

# Our democracy is at risk: we must not ignore the warnin...

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For the second time in two years we have seen the supporters of a far-right president violently object to the democratic removal of that president from office.

First it was Trump supporters who stormed the Capitol in Washington DC as the US witnessed its first attempted coup in modern times, just two years ago.

Now supporters of former Brazilian President Bolsonaro have repeated the performance in attacks on central government and parliamentary buildings in Brasilia.

The move is more than a copycat attack, although it would seem to be that. It is part of what I suspect is a trend. The message is clear. It is that the right-wing no longer trust democracy, and will not as a result tolerate it. For them, the philosophy of choice that is at the supposed heart of their thinking is not available to those who might disagree with them. Only their views are acceptable in government, and violence can be tolerated to ensure that is the case.

Good order was, of course, restored in the USA. It looks like this will also happen in Brasilia. But the legacy remains after the incidents are over. The awareness that, for example, the police appeared to let this insurrection happen in Brazil will not be any more easily forgotten than mainstream Republican support for the coup in Washington has been.

And we should anticipate that this is part of a trend, backed by a far-right belief that they have a right to rule, come what may.

There is a message in all this. It is that democracy is hard. It is not the default setting for government: totalitarian rule is that default. Democracy only survives with nourishment, support and the desire to make it responsive to people.

We are by this definition at risk in this country. Our so-called democracy not only embraces feudal institutions, it also quite deliberately fails to reflect the opinion and will of the electorate, for which leading politicians show open contempt. This creates a fertile breeding ground for the right.

When democracy fails people that will always be the case. Our supposed democracy is failing the UK at present. From first-past-the-post, to the monarchy and House of Lords, to the refusal of the democratic rights of the people of Scotland, our supposed democracy is a charade that has the deep-seated ability to alienate hard-wired into it.

We need to be wary in the countries of the United Kingdom. Unless our democracy is revived and re-nourished its failings provide an obvious breeding ground for the far-right. We had the warning with the abuse and exploitation inherent in Brexit. We cannot ignore those warning signs again.