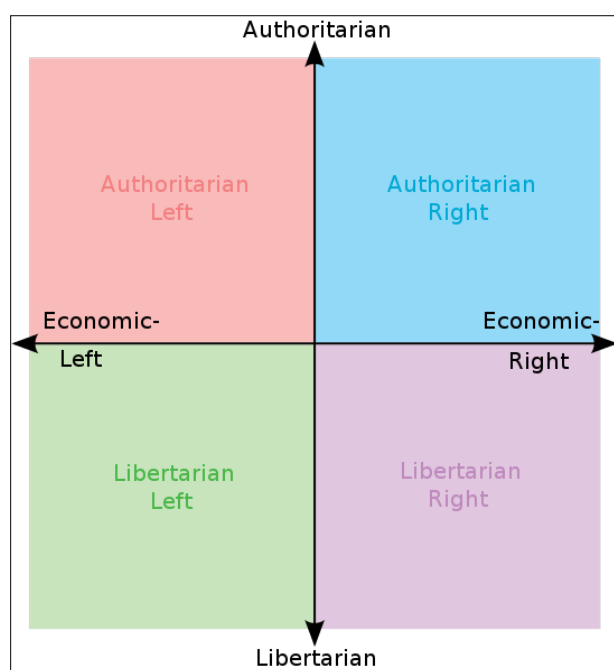
For any questions or comments about Kyle's work, please contact: p24kelliott@fairfieldprep.org

ON THE POLITICAL COMPASS

BY: ROBERT “ROBBIE” JAMES ‘23

If you are interested in some of the many online political trends that have been gaining popularity in our country, you might be familiar with the political compass. This chart has been the subject of many memes, online videos, and even lessons in high school and college classes. In fact, even at Fairfield Prep students in AP Government and Politics analyze the compass during class time.

For people who may just be getting into politics and want to visualize the marketplace of ideas, this may be a very good start, and with a free online test you can take right on their website, it seems like it is an essential tool for anyone at all interested in politics. However, the glamor of this idea will wear off very quickly, more on that later.



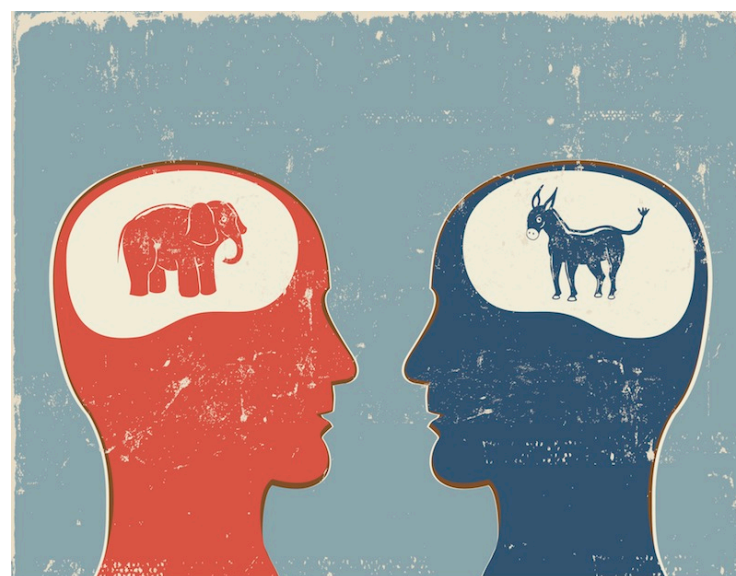
A blank copy of the political compass

What is the Political Compass?

To begin, It is important to establish in-depth how the political compass works. The political compass is a metric created to represent our political views and explain them with a simple image. The compass divides our views into four different quadrants, Authoritarian Left, Authoritarian Right, Libertarian Left, and Libertarian Right. These four quadrants all reside on a social

and economic axis, the more vertical you lean, the less you are in favor of libertarian policies and more in favor of statist, authority-driven policies. The more horizontally right you lean, the less you are in favor of equality and egalitarianism, and the more you are in favor of capitalism and meritocracy.

