



WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER

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Organization or Network? A few Thoughts on Strategy *(by Jiri Polak)*

When the participants of our First Conference gathered in the Conference Hall, in the morning of the 25th August 1998, my hopes did not stretch beyond the formulation included in the invitation leaflet: To strengthen the network of informal contacts which, as I knew from the internet, had already existed among DD activists, circles, groups and researchers in various countries all over the Globe. Some participants, like myself, probably did not expect to achieve anything beyond that. It turned out, however, that there were others who wanted to do something more. For them, the Conference was only a first step towards the creation of a formal worldwide DD organization. There were discussions about these two standpoints during the Conference, and these discussions still go on through our internet channels.

Already during the Conference, I realized that, since many participants declared themselves ready, a transformation of the network into a formal organization was the right thing to do. I see three strong reasons for this.

Firstly, it is evident that, in the current situation, to achieve anything important in politics, you have to be backed by a strong organization. An isolated grass-root citizen or group of citizens are hardly noticed, no matter how right they may be.

Secondly, firm routines and procedures will enable us to achieve much greater efficiency in what we are doing than unco-ordinated private initiatives. Such an initiative proved successful when organizing our first conference, but, to a great extent, that was due to several lucky circumstances. We can't go on relying on luck.

(continues on page 2)

FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY 1999 DECLARATION

(Dr. George L. Kokkas)



We, who sign this declaration, citizens of Greece, of the European Union, of the world, but also of the local and workplace communities in which we live, create and are employed

- believe

that all people have the right to participate without representatives in taking all the decisions that concern us, at all levels of our lives and in our work. We are entitled in exceptional circumstances to choose special proxies, freely recallable by ourselves, to participate in decision-making procedures, only when we do not have the requisite knowledge, or do not wish, to be involved personally;

- consider

that any general "carte blanche" mandate to parliamentarians and governments or other purported representatives to decide for us belongs to decadent times of historical conceptions of political manipulation and enslavement of citizens.

This ill-defined mandate in conjunction with the election of these people legitimates oligarchic systems of rule over us. The only political systems which deserve the name of democracy are systems based on institutionally unobstructed utilization of every voluntary contribution from any fellow-citizen in matters of common concern. Equal opportunities for participation of all citizens in public affairs are safeguarded only through public sortition for specific positions of responsibility when the supply of volunteers exceeds the requirement for their deployment.

(continues on page 4)

Organization or Network? A few Thoughts on Strategy ...

(continuing)

Thirdly, with a formal organization, it might prove easier to get some sponsor money. One of the reasons why we did not succeed in getting any sponsor for the Pribram Conference might have been the fact that potential sponsors doubted the seriousness of the project. (But sponsor money is **not** the most important aspect.)

Let me quote the words of Mr.Gravel: "...what we are doing is coming here first to share and discuss. And that's just a beginning, it's just the first thing we do....unfortunately, I cannot be here on Thursday. But on Thursday, I hope the wrap-up will be to pick the place and to pick a time for next year's convocation. That is the most important thing, to develop *continuity* to what we're about. And then third is, of course, to *formalize ourselves in elect officials*. And so that it's not just a pick-up team, that it has *formality, a treasury and a mission that then will be defined and presented to the next annual convocation*."

The participants of the Pribram Conference felt that it would be too early to meet in 1999, but decided that the year 2000 would be suitable. Dr.Kokkas offered Athens and Delphi as our next meeting-place and the time is scheduled to be late June. So the first two important things mentioned by Mr.Gravel are being taken care of. Remains the third one - to establish a formal organization. I believe this can only be done during the next Conference, but in the meantime, continuity will be assured by our internet channels and by this Newsletter. These channels can and should be used for a discussion about our mission, organization forms, and the declaration the Greek Conference should adopt. Recently, Prof.Becker opened a new channel for this purpose: <http://www.auburn.edu/tann>....then go into the Congress' site... scroll down to Message Board and click. Needless to say we welcome as much feedback as we can get, even from our critics.

Let me start participating in the discussion at once. First our name. I think the word **Movement** is the most convenient. This word implies that we want to achieve palpable results, that we do not want to only remain a discussion club. On the other hand, it also implies that we do not aspire at any position of power, that we only want to exert influence.

Direct Democracy or not? Already during the Conference, there were proposals aiming at a replacement of the word *direct* by something else. I have received more such proposals later on, by e-mail. However, we cannot do that. The word *Democracy* has been so debased that if you do not add the word *direct*, our basic idea would be lost. Almost any system can be called *Democracy* without people reacting. Even the former European communist dictatorships called themselves *People's Democracies*. Therefore, the word *direct* is essential.

Membership. As I see it, our organization should be open to anybody in the world, without any membership fee and without any formalities. With one exception: We should not accept or tolerate anybody who would preach violence as a means to achieve our goals. Violence is the weapon of those who lack arguments. We have excellent, irrefutable arguments. Any violence would only damage our cause.

