



DIRECT DEMOCRATIC EURO-VISION NEWSLETTER

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WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER **DIRECTRACY**

The Blind Alley (by Jiri Polak)

Admittedly, traditional politics is about the promotion of the interests of specific groups inside a given society. This is the basis and the rationale of the existence of political parties. During some 150 years or so, this was the only way to give even ordinary people some possibility of expressing their will. It was never true democracy, but it was a progress after centuries of feudalism and nothing better was at hand. From the beginning, there was a contradiction between the interests of groups and the interests of society as a whole. Party politicians were - and still are - elected to representative bodies because people expect them to promote their group interests. Once elected, party politicians behave as if they had been given the mandate to decide even on issues pertaining to the sphere of common interests of all. So far, except some limited areas, there has not been any serious opposition to this imposture, one of the biggest deceptions of all times: The establishment, including the mainstream media, constantly brainwash people pretending that they have a choice among political alternatives. However, the parties representing these alternatives do not offer the choice to vote on issues instead of complex programs and, above all, the choice between the existing, party-based, system and a different system based on elements of direct democracy which, thanks to the spectacular development of communication and information technology, has become a realistic alternative. At the same time, common interests of society as a whole are becoming more important than specific group interests: Preservation of healthy environment, preservation of peace and prosperity, preservation of mutual respect and tolerance - all this is more important than creation of jobs in a certain industry, social benefits, or would-be national interests which, in fact, are the interests of the respective ruling elites.

The contradiction between these two types of interests creates a growing tension. The ruling party-political elites, who benefit from the current system, do their utmost to preserve this system. For this purpose, they need enemies, conflicts and wars. They don't shun any crimes, including the slaughter of millions of innocents. Only a society which feels threatened is willing to blindly obey their "democratic" leaders. The

Ten Years Since

Second International Conference/Congress on Direct Democracy



Athens and Delphi, 21 - 25 June 2000

PARTICIPANTS:

USA: Prof. Dr. Ted Becker, Dr. Christa D. Slaton, Joe Goldman (America Speaks), M. Dane Waters (IRI Institute), Michael Arno, Mel Schriberg

CANADA: George Sagi

SWEDEN: Dr. Thomas Ohlin, Dr. Eva Lindencrona, Dr. Jiri Polak

ROMANIA: Dr. Angela Ionita

GERMANY: Thomas Fiedler, Franz Isemann (both *Mehr Demokratie*)

JAPAN: Sjuji Imamoto

LIBYA: Prof. Dr. Milad Alshebani

BELGIUM: Heiko Dittmer (NDDIE)

GREECE: Giogios Kokkas, Stavros Ionidis, Dr. Kanellos

ISRAEL: Aki Orr

ITALY: Ottorino Rizzi, Giuseppe Strano

FINLAND: Dr. Ari-Veikko Anttiroiko

FRANCE: Jean Ambert (Sens Public)

tension is leading modern societies into a blind alley. A way out cannot be found using established party-political instruments. The outcome can only be a revolution, hopefully non-violent, the annihilation of our civilization by a natural catastrophe or a nuclear war unleashed e.g. by an attack against Iran, or, preferably, a reform enforced from below, a reform limiting the power of the parties in favor of power exerted directly by the citizens. A change of the system might be a matter of life and death.

Perhaps the most promising way is the emergence of parties focusing on the interests of the whole society instead of the traditional interests of specific groups. In recent election

taking place in Czech Republic, a party calling itself "a Party for Direct Democracy" obtained almost 11 % of the votes. This party formed a coalition with two right-wing parties and entered government. The chairman became Minister of the Interior. Obviously, this event has not the potential for a real system change, but it is a step in the right direction. If similar parties begin to emerge in various countries, or if a genuine DD party becomes strong enough in at least one country, this might unleash a landslide. DD movements and initiatives should join forces to support DD elements promoted by any promising party or parties wherever they appear.

Moments to Remember:



Ancient speakers' forum



George Kokkas



The facilitators - Dr.Christa Slaton and Dr.Ted Becker



Demonstrations on the Screen: Workshop on "Innovative Methods to Empower Citizens"



M.Dane Waters



From the left: Heiko Dittmer, George Sagi, Jiri Polak



Foundation of the WDDM



Obr.9 The final session

Presented: 14 papers and several projects

ITALY

Proposal for a common Direct Democracy Vocabulary by Eng. Federico Tonini (cont.)

