

IT'S THE PRINCIPLE THAT COUNTS!



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PRINCIPLES AND POLITICS

No doubt, many of you are probably wondering why FREEDOM PARTY has become involved with an individual like PAUL MAGDER.

We're here to show our support to a man whose courage and conviction have led him to do a courageous thing --- of all things, to break a law.

Now, we don't normally go around supporting law breakers, but in some cases, we have to make an exception. Paul Magder is one such exception, and it's my job, as president and leader of FREEDOM PARTY, to explain why this is so.

FREEDOM PARTY believes that the purpose of government is to PROTECT our freedom of choice, NOT to restrict it.

I've repeated that statement so often over the past two to three years, that I've probably run the risk of making it sound like RHETORIC, but I assure you all, it is no such thing. We not only BELIEVE that governments should be protecting our individual freedom of choice, we DO whatever we can to help turn that belief into a reality.

You probably came here this evening expecting to hear me deal with the issue of SUNDAY SHOPPING. After all, our guest of honour is PAUL MAGDER. Well, I WILL be dealing with the issue, but Sunday Shopping isn't it.

The REAL ISSUE, that is, what's at stake in the Sunday shopping controversy, is our INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM OF CHOICE. "Sunday shopping" is merely the political EVENT, and is one of many similar "events" that have been created by state infringements on our freedom of choice.

ISSUES and EVENTS are entirely different things, and one of the first things we have to learn is how to distinguish one from the other before we can even hope to be able to FOCUS our energies on the ISSUE. After all, if you can't even identify an issue, then how can you ever have a hope in hell of DOING anything about it?

That's what I'd like to deal with tonight: ~~THE~~ ISSUE. Sunday closing isn't it. FREEDOM IS.

BECAUSE that's the issue, we're not only here tonight to support PAUL MAGDER. The relationship is a reciprocal one. PAUL MAGDER has offered to support FREEDOM PARTY.

When Paul first discovered FREEDOM PARTY, he was astounded that there actually was a bona-fide political party that advocated INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, and a society based upon the spirit of VOLUNTARISM and CONSENT: A society in which governments existed to PREVENT some people from imposing their will upon others as opposed to one in which governments are used to IMPOSE the choices of some on others.

In short, Paul discovered that FREEDOM OF CHOICE is what FREEDOM PARTY is all about!

But his discovery didn't end there.

In FREEDOM PARTY, Paul discovered a rare combination of PRINCIPLE and ACTION. During FREEDOM PARTY's relatively short, three-year history, the combination of principle and action is one that I've found CAN ACTUALLY WORK! --- EVEN IN POLITICS, and quite contrary to the expectations and predictions of a host of "experts", ranging over the entire political and philosophical spectrum.

Because they all believe the same myth.

PRINCIPLES AND POLITICS DON'T MIX.

Do YOU believe it?

Because I think it's a lot of bull.

I'm going to challenge that myth, in fact, to turn it inside out, so that I can reveal the glaring truth that is HIDDEN in the way it's expressed.

You see, it's NOT that PRINCIPLES AND POLITICS DON'T MIX, it's simply that MOST POLITICAL action and philosophy is based on PRINCIPLES THAT DON'T WORK! EVERY political action is based on a PRINCIPLE --- you just have to know what it is.

Political theories, and the PRINCIPLES on which they rest, have gotten a pretty bad reputation. It's certainly understandable. Principles lead to theories. Theories lead to practice. And practice creates problems that make you want to toss all the principles and theories out

the window, along with all the weirdos who thought them all up.

And doesn't it seem that the people who profess to hold the highest principles, are the one's who let us down the most often?

There's a REASON for all of this.

Ever hear the saying "Good in theory but bad in practice"?

It's not true.

Fact is, "Bad in practice, bad in theory."

I've heard so many people use that saying, that I've concluded it can only be some form of intellectual or moral evasion. Despite disastrous results, rights violations on a massive scale, too many people want to hang on to a dream --- a THEORY --- without having to face up to the reality that it is the dream itself, the theory in practice, that is at the root cause of the very problems it seeks to address.