The Political Compass works much better than the previously established political line, which maps a linear, left-right political spectrum. The political line is inaccurate and out of date, this graph makes no sense to anyone who is politically competent enough to realize that there is more than one dimension to our political views.



A political cartoon depicting the linear political spectrum

We have many views on different issues that may conflict with the binary “left-right” dynamic that the political line presents to us, if you recognize that we all are multi-layered, complex human beings with multi-layered, views, the line must be forgotten.

Criticisms of the Political Compass

Recently, the political compass has been under scrutiny from all sides. First of all issues, how does the libertarian-left quadrant even exist? What is the extreme

communism. Many of the people who claim to be Libertarian-Left are just Neo-Liberals who want more freedom. Many other flaws with the Compass have been called out, especially with regard to the test on the questions, you might find if you are at all critical of private corporations, you may be placed on the left side of the compass, which is inaccurate, to say the least. In addition, it has been alleged by political satirist Greg Guevara (better known as "JrEg" on Youtube) that the Political Compass was created by libertarians in order to astroturf libertarian ideas, isn't that a little suspicious?

"It is nearly impossible to map out your political views with a single chart"

An alternative to the Political Compass

It is nearly impossible to map out your political views with a single chart, no one would ever understand your views on the complex issues that impact our society today. However, if we are going to try, we might as well do it the best we can.

As I have previously mentioned, there is no Libertarian-Left quadrant, so just get rid of it. Yes, I am proposing a political triangle. One where it is Right, Left, and Anarchist. This is a much-improved alternative because it simplifies these Ideas to their core ideas, the right has an order, the left has equality, and the libertarians have freedom. This removes any vagueness involved with what Libertarian-Left even means, and ensures honest, simple answers. ■

Robert "Robbie" James is a Sophomore at Fairfield Prep, and was nominated to write for Zeitgeist by his AP European History teacher, Mr. Donahue.

For any questions or comments about Robert's work, please contact: p23rjames@fairfieldprep.org



THE LACK OF INDIVIDUAL AWARENESS

BY: JACK MILLER '23

In the 21st century, people's lives have become dependent on communication through technology. Most commonly, social media is the form that connects communication around America, the world, and amongst friend groups. This is seen through applications like TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and even YouTube.

Additionally, these outlets can help promote awareness on a variety of issues, be it political or social. However, with the influence of so many people espousing their beliefs, new users seem to group themselves in with others, without much thought; this suggests that overuse of these outlets does not allow people to grow on their own. So, despite allowing for a worldwide community and political awareness, the overuse of social media in society leads to a lack of individuality in regards to political identity.

Social Media, By the Numbers

There is no question that the worldwide community expands through social media, and continues to daily. The sheer number of millions across the world on different sites demonstrates this. TikTok, for example, has 689 million active users, and it is still rising daily, across the planet, as of February 2021, according to Soko.^[1]

Tik Tok allows users to showcase artwork and dancing through short 30 to 60-second videos. Also, it gives a platform for people to advocate for social justice issues, which is comparable to other sites like Twitter and Instagram; Twitter has 187 million users active per day, as of late 2020; Instagram, 815 million who access it per month, as of 2019, according to Statista.^[2] In both, people can also state their opinions on societal wide issues. In fact, 48% of younger adults in the age range of 18 to 29

actually utilize social media for most of their political outlooks, according to the Pew Research center.^[3]

2020. Consequently, with this large user base in mind, political groups can expand their thoughts on a greater level, which can potentially be attributed to the overuse of social media.