Democracy

The term comes from the ancient Greek language (people's government). This is for sure the concept most used in an inappropriate way, for example in our western so-called parliamentary democracies.

As you find written when reading any Constitution, in any of the so-called democratic nations in the world, power belongs to the Citizens ... and with this you should believe you are a citizen of a democratic nation.

It isn't so, we are very far from living in a democratic nation, as we shall easily show you in the following: to find out, just make a simple comparison between what living in a democratic system would require and which are in fact your actual conditions.

1. Power belongs exclusively to the Citizens.

Any public Authority, Institution, Armed Force, Tribunal ... and any other such organization acts only as instructed, for a given purpose, by the Citizens and is accountable to them.

The above means that the State administration and services should be established and run in order to satisfy the Citizens' demands and in accordance with their wishes.

Do you believe it is like this in your country?

Do you feel Police, the Town Hall, Hospitals, Schools ... are sincerely interested in your personal problems and work willingly to satisfy your needs? Do public servants deal with you in good manners and with respect, like an employee deals with his boss?

Since you are their boss, you pay their salary with your own money.

The answer is that in most western countries, you are being treated like a subject, by an anonymous power that has replaced the power once exerted by a king.

2. Decisions are taken by the majority of votes cast by the Citizens.

From each Town Hall up to the Parliament, all decisions, rulings, and laws must be reflecting the will of the majority of the Citizens.

Do you really feel that those who make laws and pass rulings truly respect the will of the Citizens?

Do you have any idea how many laws are passed without the Citizens being aware of them, or better, do you know at all that each government takes decisions without telling the Citizens, or without asking what they think?

Did anybody ask about your feelings before sending soldiers to kill Afghans? (May not apply to all countries of the Union.)

Did anybody in the Capital ask for your approval before fixing the income of members of Government or top directors in the administration?

You bet they did not and it is our money they spend.

3. Citizens have the right to be fully informed.

All the time, Citizens have the right to everything they need and all the necessary information to evaluate accurately any matter to be discussed in Parliament, because laws determine their future life.

Do you feel the Citizens had their word in any law passed by the Parliament, or do you have to accept them passively when you are informed about them reading the morning paper?

Do you have any hint about what is being discussed in the secret lobbies among the so-called people's representatives, the party leaders? Do you think the avalanche of TV programs flooding sub-normal brains, like the Big Brother, soap operas, superstar marriages and divorces, serves the purpose of increasing your information as citizens ... or rather that it is used to distract you from what really matters?

4. Political power - belongs only to the people.

The vote taken from the Citizens can be neither resisted, nor modified, except by the Citizens themselves who can use this right at any time.

First of all, you decide nothing whatsoever.

Second, organizing a referendum has been made as difficult as possible and this terminates your chances to influence politics. All decisions are taken by political parties whose so called political programs are normally foggy and undetermined, which leaves them free to do whatever they want later on.

And since you are not there when decisions are made, how can you know that your interest has been taken into account.

Eventually, what remains of your political power only consists in deciding which one social parasite will use your Citizen rights for the next four years.

That is why, during election times, everybody smiles at you.

(to be continued)

GREAT BRITAIN

Information from the I&R - GB Citizens' Initiative and Referendum

<http://www.iniref.org/index.enter.html>

17 May: "We will decide how we elect you!

How we elect our members of parliament should be decided by the people rather than the politicians. That is why even the recent Labour government, and now the ConDems, have offered to hold a referendum ("take it or leave it") on keeping "first past the post" or changing to "alternative vote".

New Zealand has shown how to choose a new electoral system in a more democratic manner. In 1992 the people of New Zealand were asked (a) if they want a change then (b) which of four electoral systems they would prefer!

The systems considered were: Mixed Member Proportional, Supplementary Member, Single Transferable Vote, or Preferential Voting.

In one way the proposal to hold a referendum on the electoral system is a step forward because the right of a people to decide on matters of constitution is implicitly acknowledged."

23 May: "The Coalition: our programme for government. Freedom, fairness, responsibility. May be downloaded from direct.gov

How about the promised shift of "power to the people?" Unconvincing. The authors of this coalition plan offer policy and democracy "for the people" but shy away from introducing effective civil participation.

In the table below we comment on and assess the national (Westminster) petition, local democracy, the tax veto, the MP (sacking) recall, how we elect our MPs, constituency boundaries and number of constituencies, local councils and possible referendum about the European Union."