COMMUNISM, as many would like us to believe, is one of those social systems that is "good in theory but bad in practice." But the people who resort to that well known cliché are simply unaware that what THEY'RE calling "the theory" is really nothing more than a STATED GOAL of a particular theory.

Believe it or not, the STATED GOAL OF COMMUNISM, in loose terms, is to envision a society where all people are equal, where no person is socially or economically disadvantaged, and where life has become so idyllic that the very existence of a state will no longer be necessary.

Now, how can you argue with that? Who could disagree? Certainly not I.

Evidently, judging by those nations who practice communism, it must just be one of those ideas that's "good in theory, but not in practice." Right?

Wrong.

WISHING for something doesn't make for sound THEORY. And wishes are at best, distant goals. So much for the supposed GOAL of communism.

But the THEORY behind communism, and the PRINCIPLES on which it rests, now that's another matter entirely.

You see, COMMUNISM IS BAD IN THEORY. THAT'S WHY IT'S BAD IN PRACTICE. One cannot expect that a society based on the PRINCIPLES of social and economic coercion, forced association, compulsory socialization and state-restricted choice, will ever progress into a society that could ever even see to its own needs, let alone create a social utopia.

Communism? Bad in theory. Bad in practice.

Good intentions? Maybe.

But you'll never be able to tell by the results.

Appealing to PRINCIPLE, particularly to principles that WORK, is definitely the HARD way to build an organization or to achieve political results.

It is also the NECESSARY and ONLY way to go.

One of the problems with "principles" is that too many people think they're simply a matter of FAITH. They think that they can just believe what they want, and that given enough political support, reality can be changed to conform to THEIR belief.

Sadly, that's about as deep as principles get in today's world of politics.

But when it comes to the principles underlying individual freedom and individual freedom of choice, if there's one thing I've learned, it's that they must be DISCOVERED. You can't INVENT them.

You see, FREEDOM is the REAL thing, and the principles on which it rests are every bit as real as the principles underlying the laws of gravity.

A sound, working principle is much more than a simple STATEMENT of belief. It is a CONSCIOUS recognition of the process of logic, morality, and ethics that is used in arriving at one's belief or conviction.

THE PRINCIPLE AT STAKE IN ANY POLITICAL DEBATE ESSENTIALLY BOILS DOWN TO THIS CHOICE: DO WE WANT TO LIVE IN A SOCIETY BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF CONSENT, OR DO WE WANT TO LIVE IN A SOCIETY BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF FORCE? IS IT MORALLY ACCEPTABLE FOR SOME OF US TO BE ABLE TO FORCE OUR CHOICES UPON OTHERS, OR SHOULD ALL INDIVIDUALS BE FREE, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A NON-COERCIVE, VOLUNTARY FRAMEWORK, TO MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES FOR THEMSELVES?

This is not a choice open to compromise. FORCE and CONSENT cannot be mixed. They're opposites. And the practice of either choice leads to completely opposite consequences.

Failing to recognize the nature of a principle behind political theory or action, like failing to recognize the principles of gravity, can

lead to consequences the opposite of those desired.

It might, for example, cause some representatives of ORGANIZED RELIGIONS to CELEBRATE a court decision proclaiming that RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS can be JUSTIFIABLY VIOLATED. I wonder how these religions might react when the time comes to exercise some of their religious freedom and they discover that they no longer have it. Not only that, they'll be told that THEY supported the governments right to restrict their religious freedom.

Failing to recognize principles might lead others, say, retail store employees, to celebrate a restriction on their right to work one day a week. It's easy to shut your eyes to principle when you've GOT a job, but what happens when some of them find themselves on the other side of the employment situation, desperately looking for jobs in an industry that has effectively had one-seventh of its market restricted?

