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REDUCTION OF DEMOCRACY IN THE US: CRUSHING THE COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST PARTIES  By Dick Bennett  402 words

The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (June 16, 2012) reported on the economic crises in Greece with an article and photo, with this caption: “An older supporter of the Greek Communist Party stands with younger women at the main pre-election rally Friday in central Athens.” It’s an electrifying reminder that throughout the rest of the world people really do have a choice of the left. There is a historical left in Greece, the Communist Party, and in other nations of the world, a real Party people can choose to vote for, or not.

Even more widespread are the many Socialist parties throughout the world. There when people say “left,” they refer to living parties and choices. In those nations a true range of choices from right to left invigorate politics. As Bradley Gitz wrote in one of his recent columns: “The ‘left is making a comeback in France. Not just Francois Hollande’s Socialists, but the hard left guys, the French Communist Party (PCF).”

But not in the United States, not any more anyway. A half-century ago the free-market of ideas and the rights of the First Amendment were withdrawn from Communists and Socialists, who were systematically and severely discriminated against and subjected to extraordinary repression by the government, such as physical assaults, denials of freedom of speech and assembly, political deportation and firings, dubious arrests, intense police surveillance, illegal burglaries, wiretaps, and interception of and tampering with mail. Equally restrictive of communist and socialist perspectives was the widespread fear and resulting self-censorship produced by McCarthyism’s repression—by all of the above and fraudulent propaganda, witch hunts, loyalty oaths; until “communist” and “socialist” were internalized by the public as unpatriotic or even treasonous. By the 1960s, belligerent anti-Communism and anti-Socialism had become the US credo.

The result today: there is no “left,” but only degrees of middle to right to extreme right. Officials, mainstream journalists, and most of the public still use the term “left” but in a warped and delusory way: they do not mean left. Rather, they mean left of right and far right, or middle, that is,” liberal.” By “left” Tea Partiers mean everybody left of them. They have allowed safety from imagined enemies to trump democracy. And everybody opposed to a representative form of government that actually represents the true range of social and political possibilities likes it that way.

It’s not a pretty story for a nation whose leaders send youth to wars claiming they are protecting freedom at home.

References:

Tom, dispatch

All power corrupts but some must govern. -- John le Carré

The ritual performance of the legend of democracy in the autumn of 2012 promises the conspicuous consumption of $5.8 billion, enough money, thank God, to prove that our flag is still there. Forbidden the use of words apt to depress a Q Score or disturb a Gallup poll, the candidates stand as product placements meant to be seen instead of heard, their quality to be inferred from the cost of their manufacture. The sponsors of the event, generous to a fault but careful to remain anonymous, dress it up with the bursting in air of star-spangled photo ops, abundant assortments of multiflavored sound bites, and the candidates so well-contrived that they can be played for jokes, presented as game-show contestants, or posed as noble knights-at-arms setting forth on vision quests, enduring the trials by klieg light, until on election night they come to judgment before the throne of cameras by whom and for whom they were produced.

Best of all, at least from the point of view of the commercial oligarchy paying for both the politicians and the press coverage, the issue is never about the why of who owes what to whom, only about the how much and when, or if, the check is in the mail. No loose talk about what is meant by the word democracy or in what ways it refers to the cherished hope of liberty embodied in the history of a courageous people.

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The campaigns don't favor the voters with the gratitude and respect owed to their standing as valuable citizens participant in the making of such a thing as a common good. They stay on message with their parsing of democracy as the ancient Greek name for the American Express card, picturing the great, good American place as a Florida resort hotel wherein all present receive the privileges and comforts owed to their status as valued customers, invited to convert the practice of citizenship into the art of shopping, to select wisely from the campaign advertisements, texting A for Yes, B for No.

The sales pitch bends down to the electorate as if to a crowd of restless children, deems the body politic incapable of generous impulse, selfless motive, or creative thought, delivers the insult with a headwaiter's condescending smile. How then expect the people to trust a government that invests no trust in them? Why the surprise that over the last 30 years the voting public has been giving ever-louder voice to its contempt for any and all politicians, no matter what their color, creed, prior arrest record, or sexual affiliation? The congressional disapproval rating (78% earlier this year) correlates with the
estimates of low attendance among young voters (down 20% from 2008) at the November polls.

Democracy as an ATM

If democracy means anything at all (if it isn't what the late Gore Vidal called "the national nonsense-word"), it is the holding of one's fellow citizens in thoughtful regard, not because they are beautiful or rich or famous, but because they are one's fellow citizens. Republican democracy is a shared work of the imagination among people of myriad talents, interests, voices, and generations that proceeds on the premise that the labor never ends, entails a ceaseless making and remaking of its laws and customs, i.e., a sentient organism as opposed to an ATM, the government an us, not a them.

Contrary to the contemporary view of politics as a rat's nest of paltry swindling, Niccolò Machiavelli, the fifteenth-century courtier and political theorist, rates it as the most worthy of human endeavors when supported by a citizenry possessed of the will to act rather than the wish to be cared for. Without the "affection of peoples for self-government...cities have never increased either in dominion or wealth."

Thomas Paine in the opening chapter of Common Sense finds "the strength of government and the happiness of the governed" in the freedom of the common people to "mutually and naturally support each other." He envisions a bringing together of representatives from every quarter of society -- carpenters and shipwrights as well as lawyers and saloonkeepers -- and his thinking about the mongrel splendors of democracy echoes that of Plato in The Republic: "Like a coat embroidered with every kind of ornament, this city, embroidered with every kind of character, would seem to be the most beautiful."