(For the table and more information see the website)

25 May: "Con/Lib - We will ensure that any petition that secures 100,000 signatures will be eligible for formal debate in Parliament. The petition with the most signatures will enable members of the public to table a bill eligible to be voted on in Parliament.

I&R - GB comments: Petition: Very weak reform of national democracy which falls behind David Cameron's pre-election promise."

28 May: "Research done by groups ranging from the left-liberal Rowntree Foundation (see Power Inquiry report 2006) to the democratically ultra-conservative Hansard Society has shown that for decades people in UK countries want to have more say in running public affairs. For instance, since the 1990s

over seven in ten British adults agree that if a large number of citizens endorse a proposal on any issue then it should go to referendum. It should be clear to our reformist politicians that, in order for people to take more "responsibility" in public matters, effective tools of democracy must be introduced."

2 July: "Swiss offer a fix for (Californian) direct democracy In Switzerland, They have a "proposal-counterproposal" system in which, once an initiative or referendum qualifies for the ballot, the government is given a chance to either pass that law itself or put a counterproposal on the ballot. Similarly, if the government passes a law, the people can put their own counterproposal on the ballot or try to overturn the law via a referendum."

(.....)

"a leading reason this dynamic works in Switzerland is because the Swiss require only about 100,000 signatures for initiatives - a bit more than 1 percent of the population - and 50,000 for a referendum. The Swiss also allow a longer period of time for collecting those signatures, up to 18 months, compared with only 5 months in California. This means non-wealthy interests can compete, and are able to use the initiative and referendum process to challenge a legislative law or advance their own law. And it means that paid circulators are not needed, and signatures can be gathered with all volunteer labor."

5 July: "The new constitution of post-world-war-II Bavaria guarantees citizens the right to propose and obtain a legally binding referendum in the Land (state of the federation). The people have used this right several times, for instance to introduce regulations for direct democracy in cities, towns and districts, also to abolish the second chamber of parliament (Senat).

In order to obtain a referendum, 10 percent of voters must endorse the proposal. If the proposal is rejected by parliament then a referendum must be held. A majority of votes cast is needed to approve the proposal as law.

Unlike Britain where only a public authority may allow a referendum, in German Lands the people may select an issue and then put it to the vote, overruling parliament and government if need be."

"However, it is constitutionally forbidden to have nation wide referendums. Germany's last experience with 'direct democracy' was not a complete success."

8 July: ".....a tax boycott or some other rebellion may eventually be needed to save or reform democracy. Before that, other tactics such as our campaign iniref.org are worth trying.

Citizen-led direct democracy can address all fields of politics. So if we succeed to introduce e.g. the citizen-triggered referendum, then we will be able to change tax laws and make or strike out many others."

15 July: "Radical devolution needs to start in Whitehall George Jones, emeritus professor of government at the LSE, and John Stewart, emeritus professor at INLOGOV

The coalition's 'programme for government' states that the administration 'will promote the radical devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups. This will include a review of local government finance'."

...

I&R - GB comment: "Rules, financial controls and clear procedures for decision-making are required, since public accountability is at stake." To be fair, the Con/Libdem coalition paper contains a suggestion which could clarify where power lies while also improving public participation in local government. They write, "We will give residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue." Elsewhere they have stated that five percent of the electorate would be needed."

27 July: "Success for our Campaign: Government backs Citizens' Initiative and Referendum

For over ten years our Campaign for Citizens' Initiative and Referendum in Britain has worked to promote genuine direct democracy. So we welcome the inclusion of our major proposals in the coalition agreement of the new Conservative and Liberal-Democrat government."

8 August, a letter sent round by Mr. **Bernard Clayson** (extracts): "The UK government is in the process of so many changes that it's a job to keep up with their progress. One that is occupying my time is referendums. Great, but If one reads the detail of the proposal on council tax referendum, they will be run by the district election process, that will mean the district costs will go up, possibly making the referendum a self-fulfilling prophecy, and defeating the objective of reducing public service expenditure. Dito with local referendums if the Bill gets passed, the second reading is in December. If, for example, my parish council has a call for a referendum, the district will run it and bill the PC. At our last local election cost, three referendums would double our precept, my problem is how can we budget for X referendums with our triggering a referendum on excessive precept requirement!

Catch-22, the problem is none of this may happen, parishes may not be included in the council tax referendum process, which in itself may not happen."

