

# Dk - DIALOG

This *Bulletin* is for the internal purposes of the *Democratic Club*.

## Introductory word

At the dawn of French revolution, Mirabeau, one of the leading revolutionary leaders of the time, asked a question whether the representatives of the Third Estate should have been considered as **plebs**, or rather as **populus**. Mirabeau did not intend to play a game with words, or start an academic semantic inquiry, but his question had crucial political consequences for the contemporary France and Western society at the beginning of modernity. Plebs means a crowd, an uneducated group of people without any political aim, aspiration, or significance. Plebs should be led, directed, or ruled by aristocracy, chiefs, or some kind of self-appointed elite. This is not the case of **populus**. **Populus** would present a modern political nation, a basis for modern liberal democracy. The modern Western civilization has been built, cultivated and saved by **populus**, not by plebs. However, in the past decades some Western political leaders or media have started to overlook or marginalize the **populus** as the foundation of the vital democratic life. Some of them even have tried to reduce the **populus** back to plebs and to deprive it of its political legitimacy. The result was obvious – the new political movements have emerged to protect the **populus** from the arrogance and incompetence of elites which lost the understanding of the basic principles and historical roots of democracy. The outcomes of the democratic elections or referendums in some Western countries provide a good testimony of the above mentioned struggle for the face of the democracy of the twenty first century. What we need is a new consensus, or a creation of a common political language of elites and **populus** to regenerate the legitimacy and credibility of modern democracy.

*Ivo Budil, December 2016*

## **I - Official Views of the *Democratic Club***

### **The Democratic Club Position No. 62**

#### **On the appearance of Miloš Zeman on Chinese TV**

Before the visit of Chinese President in the Czech Republic, M. Zeman expressed himself on television of the PRC in the sense that the Czech Republic will not act anymore under pressure from the USA and the EU and it will defend its national interests. The Democratic Club considers that the Czech Republic never acted under such pressure. It acted in the spirit of the government's conception, which considers membership in NATO and in the EU as the basis of our security. We consider Miloš Zeman's words to be a statement that is inconsistent with the government's foreign policy, which we fully support. We welcome cooperation with all countries and thus also with China, on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and respect for all existing agreements and obligations.

*Prague, April 12, 2016*

### **The Democratic Club Position No. 63**

#### **On the Question of the Referendum Laws**

In the near future, the agenda of the Chamber of Deputies would bring the Law on General Referendum, according to which, upon request of a certain number of citizens, a referendum on a selected issue should be called, whose outcome would be binding for the competent authorities. Some of the proposals set out the range of issues on which a referendum cannot be held, others require the possibility to vote without restrictions on the topics.

The Democratic Club considers that direct democracy which is realized in the form of a referendum, does not represent the improvement of the quality of democracy in comparison with representative democracy or a better implementation of the will of the people, namely for the following reasons:

1. In a referendum is almost absent any possibility of a qualified assessment of the case, which occurs when it is dealt with by discussion within representative bodies. The result can largely be decided by emotions.
2. The result of the referendum is largely decided by the formulation of the question, which in some cases can act suggestively.
3. A referendum allows only vote for or against, thus precluding the possibility of finding an optimal solution to the problem.
4. Many surveys have confirmed that the referendum voter actually addresses himself to other problems. Negative results are known, caused for example, by a general

aversion to government for completely different reasons than the subject of the referendum. Thus, for example, deeper EU integration was made impossible by referendums on the constitution, which has a negative impact on the Union's response capacity.

For these reasons, we are asking MPs not to accept the law on general referendum in any form, and also not to accept through a special law any referendum on matters that are not generally understood and for which there is little understanding of the consequences of accepting or refusing the issue in general public. We believe that the possibilities for the application of the referendum are mainly for practical problems on a local or regional level.

