

# DEMOCRACY MEANS POLICE



Our forebears overthrew kings and dictators, but they didn't abolish the institutions by which kings and dictators ruled: they *democratized* them. Yet whoever operates these institutions—whether it's a king, a president, or an electorate—the experience on the receiving end is roughly the same. Laws, bureaucracy, and police came before democracy; they function the same way in a democracy as in a dictatorship. The only difference is that, because we can cast ballots about how they should be applied, we're supposed to regard them as *ours* even when they're used against us.

Democracy doesn't just mean public participation in making decisions. It presumes that all power and legitimacy is vested in one decision-making structure, and it requires a way to impose those decisions. As long as anyone might defy them, there have to be armed personnel to *regulate*, to *discipline*, to *control*.

Without police, there would be *anarchy*: people would act on their own initiative, only implementing decisions they felt to be in their best interest. Conflicts would have to be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of all parties involved, not suppressed by a gang with a monopoly on force.

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