“...the overuse of social media in society leads to a lack of individuality in regards to political identity”

The expansion of social media across the world now takes up a lot of people's time during the day. From 2012 to 2020, according to Statista, the minutes per day on social networking sites has risen from 90 to 145 minutes. This statistic demonstrates the ever-expanding nature of these outlets moving across the 21st century. With 48% of young adults getting their political beliefs in this manner, the sheer amount of time spent on social media, in combination with the millions of users and the expanding base, could allow organizations to indoctrinate users, without their thinking twice of it.^[4]

The Digital Divide

With this indoctrination in mind, people will lack the need to think about their own belief system and moral compass. Additionally, users can become so enveloped in these ideas— whether it be

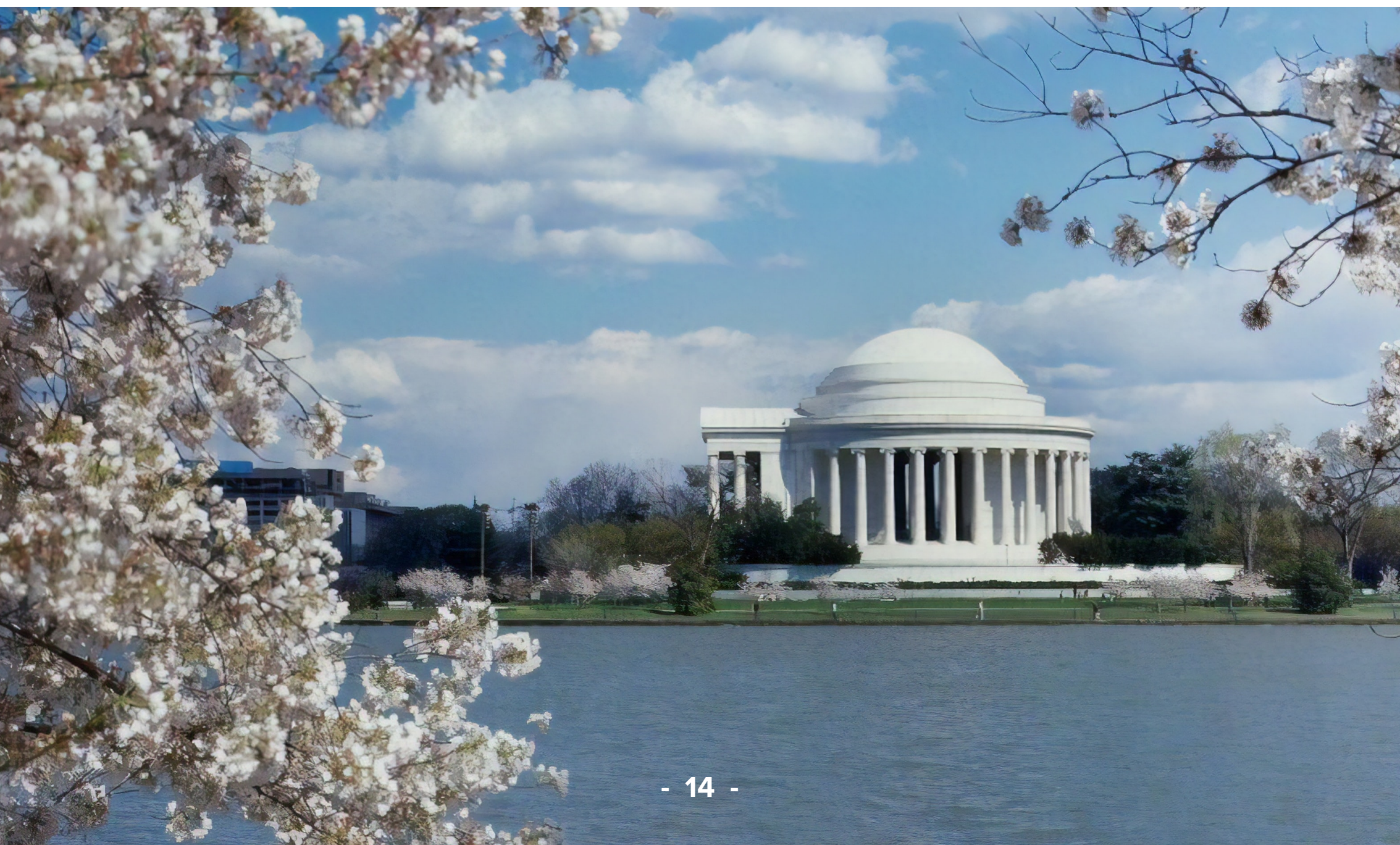
on the subject that they base their beliefs on, and were just indoctrinated by some organization online. In many cases, both deny that the answer to some political issues could lie somewhere in the middle of both of their thinking—or even outside of the political spectrum in general. This all ties back to the idea of lacking individuality: if mass amounts of people get caught up and distracted by someone else's beliefs, there is a lack of independent identity.