*Prague, June 16, 2016*

**Dear Prime Minister,**

In recent weeks some media have brought reports about the increasingly intensive activities of groups of the so-called militia. This is the term for illegal armed formations, which, without the slightest legislative support and credentials, openly proclaim as their task not only to defend our state boundaries against interference from the part of immigrants, but also possibly to intervene in the internal political life and in the Czech foreign policy, if it did not fit their ideological ideas. Rhetoric of the representatives of those groups is gaining more and more extremist nature, and they do not hesitate to threaten with armed appearances in the event that our country within its member obligations would participate in some of military actions of NATO.

We believe that the existence of the so-called militia groups in their present form is inconsistent with our legal order and that their activities could be classified as a preparation for the violent overthrow of the democratic regime in the Czech Republic. Historical experience has instructed us that similar paramilitary organizations often precede the establishment of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. We cannot understand the explicit expression of the anti-NATO position as anything other than a rejection of historical integration into NATO, which is a cornerstone of our security and freedom after the ending of the Cold War.

Given these circumstances, the Democratic Club takes the liberty to raise a question to you whether the government of Czech Republic intends to tolerate these activities and to allow eventual threat to Czech democracy.

We believe that there is still time to intervene against that threat and take steps to adequate legislative definition of the activities of the so-called militia.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Ivo Budil,*

*Democratic Club President*

**From the answer of PhDr. Běla Hejná, Deputy Minister for Management of the Section of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, emphasizing the increased attention to the topic from the part of the Ministry of Interior, Police of the Czech Republic and intelligence services, we extract:**

"From the provisions of the Section 145 of the New Civil Code however follows, that it is forbidden to form associations whose purpose is to deny or restrict personal, political or other rights of persons on the grounds of their nationality, gender, race, origin, political or other views, religion and social status, incite hatred and intolerance, promote violence, or if the purpose of the association is take control over a public body or public administration without statutory authorisation. It is also forbidden to form associations which are armed or have armed forces; as such are not considered associations whose members hold or use guns for sporting or cultural purposes or for the exercise of hunting rights. "

***We published the entire text of the reply to our letter in Czech in Dk-Dialog 1/XXVI.***

## **II - Articles, Dk Activities**

### **Medieval material basis of modern democracy**

We often talk about democracy in such a way that in its present form it is a continuation of the form which existed in antique *polis*, which disappeared in Hellenistic times and of which only a memory was maintained during the Middle Ages and early modern times. We just think that democracy is that what it means in Greek, a government by the people, and that is, if it is not identical with the freedom, it is very close to the freedom, so we frequently confuse the two words. This however creates a mental confusion, which leads us to the situation that the ideal conceals the reality, so we are not well able to distinguish between what is and what should be. However, since thinking is the basis for action, and *vice versa*, it prevents us greatly to act if we mean by that rational, i.e. reasonable and judicious conduct.

We must be aware that freedom is an individual value, because it relates to action: a man is free when he can pursue his goals according to his scale of values. Only then can we distinguish between negative and positive liberty, i.e. on the one hand not to be dominated, on the other hand to dominate and he must always know that it firstly concerns himself (to have self-control), and only then to dominate - and now comes the catch - either others or with the others. Democracy is finally the form of the governing (either others or with the others), and it is not a value in

itself. It is an indifferent matter according to St. Augustine - and such matters are good or bad according to both the objectives and the means used, we cannot say that the end justifies the means, and it is necessary to look with suspicion on the idea that by an active creation of the order an individual man or even entire society can be changed for the better. The order is formed rather spontaneously by encounters of individuals and their synergies, the organizational forms of democracy should therefore maintain and protect it rather than actively create it.

Democracy as a form of organization is already understood by Aristotle. Democracy is for him a good form, because at the same level, but against it, can be found ochlocracy: rule of the people – rule of the mob. He also recognizes other forms of polarities: aristocracy – oligarchy or monarchy - tyranny. Today, however, we usually do not distinguish between those polarities (populism – i.e. ochlocracy in Aristotle's definition - is understood as a part of democratic politics), so we can clearly see that democracy (and it thus includes ochlocracy) can lead to both good and evil. That was understood by Aristotle, thematised by Tocqueville and pointed out by Kuehnelt-Leddihn, according to some the present form of democracy actually leads to the loss of perspectives of Western society.

