

An Open Letter

Dear USA citizen,

Man is not the problem, but the solution.

*Freedom is not dangerous,
but the source of human creativity.*

(First of the "13 Theses for Freedom" from the

Freiblickinstitut – Ideen für Eine Bessere Zukunft.)

I feel compelled to write this open letter to you because I come from a failing society that is rapidly abandoning democracy and freedom and has already abandoned the most important freedom – that of Free Speech. In my country the future for personal freedom is bleak and for democratic political freedom, non-existent. It seems to me that one of the duties of any rational person living in such a milieu is to warn other human beings that their societies, their countries, their systems and their political morality may be undermined and subverted in the same way that those concepts and social constructs in my country have been.

Recently I visited your country for the umpteenth time. That visit, unlike many of the others, was for pleasure and I enjoyed an almost six week tour of some small part of it. Having flown into New York and spent a little time there I travelled on to Chicago (on the Lake Shore Limited) and then on to Salt Lake City (on the California Zephyr). When I arrived in Salt Lake City I hired a car and undertook a long, sort of comma-shaped journey visiting Yellowstone, Bryce Canyon, Arches National Park, Meteor Crater, Monument Valley, The Grand Canyon, Yosemite and San Francisco, as well as many other places too numerous to mention.

On my travels in your country I have met and talked with many

Americans from all walks of life and that trip was no different. I was intrigued by what the conversations on that recent journey revealed – more of that in a later post. As you might imagine I saw much beautiful and impressive scenery and a lot of wildlife different from that which I am ordinarily used to seeing in my own country. It was a fun trip further enlivened by short diversions to take in the Durango and Silverton Railroad and the Cumbres and Toltec Railroad, both narrow gauge railways through spectacular scenery. You may have gathered by now that I am something of a rail buff.

So, as the dust settles on your recent elections permit me to offer a few trenchant observations on those elections, as viewed, remember, from outside the United States by one who counts himself as a friend and supporter of your wonderful country and who is not unacquainted with you. Bear in mind, as you read on, that I have been, and will continue to be, a critic of my own country's system of democracy – pointless though the uttering of such criticism now is – and that I retail my thoughts because I believe that there is still time for you to draw back from the edge of the abyss.

Anyway, enough shilly-shallying. Here is the word with no bark on it. The conduct of your recent elections when viewed from over here resembled nothing so much as a third world banana republic going through the motions so that it could pretend to be a country that chose its leaders and legislators in a democratic fashion. Your country was, not to put too fine a point on it, a laughing stock. That an advanced industrial democratic republic such as the USA could have, in the twenty-first century, an electoral system that is so shambolic and disorganised as well as being open to, practically inviting, every known form of abuse caused nothing but scornful merriment and disdain. In vain did I attempt to point out that many other advanced countries are in the same boat. In vain did I attempt to remonstrate with those who poured derision and contempt upon your country's ludicrous electoral system.

It is hard to defend a system so tainted by corruption and so obviously not fit for purpose.

Even among my acquaintances who are prone to support the Democrats there was sneering mockery and hilarity at that party's shenanigans as they tried to legally "steal" election after election and as they "found" more and more "votes" that needed to be included in the final counts. Partisan judges openly and shamelessly making biased rulings further added to the disparagement that was heaped upon your system. One such progressive whom I know even reminded us about the worst excesses of the Tammany Hall political machine.

The judgement of both the right- and the left- leaning among my friends was that the conduct of your elections, and of those who stand for election, is so poor as to give rise to questions about the validity of any result that may be thrown up. It may interest you to know that both factions laid the blame for the cheating and lying firmly at the door of the Democrats. The perception is, on both the right and the left, in my country at least, that they are crooked and not to be trusted. That does not augur well for the USA's future relationships with other countries should that party ever regain power.

There you have it. That is what one smallish, but I think broadly representative, group of people in another country actually thought about your recent attempts at an election.

I would argue that your haphazard, disorganised and scrappy electoral process is probably little different from that which pertains in many other developed democracies – my own most certainly not excluded.

The problem is that most of us expect the USA to be better than that and to lead the way in democratic matters and processes. When it comes to the conduct of elections you manifestly don't lead by example and that, dear friends, may

be a problem for us all.

However, having said all that, and bearing in mind that sometimes shambolic is the best we can do and that anything else can erode the very freedoms that we seek to protect, I must say this to my friends and my acquaintances who offered their opinions so freely and also to you, dear American citizens: keep in mind the second of the "13 Theses for Freedom" from the Freiblickinstitut – Ideen für Eine Bessere Zukunft, which reads as follows

*We can decide for ourselves what is good for us
and what is not. We do not need a well-meaning state
to educate, treat or protect us from ourselves.*

Yours, etc,

Brex I Teer.