Published in January 1776, Paine's pamphlet ran through printings of 500,000 copies in a few months and served as the founding document of the American Revolution, its line of reasoning implicit in Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. The wealthy and well-educated gentlemen who gathered 11 years later in Philadelphia to frame the Constitution shared Paine's distrust of monarchy but not his faith in the abilities of the common people, whom they were inclined to look upon as the clear and present danger seen by the delegate Gouverneur Morris as an ignorant rabble and a "riotous mob."

From Aristotle the founders borrowed the theorem that all government, no matter what its name or form, incorporates the means by which the privileged few arrange the distribution of law and property for the less-fortunate many. Recognizing in themselves the sort of people to whom James Madison assigned "the most wisdom to discern, and the most virtue to pursue, the common good of the society," they undertook to draft a constitution that employed an aristocratic means to achieve a democratic end.

Accepting of the fact that whereas a democratic society puts a premium on equality, a capitalist economy does not, the contrivance was designed to nurture both the private and the public good, accommodate the motions of the heart as well as the movement of the market, the institutions of government meant to support the liberties of the people, not the ambitions of the state. By combining the elements of an organism with those of a mechanism, the Constitution offered as warranty for the meeting of its objectives the character of the men charged with its conduct and deportment, i.e., the enlightened tinkering of what both Jefferson and Hamilton conceived as a class of patrician landlords presumably relieved of the necessity to cheat and steal and lie.

Good intentions, like mother's milk, are a perishable commodity. As wealth accumulates, men decay, and sooner or later an aristocracy that once might have aspired to an ideal of wisdom and virtue goes rancid in the sun, becomes an oligarchy distinguished by a character that Aristotle likened to that of "the prosperous fool" -- its members so besotted by their faith in money that "they therefore imagine there is nothing that it cannot buy."

Postponing the Feast of Fools
The making of America's politics over the last 236 years can be said to consist of the attempt to ward off, or at least postpone, the feast of fools. Some historians note that what the framers of the Constitution hoped to establish in 1787 ("a republic," according to Benjamin Franklin, "if you can keep it") didn't survive the War of 1812. Others suggest that the republic was gutted by the spoils system introduced by Andrew Jackson in the 1830s. None of the informed sources doubt that it perished during the prolonged heyday of the late-nineteenth-century Gilded Age.

Mark Twain coined the phrase to represent his further observation that a society consisting of the sum of its vanity and greed is not a society at all but a state of war. In the event that anybody missed Twain's meaning, President Grover Cleveland in 1887 set forth the rules of engagement while explaining his veto of a bill offering financial aid to the poor: "The lesson should be constantly enforced that, though the people support the government, the government should not support the people."

Twenty years later, Arthur T. Hadley, the president of Yale, provided an academic gloss: "The fundamental division of powers in the Constitution of the United States is between voters on the one hand and property owners on the other. The forces of democracy on the one side... and the forces of property on the other side."

In the years between the Civil War and the Great Depression, the forces of democracy pushed forward civil-service reform in the 1880s, the populist rising in the 1890s, the progressive movement in the 1910s, President Teddy Roosevelt's preservation of the nation's wilderness and his harassment of the Wall Street trusts -- but it was the stock-market collapse in 1929 that equipped the strength of the country's democratic convictions with the power of the law. What Paine had meant by the community of common interest found voice and form in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, in the fighting of World War II by a citizen army willing and able to perform what Machiavelli would have recognized as acts of public conscience.

During the middle years of the twentieth century, America at times showed itself deserving of what Albert Camus named as a place "where the single word liberty makes hearts beat faster," the emotion present and accounted for in the passage of the Social Security Act, in the mounting of the anti-Vietnam War and civil rights movements, in the promise of LBJ's Great Society. But that was long ago and in another country, and instead of making hearts beat faster, the word liberty in America's currently reactionary scheme of things slows the pulse and chills the blood.

Ronald Reagan's new Morning in America brought with it in the early 1980s the second coming of a gilded age more swinish than the first, and as the country continues to divide ever more obviously into a nation of the rich and a nation of the poor, the fictions of unity and democratic intent lose their capacity to command belief. If by the time Bill Clinton had settled comfortably into the White House it was no longer possible to pretend that everybody was as equal as everybody else, it was clear that all things bright and beautiful were to be associated with the word private, terminal squalor and toxic waste with the word public.

The shaping of the will of Congress and the choosing of the American president has become a privilege reserved to the country's equestrian classes, a.k.a. the 20% of the population that holds 93% of the wealth, the happy few who run the corporations and the banks, own and operate the news and entertainment media, compose the laws and govern the universities, control the philanthropic foundations, the policy institutes, the casinos, and the sports arenas. Their anxious and spendthrift company bears the mark of oligarchy ridden with the disease diagnosed by the ancient Greeks as pleonexia, the appetite for more of everything -- more McMansions, more defense contracts, more beachfront, more tax subsidy, more prosperous fools. Aristotle mentions a faction of especially reactionary oligarchs in ancient Athens who took a vow of selfishness not unlike the anti-tax pledge administered by Grover Norquist to Republican stalwarts in modern Washington: "I will be an enemy..."
to the people and will devise all the harm against them which I can."

