

Albright, Brett – Period 1

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Democratic Reset

Democracy is a greek word meaning “power of the people”, its roots are demos, the greek word for people and kratos, the greek god of power. In ancient Athens the first successful democracy rose, with every citizen allowed to vote on issues though only $\frac{1}{3}$ of the subjects of athens were considered citizens¹. Flash forward to the 1600s, King Charles the 1st is in power over Great Britain. However after breaking a deal with parliament he was executed and condemned as a tyrant². Though the British democratic state would not last long before authoritarian powers rose once more. In the 1770s tensions were brewing between the American colonies and Great Britain. War started in 1775 and ended in 1783, for Britain it was a fight to keep money making colonies but for the Americans it was a fight for liberty. Democracy was one of the core ideals held by the revolutionaries and would be expressed through a representative democracy. In these cases when democracy is absent it must be seized through radical means, it is an idea easily lost but hard to regain.

“People don't give up power and privilege out of the goodness of their hearts.”

-Rachel Holmes. In the case of seizing democracy after the execution of king Charles, it was necessary for the current ruler to be ousted before democracy can be properly instated.

With the American revolutionaries it was only possible for the Americans to have a functional democracy after an 8-year war with the current subjugators. In France time and time again they have revolted against kings, bringing in new democratic ideals. However

¹ *Student Edition 2018: Student edition 2018.* (2019). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Page 5

² *Student Edition 2018: Student edition 2018.* (2019). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Page 25

when the most recent attempt is doing poorly the royal family or some other dictatorial force sweeps up the floor and sets it all back to ground zero³. Though France has been stable since the 1950s they continue to have threats against their democracy. Democracy is only able to be seized by the people when the current subjugating class/ruler is removed.

An important aspect of democracy is the consolidation of power not within an individual but within the common ideas of the people. A true democracy cannot be sustained without the committed support of those who will live within it. without the support it is liable for an individual or an idea to gain traction no matter how far they stray from the light of democracy. Though it is great to have full belief in the system, many operate with smaller, less democratic groups that try to force democracy to their advantage or directly undermine fair democratic votes. On January 6th 2021 thousands of aggressive insurrectionists stormed the United States capitol building with many members of congress inside⁴. The central belief between them was that the results of the 2020 election were false, and that the true president was former President Donald J. Trump. At 1:50 PM the building was breached by the now domestic terrorists, thousands of dollars worth of property was damaged and many official items were stolen. Though it was a small group of a few thousand the Jan 6th insurrectionists have shaken the board of democracy, putting the integrity of our system in question.

³Plackett, B. (2021, January 18). *How many French revolutions were there?* LiveScience. Retrieved September 21, 2022, from <https://www.livescience.com/how-many-french-revolutions.html>

⁴Zou, J. J. (2022, January 5). *Key facts to know about the jan. 6 insurrection.* Los Angeles Times. Retrieved September 20, 2022, from <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2022-01-05/by-the-numbers-jan-6-anniversary>

When democracy is not present it must be seized through radical means, it is a butterfly floating in the wind, fragile but beautiful in action. When a butterfly is injured it can only wait for a bird or a larger bug to snuff it out, and when a democracy is compromised it's only a matter of time until authoritarian power interjects and snuffs it out. But it will always come back, the flowers are still there. We must be the flowers because when large events are held to try and undermine the butterfly the only thing keeping it safe is the flower. Long live the power in the people.