Democracy, therefore, since it is merely a form, must have content, the material basis. Contemporary democracy is usually accompanied by an attribute of liberal democracy, but this attribute is of American origin, i.e. with the American sense of the word liberalism: in continental Europe, where we live, the same is called socialism, so the people thoughtlessly repeat the collocation liberal democracy, but this in reality means social democracy. And they say that this social democracy is apparently losing perspective. It is therefore desirable to get rid of unnecessary pleonasm and just talk about democracy.

The essence, material basis of democracy (as well as of any other form of good government in the Aristotelian sense) is freedom, because it is the destiny of man in our understanding, whether we take it metaphysically or theologically. Basis or essence of democracy is therefore liberal (libertarian in the American expression). This means that in some fundamental sense both individual and collective liberty must exist so we may talk about freedom in the social sense, and only then we can contemplate the realization of political forms, in our case democracy. In antique *polis*, freedom in this social sense did not exist (as reflected in the official state cults), only individual freedom at the metaphysical level existed. Civil liberty in a practical sense, therefore, was only an illusion (as already Adam Ferguson and

Benjamin Constant knew) and did not remain for long. Material foundations for European democracy (and civil liberty does not exist elsewhere than in Western civilization, based on European heritage) were created in the Middle Ages. Czech lands played in it a part which was not insignificant, but that part disappeared or was exhausted in the early modern period and until today we are not able to rediscover even its shadow. The worst thing is that historians almost do not deal with this theme, so I can present here only some partial prolegomena concerning these sub-areas:

1. Iura Conradi (Conrad II Otto Codex) and the institution of property
2. Chronicle of Dalimil and the institution of the customary law
3. Kuneš of Třebovle and the idea of equal rights
4. Jan of Přeborn and the idea of freedom of contract
5. Viktorin Kornel of Všehrdu and non-legislative concept of law

The liberal conception of social life is based on four values as basic pillars: individual rights, private property, free market, the rule of law. Economists (Murray Newton Rothbard, Alejandro Chafuen, Jesús Huerta de Soto etc.) and historians (Oscar Nuccio, Richard Pipes, Thomas Woods Jr. et al.) conclude that solely and only in societies where these values are socialized and institutionalized, can people hope for true equality before the law and material enhancement, i.e. in raising of living standards, and therefore also in the fact that they will rule together and not against each other. So in such societies something cannot be gained for nothing, there is an obvious relation between performance and reward on the one hand, and between decision and responsibility on the other hand. Jesús Huerta de Soto argues, however, that today's interventionist (in his diction socialist) society is immoral, because there are too many people who are involved in decision-making without having the burden of responsibility and in particular of the costs of bad decisions, although they claim the reward for correct decisions, by those people he - oddly enough? – does not mean the politicians, but voters. And others (like Petr Bláha) point out that this democratic evolution of Western civilization brings man to the brink of exhaustion of perspectives. We should think about this.

*Zdeněk Uhlíř, January 2013*

### **The End of Liberal Success and Limits of Direct Democracy?**

Narrow adoption of the initiative "Against mass immigration" in Switzerland triggered a wave of reaction in all Europe. Its aim is in fact a restriction of freedom of movement of persons who represent the basis of European integration. Although

Switzerland is not an EU member, it so far had access to the EU single market due to the so-called *bilateral agreements*, which are now endangered. Has Switzerland become a victim of its own economic success? Or did politicians fail to explain the workings of migration? And what are the consequences of the decision for Switzerland?

