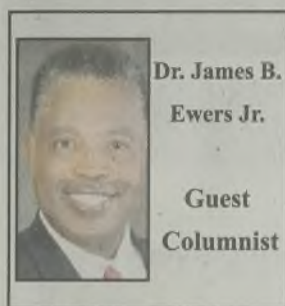


FORUM

Impeachment trial moves along, but we still must vote



Dr. James B. Ewers Jr.
Guest Columnist

We can't depend upon the president being removed from office. The country at this moment is widely divided on removing him from office. In addition to this sitting president, only two other presidents have been impeached. Andrew Johnson was impeached in 1868 and Bill Clinton was impeached in 1998. Neither was removed from office.

Our country is much like two ships passing in the night. We ignore each other and believe we are right and the other side is

wrong. It is clear however that this president has had a rocky start from the beginning. His arrogance and disregard for women have rubbed a lot of people the wrong way. While this is true, there are still great numbers of people who sing his praises. In their minds, they think he can do no wrong.

Since his inauguration, this president has been tottering on the edges of collapse, says his critics. When you watch CNN, he's not fit to hold office. However, when you watch Fox News, he's the king of the world. Our opinions are diverse, and we can each make the case for him to stay or to leave.

After a phone call with the president of Ukraine by POTUS, the House of Representatives started an impeachment inquiry

on Sept. 24. House members believed that foreign aid was being withheld because POTUS wanted some information on Hunter and Joe Biden. What was said on the phone call was the basis for the inquiry.

The sitting president was impeached on Dec. 18. The two articles approved were abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. The Senate has now started opening arguments. Republican Senator Mitch McConnell has already made it clear that the president will not be removed from office. The Senate has the votes to keep him in office.

So, no matter how persuasive the house managers are, the POTUS will remain in office. In fact, some say he is gaining momentum with all that

is happening now. In a strange way, they may be right. The Republican Senate in my opinion is not going to let public pressure sway them. Do they believe he is right or are they afraid of him? In the crevices of their hearts, do they believe he committed any wrongdoing?

The trial just began so we will see how long it will take. The president wants a quick trial and so does the Senate. I would be surprised if there are any witnesses called. John Bolton will not be called, even though he wants to testify. The president said, "I would have no problem with Bolton testifying other than we have to protect executive privilege."

With all the potential wrangling ahead, the POTUS will not leave office, at least through impeach-

ment proceedings.

In the practical and rational opinions of most, there is only one way for this president to leave office. That way is to vote him out in November. Voting him out will not be done by the Senate, but it will be done by the American people. There must be an every day commitment to ensuring that we vote. We will not need any witnesses nor will there be any whistleblowers.

We will ring the alarm so that change will occur. Our votes will be our way of saying that we are taking back our America. No longer will it be in the hands of a few monarchs who believe in their own rule of law.

Wake up everybody! The fact is our votes will matter and they will count. Don't let anyone tell you

otherwise. As November draws closer, the contestants will try to take our votes away. Don't be fooled by their trickery.

So, we will watch the trial knowing that it will be next to impossible to remove him from office. We can't control the Senate and what they do. However we can control our votes because we are the people.

James B. Ewers Jr., Ph.D., is a former tennis champion at Atkins High School and played college tennis at Johnson C. Smith University where he was all conference for four years. He is a retired college administrator and can be reached at ewers.jr56@yahoo.com.

Could the climate crisis be 'The Good News of Damnation'?



Dr. Lawrence Wittner
Guest Columnist

On August 12, 1945, six days after the U.S. government obliterated the city of Hiroshima with a single atomic bomb, Robert Hutchins, the president of the University of Chicago, delivered a remarkable public address. Speaking on his weekly radio program, the Chicago Roundtable, Hutchins observed that Leon Bloy, a French philosopher, had referred to "the good news of damnation" under the assumption that only the fear of perpetual hellfire would motivate moral behavior. "It may be," Hutchins remarked, "that the atomic bomb is the good news of damnation, that it may frighten us into that Christian character and those righteous actions and those positive political steps necessary to the creation of a world society."

