



The Transition: A Vision....

by Jiri Polak

Let's imagine what historians of the 22nd century might write about political development of the world hundred years earlier....

It could be argued that the first step towards genuine democracy was taken by organizing the First International Conference on Direct Democracy (Czech Republic, 1998). The conference was a great success, mostly thanks to the chairman, Prof. Theodore L. Becker (USA). Undoubtedly, Prof. Becker was the most prominent expert on direct democracy of that time. He had academic, and even some political contacts all over the world. Thanks to him, a worldwide network of DD activists constituted itself and attempts were made to even establish both global and European DD organizations. However, only very few activists became involved in them and their impact on political systems and day-to-day politics remained negligible. The mainstream media ignored them.

On the local and national level, the situation was more promising. The concept of *Direct Democracy* became noticed, at least among people who were interested in politics. Beside the classical form – *I&R* –, various forms of *citizen deliberation* began to be discussed and, in limited areas, even used as a complement to decision-making by politicians. Professor Becker introduced a new concept: *DDD – Deliberative Direct Democracy*.

In Europe, the most important DD organizations were those founded in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. The biggest one – the German *Mehr Demokratie* – had several thousands paying members, paid employees and a high quality periodical. However, the most significant movement of this type emerged in *Czech Republic*, a medium-size country in the heart of Europe. Since the first conference, a growing number of Czechs began to discuss ways to improve the deteriorating situation, both economic and social, remaining far from the expectations aroused by the fall of communism in 1989. Instead of the one-party communist dictatorship, power was seized, on false pretences, by an elected oligarchy, a new party-political class pretending that the new system was 'democracy'. At the same time, in *Czech Republic*, it was more difficult to avoid the understanding of the

Prof. TED BECKER



Ted Becker is the Auburn Alumni Association Professor of political science at Auburn University. He believes he was born to edit a website on the internet. Unlike most of his fellow human beings, he actually likes to write and to edit books (12 so far), so a website is easy pickings. He has had a long history of pioneering in multi-media presentations

Qualifications:

Alma Holiaday Professor of Civic and Community Engagement, Auburn University
Founding Editor in Chief, Journal of Public Deliberation
Coordinator – Co-founder, Community Mediation Service, University of Hawaii
Project: The Last, Lost Empire (2d edition) National Social Science Press (2010)

Competence:

Conflict Resolution
 Higher Education
 Political Science
 University Teaching
 Research
 Student Development

true nature of that deception, than in other countries.

Owing to their recent history, the Czechs developed a remarkable mental flexibility. They became able to understand and imagine that political systems could and would change. In the early twenty-first century, there were still people alive who had experienced no less than six different political systems. Understandably, citizens from all layers of society tried to find ways to improve their own, and especially their childrens, quality of life by changing the system. Soon, they got the insight: for that purpose, they had to take decision-making in their own hands instead of leaving it in the hands of corrupt, power-hungry party politicians. A movement for direct democracy emerged and grew. But there was a difference: While in all other countries, the concept of *direct democracy* was considered to be tantamount to the right to *initiative and referendum*, leaving the system otherwise unchanged, the Czechs brought DD to a higher level: I&R was not sufficient; the system itself had to be changed. At the same time, they realized that the international organizations in which they were involved, did not make much difference. Therefore, round 2015, they decided to focus on the campaign taking place inside their own country.

The basis of the system was, and is, the Constitution. So far, in all countries, Constitutions were written and foisted upon the citizens by political elites. To establish true democracy, the Constitution had to be written and adopted by the citizens themselves. A *Movement for Citizens' Constitution* was founded and gained momentum. It took a few years to bring this

idea to common consciousness. The oligarchic establishment had recourse to the usual tactics: First, silence, then claims, concealed in various ways, that ordinary citizens were too stupid to be able to rule themselves; and finally, resignation. The referendum could no longer be hampered. Finally, it did take place and the history of oligarchic rule in Czech Republic was ended.

The changes brought about by this change of system were enormous. Political parties were reduced to insignificance. The taxes were reduced, but the average income grew at a breathtaking pace. Poverty vanished. Owing to consistent transparency in all areas of administration, corruption was eradicated. Foreign parasitic organizations, such as NATO, and ecologically harmful corporations were kicked out. The Republic became a paragon of opulence, well-being and peaceful development.

