

America is a Representative Republic, Not a Democracy



By J.W. Bryan

For many years I have observed the increase in the number of people who believe America is a Democracy. We are not and we never have been. Our founders hated democracies.

The word "Democracy" never entered the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States. The United States is not a democracy, and our founders used strong words to make clear that their nation should never become one.

Consider some of the following statements concerning the issue:

"Democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have, in general, been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths." (1787) James Madison

"Remember, democracy never lasts long; it soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide." (1814) John Adams

"An elective despotism was not the government we fought for..." (1782) Thomas Jefferson

"...that in tracing these evils to their origin every man had found it in the turbulence and follies of democracy." (1787) Edmond Randolph

“Between a balanced republic and a democracy, the difference is like that between order and chaos.” John Marshall

Upon reviewing these statements by men who were there at the beginning, it is quite apparent to me that the simple fact remains that the United States is a republic (and a constitutional republic at that) and not a democracy, by purposeful design.

It was designed that way to protect the rights of the individual, as well as the rights of minorities, but it also protects the rights of individuals that make up the majority. Therefore, we could say that at the core of republicanism is the grounding in the basis of law which surrounds the authority for protection of the unalienable rights of the individual to the extent that these rights are inviolate and cannot be voted away by the majority.

We need to remember that we are directly endowed by God with the law, i.e., authority, which we then delegate to government and charge it with protecting our rights. Therefore, the founding of our nation was predicated upon the God-given rights of the individual, in which foremost was the duty and charge of government to protect the life, liberty and property of the individual. This is why the Founders chose to give us a republic.

In contrast to the foregoing, in a democracy there would be no protection for the rights of the individual. In fact, all rights would be disposed of. In a democracy the majority rules either directly or through its elected representatives. As in a monarchy, the law is whatever the government determines it to be.

The restraint is upon the individual instead of the government. Unlike that envisioned under a republican form of government, rights are seen as privileges and permissions that

are granted by government and can be rescinded by government.

At age 15, my father-in law had to leave home and go out on his own. At age 18 he was back home taking care of the entire family. This was in the 1920s and times were very hard.

The reason he had to leave home was because there were just too many children to feed. His father had died and his mother had married a man whose wife had also died and between them there were about six or seven children. Evidently, in the time between when he was 15 and when he became 18, things developed at home to the point that he had to return to take care of the family.

Even though he was burdened with having asthma, as well as never having a well-paying job except for a period when he was a section foreman on the railroad sometime in the thirties, he managed to acquire a little over 200 acres of land in two different tracts which were only slightly separated. Years later when these acres were divided up between his children, there was many thousands of dollars' worth of timber harvested from what he had provided. Presently there are eight families, my wife and I included, that have homes on this property. This is a blessing for us that when we set out to establish a home for ourselves, we didn't have to purchase many thousands of dollars in land.



So, what is my point; what does all this have to do with the difference between a democracy and a republic?

First of all, in a democracy he would not have had the character or the drive to do what he did because he would not have had to leave home at age 15. There would have been whatever the family needed distributed to them from government. Secondly, he would have never had the opportunity

to acquire the property that he did because when it became evident that he was getting ahead of others and accomplishing more he would have been stopped by the authorities. If he had been allowed to acquire this property, he would most likely been prevented from leaving it to his children.

I have noted that some proponents of democracy have adamantly declared that inheritance should be abolished so that everyone would have to start out from scratch – no one should have an advantage to begin with.

I think of Walter Williams as an example: At age 14 his father deserted the family, so he had to step up to the plate and become head of it. To help the family survive he shined shoes or whatever came his way. As a result, he became a remarkable man. Somehow, he became the head of the Economics Department at George Mason University. In short, a Walter Williams, or anyone like him could never happen in a democracy because the incentive, even if allowed, would not exist.

In a democracy I would not have become what I am: In 1939, when I was 12 years old, my dad became ill and was bedridden for an entire summer which resulted in my becoming the head of the family physically speaking – I had to make the crop. I received some help from my mother with the hoeing but all the plowing and planting was left up to me. All that being said, I cannot take full credit for I had access to my Father for advice. I would report to him at least once daily and at times more than that about how things were. To which he would respond with whatever advice was needed.

During this time and because of the circumstances, I became a young man. I think I realized at the time that the family would be dependent upon me for a livelihood due to my father being subject to having long periods when he could not work.

I dropped out of school in the 9th grade after we moved to Louisiana where school lasted through May, which was about the

end of planting time. So, since my dad wasn't able to get it done – it was up to me. This didn't bother me; I knew that my first responsibility was to take care of the family; actually, I was quite proud as well as happy that I could do it.

Those that are beating the drums for democracy consist of mostly two classes or groups of people. The main one is those that want to manipulate the people into accepting a form of government that is 100 percent despotic. The other is the one which thinks that the excess money others make will somehow come to them.

I can't understand how many people think that if people were restricted in the amount of money they could make, that it would result in more for them. Think about it...what if there was no one making an excess amount. What if everyone was like me and my wife who didn't make enough to pay an income tax. Do people think the economy would still be the same? Do they think the welfare checks would still arrive? And what about food stamps, would they continue? The fact is that if no one made more money than me, about half of the people would starve to death.

Therefore, when you think about it, we are very blessed that many people make a lot of money. So, let us count our blessings. Because if we shifted the rest of the way into democracy things would be much worse economically and that would not be the worst of it. The worst would be that we would completely lose our God-given rights to life, liberty, and property.

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