



DIRECT DEMOCRATIC EURO-VISION NEWSLETTER

Vol. 16 (No.4)
November 2014



WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER **DIREKTORAKY**

TRANSFORMATION - How exactly?

By Jiri Polak

Quite a few highly qualified political thinkers have put forward models of Future Democracy, based on elements of DD or DDD. However, what is missing are visions of the ways these models could be put in place. Owing to differences between American and European political culture, evidently, activists operating in both these political spheres have to proceed differently. How exactly?

In the USA, owing to the fact that the Constitution is venerated like a sort of Holy Scripture, the only realistic proceeding seems to be a comprehensive amendment, giving the right to I&R to all citizens. At present, this right is reserved for the citizens of only about half of the States and in practice, it meets a lot of bureaucratic obstacles. For several years, the strategy of pushing through an amendment giving a genuine right to I&R to all citizens of the Union has been advocated and supported by the NI4D organization. Owing to the enormous power of the forces opposing, for obvious reasons, this strategy, forces dominating the media and other means of all-embracing brainwashing, fostering passivity on the part of the citizens, the campaign for a global right to I&R is probably doomed to failure, at least for the time being. The founder and president of the NI4D, sen. Mike Gravel, seems to have given up. The only hope, as I see it, is a collapse of the system, provoking a revolt. This is the plot of my novel *Götterdämmerung in the New World*. (published in Czech Republic in 2013).

Another strategy has been to proceed through international organizations. After the First International Conference on Direct Democracy (Příbram, Czech Republic, 1998), at least two such organizations have been founded and maintained for a few years – CICDD and WWDDM. However, response from the public has been almost nil. Evidently, for the time being, this is not the way to go.

In the current situation, evidently, our hopes must be placed in the development observable inside individual countries. In several of them, this development is hopeful. Not only in the West, where almost everywhere small DD groups and organizations emerge, but even in countries like Nepal, Singapore, or South Korea.



Translation:

PAVEL KOHOUT
D A W N

**Criticism of the Political System and draft
of a new Constitution for Czech Republic**

A quotation:

"The Western model of democracy, based on the work of hired politicians, not controlled by the proprietors, necessarily results in lack of responsibility, and lack of responsibility necessarily results in debts. In this arrangement, bankruptcy is only a matter of time. This, basically, is the cause of the crisis of public finances of the Western world." "Czech Republic is steered by a bunch of miserable dabblers, without any hope of improvement

Nevertheless, not surprisingly, it is Europe where, in a not very distant future, a real breakthrough can be expected.

Let us dream

A would-be democratic European medium size country X; the system is more and more discredited; people are increasingly angry; the new political class has written and adopted a Constitution giving all power to big political parties. The insight emerges: in a democracy, The Constitution – the base of the system – must be written and adopted by the citizens directly. A few dissatisfied activists found a *Movement for a Citizens' Constitution*. A web-site is put on the net, presenting several citizens' drafts of a new Constitution. Citizens can vote on them and bring their own proposals. Hundreds and thousands participate in this campaign during several months. Then, the draft which has obtained the greatest support is proclaimed to be the official draft of a Citizens' Constitution. The obvious claim is: REFERENDUM! Politicians and the mainstream media try to silence the movement. In vain. After increasing pressure from

below, the referendum *does* take place. A new, truly democratic system is put in place in the country X, after Switzerland the first truly democratic country in the world.

This event arouses world-wide attention. In increasing number of countries, stormy discussions begin to take place concerning the legitimacy of current constitutions, not adopted by referendum. Processes similar to that which took place in Country X, start and gain momentum, first in Europe, then in America and Australia, finally even in Asia and Africa. The World is changed. People begin to understand that wars, conflicts, shortsighted looting of natural resources and environmental pollution – all those crimes against humanity had been made possible by oligarchic rule, excluding ordinary citizens from the most important modes of government. Oligarchies are falling, one after another, by non-violent means, thanks to the dramatically improved means of communication, especially the internet. A golden age begins....

A Utopia? Not necessarily. It's up to us.....

INTERNATIONAL

Czech Republic



A bit of history: In 1992, the Republic of Czechoslovakia was divided into two independent states – the *Czech Republic* and the *Slovak Republic*. The decision to divide the original state into two states was made by two leading politicians only – V.Klaus for the Czech part and V.Meciar for the Slovak part. The citizens were not asked whether they wanted that or not. In such a situation, in a would-be democratic country, wouldn't a referendum be imperative?