"There is a way of achieving all the objectives, and I do mean ALL. but whether the government is up to a heavy dose of Clayson non-conformist logic is debatable, but I will try. I am working on getting the support to give it some real clout, that may require pulling another stunt."

CZECH REPUBLIC



Václav Vorel

The parliamentary election is over but several citizen initiatives continue their activities. At present, the most promising among them seems to be the **Citizen Solidarity - Waking Up and Stepping Out** headed by Mr. **Václav Vorel**. He has a consulting agency (www.viaoptima.cz) and makes use of his experience in preparation and steering of changes of the situation of citizens

and entrepreneurs to work for a radical change of the Czech political system which, like many - perhaps most - Czech citizens, he considers as unsound. Recently, he launched an appeal to the Czech - and even European - public, urging all citizen initiatives and small, extra-parliamentary parties to unite in order to start a transformation by seeking a new form of social order on the basis of positive elements of democracy in the respective states. The aim of his concrete program is to transfer this change directly to Parliament on the basis of six practical steps one of which is the foundation of a **European Citizen Institute** which could support the development and establishment of the new order. He has recorded a speech on the video, accessible on YouTube. The speech is in Czech and, for the time being, addresses primarily Czech citizens. If this initiative proves successful, it might constitute an important contribution to the efforts observable in most European countries. This is how he sees the situation:

"As to myself, I am convinced that the current system of representative democracy is impossible to reform and that it is necessary to create a brand new socioeconomic order. The presupposition of its establishment will be to get rid of the current concept of democracy and all ideologies. For the transfer of the discussions to legislative bodies, it will be possible to make use of the remnants of positive elements of democracy, i.e. the power of citizen votes in free and citizen-controlled elections. Let's not believe people who pretend that change is not possible and who hide behind the past and progress in the form of the EU. Uniting is surely the principal instrument of further progress, but it must begin on the level of the citizens, towns, communities, and regions. It is in families and the environment of citizen solidarity that a healthy climate of the whole society emerges. Instructions and rules imposed from above do not solve anything. ... Free and independent citizens, who do not need to rob one another by tunnelling public means, are not likely to elevate to power immature personalities. It is time to make a halt, to become aware of the strength of civil society which, evidently, does no longer want to go on sitting on the merry-go-round and playing a political theatre. Let's ask a question: Why do we go on electing the same political subjects and politicians who, in Czech Republic, during twenty years, have been constructing the current system according to the model presented by the European Union? The result is a state debt incurred in times of economic growth, a debt aimed at "redistribution" and bribery of us, the voters, while now, from the same posts, when managing various areas of state administration, they show us how to economize so that the debt can be redeemed. The problem is not HOW to solve details, but WHO has the right to replace the evidently dysfunctional system by a new one. It is we, the citizens, who are responsible for assuming the power to make decisions about the New Order.

Artificial conflicts and virtual reality push people into political, and especially economic, oppression. Economic groups influencing laws, possessing capital and information steer in fact the nation states' governments. They profit from hardship and penury. However, politicians and economic groups are only two sides of the same coin. The citizen cannot win in this game, he/she can only leave it and cease supporting the system. Unconsciously, we suspect that further development based on struggle, distribution and destruction of values and resources of the planet is unsustainable in the long run; therefore, we are building a new order. The fact that citizens become more and more self-confident, seeking positive solutions, gives us hope. There are hundreds and thousands of small-scale activities as well as big international movements which try to wake up citizens and statesmen, showing them a new road to go. **It is important to understand that the transformation will be based upon our own metamorphosis!**

Love and truth need no longer prevail over lies and hatred. It is sufficient to be aware of these values and to live them in our hearts and heads. The struggle can end. It is not necessary to fight against corruption, it's sufficient not to give bribes. No need to tell lies, it will be self-rewarding to go straight through life, not to tergiversate. It's time for a common effort, for **living in order to build a new, positive reality. Let's be self-confident and transform ourselves and the world by love and respect for ourselves and others.**"

GREECE

Regrettably, the Athens Conference planned for September, cannot take place owing to some circumstances beyond the organizers' control. However, the project is not abandoned. We hope to be able to hold such conference next year. Preparations will start shortly. Let me point out that we intend to focus not only on I&R, but also on *citizen deliberation* which, as we see it, does not yet receive due attention in spite of its relevance for democratic processes. Preliminarily, we hope for the participation of Prof. Ted Becker, USA. His appearance would guarantee success.

