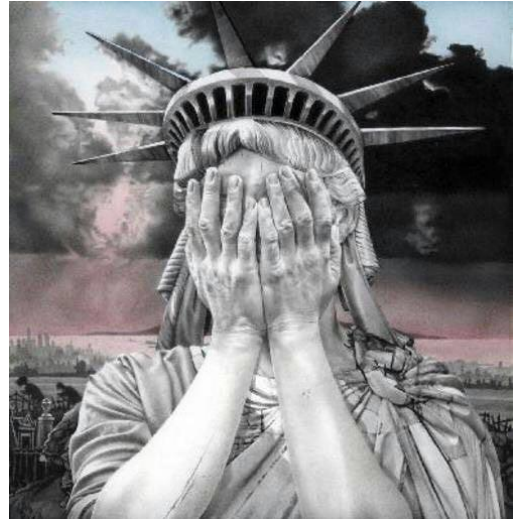


**Photo Credit Gee Vaucher** "Oh America" First Print: 1989 on the Album "Friendly as a Hand Grenade" by the band Tackhead. Vaucher is best known for her seminal role in the "Protest Art" movement of the 70s and her provocative photo-collages and illustrations for Punk bands Crass and Tackhead. ([Wikipedia](#))



Dear friends of democracy,  
a month into the war in Iran, I am not very optimistic about where the world is headed. Especially with the US becoming the leader of a global anti-democratic wave. We are approaching the 250-year mark as a nation and 230 of those years we have been at war ([Link](#)). Not a peaceful legacy by any means. We have also been an icon of social progress, rugged individualism, pioneering spirit, as well as excellence in science, business, and artistic expression.

Today, those of us standing for the progressive heritage of the human experience are facing a seismic shift in values and paradigms that guide the world. I use the term (human experience) decidedly, for we are a cognitive species that can reflect and manifest its destiny – unlike nature itself which is much grander and impervious to our survival and will go on blithely without us if we fuck up majorly. And we are fucking up majorly. But, the spirit of humanity (Decency, Empathy, Integrity / Diversity, Equity, Inclusion / Dignity, Erudition, Introspection) does not die in darkness, as the Washington Post so poetically formulated its own epitaph. It rekindles itself perpetually in new forms, even, or especially, in times of severe repression. Yes, humanity is an essential element of evolution, just as fear and hate and greed also are. So..., the challenge that faces me now is, what is my amphibian contribution to my species in a time when the tide of change is pulling me away from shore, back into the sea of uncertainty?

We are facing becoming a minority as progressives, and that presents three options. Fight where we can. Accept when we can't. And hope for the wisdom to know which of those at any given moment is a viable option. (*roughly the serenity prayer by theologian Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr*)

## **Imperative!**

Today, I want to highlight three references that help clarify (not hyperbolize) what our current options are and emphasize how important it is to vote in the coming elections. Here is a ([Link](#)) to FVAP.com showing all the upcoming elections between now and November. This little window of opportunity may be our last chance to avoid becoming another failed nation like so many before us – Sumeria (4500 to 1900 B.C.), Egypt (3100 to 30 B.C.), Indus Valley (2600 to 1900 B.C.), Mayans (1000 B.C to A.D. 1520), Ancient Greece (900 B.C. to 600 A.D.), Holy Roman Empire (31 B.C. to A.D. 476), Mongolia (A.D. 1279 to 1309), Aztecs (1325 to 1521), Portuguese Colonial Empire (415 to 1999), the thousand year intended Third Reich (1933 to 1945). All of these cultures manifested marvelous as well as horrific achievements. And regardless of how and when America takes up its own position of dwindling importance in this march of nations, each of us has the choice each day of which ideology we want to identify with. Give that choice a chance in the coming elections.

- 1) **War crimes are no longer shameful – That should terrify us.** Read this ([article](#)) from Aljazeera by the journalist Philippe Boloignon (executive director of Human

Rights Watch) on how the latest escalation in the Middle East demonstrate a disturbing disregard for civilian life. Dated 3.04.26

- 2) Watch this YouTube ([video](#)) from MS NOW on the **Heritage Foundation's new blueprint for American women**. Project 2025 proposes to redo the federal government, and has released a blueprint to “save America by saving the family.” Critics warn the policy proposals push women toward greater economic dependence on men, by promoting policies designed to pressure women into marriage and motherhood.
- 3) Another YouTube ([video](#)) by Rutger Bregman, a Dutch historian, on **how Fascism is categorized and identifiably now a valid definition for the current US-Administration**. Rutger Berman is Co-Founder of the [School for Moral Ambition](#). *"Bregman reveals how our conventional definitions of success are harming us and the planet. Discover how we can shift the focus from personal gain to societal benefit. In the process, we will join a growing movement of pioneers who are already living out this ethos."*

## Conclusion

Rutger Bergman’s analysis of the term Fascism makes the moniker more concrete; something that we can debate on its merits and not just bandy about as a derogatory, heating up emotions and hardening the lines of defense between contradicting philosophies. There may be viable advantages to being ruled by Kings and dictators. Some may want that. Some may want to expunge all vestiges of diversity from our culture and yearn for clear separation between super wealth and wide spread poverty. Demonizing the one or the other is only a path to intensifying our culture war. Perhaps even a path to civil war. The ballot it our alternative, where we can formulate into policy the desire that 8 million demonstrators stood up for on No-Kings-Day. It is our chance to honor the courage of Minnesotans and Chicagoans who have stood up against the police-state aggressions of ICE. It is our chance to vindicate all the watch-dog agencies and social programs that have been curtailed, eliminated, compromised by the current administration. Literally this may be our last chance to avoid things getting much much worse.

Thank you for reading...

If these points have helped you, share them.

In the words of Joyce Vance, *“We are in this together.”*

The worse it gets, the more we need to rely on that.

Stay aware, be informed, and get smart about where you invest your energy.

Sincerely,  
Paul Kustermann

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