In the same year, in Czech Republic, a few lawyers met at a hotel in Carlsbad – a famous spa – and, surely over some drinks, wrote a Constitution giving power to big parties, to the exclusion of the smaller ones, that did not reach at least 4 % support in elections. In the introduction they wrote "All power comes from the people" but added: "The people exert power through political parties" This is nonsense. If it is the people who have all power, nobody can prescribe for the people how power is to be exerted. A new, party-political ruling elite came into being, pretending to offer a choice between left and right, and, in reality, trying mostly to assure its privileges, no matter the election results. Later, this hidden motive became manifest in the *Opposition Contract*, concluded between the principal right-wing and the principal left-wing party. Both made a commitment to cooperate and support one another no matter which one wins the elections.

The regime established in this way became increasingly disliked, even hated. Several corruption scandals have been disclosed. Attempts were made to found new parties, but, owing to the 4% threshold, people mostly avoided voting for them, fearing that such votes would be wasted. Nevertheless, a few new parties have made it to Parliament, e.g. *The Public Affairs Party*. However when in power, the respective party leaders mostly tried to use the system for their personal benefit instead of for the common good. To gain power in this way, billions are needed. Recently, Mr. Babiš, one of the richest persons in the world, founded the party ANO (YES) and, spending many millions for publicity, has forced his way not only to Parliament, but even to Government. The country becomes more and more indebted, while millions, stolen from the people, are transferred to private accounts in tax paradises, hidden somewhere in tropical islands. These practices are generally called "tunnelling".

Ordinary people are becoming increasingly passive and cynical. However, thanks to the explosion of means of communication and information, activists and political thinkers are emerging, who understand that acting inside the flawed and rotten system leads nowhere. It's no use trying to found new parties. The system is irreparable. It must be discarded and replaced by a radically new one, put in place by the people directly.

In 2001, a few activists founded the *Movement for Direct Democracy*. A draft of a *Citizens' Constitution* was presented. It is based on the following principles:

1. A valid Constitution must be approved by a nation-wide referendum.
2. The executive power (Government) must be separated from the legislative power (Parliament). Members of the Executive must be non-partisan experts.
3. The head of State must be elected directly by the citizens.
4. The Parliament must be elected on the basis of single-mandate election districts, not on party basis.
5. The right to Initiative and Referendum must exist on all levels.
6. The immunity of MPs must be abolished.
7. The citizens must have the right to recall any elected representative at any time, if a majority of voters in the respective election district demand it.
8. The salaries and other benefits of elected representatives must be decided on by the citizens, not by the beneficiaries themselves.



The flowchart illustrates the political and administrative structure of the Czech Republic. At the top, the President (Prezident) and the Parliament (Zakony, Senát, Poslanecká sněmovna) are shown. The Parliament includes the Chamber of Deputies (Poslanecká sněmovna) and the Senate (Senát). The President appoints and dismisses the Prime Minister (Premiér) and the Government (Vláda). The Government is composed of various ministries (e.g., Minister of Education, Minister of Health). The administrative system is divided into levels: Městská část (Municipal part), Okresní úřad (District office), Město (City), and Obec (Municipality). The judicial system (Soudy) is also shown, including the Constitutional Court (Ústavní soud). The electoral process (Volba) is depicted at the bottom, showing the election of representatives to the Parliament and the Government.

Every day, stormy discussions about the political situation are taking place in the social media. The near future will show whether all these efforts have the momentum necessary for change.

A devastating criticism of the contemporary political system of Czech Republic, especially of the Constitution, has been recently presented in the book **The Sovereign State and Public Sources** by **RNDr. Radoslav Štědroň**.



RNDr. Radoslav Štědroň, published by the University of Ostrava.

The fact that such an openly dissenting book could be published by such an official institution as a State University, shows the depth of public dissatisfaction in that country. Something like that would be unthinkable in a country like, e.g. Sweden.

Sweden

In May 2014, the Swedish **Ministry of Justice** (Justitiedepartementet) published a booklet called *En Politik för en levande Demokrati* (Policy for a Living Democracy)

Dr. Jiri Polak. What is Democracy? (translation from Swedish) Democracy worth its name can only be a system created and established by the citizens themselves, not by political parties who have neither asked for nor obtained any mandate to create and establish any system. The parties are elected to promote the interests of certain citizen categories to the detriment of other categories or society as a whole. This is the very opposite of democracy. Most people are so brainwashed that they still believe that democracy cannot work in any other way.. However, in the era of the internet and globalization, party political steering of society becomes increasingly obsolete and dysfunctional. Politics is reduced to daily skirmishes, manipulated and commented upon by some selected journalists – a spectacle the purpose of which is to collect as many votes as possible, thereby enabling politicians to keep, or get access to, political sinecures, while the citizens remain powerless onlookers until the next election.

