



WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER

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What can we learn from rise and fall of Marxism

(by Jiri Polak)

There is an affinity between the study of language and the study of political systems. Above a certain level of development, all political systems are based on communication by means of language. Therefore, an insight into the development of linguistic theories can help us to better understand the enormous impact of Marxism on political thinking of the 20th century.

At the dawn of linguistics, the language was studied as a product of historical development and as determined by logic, psychology, or supposedly objective laws. In 1916, in Geneva, *Ferdinand de Saussure's Cours de linguistique Générale* (post-humous) brought about a revolution. Saussure maintained that the language (*langue*, to be discerned from *parole*) should be studied *en elle-même et pour elle-même*. This approach is called *structuralism*. As pointed out in previous issues of this Newsletter, it meant a transition to *immanence*.

Like *behaviorism* - psychology's counterpart to linguistic structuralism - Saussure's approach was strictly anti-mentalist. Surely, it is no coincidence that both these doctrines emerged almost simultaneously (Watson's break-through came only three years before the *Cours*). But linguistics and psychology were not the only branches of science where the formalist and anti-mentalist approach came to the fore - and became dominant during the whole first half of the twentieth century. Structural doctrines emerged in as unconnected disciplines as e.g. the theory of literature, mineralogy and botanics.

Although linguistic structuralism is a European phenomenon (flourishing especially in Geneva, Prague and Copenhagen), a similar development is observable in the
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THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE NDDIE

(NETWORK FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY INITIATIVES IN
EUROPE)



THE GRUMBLING OF A VOLCANO

Participants:

Germany: Johanna Allgäuer, Reiner Braun, Werner Bromand, Friedmund Dreher, Michael Efler, Erich Fritsch, Alexander Gräf, Roman Huber, Franz Isemann, Zoltan Kovacz, Thomas Krautheim, Ingrid O'Connor, Ronald Pabst, Thomas Rupp, Ursula Scheffler, Edda Schmunk, Sonia Schreyögg, Edeltraud Schwarz, Maquel Tejada, Allen Wright.

Spain: Domitilla Barbola, Maria Barbolla.

Czech Republic: Radek Batelka, Alena Králíková, Dalibor Plichta, Milan Valach, Veronika Valachová.

Ukraine: Michail Baymuratov, Nadia Semenova.

Romania: Nicu Bazga, Sorin Buda, Fodor de la Carmen, Aurel Duta, Ion Lupan, Liliana Scurea, Vicky Popescu, Horia Terpe.

Belgium: Andrew Beatty, Henrik Dahlsson, Heiko Dittmer, Fred Six.

Austria: Robert Benedek, Hans Göttl, Josef Pampalk.

Malta: Sharon E. Bonici

GB: Paul Carline

Netherlands: Filia den Hollander, Arjen Nijeboer

Yugoslavia: Natasa Djuricic, Vanja Lesic

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WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM RISE AND FALL OF MARXISM

(continuing from page 1)

USA (*distributionalism*). In that country, the 1950s brought a partial return to mentalism (Prof. *Noam Chomsky's generativism*) which, retroactively, revived interest in pre-war mentalist approaches such e.g. that of *Gustave Guillaume*. But Prof. Chomsky does not completely dismiss structuralism. He only postulates the existence of *deep (mental) structures* generating *superficial structures* - the only level studied by Saussure and his followers.

To use an anatomic metaphor: When studying human body, the older approaches focused on the flesh, the skin, the circulation of blood etc. Structuralisms began to focus on the skeleton only. In other terms: the older approaches tried to present the whole picture, overloaded by details. Structuralisms tried to understand the underlying **functions** - a useful insight. But - to learn a foreign language solely using a structuralist grammar would be impossible.

In a climate dominated by the structuralist paradigm, Marxism must have been intellectually appealing because Marxism, too, is a sort of simplified bipolar structuralism, based on dichotomies: the bourgeoisie - the proletariat; capitalism - socialism (or communism); value - use value; materialism - idealism. Many prominent social scientists (e.g. Lukács, Habermas, the Frankfurt School, and others) have succumbed to the charm of marxist half-truths which seemed to reveal the fallacy of bourgeois science and open the gate leading to the ultimate wisdom.

In the marxist simplification and categorization of reality lies also the key to the great, even if temporary, *political* success of socialist and communist movements. This insight should be used by DD activists in their search of a unifying ideology and a banner under which various branches and factions might rally. More about this in the next issue.

