



# DIRECT DEMOCRATIC EURO-VISION NEWSLETTER

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WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER DIRZKRAKY

## Partyocracy - potentially lethal

(by Jiri Polak)

Party-based parliamentarism, as we know it, emerged in nineteenth century's continental Europe as the dominant system of the biggest countries. Compared to feudalism, which had preceded it, obviously, the rule of parties was a progress and an unavoidable step on the road leading to democracy. But in itself, it never was, is not, and never can be *democracy*. Its origin was the movement of the disadvantaged classes who began to organize themselves in order to push through improvements of their situation. In response to this movement, the opulent classes began to develop organizations aimed at the preservation of their privileges. All the time it was a struggle among various categories of people *inside the boundaries of their respective state*. As soon as established, these organizations - parties and trade unions - began to develop oligarchies. *The Iron Law of Oligarchy* began to apply, no matter how nice and noble the phrases and slogans it was hiding behind. Small oligarchic groupings concentrated both the legislative and executive power in their own hands and declared their rule to be *democracy*. As a matter of fact, it was, and is, a *mockery of democracy*.

In the contemporary world, party-based systems are not only undemocratic. They are downright dangerous. We have seen it recently: To win elections, a party makes promises too costly to be kept. In government, the oligarchy is forced to borrow large sums of money from private banks. Borrowing reaches a limit, some banks go bankrupt, the biggest ones are saved using tax money confiscated by the oligarchy. There are economists who claim that the debt crisis had been artificially provoked in order to rob the tax money needed to save the system and put it into the pockets of private banks. Even if that was not really the case, hardly anyone can deny that the parties in power respond to clandestine influence exerted by transnational corporations and other vested interests rather than to legitimate demands of their voters. Presumably, the borrowing merry-go-round has a limit. The system might break down with

## What's the Difference?



Deutscher Bundestag



China's National People's Congress

unforeseeable consequences - riots, social unrest, violent actions ... The oligarchy might answer by starting a war, without any mandate, to have a pretext for the introduction of extraordinary measures. Thousands, hundreds of thousands of people might be killed due to the party-based bluff called "democracy".

And that's not all. The oligarchies exploit the short-sighted material interests of poorly informed groups to obtain their consent to plundering non-renewable natural resources and

pollute the environment beyond repair.

A radical change of the party-based systems, a change enforced in spite of the rage of those who profit by them, and put in place by involving in political decision-making grass-root citizens as **individuals**, instead of as anonymous collectives, might be the only way to save mankind from a gloomy future.

**Let's do it!**

# INTERNATIONAL CZECH REPUBLIC

## Invitation to Attend

**International Conference on Innovations in Participatory Democracy**  
to be held on October 29-30, 2011 in Prague, Czech Republic

Organized by  
**MASARYK DEMOCRATIC ACADEMY**, Hybernská 7, 110 00 Prague 1  
and  
Worldwide Direct Democracy Movement, [www.movementfordirectdemocracy.com](http://www.movementfordirectdemocracy.com)

*In this critical period of history, to assure the survival of mankind, the only way might be to involve ordinary citizens in political decision-making. In most countries, a growing number of people are trying to do just that. The above Conference could become an important step forward in this process.*

The Conference will begin on Saturday, October 29 at 10.00 am and end on Sunday, October 30 in the evening. It will be possible to register on Friday, October 28 between 4 - 6 pm or on Saturday from 9.30 am.

The conference organizers have selected several subthemes, but you can suggest other ones as well:

- (1) Direct Democracy developments
- (2) Models of Economic Democracy - participatory budgeting
- (3) Models of Citizen Deliberation
- (4) The Increasing Promise and Continued Dangers of E-Democracy

Deadline for the submission of a paper abstract: **August 31, 2011** (name, institution, one paragraph abstract, a name of the conference subtheme.) Please send your abstract to email addresses: [jiri.polak@wddmnet.se](mailto:jiri.polak@wddmnet.se) and [m.brabec@gmail.cz](mailto:m.brabec@gmail.cz).

Let us mention that conference speakers and other participants are expected to find funds for themselves to cover the costs of attendance, travel costs and accommodation. Let us please know if you plan to attend the conference. We hope you will be able to come and are looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Jiri Polak, PhD. and Martin Brabec, PhD.

Conference organizers: Marek Hrubec, PhD., Jiri Polak, PhD., Martin Brabec, PhD., Zdenek Trinkewitz, Eng., and Lukas Kantor, Mgr.

