Democracy Is Dead
Or, Powerball to the People

By: R.S. Rathkamp

 Turn out the lights, pack up the kids, and fold the tents; our grand 230-year-old experiment is over. Democracy is dead. It’s been kicked, prodded, probed, mishandled, and left for dead on the side of the road. Just like Communism before it, Democracy has gone belly-up in the political system, fish-kill of the twentieth century. It was by far the flashiest, most disco of all the governmental models, and now it’s gone. It is the Britney Murphy of dead governments; young, sexy, and energetic, but all it really did was leave a pretty corpse.

 In truth, I could have come to this conclusion years earlier, but I think I have been in denial over the seriousness of the problem. Look around you at our nation’s leaders. Over two hundred years of refinement and all we can come up with is this, oil spills, illegal immigration, prolonged wars in the Middle East, and socialized medicine. My own region of the country has sent such notables to Washington, D.C. such as George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Joe Biden and Barack Obama. To take it further, as if that was not enough, Californians voted in the Governator.

 This, of course, begs the question, who let these bozos in? Who the heck forgot to lock the lion’s cage? You did. Well, me too, but I primarily blame you. Democracy only works to represent the majority when the majority actually votes. Guess what; the majority does not vote. Recently, only 36.1 percent of the Americans turned out to vote (an all-time low since 1942). On average, only 38-40 percent of the voting body usually shows up to cast their ballot. That means that only 21 percent of the population picks our representatives. Some cities only get voter turnout in the 10 to 30 percent range.

 I realize, of course, that higher voter turnout alone is not the answer, maybe not even desirable. Take a weekend visit to Wal-Mart. Stroll down to the grocery store or take in a movie on Friday night. Look closely at the people around you. Do you trust these people to elect the leader of the free world? The majority of the country has made *Keeping up with Kardashians* a hit TV show and Ryan Seacrest a millionaire. Millions tune in each week to see what those crazy judges on *The Voice* will say next; millions more eat up whatever overpriced, computer distorted music crazy get up wearing Lady Gaga can throw at them. I, for one, do not have faith in the vast majority of Americans to make what I would call, “quality judgments.”

 Besides, it’s not like we have philosopher-like, wise men lining up for government service. Even if 100% of the people had turned out to vote in 1996, Bob Dole or Bill Clinton would have still been President. The highest voter turnout of any state in the nation in 1998 was Minnesota. They elected Jesse “The Body” Ventura as governor.

 The people who should hold office simply won’t run. Would you? To be president, think of all the belly-groveling, brown-nosing humiliation you have to go through to position yourself for a run. Then factor in the relentless prying into your personal life by the press and your opponents. If you win, you get to discard any private life you once had, and butt heads with the know-it-all’s in Congress. All this for what; a little over $300,000 a year, continued threats on your life even after you leave office, and some squat, ugly library in Topeka, Kansas that will house all of your worthless e-mails, Facebook posts, and tweets for eternity? Sign me up.

 So the end result of our noble endeavor is a stupid, apathetic population and an unqualified leadership. Clearly changes are in order. But what? Do we scrap the domestic system and start over? Just tweak it a little? Let’s examine our options.

 First we could burn the bridges. Tear down the wall of voter choice and replace it with another edifice entirely. How about Communism? Outlaw all political parties, nationalize all businesses and corporations, and let the labor unions run them, say good-bye to all your take home pay and start throwing all the smart people in jail. Take away all family-owned farms (wait a minute, I think we’re doing that one). And replace all crops with wheat. No soybeans, no tomatoes, no corn; just wheat. For good measure we’ll make all youth serve at least 2 years in the military, and we’ll start spending our rapidly shrinking resources on large government projects that will never be finished and that will never work. Everyone will also be issued one large grey overcoat that they must wear at all times. But, at least everyone will be equal- no rich, no poor.

Or, if Communism doesn’t float your boat, how about a simple Dictatorship? We could set caution to the wind and submit to the will of a charismatic leader! Usually this results in mass starvation, military thugs, large statues of said leader everywhere, and a strange desire to wear khaki. Again, no thank you.

Well, I guess dictatorships are a bit shady, but what about a good ol’ Monarchy? Our new leader would have royal blood running through their veins. How would we start? Maybe just go to the Ivy League schools and have them battle it out. Kind of like Celebrity Deathmatch, but real! Oh that could be fun… but isn’t that where most of our country’s leaders come from now?

No monarchy either? We could always go with a Theocracy. Step aside and led Mahmoud Ahmadinejad run the show! Our leader would have God’s blessing. Our motto would literally be “In God We Trust,” and our government would actually mean it. If you break one of God’s laws you will pay, either in this life or the next. With a theocracy at least we would be assured that God is always on our side. But, who would dominate in this new government? Christians? Jews? Muslims? Hindus? Buddhists? I can already hear the Agnostics and Atheists complaining and protesting now.

Not sure a Theocracy will work? How about Fascism? Let’s nationalize all of our corporations and give all of their CEOs governmental ministries to run. Health care, schmelth care, we’ll all have nice box houses at the base of the factory! And think of the order and tidiness of our new Fatherland, no more messy undesirables or dissenters allowed! Ethnic cleansing (genocide) is a go! The trains will run on time and our military will be attired in the snazziest of uniforms. We would have one person making all of the decisions and things would actually get done. On the negative side, we would suffer the unfortunate side-effect of losing most of our creative geniuses and almost all of our freedoms. So maybe that’s no way to go after all.

I say we have a random lottery to select our national and state officials. All U.S. citizens between the ages of 30 to 65would be put in a pool and picked from the hat for each office. Sound farfetched? Jury duty is by far one of the most important positions in government. As a juror, you potentially sit in judgment of whether another human being should live or die. How are these people chosen? By random chance. If you’re a coter, you’re a potential juror.

Think of the excitement of election night as huge selection parties are held all across America, each waiting for a phone call. The odds would be huge against you ever having to actually serve in office anyway. You’d have a one in 220 million shot to sit in the Oval Office. We could even make a Publisher’s Clearinghouse style ambush appointment by sending the secret service with a camera around in a can to pick up our new president.

Enough talk, we need action! This would truly be a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

\*\*\*This article has been alters from its original version *Democracy is Dead* posted on http://www.ibiblio.org/spite/bile/demo.html\*\*\*