Joseph P. Farrell: On the July 6 Events, the History of the US Constitution & Where We Go From Here

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News and Views From the Nefarium Jan 7 2021

by **Joseph P. Farrell**, *Giza Death Star*
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Truth Comes to Light Editor's references and excerpts:

Excerpts:

> *"…But 2021 is certainly off to a rocky start. And I really don't have any prepared remarks because, first of all, it's very difficult for me to express what I'm thinking and feeling right now in the wake of the absolute disaster of the American federal elections of last year, and what we saw yesterday – the spectacle that we saw yesterday – of the mob*

storming the capitol.

Now, you may think that, when I refer to 'the mob' storming the capitol that I'm referring to those people that pushed their way into the capitol building and basically shut down a session of Congress. I'm not referring to them because, primarily, what it appears to my eyes to have been, was a few agents provocateur infiltrating a rally and driving it into that sort of activity. The mob that I'm referring to is the mob called Congress and what we saw in terms of police behavior breaking up protestors, who as far as I could tell…were protesting rather peacefully."

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"We have now witnessed, in my opinion, an election that is not only fraudulent, but stolen. We have a man who is essentially a grifter, and as far as I'm concerned, an agent of influence for communist China. We have republicans and democrats who are not even willing to look at, nor address the concerns, of the millions of voters that they just disenfranchised."

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"Now, they're going to try to portray this as a return to normal. And in a certain sense, it is. But, at best, at best, if this is a return to business as usual, grift as usual, approach of the swamp – and that's the best case scenario. The worst case scenario is we've just had a coup d'etat and what we now have in charge of this country is a shill for communist China."

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"America likes to view itself as the "exceptional" nation, as if are exempt – by dint of our constitution and political

superiority and administrative genius – to the ways of history that befall all corrupt governments. Particularly those that are founded in ideologies that are, quite frankly, against the laws of the cosmos or the laws of God or whatever you prefer to say.

The idea that we are an exception to that rule has inculcated in this country and in this culture, if you want to call it that, a kind of hubris that is so divorced from reality that I think there will be geopolitical consequences to this election, right now, that we can scarcely imagine. Because what we've revealed ourselves to be, to the world, is a banana republic, operating under the color of law."

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Following his reading from Conceived in Liberty, Volume 5: The New Republic, by Murray N. Rothbard, who wrote about the constitutional convention and our current system of government:

"In other words, what he's saying is it was an oligarchy cloaking itself as a republic under color of law, that was designed to create an empire and ultimately, ultimately, with so many short circuits in it that any so-called populist expression of national will could be short circuited. So, in other words, what we saw yesterday is built-in. It's endemic to the system. It's endemic to the system. And it's time to wake up and realize that maybe those Anti-federalists had a point and that the Hamiltonians had fastened an absolute monster onto this country."

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As he is about to read excerpts from Why America Failed: The Roots of Imperial Decline by Morris Berman:

"Berman makes the point, in this book, that American culture

is essentially a hustling culture. It's a grift. It's all in the pursuit of economic power. And we certainly saw what that culture operates like yesterday. "

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"So, in other words, the other thing I'm suggesting to you is that the adolescent behavior, the constant pursuit of progress, is also, so to speak, inbuilt into this current constitution. This is why you saw what you saw yesterday with the adolescent mob of Congress doing what it did and overriding the actual will of most of the electorate in a stolen election. "

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"I do know that any way forward must take an honest, thorough, moral search of the foundations of this culture and, more importantly, of this country and of it's polity. Because no progress can be made without that. So, we can wrap ourselves in the flag like many of those protestors that we saw on tv yesterday. And we can talk about constitution. But we'd better realize that maybe some of that document might be the problem."

Final Chapter of Conceived in Liberty, Volume 5: The New Republic by Murray N. Rothbard
(Segments read by Joseph are highlighted.)

