

Alternatives to democracy

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It was in the middle of the night on July 17, 1918, when Tsar Nicholas of Russia, along with his wife, four daughters, son, and several loyal aides were awakened and taken to a basement room and told to wait.

It was for their own protection, they were told, as anti Bolshevik forces were approaching the house and it might be fired upon by the hostile forces.

A few minutes later, a group of Bolsheviks and communists entered the room and informed them of the real reason they were there.

The entire family was murdered in cold blood ? including the Tsar and Tsarina, their aides, and their five innocent children.

It was the Bolshevik's way of telling the public there was no chance of going back.

What better way to eliminate your competition than by killing them all and their future generations?

Between 1976 and 1979, Cambodian so called ?prime minister? Pol Pot carried out a genocide on his own people. He eliminated anyone who could be considered a threat to his power. That included anyone with knowledge, political enemies, people who appeared not to follow the party line, and those deemed ?bad elements.?

If you didn't agree with having your children taken away to live in a collective and taught by party members whose job it is to indoctrinate youth, or your read something that wasn't on the approved list, you would be shot and buried in farm field so your body would be used as fertilizer.

A friend of mine and fellow journalist visited Cambodia a couple of years ago. He reported back that it was a beautiful country with a very friendly population but Pol Pot's elimination of anyone with knowledge, and that included anyone who held a university degree in something like engineering or medicine, meant the entire knowledge base of the country was destroyed.

Decades later they have not recovered from that and simply do not have the ability or knowledge of how to build a bridge, a railway, or any other kind of infrastructure.

Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, found his transition from leader of the country to that of ordinary dead citizen when he and his wife were machine-gunned to death in the back alley of military barracks by several really angry soldiers in 1989.

In the west, for the most part, we avoid transitions of power at the point of a gun.

You go to the polls, you cast your vote and hope your candidate wins. If they don't, you can try again in a few, usually four or five years.

The last general election in Canada ended with a minority government ? meaning the popular vote did not elect the new leader. In fact, far from it, but that's the way the system works.

While a lot of people were disappointed, there were no riots on the streets and no yahoos in pickup trucks firing weapons at people's homes who had the audacity to plant an opposing party sign on their front line.

Down south, this debacle of an election and the resulting rallies in the month since, are an affront to both the democratic process and civic pride.

The election is over, yet there are still these ridiculous rallies and riots from both sides on city streets with many of them resulting in violence.

Standing on a street corner and yelling insults to passing motorists is no way to prove your point ? if there really is one.

The U.S. likes to present itself as the world's greatest democracy, yet the behaviour on the streets of late indicates many don't believe in the democratic process, and would gladly receive a dictator as the new leader provided he was on ?their side.?

Waving a banner in your neighbour's face or getting in a punch-up on a street corner because the other guy is wearing the wrong colour only depends the divide of an already divided nation.

If these people would pack up their banners and flags, stow their rifles and pepper spray, and turn their passions to something else they really may be able to do some good with all this time they have on their hands.

For years, the U.S. has been proud of the peaceful transition of power that follows a federal election.

However that tradition is fading as the hatred grows.

It's time to get back to some common sense thinking and political decorum before another leader is someday invited to the basement for their own protection.