

"What kind of Democracy and what kind of Mass Media do we have today?"

Dr. Sotos Voskarides

Cyprus University of Technology

sotos.voskarides@cut.ac.cy

***Presentation using Power Point, images, outlines, sketches
and cartoons with oral presentation/analysis***

Summary

The Athenian, direct, democracy was applied evolutionarily for about 140 years (from 462 BC to 322 BC in Attica) resulting in the creation of culture- for example, anything that is freely provided to all citizens and results in their well-being.

In Athens, when Democracy was prevailing, justice, philosophy, theatre, poetry, games, applied arts etc. and the principles of all sciences, were available freely to all citizens for the first time.

The modern "representative" (or parliamentary) Democracy differs greatly from direct Democracy. For this reason, as a practical development and an improved version of the representative Democracy, the participatory Democracy is preferred these days.

In the last 200 years or so with the spread of typography and the global prevalence of the 3rd industrial revolution (electricity, electronics, telecommunications, information technology, internet, etc.) the media has emerged evolutionarily, which today, at the beginning of the 4th industrial re-startion (Robotics, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, nanotechnology, Blockchain, drones, 5G etc.) play a dominant role in people's everyday life.

In today's age, of speed, of insufficient leisure as well as tranquility, peace, joy and happiness for too many people, and where human values, quality of life and also survival of the human race are in question, mainly due to the visible danger of the negative and perhaps non-reversible effects of climate change, one of the most imperative questions that afflict thinking people is 'what kind of Democracy and what kind of Mass Media prevail today'?

Do the people (Demos) really prevail, that is, the opinion of the majority? And if so, how is that opinion shaped? Are citizens really informed or manipulated by Mass Media? Is Orwell and the followers of conspiracy theories increasingly verified? Do fake news, fake journalists, fake experts and fake representatives or fake city/ State leaders dominate?

Keywords: *Democracy, Media, Corruption, Interplay, Dialogue.*

Introduction

The first rhapsody of Odyssey begins by referring to the efforts made by the goddess Athena to convince her father Zeus to stop the long and endless adventures of Odysseas (Ulysses) at sea to return unharmed home (to Ithaca). This is precisely where Homer makes the first reference to the implementation of democratic procedures, on Olympus: Almighty Zeus says that the decision must be taken by the Council of the Gods and not by him. Poseidon (who brought a focus on Ulysses' return because he blinded his son, Cyclop Polyfimos) was absent in the country of the "distant Ethiopians", something that Athena cleverly exploited, and thus the decision favourable to Odysseas was taken by the Council of the Gods unanimously.

PART A

In 508 B.C., Kleisthenis, the Athenian (member of Alkmeonides family) laid the foundations for the democratic reform of Athens. The Athenian, direct, Democracy was applied evolutionarily for about 140 years (from 462 BC to 322 BC) in the city of Athens and Attica resulting in the creation of culture, for instance anything that is provided seamlessly to all citizens and leads to their well-being.

In Athens of Democracy the principles of all sciences, as well as justice, philosophy, poetry, holidays???, games, applied arts, theatre and many others were provided freely for the first time to all citizens. Nowadays, part of our daily vocabulary use such as democracy, dialogue, counterpoint, voting and much more refers to elements of the Greek theatre such as stage, presidency, orchestra, foreground, backstage, stands, lane.

The modern "representative" (or parliamentary) Democracy differs greatly from the direct Athenian Democracy. For this reason, as a practical development and an improved version of the representative Democracy, the participatory

Republic (Town Halls, Associations, Groups, Non-Governmental Organizations, Voluntary Organizations and others) is preferred by the public.

For the last 200 years or so, with the spread of typography and the global prevalence of the 3rd Industrial Revolution (electricity, electronics, telecommunications, information technology and internet) as well as today, with the beginning of the 4th Industrial Revolution (robotics, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, augmented reality, nanotechnology, Block chain, drones, 5G and many more) Mass Media play a dominant role in people's everyday life.

PART B

These days we live at the age of speed, of the absence of sufficient leisure time as well as tranquility, peace, joy and happiness for too many people. It is an era in which human values, quality of life and survival of the human race, are in question mainly due to the visible danger of the negative and perhaps non-reversible effects of climate change.

In our days, at the beginning of the 21st century, where interplot and corruption dominate in almost all levels and activities of man, one of the imperative questions that afflict thinking people is "what kind of Democracy and what kind of Mass Media do we have / need"?

Is it, for example, democratic to vote for someone as Prime Minister or President to implement a specific programme approved by the majority of people and the next day (or after a few weeks or months) to negate a lot of their serious promises? Is it democratic the fact that there is no way to bring the leader back into order or to punish them in a way, other than to wait until the next election for a possible majority vote against them? The same question applies to unfulfilled serious promises to the people or a 180-degree turn on behalf of the supreme lord after a referendum (e.g. Greece 2015) or after their election (Cyprus, bank deposit theft in 2013, which was very artfully named 'haircut').

In democratic countries is there really Democracy, does the opinion of the majority prevail? And if so, how is that opinion shaped? Who really controls any relationships between owners and senior executives of powerful Mass Media (newspapers, TV, Radio stations) with strong executive centres or strong local and/or international economic operators?

What kind of control is applied and what are the criteria for the quality of television stations, presentation mode, broadcast duration/ frequency and news suitability? Is the enormous power and influence of the Mass Media always used in favour of citizens? Is it even used against them? The 'new' era, the 'new' data, the 'new' policy, the 'new' detergent, the 'new' opportunity, how new is it?

The vast majority of media project the political parties as the "cells" of Democracy. However, how can that be the case if it goes against basic principles of biology? Cells form tissues, tissues form organs, and organs form body systems. So the question is "how can political parties, which have organs and bodies be cells?".

Are citizens actually informed or manipulated, terrorized, bombarded with news, programs and fake heroes of zero value? Is Orwell and the followers of conspiracy theories increasingly verified? Do fake news, fake journalists, fake experts, fake researchers, fake professors and fake representatives or leaders of the City (of the State) dominate?

Is there sufficient scrutiny by the relevant bodies of the State of the accounts of Mass Media and the political parties? Do parliamentary parties pass laws or vote against others based on party or personal interests? Does the Judiciary work as it should? Is justice always bestowed properly and on time? Why do drug dealers and "traders of ideas" prevail?

PART C

Who can name up to five (5) democratic countries worldwide where Democracy is actually applied and immediately justify their response? Is Greece included in these countries? What about the Republic of Cyprus, where in October 2019 , it was mentioned by the General Attorney in a public address that there are many tangible examples of corruption and interplot in various state bodies and beyond?

Brief constructive discussion on all the above can be initiated primarily in the classrooms of schools and universities in an ethical and democratic way, sensibly and utilizing age-appropriate vocabulary and always according to the objectives, regulations and mission of education as well as simple reasoning.