Conceived in Liberty

38. **Was the U.S. Constitution Radical?**

It was a bloodless coup d'état against an unresisting Confederation Congress. The original structure of the new Constitution was now complete. The Federalists, by use of

propaganda, chicanery, fraud, malapportionment of delegates, blackmail threats of secession, and even coercive laws, had managed to sustain enough delegates to defy the wishes of the majority of the American people and create a new Constitution. The drive was managed by a corps of brilliant members and representatives of the financial and landed oligarchy. These wealthy merchants and large landowners were joined by the urban artisans of the large cities in their drive to create a strong overriding central government—a supreme government with its own absolute power to tax, regulate commerce, and raise armies. These powers were sought eagerly as a method of handing out special privileges to commercial groups: navigation acts to subsidize shipping, tariffs to protect inefficient artisans stampeded by national depression from foreign manufactured goods, and a strong army and navy to pursue an aggressive foreign policy designed to force the opening of West Indies ports, the Mississippi River, and the Northwest. And, to pay for all of these bounties, a central taxing power would be harnessed that could also assume and pay the public debt held by wealthy speculators. But government, by its nature, cannot supply bounties and privileges without taking them from others, and these others were to be largely the hapless bulk of the nation's citizens, the inland subsistence farmers. In western Massachusetts, taxes to pay a heavy public debt owned by wealthy men in the East had produced Shays' Rebellion. Now, a new super government was emerging and carrying out on a national scale the mercantilist principle of taxation, regulation, and special privilege for the benefit of favored groups ("the few") at the expense of the bulk of producers and consumers in the country ("the many"). And while to acquire sufficient support they had to purchase allies among the mass of the people (e.g., urban artisans), the major concentration of benefits and privileges would undoubtedly accrue to America's aristocracy.

As part of the agreed-to division of the coming spoils, the northern nationalists, though permanently abhorring slavery in

a region where it was not viable and was being abolished, rather swiftly moved to protect and even encourage slavery in other regions in order to obtain support of the southern nationalists and thus the Constitution. To these nationalist leaders, abandoning the slave to his fate was a small price to pay for a strong central government to further markets for northern merchants and shippers.

Dispute has long raged among historians as to whether the Constitution was the completion, the fulfillment, of the spirit of the American Revolution, or whether it was a counterrevolution against that spirit. But surely it is clear that the Constitution was profoundly counterrevolutionary. The American Revolution has, in recent years, been depicted by "revisionist" historians as solely a struggle for independence against Great Britain on behalf of rather abstract principles of constitutional law. But legal principles are seldom passionately held and fought for unless instinctively bound up with conflicts in politico-economic reality. The Americans were not anti-British; on the contrary, the need to declare independence was acknowledged very late and almost reluctantly. The Americans were struggling not primarily for independence but for political-economic liberty against the mercantilism of the British Empire. The struggle was waged against taxes, prohibitions, and regulations—a whole failure of repression that the Americans, upheld by an ideology of liberty, had fought and torn asunder. It was only when independence was clearly necessary to achieve their goals did the American Revolution take final form. In other words, the American Revolution was in essence not so much against Britain as against British Big Government—and specifically against an all-powerful central government and a supreme executive.

In short, the American Revolution was liberal, democratic, and quasi-anarchistic; for decentralization, free markets, and individual liberty; for natural rights of life, liberty, and property; against monarchy, mercantilism, and especially

against strong central government. From the very beginning of that Revolution and even before, wealthy financial oligarchs in New York and Philadelphia, beginning with Benjamin Franklin, had toyed with the idea of a strong central government in America that would grant them mercantilist powers over the people. In the last phase of the war, Robert Morris, the "grandfather of the Constitution," came within an inch of imposing a nationalist-mercantilist regime upon a revolutionary nation fighting for its existence.

The Articles of Confederation were themselves a concession to nationalism as against the original Continental Congress, but basically they had kept the Congress chained to a leash, and so nationalist power was checked. But with the postwar breakup of the liberal Adams-Lee Junto, the aftermath of wartime destruction, and the opportunity provided by the depression of the mid-1780s, the nationalists fished in troubled waters and succeeded in imposing a counterrevolution.

It has also been charged by recent historians that there was really no continuity between the contending forces during the Revolution (radicals versus conservatives) and the opposing camps in the struggle over the Constitution. But, in the first place, the continuity of ideas is striking: from the very beginning, it was the dream of the Right, once remaining with the British government became impossible, to remold America into a form as close as possible to the powerful government of Great Britain. In leadership personnel, the sticking point is that the Right in 1776, the ones most reluctant to break with England (the Morrises, the Dickinsonses, the Jays, the Schulyers—in short, the Philadelphia and New York oligarchy along with the Pendletons and Washingtons in Virginia) were the leaders of the reaction throughout the period and the leaders in the drive for a Constitution. The leaders of the Right in 1776 were also the leaders of the Right in 1789.

