



DIRECT DEMOCRATIC EURO-VISION NEWSLETTER

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WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER DIRECTCRACY

Rule by Parties or Rule by the People?

It should be evident to all unprejudiced observers that contemporary party based political systems are undergoing a crisis. The original, classical political parties emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in national societies very different from those we live in now. The social basis was formed by a few main citizen categories – workers, town dwellers, entrepreneurs, peasants – and the most important issue was distribution of wealth inside individual countries and other communities. Means of communication were severely limited, which fact enabled the power holders to subject large masses to constant brain washing leading to wars and other catastrophes. In our time, all this is completely different. The most important issue is devastation of environment, exhaustion of natural resources, terrorism, and mass migration. To solve these problems, political parties are not an adequate instrument. Instead of, or side by side with, the classical left-right pattern, spasmodic efforts are made to found new parties – *Syriza* in Greece, *Podemos* in Spain, *Sverigedemokraterna* in Sweden, *Ano* (Yes) in Czech Republic etc. All this leads nowhere. In the long run, instead of the attempts constantly made by party bosses to justify their *raison-d'être*, sooner or later, parties will be discarded and replaced by models of semi-direct democracy, better suited to organize modern societies. If only before that, our civilization will not be destroyed by the megacriminals dominating this world today

Fortunately, a growing number of people, political theorists and activists as well as grassroots citizens, begin to realize that rule by parties is not democracy. In ancient Greece, the cradle of democracy, no parties existed. Rule by parties is a transitory stage between open dictatorships, feudal or other, and genuine democracy of the future. This aspect of modern political systems began to be systematically discussed in 1998, at an international conference held in Pribram under the chairmanship of Prof. **Ted Becker**, a leading personality of the emerging global DDD movement, focusing not only on referenda, but also on citizen deliberation. Recently, Prof. Becker has consented to chair a new international conference to be held in Prag next year, named *Dawn of 21st Century Democracy*. Good news! Everybody will be welcome to attend, including the public.

SWEDISH PARLIAMENT

A Mockery of Democracy!
Mr/Mrs Speaker



Every day on Swedish television, a bizarre spectacle takes place: Speeches delivered by individual MPs concerning issues of every description. Nothing strange about that, obviously, that's what Parliament is for. The strange aspect is the fact that the MPs begin their speeches by addressing the Speaker chairing the session. Not the citizens by whom the MPs were elected, but another member of the elected oligarchy. To participate in the decision-making process, only party bosses are invited, not grassroots citizens. Such citizens are doomed to remain spectators until the next election four years later. A strange form of "democracy"!

INTERNATIONAL USA

A Vision

Israel: The 51st State

**Traditional American Exceptionalism
in the Future Multi-Polar World**



By Ted Becker and Brian Polkinghorn

The Authors



Ted Becker (B.A., J.D., Rutgers; M.A. University of Maryland; Ph.D., Northwestern University.) Becker is the author of 14 books in the fields of Law and Politics, American Government, Global Geo-Politics, and Conflict Resolution. He is the former chairman of the Department of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i and also at Auburn University. He has also been the Distinguished Visiting Professor at California State at Los Angeles and Victoria University of Wellington (NZ), as well as The Walter Meyer Professor of Law at NYU School of Law and the Alma Holladay Professor of Civic and Community

Engagement at Auburn University where he presently teaches (2015-16). Dr. Becker is also a professional mediator who was co-founder of the first university based community mediator center in Hawai'i. He also was the Executive Coordinator of Honolulu Neighborhood Mediation Network for the City and County of Honolulu and was Vice President of the Asia-Pacific Organization of Mediators (APOM), of which he was a co-founder.



Brian Polkinghorn (B.A., University of Maryland; M.A., George Mason University; Ph.D., Syracuse University). The author of a book and many articles on conflict resolution, Dr. Polkinghorn is a Distinguished Professor and Program Director in the Department of Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution and the Executive Director of the Bosserman Center for Conflict Resolution at Salisbury University in the University of Maryland system. In 2009-10, he was the Senior American Fulbright Scholar to Israel, at the Evens Center at Tel Aviv University helping launch the M.A. Degree in Conflict Resolution and Mediation there, where he continues to teach regularly. He worked successfully as a mediator for many years in that region with Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian scientists, scholars and policy makers to help resolve major water rights issues. Dr. Polkinghorn has also helped establish a major conflict resolution program in Costa Rica and was a third party neutral in resolving the political disputes between the Maoists and the traditional royalist establishment in Nepal. Currently, in 2015-16, he is the Fulbright Ambassador to Israel.