Mission. We should clearly state the purpose of our organization. I believe it could be summed up in the following way: Firstly, to supply information channels for local DD initiatives, thereby facilitating mutual contacts and strengthening their positions in their respective societies. Secondly, to inform the mass media and the general public about DD ideas and various DD projects. Thirdly, to pursue both theoretical and practical research into various aspects of DD in the broad sense. Among the participants of the Pribram Conference and those who had expressed the intention to attend, there were 21 professors and other top level researchers. According to the book *Triumph der Bürger (Triumph of the Citizens)*, already in 1996, the Organization *Mehr Demokratie in Bayern* was backed by 60

(continues on page 3)

Acknowledgements and Corrections

In the preceeding issue of this Newsletter I omitted to express my gratitude to my compatriot, Mr.M.Kolar, who, at the start of my DD activities, sent me a list of American DD addresses, thereby enabling me to establish useful contacts. Without his help, I might not have been able to organize our Pribram conference. Mr.Kolar is a physicist living in Canada. He has his own DD web-site: <http://www.pangea.ca/kolar/misc/DDe.html>

I also want to thank Associate Professor Hohos who recently published an article (*DD Movement in the World*) in the *Parliamentary Gazette* of Slovak Republic. Thanks to him, DD has begun to be discussed among Slovak intellectuals and some politicians. Prof. Hohos has supported our movement from the very beginning. In his article, he points out that our ideas are basically the same as those put forward by Alvin Toffler. He says, "The End of Ideologies thesis, advocated by certain social scientists, is itself an ideology trying to justify existing power structures". He also refers to Prof.Yeheskel Dror (Jerusalem) who, in his report *The Capacity to Govern (Club of Rome, July 1994)* draws our attention to the rapidly progressing deterioration of environment, a menace the existing political systems seem unable to deal with. Citizen initiatives like ours are mankind's only hope for survival.

In Czech Republic, our most influential ally is Prof.Smajs. When, due to Pres.Havel's sudden illness in summer 1998, we failed to get him to open our Pribram conference, Prof. Smajs was promised by the Social Democrats - then an opposition party - to send us a top level representative instead of Havel. However, shortly afterwards, quite unexpectedly, the Social Democrats succeeded in forming a minority government (still in power). From that moment on, they chose to ignore us. It is almost a natural law: As long as a party is in opposition, it might occasionally support DD to get publicity. When in government, they turn their backs upon the people. *Mehr Demokratie* in Germany have gone through the same experience.

(continues on page 3)

Organization or Network? A few Thoughts on Strategy ...

(continuing)

German Professors and 29 other high level researchers. (Their names are presented in the list of *Mehr Demokratie's* supporters.) This shows the enormous interest the idea of DD has aroused among members of the academic community. There cannot be any doubt that DD will go on stimulating research.

Declaration. To adopt a Declaration will be one of the tasks of our next conference. Our Greek friends have sent me a draft which is presented for discussion in this Newsletter. I believe, most of us will agree that this is what we strive for. I only think that, for the purpose of addressing the general public and the mass media, we should also have something shorter and simpler, not exceeding one page. I would suggest that our demands might be summed up in three items:

1. **The right to citizen initiative and popular referendum should be clearly stated in the constitutions of the states where we live. Exact procedures for the use of this right should be formulated and the thresholds (number of signatures required, time limits and other formalities) should be set so low as not to make the use of this right impossible in practice.** In Europe, the Constitutions of Switzerland and Bavaria could serve as a model. In the USA, the procedures can be formulated by American DD experts and activists..

2. **The primitive, clumsy and costly procedure of paper voting and other procedures developed long ago by party-based parliamentarism in societies very different from ours should be successively replaced by more modern methods based on electronic technology. I.e., methods of *teledemocracy* should replace the current obsolescent practices.** One of the strongest arguments in favor of this change is the fact that the use of electronic technology will save tax-payers' money. For example, the *Voting by Phone Foundation*, active in the USA, point out that their voting program would cost only c.5 % of what paper voting costs. Electronic technology will also greatly facilitate the procedures of Initiative and Referendum.

3. **The use of Planning Cells or Citizen Juries should be made a standard procedure organized by special authorities. Submission of issues to be treated in this way should be arbitrary on the part of units of the Administrative and Representative System. It should be obligatory if the respective demand would come from a popular referendum.** The use of Planning Cells and Citizen Juries is described below in this Newsletter

Rotation of Functions. Already during the Conference and even later, there came proposals that there should be rotation even among those who prepare our Second Conference. We all surely understand why. As time passes, all organizations tend to become petrified and corrupt. But we do not have any organization yet, we are still nothing more than a small group of volunteers who cannot expect to get either rich or powerful on the basis of our current efforts. Under these circumstances, I fear that attempts at forcibly introducing rotation would risk to nip our initiative in the bud, that we might get bogged down in endless debates. I suggest that, until the next Conference, we go on as we have done until now. We can begin discussing rotation when we meet face to face in Athens or Delphi. (But this is only my personal opinion. Anybody is welcome to let us know at once what he/she thinks about this and about anything.)

Agenda of the next Conference. I am pretty sure everybody wants the Greek organizers to set the agenda in cooperation with Prof.Becker and Dr.Slaton and to let these two researchers lead the proceedings. This arrangement worked out very well in Pribram and we should keep it that way. I believe, the Second Conference, contrary to the first one, should focus on the Declaration and the establishment of a formal organization. If there is time, we can have reports from our respective countries, but such reports could also be presented as papers.

Is there any affinity between our *Worldwide Movement for Direct Democracy* and the *World Federalists*? The heyday of *World Federalism* (and similar initiatives, e.g. *World Peace through Law*) was the time immediately following the Second World War. In the subsequent years, public interest successively diminished and now, the importance of World Federalist groups is marginal. It is easy to understand why. The vast majority of people, at least in the developed countries, feel that a World Federation would only put another oligarchy on top of the existing ones, while there is an increasing aversion to oligarchic rule as such. At present, to establish a World Federation would be like setting up a new roof over a building the foundations of which are rotten. It is necessary to start from the bottom - as we do - and not from the top. But when our mission is accomplished - when DD is established at least in the developed countries, time will be ripe for creating worldwide federal structures as well. However, it's a long way to go. We are just taking the first steps.