A Government That Sets Itself Above the Law

The hostile intent has been conscientiously sustained over the last 30 years, no matter which party is in control of Congress or the White House, and no matter what the issue immediately at hand -- the environment or the debt, defense spending or campaign-finance reform. The concentrations of wealth and power express their fear and suspicion of the American people with a concerted effort to restrict their liberties, letting fall into disrepair nearly all of the infrastructure -- roads, water systems, schools, power plants, bridges, hospitals -- that provides the country with the foundation of its common enterprise.

The domestic legislative measures accord with the formulation of a national-security state backed by the guarantee of never-ending foreign war that arms the government with police powers more repressive than those available to the agents of the eighteenth-century British crown. The Justice Department reserves the right to tap anybody's phone, open anybody's mail, decide who is, and who is not, an un-American. The various government security agencies now publish 50,000 intelligence reports a year, monitoring the world's Web traffic and sifting the footage from surveillance cameras as numerous as the stars in the Milky Way. President Barack Obama elaborates President George W. Bush's notions of preemptive strike by claiming the further privilege to order the killing of any American citizen overseas who is believed to be a terrorist or a friend of terrorists, to act the part of jury, judge, and executioner whenever and however it suits his exalted fancy.

Troubled op-ed columnists sometimes refer to the embarrassing paradox implicit in the waging of secret and undeclared war under the banners of a free, open, and democratic society. They don't proceed to the further observation that the nation's foreign policy is cut from the same criminal cloth as its domestic economic policy. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the predatory business dealing that engendered the Wall Street collapse in 2008 both enjoyed the full faith and backing of a government that sets itself above the law.

The upper servants of the oligarchy, among them most of the members of Congress and the majority of the news media's talking heads, receive their economic freedoms by way of compensation for the loss of their political liberties. The right to freely purchase in exchange for the right to freely speak. If they wish to hold a public office or command attention as upholders of the truth, they can't afford to fool around with any new, possibly subversive ideas.

Paine had in mind a representative assembly that asked as many questions as possible from as many different sorts of people as possible. The ensuing debate was expected to be loud, forthright, and informative. James Fenimore Cooper seconded the motion in 1838, arguing that the strength of the American democracy rests on the capacity of its citizens to speak and think without cant. "By candor we are not to understand trifling and uncalled-for expositions of truth... but a sentiment that proves the conviction of the necessity of speaking truth, when speaking at all; a contempt for all designing evasions of our real opinions. In all the general concerns, the public has a right to be treated with candor. Without this manly and truly republican quality... the institutions are converted into a stupendous fraud."

Oligarchy prefers trifling evasions to real opinions. The preference accounts for the current absence of honest or intelligible debate on Capitol Hill. The members of Congress embody the characteristics of only one turn of mind -- that of the obliging publicist. They leave it to staff assistants to write the legislation and the speeches, spend 50% of their time soliciting campaign funds. When standing in a hotel ballroom or when seated in a television studio, it is the duty of the tribunes of the people to insist that the drug traffic be stopped, the budget balanced, the schools improved, paradise regained. Off camera, they bootleg the distribution of the nation's wealth to the gentry at whose feet they dance for
coins.

A Media Enabling and Codependent

As with the Congress, so also with the major news media that serve at the pleasure of a commercial oligarchy that pays them, and pays them handsomely, for their pretense of speaking truth to power. On network television, the giving voice to what Cooper would have regarded as real opinions doesn't set up a tasteful lead-in to the advertisements for Pantene Pro-V or the U.S. Marine Corps. The prominent figures in our contemporary Washington press corps regard themselves as government functionaries, enabling and codependent. Their point of view is that of the country's landlords, their practice equivalent to what is known among Wall Street stock market touts as "securitizing the junk."

The time allowed on Face the Nation or Meet the Press facilitates the transmission of sound-bite spin and the swallowing of welcome lies. Explain to us, my general, why the United States must continue the war in Afghanistan, and we will relay the message to the American people in words of two syllables. Instruct us, Mr. Chairman, in the reasons why the oil companies and the banks produce the paper that Congress doesn't read but passes into law, and we will show the reasons to be sound. Do not be frightened by our pretending to be scornful or suspicious. Give us this day our daily bread, and we will hide your stupidity and greed in plain sight, in the rose bushes of inside-the-beltway gossip.

The cable-news networks meanwhile package dissent as tabloid entertainment, a commodity so clearly labeled as pasteurized ideology that it is rendered harmless and threatens nobody with the awful prospect of having to learn something they didn't already know. Comedians on the order of Jon Stewart and Bill Maher respond with jokes offered as consolation prizes for the acceptance of things as they are and the loss of hope in things as they might become. As soporifics, not, God forbid, as incitements to revolution or the setting up of guillotines in Yankee Stadium and the Staples Center.

Barack Obama and Mitt Romney hold each other responsible for stirring up class warfare between the 1% and the 99%; each of them can be counted upon to mourn the passing of America's once-upon-a-time egalitarian state of grace. They deliver the message to fund-raising dinners that charge up to $40,000 for the poached salmon, but the only thing worth noting in the ballroom or the hospitality tent is the absence among the invited bank accounts (prospective donor, showcase celebrity, attending journalist) of anybody intimately acquainted with -- seriously angry about, other than rhetorically interested in -- the fact of being poor.

When intended to draw blood instead of laughs, speaking truth to power doesn't lead to a secure retirement on the beach at Martha's Vineyard. Paine was the most famous political thinker of his day, his books in the late eighteenth century selling more copies than the Bible, but after the Americans had won their War of Independence, his notions of democracy were deemed unsuitable to the work of dividing up the spoils. The proprietors of their newfound estate claimed the privilege of apportioning its freedoms, and they remembered that Paine opposed the holding of slaves and the denial to women of the same sort of rights awarded to men. A man too much given to plain speaking, on too familiar terms with the lower orders of society, and therefore not to be trusted.

