

**THE HISTORY OF  
DEMOCRACY CONSIDERED  
AS A PARTY NAME AND AS A  
POLITICAL ORGANIZATION**

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The History of Democracy Considered as a Party Name and as a Political Organization by  
Jonathan Norcross

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POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

BY

JONATHAN NORCROSS

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

NOW that sectional and partisan strifes for sectional and partisan purposes are greatly abated, and those who read can give more attention to the principles and influences which lie at the foundation of, and the vices which endanger, free institutions, it is proposed to give in these chapters a historical sketch of the word Democracy as a party name and organization, together with such reflections and inferences as the narration may suggest.

The word Democracy has a variety of meanings. It means, according to popular usage, a government by the people; the same, or nearly the same, as the word Republicanism. In its last analysis, it means no government at all; or it means a despotism the most cruel, galling, and destructive ever known to mankind; or it means a political party and organization which, when in possession of supreme power, knows no rule, precedent, or law for its guidance, except its own will, or the will of its chiefs. It

is, therefore, chiefly its history as a party name and organization that it is proposed to give in these articles. There may be some objections to the word Republicanism as a party name, and some dark stains upon its history. If so, it is the duty of some patriot to point them out. I shall content myself with exposing and commenting upon Democracy as a party name and organization. And I trust it will be by no means difficult to show that the word used as a party name or title has almost invariably proved to be, in practice, as far from the abstract or popular meaning of the word as the east is from the west, or as darkness is from light. If, then, this charge can be established from the history of Democracy, such a party ought not to exist, and cannot exist without endangering free institutions and the representative form of government. But if the charge be not well founded, or if it will apply as well to any other party or party name, then the benefits to arise from its investigation should stimulate patriots to enter upon the work. From such an investigation would likely come a truer estimation and correction of party abuses, and a higher elevation and purification of the means for maintaining free government and equal rights, and consequently greater security and safety for the people. But of all this the reader must judge as we proceed with these historical sketches.

## CHAPTER II.

### DEMOCRACY IN ANCIENT GREECE.

THE history of Greece, or rather the history of Athens, in its relations and intercourse with other parts of Greece, from the days of Solon till the fall of Athens—about two hundred years,—is as thorough and comprehensive as that of any other country. Its poets, historians, orators, and artists, whose works have come down to the present time, are numerous, and such as have enabled modern students to place the history of the people and their wars and politics in glowing light, affording thorough bases for reflection upon such history. But in a study like this only salient points and leading events can be touched upon, as illustrations for the subject in hand.

The first Democratic party of which we have any account sprang into existence in ancient Athens in the days of Solon, about twenty-five hundred years ago, or 600 years B.C. At that time Athens, or the state of Attica, was or had been in a flourishing condition. Letters had been introduced into Greece, and learning, philosophy, architecture, music, and many other arts had made great progress, especially in Athens. Homer and Hesiod had long since produced their immortal poems. The famous Court of the Areopagus and the Senate of Four Hundred had