Unavoidably, these epoch-making changes were bound to arouse interest all over the world. Social scientists, as well as honest politicians and journalists were coming to visit in rapid succession. It was like an avalanche. In all western-type countries, and later even in the less developed countries, grass-root citizens were shaken from their passivity and feeling of impotence. Increasingly, the men-in-the-street were taking power in their own hands. By about 20.., the process was more or less consummated. Mankind was entering a new, glorious era.

A Utopia? It depends on all of us

INTERNATIONAL

Czech Republic

The **Movement for Citizens' Constitution** intend to present for voting by the citizens the following general principles on which the new Constitution has to be based:

1. To be valid, the Constitution has to be approved by a general referendum.
2. The legislative power (Parliament) and the executive power (Government) have to consist of non-partisan experts.
3. The Head of State and all other high-level civil servants have to be elected and subject to the possibility of recall. They must not be simply nominated.
4. The Constitution has to forbid death penalty.
5. Public debts, as well as all taxes and public expenditures have to be authorized by referendums, if citizens' initiative so requires.
6. The Parliament has to be elected on the basis of single mandate election districts. The candidates are elected as individuals, not as party members.
7. There has to be complete transparency concerning all financial transactions.
8. Political parties do not enjoy any special rights. They are not financed by the State.
9. The right to Initiative and Referendum exists on all levels.
10. Immunity of politicians is abolished.
11. Public media have to serve the interests of the citizenry.
12. Czech Republic may never unleash any war.
13. Service in the army may only be voluntary, never obligatory.
14. The salaries and benefits of elected representatives have to be decided upon in deliberative assemblies like the German Planning Cells.
15. The State abstains from all unnecessary encroachments upon the citizens' freedom.

A declaration called **Together for Peace**, issued by about 60 very prominent Czech personalities, intellectuals, activists, even some high level politicians, protests against the fomenting of war hysteria on the part of American and Europeans oligarchies who try to mobilize West-European nations against the illusory threat coming from Russia. The Czechs refuse to be implicated in any new war. After their bitter historical experience and ample information provided by the internet, they know better.

Even some other organizations put forward protests of a similar kind, e.g. **National Democracy**.

(excerpt, translation). "National Democracy is adamant in opposing the decision made by the Prime Minister Sobotka who permits the passage of American armed forces through our countries.

By taking this decision, the government betrays the citizens whose interests it is supposed to defend, because it thus participates in the hateful anti-russian propaganda and helps to increase a threat of war. War does not serve the interests of Czech Republic and its citizens. In case of an armed conflict, Czech Republic will be one of its first victims.

Such steps taken by government representatives fulfil the criteria of high treason."

Prof.Ph.D.**Josef Šmajs**, professor of Philosophy at the University of Brno, has published a book called *Constitution of the Planet Earth*, trying to establish rules for the protection of life-preserving environment on our planet. In the nineteen nineties, prof.Šmajs participated in the founding of the Czech Movement for Direct Democracy.

UK

In the pre- and post-election period, **INIREF** sent several interesting and valuable comments to the web.

Excerpts:

11th march

"Most people consider that voting once every few years for (the promises of) politicians is a poor way to take part in public

decisions which may deeply affect their own lives. In contrast, repeated surveys across the UK have shown that over 7 out of ten adults agree that a large number of voters should be able to propose and instigate a referendum even if the ruling parties are against it"

...."In a survey of people who intend NOT to vote in elections, a majority said that they would take part in referenda. Prof. Graham Smith, a political scientist, looked at "57 varieties of political participation and found that the methods of direct democracy were the most effective. An outline of how these might work in Scotland may be found in an on-line forum here

<http://tinyurl.com/nl56wla>

27th march

Mr. **Roger MacNair**, founder of a Direct Democracy discussion group at Linkedin.com, wrote (excerpt): "We'd like to hold an informal meeting/workshop on Thursday 16th April in London at 7.00pm.... with people, like yourself, who are interested in improving the democratic institutional setup in the UK, whether through direct democracy, participatory democracy models, issue based politics etc."

