

Revolution By Consciousness

Vol. II, No. 1

January 2022

A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in - Greek Proverb

A Fitting Symbol

Despite having control of all three branches of the Federal government, the Democrats are still unable to advance even a fraction of their ambitious agenda. “Build Back Better” has gone from \$10 trillion to \$6.5 trillion to \$1.75 trillion. (Note that these are ten-year costs.) Perhaps a better idea, one that would both pacify the masses and make our digital overlords happy, would be to reduce that number to a one-time expenditure of \$90 billion dollars for the “BUILT Back Better” plan. Under this plan, the majority of Americans would receive, via Amazon Prime, an Oculus 2 Virtual Reality headset (\$299

each). They could then watch digital avatars of themselves walking through a fictitious country where elections are not overturned by the highest court in the land (remember Al Gore?), the largest oil company in the world becomes the largest supplier of solar and wind energy, the war on poverty is actually won, white supremacists and neo-Nazis remain firmly embedded in movies and comic books, and “truth, justice, and the American way” replaces “In God We Trust.”

Back in the real world, the Republicans continue to stonewall every piece of legislation, and President Biden,

who could do so much with the stroke of a pen and an executive order, continually misplaces his pen as he remembers the good ‘ol of so-called bipartisanship.

All of this was predicted, not by Nostradamus, but by the 19th century cartoonist Thomas Nast, who associated political parties with a particular animal. We now see the wisdom of his choices. Republicans are elephants who drop enormous loads of shit everywhere they go. The Democrats, with all their sanctimonious braying, prove time and again to be clueless jackasses. ■

What Are You Going to Do?

We know how this ends. We got a taste of it when the the Republofascists were in complete control of the government with the Orange Mussolini at the helm. So in 2022 when the Democrats lose the House, all January 6th investigations will come to a halt, all prominent Democrats (perhaps every Democrat?) will be thrown off of their committees, and investigations will begin that blames January 6th on Antifa, the FBI, and one or

more of the following (Adam Schiff, Nancy Pelosi, Jamie Raskin, Lynn Cheney, et al.). Dr. Fauci will be investigated by Jim Jordan, and Fauci will be fired and jailed. Then Federal funding will be pulled from all “blue” states. All government agencies, such as EPA, HUD, OSHA, and ESPECIALLY the IRS, will be defunded. The USPS service will be sold to the highest bidder, and all manner of voter suppression will become the law of the land. I

can go on and on with this list of horrors but you get the picture.

The Democrats, in response, will blame Manchin and Sinema for this state of affairs. “We wanted to do something,” Schumer will say, “but they stopped us. Our hands were tied.” Biden will then decry the loss of bipartisanship, while Harris will flounder each time she’s asked a softball question. To the rescue will be such mental giants as Andrew Yang, Pete Buttigieg, and perhaps the newly-elected,

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already-mired-in-scandal New York mayor Eric Adams.

We should keep in mind that America has never quite been a true democracy, and that the struggle in America, almost from the beginning (the 1776 one, that is) has been to make the country live up to its ideals. The Make America Great Again crowd is, in fact, bringing America back to its former glory, to a time when the Civil War did not occur, when there were none of those pesky amendments that ended slavery, gave citizenship to those born in this country, and that allowed recently freed people to vote. We must remember that that era came to an end, albeit at the cost of much bloodshed, though it reappeared in a new form, what we call the Jim Crow era. I don't expect a Civil War this time around. Many people will passively wait for the next election to "fix" what the Republofascists have done, assuming they have allowed Democrats the ability to vote. But even if they allow voting, it will become painfully obvious that much of the damage cannot be easily undone. We have seen time and again that the damages wrought by Republican administrations (tax cuts for the wealthy, subsidies for the poor poor oil companies, wars against unions, terrorism, drugs,

immigrants, et al., hot wars in the Middle East, and much more!) are either left in place or made worse by Democratic administrations.

So, the question you must ask yourself, to quote Chauncey DeVega,¹ is "What are you going to do about it?" In other words, what will you do right now to try to slow down the destruction of our democracy. Here are my suggestions.

First, do not hope for the best. "Hope" is not a plan of action. Second, do not wallow in despair. There is always something that can be done to improve a situation. But be realistic. It took decades for the Republofascists to coalesce and take power. It may take just as long to undo their damage.

When trying to determine a course of action, you must balance present needs with future needs and, in many cases, you may need to prioritize the future. The most obvious example of this is climate change. The salutary effects of changes made in the present for the sake of saving the environment may not be evident for years. So, third, when trying to figure out what to do, keep in mind the following Greek proverb: "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose

shade they know they shall never sit in."

We are now at a time where we must plant those trees knowing that we will likely never enjoy their shade. Our goal is to assure that future generations will enjoy the shade. Tangible examples of this type of forward / future thinking are the various projects built in the past, such as the Hoover Dam, rural electrification, the Interstate Highway System, and here in New York, the complex of reservoirs, built more than one hundred years ago, that still provide New York City with a source of clean water.

So again, the question is, "What can you do?" The answer is, do as much as you are capable of doing. That might be donating money to various organizations, becoming involved in local politics (or at least aware of the important issues), voting in every election big and small. If you are leery of public protests, then don't protest, though you might want to financially support those groups that do protest for worthy causes. You might want to join letter-writing campaigns, phone-banking, and other activities that assure you'll be safe while also allowing you to express your support for various causes. You

¹ "What are you going to do about it?" - <https://thechaunceydevegashow.libsyn.com/>

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might also want to gently call out bullshit when you hear it. This can be done by asking questions, such as, “where did you get that information?” Or you might ask someone, “if you don’t like that government policy, what would you do, how would you solve that problem?”

