

# ON DEMOCRACY

**Tevfik Balcioğlu**

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Hello everybody. I am here to talk about democracy. This was not my choice; I was requested to talk about it, and I accepted it.

I accepted it, not because that I am a social scientist, a philosopher or a man of law, but I am a citizen, an ordinary citizen of the world. Therefore, I will tell you what I understand of democracy as an average man.

For me, democracy is a virtuosity of running the whole with the votes of majority but with satisfactory response to the needs and expectations of the minorities.

For me, democracy is an art of living together, peacefully; equally, well off, respectfully and with respect to diversities in an affluent, sustainable and environment-friendly world.

This work of art is incomplete.

We spend our lives to complete it and will continue to do so even if it is doomed to be incomplete forever.

According to Oxford English Dictionary

“Democracy is a system of government in which all the people of a state or polity (or, esp. formerly, a subset of them meeting particular conditions) are involved in making decisions about its affairs, typically by voting to elect representatives to a parliament or similar assembly”.

This definition is not sufficient, not comprehensive enough.

Democracy is needed in every aspect of our lives. It is to give rights to each individual to express their views and cast their votes for decisions affecting them.

In every level of society there are all kinds of institutions, governmental or non-governmental organizations, associations, firms, companies, communities, and so on. These bodies make decisions in their committees, boards and commissions having an impact on our lives.

Therefore in an extended version of the definition, democracy is

“a system of decision-making within an institution, organization, etc., in which all members have the right to take part or vote. In later use often more widely, with reference to the conditions characteristically obtaining under such a system: a form of society in which all citizens have equal rights, ignoring hereditary distinctions of class or rank, and the views of all are tolerated and respected; the principle of fair and equal treatment of everyone in a state, institution, organization, etc.” **(Oxford English Dictionary)**

Unfortunately, this does not materialize everywhere. That is why we have to work for democracy. Working for democracy is to increase the number of decision-making processes where more people's free wills, opinions, intentions, views, wishes and votes are taken into considerations.

However, we don't live in an entirely democratic planet and as a corollary of this, democracy is under continuous threat. The only way to overcome the threat is to develop the concept of democracy, study and update it constantly, make it known widely and apply it in every field of life as much as possible.

This is not an easy task!

Mistakes and misunderstanding must be corrected immediately wherever seen. I would like to give you two examples.



Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), the 3rd President of the United States says

“A democracy is nothing more than mob rule, where fifty-one percent of the people may take away the rights of the other forty-nine .”

He might be right when he made this statement centuries ago. But today, I feel, I have to rewrite it:

- *“A democracy must be nothing more than fine rule, where fifty-one percent of the people may consider and submit the rights of the other forty-nine”.*

Democracy is no longer a vehicle for the majority to dominate the minority but a system of mediation and balance to satisfy the needs of all.



Winston Churchill, (1874-1965), the famous British Prime Minister of the World War II, says

“The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter”.

He might be right when we consider the level of education of the average voter more than half a century ago. Nevertheless, the low level of education is not an excuse to blame the democracy; on the contrary it is an indication of what to do for democracy. Therefore, today, I feel, I have to rewrite it:

- *The best argument for democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter to see and to increase the level and quality of education for all.*



I would like to complete this short speech with a warning: The weakness of democracy is within its beauty. It is an irony but it is true: The opponents of democracy may survive within democracy as long as they observe general rules and principles. Nevertheless, one should not forget that they might fight against democracy within democracy. Therefore, struggle for democracy is an on-going and endless effort. You, the youth are in the situation to update the concept regularly, adjust it properly, renew it perpetually and disseminate it widely. Democracy is a living notion and needs to be looked after with a great care.



My last words are for those who lost their lives terribly in the Mediterranean Sea. In the last two weeks more than 1000 men, women, boys, girls, children and babies disappeared in the deep and cold waters of the sea. This is a human tragedy. This is a big disaster. Let's pray for them. They were trying to take refuge in democratic countries of Europe to survive. Democracy and living in democratic countries were their anticipation. Therefore, it is our responsibility to resolve these problems. We have the means, knowledge and power to avoid these tragedies. If we are dreaming of a democratic world we have to think of the people of the world and act accordingly. Democracy can only be expanded if it shows its strength beyond the borders of democracy. To this end, we need your hard work, dedication and contributions. You are the guards of this noble idea of democracy with which and thanks to you, the people on the earth may have hope to live better lives.

I thank you for your passion, conscientiousness, diligence and persistence and wish you good luck in this great project of human beings.