



DIRECT DEMOCRATIC EURO-VISION NEWSLETTER

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WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER DIRECTRACY

Clarification of Concepts by Jiri Polak

The concept of *Direct Democracy* is the subject of innumerable discussions round the World. However, progress is hampered by the fact that there are considerable differences in the way this idea is understood by various people, organizations or groups. Some theorists try to define and elucidate the terms used in discussions (e.g. Eng. *Federico Tonini* in this newsletter). I believe that this theoretical approach should be extended so as to clearly define the basic ideas in order to eliminate misunderstanding observable both among DD theorists and the public. The fundamental disagreement concerns the definition: What is and what is not **Direct Democracy**?

The mainstream European school of thought, originating in Switzerland, reserves this term for *Initiative and Referendum (I&R)* only. This is the standpoint of *Mehr Demokratie e.V.*, *Initiative & Referendum Institute Europe*, *I&Rgb (UK)*, DD organizations in *the Netherlands and Belgium*. The other most important approach, focusing on deliberation (*Deliberative Councils*, *Electronic Town Meetings*, *Scientific Deliberative Polling*, *Citizen Juries and Planning Cells*), is promoted by Prof. *Ted Becker* and Prof. *Majid Behrouzi*, USA, the *Jefferson Center of Democratic Processes*, USA, the *Bergische Universität Wuppertal* in Germany, Prof. *Lyn Carson*, University of Sydney, Australia, and some other researchers and activists. Some of the scholars belonging to this school refuse the very term *Direct Democracy*. Instead, they speak of *Healthy Democracy*, *Strong Democracy*, or *Participatory Democracy*. Professors *Becker* and *Behrouzi* use the term *Deliberative Direct Democracy*, or *Deliberative Direct e-Democracy (DDD)*.

So far, to my knowledge, there have not been any attempts at combining both these approaches into one synthetic process. I believe such an attempt should be made, and I hope it will be made, at the next international conference scheduled for 2011. For practical reasons, I believe that we should use the term **Participatory Democracy** for both the I&R and

Prof. Theodore L. Becker

plans to chair the next
international Conference
on Participatory
Democracy scheduled for
June 2011 in Prague



the Deliberative approach, while we can reserve the term *Direct Democracy* for I&R only. There are not only theoretical, but also, and especially, practical advantages with this nomenclature.

Time and again, when trying to discuss DD with somebody who knew nothing or very little about this subject, I've experienced this reaction: "It's no good. Most people are too stupid or ignorant to directly vote on issues. I don't want policy to be decided by drunken blokes in a pub." It is true that an in depth discussion will usually convince the non-believers, but most people are not interested in such discussions in the first place. Thinking is painful. By contrast, the term participatory is more palatable. Most people will probably admit that it would be useful to offer the citizens more opportunities to participate in decisions. In what way - that can be proposed and then tried in practice on the basis of the discussions taking place in the whole Western World. The discussions referred to in this newsletter are only a small part of this global trend.

There are two other major approaches. Some theorists design complex systems of future democracy - Mr. Lee Gottlieb, USA, Prof. M. Noah Mautner, New Zealand, Mr. George Sagi, Canada, Mr. Bernard Clayson, UK, and some more. Then there are projects of bottom- to-top voting systems - Vivarto (Mr. M. Nordfors-Stenberg in Sweden), I-Elections (Mgr. M. Kotišová in Czech Republic), My Verdict - a global project All these ideas are bricks of which genuine democracies are bound to be made in a not too distant future, if our civilisation is to survive.

But let's return to the two principal currents. As to I&R, there are two problems. Firstly, the critics are right in pointing out that some issues - and some of the most important ones - are not suitable for referendum without supplying sufficient information to the voters. Secondly, there might be (and probably is) the impression that if only the right to I&R is included in the system on all levels, DD has been established and no more systemic reforms are needed. This impression can block further progress, no matter how necessary. This problem does not exist in deliberation. Even if randomly selected, the participants in deliberative sessions get all information needed during the process and they have time enough for responsible and well-founded reflexion. But this procedure is very costly. Grassroot initiators could never afford it relying on their private means. Deliberative projects have to be financed by the authorities and this aspect restricts the issues treated to those which do not threaten the system on which the power-(and money-) holders subsist. City planning, use of certain chemicals, even health care or nuclear energy - all that is acceptable in some contexts. But try to propose a referendum on a Citizens' Constitution - one based on scientific deliberative polling or a series of Planning Cells and then written by the citizens themselves to the exclusion of political parties! At best, you will be given the cold shoulder.

