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Letters to the Editor  
Wall Street Journal

Dear Editor:

As a regular reader and subscriber, I am alarmed to see *The Wall Street Journal* endorsing radicalized views that run counter to American rights and values.

In a March 25th article entitled “West Takes Wrong Lessons from Wuhan” / “China’s Progress Against Coronavirus Used Draconian Tactics Not Deployed in the West,” Jeremy Page claims that health officials here have not learned enough from the response in Wuhan Province. According to Mr. Page, we will be more effective if we can apply the full range of “aggressive and systematic” measures which ultimately succeeded in China. The targets: people who test positive but have no symptoms and those who have symptoms but have no test results and healthy relatives of those infected. According to the article, on the recommendation of the quoted US based public health expert, they will be removed from their families and communities and placed in government facilities, and this process continued until a vaccine is developed in 12 to 18 months.

More worryingly, articles like this, praising draconian Chinese measures as effective and necessary seem to anticipate the next moves of Dr. Anthony Fauci and his team. It seems almost as if your publication is working hard to warm readers up to the idea of losing their freedoms, one by one.

Our Founders and their contemporaries understood all too well the devastation that diseases could wreak. However, they also understood the far greater devastation that could come from stealing citizens’ freedoms and the resulting powerful government, even one that claims that it is acting for the benefit of the citizens.

We have also learned from the past that when a nation takes away freedoms, the hardest hit are usually citizens with the most to lose: those who are poor, vulnerable, disenfranchised and those with views that threaten those in power.

Each of the first seven Constitutional Amendments, along with others, is a wall against tyrannical government. Governments like the one that used to rule America. Governments like those many have escaped to take refuge in this country. Governments like the one Chinese citizens have lived under for almost a century.

To the extent anything China reports can be believed, China curbed the spread of coronavirus in part thanks to a regimented and efficient pre-existing system of neighborhood committees which drives total cooperation at the local level. During coronavirus, authorities relied on these committees to spy on neighbors and enforce government edicts.

Lacking this network, many countries are now scrambling to find high-tech substitutes. These technologies, including location mapping, facial recognition, and social media monitoring, ought to terrify each and every American. And, there are voices encouraging citizens to report their neighbors who refuse to cooperate, presaging a Chinese-style environment.

Yet this is the path some in our nation seem intent on taking. And it seems to be one which *The Wall Street Journal* is encouraging readers to embrace with little question.

This disease has already hit hard within my own community and my state, yet the prevailing mood of panic and uncertainty about health and the economy must not crowd out the warning signs of the step-by-step erosion of our precious and hard-won individual rights. Long after this wave of public health pandemic has passed, and G-d willing it will pass soon if the public health services can let it go, we risk living with the new way the government operates.

Please re-consider your newspaper's role in ensuring that the checks and balances of power in our country are not dissolved at the recommendation of public health officials emulating totalitarian regimes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. David Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

E. David Smith