**Document A: Pericles** (Excerpted from Original)

"Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favours the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if no social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way, if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbour for doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be offensive, although they inflict no positive penalty. But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens. Against this fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured, whether they are actually on the statute book, or belong to that code which, although unwritten, yet cannot be broken without acknowledged disgrace…

***Source:*** *Pericles, “The Funeral Oration,” 432 BCE.*

**Document B: The Athenian Constitution** (Excerpted from the Original)

This, however, took place at a later date; at the time of which we are speaking the people, having secured the control of the state, established the constitution which exists at the present day. Pythodorus was Archon at the time, but the democracy seems to have assumed the supreme power with perfect justice, since it had effected its own return by its own exertions. This was the eleventh change which had taken place in the constitution of Athens. The first modification of the primaeval condition of things was when Ion and his companions brought the people together into a community, for then the people was first divided into the four tribes, and the tribe-kings were created. Next, and first after this, having now some semblance of a constitution, was that which took place in the reign of Theseus, consisting in a slight deviation from absolute monarchy. After this came the constitution formed under Draco, when the first code of laws was drawn up. The third was that which followed the civil war, in the time of Solon; from this the democracy took its rise. The fourth was the tyranny of Pisistratus; the fifth the constitution of Cleisthenes, after the overthrow of the tyrants, of a more democratic character than that of Solon. The sixth was that which followed on the Persian wars, when the Council of Areopagus had the direction of the state. The seventh, succeeding this, was the constitution which Aristides sketched out, and which Ephialtes brought to completion by overthrowing the Areopagite Council; under this the nation, misled by the demagogues, made the most serious mistakes in the interest of its maritime empire.

The eighth was the establishment of the Four Hundred, followed by the ninth, the restored democracy. The tenth was the tyranny of the Thirty and the Ten. The eleventh was that which followed the return from Phyle and Piraeus; and this has continued from that day to this, with continual accretions of power to the masses. The democracy has made itself master of everything and administers everything by its votes in the Assembly and by the law-courts, in which it holds the supreme power. Even the jurisdiction of the Council has passed into the hands of the people at large; and this appears to be a judicious change, since small bodies are more open to corruption, whether by actual money or influence, than large ones. At first they refused to allow payment for attendance at the Assembly; but the result was that people did not attend.

Consequently, after the Prytanes had tried many devices in vain in order to induce the populace to come and ratify the votes, Agyrrhius, in the first instance, made a provision of one obol a day, which Heracleides of Clazomenae, nicknamed 'the king', increased to two obols, and Agyrrhius again to three.

The present state of the constitution is as follows. The franchise is open to all who are of citizen birth by both parents. They are enrolled among the demesmen at the age of eighteen. On the occasion of their enrollment the demesmen give their votes on oath, first whether the candidates appear to be of the age prescribed by the law (if not, they are dismissed back into the ranks of the boys), and secondly whether the candidate is free born and of such parentage as the laws require. Then if they decide that he is not a free man, he appeals to the law-courts, and the demesmen appoint five of their own number to act as accusers; if the court decides that he has no right to be enrolled, he is sold by the state as a slave, but if he wins his case he has a right to be enrolled among the demesmen without further question.

All the magistrates that are concerned with the ordinary routine of administration are elected by lot, except the Military Treasurer, the Commissioners of the Theoric fund, and the Superintendent of Springs. These are elected by vote, and hold office from one Panathenaic festival to the next. All military officers are also elected by vote.

***Source:*** *Aristotle, “The Athenian Constitution,” 330-322 BCE.*

Document C: The Athenian Population:

The data below comes from the book Wealthy Hellas, written by Professor Josiah Ober in 2010. Ober is a professor of Classical Civilization and Political Science at Stanford University.

\*Metics were foreigners or Greeks from other city-states that settled in Athens, normally for purposes of trade. They became a key part of the citystate’s economy, industry, and education system.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Population Group | Total People | Percentage of Population | Ability to Vote |
|  | | | |
| Citizen Men | 29,900 | 12% | Yes |
| Citizen Women | 29,900 | 12% | No |
| Children of Citizens | 74,750 | 31% | No |
| Metics | 25,775 | 11% | No |
| Slaves | 80,000 | 34% | No |
|  | | | |
| TOTAL POPULATION: 240,235 | | Percentage of Total Population Able to 12% | |

**Document D: Professor Hansen** (Excerpted from Original)

The objections regularly raised against Athenian democracy are twofold: first, democracy is the rule of the whole of the people, to the exclusion of minors and maniacs only. *Demokratia* was rule by male citizens only, to the exclusion of women, free foreigners (metics) and slaves. Thus, by our standards it was oligarchy, not democracy. Second, rule was exercised directly by the people, whereas democracy nowadays is invariably government by representatives of the people. Popular assemblies belong to the past, and direct democracy has been made impossible by the size of modern nations. Athenian *demokratia* is criticized for being both more democratic and less democratic than democracy. It is more democratic by being government by the people instead of government by those elected by the people. It is less democratic by narrowing down the concept of *demos* to denote the adult male citizens in assembly.