One of the preconditions of democracy is freedom of expression. Is there really freedom of expression in Sweden? In almost all Western countries, as well as in some other, small DD groups, organizations, or even parties emerge and grow, conferences are organized, books and articles are published, even on the academic level, presenting and promoting new systemic models containing elements of Direct Democracy and structural deliberation. In the mainstream Swedish media, this global trend meets nothing but silence. Here, it is only the traditional parties and other established organizations that matter. Freedom of expression means not only impunity for one's opinions. Freedom of expression must also mean that relevant criticism of the very system is paid attention to and discussed, not silenced, ignored and censored.

Parliamentarism was born in societies which do not exist any more. It was established in order to deal with problems existing inside countries. At present, the most serious problems are global, especially the environmental pollution and over-exploitation of natural resources which, in the long run, threaten the survival of our civilization. It is the politicians who are responsible for this increasingly threatening situation. It is naïve and dangerous to expect the same politicians to really take the necessary measures before it is too late. Global problems can only be solved if ordinary citizens assume responsibility directly, not through the intermediary of political parties which would rather let the world collapse than give up their power. What can be more important than to discuss this aspect of the current situation?

The emperor has no cloths. There is no real democracy and freedom of expression in Sweden.

(This article was sent to several mainstream Swedish newspapers and other opinion builders. It was not published and nobody said one word about it. This confirms the thesis postulated here. JP)



UK

On 5th August, **I&Rgb** wrote (excerpt): ".....The prospect of making a new constitution of state is seen by some as important and perhaps exciting but by many as mystifying and remote. The experts and politicians (not all are expert) bear responsibility to inform the people about the process and to ensure that it can be readily understood.

How can real participation in the process of constitution building be enabled and promoted?

Boyle asks what shall be the role of direct democracy in making and (if necessary) revising our constitution. She wisely notes that, 'a great deal of consideration would require to be given to creating a deliberative framework that engenders legitimacy in the eventual outcome of the Constitutional Convention process through mechanisms ensuring substantive inclusion and participation.' Further she writes, 'The Scottish Parliament, and latterly the Convention itself, would also need to consider whether there should be some form of framework from which the constitution-making process should begin – through for example embedding fundamental constitutional rights'

In an essay about democracy and constitution-making, we asked, 'A crucial question namely, how can we make ourselves a modern constitution when the "constitution" and related tradition which we appear to possess provide no suitable tools for the job? Given the essential and fundamental role played and to be played by electorates in making and changing modern constitution it appears most urgent that we should give ourselves the instruments of citizen-led democracy in order, as a people, to make, rewrite and modernise our state constitution.'

On 12 August, **Iniref.org** wrote (excerpt), "We do not propose to abolish parliament or government. We do need to improve the system by adding the correct 'tools'. By 'tools' we mean the procedures of direct democracy, that is citizen-led democracy. For an introduction to the methods of direct democracy see <http://www.iniref.org>"

On 30 August, **Iniref.org** wrote, (excerpt) ".....Certainly, a House of Lords as a second chamber of parliament, is not what we want or need. Nor is a constitutional court adequate to provide 'checks and balances' in a parliamentary democracy. For constitutional matters perhaps, but for everyday politics of state, no.

A better way to scrutinise, supervise and, from case to case, correct our elected representatives would be to apply some methods of direct democracy. With 'the brake' the people can veto a bad or unwanted government proposal or law – using the optional referendum. With the 'gas' (accelerator), an agreed, large number of citizens can put forward a proposal (citizens' initiative) which must go to binding referendum of the whole electorate."

On 3 September, **I&Rgb** wrote (excerpt): "..... Many Scots argue that, different to England and the UK, in Scotland political power belongs to the people. The people are "sovereign". In the UK, sovereignty is said to belong to a mystifying entity dubbed "the queen in parliament" or similar. We are told by politicians and "experts" that because parliament is sovereign then the people cannot veto or overrule parliament or government. A referendum result, they decree, can never be legally binding on parliament.

What does this mean for we "ordinary" citizens?

If we want to be in charge of our own public affairs, if we want 21st century democracy, then we must demand that Sovereignty equals Political Rights.

Which political rights are most important from the people's perspective?

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was ratified by Scotland with the UK in 1976. Here is the section on political rights:

"Article 25. Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;

(b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors."

So, we already have written law which guarantees our right to elect politicians and to decide directly on public issues. The only practical way to do the latter is to call and obtain binding referenda."