According to Hutchins, this world society would

serve as the foundation of a world government and, in the context of the existential danger posed by nuclear war, he was totally committed to creating it. "Up to last Monday," he said, "I didn't have much hope for a world state." But the shock of the atomic bombing, he added, crystallized "the necessity of a world organization."

In the following months, Hutchins created and then presided over a Committee to Frame a World Constitution—a group of farsighted intellectuals who conducted discussions on how best to overcome humanity's ancient divisions and thereby move beyond nationalism to a humane and effective system of global governance. In 1948, they issued a Preliminary Draft of a World Constitution, with a Preamble declaring that, to secure human advancement, peace, and justice, "the age of nations must end and the era of humanity begin."

The Chicago committee constituted but a small part of a surprisingly large and influential world government movement that,

drawing on the slogan "One World or None," flourished during the late 1940s. In the United States, the largest of the new organizations, United World Federalists, claimed 46,775 members and 720 chapters by mid-1949. The goal of creating a world federation was endorsed by 45 major national organizations, including the National Grange, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, United Auto Workers, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Young Democrats, the Young Republicans, and numerous religious bodies. That year, 20 state legislatures passed resolutions endorsing world government, while 111 members of the House of Representatives and 21 senators sponsored a congressional resolution declaring that the new United Nations should be transformed into "a world federation." Much the same kind of uprising occurred in nations around the world.

Although this popular crusade waned with the intensification of the Cold War, as did the hopes for a sweeping transforma-

tion of the nation-state system, the movement did secure a number of vital changes in the international order. Not only did the United Nations begin playing an important part in global peace and justice efforts, but the original impetus for the world government movement—the existential danger of nuclear war—began to be addressed by world society.

Indeed, a massive, transnational nuclear disarmament movement, often led by former activists in the world government campaign, emerged and rallied people all around the planet. In this fashion, it placed enormous pressure upon the world's governments to back away from the brink of catastrophe. By the mid-1990s, national governments had reluctantly agreed to a sweeping array of international nuclear arms control and disarmament treaties and were no longer threatening to plunge the world into a nuclear holocaust.

More recently, however, that world society has been crumbling thanks to a dangerous return of nationalism. From the Unit-

ed States to Russia, from India to Brazil, numerous countries have been swept up in xenophobia, triggering not only a disastrous revival of the nuclear arms race, but an inability to work together to challenge the latest existential threat to human survival: climate change. Championing their own narrow national interests—often based on little more than enhancing the profits of their fossil fuel industries—these nations have either torn loose from the limited international environmental agreements of the past or, at best, shown their unwillingness to take the more significant steps necessary to address the crisis.

And a crisis it is. With the polar ice caps melting, sea levels rising, whole continents (such as Australia) in flames, agriculture collapsing, and storms of unprecedented ferocity wreaking havoc, climate catastrophe is no longer a prediction, but a reality.

What can be done about it?

Clearly, just as in the case of heading off nuclear annihilation, no single nation can tackle the prob-

lem on its own. Even if a small country like the Netherlands, or a large country like the United States, managed to quickly develop a system of 100% renewable energy, that action would be insufficient, for other countries would still be generating more than enough greenhouse gasses to destroy the planet.

So there really is no other solution to the on-rushing climate catastrophe than for people and nations to forget their tribal animosities and start behaving as part of a world society, bound together by an effective system of global governance. The climate crisis, like the prospect of nuclear annihilation, really is "the good news of damnation." And we can only overcome it by working together.

One world or none!

Dr. Lawrence Wittner, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is professor of History emeritus at SUNY/Albany and the author of "Confronting the Bomb" (Stanford University Press).

King and the tremors of history



ROBERT C. KOEHLER
Guest Columnist

Nothing like trying to rewrite history.

Remember way back when, when America was one nation under God and everyone got along so nicely? That was the sentiment of an FBI tweet on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which — oh, the horror! — blew up in the agency's face and brought a real fragment of the 'Old Days' back into public consciousness. And maybe, in the process, the agency woke up King's actual dream — you know, the one it hated and did its best to smother.