The southern territories were integrated into the respective nations. After the war, Masaryk was elected the first president of Czechoslovakia. In the Washington Declaration of 1918, its founding document, Masaryk advocated the inclusion of elements of Direct Democracy, according to the Swiss model, in the new Constitution.

In the nineteen thirties, **Masaryk Democratic Academy** was adamant in fighting nazism. During WWII, it was closed. Re-opened in 1945, it was closed again by the Communist regime after the coup of 1948. In 1991, it was re-opened, hopefully for good. It has branch offices in 8 Czech towns. During its existence, the Academy has hosted as lecturers several top level personalities and organized hundreds of conferences and lectures. For the coming *Conference on Participatory Democracy*, a more suitable place than the *Masaryk Democratic Academy* can hardly be imagined.



**Tomáš Garrigue  
Masaryk,  
President  
of Czechoslovakia  
1918 - 1935**

## The Background Story

The Czechs lost their national independence in the battle of the *White Mountain* (near Prague; 1618, beginning of the *30 Years' War*). During the following 300 years, the Czech countries (Bohemia and Moravia) were part of the Austrian Empire, together with Hungary, Slovakia, and some other territories. In all of them, the nineteenth century experienced a movement for national emancipation. In Bohemia, one of the most prominent figures of this movement was T.G.Masaryk, professor of philosophy at the University of Prague. In 1896, he founded the **Democratic Academy**, meant to be an educational institution organizing lectures, publishing books, and co-operating in the creation of concepts and strategies within various fields of social life.

During WWI, Masaryk was active abroad, especially in the USA, promoting the renewal of Czech independence. In face-to-face discussions with president Woodrow Wilson, he persuaded the latter to consent to the disintegration of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. As a result, Czechs and Slovaks united in an independent state. Hungary, too, became independent.

## Organizers of the Conference:



From left to right: Ph.D. Marek Hrubec, Eng. Zdenek Trinkewitz, Mgr. Lukas Kantor, Ph.D. Martin Brabec

Dr. Marek Hrubec is vice-president of the Masaryk Academy. Dr. Martin Brabec is in charge of the Prague Centre where the Conference is scheduled to take place.

# UK

Information from Dr. *Michael Macpherson - I&R*

10 mars: (excerpt) "We - that's the democratic we, not the royal ;- ) - have tried for some years to "sell" citizen-led democracy (i and r etc., DD) to active people and groups. One approach was to suggest DD as a "plug-in", maybe that should now be an "app", for other campaigns." .....

20 mars: (excerpt) "Here's the paper about DD in 5 countries: via <http://www.iniref.org/learn.html> click: DOWNLOAD A PROOF COPY

## Ideas for action:

1) <http://www.iniref.org/brainstorm.html>

2) <http://www.iniref.org/start-up.html>

3) A BROCHURE WITH PROPOSALS AND RESOURCES "Democracy Within Reach"

<http://www.iniref.org/reach.pdf>

4) Ways to learn more and to get involved

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

3 april: **ANTI-CUTS? FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIRECT DEMOCRACY**

### follow external links

[Economic and financial democracy by citizens](#)

[Super-Campaign for people power / more democracy](#)

[Street protests, cuts and How to Win](#)

[Demo, London, Alternative for finance policy and public services?](#)

You can comment at:

**[DEMOCR@CY FORUM](#)**

**[Facebook](#)**

Contact via <http://www.iniref.org>

5 april: (excerpt) **New Recall Campaign: Please help build momentum**

"Our democratic system desperately needs reform. Unlock Democracy are one of the leading organisations campaigning for the Yes vote in the coming AV referendum in May. However there are other crucial reforms that we must also campaign for."

9 april: See **EDM 1253 Recall of Elected Representatives at Parliament's web site.**

"A cross-party group of MPs from four (!) parties so far signed up to this "early day motion" in the House of Commons, several, so it seems, in response to the Unlock Democracy appeal."

14 april: (excerpt) **COPY OF LETTER FROM INIREF POSTED APRIL 13th 2011** .....

**Re. Localism Bill Part 4 - Community empowerment Chapter 1 - local referendums Clause 53 Application to parish councils**

"Dear Mr. Pickles and colleagues,

We understand that it is the intention of the Minister to reform the regulation of referendum democracy at the level of parish. We have already submitted a memorandum about the Localism Bill to the Public Bills Committee (1) and wish to present here some recommendations about parish democracy." .....

