

Who Will Crush Others

Americans and many others hold, in the greatest esteem, something they call democracy. But this type of government is not democracy—direct rule by “the people”—but representative republicanism, wherein people’s “representatives” make decisions that are binding (i.e., enforced by violence and threats of violence) on everyone.

A moment’s reflection tells us, however, that genuinely representative government is impossible. It would be difficult even if every member of the group being represented had identical preferences for the government’s actions. In reality, of course, the members of the electorate have widely, even wildly, differing preferences for the government’s actions. If one subset of the people is being truly represented, then the others cannot be. No senator or congress person can simultaneously act as members of Antifa and members of the alt-right would want him to act. A and not-A cannot coexist.

At its best, representative government is a relatively nonviolent system for determining who will crush others and who will be crushed by others. But remember that this system is never really at its best. Sometimes the monsters who rise to its top positions manage to hurt almost everyone at once, even themselves.