



P E R S P E C T I V E S



by **Rinaldo S. Brutoco**

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LET MY PEOPLE GO!

It's Time to Retire Two-Party Politics

The Old Testament Book of Exodus describes how Moses and Aaron went in to see Pharaoh and, speaking on behalf of the Jewish God of Israel, instructed Pharaoh to release the Jewish people from bondage where they lacked the ability to influence their own futures. They were born as slaves, held as slaves, and would die as slaves. After ten noteworthy plagues, Pharaoh relented and permitted Moses' people to "go." When will we, the ensnared people of the United States, similarly be freed from the combined shared political monopolistic tyranny of the Republican and Democratic parties that have failed us so abysmally in running our country?

In watching Trump's second Impeachment "trial" I was saddened and disappointed by the outcome which has left that him free to extract the treasures afforded to an ex-President for himself and his associates, given him the opportunity to keep all his ill-gotten gains, and provided him the opportunity to haunt our democracy again in the future. Or worse yet, serve as an example of what one can get away with when politics becomes paramount to justice and reason.

Listening to the Senate Minority Leader McConnell's concluding remarks in which he reported that Trump was "practically and morally responsible for (the riot) ...no question," made me likewise disheartened. Although he also noted that the criminal justice system could well "Lock him up," McConnell was unwilling to vote to convict because so many of his fellow Republicans exist in fear of Trump's hard-right base of followers who represent 65 percent of the Republican Party.

It is truly the "Party of Trump." In fact, Trump even has a new name for the party. He wants to call it the "American Patriot Party" if he can't hang on to the Republican brand moniker.

Everyone who watched witnessed, there was no "trial" at all. The whole charade was pure kabuki theater. A staged show with elaborate costumes, stentorian actors reciting their programmed lines, a carefully crafted stage, and commentators' constant attention giving the proceedings a false sense of gravity. Does anyone really think the verdict was ever in question?

There never was a "trial." We know that because not a single deposition was taken (only one written statement was even added to the record); not a single witness was called; and no Secret Service communications between Pence's bodyguards

and Trump's Secret Service detail proving Trump's willingness to have Pence die. No "juror" was allowed to hear the testimony of Trump under oath, nor the testimony of Senator Tuberville who has repeatedly stated a totally different version of "what Trump knew, and when did he know it." No "juror" was forced to face the police officer whose eye was gauged out during the riot, nor hear from the wife of Officer Jeffrey Smith who committed suicide after being struck with a metal pole during the riot, and never "recovered himself" afterwards. No "juror" was forced to gaze intently on the ashes of Officer Brian Sicknick who gave his life to save all the Senators.

That McConnell chose to acquit (and lead 44 other Republican Senators in taking this vote) is incredibly revealing. McConnell agreed with everything alleged against Trump including: the "Big Lie" that the election was stolen; the constant "cheering on" to the most violent and despicable members of right-wing, anti-Semitic, white nationalist paramilitary units; the incitement by Trump and Giuliani for the mob to "fight hard" in "hand to hand combat"; and that Trump effectively launched the mob against the Capitol. McConnell concluded that Trump did in fact lead a coup against the United States government, while he was still president, to overturn the valid election he lost by seven million votes and have himself installed permanently in power.

So...if McConnell agreed with everything the House prosecutors alleged, why did he vote to acquit Trump? He based his acquittal vote on the most circuitous and strained reading of the Constitution possible. McConnell's preposterous conclusion: no matter what a President did (yes, even shooting someone on 5th Avenue), he could not be impeached if he merely resigned the day before Impeachment Articles were delivered to the Senate.

Wow! That is truly bizarre. The other Republicans who also voted to acquit similarly walked into the "trial" having already made up their minds to condone this argument.

How could that possibly have succeeded? As the old saying goes, "It takes two to tango." In this case that means that without the active cooperation of the Democrats, the Republicans could not have gotten away with this farce.

The Democrats won the vote to allow witnesses and failed to

present any! The presiding officer, Senator Leahy, for whom I generally have considerable respect, never overruled the defense counsel when they kept raising and re-raising the question of the Senate's constitutional authority to have the trial when that had been definitively decided days earlier. Why did the Democrats want to rush so much?

Alas, they rushed the "trial", because they wanted to show deference to the Republicans who they want to work with in the future. Why? What is really going on in America is that a two-party system that is not in the Constitution nor any other foundational document is holding our government hostage. That these two parties, the Democrats and Republicans, share total power when combined they represent fewer than 44 percent of the voters tells the whole story. They work for their mutual power and ability to create a permanent "political class" (something the Framers overtly feared).

The Democrats are, like the Republicans, more worried about getting re-elected than actually pursuing the public's business. That's right. The 65 percent of Republicans (a party that only represents 26 percent of the public) who are still deeply pro-Trump represent only 17 percent of the voters. Yet, we let them foist this farce on us because their comity with the Republicans is what keeps both parties in power.

Our people, the American people, need to be freed of the curse of a two-party system in favor of one with greater options which will lead to better public policy and prevent going forward with the "shared power at all costs" perversion of the two existing parties--neither of which have a pre-ordained right to exist, and neither did until the 1800s.

Let's get free of these political parties enslaving us to a system that is patently broken and keeping us enslaved to white supremacy, enslaved to misogyny, enslaved to broken infrastructure, enslaved to dilapidated non-functional public schools, enslaved to a climate crisis juggernaut that endangers us all, and enslaved to an ethos that permits violence over peaceful protest. Yes, LET MY PEOPLE GO!

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