



WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 10 (No. 1) March 2008

DD or e-DDD?

Among the activists and theorists (whose number increases all the time in the whole Western world) who want to reform the so called representative "democracy", there are two, to some extent competing, currents: the I&R approach and the Deliberative approach. The former considers the Swiss system as a model and an ideal. The latter seeks inspiration in various sources, from ancient Athens to American *electronic town meetings*. It seems that the I&R people want to exclude the advocates of deliberation from the DD movement, pretending that only I&R deserves to be called *direct democracy*. This is a very deplorable standpoint.

In Sweden, some twenty years ago, there was a referendum (a plebiscite) about nuclear energy. Shall we go on producing it indefinitely, or shall we successively close all nuclear plants? The latter standpoint prevailed. In the meantime, global warming began to influence public opinion in favor of the use of other energy sources than oil, gas, and coal. Nuclear energy turned out to be an attractive alternative. Most Swedes now want to keep it, but the decision-makers are hampered by the referendum. Advocates of the establishment say: *This shows that direct democracy is no good*. This is only an extreme example of partocratic demagoguery: By picking up an untypical, isolated situation, they try to discredit the whole idea. Arguments of this type, using crazy examples to brainwash lazy and poorly informed minds of the majority, are prevalent in the media. Serious DD theorists are boycotted and silenced. The undemocratic rule of party elites is allowed to rave unopposed. Mainstream political "scientists" call partocracy "responsible government", suggesting that DD is irresponsible.

On the other hand, obviously, qualified decisions about most issues do require knowledge that average citizens do not have. Such knowledge can be obtained using deliberative processes - planning cells, citizen juries and scientific deliberative polling. But such projects cost money that can only be supplied by politicians. Evidently, politicians will not finance deliberation which questions the very system. Dozens of *planning cells* have been organized in continental Europe, but only concerning politically innocuous issues - a park here, a bus station there, a road, a construction project and the like. Consequently, orthodox I&R people seem to believe that it's only such issues that are suitable for deliberative projects and that deliberation is irrelevant for the lofty idea of I&R. As a matter of fact, deliberative approaches are opening a Pandora's box

What Are the Main Elements of Deliberative Democracy

(Quoted from the Journal of Public Deliberation, www.auburn.edu/jpd)



At present, there is no single, universally accepted definition of "deliberative democracy". However, there is substantial agreement among those who study and practice it that it is a *form of democratic self-governance* in which public decisions are shaped through public dialogue and deliberation among citizens rather than solely through adversarial debate among politicians and elected officials. Democratic public deliberation requires that citizens (a) have an equal opportunity to participate in the process (if only by having an equal chance to be selected as part of a representative sample); (b) have ready access to relevant factual information and a wide range of viewpoints and arguments about the issue; (c) have adequate time to reflect and talk about the issue or problem; (d) are aided by experienced, non-partisan facilitators who help the group work towards a generally shared judgment about how to resolve the issue or problem.

of structural reforms of corrupt, decaying patrician systems, changes inevitable in the long run.

With all respect and sympathy for Switzerland, we should understand that the Swiss DD-based system was developed in small communities of a simple society which no longer exists. Owing to a long, unbroken tradition and a unique political culture, the Swiss system still works very well. However, efforts to transplant one element of that system - the I&R - no

matter how essential for Switzerland itself - into other patrician systems, without complementing them with structured, informative deliberation, might be not only ineffective, but directly counter-productive. The claim that DD is tantamount to I&R alone opens the field to all sorts of demagoguery and paralyzes serious democratic development. Let's forget about prestige, let's join forces! We have not much time if our civilization is to survive. .

INTERNATIONAL USA

12 December 2007, a letter sent to the world-wide democracy.net discussion channel by Mr. Daniel Rosen:

"I was an independent candidate in the election, a member of no party. In the U.S. the two main parties are a lost cause, as any sentient being knows. As for third parties which might conceivably interest me, I have explained for example to the Greens that I would personally NOT be a member of any party that does not use new technology to implement direct democracy within its own procedures. There is absolutely no reason for any organization at any level of society (unions, environmental and consumer groups, etc) to delegate uncontrolled power to leaders and administrators.

In general, however, I think political parties are merely a necessary function of outdated and obsolete political technology. It is important to note in the American context, that the framers of the constitution viewed political parties, which they called "factions", as the ultimate political vice. History has demonstrated their sagacity in this and other respects."