Acknowledgements and Corrections ...

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During the Conference, there were objections to the use of the word *national* when speaking about DD. I believe there is no trace of nationalism among us. The word *national* is only used to discern local activities from international ones. Nevertheless, it might be suitable to avoid this word altogether.

To conclude, I want to correct two pieces of information: Mr.Donald Davidson resides in the USA, not in Canada; Mr.George Sagi's correct e-mail address is: sage2509@pangea.ca

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Electoral procedures are justifiable only for choice of positions and views, not individuals.

- we demand

the institutionalization of the following direct democratic policies:

A. REFERENDA, which can be called either after the concentration of a suitable number of signatures or, within the existing political system, by parliamentarians being able to call a referendum through acquiring the backing of an absolute majority of voters choosing freely, without party discipline, on the basis of conscience.

B. LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES BY CITIZENS which will make it possible for legislation to be voted on, or old laws to be nullified, if so desired by an enlarged majority of our fellow citizens.

C. INITIATIVES FOR GOVERNMENTAL MONITORING which will act as a shadow instrumentality, monitoring every branch of administration. All interested citizens will be entitled to participate freely in these. The organization of these initiatives is proposed on the basis of existing demarcation boundaries between ministries, that is to say there will be an Initiative for Governmental Monitoring for each ministry, with the corresponding sub-divisions (for monitoring of sub-ministerial departments by ordinary citizens).

D. CITIZEN ASSEMBLIES, comprizing the totality of volunteers, functioning initially as Direct Democratic prefectural councils and subsequently coming together at each higher level (regional, national, European, World). At each of these levels, the assemblies will be manned on the basis of perpetual readiness and citizen rotation.

The DIRECT DEMOCRATIC FUNCTIONING of the citizen assemblies will be secured:

- a) through balloting of volunteers
- b) with the right of recall and
- c) with no provision for repeated participation in balloting by those who have exercised a particular office, until such times as all interested fellow-citizen volunteers have been deployed in that office.

E. UPGRADING OF POLITICAL PARTIES from mere claimants to transient participation to organizations expressing different interpretations of citizens' political action. Political parties must become disinterested movers of proposals for the vote in referenda or of draft legislation for parliament or resolutions for the European Parliament, as well as for functioning Citizens' Assemblies. It must become impossible for them to impose their views on the community on the sole pretext of the purportedly representative numerical balance of forces of the political parties.

The enactment and application of these policies of Direct Democracy will result in a step-by-step substitution of direct democratic and parallel institutions for those of representative democracy, thereby redressing the democratic deficit of the 20th century.

(Inspired by the ideas of the "Philiki Etairia", "A.S.T.R.O.")
Athens, 8th January 1999

*In addition to the above Declaration,
Dr.Kokkas writes:*

"Forum for Democracy" (FfD) was established in 1995, as a free network of Associations and Activists working "Towards the Authentic Democracy", based on Citizens' Participation and Human Communities, after the works of a similar-titled Conference in Delphi, Greece. FfD is still acting as a coordinating Committee of different political projects with different names on the Greek, European and Global levels. We worked this year for the Greek local authorities elections under the title "ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY"; we are working now for the Athens Bar Elections under the title "A.KA.DEM.", meaning "Struggle for the Establishment of Referendums" and we are preparing an alternative participation in next June's European Parliament's elections.

Waiting for your thoughts and any kind of contributions for the Organization of the 2nd International Congress,
Truly yours,

George L.Kokkas
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PRESS RELEASE FROM I&R INSTITUTE
Washington, 12th January 1999

U.S. Supreme Court Sends Strong Message to State Legislators - Regulate with Extreme Caution!

Court strikes down state imposed restrictions on the initiative process as "undue hindrances to political conversations and the exchange of ideas"

Washington: "This ruling is a victory for the people and their ability to use the initiative proces," according to Governor Kirk Fordice of Mississippi, Honorary Chairman of the Initiative & Referendum Institute. "The right of citizens to propose changes that legislative bodies have ignored must be encouraged, not hindred," continues Fordice.

"The people's right to self-governance got a major victory today" stated Dane Waters, President and Founder of the Initiative & Referendum Institute, a 501(c) (3) non-profit non-partisan research and educational organization founded to study the initiative and referendum process in America. The U.S. Supreme Court today struck down Colorado's regulation and restrictions on their initiative process as "undue hindrances to political conversations and the exchange of ideas," according to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg who wrote for the court.

The decision by the court has two major points according to Barnaby Zall, Legal Advisory Member of the Initiative & Referendum Institute: 1) initiative petition circulation is

(continues on page 5)

pure political speech and restrictions on circulation, especially at the time of discussions with voters who might potentially sign the petitions, is highly protected and 2) any restrictions on petition circulation must be justified by strong showings that the regulated practices hurt the integrity of the ballot process - in other words, that the restrictions help prevent actual fraud. This will be extremely difficult to do considering that no state has ever been able to show convincingly that rampant fraud exists during the petition process.

John Berthoud, President of the 300,000 member National Taxpayers Union and a member of the Institute's National Advisory Board stated "today, Coloradans, and indeed all Americans, won a tremendous victory. The Supreme Court has driven back a fundamental challenge to some very basic fundamental rights."