Denmark: Sofie Gerström, Jesper Egebak, Nicolas E. Fischer, Jesper Morville, Lene Munkedal, Anna Marie Österbaek, Jörgen Raffensøe, Charlotte Ryö, Jörgen E. Steffensen, Hedvig Vestergaard

Slovak Republic: Miloslav Hettes, Katarina Králiková, Peter Marianek, Magda Sulanova, Andrej Svorencik.

Switzerland: Bruno Kaufmann

Finland: Ulla Klötzer

Greece: George Kokkas

Estonia: Argo Loo, Aivar Roop

Hungary: Karoly Lorant

Bulgaria: Tzvetta Maneva, Hristo Minov, Todo Minov, Bojura Pavlova, Milena Stoilova.

Poland: Malgorzata Peretiatkowitz, Rita Zydlow

Sweden: Jiri Polak

Georgia: Levan Z. Urushadze, Zurab Urushadze

Russia: Inessa Zwereva

Organizations represented:

Initiative für ein Europa der Bürger; European Women Union, Hnutí za přimou demokracii; League for Constitutionalism and Legal Culture; Attac Romania; Attac Austria; Attac Würzburg; Attac Hungary; Attac Frankfurt; Campaign for National Independence (Malta); Dr. Rath Foundation; Mehr Demokratie e.V.; European Movement Romania; IRI-Europe; TEAM; Amsterdams Initiatief; Democracy International; Association of Business Women; Mother Earth Romania; Free Europe; Europahaus Burgenland; Agora Institute Bratislava; European Future Congress (Alternative to EU); Forum for Citizens' Democracy; Virtuelle VolksVertreter Deutschland; Gender Studies Center; NO to EU Estonia; Civic Participation Society; Hnutje Human; Peoples' Movement against the EU; Referendum Platform/IRI - Europe; North/South Institute for Development;

Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation; Karat Coalition; APSS Romania; European Movement Estonia; Pour la démocratie directe en Belgique; IACERHRG.

Agenda:

The main purpose of the conference was to launch the European Referendum Campaign.

15.11.: *Slovak Republic*

Three little speeches followed by a panel discussion.

16.11.: *The European Referendum Campaign*

The campaign was officially launched. Appeal to potential supporters in all European countries. Presentation and briefing. Workshops: Practical steps to be taken.

17.11.: *Visions for Europe*

A: Europe as a Federal State

B: Europe as a Union of Independent States

C: Europe of Free Citizens

Host of the Campaign:

Democracy International (www.european-referendum.org)

Profile:

Activists association with special interest in observing and improving „democracy“ and instruments of direct citizens participation such as initiative and referendum.

European Referendum Campaign:

Democracy International is hosting the campaign, is building up the campaigning network and provides coordination and umbrella services.

Further goals:

After ending up the campaign, Democracy International will live on, searching for new challenges in the field of „democracy“.

Basic situation:

On EU level:

serious deficit of democratic legitimacy
simultaneously a high velocity of development
upcoming EU expansion
people cannot influence anything
awareness of EU/Europe is very small

On country level:

people are tired of politics in ALL European countries; there is a deficit of practised democracy everywhere; widespread lethargy
many citizens do not feel to be represented by their parliamentarians

Appeal:

The European Referendum Campaign demands

1. that an EU Constitution or Constitutional Treaty must be submitted to the citizens in a European referendum in all the countries concerned.
2. that the Parliaments of the states concerned make the appropriate legal and constitutional provisions for a binding referendum.
3. that the EU Constitution or Constitutional Treaty can only be adopted in countries in which a majority votes in favour of it.
4. that the referendum takes place simultaneously with the European Elections in 2004 in all countries concerned.



decision-making in small groups of power-holders behind closed doors; corruption ... Responding to this situation, Mr. Dahlsson, Secretary General of TEAM (The European Alliance of EU-critical Movements), wants to preserve the EU, but to transform it into a much more democratic Union of European States.

A different conclusion was drawn by Mr. Paul Carline. While endorsing the criticism put forward by Mr. Dahlsson, he said approximately this: Let them fulfil their federation plans. By doing so, they might be „playing into our hands“. Although not expressed explicitly, the idea seems to be: In a Federation, the abuse of power will be magnified, which could make the kettle boil over.

On the last day of the Conference, Mr. Erich Fritsch (Citizens' Initiative for the Europe of citizens) put forward a grandiose vision of a future of mankind based on DD systems adapted to all levels, all countries, and all contexts. Truly a dignified conclusion of the conference.

