

Is Freedom in Danger of Slipping Away?

By Ken Cable

Speaking in Springfield, Ill. in 1838, Abraham Lincoln said no foreign army will ever defeat us, but “if destruction is to be our lot, we ourselves must be its authors...” Many regimes have come to ruin testing Lincoln’s first point, but sadly, his second may well be on its way to coming true.

Listen to the language of our ‘leaders’ at every level today: People should be “*allowed*,” they are saying, to do this or that, for example, to keep more of the money they earn. This brazenly implies that the government can *disallow* such rights.

In the beginning of our Republic it was clearly understood that Americans owned their free birthright and that it was government that was to be constrained. This power has been reversed.

We have lost sight of the fact that it is the people who *allow* government to tax us, to regulate our military, to protect our borders, to build our transcontinental highways, to adopt rules to regulate institutions with nationwide impact beyond local controls. The U.S. and state Constitutions were written to *limit* government intrusion into citizens’ private lives, not to direct them. That limitation is evaporating.

Our freedom is *not* a gift conferred on us by our government. A gift implies a giver who can withhold it at will. Freedom is the natural condition of every human child born, subject only to the care and direction of his parents until he is mature enough to begin exercising personal choice.

Freedom only requires definition when it is withheld. “Inalienable Rights” are a given and require definition only as a reminder. Lack of freedom implies some *human* entity has taken control.

So from where comes the notion, practice, mandate or power to *deny* fundamental freedom to anyone? Simply, it comes from other *people*. It is *not* some existential power in the universe that challenges freedom. It’s people, often one person, who through dint of personality attracts followers in sufficient force to call himself king, emperor, dictator or, in some cases, deity. If there is no countervailing force, freedom is lost to the whim and caprice of the self-anointed leader.

It is not a pending civil war or foreign invasion that threatens our republic; it is a slow, erosive force at work subtly taking away Americans’ right to manage their lives. For decade’s politicians elected to administer the constitutionally necessary common affairs of cities, states and the nation, have gone beyond their mandate, and are putting into place rules that work to regulate the private lives of citizens. The pace at which these unnecessarily intrusive new rules are growing is accelerating

Legislation on plastic bags, fireplaces, hand-free cell calls, carbonated drinks, children's lunches, adults' diets, tanning booths, salt, sugar, red meat, bottled water... the list grows agonizingly long.

Americans are good at ordering their own lives under rules of their own making. It is time our 'leaders' in faraway capitols concentrate on affairs of state and quit nitpicking people's personal behavior. It's past time to demand it.

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