GERMANY

Mehr Demokratie 2/10 - Zeitschrift für Direkte Demokratie
Editorial by Ms **Anne Dänner**, spokesperson of the organization.

Articles:

Roman Huber, Munich: "Hochverehrte liabe Mitlandsleut!" (Visit to Switzerland)

Alexander Slonka, Köln: Damit ihr Hoffnung habt; Mehr Demokratie für NRW

Ronald Pabst, Köln: Sommerreise durch Rheinland-Pfalz

Angelika Gardiner, Hamburg: "Haben wie das wirklich so gewollt?"

Stefanie Senger, Berlin: Bildung und Erziehung orregon die Gemüter

Rolf Sörensen and Karl-Martin-Hentschel, Heikendorf: Zeit für ein neues Wahlrecht

Christian Büttner, Stuttgart: Demokratie macht Schule

Günter Sölken, Berlin: Mehr Direkte Demokratie in Europa?

Andreas Bummel, Mainz: Für ein globales Parlament

Prof. Dr. **Jürgen Falter**, interviewed by *Lynn Gogolin*, Berlin: Demokratie ohne Souverän?

Marianne Grimmenstein-Ballas, Lüdenscheid: Ein ausserparlamentarisches Parlament

Werner Rügemer, Köln: Geheimnisverrat ist Bürgerpflicht

Christian Felber, Wien: Mit (Direkter) Demokratie aus der Finanzkrise

Leserbrief; Drei Fragen an Claudine Nierth, Jahrbuch für direkte Demokratie 2009, various internal information.

Review: **Denise Entian**, Berlin: *Global Citizens in Charge* (See also the previous issue of this newsletter)

SWITZERLAND

Europa-Magazin 1/2010:

Editorial by Dr. **Paul Ruppen**

Forum für direkte Demokratie und **EUROPA-MAGAZIN**

Disquieting: "Die direkte Demokratie gerät in der Schweiz zunehmend unter Druck. Ein eventueller EU-Beitritt droht, sie ihrer Substanz zu berauben." (DD in Switzerland threatened?)

Daniel Vischer, Nationalrat der Grünen Partei Schweiz: *Grundrechte sind demokratisch legitimiert und nicht Ausdruck "fremden Rechts"*

Tim Weber, Mitglied von "Mehr Demokratie": *Wieviele Volksabstimmungen trauen wir uns zu?*

Paul Ruppen: *Minarett-Verbot, Menschenrechte und Demokratie* (A complicated issue)

Buchbesprechungen

Gerechte Verteilung wagen? Review of a book by Prof. Herbert Schui

Staat und Krise, Widerspruch - 57 Beiträge zu sozialistischer Politik; Zürich, 2009

Kurzinfos

Jens-Peter Bonde, Membre Danois du Parlement Européen: *La votation irlandaise Triste journée pour la démocratie en Europe*

Bruno Kaufmann: *Moderne Direkte Demokratie*

Die Redaktion: Ende mit Schrecken oder Schrecken ohne Ende? - Probleme mit dem Euro

Werkstatt Frieden & Solidarität: Griechenland: EU-Kredite für Rüstungsaufträge - EU-Kredite für Athen an Rüstungsaufträge für Deutschland und Frankreich geknüpft

Kurzinfos Umwelt und Ernährung

Kurzinfos EU-Politik Schweiz

For the texts please go to <http://www.europa-magazin.ch>

9 August. Mr. **Jim Powell** commented on the Swiss political system in the WDDM channel:

"I do not agree with their proportional representation as there is no direct responsibility to a geographical area.

A ward system allows for recall. "Top up" will allow for representation of the smaller parties who do not get enough votes. There would be one vote for the ward and one vote for Proportional Representation. Assume that Party A gets 55% proportional votes and 70% of the seats. Party A would not get any PR seats. Party B get 2% of the proportional votes and no seats would get 2% PR seats."

USA

2010 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy and U.S. Conference on Initiative and Referendum. **San Francisco, July 31 through August 4**

8 August, a report sent round by Mr. Evan Ravitz: "About 350 of us met this week for the 2010 **Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy**... about twice the expected turnout. (Representative Democracy is about as popular as cholera, and California's initiative process has problems too. People came from as long as Mongolia, Chile and Bulgaria.)