We do not want a 'cucumber' democracy

The EU is an undemocratic ...
Europe needs citizens' participation!
Support the constitutional network!

www.european-referendum.org

Strategy:

Democracy International have developed a detailed and well thought-out strategy. (See the web-site). A funny component is the Postcard Campaign. Individuals are invited to send this postcard to the responsible actors:

Concerning the above proposals, heated discussions took place. There are mainly two schools of thought: The EU critics and the Federalists. The Critics – represented e.g. by Mrs. Ulla Klötzer, Finland, want to dismantle the Union because the Brussels power elites are even more inaccessible to ordinary citizens than national politicians. Two approaches are conspicuous: The Reformists and the Radicals. The former were represented by Mr. Henrik Dahlsson, a high EU official, who described the machinations taking place in Brussels:

Exaggerated influence exerted by lobbyists, especially those belonging to big corporations; general lack of transparency;

It was particularly encouraging to meet representatives of women's organizations – Coalition Karat, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (<http://www.karat.org> and www.bgrf.org) and Gender Studies Centre. Surely, women begin to realize that only DD can give them full equality, not only on paper, but in real life. Their support will be crucial for our efforts to re-form the male-dominated representative systems. If I am not mistaken, in Mrs. Bojura Pavlova, Bulgaria we have gained a warm supporter.

On Saturday evening, we were invited to a reception held for us by the Swiss Embassy and his Excellency the Ambassador personally, at the Forum Hotel. For this, we must thank Dr. Bruno Kaufmann, President of the IRI-Europe Institute.

INTERNATIONAL



USA

• *Information from Mr. M.Dane Waters, I&R Institute, Washington:*

5 September: "In this report you will read about the Michigan State Board of Canvassers decision to deny ballot access to two initiatives. Their decision is extremely controversial because many initiative scholars argue that they overstepped their authority in reaching this decision. The decision also continues the horrific trend of striking initiatives down on technical grounds AFTER the proponents have spent considerable time and money on these issues. The Institute endorses specific state review of initiative petitions for technical deficiencies but strongly believes that these reviews should take place prior to circulation and offer a specific remedy to the deficiencies.

Additionally, you will find a quick overview of our upcoming pre-election report. We are waiting on a few more issues within the states to be resolved before issuing the final report."

16 September: "This November, voters in 38 states will get the opportunity to cast a vote on 199 statewide ballot measures - 52 from the people and 147 from the government. The issues to be decided will be as mundane as taking out obsolete provisions of Colorado's constitution to controversial issues like legalizing marijuana in Nevada. Over half of the statewide measures will fall into a handful of categories: drug policy reform, animal protection, educational reform, election reform, gaming and fiscal policy.

If these numbers stay constant, it will represent a 30% decrease from the last election in the number of initiatives placed on the ballot and will also represent the fewest number since 1986 when 46 statewide initiatives were voted on." Report link: <http://www.ballotwatch.org/2002Pre-electionReport.pdf>

23 September: "In this update you will find a very interesting article from the Seattle Times that talks about the current state of the initiative process around the country. You will also find - at the end of this email - changes that you should make to the pre-election report that we sent out last week. As with every election cycle, due to litigation and legislative action, we probably won't know exactly what will be on the ballot until early October. We will keep you informed."

• *Changes to Pre-Election Report:*

Florida - Article:

<http://www.tallahassee.com/mld/democrat/news/local/4119605.htm>

Nebraska - Article:

http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u_np=0&u_pg=36&u_sid=509184

Missouri: Add the following 2 initiatives: Article:

<http://www.kansascity.com/mld/kansascitystar/4086536.htm>

Article:

<http://www.ledger-enquirer.com/mld/ledgerenquirer/news/nation/4092609.htm>

1 October: Mr. Waters send round an interesting article from the Houston Chronicle that gives a good overview of the ballot measures to be voted on this November: Ballot initiatives give peek at states' hot-button issues by *Julie Mason*, Houston Chronicle, September 28

7 October: "In this update you will find an article by Lou Jacobson of the National Journal discussing this year's ballot measures as well as some interesting insight into what the "liberals" or "progressives" are doing this election cycle. I would also encourage you to visit (<http://nationaljournal.com/>) for more insight into this year's election.

You will also find an article by Jason White of (www.stateline.org) which discusses how lawmakers are choosing to sidestep the dreaded "tax" issue and instead are placing these controversial issues on the ballot for the voters to decide. I find it ironic that on one hand lawmakers' voice concern about the citizen's ability to make "informed decisions" on fiscal issues at the ballot box, yet they choose to place these types of issues on the ballot for the voters to decide when they don't want to deal with them.