1st april

(excerpt)

"Running up to a general election in May we want to ask about the chances for effective democracy reforms under the next government. (excerpt)

For the 2010 election we were promised spectacular innovations. In autumn 2009 the Conservative party leader, later prime minister, could be heard promising in a BBC broadcast that he would introduce citizen-initiated referendum both at local and national levels. His words may be heard via the following web page

<http://www.iniref.org/ir-r09october.html>

Then after the coalition had been formed the LibDems and Tories promised "We will give residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue." Coalition agreement 2010 p.27. Now (April 2015) after a full term of five years in power the government has failed to fulfill these promises. Direct democracy was ditched from the Localism Bill. Citizen-initiated national referendum for use by the voters of the UK was not even drafted into a parliamentary bill. The Labour party previously had done no better,"

23rd april

(excerpt)

"..... If the people of the UK and its countries want meaningful participation and strong democratic rights then they must elect MPs who will bring in the necessary reforms. Follow our "Election campaign call", linked below. Join in. Do your bit."

Campaign for direct democracy in Britain

Citizens' Initiative and Referendum I&R – GB

<http://www.iniref.org/> Link to site index

<http://www.iniref.org/carta.htm> Election campaign call

24 april

(excerpt)

"What right do the party bosses have to rule the country? They do not have that right. But they behave as though they do. At elections the politicians gain political power BUT they can only borrow that power from the people."

30 april

(excerpt)

"NEXT PARLIAMENT AND GOVERNMENT MUST INTRODUCE DIRECT DEMOCRACY

For a new Democracy Bill to enable the following power:

Using the citizens' initiative a large number of citizen-electors can instigate a binding referendum"

1st may

(excerpt)

"..... What do the parties offer in their manifestos (or other

promises) for the 2015 general election?"

Greens: "Referenda on local government decisions if called for by 20% of the local electorate."

UKIP: "Citizens' Initiative: Every two years we will allow a national referendum on the issues of greatest importance to the British public, gathered via an approved petition, provided the petition has more than two million signatures."

Labour Party INIREF notes: (excerpt): "IN the 2015 manifesto there are vague promises to devolve power to "communities" and to "empower" people No hint of citizen-led direct democracy was found. Also, during many years from 1997 to 2010 and several Labour governments NO serious progress was made to introduce elements of direct democracy."

3rd may

(excerpt)

"..... UK party politics is in disarray. Some would say chaos. In democracy the citizens are in ultimate charge of parliament and government. We suggest that it is time for all citizens of the UK to take a firmer grip on our public affairs. Let us introduce the option of direct rule by the people. With direct democracy we can intervene on any important issues we, as the electorate, select. We can both propose and veto policy and law-making."

6th may

"I would like to have the opportunity to vote on issues that I feel strongly about... why not let the people themselves vote on policies? Can we not be trusted? A party's policies frequently seem to change during the course of a parliamentary term so why should I vote for a person belonging to a party and not be sure that he will not carry out his election pledges? What about all the issues that were not mentioned during the elections? How will I know at the time of voting that my representative will act in my best interests?"

A citizen and voter

12th may

(excerpt)

"GENERAL ELECTION MAY 2015

With only a minority of votes the Conservative party won a majority of seats in our elected parliament so that they will be able to rule alone for up to five years (statistics below). Our "representative", indirect democracy does not provide sufficient mandate or authority to run the country. The well-being of most people of the UK will be of secondary or minor interest to the new government."

USA

NCDD – National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation

<http://ncdd.org>

WELCOME TO NCDD

The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation is a network of thousands of innovators who bring people together across divides to tackle today's toughest challenges. NCDD serves as a gathering place, a resource clearinghouse, a news source, and a facilitative leader for this extraordinary community. [More about who we are and what we do.](http://www.ncdd.org)



COMMUNITY NEWS

NCDD's blog is your go-to source for news about D&D trends and strategies, cutting-edge programs, funding and job opportunities, and more.

The latest:

- [Local Democracy Innovation From Around the Globe](#)
- [Acquaintances Open \(1st April\)](#)
- [Community Dialogue: From Dialogue to Action](#)
- [Engagement: Progress](#)
- [The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation](#)

Don't Miss:



RESOURCE CENTER

Access to nearly 3,000 resources: dialogue guides, D&D methods, video case studies, evaluation tools, articles, books, programs and more.