His opinions having become both suspect and irrelevant in Philadelphia, Paine sailed in 1787 for Europe, where he was soon charged with seditious treason in Britain (for publishing part two of The Rights of Man), imprisoned and sentenced to death in France (for his opposition to the execution of Louis XVI on the ground that it was an unprincipled act of murder). In 1794, Paine fell from grace as an American patriot as a consequence of his publishing The Age of Reason, the pamphlet in which he ridiculed the authority of an established church and remarked on "the unrelenting vindictiveness with which more than half the Bible is filled." The American congregation found him guilty of the crime of blasphemy, and on his return to America in 1802, he was met at the dock in Baltimore with newspaper headlines damning him as a "loathsome reptile," a "lying, drunken, brutal infidel." When he died in
poverty in 1809, he was buried, as unceremoniously as a dog in a ditch, in unhallowed ground on his
farm in New Rochelle.

Paine's misfortunes speak to the difference between politics as a passing around of handsome platitudes
and politics as a sowing of the bitter seeds of social change. The speaking of truth to power when the
doing so threatens to lend to words the force of deeds is as rare as it is brave. The signers of the
Declaration of Independence accepted the prospect of being hanged in the event that America lost the
war.

Our own contemporary political discourse lacks force and meaning because it is a commodity
engineered, like baby formula and Broadway musicals, to dispose of any and all unwonted risk. The
forces of property occupying both the government and the news media don't rate politics as a serious
enterprise, certainly not as one worth the trouble to suppress.

It is the wisdom of the age -- shared by Democrat and Republican, by forlorn idealist and anxious
realist -- that money rules the world, transcends the boundaries of sovereign states, serves as the light
unto the nations, and waters the tree of liberty. What need of statesmen, much less politicians, when it
isn't really necessary to know their names or remember what they say? The future is a product to be
bought, not a fortune to be told.

Happily, at least for the moment, the society is rich enough to afford the staging of the fiction of
democracy as a means of quieting the suspicions of a potentially riotous mob with the telling of a fairy
tale. The rising cost of the production -- the pointless nominating conventions decorated with 15,000
journalists as backdrop for the 150,000 balloons -- reflects the ever-increasing rarity of the
demonstrable fact. The country is being asked to vote in November for television commercials because
only in the fanciful time zone of a television commercial can the American democracy still be said to
exist.

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Billionaires & Ballot Bandits: How to Steal an Election in 9 Easy Steps
by Greg Palast 2012

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Synopses & Reviews

Publisher Comments:

NOW A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER!

A close presidential election in November could well come down to contested states or even districts--an election decided by vote theft? It could happen this year. Based on Greg Palast and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s investigative reporting for Rolling Stone and BBC television, Billionaires & Ballot Bandits: How to Steal an Election in 9 Easy Steps might be the most important book published this year--one that could save the election. Last week Billionaires & Ballot Bandits debuted on the NYT Bestseller list at #10 in paperback nonfiction.

Billionaires & Ballot Bandits names the filthy-rich sugar-daddies who are super-funding the Super-PACs of both parties--billionaires with nicknames like "The Ice Man," "The Vulture" and, of course, The Brothers Koch. Told with Palast's no-holds-barred, reporter-on-the-beat style, the facts as he lays them out are staggering. What emerges in Billionaires & Ballot Bandits is the never-before-told-story of the epic battle being fought behind the scenes between the old money banking sector that still supports Obama, and the new hedge fund billionaires like Paul Singer who not only support Romney but also are among his key economic advisors. Although it has not been reported, Obama has shown some backbone in standing up to the financial excesses of the men behind Romney. Billionaires & Ballot Bandits exposes the previously unreported details on how operatives plan to use the hundreds of millions in Super-PAC money pouring into this election. We know the money is pouring in, but Palast shows us the convoluted ways the money will be used to suppress your vote.

The story of the billionaires and why they want to buy an election is matched with the nine ways they can steal the election. His story of the sophisticated new trickery will pick up on Palast's giant New York Times bestseller, The Best Democracy Money Can Buy.

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**About the Author**

Bestselling author GREG PALAST's most recent book is Vulture's Picnic. Author of a number of previous bestsellers, including The Best Democracy Money Can Buy, and Armed Madhouse, Greg Palast is currently a Nation Institute Fellow and BBC correspondent. He lives in New York City and Long Island.

**Robert F. Kennedy Jr.** is the Dean of the Pace University School of Environmental Law, Chairman of the Riverkeeper Alliance, an attorney representing victims of voting rights violations, and contributing editor to Rolling Stone magazine.

**Ted Rall**'s political and social commentary cartoons have appeared in hundreds of publications, including Rolling Stone, Time, Fortune, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, Village Voice and New York Times. A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, he has twice won the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Prize. Visit him at Rall.com.

**Can Capitalism Tolerate a Democratic Internet? An Interview With Media Expert Robert McChesney**

**Anne Elizabeth Moore, Truthout:** In this interview near the release of his latest book, Digital Disconnect, McChesney draws on his decades of experience as a media-watcher and -maker to ask the big questions about the future of the Internet

**Read the Article**

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**Also Available:**

- Communication Revolution
  By Robert W. McChesney
- Tragedy and Farce
Celebrants and skeptics alike have produced valuable analyses of the Internet's effect on us and our world, oscillating between utopian bliss and dystopian hell. But according to Robert W. McChesney, arguments on both sides fail to address the relationship between economic power and the Internet.

