



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on May 20, 2022

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The Imprudence of Democracy

In April, Fox News reported that President Biden's approval rating hit its lowest level since he took office, while a YouGov poll revealed overwhelming support for his policies toward Ukraine. Yet another survey by Quinnipiac University recorded middling disapproval of Biden's Ukraine approach, but said that the president's overall approval rating "has been steadily inching higher" since its January low.



So much for public opinion. We witnessed the folly of heeding it during the so-called pandemic. Gallup polls recorded overwhelming support for lockdowns in 2020; two years later Johns Hopkins University researchers divulged that lockdowns inflicted "devastating" harm on the economy, society, and public health.

History teems with similar lessons. Public-approval ratings for Jesus of Nazareth were the highest they had ever been when crowds in Jerusalem hailed Him as their king, but within a week Pharisaical fact-checkers had convinced the same crowds to demand his death from a governor who had already declared Him innocent. This was group-think (i.e., democracy) at its finest.

How does this happen? The answer is brilliantly portrayed in a political sitcom that aired on BBC television in the 1980s. Insiders called *Yes, Minister* and its sequel *Yes, Prime Minister* more a documentary than comedy. The fictional official is cleverly controlled by his staff — career "civil servants" Sir Humphrey Appleby and Bernard Woolley. In one episode Appleby illustrates how to sway the minister's decision on reinstating the military draft by dictating the outcome of polls.

Appleby: Bernard, you know what happens. A nice young lady comes up to you. Obviously you want to create a good impression. You don't want to look a fool, do you?

Woolley: No.

A: No. So she starts asking you some questions. Mr. Woolley, are you worried about the number of young people without jobs?

W: Yes.

A: Are you worried about the rising crime among teenagers?

W: Yes.

A: Do you think there's a lack of discipline in our comprehensive schools?

W: Yes.

A: Do you think young people welcome some authority and leadership in their lives?

W: Yes.

A: Do you think they respond to a challenge?



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W: Yes.

A: Would you be in favor of reintroducing national service?

W: Uh... Oh, well, I suppose I might.

A: Yes, or no.

W: Yes.

A: Of course you would, Bernard. After all you've told you can't say no to that. So, they don't mention the first five questions and they publish the last one.

W: Is that really what they do?

A: Well, not the reputable ones, no, but there aren't many of those. So, alternatively the young lady can get the opposite result.

W: How?

A: Mr. Woolley, are you worried about the danger of war?

W: Yes.

A: Are you worried about the growth of armaments?

W: Yes.

A: Do you think there is a danger in giving young people guns and teaching them how to kill?

W: Yes.

A: Do you think it's wrong to force people to take up arms against their will?

W: Yes.

A: Would you oppose the reintroduction of national service?

W: Yes!

A: There you are, you see Bernard. The perfect balanced sample. So we just commission our own survey for the Ministry of Defense. See to it, Bernard.

Thus, public opinion, particularly when uninformed, can easily be swayed by demagogues to serve their vested interests, which is why America's Founding Fathers established a republic, instead of a democracy. They took cues from history, which proves the superiority of government by rule of law that limits government to its proper purpose of protecting rights, rather than government dictated by popular opinion (aka mob rule).

As John Birch Society founder Robert Welch pointed out, the terms "republic" and "democracy" are antonyms, not synonyms. Democracy is "a weapon of demagoguery and a perennial fraud," he warned. "This is a Republic, not a Democracy. Let's keep it that way!"



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