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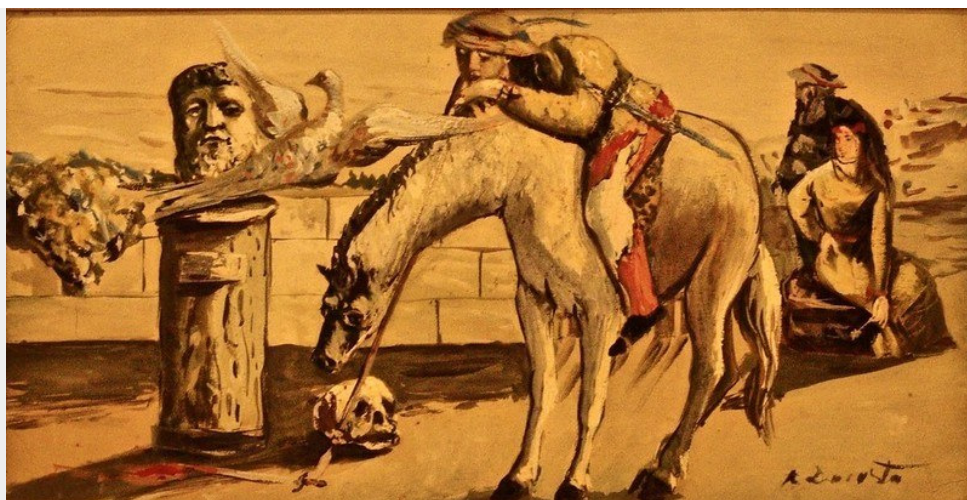
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زبانهای اروپایی

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## Republican and Democratic Parties in Turmoil



The Poet's encounter with Death (1941) – António Dacosta – CC BY 2.0

Stumbling into February, both major political parties in the U.S. are in disarray as they face uncertain, unplanned and uncontrollable futures going into a crucial election year.

For Republicans, it's the dangerous and perhaps foolish choice to acquit a corrupt president who has been impeached. For Democrats, it's looking like Bernie Sanders, the Independent senator from Vermont, may wind up sweeping the early primary states, upending the Democrat's apple cart of cozy corporate campaign contributors with a wave of young, progressive, enthusiastic voters and millions of small-donor supporters.

At this writing, the Senate hasn't yet voted on the question of whether to call witnesses in the impeachment trial of Donald J. Trump — but suffice it to say it's a long shot. This, of course, flies in the face of what a real trial is supposed to be, namely, where the "jurors,"

in this case the 100 members of the Senate, are supposed to watch both sides present their cases, call witnesses to bolster their own or weaken their opponents' arguments and objectively make their judgment based on the facts.

In this particular case, the most compelling witness would be former National Security Adviser John Bolton, a hard-core right-wing hawk hired and fired by Trump. While Trump's administration has done a startling job of refusing to allow testimony or information from agencies and individuals, it's fair to say they're having a very tough time keeping Bolton from making his accusation. Truth is, that's already been leaked from Bolton's upcoming book, saying Trump did indeed condition the release of congressionally approved military aid to Ukraine to demand Ukrainian President Zelensky first announce investigations into Joe and Hunter Biden in relation to Burisma energy.

Bolton would offer "firsthand" testimony that blows away the Trump defense claim that only "secondhand" witnesses were called to testify in the House. Unfortunately for the president, even if the Senate doesn't call witnesses, Bolton would be free to testify before the House or go straight to television. For a political party obsessed with controlling its members, Bolton is now their worst nightmare of uncontrollability.

Speaking of uncontrollable, the Democrats are wrestling with their own uncontrollable candidate in Bernie Sanders. Besides leading all the Democrat candidates in fundraising with a stunning \$35 million from small donors last quarter, Sanders continues to inspire, energize and bring hope to large crowds across the nation. Recent polls put Sanders easily in the lead in the Iowa contest, leading in New Hampshire and overwhelmingly leading in California, which controls a huge percentage of delegates to the Democratic nominating convention.

Bernie also has the solid and enthusiastic support of millions of young voters who are embracing his platform of combating climate change, implementing universal health care, eliminating crushing student debt and addressing the mounting problem of income inequality in the U.S.

While there's been much Demo hand-wringing about Sanders' positions, it's his attack on "millionaires and billionaires" that has party insiders tied in knots at his ascendancy while their hand-picked neoliberal, Joe Biden, slides downward in the primary polls. Despite the worries about Bernie's "electability," the reality of Sanders' standing and potential

early primary victories is undeniable and his supporters are unshakably — and uncontrollably — dedicated.

With both major political parties in turmoil, one for defending corruption, one for trying to quash a progressive candidate, it's fair to say February is going to be quite the month in U.S. politics. Maybe it's time to consider tossing the control exerted by the two-party system and offer voters expanded choices to address the many and daunting challenges of the future.

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