

Letters to the Editor

The Editor
Susquehanna Times

Enclosed is my letter to Ayatullah Khomeini expressing my thoughts on him and the Iranian situation. The letter also reflects my confidence and support of President Carter in his handling of this regrettable affair.

I would like to share it with my fellow citizens.

Ben Thompson

April 28, 1980

Ayatullah Ruhollah
Khomeini
Qum, Iran

Dear Mr. Khomeini,

Lest you make the mistake of mis-reading the mood of this country, I feel compelled to express some gut feelings from the heart of America.

Our national pastime, baseball, is into a new season and many of us are keeping one eye on the early standings. Our hockey and basketball seasons are coming to an end and many of us are rooting for our favorites to bring the cup home. Trout season came and went already and many an American child caught his first fish. In my part of the country we are turning the soil in preparation for another planting season. The onions I planted in March are in my salads already and I staked out four tomato plants last week. We held our primary elections last week and some of us voted, some did not, but we all had the chance. Any one of the candidates would probably make a good leader, but we each have our preferences. We are undergoing a head count in this country now and listed among us will be many Chinese, Jews, Russians, Germans, French, and yes, Mr. Khomeini, many Iran-

ians. Every religious persuasion and every political philosophy will be found among us, as well as at least one of every racial strain found on this earth.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Khomeini, we are Americans, one and all. We argue a lot with each other. Very often our arguing among ourselves is thought by others to be social disruption. Not so, my friend. Each of us might think we could do it better, but we stand solid behind the man we choose as our president. When you slander our president you slander me and every other American as well. When you vilify an American citizen or desecrate the dead body of one, you have done the same to me. If your advisors tell you that you can manipulate our politics, or our economy, or our special order, be very careful where you step next. Chances are that you are being used.

Perhaps you are a prisoner yourself, I don't know. We seem unable to find a spokesman for your country. I have mixed feelings about you personally. I'm not sure if I like you, but I don't hate you. I admire your determination and religious spirit, but I am a little frightened of your fervor.

You are holding some of our people against their will, Mr. Khomeini. You are desecrating the bodies of some of our people, too, and showing the twentieth century world what fourteenth century barbarism was like. You have chosen to ignore all our efforts at civilized intercourse. Even the beloved prophet Muhammad would disapprove. Surely Allah does.

What now, Mr. Khomeini? What happens next? We can wait this out as long as you can. Our president will tell us how to respond to

you and we will accept his decisions. You can squeeze us here and there a little and we will experience some inconvenience for a while, but we'll get around to you sooner or later and make do without you.

What I am trying to say, Sir, is that you and your bandit countrymen are not our only concern. We grieve for our dead whose bodies you have desecrated and we long to have our people released from your criminal terrorists. But we will manage. Our lives go on. When this situation is finally resolved and our people are reunited with their loved ones, Americans will be the people to whom you can turn for food and medicine and the economic assistance you will need to rebuild Iran. Some might ask why we would help you. The answer, Mr. Khomeini, is that the whole world is greater than its individual parts. Why not join us in making it a better place to live?

Salaam Alechem,
Ben Thompson

To the Editor:

On April 4, 1980 my garage in East Donegal Township was burglarized. An excess of \$1000 worth of tools, supplies, and shop equipment was stolen. Through the prayers of many good friends and family members, a series of events that can only be attributed to fate, and some good investigative police work, essentially all of the stolen items have been recovered in good condition. Additionally, a suspect has been arrested and charged with the crime.

I'd like to take this opportunity to offer my sincerest gratitude to all those who offered their

prayers on my behalf, and to those police officers who stuck with it: following clues and their instincts to recover the property. In particular, I'd like to express my appreciation to Steve Engart of the Marietta Boro Police Force. His efforts were especially determined and successful.

During the episode, I encountered several circumstances which were particularly frustrating and disturbing. One was with my insurance company—something that has probably been frustrating to many people that have entered claims. First I was informed that it would be necessary for me to "prove" that I owned the tools, and then it would be necessary for me to "prove" that they were stolen. It seems that so many people have been "ripping off" the insurance companies that an honest person entering an honest claim is made to feel like a liar until he can prove the truth. This concept seems a little backwards to me and certainly not part of the principles my ninth grade civics teacher told me

our country was built upon. But, never mind, my claim was disallowed before any of that became necessary—that's right—nailed by the "ole fine print." Seems it was necessary for me to live in my garage before coverage is granted. My concern here is not that exclusions of this nature are included in insurance policies. Rather, my concern is for us "believably covered" policy holders who become "victims" of the legal terminology commonly used in insurance policies. It is nearly impossible for a lay person to read an insurance policy and decipher under what conditions coverage is actually granted. Try reading and understanding one of yours tonight—just for the fun of it! I'm convinced that policies could be written in terms that a lay policy holder could understand—just like the brochures the agent hands you when selling the policy. Legislation should be passed requiring this simpler, clearer terminology. In all fairness, I must give credit to my agent. His honesty

and efforts had gained reconsideration of my claim at the time the property was recovered.

The other circumstances encountered were with the laws of our land. All too often, laws written to protect the innocent are used to protect the guilty. Somewhere along the way our justice system has seemingly forgotten that laws were written to serve justice. When, in the face of undeniable evidence of crime, no legal action can be taken to pursue justice, something has certainly gone grossly awry in our system. Such circumstances nearly force decent people to take criminal action to gain justice. I believe it is time for the members of our judicial system to again make the service of justice the primary goal in the application of our laws.

In closing, again my thanks to those whose efforts led to the recovery of my equipment—now I can get back to work.

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