22 april: (excerpt) "**Iniref, the Campaign for Direct Democracy in Britain**, has called for lobbying and campaign action for instance at general election times and aiming to improve government law which regulates the procedures of democracy. Recently we drafted a call to lobby the Communities minister to improve his localism Bill (see 1. in "Read more")." .....

24 april: (excerpt) "Statement of our aims in this rapid survey: As a campaign we of I&R - GB at iniref.org advocate the introduction of citizen-led direct democracy (CDD) at all levels of government. We regard a combination of direct democracy with existing forms of indirect, "representative" democracy to

be the best known realistically achievable system of legislation and government. So we measure the promise and apparent intentions of political parties against this "gold" standard which, although probably not perfect, is "state of the art" governance." .....

(Follows a survey of the scottish political parties approaching a Holyrood election 2011:)

**Scottish Conservative Party** .....

**Greens Scotland** .....

**Scottish Liberal Democratic Party** .....

**Scottish Labour** .....

**Scottish National Party** .....

*None of these parties promises to introduce CDD in the system. No wonder, all traditional parties are by nature anti-democratic. (JP) However, I&R - GB has found at least one party which promises to introduce CDD - citizen-led direct democracy, namely*

**United Kingdom Independence Party** .....

17 may, a letter addressed by I&R to "Citizens of the UK, Experts, lobby groups, Members of Parliament, UK (personal mail or message)

re: **Localism Bill: Call to Improve Referenda and Parish Polls**

see: <http://www.iniref.org/referpoll1.html>

# SWEDEN

22 mars: I&R wrote: "**Democracy reforms in Sweden offer guidance for Britain; Stronger rights of electors to govern their own affairs now anchored in constitution**

For the around 300 local authorities and 26 regions the Swedes introduced from the beginning of 2011

1. Citizens' law-proposal (initiative)

2. Right (improved) to demand a plebiscite (decision by the electorate, "referendum").

These changes strengthen the role of citizens in regional and local government. Before this reform there was a citizens' right to demand a referendum but this could be refused by the governing authority.

Swedish attention to detail for good governance is illustrated by some accompanying innovations. They propose to build a "comprehensive direct-democratic infrastructure" (Kaufmann), with local advice centres for voters who wish to contribute to governance and exploit their new democratic rights. Also planned is a national institution for political participation, which will inform citizens and support and encourage the newly introduced "direct" democracy.

The rules for citizens' initiative and referendum were laid down by revision of the constitution of state which came into force in January 2011."

"Summarised from: Bruno Kaufmann, "A more democratic Sweden": Demokratisches Schweden md magazin Nr.88, 1/2011 published by mehr-demokratie.de"

Note: A step in the right direction, but still insufficient. To be effective, these reforms would have to be generally known and presented in the mainstream media. But in them - so far not a word. Anyway, a truly democratic constitution would have to be conceived, authorized and if necessary amended directly by citizens. Political parties should not be allowed to do that. (JP)

# GERMANY

## Krieg und Frieden - eine Frage der Demokratie?

Tagung von *Mehr Demokratie*, 20. bis 22. Mai in Eisenach

MD Magazin Nr.88, 1/2011

Denn bei den vielen liegt alles - Editorial by Ralf-Uwe Beck

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Bundesweite Volksentscheide .....

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by **Bruno Kaufmann** (see the summary above, presented by *i&Rgb*)

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Kampagne in Südtirol

Wissenschaft - Erstes Wahlrechts-Ranking

International

Arabische Demokratiewelle

Erstes Referendum im Sudan

Themen .....

Omnibus für Direkte Demokratie

Leserbriefe .....

MD Intern

# PORTUGAL

18 April, a letter sent to the *WDDM* discussion channel:

"Hello, I am from Portugal. I believe it will inevitably move towards direct democracy, and I wonder if there is someone in Portugal entered these lists of mail. My direct democracy site: <http://podercontrapoder.blogspot.com>

# SWITZERLAND

27 April, a letter from Paul Nollen to the *e2d-international* discussion channel:

"The Swiss example for a balanced budget;

**Sustainable Fiscal Policy in a Federal State:**

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/j.1662-6370.2005.tb00369.x/pdf>

Gerhard KIRCHGÄSSNER, *University of St.Gallen*

Summary

Using a small theoretical model it is first shown that it is reasonable to limit public deficit and debt in relation to GOP in the long-run. Then we describe fiscal institutions called 'debt brakes' which are designed to prevent public deficit and debt from going off course. We present some models which have been supplied in some Swiss cantons, especially in the canton of St. Gallen, and the respective institution recently introduced at the federal level. Altogether, the models in the different cantons are quite successful. At the federal level we still have to wait before we can evaluate the results. Finally, we describe how the problem of a possible bail out of cantons and local communities is solved in Switzerland. Taking all results together, we come to the conclusion that by choosing appropriate institutions federal countries are rather more able to perform a sustainable fiscal policy than unitary states. In this process, budgetary restrictions and/or fiscal referenda play prominent roles at all levels. On the other hand, a special stability pact between the different governmental levels does not seem to be necessary."