Keeping all the aforementioned information in mind, this begs the question, how does one change this, and push for a more individual approach to thinking?

Well, there is no complete individual approach to thinking. People will always be influenced in one way or another by a great thinker before them, or the environment around them; it is inevitable. That is why it is key to take more of a moderate approach when it comes to developing an identity politically or none-politically. Yes, take in information from outside sources; but also take time to think about the implications of that information, and develop an opinion about it by putting in the hours of self-reflection of what was learned. ■

Jack Miller is a Sophomore at Fairfield Prep, and was nominated to write for Zeitgeist by his AP European History teacher, Mr. Donahue.

For any questions or comments about Jack's work, please contact: p23jmilller@fairfieldprep.org



COLLEGES- NON PROFIT OR HEDGE FUND?

BY: JON LOUW '21

This year, the college process has been unlike any other we have seen. The coronavirus caused the majority of universities to drop the the standardized test score requirement (SAT/ACT).

As a result, students like myself applied to many universities- even ones that seemed impossible a year ago. The elite institutions especially (Harvard, Stanford, Columbia Etc) received an unreal amount of applicants. Harvard especially went from receiving 40,248 applicants for their class of 2024 to 57,435 for their class of 2025.^[1]



Stanford University Campus, located in California

In a way, these institutions admire the fact of having very high applicants for very few spots. It gives them the ability to boast the fact they are such elite Institutions with low acceptance rates. The problem isn't the fact they receive so many applicants, its that they haven't increased their freshman class seats to accommodate for the large number of applicants.

One prominent school that comes to mine is Stanford University, home of Alumni such

as Larry Page, Elon Musk, Herbert Hoover and many more. The university's endowment has gone from 1 Billion to 30 billion over the past 30 years. However, they have not increased their freshman class one seat.^[2]

To make matters worse, the institution has decided back in July to cut 11 of their Division 1 sports. 11 sports that will be discontinued are men's and women's fencing, field hockey, lightweight rowing, men's rowing, co-ed and women's sailing, squash, synchronized swimming, men's volleyball and wrestling. They said the cut is due to “financial ramifications of the coronavirus pandemic.” A 30 billion dollar endowment school cutting sports because they cant afford it is absolutely baffling.^[3]

What Can be Done

To begin the process of reform, these elite institutions should no longer be considered “non-profit.” They are a business, one that is used to please the ultra-wealthy and the administrators in the school. The fact that they can be exempt from paying taxes hurts the city/towns across the country, as they need the revenue to run the area. ■

Jon Louw is a current Senior at Fairfield Prep, and is the current president of the Political Awareness Society. He will be attending Penn State University next fall.

For any questions or comments about Jon's work, please contact: p21jlouw@fairfieldprep.org



KNOW YOUR SOURCE

A crucial part of political awareness is recognizing bias in news articles. The following are excerpts from articles published on major news websites covering recent events, can you tell who wrote what?

Source One:

“Biden administration officials greeted the news with euphoria in Washington. In the White House, the President took off his mask during a meeting with Sen. Shelley Moore Capito and other senators ... Senators on Capitol Hill uncovered their faces. “Free at last,” Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said.”

Source Two:

“Israeli warplanes pounded the Gaza Strip on Saturday, killing at least eight children in a refugee camp and flattening a high-rise building housing the offices of international media outlets as Hamas unleashed a new barrage of rockets targeting central Israel.”

Source Three:

“ ...more than 120 retired generals and admirals from the United States Armed Forces ... called into question his physical and mental health after Biden repeatedly fell while trying to board Air Force One and has appeared to struggle to remember things while in office.”

