Is anti-patriotism a fair method of protest?

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Is anti-patriotism a fair method of protest?

San Francisco 49ers quarterback, Colin Kaepernick, has recently become heavily scrutinized by both the media and the American public after his refusal to stand for the national anthem out of protest against systemic injustice. His actions have now erupted a nation-wide debate about what exactly is acceptable as “peaceful protest.”

In fact, it can be said that the movement as a whole was ill-conceived. Should we, the American public, allow and encourage this type of anti-patriotism?

I went to a private Catholic elementary school. One of my earliest memories at that school was standing beside my peers, facing the American flag which hung in the corner of the room and reciting the national anthem. I did that every morning for over a decade.

Unfortunately, this isn’t something that schools allow anymore. The American flag doesn’t hang in classrooms today. We have completely shifted our culture into believing that the United States has not done us any good. Apparently, that means we are now allowed to publicly disrespect our own nation.

This is not the first time in history we have seen civil rights movement turn controversial. In the last few years, most notably, since the murder of Trayvon Martin, Americans have taken to extreme methods of protest. These methods often include defacing governmental and public property and even setting fire to the American flag.

It would be nice, albeit untrue, to say that there is nothing wrong with this country. I would love to be able to say that we are not a nation built upon slavery, with systemic injustice and inequality, and that we give fair and equal opportunity to each and every citizen. The truth is, systemic injustice and oppression continues to exist here. However, that does not allow me to disrespect the country I have been born into and the land that has provided me with freedoms that I sometimes forget to appreciate.

The American flag is a symbol of the unity of the U.S. It symbolizes the freedom given to us every day that may be taken for granted. Is it fair to denounce our entire nation and history in exchange for a civil rights movement? Although I believe the Black Lives Matter Movement is crucial and stands for a good cause, we should not abandon an important part of our history and culture.

There is a difference between protesting peacefully and causing civic upheaval. After all, it is what Dr. King spent his entire adult life fighting to change. We can make change peacefully without disrespecting the only country that continually fights to protect our freedom.
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