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# Constitution Written for Protection

**W**HENEVER you read about somebody wanting to call a constitutional convention, look to see whose rights he wants to write out of it. He may be looking for some personal advantage.

The Constitution of the United States was written to perpetuate truth, to ensure that people would have a voice in government, to keep public institutions functioning, and to prevent individuals from becoming despots who would enslave free men.

The Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the constitution, were added to amplify these points. They also set a precedent for revising and updating the constitution when it is needed or desired by the people. Draftsmen of this great document of liberty did not consider it necessary to rewrite the entire constitution in order to improve upon it. Why should we?

A frequent criticism offered for the Oklahoma state constitution is that it is too long. To argue that the constitution is too long is about as logical as arguing that the encyclopedia covers too many subjects, when all you wanted to know about was freedom.

A constitution is not designed for entertainment or recreational reading. A document of this nature is intended to set forth principles upon which government is founded and it is to be referred to as needed to keep the state or nation moving toward the goals that have been chosen.

Arguments that constitutions are out of date because they were written by preceding generations should be carefully examined. The phraseology is different from the current vernacular, but truth is constant and

human nature still leads men to try to gain mastery and power over other men.

Again, the question arises as to what particular provisions or rights the reformer considers to be out of date. It is hard to believe that rhetoric alone would motivate such a drastic step.

Many groups in this country would like to change our form of government, not just to revise the constitution. Some would like to destroy or compromise our freedoms by suppressing the right of dissent, by abolishing all references to God and to religious worship and by bringing control of news media under the federal government to make it a tool of politicians.

They try to make their arguments sound plausible, but we should never forget that the right to dissent from the established way of doing things

implies a belief in something better. The right to dissent is a right to improve; not just a right to destroy.

Certain dissenting factions are trying to use the present national crisis as leverage to change our form of government. For example, one group says this country is too large and too complex for us to follow a single leader. They are proposing that a sort of national committee be set up to replace the president. Others want to adopt the British plan, so that the chief executive may be changed whenever the legislative body shifts its majority.

The real trouble with our constitution, national or state, is not its length, its age or its language. The difficulty is the people who read it and misread it, or who attempt to warp its meanings to serve selfish purposes. It is they who need revision; not the constitution.