"Since the early 90s, state legislatures around the country have continued to try and make the initiative process as difficult as possible because they see it as an assault on their unchecked power," according to Dennis Polhill, Chairman of the Initiative & Referendum Institute, "but thanks to lawsuits filled by the American Constitutional Law Foundation and the Initiative & Referendum Institute, and appropriate and important decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court, a very clear and distinct message has been sent - let the people self govern, let them utilize the initiative and referendum process as it was envisioned, as a check and balance on our elected officials," continued Polhill.

According to John Boehm, Counsel for the Institute, "this decision could affect similar requirements in 15 of the 24 initiative states with a registered voter requirement (AK,

AZ, CA, FL, ID, ME, MI, MO, NV, OK, OR, SD, UT, and WY) and could have an impact on Mississippi's requirement that circulators be residents of the state. The decision could also have an impact on five of the 24 initiative states with some form of disclosure requirement of whether or not a circulator is compensated (AZ, CA, OH, ID and OR). We will analyze the Court's decision closely to see what steps the Institute needs to take to clean up these unconstitutional legislative assaults on the initiative process."

"The American Constitutional Law Foundation and the other plaintiffs in this case believe this decision makes a very important statement about the rights of all citizens to participate in the political process," stated Paul Grant, co-counsel for ACLF and a member of the Institute's Legal Advisory Board. "As initiatives put more pressure on legislatures to be responsive to the will of the people, it's only natural that they will respond with new laws to curtail citizen initiatives," concluded Grant.

"Today's action by the highest court in the land will hopefully dissuade state legislatures from acting in their own self interest and instead make it clear that the courts will no longer tolerate their unconstitutional behavior. However, if history is any indication, the battle between the people's use of this important tool of self governing and the actions of legislatures wishing to take away this right is far from over," concluded Waters.

M.Dane Waters, Initiative & Referendum Institute
Congratulations, I&R Institute and
the American People!



Mrs. *Barbara Vincent* has sent us two papers concerning the background of the American political system. I bring here the beginning of her first paper:


THE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT FOR REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES

WE THE PEOPLE HAVE AN IMMUTABLE right to settle our grievances against government via petition, an authority that is declared in both federal and state constitutions. In fact, this is the people's most important power because it is through redress that all other rights are protected. Put another way, it is the citizens' ability to redress grievances in a convenient, timely and effective manner that prevents representative government from becoming misrepresentative of the people's will. For a century, the petition process of choice in America has been voter initiative and referendum. I&R legislation describes how the right of redress will be exercised and how the people's decisions will be implemented. Used in half the states and in thousands of local jurisdictions, this mechanism enables voters and reform-minded public officials to circumvent the political establishment and place significant issues on the ballot when government fails to act as needed (omission) or behaves contrary to the public good (commission): **INITIATIVE** - Petition process that enables citizens to introduce new legislation for approval or rejection at the polls; **REFERENDUM** - Petition process by which citizens call existing legislation up for a vote. This procedure is often referred to as a "proposition" or "ballot measure". **BECAUSE THIS PETITION PROCESS** has been in continuous use in America for 100 years, I&R has become part of the "organic law of the land", a term that is known to be synonymous with due process:

While it has been held that the idea of direct legislation is as old as government, the adoption of the initiative and the referendum as a part of the organic law in some jurisdictions came about as a result of the growth of dissatisfaction and distrust of the people for their legislative bodies, and because of the increase of corruption in legislation due to the power and influence of large corporations and powerful groups of individuals, and was not due to any willful or perverse desire of the people... The legislation power is vested in the legislation assembly and in the people.


- Corpus Juris Secundum

(Will be continued in the June issue of this Newsletter)

 On the 4th February, **Mr. Dane Waters** sent us the following information:

The Initiative & Referendum Institute is hosting the first national conference on initiative and referendum in almost twenty years. The conference, which will be held May 6-8, 1999 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, DC, will bring together legal experts, scholars and proponents of the most influential issues enacted by initiative and referendum. The Institute plans to use this forum to educate the public on the initiative and referendum process, highlight those issues that have benefited from its use, and discuss the pros and cons of initiative and referendum to address the concerns raised about the process. Already such individuals as Mississippi's Governor Kirk Fordice, The Washington Post's David Broder, Attorney General Edwin Meese, The Wall Street Journal's John Fund, Bill Zimmerman - Executive Director, Americans for Medical Rights, Governor William Janklow of South Dakota, Ron Faucheux - Editor in Chief, Campaigns and Elections Magazine, Paul Jacob - President, U.S. Term Limits Foundation, Wayne Pacelle - Executive Vice President of the Humane Society of the United States and Ward Connerly - Chairman, American Civil Rights Institute, have committed to speaking at the conference. It promises to be an exciting, comprehensive look at this important facet of American politics. We have attached a draft agenda for your review in MSWord97. (If you are unable to open the file, please respond with a note requesting that it be faxed or mailed.)

The cost of the conference will be \$199.00 per person if full payment is received by March 15, 1999 (\$249.00 after March 15, 1999). The registration fee will be waived for members of the media and college students. If you would like additional information on the conference, please contact Dane Waters, President of the Initiative & Referendum Institute via email at: mdanewaters@iandrinstitute.org or by calling 202.429.5539.

 **Mr. Donald Davidson**, host of NEW DEMOCRACY (<http://www.mich.com/~donald>) - Home of Citizen's Democracy, focuses especially on a reform of the Voting System of the United States. Recently, he has sent us what appears to be the final version of his plans. There are three **Davidson Plans** (for details, see his web-site):

- * All three Plans are intended for large partisan elections.
- * All three Plans combine the Primary inside the general election.
- * All three allow the voter to rank candidates and/or vote for a party.
- * One Plan is for large single seat partisan elections.
- * One Plan is for large multi-seat partisan elections conducted in one area.
- * One Plan is for large multi-seat partisan elections divided into districts.