Making judgements, decisions, or creating laws based on principles that justify the use of force in our social and political relationships will always lead to disastrous consequences --- and to never-ending political debates and events.

Consider the EVENT of SUNDAY SHOPPING and what could politically happen as a result of an upcoming Supreme Court decision.

A Supreme Court decision will eventually be made regarding the constitutionality of the RETAIL BUSINESS HOLIDAYS ACT under Section 15 of the Constitution. This is the section that says "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination..."

Now let's remember that just because something is judged "justifiable" under the Constitution doesn't mean that it doesn't violate our rights and freedoms. By virtue of the December 18 (1986) court decision on the same law, we already know that the RETAIL BUSINESS HOLIDAYS ACT violates our RELIGIOUS freedoms. The court told us so.

But the frightening aspect of the court decision is that it explicitly supported the government's right to violate what our legislators have the nerve to call a FUNDAMENTAL freedom. But this is frightening only to those people who recognize the MORAL PRINCIPLE on which the court decision was based.

When any government tells you that it has a right to violate what even it calls a FUNDAMENTAL freedom, then you KNOW that you are no longer living in a free country. The fact that you may still be able to exercise

a great number of freedoms is not the measuring stick of true freedom. In a FREE country, your freedom is a matter of RIGHT, not PERMISSION.

So you see, there's really no way of knowing WHICH way the court might rule under Section 15. But the tragedy in this whole matter is such that even if the Supreme Court ruled in FAVOUR of upholding our rights under Section 15 of the Charter, what will really have been won or accomplished?

Naturally, people like our guests PAUL MAGDER and MARC EMERY, who have been charged under the current law, will have a lot to personally celebrate about, and it's not my intention to downplay the significance of the personal victory for them.

But what about the rest of us?

Remember, Section 15 of the Charter DOES NOT GUARANTEE AN "EQUAL" RIGHT TO FREEDOM --- IT ONLY GUARANTEES THAT WE ALL BE EQUALLY TREATED BY THE LAW.

AND BEING GUARANTEED THE RIGHT TO BE EQUALLY OPRESSED IS NOTHING TO CELEBRATE!

Those supporting the restriction of our freedom of choice on a Sunday will simply refocus their efforts on finding ways to legislate Sunday closing laws that are EQUITABLE!

After all, when the LORDS DAY ACT was struck down for being, of all things, COERCIVE on religious grounds, the issue simply changed to finding a way for the same law to be coercive for OTHER REASONS. And as the Supreme Court ruled on December 18, that's perfectly OK.

It's "justifiable."

To justify the use of legal force simply to attain some desired personal or social benefit is about as MORALLY UNPRINCIPLED as you can get. Or perhaps to be more precise, it is a decision that blatantly supports the PRINCIPLE of using force to get what you want.

So let's suppose that Sunday closing laws are actually struck down under Section 15 of the Charter. What do you suppose might happen?

Will all those arguments used to justify Sunday Closing laws just disappear overnight? What about our "common day of rest?" What about "stretching six days of economic activity over seven?" And what about all those employees who'd be "forced" to work --- and what about the provincial government's promise to prevent that from happening? And let's not forget all those businesses who'll be "forced" to open?

I wonder, would all those lobby groups and special interests pushing for restricted Sunday trade simply vanish? What do YOU think?

And while you're thinking about that, think about THIS: What about all the retailers who already paid fines and lost their business freedom because of an unjust law? Who accepts responsibility for that? And think about the lost business, lost revenues, lost opportunities, and the goodwill lost. Who accepts responsibility for that?

The unfortunate answer is: EVERYBODY and NOBODY.

By using government to achieve economic or social objectives, we wash ourselves of the moral responsibility for our actions. Whenever we let FORCE become an element of a relationship --- even through government-created laws --- the social, economic, and political fabric of our society deteriorates and the long-term consequences, though often temporarily desirable, always create problems worse than the ones they were intended to solve.

That's because of a simple PRINCIPLE: Using force is wrong. And BECAUSE it's wrong, it never works.