McChesney’s award-winning Rich Media, Poor Democracy skrewed the assumption that a society drenched in commercial information is a democratic one. In Digital Disconnect, McChesney returns to this provocative thesis in light of the advances of the digital age. He argues that the sharp decline in the enforcement of antitrust violations, the increase in patents on digital
technology and proprietary systems, and massive indirect subsidies and other policies have made the internet a place of numbing commercialism. A handful of monopolies now dominate the political economy, from Google, which garners a 97 percent share of the mobile search market, to Microsoft, whose operating system is used by over 90 percent of the world’s computers.

Capitalism’s colonization of the Internet has spurred the collapse of credible journalism and made the internet an unparalleled apparatus for government and corporate surveillance and a disturbingly antidemocratic force.

In Digital Disconnect, Robert McChesney offers a groundbreaking critique of the Internet, urging us to reclaim the democratizing potential of the digital revolution while we still can.

Robert W. McChesney is the Gutgsell endowed Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of several books on the media, including the award-winning Rich Media, Poor Democracy and Communication Revolution, and a co-editor (with Victor Pickard) of Will the Last Reporter Please Turn Out the Lights. He lives in Champaign, Illinois.
JEFF CLEMENTS, CORPORATIONS ARE NOT PEOPLE: WHY THEY HAVE MORE RIGHTS THAN YOU DO AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT. Berrett-Koehler, 2012. John Nichols: “Clements does a great job of exposing the machinations of the corporations and the courts. But his finest contribution is a roadmap for overturning the Citizens United ruling with a constitutional amendment. We can get there from here; indeed, as Clements tells us, we must if we hope to make the promise of American democracy real not just at town meetings in Vermont but in the swamp that is Washington, D.C.” --Dick

Why the 2012 Election Was a Vote for Democracy


(AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

Democracy has taken quite a beating over the past several years, with the blows raining down from an increasingly activist and obsessively pro-corporate Supreme Court, voter-ID promoting Republican governors and legislatures, and Karl Rove’s empire of influence. It was easy to imagine, going into the November 6 election, that the fix was in. But the people pushed back, giving President Obama a 3.4 million popular vote victory, a 332–206 Electoral College landslide, a Senate that is more Democratic and more progressive, and a House with considerably fewer Tea Party extremists. Reversing the pattern of the 2010 Republican wave, voters chose labor-backed Democrats in seven of eleven gubernatorial races and handed key legislative chambers in New York, Maine, New Hampshire and other states to Democrats.

About the Author

John Nichols

John Nichols, a pioneering political blogger, has written the Beat since 1999. His posts have been circulated...

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John Nichols
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John Nichols

This has led some commentators to imagine that a template has been developed for defending the will of the people in the face of unprecedented financial and structural assaults on the democratic process. But that’s a naïve assumption. It obscures the fact that a combination of gerrymandering and right-wing Super PAC money prevented Nancy Pelosi and the Democrats from regaining control of the House, and that many state capitols are still dominated by anti-union die-hards like Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, Ohio Governor John Kasich and their allies. And just because an incumbent president, reasonably well-funded Democrats, and fully mobilized labor, reproductive rights and civil rights activists were able in 2012 to push back against an unprecedented onslaught of right-wing Super PAC money does not mean they will be able to do so when more sophisticated and ever more abundantly financed conservatives return in 2014 or 2016—as they surely will.

The better lesson to take from 2012 is that voters really do want a fair and functional democracy, and that Democrats and their allies should use the authority they have been handed to fight for it. Americans do not want to cede control of their communities to austerity appointees, as evidenced by Michigan’s rejection of the emergency manager law that Republican Governor Rick Snyder deployed to overrule local elected officials. Americans recognize the danger of GOP-backed barriers to their right to vote, as Minnesotans showed by rejecting a constitutional amendment mandating photo voter IDs. And they do not want corporate money to dominate our politics any more than they want corporations to dominate our lives.

In Montana and Colorado, voters overwhelmingly supported calls for a constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court’s Citizens United ruling—and with it, the fantasy of “corporate personhood.” That ruling, decried even by Senator John McCain as the “worst decision ever” from the High Court, ended a century of controls over the corporate dominance of politics. The Montana and Colorado votes align those states with California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island and Vermont—all of which have passed resolutions calling for a constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United. And dozens of communities across the United States—including Chicago, San Francisco and conservative Pueblo, Colorado—have backed local resolutions promoted by groups like Common Cause, Public Citizen, Free Speech for People, and Move to Amend. Most did so by
margins as wide as the 3–1 statewide votes in Colorado and Montana.

Montana went a big step further, electing as its governor Steve Bullock, the crusading attorney general who waged the boldest battle against the use of *Citizens United* to wipe away state laws that bar corporations from buying elections. Bullock lost that fight before the same Supreme Court that handed down the initial ruling, but his gubernatorial victory—after a campaign that declared, “If you believe elections should be decided by Montanans, not out-of-state corporations, stand with Steve Bullock”—offers a reminder that advocacy for real reform is smart politics.