**Difficult relations with the EU.** Switzerland has dealt with its relationship to the integration of Europe for a very long time. In 1960 it was one of the seven founding members of the EFTA (European Free Trade Association). In the course of time, almost all the members joined the mainstream of Europe integration. Leaving only four countries that in the early 90s decided to join at least the EEC (European Economic Community). Among them was also Switzerland, whose negotiations were however stopped by very narrow referendum (50.3% vs. 49.7%) in 1992. The government was thus forced to seek other solution, which turned into *bilateral agreements*. Thanks to them, Switzerland, unlike the members of the EEC, does not accept automatically EU legislation, but it is decided upon it in the *bilateral commissions* in Switzerland and the EU (not Switzerland and all EU members). De facto, however, Switzerland is a member of EEC, which contributes to the budget also of the new member states, including the Czech Republic. Bilateral agreements were confirmed in referendums on the introduction of the Schengen area in 2005 (55% vs. 45%) and enlargement by Bulgaria and Romania in 2009 (59.6% vs. 40.4% against it).

Part of bilateral agreements was also the so-called *Guillotine clause*, when termination of one agreement invalidates all bilateral agreements. The success of the referendum has bound the government (which was, in its recommendation against acceptance) to introduce quotas for movement of persons. This would mean a breach of the agreement on the free movement of persons and therefore termination of all bilateral agreements as such. The government has to convert the will of the people into an Act in a three-year period. It is exactly the form of this legislation which the EU is waiting for, according to which it will then react.

Shortly after the approval, Switzerland began to deal with alternatives, but gaining exceptions to the restrictions on the movement of people along the lines of tiny Liechtenstein is unreal – as well as setting quotas so high that it would not de facto limit movement of people.

**Pressures and dependencies.** A quarter of the population of Switzerland are foreigners. A country with half the area of the Czech Republic is formed in 60% by the Alps forcing eight million inhabitants to live quite concentrated. Moreover, around

230 000 employees arrive daily from neighbouring countries. Switzerland is a small open export economy without mineral wealth, dependent on trade and innovations. Thanks to the access to the EU's single market, Switzerland got out of the economic crisis of the 90s. Since 2010 it is the most competitive country of the world<sup>1)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global\\_Competitiveness\\_Report](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Competitiveness_Report)

It also owes this to the ability to attract the best workforce and stay ahead in research. The country is the place of origin of global companies such as *Nestlé*, *Novartis*, *Credit Suisse*, *UBS* and *ABB*, where foreigners make up half of employees (in management the share is higher). Due to the introduction of quotas, the fight for determining the proportion between permits for EU members and third countries will start. Disciplines such as IT (e.g. Google has its European Research headquarters in Zurich) depend on the supply of IT professionals from India, biotech firms on the contrary get experts from the United States. Also the best university on the continent *ETH* in Zurich boasts a high proportion of foreign students. Even local branches such as health, education, or construction, could not function without foreign workers. The success of Switzerland is therefore conditioned by abundance of qualified workers who are mostly coming from neighbouring culturally close countries. The biggest emotion though is caused by the fifth largest immigrant group from a Muslim Kosovo.

**Divided country.** In the campaign for the adoption of the initiative, arguments emerged about crowded roads and too expensive flats – about infrastructure that cannot cope with a "surge" of immigrants. More realistic is the fear of inhabitants of border regions from cheaper competition from abroad demeaning labour standards (social dumping). However, the results of voting, which was attended by a large number of voters (56%) do not correspond with those arguments. Most immigrants are heading to the cities and paradoxically regions experiencing the largest immigration and rise in prices (around Zurich and Geneva) voted clearly against the initiative. Most fears from "mass immigration" are thus found in the regions in the mountains with a minimum of immigrants and pressures on infrastructure. The initiative thus confirmed division of the country into urban liberal voters and conservative voters from the regions. The vote imitates the results of controversial referendum on minaret ban revealing desire for cultural homogeneity and national sovereignty. The results thus confirm studies on resistance to immigration, which is based more on fear of emotional cultural factors than rational economic arguments. Further, the traditional division between language regions was confirmed. Significantly left-wing and more pro-European western French-speaking part was against the initiative. Whereas