Such is the ultimate cost of failing to recognize the principles involved in a given issue.

And it's one of the reasons that we're gathered here this evening.

TURNING AGREEMENT INTO SUPPORT

Supporting an issue on principle, like building an organization on principle, has rarely been tried in any significant way, and has thus rarely been successful. That's because too many people think that principles are things you AGREE with, and that that's all it takes to turn things around.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

We came together this evening for a very specific purpose: to show our SUPPORT to a man whose battle for HIS freedom of choice will have a direct bearing on OUR freedom of choice. Naturally, I suppose it would be safe to assume that most of us in this room AGREE with Paul Magder's objectives, but by coming here this evening, you all went a step further than simply AGREEING with his efforts: you SUPPORTED them.

There's a big difference.

Let me make it clear what I mean when I use the term "support." A lot of people have said to me: "I really like what I've been seeing FREEDOM PARTY do. I think I agree with just about everything you guys are into. Keep up the good work!"

I even recall an instance when, after having delivered a speech at an all-candidates debate during a past election, I was approached by a young woman who told me: "Mr. Metz, I agree with everything you said, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to vote for another party anyway, because you see, I don't want that OTHER party to have a chance of getting elected."

This last case particularly bothered me, because having admitted that she essentially agreed with my perspective on whatever the political EVENTS were at the time, this young woman also revealed, quite unwittingly, that she had been compromised into a position that so many of us have found ourselves in: VOTING "AGAINST" INSTEAD OF VOTING "FOR".

Ironically, in both these instances, the people who approached me to let me know that they agreed with me probably thought that they were supporting what I was doing, when in fact they were doing no such thing. In fact, in the latter case where the young woman was voting "against" another political party, she was also voting against what she said she agreed with and believed in.

You aren't supporting anything by voting against something else.

AGREEMENT does not equal SUPPORT.

Let me repeat that.

AGREEMENT does not equal SUPPORT.

Agreement alone, isn't worth the paper it isn't written on.

SUPPORT is an entirely different thing.

If you want to know how to recognize SUPPORT when you see it, it's easy. Think of the word ACTION. And when you think of ACTION, think of the word PHYSICAL.

Because PHYSICAL ACTION is the only way to show your support and physical action can only translate into two basic means of exchange: Time or money.

MONEY IS PHYSICAL. Presumably, any money that any of us may have was earned because we WORKED for it. WORK is physical action. Writing out a cheque --- that's physical action. Dropping an envelope in a mailbox --- that's physical action.

Of course, it's easier to SEE the physical action when you volunteer your TIME towards something you agree with. Stuffing envelopes, helping in mail drops, doing research, answering telephones, are just a FEW of the ways you can show your support through this option.

But there's even another way. So if you're one of those people who happens to be in a position of not being able to contribute direct time or money to the principles you agree with, that's not a problem. I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO LEAVE HERE TONIGHT FEELING THAT THEY'RE NOT IN A POSITION TO GET INVOLVED AND SUPPORT THE PRINCIPLES THEY AGREE WITH.

No time or money? For most of us, that circumstance is a TEMPORARY one. In the meantime, there are plenty of other things that can be done to support your principles and to support others who share your principles. To put it bluntly: Help spread the word.

Have you ever seen something in the newspaper that upset you? --- that delighted you? TELL somebody about in a concrete way.

Write a letter to the editor. If you know that they agree with you on Sunday closing laws, tell your friends and acquaintances about FREEDOM PARTY, or about PAUL MAGDER, or about any other individual or organization that SUPPORTS the principles YOU agree with. Tell those individuals or organizations about your friends. Send newsclippings, messages, contacts, etc. to the people or organizations that CAN do something to support the principles you agree with.

It may not be the type of political activity most of us have been accustomed to, but it's the ONLY kind of activity that will have any kind of lasting effect on those political issues where IT'S THE PRINCIPLE THAT COUNTS!