Finally, the Public Policy Institute of California just issued some survey results on the upcoming California election - very interesting reading. You can see the results at

(<http://www.ppic.org/publications/CalSurvey30/survey30.pdf>)"

13 October: "The election is almost upon us and there is a lot of digest. The latest count is that there will be 202 statewide ballot measures in 40 states. 149 are from state legislature (a 20% increase from 2000) and 53 from the citizens (a 30% decrease from 2000). A complete report is available on our website at www.ballotwatch.org.

One thing that is striking about this election cycle is the involvement of Federal Agencies in attempting to influence the outcome of the elections. ... The article below talks about how the FDA is working to stop an initiative in Oregon pertaining to the labeling of genetically modified food. These actions by the Federal Government will no doubt lead to litigation.

In addition to information on the U.S. elections, I am including some articles about upcoming votes in Europe dealing with the ratification of the Nice Treaty and the adoption of the Euro (in case you wanted to see what is happening "across the pond")."

23 October: "I get calls from reporters almost daily asking me about what's on the November ballot as well as what I consider the 'hot and interesting' issues. What I almost always tell them is that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. What's 'hot and interesting' to one person may not be of any interest to anyone else. When I first started the Institute, I too would privately ask myself why the citizens were placing certain things on the ballot. However, I soon realized ... that every issue that was appearing on the ballot was backed by citizens with deep personal and philosophical beliefs in what they were pushing.

Behind almost every initiative, there is a story - a passion for change."

28 October: Information from Mr. **David Parrish**: "You can download a brochure associated with the election for the National Initiative now being conducted in Portland, Maine here:

<http://ni4d.us/graphics/maineelectionbrochure.pdf>

16 September: Information from Mr. **Evan D. Ravitz**: "This is revealing. Note the part of the Bush plan which says: "...advanced forms of biological warfare that can 'target' specific genotypes may transform biological warfare from the realm of terror to a politically useful tool."

See also:

<http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>

• Pi911 The People's Investigation of 9/11

"We declare a national emergency in uncovering what really happened on 9/11/2001 through an immediate call for an independent collaborative investigation worldwide. The U.S. government could help us but instead is doing everything it can to stop any investigation into 9/11." See <http://www.911pi.com>



CANADA

• Prof. **Michel Chossudovsky**: War and Globalization - The Truth Behind September 11

Can be ordered from "Global Outlook", R.R. # 2, Shanty Bay, Ontario L0L 2L0 or from North America, call 1-888-713-8500 (Pricing: \$ 17 Cnd within Canada; \$ 17.00 US to the U.S.; \$ 19.00 US or Euro 19.00 to Overseas. Price includes postage. Or you can order online at: www.globalresearch.ca

18 September: Information from Mr. **George Sagi**: "The WEB address (URL) of *Participatory Direct Democracy Association* has changed to <http://pdda.ca>. You will find live-links from ours to your own Web-sites. Dr. **Mirek Kolar** has dedicated much of his time to improve this Web-site which he has been managing for several years. We owe him our gratitude for his dedicated unselfish work.

I have resigned as the President of PDDA and Mirek was gracious to take over its management as its new President. The changes were due to my advanced age. This way a younger, dedicated person will carry the torch. I need time to finish my futuristic novel which incorporates a practical model of DD in a popularizing, hopefully, enjoyable format."

*George, on behalf of all members of our network, I wish you much success with your post-retirement activities, especially with your novel! Visionaries like yourself are badly needed! You have been one of the most prominent DD pioneers, participating both in Pribram 1998 and Athens/Delphi 2000, and one of the "founding fathers" of the tentative effort to establish a worldwide organization. The Czech translation of your **Theories of Direct Democracy** has become one of the basic theoretical works of the Czech DD Movement. I hope you'll stay in touch! Sincerely,*

Jiri

• 24 September and 4 October: Information from Mr. **Miroslav Kolar**: New submissions to

<http://democracy.mkolar.org/newURL.html> Links:

<http://www.autobuyology.org/car15.html> and

<http://missioncity.tripod.com>



NEW ZEALAND

• Prof. Ph.D. **Michael Noah Mautner**'s book **A Constitution of Direct Democracy** can be obtained from amazon.com.



IRELAND

• 22 October: Information from Mr. **Anthony Coughlan**: "Irish referendums are forms of direct legislation, like in Switzerland and various other countries, and most US states. The citizens of the Republic of Ireland are legislating to amend the Constitution of their State, which they originally adopted in 1937 and "gave to themselves" by referendum, to use the words of the Constitution's preamble.

Irish referendums are therefore constitutionally different from referendums in the UK, for example, which are advisory in character and where sovereignty is regarded as resting with the Crown in Parliament, not with the people." ...