Have a look at:

<http://americandisaster.blogspot.com>

<http://helpline.deliberative-democracy.net>

http://www.healthymocracyoregon.org/about_CIR.html

12 February 2008, a letter sent by Mr. Roy Daine to the CICDD discussion channel:

<http://www.myverdict.net> has been asked to be the focal point for the 'Great Direct Democracy Experiment', an attempt to select a candidate for public office FROM the people, using the 'Active Democracy' system outlined at -

<http://www.myverdict.net/articles/intarticle.php?articleID=11>

The right of people to self-determination, is enshrined in international law as an inalienable right. This right flows to the people and not to nations or governments.

But no community anywhere, at any time in history, has been able to exercise this right.

In all societies, power, initially, has been taken by the strongest and any democracy has evolved.

The internet gives us a tool, at last, for finding out the opinion of everybody, on every issue, at every level of society and any community can now exercise their right to self-determination.

Understandably, governments have failed to capitalise on this, as there is no statutory duty, at least in the UK or USA, to take any notice of the people (representatives represent constituencies and NOT constituents).

Only one website - <http://www.myverdict.net> - exists for the purpose of finding out the views of everybody, on every issue, for every community.

As well as a democracy section, where users can put any question to a vote, based on their area of residence, myverdict.net has article, news and forum sections, for over 25,000 administrative divisions in every inhabited country.

In addition to being a political site, focused on the idea of direct democracy, users can post on any topic, in categories decided by the user. If you have anything to say, you can say it at myverdict.net.

Best Regards Roy



<http://www.myverdict.net>

12 January 2008, information sent round by Mr. Miroslav Kolar - new submission:

Democracy by the people is a newly formed DD advocacy group in the U.S. We are currently launching two websites in the form of blogs:

1. <http://www.democracybythepeople.blogspot.com/>
- to focus on DD in the USA
2. <http://www.delaesquinacaliente.blogspot.com/>
- to examine DD worldwide)

We have also built a webpage on which we have compiled over 600 links by country to Direct/Participatory Democracy and Initiative and Referendum related websites and articles.

22 January 2008, a letter sent by Mr. Lee Gottlieb: (see this Newsletter, September 2007)

"I've been in Florida for the past month and expect to be here for another two. True Democracy is still trying to see its day in this state as witnessed from the article in the St. Petersburg (FL) Times which claimed that advocates of the Florida Hometown Democracy petition ran into a brick wall in their efforts to get the amendment on the November ballot.

Four weeks before the February 1st deadline for amendment to reach approval for the ballot, the Secretary of State shut down the computer system used to tally signatures as they are certified by county election supervisors. It meant petition groups went blind and couldn't tell how close they were to meeting the required number of signatures.

In addition, business opponents offered petition gatherers three times as much money to switch sides and sent out a mailer to petition signers warning: "unless you want higher property taxes, higher utility bills, and Florida's scenic beauty destroyed by Big Developers, you will certainly want to revoke your signature from the petition." How about such fear?"

24 January 2008, a letter sent round by Mr. Evan Ravitz:

"Folks, I've submitted Sen. Gravel's National Initiative for Democracy for our next president's agenda at the new website On Day One.

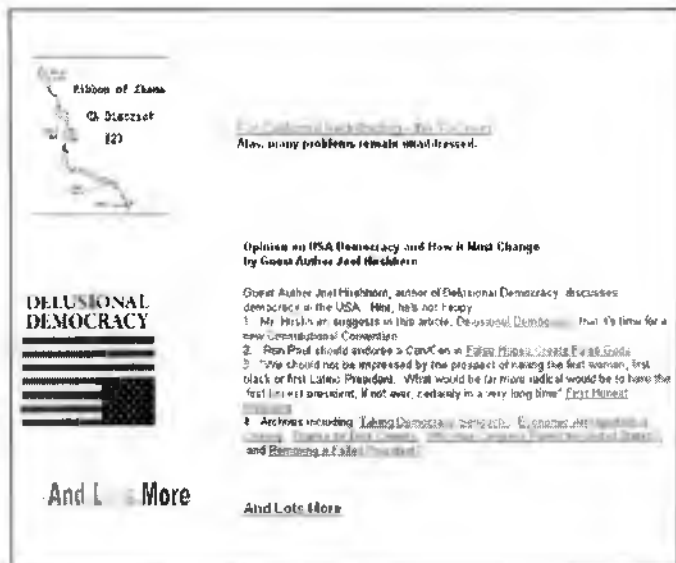
Please give it a 5-star (or whatever you think) rating, comment, or Digg it at:

<http://www.ondayone.org/node/246>

Thanks for your help! Evan"

Read the excellent *Citizen Power Magazine* (<http://www.citizenpowermagazine.net/>)

A sample.