***Source:*** *Mogens Herman Hansen, “Was Athens a Democracy?” 1989.*

**Document E: Professor Camp** (Excerpted from Original)

Ostracized in Athens : Ancient Greeks knew how to dump bad pols**,** By John McK. Camp**.** July 24, 2003

The United States has borrowed lots from the ancient Greeks, including such bedrock items as architecture, the Olympics, coinage, theater, and, most importantly, the concept of democracy. Visitors to Athens can still view the official drinking cups and tableware used in the 5th century BC, when legislators were wined and dined at state expense. Not much, in fact, has changed since antiquity except the technology.

One aspect of ancient political life has not been adopted, however, and perhaps it's time to bring it back: ostracism. Once a year the Athenians would meet and vote on a simple question: Is anyone aiming at a tyranny, is anyone becoming a threat to the democracy? If a simple majority voted yes, then they dispersed and reassembled two months later. They brought with them their ostracon (a fragment of pottery), on which they had scratched the name of the person they thought represented a threat. The man with the most votes lost. He was exiled for 10 years, and this was thought to calm any anti-democratic leanings he might have.

In other words, the Athenians not only voted people into office, but they had a regular procedure for voting one person per year out of office. It was an option which could be exercised but did not have to be. The exile did not involve confiscation or any other punitive measures; it was designed only to remove an individual from the political arena.

So. We're watching a lengthy and costly and highly politicized recall attempt to remove Gray Davis from the governor's office in California. Would it not be easier to have an ostracism mechanism in place? How much simpler, less expensive and less wearying it would have been a few years ago simply to write either the name "Clinton" or "Starr" on a piece of paper, and have one of those two exiled outside the Beltway for the next 10 years. What would we have lost, except a media circus?

The Athenians were better than we are at enforcing accountability in their public officials. They had an examination to check the qualifications of an individual before entering office (a dokimasia), but they also had a formal rendering of accounts at the end of a term of office (euthynai) and ostracism in the meantime. And they were not afraid to use it. Almost every prominent statesman of Athens in the early 5th century BC took one of these 10-year vacations, courtesy of the Athenian people.

Pericles was one of the few not to be ostracized, though he was a candidate. Opposition to his grandiose building plans for the Acropolis were the subject of a controversy which only ceased when his chief political opponent, Thucydides (son of Milesias, not the historian), was ostracized and removed. The people had spoken. We owe the Parthenon to Pericles' ability to persuade the Athenians that this was a goal worth pursuing.

There's no reason why we could not apply ostracism on the national, state, and even local levels; an annual opportunity to remove someone whose performance, for whatever reason, has not been acceptable. We have the option now only when terms are up. But, in a fast-moving world, why not more frequently? Better to weed out bad apples sooner rather than later.

There may be pitfalls, but no worse than what we're used to or what the Athenians faced. We would have to trust the electorate to make responsible decisions, and in times of crisis an ostracism could be nullified. During the Persian Wars the Athenians summoned home all their exiles, especially Aristeides, to help in the struggle.

Nor should anyone naively think that political skullduggery would not rear its head, though we can perhaps take heart in the fact that it's been with us for years. One batch of 190 ostraca found in Athens, all with the name of Themistocles, the architect of Athenian naval power, turned out to be all written by only 13 individuals. Images of "cemetery votes" spring immediately to mind, as do "Florida" and "hanging chads."

The other danger is that if a leading statesman is powerful enough and has the votes, ostracism is a great way to eliminate a weaker but annoying rival. That is in effect what Pericles did to Thucydides in 443 BC. In 417 BC, when the outcome was uncertain, the two top dogs, Alcibiades and Nikias, ganged up on Hyperbolos, a hapless number three. This was such an obvious misuse of the system that the Athenians never used it again. If they hadn't abandoned it, perhaps that gadfly Socrates would have been exiled rather than put to death in 399.

Hundreds of ostraca have come to light in the excavations of ancient Athens, compelling witnesses to the turbulence and vitality of the political system known as democracy and powerful reminders that in Athens, the people really did rule. For all its flaws, the procedure was used from 487 to 417 BC, and it is perhaps no coincidence that those 70 years correspond almost precisely to the acme of Athenian prominence in virtually every field of endeavor.

Those in office might not like it, but a return to ostracism would certainly return power to the people and ensure that their voices were heard and heeded.

***Source:*** *John McK. Camp, “Ostracized in Athens: Ancient Greeks Knew How to Dump Bad Pols.”* The New York Times*, July 24, 2003.*