Source Four:

“President Joe Biden met Friday with six immigrants who benefited from an Obama-era policy that protected those brought to the U.S. illegally as children. The president is trying to turn attention toward overhauling the nation’s immigration laws, but it’s an issue he has made scant progress on in the first months of his presidency.”

Source Five:

“The disgruntled agents shared their concerns in a report by Reuters that appeared Friday – the 52nd day that Vice President Kamala Harris has neither traveled to the border nor held a news conference in connection with her role as manager of the Biden administration’s response to the migrant crisis at the border.”

ANSWERS:

SOURCE ONE: CNN. THIS IS A TRICKY ONE, BUT NOTE THAT ONE OF PRESIDENT BIDEN’S KEY GOALS IN HIS FIRST 100 DAYS WAS NONPARTISANSHIP. BY REPRESENTING REPUBLICAN SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MITCH MCCONNELL AS CELEBRATING ALONGSIDE THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION, THE AUTHOR MAY BE DOWNPLAYING THE SERIOUS PARTISAN DIVIDES THAT REMAIN IN US POLITICS.

SOURCE TWO: MSNBC. WHEN RESEARCHING SUCH A VOLATILE AND COMPLEX TOPIC LIKE THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT, ITS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT RIGHT LEANING SOURCES WILL OFTEN EMPHASIZE THE WAR CRIMES OF HAMAS (ASSOCIATED WITH THE PALESTINIAN LIBERATION EFFORT) WHEREAS LEFT LEANING SOURCES WILL EMPHASIZE THE WAR CRIMES OF THE IDF (ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCE).

SOURCE THREE: THE DAILY WIRE. NOTE THAT THIS SOURCE IS PLAYING INTO THE RUMOR THAT PRESIDENT BIDEN IS NOT MENTALLY CAPABLE OF SERVING AS PRESIDENT. THIS IS A COMMON CONSERVATIVE TALKING POINT, AND WAS IN FACT USED TO ATTACK HILLARY CLINTON IN 2016 WHEN SHE FAINTED WHILE LEAVING A 9/11 MEMORIAL EVENT.

SOURCE FOUR: AP. WHILE NO SOURCE IS COMPLETELY UNBIASED, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS IS WIDELY RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE MORE CENTRIST SOURCES OUT THERE. NOTE THAT THIS EXPERT RECOGNIZES THE COMPLEX TRUTH OF THE STORY: WHILE BIDEN HAS DEMONSTRATED SOME EFFORT TO FIX THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM, THE EFFECTS ARE NOT BEING SEEN AT THE BORDER.

SOURCE FIVE: FOX NEWS. AS A RIGHT LEANING SOURCE, FOX NEWS BENEFITS FROM DISPLAYING THE DEMOCRATS AS CALLOUS OR NOT OPEN TO ANY SORT OF DISSENT. THIS CAN BE SEEN IN FOX NEWS’ AMPLIFYING OF VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS’ LACK OF RESPONSE TO THE BORDER CRISIS.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM THE FAIRFIELD PREP STUDENT BODY

ABOUT THE LETTER TO THE EDITOR SECTION:

We at the Political Awareness Society understand that our Prep brothers may have questions and comments about the Zeitgeist. We hope that these letters will provide the opportunity for everyone to say what is on their mind without having to write an entire op-ed and/or put their names on their views. Below are the Editor's pick of five letters taken from a pool of several submissions.

Dear Editor,

I sometimes find myself turning off the news out of frustration. How do you keep following the news even when it is bad?

Peace,
-Anonymous Prep Brother

Dear Prep Brother,

I get the feeling. Our generation has inherited some very tough problems, and being thrown into the political world so quickly can be overwhelming. Also, news sources often sensationalize events to increase views.

Despite this tough political climate, though, be sure to follow that gut feeling you have to continue to explore ways that we can make this world a better place than the one we inherited. To quote Monty Python: "Always look on the bright side of life!"

Sincerely,
-Luis Brea, Editor-in-Chief of *Zeitgeist*

Dear Editor,

Do you think the over-partisanship of certain issues is an underrepresented issue in modern US politics

Peace,
-Tim Wong, Class of 2023

Dear Tim,

Absolutely. In fact, I have done work outside of the school to combat this issue, as our divides are becoming more and more noticeable.