23 February, Ms. **Sandy Heierbacher** sent round the following mail (abbreviated):

"I'm so excited to officially share the big news that NCDD is coming to Boston for our national conference this year!! I just posted a save-the-date announcement on our blog www.ncdd.org/20054 and encourage all of you to share it widely. Plus be sure to mark your calendars!

NCDD's biennial national conferences are major learning and networking events for our field. Building on a 14-year legacy of popular, well-loved events, NCDD 2016 will be our 7th National Conference and just the latest of many events, programs and gatherings that NCDD has hosted since we formed in 2002.

Sandy Heierbacher, Director, National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation
sandy@ncdd.org

CITIZENS' INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM I&R
campaign for direct democracy in Britain

APPEAL TO PEOPLE IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE
FOR ACTION IN AND COMMITMENT TO THE MOVEMENT FOR DIRECT
DEMOCRACY

OUR FIRST MAJOR GOAL

Act of Parliament to enable the introduction and effective operation of citizen-led direct democracy across Britain and N. Ireland at all levels of government. With the "tools" of direct democracy we can begin to build community and to regain supervision of our public affairs, guiding and correcting the political parties, councils and parliaments, when need be.

INVITATION

This reform of our constitution and democracy, which would benefit many, demands a strong movement of people and society. Please look at our plan (Strategies ...) sketched below in the colour spectrum and consider how you might be able to contribute.

Working title of the proposed law:

THE DIRECT DEMOCRACY ACT
2016/17/18

Strategies, locations, foreseen actors for the
Direct Democracy GB campaign are
sketched below. Where can you fit in? See
Contact below.

GRASS ROOTS AND COLLECTIVE
ACTIVISM

Space/spheres: local/ country-wide/ **focus: parliamentary**
constituencies/ international *Actors:* citizens/ members in
organisations, unions, NGOs/ staff in public services/ students/
academics. **THIS MEANS YOU :-)** and me. We invite co-operation
and also if you wish to set up a new direct democracy initiative,
project, campaign or action group then please go ahead let us know
how you fare.

approach, discuss with
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Spheres: Mainly constituency-based organising and contact-seeking. Lobbying via acquaintance, professional or business contact etc.
Actors: Mainly MPs' own potential voters, constituents and supporters.

contact, persuade, cajole
CANDIDATES FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Sphere: Mainly parliamentary constituencies during run-up to elections. *Actors:* As above. Request candidates to promise support (if elected) for the Direct Democracy Bill. Invite them to sign our "pledge" (ask us for detail).

discuss, inform
LOCAL COUNCILLORS

Tactic: Suggest that local councils can introduce methods of direct democracy. They could publicly announce readiness to accept citizens' proposals e.g. policy or planning, which if supported by many residents' endorsement could trigger a referendum. Councils can agree in advance to abide by the people's ballot decision.

question
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS

During debates about the Localism Bill these organisations outed themselves as bastions of opposition to local direct democracy.
Tactic: Write to ask why they opposed the citizens' referendum and

publish their reply. Try reasoned argument ;-)

call to action
TRADE UNIONS

Members of trade unions and officials are requested to promote a union policy favouring the introduction of direct democracy for local and national government. We are keen to discuss if trade unions could formally adopt a DD proposal. Reform to our system of democracy is a matter of state constitution and so may not fall under any legal ban on union political activity.

seek co-operation, discourse, support
CAMPAIGNS, COMMUNITIES, NGOs, RELIGION-BASED GROUPS, MEDIA PROJECTS

We ask groups and organisations to include direct democracy among their reform demands and to make own initiatives such as press releases, meetings which thematise DD, videos, broadcasts, internet actions and other forms of presentation and promotion.

Political rights of all citizens is an issue of higher priority than territorial matters and international treaties

Why for the UK do we NOT have a charter of rights and a Constitution of state, which are clearly defined, accessible, known to all citizens, understandable and well understood?