And yet, it is the very system which must be reformed if true democracy is to be put in place. Politicians will never do that, unless forced by a pressure from below. And pressure is mounting under the surface. It's up to us not to let it slacken again.



INTERNATIONAL ITALY

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

5. If power belongs to the citizens, the citizens got to use it.

In real democracy, the citizens should never give away their power to any elected politicians who exercise their power; instead, they should delegate one qualified citizen to realize and enact their will.

That is the core of the matter, the swindle used by professional politicians and political parties to neutralize your theoretical political power.

What they do is taking your power away from you with your vote. "Give me your vote.... I shall defend your interest they tell you.

One second after you have voted, you lost everything and they are in power: Should you need something, you have to beg, or sign a petition, just like subjects used to address a king.

Wouldn't it be better if the citizens would decide what has to be done? Wouldn't they rather empower one of themselves in order to realize their will? Wouldn't it be better if they could recall the man if he does not perform to their satisfaction?

Wouldn't this be real democracy?

6. A crime against the Citizens, the worst possible one

Oppose the Citizens' will, try to delay or impair it, steal the Citizens' money, disturb the steady work of the Democratic State are those crimes which must be punished by the hardest means, since they give offence to millions of honest citizens.

Our laws should be studied and modified, so as to inflict the strongest punishment for the above acts, which are crimes against the Democratic State.

One suggestion as an example to clarify the role of public officers as servants of the citizens: In case of betrayal of the trust other citizens had put on him, it should be stated that anybody who profits from his public job for a personal benefit shall be expelled from his job and forever forbidden to have a new job in a public company or administration. This will automatically stop corruption almost completely. Today, corruption is punished with low level measures, you guess why.

7. Democracy means efficiency

One of the main reasons for having Democracy is that Citizens want everything in the State organization to be run in a simple and efficient way, so that the Citizens have the best possible living standards and common resources are used for the benefit of all.

Are things going this way in your nation?

Or, instead, have professional politicians put themselves at the place of kings and noblemen, assuming their old privileges in order to sponge upon the citizens' backs?

Isn't a common interest that a poor boy could study at the expense of the Nation, so that he can put his intelligence at the service of all Citizens?

Is this happening today? Or aren't the sons and daughters of professional politicians automatically guaranteed to occupy the posts as directors in every administration or public company? Can you imagine how great is the lack of efficiency eaten up by the enormous organization these parasites, using their power, have arranged for themselves along the years? Can you imagine how much of the taxes you pay are thrown out of the window to allow these guys to live like kings?

Now, what is better, our Direct Democracy or the so-called Democracy you pay so much for?



Czech Republic

11 September: A demonstration was held in central Prague (Vaclavske Square), organized by the No to the Bases Initiative and the Czech 9/11 Truth Movement. There were speeches, gathering of signatures for a petition and, ultimately, a March on the Television in protest of the fact that the TV and other mainstream media consistently boycott information about new dissident movements demanding transparency, fight against corruption, and refusal to become manipulated and exploited by a new, this time right-wing, party-political oligarchy.



Germ of a DDD movement?

Quotations from the speech "Appeal to the ministers Vondra and Schwarzenberg: Resign!", delivered on 13 October by Daniel Solis: "Again, the Government prepares a project of American anti-missile defense. As always, its utility for peace and security of the State and the whole of Europe, if not the whole world, is foisted upon the citizens." "So what's going on? Again, we are being fooled by the hawks and well-paid politruks of the military-industrial complex. Again, these people, who have infiltrated the highest posts, treat us, the public, as fools." "Their media and security apparatus will probably label as enemies of the State and dangerous supporters of international terrorism those who refuse to accept their schemes, who defy them and criticise their plans." "However, suspicion is emerging among the public. People are waking up and are becoming aware that it is those representatives of supranational corporations - both financial and arms-producing - who are enemies of the State, while shouting that they want to protect us, the citizens, against the danger of terrorism. But we know already that terrorists are those who spread fear of a non-existent threat, who intimidate the inhabitants of our country by fraudulent and alarmist information and who do not even shun staging terrorist incidents by the intermediary of mercenaries paid by themselves in order to keep generating fear in the public and consent to wage crazy wars and maintain costly security measures to the detriment of personal freedom."

