



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on February 20, 2018

The Story of a Patriot Who Fought the Con-Con in South Dakota

“Once you open up the Constitution” with a Constitutional Convention (Con-Con), “we could lose the Second Amendment, we could lose the Electoral College,” South Dakotan Kitty Werthmann (shown) told *The New American* on Saturday, explaining her passionate opposition to the effort to get the South Dakota Legislature to join in demanding that Congress call for a Constitutional Convention, under Article V of the U.S. Constitution.



Werthmann was a leader in delivering the Con-Con advocates a stinging defeat last week in the South Dakota Senate, with the proposal, SJR 3 — which would have added the state to the list of states asking for a constitutional convention — going down to defeat. She pointed out that the supporters of the Con-Con spent thousands of dollars lobbying the Senate, noting that former U.S. Senator Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) “threw his weight around,” and that there was “a lot of dark money” behind the Con-Con effort.

“The pressure was intense,” she added, but in the end, the legislators “resented the outside influence.”

Werthmann is an example of the effectiveness of educational efforts, especially in defeating a dangerous idea such as the Con-Con (sometimes referred to as a Convention of the States) that enjoys support from many uninformed and misinformed conservatives. Among those in South Dakota and in other states alerting legislators and others to the dangers of a Con-Con are Eagle Forum (of the late Phyllis Schlafly), Concerned Women for America, and The John Birch Society (the latter the parent organization of *The New American*).

Werthmann told me that “*The New American* is a good magazine,” adding that it is a “good source of the truth, and very reliable.”

While many have read in *The New American* and other liberty-loving sources of historical examples of how freedom can be lost, Werthmann actually lived through such a loss of freedom. As a youngster, she endured seven years of Adolf Hitler’s dictatorship in Austria, followed by three more years of dictatorship under the Soviet occupation.

Finally, in 1950, she arrived in the United States, and became, in her words “a proud naturalized citizen.”

She explained how dictatorship came to Austria. In 1938, one-third of Austria’s workforce was unemployed, and they were suffering 25 percent inflation and 25 percent interest rates. There were massive demonstrations in the streets as the Hitler-backed National Socialists battled the Communist Party.

In contrast, Germany had no unemployment and it seemed as though everyone there was driving a VW bug. Hitler garnered 98 percent of the vote for the Anschluss (the union of Austria with Germany) in 1938. “We had almost anarchy,” Werthmann said, in explaining how Hitler won. She called him “a very



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clever politician.” When she is now asked how Austrians could have voted in a “monster” such as Hitler, she explains that he “did not look like a monster — yet.”

The complete dictatorship did not come in Austria overnight, but rather in stages. Soon, no one was elected anymore, from school board on up to the top officials in the country. Werthmann recounted how the National Socialists reduced Austria’s seven states to four, arguing that it would be “easier to govern.” She explained that consolidation and centralization is a “very important component of socialism.”

“We got free radios,” she recalled, that they could use to listen to the nationalized radio stations. Print media was censored before it hit the streets. The Nazis took all the money of the Jewish bankers and nationalized the banks — and education.

Before Hitler’s National Socialists took over, Werthmann’s public school would open and close the day with prayer. But with the new Nazi regime, the crucifix was gone, replaced by the swastika, and prayer ended immediately. Instead of going to church on Sunday, children were made to participate in National Youth Day. Any parents not letting their children take part in National Youth Day would be fined, and if they persisted, they would be jailed.

The National Youth Day consisted of political indoctrination, Werthmann explained. “We were told that our parents were old-fashioned and that we had rights” with which parents could not interfere. The rest of the day was filled with sports, and then, she said, “at age 16, the boys all got motorcycles,” and learned to fly airplanes. Most of the youth thought this was much better than going to church “and listening to some old priest.”

Fortunately, Werthmann said, her mother took her out of the public school, and put her into a religious school. “She saved me from Godless humanism,” Werthmann said, although she resented her mother for it at the time.

The Nazi government also declared “equal rights” for women, which they soon found out included compulsory military training. The National Socialists introduced nationalized healthcare, which was a disaster, she said. “Before, we had excellent private insurance.” She recalled that when healthcare was nationalized, her brother-in-law, a physician, had 40 patients waiting for him when he showed up for his practice. He called it “practicing medicine on a conveyer belt.” The government gave him a list of approved medications. If he used any other medications, they took it out of his pay, she said.

“Bureaucrats wrote rules and regulations on everything,” she remembered. Food was rationed. “They even counted chickens,” she said, and told farmers how many eggs their hens were to lay.

“The Gestapo was everywhere,” enforcing the rationing. If someone died in a home, the family was told to return that person’s rations. “You could not trust anyone,” she said, because everyone was told to spy on everyone else.

The National Socialists also enforced abortion on women, if the unborn child was not 100 percent Aryan. Later, when Werthmann was teaching at a school, a van from the “Health” department showed up and took away those they considered mentally deficient. Parents could not visit their children, because “that would make them homesick.” In a few months, parents began receiving letters informing them that their child had died of an illness. It is now known that as many as 20,000 children were simply euthanized, because they were considered useless to the Nazi regime.

It was practically impossible to fight back, because the Nazis took away all the guns. First, they



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instituted gun registration, arguing that it was the only way to “track criminals.” So citizens dutifully went to the police station, where the serial numbers on their guns were recorded. Not long after that, Werthmann recalled, they were ordered to turn in their guns. The government explained that this was to end crime.

“I say keep your guns,” Werthmann declared, “and buy more guns.” She offered the example of Switzerland, where almost all citizens own guns. “Not even Hitler dared to invade Switzerland,” she noted.

She concluded by remembering her entrance into America. “Those of us who passed by the Statue of Liberty” believed they were entering a land of freedom. “When the people fear their government, that is tyranny; when the government fears the people, that is liberty,” she explained.

Listening to Werthmann’s story, it is clear that she does not want to lose the Constitution of 1789 and have it replaced by something hammered out at a convention in 2018. As the late Justice Antonin Scalia once said, the 21st century is a bad century in which to write a constitution.

Photo: Kitty Werthmann



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