That was especially evident in Senate elections, where some of the biggest winners were outspoken backers of a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*. Independent Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders made his stance a central theme of a re-election that secured 71 percent of the vote; he’s proposing a Saving American Democracy Amendment that says: “Corporations are not persons with constitutional rights equal to real people. Corporations are subject to regulation by the people. Corporations may not make campaign contributions or any election expenditures. Congress and states have the power to regulate campaign finances.” Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, who beat back an unprecedented Super PAC assault, led his campaign website with a petition to “Overturn *Citizens United*.” Newly elected Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin supports an amendment, as does Maine Senator-elect Angus King, an independent who is likely to caucus with the Democrats.

They’re not alone. President Obama argued in an online conversation shortly before the Democratic National Convention that “we need to seriously consider mobilizing a constitutional amendment process to overturn *Citizens United,*” and the Democratic platform declared: “We support campaign finance reform, by constitutional amendment if necessary.” The president may have an opportunity to appoint several Supreme Court justices who will recognize the need to reverse not only the *Citizens United* ruling but a series of decisions that handed overwhelming power to those with overwhelming amounts of money.

But presuming that the courts can quickly or certainly be repurposed as defenders of democracy is another naïve assumption. The president is right to argue that the movement to amend “can shine a spotlight on the Super PAC phenomenon and help apply pressure for change.” And the voters are right to say, as they have with their ballots in states and communities nationwide, that corporations are not people. Democracy is popular, so popular that it beat back plutocracy in 2012. Those who won have a democracy mandate; they should use it to repair the damage done and usher in a new era where money is controlled and the
popular will is unleashed.

Slow Democracy: Rediscovering Community, Bringing Decision Making Back Home by Susan Clark and Woden Teachout. According to John Nichols' review, the book shows us "what works: town meetings, deliberative gatherings...citizens collaborating....This is the antidote to big-money politics and the punditocracy." -- Dick

CREATIVITY, Dissent, Resistance

The Nation Magazine presented several commentaries on the nature and significance of “creative response.” Organized by Antonino D’Ambrosio, who created the film Let Fury Have the Hour, the several contributors, writers and artists, propose how a life of creativity opposes consumerism, greed, violence and war. D’Ambrosio discusses some of the subjects of his film, for example Ai Weiwei and Pussy Riot. At the heart of them all is their defiance of the cynical claim that we must accept conditions as they are. –Dick

CRITICAL THINKING AND DEMOCRACY


Table of Contents, overviews and selected pages.

Sample 30 Days to Better Thinking and Better Living

Author: Linda Elder and Richard Paul
Publisher: Prentice Hall
Copyright: 2006
Pages: 89 $13.59

Critical thinking is at once simple and complex. Though there are many layers to critical thinking, and you can always deepen your understanding of it, there are some basic ideas in critical thinking that, if taken seriously, can almost immediately improve the quality of your life. This book offers 30 such ideas. You can focus on one idea per day or one idea per week. And each idea is immediately applicable to your life. This book is for anyone interested in improving the quality of their lives by improving the quality of their thinking.

The 30 Days Book is a revised and updated version of the original 25 Days to Better Thinking and Better Living.
There is nothing we do as humans that does not involve our thinking. Our thinking tells us what to believe, what to reject, what is important, what is unimportant, what is true, what is false, who are our friends, who are our enemies, how we should spend our time, what jobs we should pursue, where we should live, who we should marry, how we should parent. Everything we know, believe, want, fear, and hope for, our thinking tells us.

It follows, then, that the quality of our thinking is the primary determinant of the quality of our lives. It has implications for how we go about doing, literally, everything we do.

Therefore, learning to think at the highest level of quality, or to think critically, is too important to leave to chance. Critical thinking is the disciplined art of ensuring that you use the best thinking you are capable of using in any set of circumstances. Through developed critical capacities, you can take command of the thinking that is commanding you.

Becoming a critical thinker requires that you learn to observe, monitor, analyze, assess, and reconstruct thinking of many sorts in many dimensions of human life. It requires the building of important habits of mind. It has implications for every act that takes place in your mind. It requires a special form of dedication and perseverance, honesty and integrity. It can be done only if taken seriously and pursued throughout a lifetime.

This book will show you how to use your mind to improve your mind. Each of the ideas in it can help you take command of the mind that is controlling your thoughts, emotions, desires and behavior.

Our hope is not in a miracle transformation, but in laying a foundation for your future intellectual and emotional growth. We are merely scratching the surface of deep and complex topics. We do not provide a quick fix, but rather places to begin. When you begin to take your intellectual growth seriously, you begin to see payoffs in every part of your life.

But first, you must wake your mind up. You must begin to understand your mind. You must begin to see when it is causing you problems. You must begin to see when it is causing others problems. You must learn how to trap it when it tries to hide from itself (using one of the many forms of self-deception of which it is naturally skilled). You must discover some of the trash and nonsense you have unknowingly taken in during years of passive absorption - to which all of us are subject. This book will show you how to begin.

CHOMSKY, 3 CRISES, SHARP, US DEMOCRACY DEFICIT
By Dick Bennett

In a talk Noam Chomsky gave in June 2005, entitled “Imminent Crises,” he analyzed three crises facing the US. A transcription of the talk has just now (January 2013) been published in Z Magazine, for which the editor expressed his view that the three crises “are particularly relevant today, post-election [of Nov. 2012], as neither of the three were addressed by the candidates (although they involve survival of the species), and there are no known plans to do something about them.”

