

America's Wars: Can We Please Get Rid of the "Pledge of Allegiance"?

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The Pledge of Allegiance is not an expression of patriotism. It is a loyalty oath that one normally associates with totalitarian regimes. People who love freedom, should be appalled by the idea our children are being coerced to stand and declare their support for the state. This is the worst form of indoctrination and it is completely anathema to the principals articulated in the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights. I cannot imagine outspoken libertarians like Thomas Jefferson or Tom Paine ever proclaiming their loyalty to the state when they correctly saw the state as the greatest threat to individual freedom. Which it is.

Now I know that many people think the Pledge is simply an affirmation of their respect for the flag, their love for the country, and their gratitude to the men and women who fought in America's wars. But that's not what it is. The Pledge is an attempt to impose conformity on the masses and compel them to click their heels and proclaim their devotion to the Fatherland. That's not how it's supposed to work in a democracy. In a democracy, the representatives of the state are supposed to pledge their loyalty to the people and to the laws that protect them. That's the correct relationship between the state and the people. The Pledge turns that whole concept on its head.



Now I'd have no problem if our schoolchildren recited the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence before class every day:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

That’s great stuff, unfortunately, the people who run this country would never allow it. They’d never allow our kids to recite an incendiary, revolutionary document like that every day for fear it would incite violence against the state. What they want is “good Germans”, not revolutionaries, not freedom-loving populists, and not well-informed, critical thinking individuals who can see through the sham of their jingoistic propaganda. They want people who are going to follow the rules, do what they’re told, fight the wars, and perform their worktime drudgery for 30 or 40 years until they’re carted off to the glue factory. That’s what they want. Reciting the Pledge fits perfectly with this dumbed-down version of permanent indentured servitude. It provides the ideological foundation for bovine acquiescence to the demands of the state and the crooks who run it behind the tri-color banner.

The fact that institutions like the Pledge are never challenged in a public format, points to deeper problems with the media and the way our kids are being educated. And while I don’t have time to talk about that now, it makes me wonder where are the people to question these silly recitations that undermine democracy and personal liberty? Why are their voices never heard?

I can’t answer that, but when I see the state deliberately eviscerating habeas corpus and locking away terror suspects for life with no evidence, no witnesses, no due process, no presumption of innocence, no way to defend themselves or claim their innocence in a court of law or before a jury of their peers-when I see the US state assuming the same unchecked, tyrannical powers as all of the dictatorships that went before them- I grow increasingly concerned that this lack of critical thinking is costing the country quite dearly. We are on the verge of losing what-little democracy we have left because people are incapable of looking around and asking ‘what the hell is going on?’

Pulling your head out of the sand and asking questions is not a sign of disloyalty. It’s a sign of intelligence, the kind of intelligence this country needs to stop the bloody wars and get back on track.

So next time you’re in a situation where you’re asked to stand up and recite the pledge, just pause for a minute and ask yourself what it really means. Is it really an expression of “love of country” or is it a vacuous and demeaning exercise in nationalism that should be done away with ASAP?

I’d say, it’s the latter.

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