

## Evolving Democracy



I try very hard to avoid politics in my blogs, but my recent trip to Montana and a previous trip to Nevada for business got me looking unbiasedly at the US political system. This stemmed from conversations I had with two gentlemen from my company who seemed very open minded, but still supported Donald Trump as President. Through our conversations, I started to get an in-depth look at people who support Trump not because they think he can make America great again (remember, these folks do come across as enlightened), but because of how they view their political system as an ingrained and broken process. They support Trump because they want him to blow it up so they can start over.

And you know, there is some merit to that.

The American culture as a whole is strongly based on the individual. The idea of freedom to do what you want and achieve great things is ingrained in the American psyche. You can see it in the debate over the second amendment. Their history of going west and starting over, free to live their lives on their own terms. It's quite an uplifting story. And Americans are proud of that history. Reality, however, is never that rosy. World history has seen a lot of abuses and American history is no different. Also, although the American Dream is not only for the rich, but it does have its obstacles for the poor.

Individualism. It's a hell of a way to maintain a democracy, but somehow, they have managed it. Of course, they say they aren't a democracy. They are a republic, with representative government. Yes, if you want to split hairs, the US is not a democracy, which involves everyone's involvement in the political

system. Great for the City of Athens back in 500 BC where there were only a few thousand folks (less if you don't let the women and children vote). But it is hardly practical for a nation of 350 million.

There is another part of individualism that makes the US an anomaly in history. Yes, I'm going back into history again. Back during the American Revolution (that's how the Brits saw it, Americans see it a little differently), once they had won, the thirteen colonies were all wanting to become their own nations. It took most of the 1780's to get a federal system in place. Then it took George Washington eight years as president to make it accepted. Without George, who was a truly great man (with a 3-9-1 war record, who knew), there was a very good chance America wouldn't have happened at all, and in the process, Canada could very well have had a different history.

The political system established was never designed to be a two-party system. In fact, there were several times when there were more than two parties. But one would think that a system based in individualism, the American political landscape would look more like Italy and their never-ending parade of political parties that make running the country a challenge. But this was the late 1700's, early 1800's. Even Britain, with its political system, fell into a two-party structure (the Tory's and the Whigs) because the issues of the day were fairly black and white (or white and black, depending on your party affiliation). The British labour party only formed when it was found that the newly franchised working voters were not represented by the aristocratic parties of the day. Things really took off when soldiers returned from the Great War with a rather strong distain for the aristocratic officers who had sent so many of them to their deaths.

So here we are, a two-party system ingrained into the politics of America. One continues to drift right, with less government to get in the way of the people, which eventually leads to chaos by the way, and a moral code (which they don't actually follow themselves) they try to force down everyone's throat. Never mind individual freedom. The other drifts continually left, with more government control done in the name of protecting the people, which generally leads to a dictatorship by the way. Never mind individual freedom.

Before they drifted, they actually used to talk to one another and achieved some great things. Now, middle ground is barren, which is where most US citizens are politically. There is no one to represent them. And there appears to be no way to clear the establishment so their political system can evolve.

Then along came Trump.

I really wonder how historians 100 years from now, away from the current biases, are going to write about this time.