12 December 2007, Mr. **Miroslav Kolar** drew our attention to 2 new websites:

<http://gov21.org> - Governance in the 21 Century

"This is a far-reaching and comprehensive description of a method of direct democracy and its implementation at all levels of government - its advantages, its benefits, its challenges and its implementation."

<http://www.historyandissues.org> - Louisville History
Louisville History, Issues, Participation (DD)

17 December 2007, new submission to <http://wwwdemocracy.mkolar.org/MessBoard.html>

Announcement: Book Review

"I've been writing a book on how to achieve direct democracy for large scale populations. It's been a process that has taken quite a bit time. Book reviews to see where I went wrong or where I need to clarify. This is my voice against the world of republics so that one day the dawn will come for real democracy. I need your help. I don't know how else to say it. For those who are willing my email address is pure_democracy@yahoo.com. Thank you all."

Michael Stansfield, United States

UK

18 December 2007, article published in the *Journal of Public Deliberation*:

New British PM Wants National Citizen Juries to Discuss Constitutional Reforms This Coming Year

by

Jim Snider

(excerpts)

"Great Britain's new Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, in his July 3 speech to Parliament on parliamentary and constitutional reform, said that he asked his Justice Minister to hold series of public meetings throughout the fall to discuss constitutional reform. In his remarks, he specifically endorsed citizen juries, as a preferred method of involving the citizens of UK directly in this process.

To further underscore his commitment to using Citizen Juries for such macrochange, he personally visited a Citizen Jury being conducted in Bristol on September 6, 2007. This one was discussing various issues in the British educational system. Brown is seen in a video clip on YouTube being involved in the deliberation process with the citizens. He notes that issues from the use of the internet as an educational tool through obesity would be addressed well by Citizen Juries and that his government intends to listen to the results. Search YouTube "Gordon Brown Citizen Juries."

The new Prime Minister seemed very serious about closing the persistent "democratic deficit" that the EU seems unable to do much about."

"..... **In Britain we have a largely unwritten constitution.** To change that would represent a fundamental and historic shift in our constitutional arrangements. **So it is right to involve the public in a sustained debate whether there is a case for the United Kingdom developing a full British Bill of Rights and Duties, or for moving towards a written constitution.**"

22 December 2007, information sent round by **Dr. Michael Macpherson** through Mr.M.Kolar's Meeting Place:

"EXTRACT

<http://www.iniref.org/latest.html>

"The countries of the British Isles and the UK as a whole are near the bottom of the league table in citizens' (direct) democracy CDD (see Table, ...). Way, way ahead of the UK are countries of the Baltic, several east-european countries since 1990,

Italy, Ireland and Lands of the Federal Republic of Germany. The headings in the Table clearly indicate what is meant by CDD (see also definition, 1).

Now that an early general election has been fought off and we find ourselves in the continuing mid-life crisis of a third consecutive Labour Party government, it is time to take our magnifying glass in order to search the utterances of opposition, government, and their thinker-gurus, for serious proposals of democracy reform."

GERMANY

Zeitschrift für direkte Demokratie 4/07

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MD intern

CZECH REPUBLIC

7 - 9 December 2007 a meeting of the nascent DD party **The Democracy Movement** was held at the town of *Karlovice*, the home town of the chairman, Mr.**Petr Czasch**:

On 12 February, we received the information that the Movement has been formally registered at the Ministry of Interior. The democratization campaign can now begin!



EUROPE



This network is a credit to ASCOP <http://fair-ensemble.over-blog.org>

2. A new member organization of ASCOP

Welcome to the association "Act For Human Rights". The association works for the promotion of human rights from the globalist point of view.

<http://www.recim.org/ascop/agirdh-fr.htm>

3. 1948-2008

A public debate will soon be organized on the Internet to produce together a statement which will be broadcast on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Invitation and details in the next message.