1. The Scottish Independence Bill: a consultation on an interim constitution for Scotland
The Scottish Government, Edinburgh 2014 ISBN: 978-1-78412-545-5

Information from INIREF – petition sent round by Mr. **Jason Robert Leonard**

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/119077/sponsors/FmNmVbkOXh8uEvjWxk8>

"My petition:

Require MP's votes be put to constituents and enforce the tabulated result.

In our technological world it is inexcusable that we accept representational democracy. We the people mustn't wait 5 years to effect change. Pass a law to make MP's become system administrators, freeing them from the spectre of self serving private influence and empowering the British people.

Certainly evidence of functioning direct democracy exists the world over. Most recently a study in Spain "DIRECT DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNMENT SIZE: EVIDENCE FROM SPAIN" indicates that direct democracy reduces the cost and size of government and better aligns policy with the preferences of the median voter. British Governance is the gold standard worldwide and is arguably one of the greatest exports. It is only right and natural that we be the first to adopt direct democracy."

On 28 January 2016, Ms **Klina Jordan** wrote to Dr. **Michael Macpherson**, INIREF:

"I have received details about your project from one of our members, Tom Pratt. I am a huge fan of direct democracy, or more particularly, liquid democracy. Our campaign is purely focused on getting PR in the House of Commons by 2021 – we see this as the most important next step for democracy in the UK but I fully support the introduction of more direct democracy too.

MakeVotesMatter.co.uk

Dr. **M. Macpherson** replied (excerpt): "Personally, I support your campaign aim "focused on getting PR in the House of Commons by 2021". Briefly I will argue that your campaign should in parallel strive to introduce citizen-led direct democracy (odd) as proposed by our Campaign, presented at www.iniref.org

For information:

May 2013: An article sent round by **Arjen Nijeboer** (excerpt): "**Liquid Democracy versus Direct Democracy through Initiative and Referendum: Which is Best?**

Liquid democracy (LD) has been adopted as the basic model of democracy of, among others, many Pirate Parties. It is supposed to be a practicable alternative to both representative (RD) and direct democracy (DD). But is this really the case? I believe this view is based on a misunderstanding of how modern direct democracy systems (with the main example of Switzerland) actually work. In this article, I argue that the attractive features of LD are already incorporated in modern DD systems in the form of initiative and referendum (I&R) as it functions today in e.g. Switzerland. At the same time, LD has

some clear weaknesses that make it both impracticable and undesirable. DD through initiative and referendum, not LD, is the way forward." (For more detailed information, please, contact Mr. **Arjen Nijeboer**.)

Czech Republic

Mgr. **Miluš Kotišová** plans to write an extremely sophisticated philosophical book on the substance of democracy. Using an impressive amount of materials, for the time being, she has written an essay (in Czech) called

A New Democratic Deal: Politics as a Public Cognitive Space

"A philosophico-pedagogical attempt at a "de-economization" of money, at its transformation into a methodically more accurate linguistic system, and, using this new language, an attempt at a revival of the substance of democracy."

The basic thesis put forward in Mgr. Kotisová's work is **MONEY IS A LANGUAGE**. One of the philosophers quoted to illustrate this conception is Prof. **Josef Šmajs**, professor of philosophy at the University of Brno, the second principal University of Czech Republic. His main concern is ecology, especially the deteriorating environment, menacing the survival of mankind. It is this concern which induced him to join the informal group of Czech activists promoting the idea of *Direct Democracy*.

A quotation from his article **Shall we overcome the conflict between Culture and Nature?** (Translated from Czech):

"Long ago, we lost our home in tops of Trees; at present we are threatened by the Earth, wounded by Culture

We are faced by an increasing number of proofs that in the long run, our time's culture, hostile to nature, is unsustainable. Neither its orientation, extent, nor structure is compatible with the Earth; it damages humans, devastates the Earth and threatens Man, its creator, by a premature extinction.

If I am to only focus on the problem of rational understanding of the conflict between Culture and Nature, I see a hope in the growth of sensibility of one part of humankind vis-à-vis the negative consequences of the predatory cultural expansion.

Today, we need to survive on a warming planet Earth. Therefore, a painful self-preserving upheaval lies ahead, both in human thinking and in the adaptive strategy of our biological species."