This was the FBI's official tweet on MLK Day:

Today, the FBI honors the life and work of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. A quote from Dr. King is etched in stone at the FBI Academy's reflection garden in Quantico as a reminder to all students and FBI employees: 'The time is always right to do what is right.'

That the FBI — the agency that saw King and the Civil Rights Movement as a communist plot, subjected him to merciless surveillance, and may have tried to get him to commit suicide — should, 50-plus years after his murder, purport to honor him was simply too much for lots of people, many of whom linked to a monstrous letter the agency had sent to King, along with a box of tapes showing him having sex with various women who were not his wife.

The letter was a phony screed of outrage, allegedly from a black former supporter, which ended thus:

The American public, the church organizations have been helping — Protestant, Catholic and Jews will know you for what you are — an evil abnormal beast. So will others who have backed you. You are done.

King, there is only one thing left for you to do. You know what it is. You have just 34 days in which to do (it). ... You are done. There is only one way out for you. You better take it before your filthy, abnormal, fraudulent self is bared to

the nation.

King knew from the start that this was from the FBI and did not let it stop him: And its relevance today is not as simply a piece of the past. Yes, it's a reminder of the blatant, unrestrained racism of yore, but even more disturbing is the institutional arrogance it represents, combined with racism. This is white America "protecting" itself — institutionally, at the highest levels of government.

Who here thinks we're done with all that?

Indeed, this nation's lack of atonement for its past — combined with the endless wars it is currently waging — make King's legacy profoundly problematic, by which I mean relevant.

For instance, he wrote in his 1963 book, "Why We Can't Wait":

Our nation was born in genocide, when it embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. Even before there were large numbers of Negroes on our shore, the scar of racial hatred had already disfigured colonial society. From the sixteenth

century forward, blood flowed in battles over racial supremacy. We are perhaps the only nation which tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its indigenous population. Moreover, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade. Indeed, even today we have not permitted ourselves to reject or to feel remorse for this shameful episode. Our literature, our films, our drama, our folklore all exalt it.

And then there was his stand against the Vietnam war:

Each day the war goes on, the hatred increased in the hearts of the Vietnamese and in the hearts of those of humanitarian instinct. The Americans are forcing even their friends into becoming their enemies. It is curious that the Americans, who calculate so carefully on the possibilities of military victory, do not realize that in the process they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat. The image of America will never again be the image of revolution, freedom, and democracy, but the image of violence and militarism.

These words, delivered at Riverside Church in New York, a year to the day before his assassination, drove LBJ nuts. Who did King think he was? He got his civil rights legislation! Now here he was, opposing America's noble war.

Not only do these words remain immensely relevant today, they are a reminder of how little has changed and how King-level outrage over our wars, our racism and our poverty remains crucial. Endless war — racist militarism — continues to be a defining national characteristic, unchallenged at the political or media center.

"Even when critical of U.S. actions, media commentary on recent U.S. bombings and assassinations in the Middle East is premised on the assumption that the U.S. has the right to use violence (or the threat of it) to assert its will, anytime, anywhere," Gregory Shupak wrote recently at Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting. "Conversely, corporate media coverage suggests that any countermeasure — such as resistance to the

U.S. presence in Iraq — is inherently illegitimate, criminal and/or terrorist."

I do, however, believe that this is a nation where change — a "revolution of values," as MLK put it — is possible. Indeed, his life shows this to be the case, but honoring King requires more than thanking him for his service or reciting a quote that instantly goes meaningless.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez put it this way recently, at a Martin Luther King Day event in New York City:

"We can't sit around and use the high school history version of Dr. King. King's life did not end because he said 'I have a dream.' It ended because he was dangerous to the core injustices of this nation. ... If we want to honor him, we have to be dangerous too."

Robert Koehler (koehlercw@gmail.com), syndicated by PeaceVoice, is a Chicago award-winning journalist and editor. He is the author of "Courage Grows Strong at the Wound."