Most recently added:

- [Building Trust in a Polarized World](#)
- [Community Dialogue: From Dialogue to Action](#)
- [Engagement: Progress](#)
- [The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation](#)
- [Local Democracy Innovation From Around the Globe](#)
- [Acquaintances Open \(1st April\)](#)
- [Community Dialogue: From Dialogue to Action](#)
- [Engagement: Progress](#)
- [The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation](#)



NCDD NETWORK

Our 2,000+ members are doing extraordinary work across the globe. Learn how to join them, connect with them, and learn from them.

Participate!

- Learn about how and why to join the Coalition. We'd love to have you!
- Use our [resources map](#) to find NCDDers near you.
- Share your success stories with the whole field via our [Dialogue & Deliberation Blog](#).
- Subscribe to over a dozen listservs and newsletters, including our popular NCDD Discussion Listserv.

7th april, Ms **Sandy Heierbacher** wrote, (excerpts)

"Hi, everybody! Just sending out a quick update, mainly so you don't miss out on this month's free online events. This month, the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD) is running two online events that you're welcome to participate in, even if you're not an NCDD member:

— Tomorrow's "Tech Tuesday" on Loomio, happening from 4-5pm Eastern (1-2pm Pacific) on April 7th.

— Our April "Confab Call" on Thurs, April 23rd will be a special one, as we'll be talking with NCDD Member Pete Peterson about his recent experience running for CA Secretary of State, and what he learned from running for office on a "civic engagement" platform.

Prof. **Ted Becker**'s DDD activities continue, as always, on a global scale.

Excerpts:

TAN+IN

Masthead: Who We Are...

Editor-in-Chief



Ted Becker
becker1@auburn.edu
(Professor of Political Science; Auburn University, AL)

Assistant Editor and Webmaster



Jody Bronaugh
jbrnau@mindspring.com



National Correspondents



Auli Keskinen, Finland and European Union
auli.keskinen@ry.fi
Director of Research and Development, Ministry of the Environment



Elípe Montargil, Portugal
jimmo@lis.ulsiada.pt
Ciberfaces



Tomas Ohlin, Sweden
tomaso@rics.se
Formerly of Ministry of Public Administration; Stockholm, now a consultant on teledemocracy



Dick Ryan, New Zealand
dksryan@xero.co.nz
Prince of Whales Trust, Kerikeri



Song Muk Won, Korea
simon@cyberparty.or.kr
Executive Director, Cyberparty of Korea



Nora Fermania, Ph.D. 2+
I Help Clients Develop Communication ...
Skype kontakt 1



Duane Elgin 2+
Author, speaker, educator, media activi...
Skype kontakt 1



Marcelo Fallows 2+
Analista TI at Dataprev and MBA Projec...
Skype kontakt 1



John Turley 2+
Principal, Turley Mediation Group
Skype kontakt 1



Phil Nauer 2+
Attorney/Principal at NauerLaw
Skype kontakt 1



Scott Aikens 2+
Vice President, Leasing at Robert Aike...
Skype kontakt 1



Michael Weikner, Ph.D. 2+
Founder at Sify - Hit me up for beta ac...
Skype kontakt 1



Lars Hasselblad Torres 2+
Director, Office of the Creative Econom...
Skype kontakt 1



Gabriel Shirley 2+
Global Talent Manager and Technologist
Skype kontakt 1



Philip Rooms 2+
Management Consultant
Skype kontakt 1

Ted Becker
Professor at Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama, USA - Volunteer/Boarding

His work focuses on the development of a new model of community engagement and the role of the university in the 21st century.

Founding Editor in Chief
Journal of Public Deliberation
August 2004 - June 2010 (6 years 4 months)

Coordinator
Co-founder, Community Mediation Service, University of Hawaii
1979 - 1981 (2 years 4 months) Hawaii

The first university-based community mediation service in the USA.