We were addressed by **Ralph Nader**, **George Lakoff**, **Jane Hamsher**, **Tom Hayden**, **John Fund**, **Grover Norquist**, plus various California legislators, EU and Swiss parliamentarians. Surprises included Krist Novoselic, Nirvana bassist (see [video](#) of his speech) turned Chair of FairVote and Joel Marsden, maker of the multi-award-winning film [WorldVoteNow](#). Do see the new video about Oregon's [Citizen Initiative Review](#), by far the most significant advance in 112 years of ballot initiatives in the U.S. More material available soon."

6 August, a report from Mr. **Lee Gottlieb**: "The Forum was a wonderful experience. I learned many things about the Initiative Process and about the many people of varied skills

who participate to create and force an initiative onto the ballot so ordinary citizens may have a voice on issues important to them.

Everyday, and a few times each day, computerized polls were taken on the important points offered up to that time. The hand-held electronic "OptionFinder G2" was a miracle of simplicity to use but the sophistication and variety of information obtained were awesome.

From the very first day the poll once again refreshed my memory that people can firmly believe in two opposing philosophies without understanding the paradox.

The majority of attendees responded to a poll on the first morning claiming, in essence, that they trusted the ordinary citizen/voter. To me, this affirmed that the majority of forum attendees believed ordinary citizens capable of logical and common sense decisions at the ballot box.

However, as this was a forum primarily concerned with the initiative and the problems arising from the initiative processes globally, the meetings immediately began discussing initiative problems from varied viewpoints and it was apparent that few, if any of these people truly had faith in the ordinary citizen/voter for never once, to my knowledge, was there actually a discussion about creating or implementing a voting system that would give the citizen/voter easy and free access to political decision-making without the assistance of professional politicians or lobbyists.

Throughout the meetings, as I listened to the speakers and panelists, two overwhelming facts quickly became apparent.

First: under all present political systems, it was very difficult to get an initiative on the ballot whether town, city, state, or national level. It was evident that those who wielded power on behalf of the people did not actually want to share decision-making powers with the people. Elected legislators normally created obstacles to getting an initiative on the ballot demanding the collection of too many signatures within the allowed time or demanding excessive proof of a signature's validity. Despite particulars, producing change in the social system utilizing an initiative process is normally more difficult to make than necessary, and all over the world the status quo of a minority ruling elite remains. Imposing an Initiative process - a bottom-to-top-political process upon a political system functioning as top-to-bottom-system in which the minority elites impose their laws and regulations upon everyone else will always be an uphill fight for ordinary citizens.

Second: Listening to the panelists was a learning experience. Over the five days, the initiative process was approached from the viewpoints of varied stakeholders: among which were signature collectors, the courts, polling companies, law firms, citizen/voters, and independent consulting firms. Regardless of which group was involved, the overwhelming obvious fact was that some people will profit financially by trying to pass an initiative and some by trying to block it. Money was the common motivating denominator.

Sadly, it seemed to me that these DD advocates hadn't the slightest idea as to what true democracy really is and the use of the phrase "Direct Democracy" for most of the meetings simply had a hollow ring. Never once was the reality of class conflict addressed and as you and a few others of the WDDM know I believe class conflict is at the core of most human problems. Until this topic is addressed and a deliberative system, such as Professor Dienei's is initiated in every country on our planet, humanity shall continue to go down an illogically destructive path.

There's little doubt that millions of people understand serious changes must be made to the world's political systems if the masses are to survive as anything other than overworked,

underpaid corporate slaves. The problem that has stalled a solution for many years is that there are too many different solutions offered and everyone believes his or her solution is the proper and only one. It's time for some of us to make compromises and others to make hard and fast decisions from which a universal DD format can take form and grow.

First: the very first objective of any program of change must be to give the citizenry of a nation the ability to determine the elements of their constitution and the ability to change them every twenty years, if desired. The point being that a people must hold the power to determine whether, or not, they are to be a self-governing people or one ruled by - supposedly - superior individuals; whether they are to form a unique bottom-to-top political system or the usual top-to-bottom system that has existed everywhere for thousands of years.

Second: establish a program of education that will inform citizens of a nation why they must change their constitution and political system; clarify the confusion about direct or participatory democracy, and describe what a bottom-to-top political system is, what it can accomplish and what it can't accomplish.

Third: propose a system of deliberation such as Professor Dienei's Planning Cells to be used as a universal technique of political decision-making despite differences in titles or language.

