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Claremont McKenna College



John-Clark Levin is a native of Ojai, California, and recently completed his sophomore year at Claremont McKenna College, majoring in Philosophy, Politics and Economics and Linguistics. After founding and editing a student magazine at Villanova Preparatory School in high school, he joined the staff of the Claremont Independent, the journal of conservative and libertarian political thought at the Claremont Colleges, where he rose to managing editor in his freshman year. Mr. Levin was named Editor-in-Chief at the start of his sophomore year. The pieces that earned him the Collegiate Breindel Award are titled “The Lessons of 1939” and “An Open Mind.”

Editor’s Note: Diversity, Take Two

By: John-Clark Levin

As I write this, exactly seventy years have passed since German panzers rolled across the border into neutral Poland, plunging human civilization into the unparalleled catastrophe of the Second World War. It should never have been. The world had vowed, pledged, sworn never to let the horrors of the last war be repeated. So much blood had been spilled in the fields of France and Belgium -- so much treasure and innocence burned away in the trenches and on the seas -- that to most of the world, war had become a repellent, even unthinkable idea. In Paris, London and Washington, the leaders of the Free World remained firm in their faith that war itself had been defeated, even as that faith blinded them to the many signs that evil was stirring anew.

Through a long string of aggressions, the forces of good stood silent. Each time, they remembered the senseless carnage of Verdun and the Somme; each time, they remembered the whole generation of young men that they had lost to the last war, and they allowed themselves to be deluded. Better, they said, to lose Manchuria to the militarists in Japan than risk another war and all its calamity. Better, they said, that Ethiopia be swallowed up by Mussolini's fascists than that they risk a crisis. Better that they silently betray the Spanish and the Austrians and the Czechs to Hitler than risk the confrontation they had long believed impossible. And so, when the hour finally came in Poland, the forces of evil were strong and confident. By the time the Free World awoke from its vain delusion that war had been eradicated, war was upon them in force so great that it very nearly overwhelmed all. It was a threat that could have been averted easily if the world had been vigilant, but by September of 1939, that hour had long passed, and the price of inaction was an ocean of blood.

The Claremont Independent is a voice against inaction. We recognize that the sacrifices required to maintain liberty are difficult and dear. Yet they must be made, and made before the threats to freedom are strong and confident. We recognize that we must argue against appeasement abroad long before the threat is brought home to New York, Washington or Pennsylvania. We recognize that we must oppose economic interventionism long before our economy collapses, government-run healthcare long before patients are rendered powerless and educational decay long before America loses its place as the world's beacon of ideas and free thought. For history has shown us exactly

where the small appeasements lead. If we remain silent as speech is suppressed on our campuses, as nihilism takes over academia and as political correctness smothers truth, one day the heaps of small appeasements will be proven disastrous all too late. By the time the veil is lifted and the delusion broken, we will wake up in an America we do not recognize, facing threats beyond our power to overcome.

Our mission is to prevent this. We believe that Truth and Excellence are the bedrock of our intellectual endeavor and the life of these colleges. Where they are threatened, in the large ways and the small, we must speak out. We must speak against inaction and complacency -- against the delusion that freedom is free and peace is easy. We must champion Truth as we see it, promote Excellence as we understand it, and preserve the purpose of the education promised here. We must advance the cause of American principles, each of us doing our part to carry on the grand experiment in liberty which has been kept alive by those who've come before us. Despite difficulties and dangers, we must cry out against the small and attractive appeasements that give the enemies of freedom strength. The free exchange of ideas is under threat from Tiananmen Square to Sixth Street, and we must not be silent. Always we must sound in our pages the trumpet of Truth and Excellence in defense of everything the Claremont Colleges represent. And we will.

Best,
John-Clark