The speech contains well-founded information about entanglement of politicians with dubious vested interests.

important matter of policy, or assign low priority to another. By formulating a proposal and collecting an agreed number of endorsements, members of an electorate can put the proposal on the public agenda, obliging parliament to debate and decide on the proposal, and if need be triggering a decision by the whole electorate in a referendum ("ballot").

b) The **Veto-Referendum**, the "brake", may be used to strike out part of a law, annul a law or block a government law before it comes into effect. For current government law, usually an agreed number of signatures must be collected within a few months, in order to usher in a referendum on the legislation which has been challenged.

c) The **Recall** is a form of Citizens' Initiative which can lead to the sacking of an MP (or councillor) in the period between normal elections. A proposal to "recall" the elected representative must be endorsed by a large number of members of her or his constituency. A successful "recall" must usually be followed by a by-election.

These procedures of democracy are of course not meant to replace, nor would they weaken, parliament and government.

It is of interest to note that the Conservative and Liberal Democratic parties have repeatedly promised to devolve power to the "lowest possible" level. After gaining power the Conservative/Libdem coalition put forward some surprisingly advanced proposals for improving democracy in Britain. For instance, the coalition agreement among other related ideas promises:

- We will give residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue.
- We will give residents the power to veto successive council tax increases.
- We will bring forward early legislation to introduce a power of recall...

Elsewhere David Cameron promised to introduce "The right to initiate local and national referenda" ("Fixing broken politics speech May 2009).

It is by no means certain that the Con/Libdem coalition is sincere about the above described reforms nor is it clear that their leaders can realistically hope to deliver in the face of anticipated opposition from their own back benches and elsewhere. They need our help and encouragement!

Those many citizens (more than seven in ten adults according to surveys) who yearn for people-powered democracy in all parts of the UK could rise to take these politicians AT THEIR WORD.

Moving our countries, cities, towns and districts towards real "democracy-by-the-people" is not a party-political issue. Whatever your political views, so long as you want better democracy then please join in yourself or support others who actively campaign.

Further information:

<http://campaignfordemocracy.org.uk/directdemocracyexamples/>

<http://www2.prestel.co.uk/rodmell/>

I&R - GB Citizens' Initiative and Referendum Campaign for direct democracy in Britain

<http://www.iniref.org>

Germany

Mehr Demokratie Magazin 3/2010 (new format)

Contents:

Bundesländer - Stuttgart 21, Kampagne im Saarland, Ländertelegramm, Volksentscheid in Bayern, Erfolg in Rheinland-Pfalz!, Reform der kommunalen Direktdemokratie
Europa: Brüssel bremst, Die Ausgestaltung der Europäischen Bürgerinitiative

Titel: Die Ignoranz der Politik: Volksentscheid in Hamburg
International: Mehr Zeit, weniger Geld, Direkte Demokratie in Kalifornien

Bundesweiter Volksentscheid: Wie erreichen wir den bundesweiten Volksentscheid? Strategie-Diskussion

Omnibus für Direkte Demokratie: Volksinitiative "Schule in Freiheit"

Kurz notiert: Turbo-Abi, Pac-Man und Hundekot

Themen: Gegen käufliche Politik, Atomenergie, Thema für Volksabstimmung?, "Sie beginnen mich zu hassen", Jahrestagung "Demokratie und Geld"

Wissenschaft: "Der Knall hat eine reinigende Wirkung", Direkte Demokratie in der Schweiz, Finanzielle Auswirkungen der direkten Demokratie, Neue Studie

Lesebriefe

MD Intern: Ergebnis der Mitgliederurabstimmung, Einladung zur Bundesmitglieder-versammlung

USA

Recently, Mr. **Lee Gottlieb** sent us new materials produced by the American Institute of DD, including the draft of a new **Constitution of America**. Should such a Constitution be adopted in the USA, the world would be very different from what it is now. A quotation from the accompanying letter:

"A Direct Democracy associate, Roger Rothenberger, has said it best: 'Everyone knows there are serious problems, but, unfortunately, everyone has a different solution.' It's time that those of us who are concerned with the direction humanity is being taken by our rulers learned to compromise.

