H.L Mencken on Democracy

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**Question 2 Discussion: H.L Mencken on Democracy**

The quote by Mencken on democracy being a theory where the common people have knowledge of what they want and deserve to secure whether in a good way or hard way has been taken in very different viewpoints. The world today is a place where people have acquired much knowledge on different societal and political aspects thereby making it hard for anyone to confuse them in any way.

In the world today, most of us take democracy as just a term with the strained meaning that it mainly entails the freedom of each and every individual with the power to speak out. At least there is something that we know and want to begin with. Most people today have taken it for granted and think that it is their natural advantage that they must enjoy. This brings out the whole notation of democracy as what is well-know and deserved by all the individuals. Nobody consider it as a right that has been earned. It is therefore significant to consider what democracy really means to our daily lives. The whole idea of democracy is political in nature. However, the different principles of democracy are shared today in our daily lives. For us, democracy is just the freedom to carry out whatever we have chosen to do whether it is voting, job and our stand in the community (Lott, and Davis, 2012). We already know whatever we want. We know the kind of leaders we want, the kind of job we want and deserve and the way we need to be treated in the society regardless of our birth positions. We would therefore do anything in our position to achieve all these things whether it’s going the good or bad way.

There are different ways through which people today exercise their democratic rights and powers. One of the clearest and evident way through which nowadays democracy is exercised is through choosing those who will lead us by means of voting. Before one engages in voting, he/she will have the exact knowledge and information of what they want as depicted in the definition given by Mencken. They usually know what they want and deserve. There is a process that we go through for one to be recognized as informed. Having the necessary information is one of the ultimate step in decision making which is highly required in the voting and selection process (Smith, 2015).

Most of the citizens in any country are usually not in the government. In that regard, they must ensure that they consider making these two important decisions when it comes to political matters. They must know how they should be voting and also understand the ways through which they can exert direct power and influence on the different policies formed by the existing government (Miller and Stokes, 2013). In deciding how to vote, one must consider a series of steps to follow. They must be able to consider issues which require a proper decision and gather enough significant information relating to them. The issues will form a basis upon which important decisions will be made politically. One will then choose one of the information among those gathered and use it in voting. Fact analysis will then follow. Here we will understand in depth the information that was used to arrive at these factual conclusions about the available policy alternatives. Appraising the values is significant too as it will help in analyzing the consequences of the available alternatives. The appraisal will be coordinated and used in evaluating the parties which are involved in the elections. Finally, before deciding on whether to vote or to abstain, one will have to make some decisions after thoroughly comparing the net evaluations of the participating parties (Downs, 2017). The voters must therefore understand the fact that the process of decision making is usually time consuming and entails a lot of resources that are usually scarce.

Over a long period of time, many individuals in the political arena have thought that voters are the ones who are able to punish all those who have become incumbents for bring in the hard times (Converse, 2006). Today, most governments bear the duty of most things especially the economy. Therefore, people think that replacing the incompetent managers and other leaders with other alternatives that are able to take care of the situation and seems to be highly informed is a rational action. However, in reality, the voters usually punish the government in the wrong way and for the acts that can be said to be of God so long as they feel that the activity of the events is attributed to the government in power. Therefore, most of them will try to take out their frustrations by voting out the whole government. What they fail to understand is the fact that voters who are in much pain are not usually that irrational but are usually ignorant about politics and science. This voting behavior makes democratic responsiveness and the whole idea of making a rational choice very difficult to help and survive. The above idea is a very bad one when it comes to the whole concept of democracy. It’s a proof of what Mencken says about democracy as involving the people being governed doing everything in their power, whether good or hard, to achieve whatever they know and deserve to get at the end of the day. Achen and Bartels, 2004, asserts that the “the voters understand very little beyond their own and their community pain and pleasure...” Most of the voters usually just thing about the effect and causes just as the popular culture denotes them to behave and think.

Democracy is entails more of political aspects in it. All these must be fully understood and appreciated rather than being used in the wrong way. Despite the fact that citizens know what they want and deserve, they should open their minds and understand who governs and actually does the ruling process. They must fully understand how much their fellow citizens are sovereign, powerless or semi-sovereign in different aspects. Gilens and Page, 2014, asserts that these questions will help us in understanding how the American political system works and “has helped illuminate how democratic or undemocratic our policy making process actually is.” It is therefore important for citizens to change their attitude towards the political and democracy principles as a whole so as not to get any aspect wrongly (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018).

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