The difference between the two periods—and the significant break in continuity—was the shift of large numbers of radical

leaders during the war into the conservative ranks a decade later. Indeed, one of the prior reasons for the defeat of the Antifederalists, though they commanded a majority of the public, was the decimation that had taken place in radical and liberal leadership during the 1780s. A whole galaxy of ex-radicals, ex-decentralists, and ex-libertarians, found in their old age that they could comfortably live in the new Establishment. The list of such defections is impressive, including John Adams, Sam Adams, John Hancock, Benjamin Rush, Thomas Paine, Alexander McDougall, Isaac Sears, and Christopher Gadsden. Perhaps an explanation of many of the defectors (Sam Adams, Sears, McDougall, Gadsden, and Paine) was the rightward shift of the big-city artisans who provided these men with their political power base.

Conversely, the Left in 1788 was very apt to have been on the Left in the early years of the Revolution. Among those faithful to the liberal cause: Luther Martin, James Warren, Elbridge Gerry, George Clinton, Abraham Yates, generally the Clintonians in New York, the Constitutionalist Party in Pennsylvania fighting against the counterinsurgency of the conservative Republican Party (except for defections like Paine), Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Person of the old radical Regulator movement in North Carolina. An important test of this hypothesis would be to find individuals or groups who were on the Right in 1776 but had shifted sharply leftward by 1788. Prominent men in that category are undoubtedly rare indeed.

If, then, the Constitution was a counterrevolution, what kind of a reactionary movement was it? Contrary to the famous "Beard Thesis," it was not at all a struggle between a sound-money "creditor class" against a small-farmer "debtor class" in favor of inflation and paper money. These were categories that Beard impermissibly smuggled from his experience of the monetary struggles of the late nineteenth century. It is impermissible to speak of debtor and creditor "classes," for

these are categories that shift from month-to-month and even day-to-day. Consequently, while it is true that paper money is likely to be favored by debtors, the aggressive debtors were far more likely to be wealthy merchants and great planters than rural farmers far removed from the seats of financial and political power. Wealthy mercantilists have higher credit ratings, can do more with borrowed money, and have much stronger political connections that allow them to secure favorable legislation. In truth, most groups, especially most of the wealthy, favored paper money; the difference came largely in the ways in which that money could be emitted and in whether legal-tender laws would accompany them. The oppressive form of debt, against which, for example, the Shaysites rebelled, was not private debt but public debt, i.e., against the fastening of a Revolutionary War debt owned by the wealthier classes upon the masses and small farmers who would be taxed to pay for it.

The Constitutional counterrevolution, then, was not a struggle of sound-money men against inflationists or creditors against debtors. Jackson Turner Main's brilliant demonstration that it was a conflict of commercial versus non-commercial factions can be subsumed under a broader truth. It was, as Patrick Henry grasped, a struggle of power and privilege, and to a lesser extent, of aristocracy against democracy. Those familiar categories can also be subsumed in the Liberty versus Power dichotomy, for while aristocracy was the most determined to acquire special privileges, they could not have won without the lures of apparent privileges offered to the urban artisans.

Contrary to Forrest McDonald, the Antifederalists have received a poor historical press, and even the most supposedly extreme Antifederalist historian dedicated his book on the formation of the Constitution to James Madison. He concluded his book as follows:

Today, Americans continue to debate, as they have ever since

the eighteenth century, about the division of power between the states and the central government, and about the role the latter should play in the economy and social life of the nation. Such debate had validity in an earlier and simpler age, but it is now little more than a romantic exercise. Although the Constitution itself remains what it was, the realities of political life in the twentieth century have created an all-powerful national government in fact.

And Staughton Lynd, though utilizing the commercial/non-commercial view of the struggle, and sympathetic to the individualist-libertarianism of the Antifederalists, concludes that Federalism was right by turning to "'positive, planful government'" to "'promote, guide, and discipline' all economic enterprise towards national goals." All this was justified, and even an aggressive internationalist policy was needed "to protect American economic independence" and secure "national economic development."