(The complete text has been published at democracy-europe@yahoo.com)



SWEDEN

• *The Direct Democracy Party*, presented in the previous issue, are developing a scientific approach to the problem of democratic management of society - MoinMoin Wikin (Demokratiska Sammanställningar, i.e., approximately, *democratic overviews*; see

http://direktdemokraterna.com/direktdemokrati/Sammanst_e4llningar).

For the time being, they write in Swedish, but will surely publish an English version when ready. I believe that, together with innovations such as Dr. **Mikael Nordfors'** Vivarto, this approach gives us a glimpse of a not very distant future, when the running of society will be the task of *political engineers* responding to the citizens' true preferences, instead of being a playground for party-political dabblers.

• One more Swedish DD group has emerged recently - *Demokratiforum* (Democracy Forum):

<http://www.demoex.net/hem> They try to introduce DD into local politics of a Swedish commune (Vallentuna).

• There is yet another phenomenon that deserves mentioning: While on the national level, the established parties keep trying to maintain their independence and traditional ideological profiles, on the local level, communal politicians, regardless of their respective label, tend to pragmatically cooperate and form coalitions in pursuing a policy beneficial for their own community, sometimes in opposition to their

national party leaderships. This is one of the trends bound to result, sooner or later, in a disintegration of the current party system as such. It has begun to be discussed even in national TV.



GERMANY

• In September, The *Menschen für Volksabstimmung* campaign has failed to obtain the prescribed 2/3 majority of the *Bundestag* votes. This is, of course, only a postponement, not a defeat.

• A new political party - *Virtuelle Volksvertretung Deutschland (VVVD)* - has been founded. It wants to make use of electronic communication between the citizens and their parliamentary representatives, thereby introducing elements of DD into the system. (www.vvvd.de)



CZECH REPUBLIC

• In September, at the Department of Philosophy, University of Brno, Ph.D. *Bohuslav Binka*, co-editor of this Newsletter, successfully defended his doctoral thesis *An Analysis of Deep Ecology*. **Congratulations!**



BULGARIA

• 17 September: Information from Mr. *Ivan Christoff*: "On Sept. 12th 2002 in Sofia, Bulgaria, a march for direct democracy passed through the centre of the city starting from the National Assembly and visiting the two public media - BNRadio and BNTelevision. A real responsibility for bad governance and 90% taxation of illegal or significantly exceeding declared incomes property was also demanded. A petition signed by 3000 citizens was submitted to the Parliament - a second one of that kind. The first, signed by another 6000 citizens was submitted already in 1997 (without street action). And since it was totally ignored (by deputies and media, this time we went to the streets."

Mr.Christoff further reports that the action was almost (but not entirely) ignored and boycotted by the media. Two interviews were broadcasted live by BNR and one by Drarik-radio. Nothing on the TV. It's the same story as everywhere. The established media are either corrupt or lack insight into the importance of the growing DD movement.



SPAIN

• 30 October: A letter from mr. *Albert Tió*: "Hello from Barcelona, What do you think about the concepts of DD (direct democracy) and participative democracy? From our organization www.motivados.org, we are trying to inject to our ill functioning democracies aspects of both. The first seen as participative moments, like referendum, and the second as participative processes. Would you say that DD involves both? We are looking for non-demagogic terms to transmit our message. One of our

strategies to succeed in our goals is to go for local elections in Barcelona, in order to try to change things from the inside. Thanks a lot for your inputs."



UK

• 6 September: Information from Dr. *Michael J. Macpherson*: "There's a new page at the Integral Studies website. It's quite heavy reading - meant for enthusiasts of democracy!

THE LEGAL BASIS FOR NATIONAL REFERENDUM IN BRITAIN Compendium of contributions to an online discussions in the British university forums Law-public and Public-administration-and-management.

There are some informative letters, international comparisons and literature references. Questions arise from this discussion such as: If a referendum on whether to join "Euroland" is held, will the result be binding or just advisory? What are the chances to introduce legally regulated elements of direct democracy, such as citizens' initiative and referendum, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland?

You can find the compendium via <http://home.snafu.de/mjm/init.html> "

• 6 September: Information from Mr. *Bernard Clayson*: "Interesting observations by a specialist in the field advising the UK Prime Minister on when to hold referendums. http://www.no-euro.com/factsfigures/briefs/ni_one.asp i.e. manipulation of the result?, good tactics?, or defence of the status quo?"



