

# How Democracy ended in Athens; it was replaced by an Oligarchy.

Those that promote the benefits of “democracy” leave one thing out; it is always replaced with an oligarchy. Where the wealthy people control the government and eventually reduce the rest of society to slave or serfs serving them. Here, we take a look at the Athenian “democracy” and as we read about it, keep in mind the terrible parallels between it and America.

What is amazing to me is that our Republic was changed to a democracy by the 12th amendment, and those changing it KNEW HISTORY. They knew that democracies always... 100% always... always without fail... become oligarchies of the wealthy.

Here we look at the “gold standard” for “democracy; Athens. This is the standard that all the pro-democracy advocates cite. And the one that became an oligarchy before it’s eventual collapse.

## Introduction

In the year 507 B.C., the Athenian leader Cleisthenes introduced a system of political reforms that he called *demokratia*, or “rule by the people” (from *demos*, “the people,” and *kratos*, or “power”).

It was the first known democracy in the world.

This system was comprised of three separate institutions:

- The ekklesia, a sovereign governing body that wrote laws and dictated foreign policy;
- The boule, a council of representatives from the ten Athenian tribes
- The dikasteria, the popular courts in which citizens argued cases before a group of lottery-selected jurors.

Although this Athenian democracy would survive for only two centuries, its invention by Cleisthenes, "The Father of Democracy," is considered to be one of the best contributions Greek made to the world. The Greek system of direct democracy would pave the way for representative democracies across the globe.

Which is a mystery to me.

As they all failed.

Each one, in turn, becoming a nation ruled by the wealthy and one that abused it's poor.

# Who Could Vote in Ancient Greece?

One of the things that everyone omits is that in a democracy, not everyone could vote. In fact only a handful of people were ever permitted to vote, and their selection... wouldn't you know it... was influenced (if not decided) by the wealthiest inhabitants.

"In a democracy," the Greek historian Herodotus wrote, "there is, first, that most splendid of virtues, equality before the law."

However, the "equality" Herodotus described was limited to a small segment of the Athenian population in Ancient Greece.

For example, in Athens in the middle of the 4th century there were about 100,000 citizens (Athenian citizenship was limited to men and women whose parents had also been Athenian citizens), about 10,000 metoikoi, or "resident foreigners," and 150,000 slaves.

Out of all those people, only male citizens who were older than 18 were a part of the demos, meaning only about 40,000 people could participate in the democratic process.

# The Ekklesia (the assembly)

Athenian democracy was a direct democracy made up of three important institutions.

The first was the ekklesia, or Assembly, the sovereign governing body of Athens.

Any member of the demos—any one of those 40,000 adult male citizens—was welcome to attend the meetings of the ekklesia, which were held 40 times per year in a hillside auditorium west of the Acropolis called the Pnyx.

Important point; The actual voters could directly make laws. They did not need to vote for a "representative" who would vote for them.

That was great on paper, but not really all that functional. For only about 5,000 men attended each session of the Assembly. The rest were serving in the army or navy or working to support their families.

At the meetings, the ekklesia made decisions about war and foreign policy, wrote and revised laws and approved or condemned the conduct of public officials.

The group made decisions by simple majority vote.

# The Boule (The Council)

The second important institution was the boule, or Council of Five Hundred.

This could be considered the "Deep State" or the bureaucracy.

The boule was a group of 500 men, 50 from each of ten Athenian tribes, who served on the Council for one year.

Unlike the ekklesia, the boule met every day and did most of the hands-on work of governance.

It supervised government workers and was in charge of things like navy ships (triremes) and army horses. It dealt with ambassadors and representatives from other city-states.

Its main function was to decide what matters would come before the ekklesia. In this way, the 500 members of the boule dictated how the entire democracy would work.

Positions on the boule were chosen by lot and not by election.

This was because, in theory, a random lottery was more democratic than an

election: pure chance, after all, could not be influenced by things like money or popularity.

The lottery system also prevented the establishment of a permanent class of civil servants who might be tempted to use the government to advance or enrich themselves.

However, historians argue that selection to the boule was not always just a matter of chance. They note that wealthy and influential people—and their relatives—served on the Council much more frequently than would be likely in a truly random lottery.

In actual function, the selection of membership was determined by the wealthy and influential.

## The Dikasteria (The Judges / Courts)

The third important institution was the popular courts, or dikasteria.

Every day, more than 500 jurors were chosen by lot from a pool of male citizens older than 30. Of all the democratic institutions, Aristotle argued that the dikasteria “contributed most to the strength of democracy” because the jury had almost unlimited power.

There were no police in Athens, so it was the demos themselves who brought court cases, argued for the prosecution and the defense and delivered verdicts and sentences by majority rule.

There were also no rules about what kinds of cases could be prosecuted or what could and could not be said at trial, and so Athenian citizens frequently used the dikasteria to punish or embarrass their enemies. It became a tool of the wealthy.

Jurors were paid a wage for their work, so that the job could be accessible to everyone and not just the wealthy (but, since the wage was less than what the average worker earned in a day, the typical juror was an elderly retiree).

Since Athenians did not pay taxes, the money for these payments came from customs duties, contributions from allies and taxes levied on the metoikoi.

The one exception to this rule was the leitourgia, or liturgy, which was a kind of tax that wealthy people volunteered to pay to sponsor major civic undertakings such as the maintenance of a navy ship (this liturgy was called the trierarchia) or the production of a play or choral performance at the city's annual festival.

## The End of Athenian Democracy

Around 460 B.C., under the rule of the general Pericles (generals were

among the only public officials who were elected, not appointed) Athenian democracy began to evolve into something that we would call an aristocracy.

This was the rule of what Herodotus called “the one man, the best.”

This has lead to all democratic nations evolving into one of the following forms...

- Oligarchy
- Plutocracy
- Aristocracy

## Conclusion

When some mindless clone voices the idea that “democracy” is the best, you should rest assured that they are either [1] ignorant of history, or [2] a shrill for the wealthy. Historically, all democracies evolve into rule by the wealthy and well-connected. There are NO EXCEPTIONS.

America was set up as a Republic, but was quickly changed into a democracy with the 12th amendment, and evolved over time to the oligarchy it is today.

Can you do anything about it?



No, you cannot.

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Unless you want to get involved in armed insurrection (always a nasty business), I would advise moving somewhere else where the “grass is greener”. I have other posts on this subject and I would suggest you all take a look at them. Here...

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