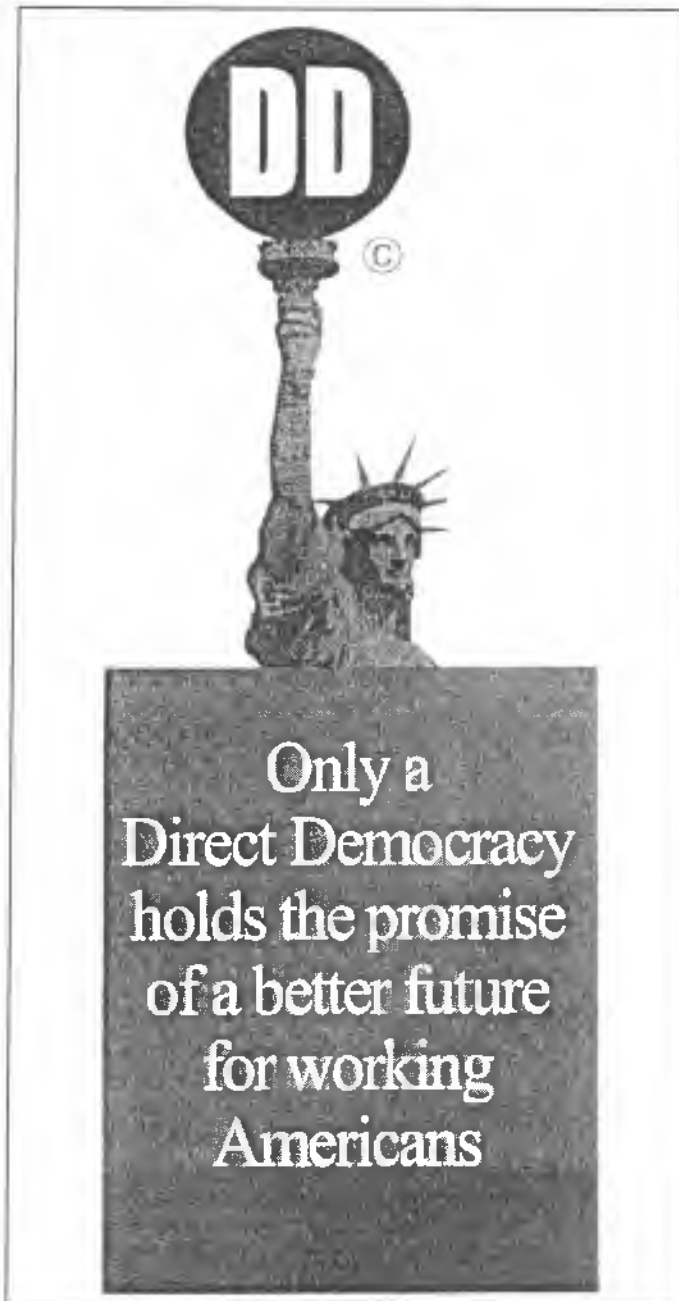
As I see it, in the United States, there are three steps to be taken to transform representative democracy into true democracy beginning with the truth that the U.S. constitution is a contract between thirteen states, but a DD constitution would be a contract between 300 million people.

1. A program of education must be initiated to inform the general public of the differences between representative and true democracy, and the benefits to be derived by working citizens from a DD form of governance. (The Institute of Direct Democracy's Chapters For Change)

2. A process must be available that will allow all Americans to choose between representative democracy and true democracy, and to change their constitution. (Senator Gravel's National Amendment to the Constitution)

3. A program of education must be initiated to teach the general public how they must function as the sole decision-makers in their new political system. (Professor Dienel's Planning Cell System via Chapters For Change)

To show the world the serious intent of DD people, I believe similar programs should be initiated in all countries that have a DD organization.



**Only a
Direct Democracy
holds the promise
of a better future
for working
Americans**

4 October, a letter from Mr. **Triaka Smith**: "AloHA! Herewith are samples of grievances against the U.S. Constitution demonstrating the need for the globally balanced CONSTITUTION of UNITED DIVERSITY <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/united-diversity>

Grievance 1 - "Imbalance".

The U.S. Constitution established a form of government that gave direct governing power to a small minority over the American people at large. Political power was structured from the top down as opposed to the taxpayers who financed it from the bottom up, an oligarchic system that favored influential money interests and leaned toward elitism.

(Details at <http://www.globalvisions.org/cl/swm>)

Grievance 2 - "Secret Government".

The U.S. Constitution failed to prevent the rise of a large and powerful secret government mechanism over which the people at large had no direct control, resulting in "taxation without representation", the grievance lodged by American revolutionaries in 1776.