German-speaking part with strong right-wing populist SVP (Swiss People Party) voted for it. Similarly, Italian-speaking Ticino region near the border with Italy possesses its own strong right-wing populist party similar to Italian Northern League. Thanks to lower taxes many Italian companies immigrated there, in which however many workers from Italy commute. Local Swiss citizens are worried primarily about pressure on prices and work conditions (i.e. social dumping). According to the left, politicians should act here earlier and check fair working conditions. Maybe, the 19,526 votes, who decided that initiative, would not be missing.

**Why? Emotions, discourse, and system.** Emotions can be best exploited by populist *SVP*. Their posters are exploiting contrasting colours of black-white-red appealing to emotions. Pictures of completely veiled Muslim women, minarets similar to missiles, white sheep kicking the black one out appeal to the fear of the foreign. According to me, it is strange that the campaign against the initiative took over the aggressive colours of SVP instead of offering positive alternative. Opponents of the initiative have not been able to create a positive emotional association with bilateral agreements on which the current success of Switzerland is based.

Another key element is the discourse on migration in Switzerland. Opinion polls in Europe show that citizens are aware of the need for immigrants, but they want "just some." The whole debate in Switzerland, however, was framed by the title "Against mass immigration ". The term "mass" and the interpretation of freedom of movement, according to which apparently anyone can come and stay in Switzerland – could not be overcome by opponents of the initiative. Few of the supporters of the initiative probably know that according to the rules of free movement of people, although anyone can come from the EU, but only those may remain who within three months are able to find a job or are able to finance their stay to avoid becoming burden on the social system. Moreover, for the new Member States including the Czech Republic until 2014, quotas which restrict the permit apply.

In my opinion, the most disappointing was the role of economic lobby. Thanks to low taxes, legal security, political stability and the quality of education, Switzerland is the seat of a large number of international companies. Private firms, however, try to keep the political neutrality, which did not pay off for them already in 1992. After the failed referendum on entry into the EEC, the internationally active companies were those who had found *EIG Economiesuisse*, essentially supporting the adoption of bilateral agreements. *Economiesuisse* is now blamed for not being seen in discussions about the initiative at all. Its boss had to resign - which is obviously too late.

Another factor that influenced the success of the initiative is the specificity of the political system in Switzerland. According to me, the favoured position is held by the populist SVP, which is the strongest party in parliament. Thanks to the concordant form of democracy, Switzerland has no opposition; the government is due to the so-called magic formula represented by the seven largest parties. I think that exactly the lack of a clear division between government and opposition allows SVP to lead the opposition campaign rhetoric and at the same time not to accept responsibility for its activities. This is because it can always blame it on "bad central and from the people removed" government in Berne. The icing on the cake of populism is an ideological paradox of SVP. Party that opposes state intervention in the economy and promotes whenever possible the freest market, requires in the referendum the exact opposite - namely limiting the regulation of migration by market and the introduction of quotas determined by the state in which the most able lobbyists succeed.

**The limits of direct democracy?** Narrow results of the initiative renewed questions about the limits of direct democracy among its opponents - that is primarily urban liberal and educated population. Those feel to be outvoted by rural population which at the same time profits in the form of redistribution from their success. (Wealthier cantons contribute to the poorer and also the Swiss agriculture is heavily subsidized.) Another issue is the possibility to limit the effortlessness for starting referendum or initiative - a limit of 100 000 signatures had been introduced at the time when the number of population was significantly lower. Instruments of direct democracy are used too often, which is both very expensive and frequently only serves political entities to make themselves visible. The Swiss also vote very often because of the amount of local, cantonal and federal referendums. Voter turnout in European comparison is relatively low, and gives evidence about possible overburdening of voters.