The three crises are: 1) “threat of nuclear war, which is very high”; 2) “threat of environmental catastrophe,” of which “the U.S. is alone in refusing to take any steps”; and 3) failure of the US to “function as a working democracy,” its “democracy deficit.”
**The third crisis underlies the other two.**

Despite the opinion of “official strategic analysts” that “the current [nuclear] policies of the Bush administration carry...an appreciable risk of ultimate doom,” the policies remain the same. Billions of dollars are still being spent annually not only on maintaining the US arsenal but on developing it, and consequently the prospect of someone using a dirty bomb or real nuclear weapon is inevitable. (And the Obama Administration continues Bush’s policies—Dick.)

Regarding the environmental crisis, again Chomsky quotes from a national scientific group warning of catastrophe if significant changes in policy are not done, and criticizing the US official refusal to take action.

These dire failures of governmental responsibility result from the failure of relevant democratic institutions to function. For example, despite the “overwhelming majority of the U.S. population...in favor of signing the [Kyoto] Protocol,” almost alone the US refused to sign it. When the most powerful nation “has the capacity to pursue—and is pursuing [and continues under the Obama Administration—Dick] policies which carry an appreciable risk of ultimate doom and maybe apocalypse soon, and maybe irreversible environmental catastrophe, then the democracy deficit is a very serious problem and, therefore, the third imminent crisis.”

And the democracy deficit is real, which provides Chomsky with an optimistic conclusion. The candidates avoided these three issues in 2004 [and in 2012], because they knew the majority population “is overwhelmingly in favor of cutting the military spending, of increasing social spending...more funding for renewable energy, more funding for the UN.” “In general, there’s just an enormous gulf between opinion and public policy which is in many ways a very optimistic conclusion—very optimistic.”

As Gene Sharp would agree, whose abhorrence of tyranny and love for liberation he has expressed in book after book for over forty years, to worldwide approval (except from tyrants). In *From Dictatorship to Democracy* (1993-2008) he expresses his “sad realization that every dictatorship leaves such death and destruction in its wake” and his consequent “determined hope that prevention of tyranny might be possible” (xviii).

This is not to suggest that the US is a dictatorship (although many commentators consider corporate control of Congress and mainstream information an approximation). He does not discuss the US in this book, but only countries that are “not free.” But he cites the tabulation by Freedom House, which compiles a yearly international survey, of Free, Partly Free, and Not Free countries. Sharp discusses the Not Free, but the Freedom House categories invite inquiry regarding their relevance to Chomsky’s opinion that the US deserves the label of democracy deficit. The US is partly free; a gulf separates public desire from public policy. Were the public overwhelmingly for expanding nuclear arms development and the military budget and empire, and for decreasing spending for health and education and sustainable, non-CO2 energy, then hope for liberation, for influence of public policy by public desire, would be zero. But the problem is the degree of desire. A “defiant, mobilized people” has often proven itself capable of removing even a firmly entrenched dictator, and the US government is only partly tyrannical/ unfree.

Whether the US population’s understanding of the three crises will ever break through electoral and media domination by the few and the public’s fear and patriotism and the governing myths of the country into action for change, I cannot predict, but it is a prerequisite to moving the nation from democracy deficit and nuclear and climate catastrophes to
ELECTIONS SOLD. POLITICIANS BRIBED. MONEY CONTROLLING OUR GOVERNMENT. IT’S NOT AMERICAN, IT’S CORRUPT.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ACT

The American Anti-Corruption Act gets money out of politics, so the people can get back in.

HELP PASS THE ACT (AND STOP THE CORRUPTION)
ABOUT THE ACT

The Act was crafted by former Federal Election Commission chairman Trevor Potter in consultation with dozens of strategists, democracy reform leaders and constitutional attorneys from across the political spectrum.

The Act would transform how elections are financed, how lobbyists influence politics, and how political money is disclosed. It’s a sweeping proposal that would reshape the rules of American politics, and restore ordinary Americans as the most important stakeholders instead of major donors. The Act enjoys support from progressives and conservatives alike.

Constitutional attorneys confirm that the provisions are constitutional. The Act is being championed by the Represent.Us campaign. Click here to support this campaign.

HOW TO GET MONEY OUT:

1. Draft comprehensive legislation to Stop bribery, End secret money & Empower voters.

2. Get a million Americans to become citizen co-sponsors of the new law. That’s where you come in.

ADD YOUR NAME DONATE

3. Mobilize a massive, national movement for a government that represents the people, not the money.

4. Use the power of the Represent.Us campaign to pressure politicians to formally Co-Sponsor the Act as is, with no changes, delays, or loopholes.
5. Leverage the power of the national movement to vote out politicians who do not stand behind the Act.

ADD YOUR NAME TO CO-SPONSOR THE ANTI-CORRUPTION ACT

pass the Act

The American Anti-Corruption Act will only pass if a million Americans demand it. Please add your name.

Name: [YOUR NAME] Email: [ ] ZIP: [ ]

ADD YOUR NAME OR JOIN WITH FACEBOOK

Thank you for becoming a Citizen Co-sponsor.

Now, click below to enter mission control, where you can invite and recruit more co-sponsors

ENTER MISSION CONTROL
Or just spread the word

• FORMER LOBBYIST JACK ABRAMOFF EXPLAINS HOW BRIBERY WORKS
• FORMER FEC CHAIRMAN TREVOR POTTER ON BUYING ELECTIONS
• CONSTITUTIONAL SCHOLAR LARRY LESSIG ON HOW TO EMPOWER VOTERS
STOP POLITICIANS FROM TAKING BRIBES

Prohibit members of Congress from soliciting and receiving contributions from any industry or entity they regulate, including those industries’ lobbyists. Prohibit all fundraising during Congressional working hours.