On the web, a vivid discussion is going on concerning Mr. Davidson's reform proposals. While the majority of the commentators deal with technicalities and details of the plans,

there are some critics who put forward other aspects. I bring here two such remarks.

• **Mr. Miroslav Kolar**, <http://www.pangea.ca/kolar/>:

"I think that the way you elect the deputies does not matter much unless the citizens can control their actions all the time. Some kind of an easy recall of an elected representative at any time during his/her term whenever the voters are no more satisfied with his/her performance seems to me a much better improvement of the present representative democracy.

• **Mrs. Barbara Vincent** (American Petition Project) writes:

"...one item appears to be missing. That is, the need for more ethical and enlightened candidates, individuals who

- 1) understand the underlying principles of self-rule; and
- 2) are capable of honoring their solemn oaths of office...

Therefore, I propose a system of candidate certification. This would consist of a six-month-long course of study followed by an examination..."

Recently, Mr. Davidson has begun to complete his proposals with elements of Direct Democracy. I quote from one of his letters: "There must be ways in which elected officials can be held accountable. One way is when they face re-election. Another way is recall. There are two other ways that need to be added before we will have the best accountability of our lawmakers. *One is that the citizens should have the means to petition for a referendum, so that the citizens can pass laws that the lawmakers refuse to pass or laws that the lawmakers are not allowed to pass. The second way is for the citizens to have the means by which they can change or veto any measure that was passed by any one of their levels of government.*

We the citizens must think of our elected officials as our employees... In regard to accountability, these two improvements in government are more important than proportional representation - more important than any other election reform.These two improvements are the first two principles of Direct Democracy. Maybe Direct Democracy should change its name to Accountable Democracy."

On the 8th February 1999, Mr. Davidson sent me two Models of Direct Democracy.

- 1) Model of a Direct Democracy City Council
 - 2) Model of a Direct Democracy State House which includes a Citizens' Senate
- (Unfortunately, my space is limited, so I cannot present these models here. But anybody can look them up in Mr. Davidson's web-site. I am glad to see a new way of building DD models. Welcome to our club of model-builders!)

 From **Mr. Ivan Christof**, Bulgaria, I have received the following letter:

We are greatly interested in the materials presented at the 1st Congress on Direct Democracy and in participating in the forthcoming one. Please be kind to inform us where and how could we be in touch. A story of our endeavors can be found at: <http://members.tripod.com/~freeinf> - the letter to Transition Magazine.



Mr. John A. Newell puts forward the following proposal:

PSYCHOCRACY: The Scientific Selection of Primary Candidates. A political club should advertise for hundreds of applicants for the position of primary candidate, then use rigorous test, including psychological evaluation, to select the best applicant for the club for the position of primary candidate. see <http://www.cnct.com/home/jbloch Link? Distribute? Try on your students>.



On the 22nd February, we received this letter: "Hi, my name is **Stuart Baurmann** and I am president of a newly founded non profit organization which provides free public opinion registry web site called "The Pollite Lens". The nonprofit is called "The Pollite Organization" and is based in Austin, TX. I am sending this message to the members of the "Continuing International Congress on Direct Democracy" because I think we have similar aims, and perhaps some of you will be interestd in this system." <http://www.pollite.org>

The amount received so far at our bank account in Prague is vastly inferior to the number of subscription announcements. Would you, please, inform me whether you have sent your subscription or plan to do so? You can use the enclosed ticket or e-mail.

Thank you in advance.

J. P.

More DD addresses and announcements:

- Daniel B.Jeffs, The Direct Democracy Center - conduit@primenet.com
- Dawn Pisturino - chance@ctaz.com
- Mr.Colin Stark - cstark@sentry.npsnet.com - has sent us a Media Release: Council of the District of North Vancouver debates Direct Democracy bylaw on Monday, March 8th 1999, at 7 P.M.
- Web-site Internet-fiesta <http://www.internet-fiesta.org/> offers advertising channels. We could perhaps advertise there our next Conference. We might perhaps even advertise for sponsors? I believe it's worth checking.
- From **Dr.Michael Macpherson**, PSAMBRA, Berlin, we have received the following announcement: Conference: "Local and Regional Information Society", Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic, is scheduled for 15-16 March 1999 <http://www.isss.cz>

The Conference will be attended by several public personalities. Dr.Macpherson holds an Introductory Address, *Citizen participation in politics: The role of new communication media.*

Can be read on <http://www.snafu.de/~mjm/hradec-kralove.html>. Dr.Macpherson's lecture contains plenty of interesting information, including relevant web-sites. Have a look at it!

THE COMMUNITIES OF THE FUTURE PROJECT (USA)

"The Communities of the Future was conceived in the late 1980s as a framework of new principles within which local communities from throughout the Southeast could begin to rethink all institutional structures of community life for a fast-paced, inter-connected and increasingly complex society. It has since evolved to the point where over 30 communities in 18 states throughout the nation are involved in some appropriate way.

In January 1993, the Virtual Center for the Communities of the Future was established by Rick Smyre RLSmyre@aol.com to develop "capacities for transformation" associated with eight principles."

Within the framework of this project, **Prof.Michael Reber** is developing a discussion forum on *Community Learning Centers*. Several topics are to be discussed, among them the idea of *Consensus Democracy*, particularly interesting for the members of our movement. From the presentation of this idea, I quote:

"America Speaks has issued the challenge for governance in the 21st Century: "to regain some control over the policies which affect our lives."