In my opinion, the bigger problem is the overburdening of voters for reasons of complexity of the issues. To understand the causes and consequences of the current globalized world is for most population extremely difficult. Generations were used to that when they buy a BMW, it will be from Germany. At present, parts of it are from all Europe or from the entire world. Frequently even the final assembly takes place in another country than the one corresponding with the origin of the company. Companies maintain the image of *Made in Germany* that people know - but actually this does not completely correspond with the reality of the functioning of the contemporary world. How to explain to the voters the intangible, abstract and with

difficulty understandable problems? (This question is dealt in German in Programme *Sternstunde* at *SRF* with two of my teachers: see *Demokratie gegen Globalisierung - Ist die noch Schweiz regierbar?*)

I think that the outcome of the vote in Switzerland highlights the problems common for the rich democratic societies (among which I include the Czech Republic) - that will produce more and more conflicts and the interest of political scientists.

*Peter Neugebauer, March 2014*

### Sources

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Graphs and maps to this paper are available on the Web: [www.neup.eu/mei](http://www.neup.eu/mei)

### Two Blind Alleys for Democracy

Alleys which should be avoided are of course intended here. That of course is not easy. Even more difficult it is to find a way out of it.

*The first* such blind alley lies in the often merely formal conformity with democracy and its individual elements. Although there is no binding definition of democracy, different approaches usually agree that it is a political system, in which fundamental rights and freedoms are exercised, including the rights of citizens to freely elect representatives of their countries or their region, municipality, etc. and also a system in the rule of law exist. Some approaches designate that situation as liberal democracy and in case of significant deficiencies, particularly in the area of The rule of law, call it illiberal democracy. Personally, I consider that unnecessary: translation of the word democracy is government of the people and to govern not only means to write laws, but also to implement them. Therefore, for the realization of democracy it is not enough that freely elected representatives write laws, but it is also necessary that the society act upon them without exceptions. However, shortages also occur often in the sphere of rights and freedoms. Thus, for example, shortcomings in the freedom of

information can degrade elections of representatives to zero. Elections can be manipulated or falsified. Therefore I believe that regimes with serious shortcomings in these areas should not be called democracy at all, not even with that dishonouring attribute. Specific forms of serious deficiencies may, however, exist in great variety, and therefore any attempts to demarcate general border, behind which democracy ends, are undoubtedly doomed to fail, leaving us only the possible effort of achieving consensus in individual cases. According to me, this border was exceeded in post-war Czechoslovakia, where several political subjects agreed that they would govern jointly, and the creation of additional ones would be possible only with their consent (similarly it was like that in Sukarno's Indonesia). In the case of Czechoslovakia it was, however, unified scheme drawn up by Moscow for all the territories conquered by the Red Army.

When the deficiencies are less severe, we do not reject the notion to regard such state as democracy, but one which is threatened to get lost in a blind alley or is already found in it. In the Czech Republic, there is mainly the question of obvious shortcomings in the matter of the rule of law, which encouraged even the President of the Supreme Administrative Court to declare on Czech Radio, that the Czech Republic is not a state of laws (which would, however, be a lack of the most serious kind and would place our country into undemocratic space). There are further our political parties, many of which are actually business bodies. Also, the equality of the vote in different administrative regions is rather problematic, due to their various sizes. But it is not the aim of this paper to carry out a full inventory of such cases. However, those are mostly things that can be eradicated by great effort of the society, insofar as it is not found at the same time in the *second* blind alley, which is the subject of our further interest.

The second one is in its pure form characterized by the situation, in which the rules of democracy are not violated, the state is perfectly that of law, all liberties including elections are flawless, but society is evolving in a direction which is unhealthy and unsustainable. The country consumes more than it creates, does not care about the education of its citizens. The country does not care enough about its defence and the defence of its democratic system and associates with authoritarian and totalitarian countries. It encourages hostility of the population against democratic countries. The law is respected, but diverges from justice.

