

Churchill is calling

By Constance Scrafield

Does anyone know if the stars and the planets are badly out of alignment? You know, what astrologists and others say when a combination of occurrences seem to push us collectively or individually in a direction we might not have thought of on our own ? the planets were or were not aligned in a certain order to make it all happen.

Take a look around in the cool morning light and wonder: what is going on?

This planet has rarely been at peace while there are homo sapiens ? our really mighty minds and inventiveness have largely been spent developing ways to kill each other. Goodness knows the stars and planets have sent messengers telling us to change our ways and look to our own well being as a species.

To no effect.

However, these days, things seem wilder than ever before. Is democracy finally being killed off?

Our parks host the statues to young men dying ? losing their young lives, never to love a partner for years and years, never to father children or have the joy of watching their grandchildren grow. They never had the chances of a fruitful life, or know the satisfaction of contributing ? without dying ? to the betterment of their family and friends and the greater society to which they belonged.

Their mothers, their sweethearts grieved for them forever after and I can't help feeling that a mother of a murdered WWII son might not entirely be satisfied with the sacrifice her son made to protect democracy were she still alive today.

Churchill, probably the greatest proponent and defender of democracy, declared it a difficult and complicated form of government but the best system there is. Democracy's feet are planted in ancient Greece where the populace actually came in numbers to the city centre to say how the city/country would run, a time where every voice counted ? but they still went to war with the other democracies, too.

From those days, voting to run the country, with and without the ladies' being included, depending on the society, has been the right of the people off and on always. When tyranny installs itself, eventually, the people rise up and defeat it, sometimes with pretty rough consequences for the tyrant.

Here's a question: why does anyone want to be a dictator? Look at Turkey and Venezuela, their elected leaders working so desperately to be sole rulers, passing new laws to support their unquestionable and indefinite authority, holding fake referendums (that good old 51% win for the dodgy side ? over and over again) ? but why?

Do they suffer from years of rejection from a parent? Were they bullied at school and grew up with a I'll-fix-you complex? Is it a form of insanity that just drives to insanity a person's insistence on being at the top of the pile alone with absolute control?

Do they never think of the consequences of such power, the formidable responsibility for the care and welfare of the entire regime over which they insist on dominating?

What about the people who support the would-be tyrant ? the common folk, not those in positions, they hope, to benefit from their support? In all our fighting and dying to defend democracy, what do we do when a dictator rises, seemingly all on his own, to reduce and even defeat democracy with false policies, dangerous political stances and a heavy-handed and willing police/army force?

It never seems to occur to anyone to deal with tyranny except with force of arms. There is, as it seems, only the death of young men, women and children to defeat and stop the brutality of a one man government.

Apparently, there are no minds mighty enough to know how to negotiate, with wondrous skill, to defuse and neutralize ? with intelligence, not death-dealing ? the dangers of a regime teetering on the brink of real chaos.

The half apes/half men in ancient times stood on either side of a river ? so the old stories and speculation tell us ? banging their sticks and screaming at each other over territories that were tiny compared to the whole broad world. As the world shrinks in the face our overwhelming population, we have not come one step further from those screaming predecessors.

We are still threatening, killing and screaming at each other about the rights of the extremely few over the many. The fact is, that the majority of young men, women and, certainly, children do not want to die before they have lived.

Churchill was a man of war as necessary. Yet, he predicted the rise of Hitler, warning that Hitler's plans were clear, that diplomatic intervention was essential to prevent all out war. The mighty minds failed and the war ensued.

So, too, today. None of us want the world to end under a nuclear cloud.