With regard, Daniel www.recim.org

P.S.: At the very beginning of the year 2008, a new message will present the organization of the debate on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

www.recim.org/ascop/agenda-an.htm

THE WORLD

29 December 2008, a letter sent round by "ASCOP":
Peoples Congress Consultative Assembly ASCOP
 News release No.: a7-08

1. A citizen network has been created in Liege.

At Liege, on the 3 and 4 November 2007, during the Peoples Congress session, a working group has proposed to work on the LINKS to advance our common globalist ideas to see one day Institutions and a democratic World Parliament representative of all the peoples of the planet. In order to advance our ideas, we have to convince, create relationships, connections with the people who live by our side. A citizenship, a civism and global solidarity are meaningless unless they translate into citizens' initiatives at the local level that give reality to our ideas. It's on the ground of everyday life that we must lay the foundation of our group work to advance our ideas in the heads and to see them materialize at the polls.

5 January 2008, a letter sent by Mr. **Jim Powell** to the WDDM discussion channel:

"I have been working within my community in South Africa on the local organization. I have found that the web site is not that frequented but when emails are sent there is a better response.

I would suggest that the initiatives and the ensuing discussions be broadcast to those who would want it. This widens the distribution of information.

It is interesting that generally the initiative and referendum process is generally better supported in Switzerland than voting for a representative.

Politicians are the employees of the voters

Regards Jim Powell"

21 January 2008, information sent round by Mr. **Mikael Stenborg** concerning the current situation on the global democratization front:

Home • Category Site Name

Category Site Name

Title	Average Rating ▼	Created	View	Edit	Clone	Export	Voters
The Global Democracy Portal	72	7 weeks 1 hour ago					5
World Democracy Info	62.5	10 weeks 3 days ago					4
The World Democracy Portal	62	7 weeks 1 hour ago					5
The World Democracy Campaign	60	13 weeks 5 days ago					7
United Humans	60	13 weeks 5 days ago					8
Vote Human	56.6667	7 weeks 1 day ago					6
One Human One Vote	55.7143	7 weeks 1 day ago					7
New World Democracy	52	7 weeks 6 days ago					5
Kunlabari	46	6 weeks 5 days ago					5
The Earth Federation	45	5 weeks 20 hours ago					6
Unity in Diversity	40	13 weeks 4 days ago					4
SITE NAME ENODEMOCRACY	40	5 weeks 20 hours ago					5
Coalition for a World Parliament and World Democracy	36	13 weeks 5 days ago					5
Vote Globally	32.5	6 weeks 5 days ago					4
United Individuals	32.5	23 weeks 5 days ago					4
Website / movement name - Unity in Multiplicity : Multiplicity in Unity	20	8 weeks 5 days ago					4

SIMPOL

4 January 2008, a letter sent round by Mr. **John Bunzl**: (excerpt)

"Due to the very hard work of a number of Adopters, Simpol continued to make good progress, managing to sign up a number of new MPs from around the world. We've also further evolved our policy development process. But we will have to do far better if we want to solve global problems.

2008, I believe, may well be the year in which citizens are finally driven to understand that no one is in the cockpit of the global economy and that if global problems are ever to be solved, WE CITIZENS - and no one else - will have to take charge. Our extraordinary success in getting all sorts of MPs from diverse countries to sign the SP Pledge shows that Simpol qualifies itself as one practical method or process for achieving that aim.

But whether it's Simpol or some other method, no method can possibly succeed unless WE, each of us, makes an extraordinary personal commitment to do all that we possibly can to help our chosen method(s) to succeed. After all, it is just BECAUSE it all seems so remote, so unlikely, so long-term and so seemingly impossible that success demands more than mere effort; it demands absolute faith and commitment. It demands that we have faith in human goodness and in our capacity as citizens, against all the odds, to come through."



It's Simpol !

The Simultaneous Policy News • Autumn 2007



John Bunzl's New Book!

3 New UK MPs

Simpol Global Justice Strategy Forum

Why Rock Won't Save the Planet

UK Adopters Alerts

Future Possible Scenarios to Avoid

Protecting the global locally!

Pictured Above: Simpol at the Camp for Climate Action 2007

Policy Suggestions Explained: Precycling Insurance and Remodelling Companies

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Adam Jacob's end-to-end cycle diary

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