To put it shortly, we can say that the basic cause of such phenomena is a combination of egoism with ignorance. In the Club, the often repeated assertion that

democracy necessarily ensures the positive development of society, because people do not vote against their own interests, has no universal validity, because the properties, mentioned in the previous sentence, prevent some people from recognizing their real interests. Disaster then begins when this type in the population predominates.

In many countries, including the Czech Republic, it seems that democracy is unable to ensure that the country stops running into debts and eliminates the debt for which it pays interest that would be able to cover for example deficiencies in social policy. But voters are asking money now, the parties wishing to save money are swept from the political scene and debts with interest go on growing. How do voters imagine their future? That perhaps the country joins some raiding expedition led by Putin Bear and he'll reward us by arranging deduction of debts? Surely this could be done.

Also the Arab Spring soon after its birth showed that democracy automatically does not the good. We saw in Egypt that it gave victory to the Islamists, craving after liquidation of Israel and Christians in their country. Fortunately, things have evolved in accordance with the words of L. Stejskal (Neviditelný pes – The Invisible Dog 30. 9. 2014): *Democracy is a wonderful thing, but when it starts sawing off the branch it is standing on, it would be foolish not to stop this.* This truth should be known for example by the supreme command of the Reichswehr at the end of the year 1932.

Without a population in which morality and education prevail, democracy cannot be associated with the good, truth, justice, rationality. Confidence is gained by politicians who harm their country. This is particularly painful in our country where with the obvious approval of the majority a start of gradual destruction of our affiliation to the Atlantic and in the future certainly to the European Community and return to the yoke of the Eurasian despotism is coming. We are extraordinarily predisposed to that thanks to the so-called transfer of the Germans, which, although it is unreasonable, raises fear of the attempts to revise it. Then a reference to German uncles of the presidential candidate can cause his defeat by a person who harms his country. Transfer of the Germans to the Reich was also the transfer of the Czechs to the East. You could say that this is fair punishment, but not for the majority who do not mind. Another disaster is almost complete absence of elites i.e. statesmen who could serve as a model of morality. Elites here were systematically expelled and killed in the last century for more than 50 years (we could talk also about period after Battle of White Mountain) and they are not in good condition even today.

I cannot see any solution, at least in the medium term. It may be only individual. However that has its age limit, which I am overstepping more than doubly.

*Jan Friedlaender, September 2014*

### **Departed Non-democrat**

During those nearly 25 years of my membership in the Club, I was entrusted several times with the task of saying goodbye on the pages of the Dialog to people who had particularly contributed to our democracy. Last time it was Mr. Paumer, the third from the Mašins, as he used to say, and before him the unforgettable Pavel Tigrid. I missed, unfortunately, Václav Havel. Perhaps it was too great a theme for a man returning then from a difficult disease. Too bad, I lost the opportunity to be inserted in the list of decent people created and maintained by a hateful Czech fascist.

This time I am entrusting myself to remember a man who cannot be called a democrat. In recent days, Dr Harry Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's long-time Prime Minister (1959-1990), then Senior Minister during the last 15 years, who still held decisive influence even in this function, died at the age of 91. He also headed for almost 40 years the most powerful political party, the People's Action Party. His government gained legitimacy primarily by its performance. Under his rule, underdeveloped island colony turned into a rich flowering state with GDP per capita at purchasing power parity higher than GDP of Switzerland or of the United States, a state in which corruption is almost non-existent, where numerous nationalities and ethnic groups live in peace and where there is perfect order in the public space. His way of governance, however, had strong democratic deficits. That regards specially the treatment of political opposition and freedom of media. We can thus hardly speak about democratic legitimacy of his government. I cannot, however, consider his proverbial tough laws to maintain public order as a democratic deficit. I do not think that the citizens are, in the name of democracy, obliged to bear that they have to zigzag between chewing gums, cigarette butts and dog excrements, are threatened by cancer from cigarettes of their neighbours or have to see their property destroyed by graffiti vandal gangs.

