

# THE BYSTANDER —★—

## Are there *Two Americas*?

Published in the Martinsburg *Journal*, May 28, 2017

Are there really “Two Americas,” the phrase we hear from all sides of the political spectrum referring to the disparity between the have-nots and the haves, the urban and the rural, the left and the right, the intellectuals and the blue collars?

No; there are not two Americas. There are three.

There are the Native Americans, the hundreds of tribes who thrived for thousands of years until they were forced at gunpoint onto quarantined lands under treaties that are still being broken by both the US government and private citizens. But they are Americans, with the right to vote granted in 1924.

Secondly, there are the descendants of Africans who were kidnapped, shipped, sold, and worked like animals until death. They were not even considered people for the first 400 years. They are still living on *reservations* in the rural south and segregated neighborhoods of the inner cities. But they are Americans, with the right to vote since 1870.

Then, there are the European immigrants who settled this continent. They guaranteed themselves, white men, the right to vote as their first act of government in 1787. This *third* America has never been subject to any legislative interference to its own pursuit of Life, Liberty and Happiness. But now, after banishing one race, enslaving another, and disenfranchising their own mothers, wives, daughters and sisters until 1920, they are angry because they realize that they have divided themselves into a caste system not unlike the class structure they imposed on Native Americans, African-Americans and women.

To trivialize our divided nation into what is essentially opposing White Americas by calling it “Two Americas” is more of the same disrespectful exclusion of the only true minorities we owe anything to

# THE BYSTANDER —★—

in this country. Everyone else came willingly, and most got a better deal here than they did from the place they left.

This latest excuse to elect a working-class savior has no basis. All the ingredients for a Trump-like figure to rescue the “Little (white) Guy” have existed for well over five decades, spanning 12 presidential elections that could have been opportunities for blue-collar middle-class voters to express their frustration with *elite* Washington. We've had the working poor since Biblical times, wages have stagnated for over 30 years while the cost of living has gone up, and manufacturing began to decline well before that. Distrust of government is epidemic, starting with the Vietnam War and Watergate.

So, what was so different in this election cycle?

The only factors that have never before occurred were these two events: our first Black President, and the looming specter of his potential replacement, a woman. That was the spark that lit the fire that blazed the inferno that became the arsonists' destruction of the integrity of our government that is now swirling towards a conical abyss.

Rebuilding will obviously be difficult. Who will accomplish the hard labor? Minorities, new immigrants, and women. Many of these people have two things in common: adapt to survive, and don't put the responsibility of failure on someone else. Those are the same values that made our ancestors achieve, for better or worse, success in this country we call home. This government was founded specifically so that its citizens, and now every citizen, would have an opportunity to shape their own fate, and also shape the destiny of the nation. If we can't continue to believe that, then no cosmopolitan billionaire real estate developer is going to do it for us, no matter what he promises.

If you want to *Make America Great Again*, you need to start with *you*.