It is this change of paradigm, unavoidable if mankind shall survive, which also makes unavoidable a transition from party- and conflict-based political systems to cooperative, inclusive ones, based on the insight that long-term common interests of the whole society are more important than short-term group-egoistic interests of party elites, fomenting conflicts on which parasitic elites thrive.

JP

Germany

mdmagazin, Zeitschrift für Direkte Demokratie, Ausgabe
1.2016 – www.mehr-demokratie.de

INHALT

FRIEDENSNOBELPREIS FÜR DIE DEMOKRATIE

EUROPA

"Stop TTIP" Schreibt Geschichte

Gut Beraten per Referendum

Keine Lösung: Investitionsgerichtshöfe

BUNDESLÄNDER

Der Südwesten holt auf

Mehr Durchblick!

BUNDESWEITE VOLKSENTSCHEIDE

Der Stiftungsbeirat stellt sich vor

Die Schwerpunkte 2016 der Demokratie-Arbeit

Die Volksabstimmung in Zeiten der Flüchtlingsfrage

OMNIBUS FÜR DIREKTE DEMOKRATIE

Keine Heimat ohne Fremde

EUROPA

EU-Parlament will Bessere EU-Bürgerinitiative

BUNDESLÄNDER

Ländertelegramm

INTERNATIONAL

Zwischen Traum und Trauma

Kurz notiert

20 Jahre Initiative für Mehr Demokratie in Südtirol

LESERBRIEF

Antwort auf "Sind Kapitalismus und Demokratie miteinander vereinbar?"

Über Jahrzehnte hinweg haben die EU und ihre Mitgliedstaaten ein Abwehrdispositiv gegen Flüchtlinge und MigrantInnen aufgebaut. Seit April dieses Jahres scheint alles durcheinander zu gehen – jetzt versucht man zur "europäischen Normalität der Abschottung zurückzukehren."

Gerald Oberansmayr: "EU setzt zwei Drittel des FPÖ-Programms um"

Die EU will das Flüchtlingselement nutzen, um die Flüchtlingsabwehr weiter zu militarisieren. Auf der Strecke bleibt das Grundrecht auf Asyl. Während sich die SPÖ bei der Wienwahl als Anti-Strache inzeniert, hilft SPÖ-Vorsitzender und Bundeskanzler Faymann auf EU-Ebene mit, das Flüchtlingsprogramm der "Freiheitlichen" umzusetzen.

Heiner Busch: Von der "Flüchtlingskrise" zum "Normalzustand"

Über Jahrzehnte hinweg haben die EU und ihre Mitgliedstaaten ein Abwehrdispositiv gegen Flüchtlinge und Migranten aufgebaut. Seit April dieses Jahres scheint alles durcheinander zu gehen – jetzt versucht man zur "europäischen Normalität" der Abschottung zurückzukehren."

Ralf-Uwe Beck und Anne Danner von *Mehr Demokratie*: Die Volksabstimmung in den Zeiten der Flüchtlingsfrage

Die Rufe nach der direkten Demokratie werden lauter – auch von der rechten Seite der Gesellschaft. Pegida und andere neu-rechte Strömungen schreien nach Volksabstimmungen und skandieren dazu "Wir sind das Volk". Was hat das mit Mehr Demokratie zu tun? Gar nichts – zunächst. Auseinandersetzen müssen wir uns dennoch."

Solidar-Werkstatt, Linz: 20 ans d'adhésion de l'Autriche à l'UE – un bilan

Alors que l'Autriche fête le 20ème anniversaire de son adhésion à l'UE, les hommes politiques et les médias s'unissent une fois de plus pour vanter les bénéfices que cette adhésion nous aurait apportés. Pour notre part, nous pensons que, si quelquesuns ont gagné à cette adhésion, celle-ci a toutefois été préjudiciable au plus grand nombre. La situation des employés est devenue plus difficile qu'auparavant et les promesses faites concernant la politique des transports n'ont pas été tenues."

Switzerland

EUROPA-MAGAZIN 2/2015

<http://www.europa-magazin.ch>

edito by **Paul Ruppen** deals with the refugee crisis

Heiner Busch: Von der "Flüchtlingskrise" zum "Normalzustand"

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