(Details at <http://www.globalvisions.org/cl/swm>)

Grievance 3 - "Domination".

**AVAILABLE ONLY ON
THE INSTITUTE WEBSTORE**



The Malfunctioning Animal

presents a theory of what people really are as opposed to what we think we are, why we repeat the same foolish, or stupid, things generation after generation and offers a solution that encourages people to fully function as people were actually created to function.



**American Institute of
Direct Democracy**

<http://www.americaninstituteofdd.com>

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The U.S. Constitution failed to provide sufficient checks and balances by American taxpayers against government actions that went beyond their wishes. Opinion polls of the people at large consistently indicated intrusive policies, including "policing the world", were not favored. Nevertheless, the government expanded and extended both overt and covert penetration and domination of other nations.

(Details at <http://www.globalvisions.org/cl/swm>)

13 August, from **Participedia**: "Participedia is a tool for strengthening democracy. Based on a wiki platform, its main content consists of user-generated articles which describe and assess participatory governance through the world. For instance, there will be articles on the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly of 2004, consensus conferences in Denmark, participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre and other cities, local school council governance in Chicago, municipal evaluation meetings in China, and the People's Campaign for Democratic Decentralization (under the Panchayati Raj reforms) in Kerala, India. In addition, there will be articles on participatory methods, such as deliberative polling, citizens' assemblies, and participatory budgeting, as well as articles about the organizations that sponsor, imple-

ment, and study participatory governance. Over time, we hope **Participedia** will garner hundreds and perhaps thousands of such articles."

http://participedia.net/wiki/Welcome_to_Participedia

30 September, an article supplied by Dr. **Myron Stagman**, a doctor of English literature, research scholar, and author of books on Shakespeare; more importantly, a political strategist and campaigner:

A number of politically-progressive articles and books/articles and books by fine writers appear. However, and this is true everywhere (e.g. North America and Europe), precious little if any thought is given to the 98+ % of the population which the Oligarchs brainwash and manipulate to the detriment of every decent thing we believe in. Therefore, one article of faith looms large in the pursuit of Justice and Fair Play:

Namely, it is 100% IMPOSSIBLE to bring a goodly measure of Justice into this utterly corrupt, corporate-cartel-controlled world without beginning the process of **CREATING AN INFORMED, POLITICALLY-ACTIVIST CITIZENRY**, a General Public equipped with **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE** on **VITAL ISSUES**. (The foundation of Injustice is what we have always had - ignorant, politically-passive /or misguided/ General Publics.) And the creation of an informed, politically activist Citizenry can **ONLY** be accomplished via **GRASSROOTS PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGNING** (to get around political corruption and corporate mass media Thought Control). And such campaigning must be **de-centralized and self-generating** - no central organizations to be quickly & easily co-opted.

Grassroots Public Education Campaigning means (1) **leafletting/talking in colleges/ universities**. No genuine, enduring politically-progressive movement is possible without the informed participation of college students. (2) **Leafletting/talking Door-to-Door**. The vast majority sits behind those doors being daily brainwashed by corporate mass media Thought Control. (3) **Telephoning** - The Obama organization demonstrated its efficacy in getting votes. Let's use it in causes better than mere politicking.


In these ways we can create a **GRASSROOTS MASS MEDIA**. We need to create an Ethic of the above.

I request you propound the Theme and Ethic of educating and politically activating the General Public via grassroots public education techniques.

(Note: Dr. Stagman's ideas are consonant with what some of us try to do already, particularly Mr. Lee Gottlieb in the USA; Dr. Stagman has sent us two mobilization leaflets. Please, see below:)



**The National Initiative
For Democracy**



WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT FOR YOUR CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN?

the usual **Representative (aka voting) "Democracy"**, where **the Money interests boss the roys!**
OR a strong measure of **Direct Democracy** with a **Citizens' Initiative & Referendum** at the **national, state, and local** governmental levels -
 to propose (by petition/poll) and enact laws, to reform those citizen-made laws, to repeal bad laws and recall bad government officials.
 (Now we'll have some control over our lives!!!)


Do you want the usual **Corporate mass media Thought Control** with its continued propaganda lies, distortions, and suppressions of Truth?
 (Would any informed, honest person believe the Warren Report's infamously unfair story about the assassination of President John Kennedy? What informed, sincere person could believe government's tall tale about 9/11 when 100 facts (suppressed by Thought Control) tell against it? - this propaganda used as an excuse to get us into two Wars & to destroy our precious Bill of Rights.)