Professor Cecilia Keyna has derided the Antifederalists as "men of little faith," i.e., little faith in political power.6 Some recent historians have termed the Federalists "radicals" and liberal reformers, and the Antifederalists "conservatives" because the Federalists favored a sharp change in the status quo, while the Antifederalists did not. But to base the concept of radicals versus conservatives solely on the formal fact of change, regardless of context, is to (a) blur the critical difference between revolution and counterrevolution and (b) to arrive at such conceptual absurdities as designating Francisco Franco's rebellion in the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s as "radical," while the Spanish Loyalists were "conservative." But the point is that this "little faith" was precisely in the tradition of the American Revolution Bernard Bailyn writes of the revolutionary thinkers:

Most commonly the discussion of power centered on its essential characteristic of aggressiveness: its endlessly propulsive tendency to expand itself beyond legitimate

boundaries. … The image most commonly used was that of the act of trespassing. Power, it was said over and over again, has "an encroaching nature"; … power is "grasping" and "tenacious" in its nature; "what it seizes it will retain." Sometimes power "is like the ocean, not easily admitting limits to be fixed in it." Sometimes it is "like a cancer, it eats faster and faster every hour." … It is everywhere in public life, and everywhere it is threatening, pushing, and grasping; and too often in the end it destroys its benign—necessarily benign—victim.

What gave transcendent importance to the aggressiveness of power was the fact that its natural prey, its necessary victim, was liberty, or law, or right. The public world these writers saw was divided into distinct, contrasting, and innately antagonistic spheres: the sphere of power and the sphere of liberty or right. The one was brutal, ceaselessly active, and heedless; the other was delicate, passive, and sensitive. The one must be resisted, the other defended, and the two must never be confused.

The Federalists, on the other hand, in their faith in quasi-monarchical power, especially with themselves in the driver's seat, are strongly reminiscent of the Tories—another indication of continuity in the ideological struggle and of the Federalist movement as a reaction against the spirit of the American Revolution. Forrest McDonald is the latest historian to treat the adoption of the Constitution as a counterrevolution in restoring Toryism. However, in contrast to earlier historians of a similar view, McDonald extravagantly eulogizes this process. Apparently for McDonald, the American Revolution was the first step down the inevitable road to Bolshevism, a fate from which America was saved only by the "miracle … of all ages to come" of the Federalists, "giants" "who spoke in the name of the nation." Happily for McDonald, the giants triumphed instead of those "who, in 1787 and 1788, spoke in the name of the people and of popular

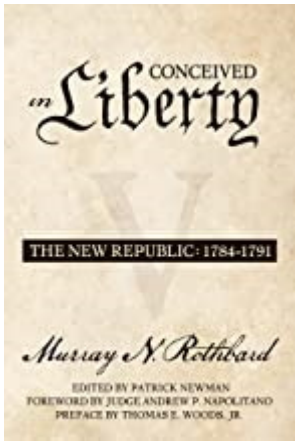
‘rights.’”

Overall, it should be evident that the Constitution was a counterrevolutionary reaction to the libertarianism and decentralization embodied in the American Revolution. The Antifederalists, supporting states’ rights and critical of a strong national government, were decisively beaten by the Federalists, who wanted such a polity under the guise of democracy in order to enhance their own interests and institute a British-style mercantilism over the country. Most historians have taken the side of the Federalists because they support a strong national government that has the power to tax and regulate, call forth armies and invade other countries, and cripple the power of the states. The enactment of the Constitution in 1788 drastically changed the course of American history from its natural decentralized and libertarian direction to an omnipresent leviathan that fulfilled all of the Antifederalists’ fears.

With the ratification of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the new government was now a fact and the Antifederalists would never again agitate for another constitutional convention to weaken American national power and return to a more decentralized and restrained polity. From now on American liberals, relying on the Bill of Rights and the Tenth Amendment, would go forth and do battle for Liberty and against Power within the framework of the American Constitution as states’-righters and Constitutionalists. Their battle would be a long and gallant one, but ultimately doomed to fail, for by accepting the Constitution, the liberals would only play with dice loaded implacably against them. The Constitution, with its inherently broad powers and elastic clauses, would increasingly support an ever larger and more powerful central government. In the long run, the liberals, though they could and did run a gallant race, were doomed to lose—and lose indeed they did. In a sense, the supposedly unrealistic radicals who would totally reject the Constitution

and try to rend it asunder (in different ways and from very different perspectives, e.g., the Whiskey Rebels, William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, and the secessionists of the South) would be far more perceptive about the realities and the potentials of the American constitutional system than those liberals working within it.

References:



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Why America Failed: The Roots of Imperial Decline by Morris Berman in paperback or hardcover.

Also referenced – the essay "I'll Take My Stand" by John Crowe Ransom: **I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian**

Tradition (including the essay by poet John Crowe Ransom) by Susan V. Donaldson