EUROPE

• On 19th September 2002, at the European Parliament in Brussels, a conference was held on **The European Referendum Challenge**

• *Program*:
Morning: Public hearing on the European Referendum Challenge; Welcome and Introduction by Heidi Hautala, Finnish MEP; Presentation of the main findings in the IRI report by Bruno Kaufmann, IRI Europe President; Statements by Giovana Da Minico, Professor at Napoli University, and Michael Efler, Mehr Demokratie, Germany.
Afternoon: The Referendum Campaign. Welcome and Introduction by Thomas Rupp and Heiko Dittmer; discussions and deliberations on practical issues; Summary and looking ahead to the Regional Forums by Bruno Kaufmann.

• 2 September: Information from Mr. *Vladimir Rott*: An article published in *Financial Times*, Sep 2 - World / Europe: "Prodi attacks plans for Brussels reform. The Commission jealously guards its monopoly on bringing forward new legislation. By Daniel Dombey in Brussels."
"Romano Prodi, president of the European Commission, has attacked plans backed by presidents and prime ministers for reforming decision-making in Brussels, believing they could threaten his institution's power and influence."
(For the entire text see <http://news.ft.com/world/europe>)

STRATEGY IN EASTERN EUROPE

(Ph.D. Milan Valach, spokesman of the Movement for DD, Czech Republic)

DIRECT DEMOCRACY - THREE MYTHS CONCERNING THE MOVEMENT

The activists of various DD movements are often wrong in believing that all people in the world are equally interested in the idea. They simply suppose that all people desire freedom and consequently, that it's enough to give them correct information for the movement to be victorious.

This is one of the most dangerous illusions that could transform the whole movement into a sort of altruistic charitable organization without much political impact.

The first myth is the conviction that **people always desire freedom**. Many historical examples suggest that it has not always been the case. We have seen millions following totalitarian leaders. Not long ago, this happened in Russia after the Bolshevik revolution, in Germany, Austria, Italy, and many other countries, where Nazi and Fascist movements gained massive support, in China where Mao was able to dominate that huge country on the basis of general consensus backing his dictatorship. Lately we have witnessed fundamentalist religious movements and sects playing considerable role in today's world.

Of course, we could put forward examples to the contrary. Already in the Middle Ages, at the beginning of the 15th century, in the Bohemian Kingdom, there was an outbreak of the Hussite movement which combined demands for a religious reform with radical social demands, as well as equally radical demands for the abolition of power inequality among people. More such examples could surely be mentioned.

But what do they tell us? Sometimes people accept dictatorship and even demand it, at other occasions they oppose it and fight for freedom. Human behavior thus changes over time and without understanding the reasons, our movement will be blindfolded and our pursuit, that costs us so much in terms of time and effort, will have little effect.

To elucidate the problem, let us also take a look at the *second myth* which pretends that **freedom is something all people desire**. Here, a simple question concerning the substance of power is all we need. What is the power base of all dictators as well as contemporary political elites? The simplified answer is: power resides in the ability to force others into obedience. In turn, this ability is based on the command of means of coercion - the police and the army. In the year 2000, in Prague, and also in Seattle, Göteborg and elsewhere, we could watch the police dispersing demonstrators who were protesting against the domination of supranational monopolies. However, there are many historical examples telling us that in such cases, power is only dangerous if the police and the army are devoted to it and if the majority of the public agree with their behavior. In short, power is based on the consensus of the bulk of the society, both inside the power elites and the people at large. On the one hand, consensus is achieved by the powerful because it corresponds with the interests of the privileged, and on the other hand, because it has a grip on the minds of the underprivileged. Instrumental in maintaining this grip are the so called mass media which, in reality, are means of manipulation by which the elites dominate most of the respective society.

The history of the struggle for social and democratic rights, which was taking place during the 19th and 20th centuries, bears clear witness to the fact that one part of society took sides with the repressive authorities and supported their fight against forces of democratization. We might not be completely wrong if we identify the core of the champions of democracy with the proletariat. Similarly, during the French Revolution, the third estate fought against the privileged estates of the clergy and the aristocracy.

Consequently, we can see that, invariably, those who fight for freedom are always social categories, groups or classes who are deprived of it, who are disadvantaged in the respective social system. The fact that certain individuals belonging to the privileged classes join the revolution does not disprove this rule.

The third myth. The above mentioned insight permits us to also refute the third myth claiming that people **strive for freedom for freedom's sake**. People have never desired freedom pure and simple; they have always wanted to get space for the pursuit of their own interests. This is clearly seen in all bourgeois revolutions, when, shortly after the victory, the slogans mentioning "liberty, equality, and fraternity" began to conceal ruthless exploitation of European workers, as well as the exploitation of the people of India, China, and many others, even the enslavement and massacres of Africans and red Indians. All this in the name of the God of profit, looming large as the real substance of the bourgeois idea of freedom. So freedom does not mean the same to everybody.

