

DEMOCRACY

MEANS WAR



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 means constant competition. Just as corporations contend for resources in the marketplace, politicians and governments vie for power. When power is centralized, people have to attain domination over others in order to determine their own destinies. Those in power can only hold onto it by waging war perpetually against their own populations as well as foreign peoples: hence the National Guard troops brought back from Iraq to suppress domestic protests.

As long as we remain at a distance from our own potential, being *governed* rather than acting freely, being *represented* rather than acting on our own interests, people will seek power over each other as a substitute for self-determination. The alternative is *anarchy*: a world in which people fight only for themselves—not for empires, flags, or gods—and conflicts cannot produce hierarchy and oppression.

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