2 September, Mr. **Ian Woods**, editor of **Global Outlook**, wrote, "Here's a great quote from Winston Churchill, below:

PARLIAMENT BILL

HC Deb 11 November 1947 vol. 444 cc203-321

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1947/nov/11/parliament-bill>

(excerpt) "The right hon. Gentleman spoke about Parliament, about the rights of Parliament, which I shall certainly not fail to defend. But it is not Parliament that should rule; it is the people who should rule through Parliament. That is the mistake he made, an important omission. All this was comprehended by those who shaped the Parliament Act and the settlement which developed upon that Act, so that it was never mentioned again for 36 years until now. That is what the Government are seeking to mutilate, if not to destroy. The object of the Parliament Act, and the spirit of that Act, were to give effect, not to spasmodic emotions of the electorate, but to the settled, persistent will of the people. What they wanted to do they could do, and what they did not want to do they could stop.

All this idea of a handful of men getting hold of the State machine, having the right to make the people do what suits their party and personal interests or doctrines, is completely contrary to every conception of surviving Western democracy. "Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made," "Some patient force to change them when we will."

Germany

October 2014, **mdmagazin**, Mehr Demokratie

Contents:

Europa Jetzt erst recht

Quote: "Die Skandalöse Nichtzulassung der Europäischen Bürgerinitiative "Stop TTIP" zeigt, wie weit die Europäische Union noch von demokratischen Verfahren entfernt ist."

Kommunen

Die Kommunen zuerst! Schulden bremsen per Volksentscheid

Bundesländer

Offen für Transparenz Ländertelegramm

Kurz notiert

Demokratie-Nachrichten Mit Terminen vor Ort

Europa

Mit direkter Demokratie gegen die Krise

Weltweit

Hongkong fordert freie Wahlen Transparenz, Demokratie, Mitbestimmung

Omnibus für Direkte Demokratie

Aktion West/Ost

25 Jahre friedlich Revolution

Das Räderwerk der Angst

Leserbriefe

Unsere Aktiven

Switzerland/Europe

Europa-Magazin 1/2014

Contents:

edito – Paul Ruppen

Hebelt die EU die duale Berufsbildung aus? von Rudolf Strahm

Kurzinfos

SP Schweiz nach der Abstimmung vom 9.2.14

Gauk warnt vor der direkten Demokratie

Einwanderungsinitiative und Bilaterale von Paul Ruppen

Kurzinfos

Staat "gerettet" - auf Kosten der Bevölkerung Keine Wende

in der Euro-Zone Einwanderung – ein paar Vergleiche Die

Stimme der Empörten Karlsruhe und EZB-Staatsanleihen

Buchbesprechungen

Retour aux sources par Luzius Theiler

Quand on place ses espoirs en de lointaines "élites" plutôt que dans la démocratie

par **Paul Ruppen**

Auf dem Weg in die Zweite Liga

In www.german-foreign-policy.com

"Die Gewerkschaften werden fallen wie die Berliner Mauer"

von **Gerald Oberansmayr**

Das geheim verhandelte Freihandelsabkommen TTIP gefährdet die Demokratie

von **Roman Huber, Mehr Demokratie München**



USA

22 October, Mrs. **Sandy Heierbacher** wrote, "It's wonderful to see all the membership applications coming in already! As it says below, membership dues for the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) will be increasing on November 5th, but you can join or renew at the current rates (for one or two years) now.

Please do join the Coalition if you are committed to deliberation and public engagement. We'd love to have you involved!

And if you want to get a sense of how vibrant, engaged and welcoming the community is, check out the notes and photos that attendees tweeted at <http://twitter.com/hashtag/NCDD2014> from last weekend's national conference.

Sandy Heierbacher, Director, National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation

sandy@ncdd.org * www.ncdd.org

MERRY CHRISTMAS and A SUCCESSFUL NEW DD YEAR!

*I intend to publish this newsletter
as long as I can.*

*When I no longer can, I wish to thank all
friends
and activists who read it all those years*

JP

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION 300,- Czech Crowns

ACCOUNT NR.: JIRI POLAK, 002022-0168677293/0800

IBAN CZ74 0800 0020 2201 6867 7293

BIC - SWIFT: GIBACZPX

BANK ADDRESS: CESKA SPORITELNA, JUGOSLAVSKA 19, PRAHA 2, CZECH REPUBLIC

DD Europe



DIRECT DEMOCRATIC EURO-VISION NEWSLETTER

Vol. 16 (No.4)

November 2014

**WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY
NEWSLETTER**

Published by MDD - Movement for Direct Democracy

Responsible editor: Jiri Polak, Design: Bohuslav Binka, Picture: Katka Svehlova

MDD - MOVEMENT FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY

JIRI POLAK, ASSARHUSAVÄGEN 64, S-24736, S. SANDBY, SWEDEN

PHONE: 046/58891, E-MAIL: JIRI.POLAK@SWIPNET.SE

