

## [ Our View ]

## Make arguments instead of personal attacks

President Donald Trump signed an executive order last Friday barring all immigrants and visa holders from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States for 90 days and all refugee admissions for 120 days. Many of us responded in some manner on social media — after all, this was an action that prevented many students at American universities from returning to the country, something that hits close to home for Truman students. If you are opposed to the ban, maybe you posted an article to inform friends, shared a live stream of protesters at airports or provided information about how to donate to the American Civil Liberties Union. In the typical fashion, maybe you received a response on one of these posts from someone who disagreed with you — or maybe you responded on someone else's post to share an opposing view.

This type of dialogue ensures we, as citizens, are as informed as possible about every side of the complicated political issues Americans faced during the past few weeks. However, it's easy to get caught up in the emotions of outrage, disbelief or confusion and lose sight of what should be our goal.

We, the Truman Media Network Editorial Board, urge everyone to be conscious of the best way to frame an argument regarding a conflict such as the recent immigration and refugee ban. It's too easy to let a discussion spiral into a circular string of back-and-forths about who's right and wrong. Just as the goal of a democracy isn't for one person to beat their opponent and rule over us all, the goal of this discourse shouldn't be to declare one's self the winner — it should be to find out more about opinions different than your own to better your understanding of what's going on.

We must be open to hearing the other side. It is crucial, especially considering the current political climate, to not succumb to the ease of remaining within your information bubble. Don't close yourself off to views that don't agree with your own, and don't make a claim without backing it up. If you agree with something or passionately believe something, explain why that is. If you're against something or don't understand it, give your opinion about why that is or ask for some clarification. It's up to us to be the catalysts, not only of others' knowledge, but also of our own.



"Orwellian"  
by Xavier O'Brien

The term 'Orwellian' is sometimes used casually, whether by people protesting Starbucks cups, a celebrity being in hot water over inflammatory comments, or social media shutting down a hobbed for extremist activity. None of these things are Orwellian, but thanks to the actions of our new President, the term can finally be applied properly.

In George Orwell's 1949 book, *Winston Smith* is a clerk working for the "Ministry of Truth," the branch of government responsible for altering facts. If the government says something which turns out to be wrong, the Ministry of Truth edits or erases the offending fact. If the offending news item was so incorrect as to be blatantly obvious, Smith replaces that day's statement with complete fabrications, such as awarding a medal to a non-existent war hero, or changing important historical dates. Records the Ministry of Truth wants to purge go to an incinerator. People who disagree with Party ideology are executed and erased from history completely.

In this dystopia, slogans are enforced ad nauseum, including "WAR IS PEACE", "FREEDOM IS SLAVERY", and "IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH." The government, which is in a state of constant war, routinely switches sides and claims that they have always been at war with Eastasia/Eurasia, and the record is updated to reflect this.

A line frequently cited in the book is "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past."

This bespeaks a theme central to Orwell's dystopia: Media is tightly controlled and civilians are brainwashed into obedience. Whenever any citizen shows signs of resistance, they are taken to the Ministry of Love, where they get tortured until they die or fall in line with the Party's truth. Most people do not resist, however, showing an

eerie, lemming-like ability to be led, if not from apathy, then due to constant misinformation.

This is due largely to the term "doublethink", which is defined as "the acceptance of or mental capacity to accept contrary opinions or beliefs at the same time, especially as a result of political indoctrination." For instance, if the Party were to say that 'up' is to now be called 'down', official record would make it so, and destroy any evidence to the contrary.

While I do not think that our government is a real-life dystopia yet, Trump has demonstrated an uncanny ability to bend the past (and indeed, the very truth) however he wants. It does not matter how many printed copies of the truth you have. It does not matter how much video you have. Trump's method counts on the American people being apathetic and docile — and apparently, he is right. The truth will die while lies get screamed repeatedly until everybody believes them — just like Trump's claims that he opposed the war in Iraq and our intervention in Libya, or even his inaugural crowd size.

That is what Orwell's point with media was — the Party did not have to waste time with a lie when they could just bend the truth to fit their will. We are seeing this happen with "alternative facts," the ignoring of accredited news organizations, the veiled threat of termination for State Department employees who protest their new leadership, the firing of Sally Yates, etc. Many have said that the President must be respected, but the office of the President is not to be followed blindly. Indeed, the self-same people that are telling us that the office of the President should be respected are some of the people that did all they could to hinder Obama.

During the First World War, when questioning the war effort was made criminal by the Sedition Act of 1918, former President Theodore Roosevelt said in response, "To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public." — *The Kansas City Star*, 18 May 1918.

Those words are just as true today as they were then. I refuse to watch as the government works to oppress refugees, LGBTQ people, political dissenters, and naysayers. It is undemocratic, and it must be protested.

Most importantly, we, the Truman Media Network Editorial Board, cannot stress enough how imperative it is that everyone maintain an air of respect when engaging with others, regardless of whether it's in person or on social media. Too often, we see fallacious attacks on the character of all supporters of a particular candidate or issue, instead of a valid argument against the candidate or issue itself. If you don't like the new immigration policy, argue against it, not against the good character of your Facebook friend who supports it. If you aren't happy with the job our legislators or new president have been doing, argue against them instead of calling the character of the people you know who support them into question.

When it comes to supporters of a candidate or issue, the odds are they have a good reason for doing so. Why not find out why? Having a clear, respectful conversation can help you understand where people on one side or another are coming from and subsequently allow you to take those views into account when you consider alternatives to a policy you think needs a replacement or who to vote for in the next election.

Shouting into the void isn't a productive way to do this, nor is assuming everyone who has an opinion that doesn't match yours is a bad person. It's up to all of us to ensure that we're as informed as possible about every issue we scroll past on our social media feeds.

Nice, **4+**  
large bedroom loft in  
downtown Kirksville

All wood floors. 2500 ft.<sup>2</sup>. All appliances, high-speed Internet, washer and dryer, side-by-side fridge water and ice, microwave, dishwasher, stove, water and trash, all included.  
Walking distance to both colleges, food and entertainment.

**Renting June 2017**

\$1300 a month \$325 per person

Call 660-216-8608

EMAIL US AT  
[ADVERTISING.TRUMANMEDIA@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ADVERTISING.TRUMANMEDIA@GMAIL.COM)  
OR CALL (417) 761-2897  
FOR MORE INFO

TMN TELEVISION TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY INDEX dm the 88.7 edge

**BUCK BROS.**  
**SUNNY SLOPE AUTO, LLC**  
NAPA Service Center

**660-665-8464**

710 W. Potter Avenue  
at the Corner of Oteophathy & Potter Ave

serving the area for over 30 years

**Complete Automotive Services**

oil change, tire rotations, tune ups, check engine light, jump starts, & unlock locked car

Tell us you saw our ad  
in the Index and get  
10% off on labor

[www.buckbrothersauto.com](http://www.buckbrothersauto.com)

[WWW.TRUMANRENTALS.COM](http://WWW.TRUMANRENTALS.COM)

Providing affordable  
student housing  
for more than 30 years

Boardwalk • Waterworks • Park Place  
States Avenue • St. James Place • New York Avenue

Four Horizons Realty  
703 N. Marion St.  
Kirksville, MO 63501

**660-665-RENT**

[www.4horizonsrealty.com](http://www.4horizonsrealty.com)