On first glance, simple solutions seem to be available which can reenergize the democratic process. ...This approach assumes that the present institutional structure of decision making is correct and there just needs to be "tinkering" with the system to make it work. ... The idea of Consensus Democracy is based on the theory that the structure of democracy needs new scaffolding ... the need to reengineer the approach to local decision making. ... It assumes the present system which emphasizes political parties and simple ideology is unable to be effective in a fast-paced age in which constant change creates a new level of interdependency and complexity. ..."

Although the authors of the idea of *Consensus Democracy* do not explicitly speak about *Direct Democracy*, (inevitably), they draw the same conclusions as we: *There must be new political structures allowing citizens to participate in decision making much more actively and directly than the case is at present.*

The site for the Community Learning Center Committe is: <http://www2.kanazawa-it.ac.jp/englishd/reber/cotf.html>

PLANNING CELLS AND CITIZENS' JURIES - FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL ENGINEERING OF THE FUTURE

(This article is based on the following materials sent to me by Prof.Dr.Peter C..Dienel, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Germany; e-mail: DIENEL@UNI-WUPPERTAL.DE)

In English: Planning Cells: The German Experience (Werkstatt-Papier der Forschungsstelle Bürgerbeteiligung Nr.56)

In German: Die Diffusion des Modells Planungszelle ins Baskenland; Die Demokratie braucht endlich den Bürger; Stabilisierung der Demokratie - ein Weltproblem (Werkstatt-Papiere Nr.54, 55, 57 respectively)

Articles: Wie können die Bürger an Planungsprozessen beteiligt werden? (Der Bürger im Staat, Heft 3/1971), Das gute Volksempfinden (Der Spiegel Nr.20/15.5.95), Planungszelle forscht nach Beschäftigung (Märkische Oderzeitung, 6.November 1998)

In addition: Horst Zillesen et al.(Hg.), Die Modernisierung der Demokratie, Opladen 1993, Adrian Reinert, Wege aus politischer Apathie? Frankfurt/M.1988, Sven O.Hansson, Nytt Partiprogram. Nya former för demokrati (Tiden 2/98, p.20-24; Stockholm)



The idea of *Planning Cells* has been conceived and developed for practical use by **Prof.Dr.Peter.C.Dienel**, undoubtedly one of our time's leading sociologists. The *Planning Cell* might be defined as a non-partisan, ad hoc, randomly selected, single issue, short-term micro-parliament. I quote from *Werkstatt-Papier Nr.56* (see above):

"25 people from different background work together for a strictly limited time accompanied by two moderators (one man, one woman), in order to learn of a problem delegated to them by a commissioning body, and to look for alternative solutions. Generally 4 days are enough to understand and to handle the given case. One hour for lunch and two coffee breaks organize the discourse into four working units every day. Finally, the recommendations and the assessments of the solutions are presented to the commissioning body as a "Citizens' Report" (Bürgergutachten).

The instrument was tested thoroughly, and it now proves to be ready for being multiplied into many new areas on different levels of decision making. If the conditions of the model are observed, the *Planning Cell* is aiming in the medium term towards the development of a new industry. But how does it operate? The *Planning Cell-model* takes four steps to make

the informed human being possible:

- * There is a limited sector of reality to deal with. This way, the *Planning Cell* implementing organization knows beforehand what information could be relevant.
- * Information is offered to the group by the best **experts** we can get, or by witnesses and visits and by all kinds of media (e.g. films, slides, videos). To save time, an agenda organizes the information into reasonable problem packages.
- * The most important factor for getting informed seems to be **time**. One has to have the time to listen, to understand, to ask questions, to discuss alternatives and to make up one's mind. *Participants learn surprisingly fast. At the second day already, old widows and young sales assistants speak jargon. Records of Planning Cell-projects show: The ability of lay consultants to understand and to use new categories was constantly underestimated by the experts and politicians taking part as witnesses or speakers.*
- * Time is money. People have to be **paid**, if we want to have the sufficiently informed citizen. Every participant gets an expense allowance and also the full loss of earnings and a young mother may need a place in a kindergarten. In paying the necessary money, it came out that remuneration here has a very positive side-effect. To the people it signals the seriousness and the emergency of their task.

During the four days of the average *Planning Cell* program, everyone of the participants spends most of the time together with four other people in small discussion groups. Those 5-people-groups have to grasp a certain situation or to decide on specific alternatives. They also have to visit sites or to work on some other task.

Participants in *Planning Cells*, surprisingly enough, hesitate to optimise their own interest positions. *They try to detect the common interest behind each of the possible solutions and they are eager to identify themselves with it.*

Taking part activates the normal participant to talk to other folks (family, colleagues, neighbors) at length about the *Planning Cell* experience and its results. The planning cell appears to be a public relation machine.

In the USA, citizen juries usually work in plenary sessions, not dividing up into small groups. Processes of this kind are influenced by their understanding of a "jury", assimilating evidence and deciding always together. The UK juries have at least some small group sessions on their agenda.

Public trust in the reliability of our state seems to wane. Today even formally legitimized measures sometimes occur as not feasible. Solutions are blocked by vested interests. The foggy reasoning of permanent campaigning keeps the real issues invisible (You better do not mention them). In that respect, people selected at random behave uninhibited and impartial. They immediately will ask you what will happen to the results at the end of their 4 days' work. This means to have good reason for expecting a true political effect. This expectation is possible since

* *Planning Cell* projects do not start without administrative orders. They have an **officially commissioning body** (a city, a county, a ministry etc.) as their partner. Therefore they got an addressee for their Citizens' Report, whereas e.g. the US "citizens' juries are not a direct part of the decision making process." Instead, they try to address the media.