If we can come to some sort of understanding between the DD advocates in a number of countries and then initiate such a program, so that we are all working toward the identical objectives and hold the same views about what DD is and what it isn't, humanity will have taken a giant evolutionary step toward maturity and peace on Earth. Unity is what we lack."

Comment: Yes, we can begin discussing proposals of general principles on which every democratic system must be based. The evaluation and expression of common accord can, hopefully, be worded at the Conference scheduled for June 2011. JP

I Like Mike!

A video under this title, showing a fictional situation, can be seen on YouTube: Senator Mike Gravel has been elected president. He calls home all American troops from countries outside the USA, closes all American bases abroad, cuts down military spending by 90 per cent and uses the means saved in this way for improving the situation of ordinary Americans, helping poor countries and healing environment.

I am sure I am authorized to declare on behalf of all true democrats:

We All Like Mike!

THE WORLD

17 July, a letter sent to the WDDM channel:

"You are invited to visit/register at <http://www.8thwonderland.com>

It is a virtual country practicing Direct Democracy."

27 May, a letter sent by Mr. Richard Renyi-Vamos to the WDDM channel:


"I really agree with your cause. I also created a fan-website for you on FACEBOOK!!!!

Anyway, I study psychology at my university, and really think so, that direct democracy is the future." <http://www.world-wide-democracy.net/Wiki/MrRico>

SIMPOL

13 May, a quotation from the recent PRESS RELEASE: "The Simultaneous Policy (Simpol), a range of measures to solve global problems like climate change, out-of-control financial markets, and social injustice, is now officially supported by no fewer than 23 newly elected Members of Parliament coming from all the main parties." www.simpol.org.uk


Comment: Even if the support for Simpol is growing all the time, I believe that the project cannot be realized as long as the current oligarchic party-based system is dominant because forces benefitting from its preservation will remain stronger than those who advocate change. A prior introduction of elements of DD in the big countries will probably be a precondition. The Simpol Movement and the DD Movement are natural allies. JP



It's Simpol !

The Simultaneous Policy News • Autumn/Winter 2008

...if animals ruled the world...



Interview with Tracy Worcester - Simpol Supporter and Filmmaker of *Pig Business* • Policy Pages - Voting Open • Rent of the Month - enough with the Bad News already! • Annual General Meeting - John Bunzl and Ken Wilber speak

SPD - 40 Buxkoby - Lausanne 2008

...the following proposal has been submitted under the 1500 - 2000 title

Title: International Farm Animal Welfare Standards

Preparer: Dana Trivette



Supporters: Denis Kolb (UK), Ruy Sliet (Scott. Africa), Brian Willis - (France), Syd Baamel (Canada), Mabley Weller (UK), Suzanne Brinkley (USA), Barla & Powell (UK), Simon Kinnaird (UK), Bill Clarke (UK)

Summary: With the help of Compassion in World Farming, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Simpol Activists, small farmers and animal health professionals, SIMPOL guidelines for appropriate levels of care for each type of animal, covering environment, quality of space, socialisation, access to natural, feeding, treatment, euthanasia, slaughter hygiene and waste disposal will be developed into a document for international ratification. These guidelines would be part of the Simultaneous Policy package of reform to be presented to governments, labour, health and aid agencies, to ensure that no other need risk competitive disadvantage when it also reviews ethical and healthy

How to vote: visit www.simpol.or.uk

The annual vote is organised by the Simpol-UK Policy Committee, http://www.simpol.org.uk

For more guidelines to guide the vote, the links on the statement are at the top of this page.

Film clips: Campaigning at elections, policy fora etc.

Find out the Simpol DVD campaigning for the Simultaneous Policy, interviews and events are now available online.

By using internet connectivity, Simpol

...to help up a candidate in the European election and have several of our members at the stage and

Clips to be seen include:

- Overview of Simpol from Simpol Theatre and John Bunzl
- Planning a policy forum
- Campaigning for Simpol at elections
- Press releases and a video interview

You can access the clips at: <http://www.simpol.org.uk/campaigning>

You can also find a short film with the results of the 2008 vote on policy suggestions at <http://www.simpol.org.uk/policy>

You can find more recent clips, including an interview with John Bunzl and the Simpol mobile assets staff at <http://www.youtube.com/user/simpolbarista>

The Simultaneous Policy www.simpol.org



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