Project
The Last, Lost Empire (2d edition) National Social Science Press (2010)
The first digital book on America's role in the global political economy

Kompensier
Franchise kompensier

Conflict Resolution
Higher Education
Political Science
University Teaching
Teaching
Research
Student Development

Andreas son kanais interessier dig

Utbildning VVS-entreprenör
Skickat betyg av skolkraft inom
VVS Skol VVS-entreprenör 2 år
senast 1/5

ConfabTalkers - 4 dagar!
Vi erbjuder små grupper med
intressanta föreläsare - start 23
april

Hur du riktar förslag
sändt till Sales Analytics
Veckan 11 maj

Anders har även beaktat

Niklaus Jean-Louis, MPA
Professor at Hodges University
Naples FL

Michael Wessell
Adjunct Faculty, Department of
Conflict Analysis and Dispute
Resolution, Salisbury University

Dana Melzer
University of Kansas Hill Interventional
Center & Veterans Services PC

Constance Hernandez
Charles Barkley Endowed Professor
at Auburn University

Christine Schwarz
Small Business Owner at Bank of
America

Center - by Elykyl
Autism/Asperger

Dr. Arpan Mehta
Post Doctoral Research Fellow at
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Christine Schwarz
Executive Recruitment / Client
Relationship Management / Project
Management at Saxon Search
Saxonia

Dr. A. Chandra-Rajan (aka)
Web Editor at A4-ug Rajagopal
Communications

Robert (Bud) Synhorst
Executive Director of the Nebraska
Regulation Party

Professor emeritus Ted

Joan Weiss
PROFESSOR at Auburn University
Skicka kontakt

GERMANY

mdmagazin – Zeitschrift für direkte Demokratie, 2.2015

Contents

EUROPA

TRANSPARENZ AUF RATEN

BUNDESLÄNDER

KONSULTATIVE VOLKSBEFRAGUNGEN – DER NEUE TREND

WILL HAMBURG RUNTER VOM SIEGERTREPPCHEN

LÄNDERTELEGRAMM

REFORMEN, REFORMEN!

INTERNATIONAL

BARBARA PRAMMERS VERMÄCHTNIS – DIE REFORMDEBATTE IN ÖSTERREICH
SCHEITERT DER ARABISCHE FRÜHLING?

BUNDESWEITE VOLKSENTSCHEIDE

PEDIGAS PAROLEN

DEMOKRATIE IN DER DEFENSIVE?

OMNIBUS FÜR DIREKTE DEMOKRATIE

DEMOKRATIE UND DIREKTE DEMOKRATIE

REZENSION

WIE DIE QUALITÄT VON BÜRGERBETEILIGUNG SICHERN?

KURZ NOTIERT

DEMOKRATIENACHRICHTEN AUS EUROPA UND DER WELT

LESERBRIEFE

ZWEI ANTWORTEN AUF "DEMOKRATIE IST, WENN MAN TROTZDEM BLEIBT"

SWEDEN

Recently, Dr. **Bruno Kaufmann**, a Swiss living in Sweden, one of the most prominent DD personalities globally, editor in chief of **People2Power**, Co-President of **Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy** and collaborating with several other DD

institutions, both in Sweden and in Europe, has participated in the publication of two important publicity materials. See below:

المؤتمر العالمي للديمقراطية الحديثة المباشرة
اللامركزية من خلال المشاركة

GLOBAL FORUM ON MODERN DIRECT DEMOCRACY
Decentralization by participation

FORUM MONDIAL SUR LA DÉMOCRATIE DIRECTE MODERNE
Décentralisation par la participation

جامعة تونس / المعهد الوطني للعلوم الفلاحية بتونس
من 14 الى 17 ماي 2015

Université de Carthage / Institut National Agronomique de Tunisie
14-17 Mai 2015

2015globalforum.com
swissinfo.ch/directdemocracy
people2power.info

FOCUS | GIZ | ECCAS | | | | | | | | | | | |



INTERNATIONAL

9 march, Mr. **Roger Kotila**, via The Community of World Citizens (worldcit@googlegroups.com), wrote:

2Dear friends and fellow world citizens, **Reader Supported News** has published my latest article "Justice Denied, Above the Law: Netanyahu and Other Heads of State" <http://readersupportednews.org/pm-section/256-justice/28913-justice-denied-above-the-law-netanyahu-and-other-heads-of-state>

Best regards,

Roger Kotila

Editor, *Earth Federation News & Views* www.earthfederation.info

7 may, letter sent by Uniquet8 to e2d-International (excerpt):

"Your site at <http://www.e2d-international.org> has been updated automatically to WordPress 3.7.8.

For more on version 3.7.8. see the About WordPress screen:

<http://www.e2d-international.org/wp-admin/about.php>"

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



DIRECT DEMOCRATIC EURO-VISION NEWSLETTER

Vol. 17 (No.2)

June 2015

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