* The proposals of this Citizen's Report are **discernibly unbiased**. The laypeople admitted to the *Planning Cell* process work on their problem without any formal ties to the organizations affected or to vested interests. In comparison with other bodies in the area of public decision making, the *Planning Cell* process reduces the chances of any organized interest to have an influence to a minimum. Besides being immune against vested interest, the advisory instrument *Planning Cell* also does not produce organizational interests of its own. The *Planning Cell* people have no opportunity for personal advancement, for being promoted or for becoming re-elected. The jury-process is seen to be neutral, by the participants as well as the general public."

A Short History

"Since its first application 1972 in the German town of Schwelm, the *Planning Cell* was implemented 170 times at more than 40 locations. Several million Marks were turned over during the recent years in running this method. It proved to mediate hardened conflicts and to produce consensual decisions. Last year, the basic text "Die Planungszelle" came out in its 4th edition. In a number of countries right now, the instrument attracts growing attention. In the UK it was used as "Citizens' Jury" for the first time in 1996. With a smaller number of participants than the *Planning Cell* model, it nevertheless proved to be very effective. Since then, more than 20 juries have been held there on a variety of topics. Right now a PIP (Public Involvement Programme) is started in order to evaluate the development.

The project should not be too small. Never run just one *Planning Cell* alone. The average *Planning Cell*-project consists of 6 - 10 *Planning Cells*. There have been already nation-wide projects up to 24 *Planning Cells* working on the same problem along an identical 4-days program. Larger quantities are more resistant to bribery.

Beside an official commissioner, the *Planning Cell*-project has to have an implementing organization. This has to be acknowledged as being impartial. Originally, this function was taken care of by the "Participation Research Unit" at the University of Wuppertal. During the years, it came out that all those remuneration operations and the number of contracts with experts, jurors and staff asked too much of a university administration. Then CitCon took over the demanding function of a neutral organization. This institute is located in Bonn, now with branches in San Sebastian (Spain) and Beppu University (Japan)."

The Standard Procedure in Germany

"To make a *Planning Cell* project go effectively, one needs a process of more than four days. We can distinguish five phases: design, preparation, implementation, compiling the documentation, follow up. After the joint formulation of the task, two problems have to be solved in the second phase: The issue has to be translated into a program of 16 work units and the jurors have to be selected and invited. Building the **program** is crucial for the *Planning Cell* preparation. Each working unit has to have its clearly defined remit. Problems have to be reduced to comprehensible alternatives. All this is done by the programmer who is much more important than the moderator.

Contrary to the use of a quota-system in the UK and the USA for recruiting participants, we select people completely at random. The practice of a quota-system in the UK and the USA is a consequence of the small number of participants. A group of 15 people hardly can mirror the composition of society, a group of 300 people can.

In the third phase, *Planning Cells* carry through their 4-days program. Usually we run two *Planning Cells* parallel to each other, one starting at 08, the other at 09 o'clock. This way every expert may be deployed twice which saves time and money.

Fourth phase: In the days after this finish, the Citizens' Report is produced and printed. It documents the task of the project, describes the course of the process and finally gives a summary of the results in presenting recommendations.

Fifth phase: The Report is handed over to the commissioner. Each participant receives a copy. These Citizens' Reports have their impact on the official decision making processes."

In general: "In most cases, *Planning Cells* were employed because the political parties had come to a dead end. The Citizens' Report offers a breakthrough. Each of the *Planning Cell*-projects mentioned in the "Status Report '97" had a definite effect on different stages of the solution processes." *The influence of the moderators*: The moderators "are in charge of moderating the plenary sessions and keeping the 4 day schedule in time. They are not allowed to show personal opinion in the matters on discussion. In this respect, some professional standard is developing. But even having professional standing, the moderator may unconsciously radiate certain values and options. To even this out, we employ different moderators. A project of 20 *Planning Cells* working with the same agenda on the same problem will see up to 40 different moderators. So the possibly deforming influences of a single person to the results of a project will be close to zero."

The costs of running *Planning Cells*

"Even though bringing good value, the *Planning Cell* costs good money. The Citizens' Report concerning the commuting traffic of Hannover region required around 400.000 DM. Its 12 *Planning Cells* were staffed by 300 people selected from different municipal districts of Hannover. The most expensive *Planning Cell* project, "The Telephone of the Future", had 519

lay participants work at eight different locations all over Germany. To give them a chance to try out future possibilities, each time two truckloads of fancy technical equipment had to be shipped to the planning cell assembly rooms. The German ministry in charge of commissioning this ultimately very successful project had to pay ca. 820.000 DM to get its Citizens' Report. Five *Planning Cells* from there and one *Planning Cell* selected at a neighbouring town (altogether 150 lay jurors) offered the acceptable solution the town people had been longing for. Other projects, however, worked cheaper than those, e.g. for a ten *Planning Cells*' project for city planning problems in Cologne, 99.500 DM had to be spent. Insofar the 100.000 DM Meehan estimated for British projects are possibly too little."

The Current Situation

"At the moment, financing seems to be the main difficulty. It is true that most of the emphatically started *Planning Cell*-endeavours broke down in their very beginning for financial reasons. Competing forces are always there. They are inclined to exaggerate the cost problem. Being a new instrument in Germany, the *Planning Cell* is now in the phase of its pre-take-off. Officially, it is still **non-existent**. The terms "*Planning Cell*" or "*Citizens' Report*" do not occur in any decree, announcement, law or budget."

