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THE PAIN INFLICTED BY INDIFFERENCE

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“Who are our leaders?” My dad posed this question as we watched Joe Biden address a crowd of protestors in front of Philadelphia’s City Hall. The words echoed through my head and settled deep in my stomach. Who, on a national level, is providing Americans with solutions to the issues plaguing our country?

COVID-19 response was delegated to governors as the president continued to downplay the deaths of his people. Mass graves like that of a war zone were dug in Manhattan; the president did not wear a mask. In March, Anthony Fauci arose as a wealth of information on disease control and prevention; in May, he was not permitted to testify at the House hearing regarding pandemic response. As I heard of China and Italy’s unified and effective recovery, I continued to hear contradictory policies implemented in various states. There is no American response to COVID. There is a New York response, a Florida response, a Vermont response, a Nevada response.

However, my dad’s initial comment came in the context of protests for racial equality. As this outcry for justice approached the White House, it was met by a wall of tear gas dispatched by presidential order. Yes, the streets of America’s greatest cities were ravaged; a visual representation of how systemic racism has ravaged generations of black Americans. Again, governors and mayors were the only elected officials publicly addressing the unrest and beginning to implement real changes, both symbolic and legislative. These regional officials must undertake enormous systemic change while comforting their grieving and enraged public. The president referred to protesters as thugs.

The immense discordance among the “United” States deepens the pain and fear of the American people because there is no one solution. Some cities are seeing their police forces defunded, others are seeing confederate symbolism removed from their flag, but all must watch the apathy of the president as they writhe in pain.

Who is an American leader in 2020? Will we have an answer come November?

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