# EUROPE

1 april, a letter sent round by Dr. **Bruno Kaufmann**, President of the *Initiative and Referendum Institute Europe*: "With one year to go before the first European Citizens' Initiatives will be

The screenshot shows a website for 'democracy international'. The main content is titled 'European Citizens' Initiative'. It includes a sub-header 'header menu: Quick access to' with links for 'contact us' and 'press'. The main text describes the initiative, its inclusion in the EU treaty, and the organization's response. It mentions that the initiative was included in the new EU treaty and that they demand a fair regulation. A response by Mehr Demokratie e.V. on the EU Commission's Green Book is highlighted. The text explains that Mehr Demokratie was involved in the process leading to the inclusion of the initiative in the Constitutional Treaty (Reform Treaty) and welcomes the Commission's efforts. It states that the initiative should be available to citizens as soon as possible by means of a Regulation. The text also mentions that the initiative offers significant possibilities for the development of European civil society and of a European public space, and thus for democracy itself at the EU level - as long as the Commission, as the intended recipient of such initiatives, makes active use of the opportunity the ECI presents for engaging intensively with the citizens. For the organization, there are considerable risks if the expectations and hopes for the use of this new instrument were to be disappointed as a consequence of the imposition of impractical procedural rules. Based on their extensive practical experience with direct democracy, they offer this response as a contribution to the hoped-for user-friendliness of the ECI. There are links to download the English version (pdf - 7 pages) and the German version (pdf - 8 pages). A section titled 'Europe wide Campaign' mentions that in 2006/7 they campaigned for the immediate introduction of the ECI, with more than 110 NGOs supporting them and 45 MEPs supporting their demand. On the right side, there is a section titled 'Strengthen the citizens' voice' with a photo of a signature gathering and a short story about the initiative. The footer contains navigation links: search, sitemap, top of page, home, and contact.

launched, many organizations, institutions and even commercial companies are now exploring their possibilities to play a role in the conduct of this transnational direct democratic process. The institute will continue it's work to document, assess and communicate on these different activities and try to contribute to the quality and access of the European Citizens' Initiative.

For this purpose we invite you all to join us at the 2011 European Citizens' Initiative Summit in Vienna on May 6 and 7, where basically all relevant stakeholders will share their inputs to the further preparation process towards the April 1, 2012 starting line-up.

Please pay also attention to the newly published "European Citizens' Initiative Handbook ", available in five different languages.

Our partner organization in the ECI Community are today also launching different preparatory steps including a hotline for potential organisers by ECAS , a list of steps to consider for organisers by the ECI Campaign and an information brochure (in German only so far) by the Green Group in the European Parliament. Other initiatives include commercial offers and media initiatives.

Let's stay in touch and let's together work for a successful introduction and practice of the European Citizens' Initiative." *(Regrettably, so far, I haven't received any report from the Vienna meeting. JP)*

18 may, information from **Democracy International**: Greens/ EFA Conference on the European Citizens' Initiative on 29 June 2011 in the European Parliament. Preliminary program and registration: <http://www.greens-efa.eu/european-citizens-initiative-3817.html>

Democracy International Conference on 30 June 2011 in Brussels. Preliminary program, registration form, and practical details: <http://democracy-international.org/events.html>

## USA

The video proceedings and other information about the **National Initiative for Democracy** can be found at <http://ni4d.us/en/global-forum-ordering>.

It is possible to subscribe to the NI4D news mailing list at <http://mailhub.ni4d.us/?p=subscribe&id=5>

*Needless to point out that, currently, this is probably the most important citizen initiative in the USA. If it gains sufficient support, the history of the only remaining superpower, and indeed of the whole world, would take a new, hopeful course. JP*

## INDONESIA

12 May, information from Mr. **Paul Nollen**: "An interesting experiment in Indonesia is added on Participedia: [http://www.participedia.net/wiki/Indonesia\\_Direct\\_Democracy\\_Experiment](http://www.participedia.net/wiki/Indonesia_Direct_Democracy_Experiment).