Planning Cells outside Germany

The USA: The *Jefferson Center*, founded in 1974 by Mr. Ned Crosby, had conducted 26 *Citizen Jury* projects until Summer 1998. (More information can be obtained at www.usinternet.com/users/jcenter.) It has a well developed organization and numerous staff. Mr. Crosby attended our Pribram Conference. (Concerning the differences between *Citizen Juries* and the German-type *Planning Cells* see above.)

Spain: *Planning Cells* began to be organized in the Basque region in 1991, after Prof. Dienel's visit to the *Laboratorio de Sociologia Juridica*. Several local newspapers brought reports about the idea and the results achieved in practice. The presentation, which took place in October 1991 at the University of Onate, was attended by more than 50 Mayors, MPs of the Province of Guipuzcoa and the Ombudsmen of Galizia and Aragón. Many citizens as well as the media understood immediately that "*el modelo alemán*" - "*Núcleos de Intervención Participativa*" was a new opportunity for solving problems caused by permanent conflicts between the local population and Madrid. Until September 1997, three *Planning Cell* projects were realized in the region. In the Spring of 1997, a successful PC project was organized in Catalonia. Interest has been aroused at the University of Barcelona and inquiries were received from **Uruguay** and **Argentina**. (See Werkstatt-Papier Nr.54)

South Africa: The idea is known as *Peoples' Planning Units*.

UK: Interestingly, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair has expressed a wish to use the German PC model in important areas of the country's politics. (*The Times*, October 28 1996, p.2)

Sweden: PC's have been mentioned as a possible innovation by Sven O. Hansson in the article *Nytt Partiprogram. Nya former för demokrati* published in the Social Democratic periodical *Tiden*, February 1998. However, in the Swedish public debate, not only the *Planning Cells*, even the concept of *Direct Democracy* in any form has, so far, been banned.

(Will continue in the June issue)

Please, send us your contributions for the nex issue by 10th June. Thank you in advance!

The editors



DIRECTOCRACY

WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY

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Jak natrvalo zarazit korupci vlády a tunelování

Korupce a zlořády, jako tunelování, jsou zabudovány do systému vlády "reprezentační" pseudo-demokracie. Je třeba pochopit, že tuto falešnou demokracii vymysleli aristokraté pro vlastní užitek, ne pro veřejnost.

Bohatí (dnes jsou to velké korporace) KUPUJÍ politický systém, takže naše politické systémy jsou zkorumpované, řízené loutkami placenými, aby přísluhovaly bohatým. Je to jednoduchý systém, ale Myšlenková Kontrola korporačních medií se snaží zatajit Vám jednoduchá fakta.

Podívejme se na některé ohavné následky Politické Korupce:

- Vláda hlavně pro Bohaté, nikoli pro Veřejnost
- Tunelování
- Ekonomické krize zrcadlí astronomické rozkrádání a zpronevěry Bankovního Kartelu, poškozující občany, načež přichází "utahování opasku" obětí
- Nezdravé potraviny a nápoje - znečištěné GMO, chemikáliemi a radioaktivitou
- škodlivá narkotika (falešně nazývaná "léky"), s rostoucím obsahem GMO (geneticky manipulované plodiny)
- Atd. atd.

(viz dřívější stránku)



Čestní lidé

Co dělat? Odpověď je jasná - K čertu s korupcí prorostlou reprezentační pseudo-demokracií.

Nastolme místo toho Přímou Demokracii, kde lidé si vládnou sami, nikoli zkorumpovanými reprezentanty. Klasické Atény (5. století a velká část 4. století před Kristem) měly Přímou participační Demokracii po 150 let BEZ KORUPCE. Přímá Demokracie (nastolená koncem 6. století před Kristem) ukončila politickou korupci - a ta se nikdy nevrátila!!

Za prvé, slovo Demokracie znamená ve staré řečtině Vládu Lidu, řecky: demos. Oligarchie, kterou máme dnes a po mnoho minulých staletí, byla a je naším ohavným vládním systémem. (Řecky Oligarchie, Vláda Několika - to jest Bohatými)

(Čeho je zapotřebí pro nastolení Přímé Demokracie?)

1. Informovaná veřejnost participující ve volném čase (chápete-li základní rozdíl mezi oligarchicky reprezentační pseudo-demokracií a skutečnou demokracií, t.j. Přímou Demokracií a chcete-li o tom mluvit s rodinou a přáteli, okopírujte tento leták a rozdejte jim jej (a navrhněte, aby dělali totéž - nastartujte řetězový proces, vzdělávání na úrovni řadového občana). Pak, ano, pak jste na cestě stát se skutečně informovaným občanem, participujícím ve volném čase.

2. Občanská Shromáždění- scházení se s jinými ve vaší komunitě (město, univerzita, pracoviště) a rozhodování co chcete a co ne. Bude-li tohle dělat dostatečné množství lidí a komunit, pak se politickým systémem stane Lid.

3. Celostátní Iniciativa a Referendum - trvejte na tom, jakožto na proceduře, která nepodléhá schválení výkonnou, zákonodárnou ani soudní mocí. Lid vyhláší Iniciativa a Lid hlasuje v Referendu.

Chcete-li, nazývejte Přímou Demokracii PD. Bratři a sestry! Vaše děti a vnuci potřebují PD - nutně!!!