The motive force of history are interests. If, in the 19th and early 20th century the proletariat fought for general suffrage, it was because it did not have it, but needed it to assert its interests. In other words, the proletariat's right to vote in elections was the same as general suffrage, simply because there was nobody occupying a more humble position.

The attraction of the "fight for freedom" lies in its promise of liberation from current oppression and future satisfaction of interests that cannot be satisfied in the present system. Seen from the viewpoint of the fight for direct democracy, the issue is the satisfaction of those social groups who, at present, do not enjoy any considerable wealth or political power.

What are the consequences for the tactics of the movement? For one thing: It would be very naïve to rely on the support on the part of any political elites. Direct democracy is not compatible with their interests, quite the contrary. Direct democracy rejects power as a privilege of any narrow elite. In reality, DD wrings power out of the hands of the elites and gives it to the citizenry.

We can achieve success only if we gain the support of the majority of the citizens. In turn, such support can be gained only if we are able to show **what benefit they can reap from DD**. We must show them why it is disadvantageous for them to leave power in the hands of narrow political elites and what damage they suffer by remaining passive.

We can easily draw their attention to the devastation of natural environment due to the ruthless plundering of nature by big corporations and especially by supranational monopolies (see e.g. Albert Gore: *Earth in the Balance*.) The amalgamation of economic and political power has many negative consequences for the citizens. In the time of globalization, it even threatens democracy itself (see Bauman, Z.: *Globalization*). But not only that. Political and economic elites could plunge us into wars which serve their interests, but which are totally immoral and the consequences of which will be disastrous for the majority of citizens (see Bush and his efforts to dominate the global oil sources).

Direct democracy must be presented as an instrument enabling us to solve current problems in the interests of the majority of underprivileged citizens. Only in this way can it gain motivational force and set afloat a mass movement sufficiently strong to push through necessary changes in spite of the resistance on the part of the ruling elites.

In this respect, the situation of the countries of the so called Eastern Bloc is even more difficult. They are adversely affected by their past. The citizens have little or no trust in their own ability to prevail over the rulers. Most of the mass media are dominated by Western press monopolies which behave there like neo-colonial powers.

However, every country has its own history shaping both the mentality of the inhabitants and the specific local conditions. Therefore, the tactics and success of the DD movement also depends on these peculiarities which are difficult to understand if seen from the outside.

So what can we do for ourselves? In the post-communist countries, the movement's objective must be to put pressure on their respective governments so as to prevent them from hampering further democratization of the EU. We must support one another in penetrating into the media and into the consciousness of the general public. The power of the united citizens must be opposed to the power of the united European political elites, and to the global power of supranational monopolies.

To reach its purpose, every kind of political activity requires considerable resources. Supposedly, the conditions of similar groups active in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc resemble ours. It is very difficult to obtain grants in support of direct democracy. Next to the passivity of the citizens, our biggest problem is lack of money. We need financial resources and any help would be welcome. We would also be grateful for suggestions as to suitable foundations or grant projects.

The world we will live in will depend on our efforts and our fight, nothing else!



HOW SAFE IS INTERNET VOTING?

• 26 May, Mr. Bernard Clayson:

"I've just published two UK government (DETLR) reports on the legalities and technicalities of e-voting on <http://www.planet-thanet.fsnet.co.uk/government/index.htm>

I have to apologize for my comments on this subject in the past, I've been guilty of VASTLY UNDERSTATING the number and magnitude of the problems. The technical report identifies over a hundred, and I did not count the legal ones, and they did not identify the potential for the government of the day abusing the vote (I presume they wanted to get paid). They identified 136 ways of e-voting to include disabilities etc, voting via mobile/home phones, TV, computer, e-voting booths in public places, ATM's etc. Public Scrutiny/Accountability? Why? What for?

Some local elections used e-voting this year, more are scheduled for next year And they have not sorted out the problems yet, all this begs the question of: - If they are not worried about hackers and hostile governments, can one assume they don't care because they can 'pre-conclusion' the result?'

• 27 May, Mr. Akiva Orr:

"I think e-voting is inevitable whether we like it or not. But Bernard's criticism is justified and useful. I think it should be used not for resisting the inevitable (which is a waste of time that will, at best, delay implementation) but for making the possible loopholes foolproof."

• 27 May, Mr. John Suhr:

"Right, Aki. You could also add E-commerce in general. Bernard fails to acknowledge that E primaries were successfully conducted in at least 3 US states in 2000. There were some glitches, but an important benefit was increased voter turnout - which was otherwise lagging badly.