Lee's departure became an impetus for the exchange of views about the relationship between freedom and prosperity. Lee used to proclaim that full democracy would threaten stability. And he was aware that moving closer to full democracy depends on the state of society, its education and its traditions. I myself wrote some

time ago that in order to achieve good democracy, it needs to be implemented gradually. This was written recently more precisely in Lidové Noviny by Edvard Outrata: primarily there must be the rule of law, the education of the population, and only then full democracy.

History provides a number of examples of extremely negative consequences of a sudden outbreak of full democracy. All you have to do is to point out to the so-called the Great French Revolution or to the majority of the countries where the Arab Spring had occurred. The Czechs were in this case on a good track; they proceeded from unfair elections in the curiae to universal and equal elections in 1907. In 1938, however, this development was broken for 51 years, which could not be without effect on the restored democracy.

During the life of the Prime Minister Lee, many democratic statesmen spoke about him with respect despite all the controversy. If once, how much it is unlikely, Fukuyama's idea of global victory of liberal democracy would become reality, then Singapore of this epoch would be certainly looked upon as a classic example of pre-democratic state form in the last stage prior to its transformation to democracy. Then it would also be possible to modify the title of this article.

*Jan Friedlaender, April 2015*

### **Announcement for Members who want to be (more) active**

Everybody who wants to discuss Democratic Club activities, to bring new opinions and suggestions, let us know please as soon as possible at [dklub@volny.cz](mailto:dklub@volny.cz), preferably by the end of the month, and we can inform you via e-mail on new prepared Positions and other topics and expect your feedback. And, moreover, we'll appreciate your feedback on our website, too.

### **Announcement concerning the Dk-Dialog Distribution**

Everybody who wants to receive the Dk-dialog via e-mail and who doesn't want to receive the printed copy, please inform us at the address [dklub@volny.cz](mailto:dklub@volny.cz). It is possible to read it on the Club web sites and to print it from them, too.

*Redaction*

### **Activities of the Democratic Club**

The Democratic Club has three main activities. We consider the formulation of the official positions aiming to affect political life and public opinion as the first one. These positions are distributed to representatives of political bodies (president, ministries, members of parliament, and other high level officers), sent to mass media

and published in Dk - Dialog for better orientation of members. The regular monthly meeting of members (regularly up to now only in Prague) is the second activity, usually with an opening theme and the discussion concerning also other topics of democratic relevance. We could mention some of them occurring during the last year. Fascism as the Democracy upside down (Stanislav Kubů), Problems of Contemporary Immigration to Europe (Jan Friedlaender, Zdeněk Pavlík, Ondřej Wagner), Czech Republic in the Global Economy (Jan Švejnar), Democracy from the Viewpoint of Social Anthropology (Josef Kandert), Our History and Quality of Democracy (Pavel Žáček), Factors of Democratization in Europe of the 20th Century (Thomas Weiser), Climatic Changes and the Society Development (Ivan Sládek). The publishing of the Dk-Dialog is the third main activity, contemporary three times a year. Its English version is published irregularly. The study of democracy and democratism belongs among other non trivial activities.

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### **Appeal to Members living abroad**

We would be glad if you could acknowledge the receipt of the mail, e.g. by e-mail. We suppose the mail arrives unless it comes back, but we are not sure. Please, announce any change of your address to [dklub@volny.cz](mailto:dklub@volny.cz).

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### **Did you know that...**

...you can see Video Recordings of the 20th Forum 2000 Conference [The Courage to Take Responsibility](http://www.forum2000.cz/en/homepage) held on October 16-19, 2016, in Prague and other Central European Cities, at: <http://www.forum2000.cz/en/homepage>

*Jitka Nováková, November 2016*

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You can meet the Democratic Club actualities on *Facebook* and *Twitter*, too.

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