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GUEST OPINION

Illegals threaten our way of life

BY JUNE SHILKA

As a proud United States citizen, I believe it is imperative to preserve the prestige of my great nation and rebut biased opinions about my country which were expressed by Mr. Roger Hernandez, a syndicated columnist and writer-in-residence at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in two commentaries in recent editions of Florida Weekly.

It is apparent that Mr. Hernandez holds views of the past, present and future of our country that are not conducive to insuring the cohesiveness of our nation.

Our country has developed a unique culture in a little more than 200 years that has enabled us to become a leader of nations. This culture is now threatened by the massive invasion of illegal Hispanic criminals that our government leaders have chosen not to control. These criminals have ignored our laws and insisted upon the adoption of their foreign language. The deception of "cheap labor" that is behind this travesty has resulted in an extremely high cost to our country and its citizens. We are rapidly losing our identity and are slipping into a third-world category as a consequence.

Our culture began when the English settled on our shores. We recently celebrated the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in North America. Mr. Hernandez reminds us that the Spanish settled St. Augustine in Florida 42 years prior to the founding of Jamestown and complains that this achievement was not celebrated. He attributed this omission to a lack of the teaching of history in our edu-

cational system and political correctness, which is an absurd statement.

I take exception to Mr. Hernandez's understanding of our history. I learned in history studies of Spain's meager contribution in the early beginning of our country, as did my peers. It is true however, that in recent years, our schools have become lax in focusing on the details of our early history. I must add that we also learned that Spain was unable to secure their colonial possessions. They did not leave a defining culture. The English did and for that I shall forever be in their debt. The corrupt governments of Mexico and many of countries founded under the influence of Spain certainly cannot be compared to the United States where the English left their mark.

I am deeply offended by Mr. Hernandez's assertion that our legal customs and political traditions inherited from the English are inconsistent with a respect for liberty with our "land grabs" from the Indians and the acceptance of slavery. Mr. Hernandez must be reminded that the Spanish planted their settlements on Indian soil. We also learned from history that the natives in the New World feared the Conquistadors and that the diseases the Conquistadors brought with them devastated the Indian population. Juan Ponce de Leon, a figure well known in this area was mortally wounded by the Caloosa tribe before he discovered his "Fountain of Youth" because they distrusted him and rightly so.

Yes, slavery did exist in our early years but the Civil War righted that wrong because we had and still do have a great deal of respect for the liberty for all of our LEGAL citizens.

It is very difficult to understand

why the millions of illegal immigrants have the notion that they have earned the right to demonstrate against our government and our people. They absolutely do not. They certainly do not have the backbone to demonstrate against their own governments to demand that things should be made better for them there. If the millions that are here illegally would ban together and do just that, perhaps they could make the difference but it has become too easy to challenge our wimpy government leaders.

We do not like what is happening. We fought hard and lost countless lives to make our country what it was before the invasion of the people that Mr. Hernandez champions. We are sick of it.

Lastly, Mr. Hernandez's view of the future of the United States is terribly disturbing. He predicts that with the continual swell of Hispanic voters, Spanish-language presidential debates will be the norm. His reference to "Hispanic voters" rather than AMERICAN VOTERS raises a red flag.

We need to take seriously the advice of Alexander Hamilton (one of our revered founding fathers) who said "To admit foreigners indiscriminately to the rights of citizens the moment they put foot in our country would be nothing less than to admit the Grecian horse into the citadel of our liberty and sovereignty". ■

— Mrs. June Shilka lives in Fort Myers.

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