OR do you wish to learn about **grassroots public education techniques**? (the reverse of this leaflet explains it) that we can all employ in a little SPARETIME to educate and politically activate our family members and friends, acquaintances and neighbors, ourselves creating a **grassroots mass media** to effectively neutralize corporate mass media Thought Control?

Do you want your kids and grandkids to live in a country that forever makes War to further enrich multi-billion-a-year Businesses? Uses **Torture** to get their way (and personally you & your children that this barbaric conduct is OK?) - Allows the biggest financial crooks in the universe to steal and defraud \$720 Billion dollars, then provides the Guilty with **MUCHING FUNDS** out of taxpayers' pockets?!!? Promotes catastrophic Global Warming by kneeling to Giant Oil corporations instead of developing our already-advanced, clean, incredibly cheap energy sources?

Do you really want your children and grandkids to have poisonous genetically-engineered food and extremely dangerous genetically-engineered medicine forced upon them? - Drinking Water containing dozens of cancer-causing chemicals?

OR do you want to change all this by doing a little SPARETIME educational work to get us **Direct Democracy's Initiative & Referendum** at ALL governmental levels, national, state, and local?



WHAT CAN WE DO . . . in a little SPARETIME [as part of an ethical lifestyle . . .] to get our DIRECT DEMOCRACY national-state-local INITIATIVE & REFERENDUM??

How Do We Create Our **GRASSROOTS MASS MEDIA** to get Our Citizens' proposed laws? **Initiative & Citizens' Vote! Referendum!**

In other words, how can we free ourselves from the unjust, brutal policies of the Unimaginably Rich and their Political Henchmen?

- 1. INFORM OTHERS** (family, friends, associates, groups), and ask them to do the same thing you are doing - Pass them these information-sheets to duplicate & distribute. (This helps create a Chain Process.)

For the more ambitious, go **DOOR-TO-DOOR** in your community, handing out leaflets & friendly telling folks why you are doing this. **PLEASE do go Door-to-Door.**

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES - Two people (preferably a man and woman) can go to one of them, **TALK** to students & hand out info-sheets. Major efforts **MUST** be made in colleges/universities. No fundamental reform can be achieved without the active assistance of **STUDENTS**.

- 2. Write LETTERS** to the **EDITOR** of local & regional media
- 3. Give TALKS** to whomever will listen. We need talkers, speakers, & **TELEPHONERS!**
- 4. DIRECT ACTION** - Publicize our info in any interesting way you can think of.

Note: Your small individual effort is **NOT SMALL**, too vital. You keep the ball rolling, and you set a Good Example for everybody, including your children and grandchildren.

Note: These grassroots public education techniques should be utilized to effect **ANY GOOD CAUSE**.

Note: These educational, information-and-opinion-passing techniques are the key to creating an **INFORMED, SPARETIME, POLITICALLY-PARTICIPATING** Citizenry.

The few Unimaginably Rich and their Political Henchmen can only rule when they have a largely ignorant, politically-passive General Public in awe and confusion and dispondent. Don't let yourself be cornered any longer. Remember your kids & grandkids - if you can't do it for yourself, you must do it for them.

Becoming part of this **GRASSROOTS PUBLIC EDUCATION** Process. We have to get the national-state-local **Init. & Ref.** - Do your share, Citizen!

www.ni4d.us

A new **IDEA** publication:

What is International IDEA?

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable, democratic development.

International IDEA's mission is to support sustainable democracy through providing comparative knowledge and assisting in democratic reform and reforming processes and politics.


What does International IDEA do?


In the field of election administration building political parties gender in democracy and women's political empowerment democracy self-assessments and democracy and development we undertake our work through the main activities:


- promoting comparative knowledge and experience derived from practical experience in democracy building processes from diverse contexts around the world,
- assisting political actors in reforming democratic institutions and processes, and engaging in political processes when invited to do so, and
- integrating democracy building projects through the provision of comparative knowledge resources and assistance to political actors.


Where does International IDEA work?


International IDEA works in more than 100 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

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Electoral Processes 

Political Participation and Representation 

Constitution Building Processes 

**Merry Christmas
and Continued Success in the
New, Conference Year!**



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