

FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY AREN'T THE SAME THING

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These are troubling times since 9/11 and most of our problems appear to spring from repressive regimes. The solution as far as many in the West are concerned is for those regimes to become more democratic. Most people equate democracy with freedom. In a recent column, Joseph Sobran explores the real meaning of democracy and some of its drawbacks.

Plato described democracy as the “rule of unwise people by unwise people”. Another analogy has equated it as two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch. Sobran opines that the lambs invariably lose the elections.

He notes the framers of the U S Constitution took great pains to create a republican system in which majority rule would be tempered and inhibited by many restraints.

Everyone equates democracy and freedom as meaning the same thing. The point is made that we do not owe our freedom to democracy, but to older legal traditions inherited from Anglo-Saxon law. They essentially were habeas corpus, due process of law, the presumption of innocence, the right to trial by one’s peers, etc. The Constitution preserves these protections against arbitrary State power.

In his article, Sobran points out that in practice, democracy breeds corrupt politicians intent on short-term gain for themselves. One does not have to look hard to see the proof of that statement in today’s climate of heightened national security. They place party unity and reelection concerns over national security.

Dwight Eisenhower said the one thing that makes America unique among all nations is freedom. Sobran ends his article on the note that the world does not need more democracies. It needs more freedom – a vastly different thing.

In an article on March 5, 2002, I declared that I would no longer vote for the lesser of two evils in State or local elections. I arrived at this decision after reading Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura’s book *Do I Stand Alone?*

I briefly reiterate quotations from prominent Americans that reinforced my change of heart: Eugene J. McCarthy: “*The two party system has given this country the war of Lyndon Johnson, Watergate of Nixon and the incompetence of Carter.*”

Jerry Garcia: “*Constantly choosing the lesser of two evils is still choosing evil.*”

This earlier reasoning will determine my vote in the approaching gubernatorial election here in New York. Both of the two major political parties have demonstrated a propensity to rule in favor of special interest groups in direct relation to generous contributions from them. The little guy is left out in the cold.

Both parties have demonstrated that they favor mob rule when it comes to our Adirondack region. This is a perfect example of supplanting and limiting our freedoms with democracy.

Sobran further pointed out: An individual vote really only matters in jury trials where it may decide a verdict when a unanimous verdict is required. One is more likely to be run over on the way to the polls than to make a difference with his or her vote.

I will not vote for the lesser of two evils, but for Tom Golisano who owes nothing to any special interest groups. As George Wallace once pointed out “There is not a dime’s work of difference in either major political party”.