Further, it is of utmost importance that you watch / read / listen to news, commentary, and so on, with discrimination. Be skeptical of Facebook posts, Twitter memes, YouTube videos, and even your trusty (or not so trusty) newspapers and news channels. Always ask yourself, can I trust this information? This does not mean don’t trust any information. Nonstop skepticism is not a sign of intelligence. It is a sign of laziness, of a refusal to think hard about hard problems at a time when hard thinking, with an eye to the future, is exactly what we need.

Finally, imagine the worst-case scenario and create a mental checklist as to how that scenario might become a reality. Then as events unfold, that checklist will help you see the warning signs so you can act accordingly. That might mean

being more vocal, donating more money, getting involved in local politics, or local charities that do good works. Some may recoil at this idea of imagining the worst, but by not doing so, every negative event will feel like a bolt out of the blue, and will nurture a feeling of despair.

Imagining the Unimaginable on Long Island

All this doom-and-gloom may seem abstract so allow me to bring it on home for those of us who live in one of the wealthiest counties² in the country: Nassau County, Long Island, New York. More than twenty years ago, the Republicans were in control of the county. They did so well that they nearly bankrupted the county, and begged the state to lend them money to help them get out of their mess. The state helped the county, but a condition of the loan was the creation of the Nassau Interim Finance Authority³, a state board created to help the county avoid bankruptcy. Though different county administrations, both Republican and Democratic, had sparred with NIFA over the

county’s budget, the county’s most recent budget (December 2021), created by Democratic County Executive Laura Curran, was met with unanimous approval by NIFA. Of course, there is no happy ending here.

On November 2, 2021, nearly every Democrat was tossed out of office. In the Town of North Hempstead where I reside (there are several towns, cities, and villages in Nassau County), the Republicans took control. On the county level, again the Republicans took control and this time, Bruce Blakeman, who was once the leader of the county legislature and who helped bring the county to the brink of bankruptcy, became its new county executive. There were two Democrats who managed to escape the bloodbath: Delia DeRiggi-Whitton, and Joshua Lafazan.

Lafazan, who recently changed party affiliation⁴ from Independent to Democrat, co-sponsored a bill that bordered on fascism. That sounds like an exaggeration until you read the actual bill. The bill⁵ would have made it possible for INDIVIDUAL POLICE

² “wealthiest counties” - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_highest-income_counties_in_the_United_States

³ “Nassau Interim Finance Authority” - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nassau_Interim_Finance_Authority

⁴ “changed party affiliation” - <https://www.liherald.com/stories/josh-lafazan-a-professed-unifier-running-for-congress.136963>

⁵ “The bill” - <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/2503?fileID=163393>

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OFFICERS TO SUE INDIVIDUALS, for up to \$50,000 dollars, who they deemed were a threat to them. There are already laws in the county that define the police as a protected class, but this bill would have gone even further. A police officer would have been able to sue an individual based on the legal definition of harassment. Harassment can be as simple as giving an officer a dirty look, and that officer perceives that to be an implied threat. Would ordinary people have the money to defend themselves against such lawsuits? Probably not, which means that people would be hesitant to engage in any interaction with the police, and they would certainly avoid protest, no matter how peaceful it might be. It quickly became obvious to opponents of the bill that this proposed legislation would violate the First Amendment right of free speech.

There were three sponsors of the bill. After much protest, one withdrew his name. The remaining sponsors were Lafazan and DeRiggi-Whitton. They seemed not to note the obvious: that this bill would be a violation of a Constitutional right. Would you like to guess which two people were reelected in November 2021?

So let's begin with what has already taken place. Nassau County flipped from Democratic

to Republican control. The new County Executive, Bruce Blakeman, was the county's liason with the Marmalade Mussolini's reelection campaign. This is the same Blakeman that played a role in the bankrupting of the county. Even before assuming office, Blakeman announced that he would not abide by any COVID-related mandates. Further, he stated his opposition to the Bail Reform laws. (NYC Mayor Eric Adams is also opposed to bail reform, and is in favor of reinstating solitary confinement though all human rights organizations state that solitary confinement is a form of torture.) Second, the sponsors of the proto-fascist bill were reelected. In fact, Lafazan switched parties (from Independent to Democrat) because he's looking to make a run for a Congressional seat.

Let's switch to events that have not-yet-taken-place-but-could. The Republicans gain the House in 2022. This emboldens Republicans on every level to push for draconian changes. Protests break out all across the country. Right-wing media stokes fear of chaos and violence. In Nassau County, the proto-fascist bill, promoted by Lafazan and DeRiggi-Whitton, reappears, endorsed by the county's police unions. The Republofascists who reside in some of the wealthiest

areas in Nassau County — Kings Point, Great Neck, Flower Hill, Garden City, Brookville, Locust Valley — clamor for passage of the bill. (They can “clamor” by threatening to withhold donations to politicians and their various fund-raising committees.) Perhaps they'll also push for anti-CRT legislation, banning of certain book from schools and libraries, and so on. In other words, Nassau County begins to resemble Florida, Virginia (under Youngkin), South Dakota, or Arizona.

What does the unimaginable feel like?

I'm reminded of the Kavanaugh hearing which crystallized for me the idea that the entire country was being treated like a rape victim. Old white men, accompanied by women who wished they too were rapists, were laughing as Christine Blasey Ford described the way she was held down on the bed by Kavanaugh. When it was time for Kavanaugh to speak, he exploded with rage. Now try to imagine what was going through Blasey Ford's mind. Here she was, decades later, feeling violated and helpless all over again. That's what the unimaginable will feel like.

So, what are you going to do about it? ■

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