Bernard's unreasoning faith in the paper ballot is mystifying. He should only have to look at what happened in Florida to realize that the paper ballot is no guarantee against fraud and manipulation. The last word I heard was that Gore actually won Florida on recount!

Of course there will be startup problems with new technologies, but these can be remedied as the process

develops. It is a matter of designing in the proper failsafes, checks and confirmations. The benefits should considerably outweigh the costs." ...

• 27 May, *Mr. Bernard Clayson:*

"Aki and John, it is not MY report, it was done by legal and technical experts. Your blind faith in E is mystifying to me, and I take it from the response neither of you have read either report.

p.s. John, they mention the US primaries, you really should read it. How do you know voter turnout was increased? It could be multiplied votes or manipulated figures, how would anyone know?"

• 29 May, *Mr. Bernard Clayson:*

It never fails to amaze, and puzzle me why the ones who advocate e-voting find it so impossible to follow a link to further education on the subject. If you want the original government pdf files I'll send them to you. However,

John wrote

Quite right, Triaka and Aki

Recalling that Bernard argued the California energy crisis was due to genuine shortages, the credibility of his views and sources is in doubt.

The Enron and similar disclosures show that the entire affair was a fraud. The mythical shortages were entirely contrived to drive up prices - hardly an unusual business practice. (BC) *the energy crisis (which you were going to cure with e-voting), you have not seen the last of it (and you did not follow links then either). Then, as now, you take one snippet and project it as the total exchange on the subject.*

Bernard should therefore answer Aki's question directly rather than referring us to other doubtful authorities. If E-banking works satisfactorily, then why not E-voting? (BC) *I did, time factor, further than that you will either have to think or go to the link and read it.*

And surely, the losing faction in an E-vote would detect and report any fraud and insist on an honest revote. With E-voting, that would be easy. As Triaka says, the voters would not accept fraud. An honest system is the whole reason to institute E-democracy. (BC) *Like your Presidential election? further more how do you do a recount?*

Bernard's faith in the paper ballot is naive. With the anonymous ballot, how can the authenticity of the paper ballot be verified? Obviously, it can't. Anyone desiring to "stuff" the ballot box can do so so long as the election authorities cooperate. Again, look at Florida. (BC) *Because your country run a ridged counting system (which should prove something to you, but I doubt it), it does not mean the paper ballot is invalid, it means automated systems of counting are. The UK runs a clean system, that is now going to change, everyone should be asking WHY? Who is going to gain from it? the public?*

Regards Bernard

• 30 May, *Mr. Bruce Eggum:*

Unfortunately I did not receive yahoo group mail for days. However this same question or topic seems to remain unresolved: e-voting

Aki continues the same old question ie: 29. 5. 2002

Dear Bernard,

Could you please spell out for me the differences between e-banking and e-voting (as you see them), which rule out e-voting but not e-banking? Most people care more about their money than about politics. If e-banking is reliable enough for them, why isn't e-voting? ATB, Aki
E-banking loses a few billion dollars a year in these united states, from hackers, and other unscrupulous persons. An article showed Israel did also lose a huge amount of money via ATM's. Apparently the banks right it off, make more money to take it's place. Perhaps they consider time saved in employee cost as a factor.

You must realize Aki, that the bank booth ATM is a computer, just like your TV or PC. Once you enter your information, it hits the phone lines and is susceptible to be intercepted. Than too are the bank employees. Networked as banks are, employees from other parts of the world can also get into your account. If you can do ATM you can also enter your account from your TV, or PC. Hackers can get to your account just like they get in other computers. No AKI, your ATM is just as vulnerable as any other internet function. It IS an internet function!

What needs to be done, is continue to progress on development of a secure system. Simply saying it is secure, does not make it secure. Instead of having your head in the sand hiding from reality, read the articles about the dangers of e-voting so perhaps you can contribute to fixing the problem. Do not contribute to the problem by accepting a system which is dysfunctional.

Bernard has an excellent research article on his site here:

E-Vote, technical

<http://www.planet-thenet.fsnet.co.uk/government/evoting/tech1.htm>

It also considers how to have a secret ballot, and explains why this is needed. John seems to think this is not important, however he does not accept the reality that people get enraged and kill or injure those who vote "wrong" according to them.

Violent threats and actions have been a party to throwing elections since they began.

As I have said, I certainly am not against e-voting. I simply will not accept a system with so many flaws.

Bernards, Bruce





Prof. *Michel Chossudovsky*: War and Globalization - The Truth Behind September 11

Dr. Bruno Kaufmann - leading a workshop on the theory of DD



Merry Christmas and a Happy New DD Year! Hold On!

Yearly subscription 10 \$.

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