A few of the of the five articles found in this edition discuss the ways that we talk about politics, rather than the issues themselves. I was happy to see this trend, as these submissions spark new ways that we can have political conversations and view the political landscape.

Sincerely,
-Luis Brea, Editor-in-Chief of *Zeitgeist*



Dear Editor,

After President Trump, it seems like both political parties are dividing and evolving at a rapid pace.

Recently, I read that Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez sparred with Marjory Taylor Greene on the senate floor. Do you worry that extreme politics will mean disaster in the long run?

Peace,
-Anonymous Prep Brother

Dear Prep Brother,

This is a great observation and I share your concerns about extreme politics. However, I will have to diverge from your categorization of what is considered extreme.

While I do not support Cortez on everything, I would personally make a very clear distinction between her and Greene's politics.

Sincerely,



Dear Editor,

I have to begin this short letter by apologizing for my not having written you a longer piece to publish in this spring's print of *Zeitgeist*. I would give you the spiel about being in the final exams period, but luckily you are an understanding fellow, so today I won't humiliate myself with excuses. Still, that you have compiled such an edition this spring, is a sign to all that that spark of writing, which is duly fueled here at 1073 North Benson, has started up a flame in the Prep community; a flame that stood the test of a pandemic, and that will hopefully never die out.

Since you'll place these letters at the front of the edition, I won't spoil any of the content for our readers. But, as always, I will thank you for your incessant work with *Zeitgeist* and *Poliware*, and I look forward to participating in next year's editions.

Peace,
-Joseph Altieri, Class of 2023

Dear Joe,

Thank you for so much your work on the winter edition of *Zeitgeist*. Even if it is not a full op-ed, I am very happy that you were able to write something for this edition; I can assure your name will always have a spot in future editions should you choose to fill it.

Sincerely,
-Luis Brea, Editor-in-Chief of *Zeitgeist*



Dear Editor,

What does the future of the Political Awareness Society look like?

Peace,
-Anonymous Prep Brother

Dear Prep Brother,

As the President-Elect of the Political Awareness Society, I know I have tough shoes to fill. Jon Louw and I made a great team this year, doubling our email list, revamping *Zeitgeist*, and finally offering our members meetings with College Professors and State Senators through local organizations.

I also know about the future we stand on. Our alumni span decades and have gone on to do great things and live out to Jesuit mission with the lessons they learned from our meetings.

While I cannot perfectly predict the future of the group, I can assure you that I will give it my all with my successor Kyle Elliot to make the 2021-2022 academic year one to remember of the Political Awareness Society.

Sincerely,
-Luis Brea, Editor-in-Chief of *Zeitgeist*



***LET US DARE TO
THINK, SPEAK,
ACT, AND WRITE.***

-John Adams, Second President of
the United States

SPECIAL CREDITS:

MR. DENBY

FOR PROVIDING EDITS TO WRITERS AS A
MODERATOR OF OF THE POLITICAL
AWARENESS SOCIETY

MR. MAURITZ

FOR PROVIDING EDITS TO WRITERS AS A
MODERATOR OF OF THE POLITICAL
AWARENESS SOCIETY

MR. MILAZZO

FOR OFFERING HIS INSIGHTS INTO THE
INTERSECTION OF THEOLOGY AND
POLITICS IN HIS INTERVIEW (SEE PAGE
THREE)

JON LOUW

FOR PROVIDING SOLID LEADERSHIP TO
THE GROUP DURING HIS TENURE AS
PRESIDENT OF THE POLITICAL
AWARENESS SOCIETY

LUIS BREA

FOR ORGANIZING AND FORMATTING
ZEITGEIST AS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF
THE POLITICAL AWARENESS SOCIETY

DISTINGUISHED WRITERS

FOR OFFERING THEIR OPINIONS AND
RESEARCH TO THE STUDENT BODY IN
THEIR NOW PUBLISHED WORKS

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