## IN GENERAL

20 april, a discussion between Mr. **Paul Nollen**, Belgium, and Ph.D. **William McConochie**, USA. Mr. Nollen's answers to Dr. McConochie's questions are in italics:

"While there are appealing features to direct democracy, how this is engineered in practice raises several important questions, such as:

1. Who frames the issues upon which the public will vote and how will the issues be framed and presented to vote?

*Only the citizens themselves can put an issue on vote. Plebiscites are prohibited in Switzerland.*

2. Who will decide which issues will be presented to the public for voting?

*There is a number of signatures necessary (showing public support) in order to initiate a referendum.*

3. Who will select the persons/organizations/branch(es) of government who will do tasks 1 and 2?

*This can be done by the administration of the government or by any organization that want to do it (see demoex <http://www.participedia.net/wiki/Special:BrowseData/Organizations>)" .....*

*(The text of the entire discussion is too long to be published here. Those interested can contact Dr. MacConochie <Bill@Politicalpsychologyresearch.com> and/or Mr. Paul Nollen <paul.nollen@skynet.be>.)*

21 april, Mr. **JF Frenette**'s comment on the above discussion: (excerpt) ".... the sole mission of Electronic Direct Democracy (E2D) International is simply: **to help establish , to support and promote, and to maintain communication and co-operation between politically neutral electronic direct democracy parties around the world.**

We have been collaboratively writing an E2D Manifesto .... " (see below)

12 May, a letter sent to *e2d-international* by Mr. **Paul Nollen**: "I placed a link on our participedia page [http://www.participedia.net/wiki/Electronic\\_Direct\\_Democracy\\_EDD](http://www.participedia.net/wiki/Electronic_Direct_Democracy_EDD) to our forum for E2D <http://www.e2d-i.org>

Anna ORR's books

**www.abolish-power.org**

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What is politics ?  
What do politicians do ?

Do we need politicians ?

Can everyone do what politicians do ?

Political power corrupts, can we abolish it ? How ?

See answers to these questions at [check out Politics Without Politicians](#)

## Direct Democracy Pamphlet by Anna ORR

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**www.abolish-power.org**  
Anna ORR's books

Maybe we have to write something about the use we want to make of this forum. Topics has to be "participedia" and/or "E2D" related. Registration is free with a link on the confirmation mail."

12 april, Mr. Aki Orr, Israel, answering a letter from Mr. Paul Nollen, wrote, "Dear Paul, I appreciate your view. However - I'll be 80 next June and my 55 years of political activity showed me repeatedly that one cannot change a political system "from the inside".

"Inside" you become more and more like the others there. You have to participate in their game and this changes you." (Very true indeed!! JP)

18 april, a letter from Mr. Jim Powell, South Africa, sent to the WDDM discussion channel (excerpts):

"Voters get control over your Ward Councillors after the 2011 elections.

Below is the suggested commitment by the candidate to the voters in the ward. Knock it about and modify it as you see fit but get the commitment from the candidate in your ward. It is very difficult to get the voters to vote in an open, not secret, petition against a representative.

Direct Democracy in Action

*How to ensure that your councillor is directly responsible to the electorate after the 2011 municipal elections*

If you want more control over the day-to-day running of your town or city, you need to ensure that ward councillors can be held to account by the people who voted them into office.

So, during the election campaign for the upcoming municipal elections, ask your selected candidate, or all candidates, to sign the following social contract as a commitment to direct and measurable democracy. ....

I, (candidate councillor ID), acknowledge that will effectively be an employee of the voters of the ward (number, Council) if elected as a ward councillor during the 18 May 2011 local elections by the said voters of the ward in question, and that it is the voters of the said ward who, through payment of their rates and taxes, pay my salary.

I therefore commit myself to direct democracy in the following ways:

1. ...regular and effective consultations with the voting public ....
2. ...voting in accordance to the best interests of the voters ....
3. ...ensure that the wishes of my constituency are effectively communicated and advocated for in Council ....
4. ...ensure that the by-laws are upheld ....
5. I commit to being held accountable for my performance by the voters."

In the concluding section, the candidate pledges consent to recall should he/she fail to keep the above promises.

*Although this pledge is proposed for local elections in South Africa, the same principle might be applied even to parliamentary elections in any truly democratic country. This principle is also similar to that used by Simpol. (JP)*

PS: OWING TO COMPUTER  
BREAKDOWN, SINCE 31.5.,  
I HAVE NOT HAD THE INTERNET.  
J.P.

## YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION 20,- euro

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