Members of Congress who sit on powerful committees get extraordinary amounts of money from special interests regulated by those committees. Politicians routinely host fundraisers, and invite lobbyists to contribute to their campaigns. The result is a Congress made up of politicians dependent on those special interests to raise the money necessary to win reelection. Politicians are forced to create laws that are favorable to those interests, often at the expense of the public interest.
LIMIT SUPER PAC CONTRIBUTIONS AND “COORDINATION”

Require SuperPACs to abide by the same contribution limits as other political committees. Toughen rules regarding SuperPACs’ and other groups’ coordination with political campaigns and political parties.

The Supreme Court’s Citizens United and subsequent court cases ruled that SuperPACs have the right to raise and spend unlimited money influencing elections, so long as the SuperPACs do not coordinate with the candidate campaigns. Since Citizens United, we’ve seen tremendous coordination between campaigns and their SuperPACs, making a mockery of the “independence” that the courts thought would exist. SuperPACs have become extensions of the campaigns, and allow mega-donors to exert undue influence on election outcomes.

PREVENT JOB OFFERS AS BRIBES

Close the “revolving door” where elected representatives and their staff sell their legislative power in exchange for high-paying jobs when they leave office. Create a “cooling off” period on private employment that will last 5 years for all Congress members and all senior staff (currently 2 years in the Senate, 1 year in the House, and 1 year for senior staff.)

Today, politicians routinely move straight from Congress to lucrative lobbying jobs on K Street, in order to influence their former colleagues and friends. Senior staffers who work for congressmen do the same thing. This corrupts policymaking in two ways: members and their staff anticipate high-paying jobs with lobbying firms, and routinely do favors to their future employers while still in Congress; and once out of congress they enjoy undue access and influence to members of Congress. The biggest spenders hire these influencers, and win policy as a result.
CALL ALL PEOPLE WHO LOBBY, LOBBYISTS

Significantly expand the definition of and register all lobbyists to prevent influencers from skirting the rules.

Today, the definition of who is a lobbyist—and who is not—is weak. The result: members of congress and their staff end up working as “historical advisors” (for all intents and purposes as lobbyists) to skirt the law while receiving big money to influence policy. Lawmakers are not subject to accountability since the public does not know all the people they meet with who try to sway them on policy decisions.

LIMIT LOBBYIST DONATIONS

Limit the amount that lobbyists and their clients can contribute to federal candidates, political parties, and political committees to $500 per year and limit lobbyist fundraising for political campaigns. Federal contractors are already banned from contributing to campaigns: extend that ban to lobbyists, high-level executives, government relations employees, and PACs of federal government contractors.

Lobbyists currently must abide by the same contribution limits to electoral campaigns as everyone else: $2500 per election. Lobbyists "bundle" these $2500 contributions with other lobbyists, and individuals working for special interests that seek to influence politicians. This adds up to serious money and political favors in return.
END SECRET MONEY

Mandate full transparency of all political money. Require any organization that spends $10,000 or more on advertisements to elect or defeat federal candidates to file a disclosure report online with the Federal Election Commission within 24 hours. List each of the donors who gave $10,000 or more to the organization to run such ads. This includes all PACs, 501c nonprofits, or other groups that engage in electioneering.

Elections are being flooded with secret money funneled through "501c" organizations that are not required to disclose the names of donors. 501c's either spend money directly to influence elections, or make unlimited contributions to SuperPACs. This allows secret political donors to flood elections with money and, thus, influence outcomes.

EMPOWER ALL VOTERS WITH A TAX REBATE

Build up the influence voters by creating a biennial $100 Tax Rebate that they can use to make qualified contributions to federal candidates, political parties, and political committees. Flooding elections with small-donor contributions that will offset the huge spenders. Candidates and political groups will only be eligible for these funds if they agree to a set of contribution limits: they will only accept money from small donors (giving $500 or less a year), other groups abiding by the limits, and the Tax Rebates themselves.

Nearly $6 billion was spent on the 2012 elections, and the vast majority came from big special interest donors. In 2008, less than 0.1 percent of Americans contributed $2,300 or more. Politicians are dependent on this tiny percentage of the population. To change this, we need to dramatically increase the number of small donors to politics, so that politicians become dependent on everyday Americans and not moneyed interests. That's how we get politicians who actually fight for the general public.
DISCLOSE “BUNDLING”

Require federal candidates to disclose the names of individuals who “bundle” contributions for the member of Congress or candidate, regardless of whether such individuals are registered lobbyists.

ENFORCE THE RULES

Strengthen the Federal Election Commission’s independence and strengthen the House and Senate ethics enforcement processes. Provide federal prosecutors the additional tools necessary to combat corruption, and prohibit lobbyists who fail to properly register and disclose their activities from engaging in federal lobbying activities for a period of two years.

Federal agencies routinely fail to enforce the anti-corruption rules that already exist because their leadership are appointed by those they are supposed to regulate. The result is an elections system where even lax rules can be skirted or broken with impunity.

DOWNLOAD THE ACT

Sounds tough? It is. But this is why it will work

- Reform will only occur at a moment of crisis. We will harness public anger and demand for change.
- We must start with the people, not Congress, and gather an unprecedented coalition.
- We must engage liberals, conservatives and independents. Highly visible
Spokespeople from all sides will aid us.

• Politicians will only act if forced to by electoral pressure. We will unseat politicians who don’t cooperate.

• The solution must be comprehensive. Incremental reform won’t work: it has to come as a package.

But we need your help

CO-SPONSOR THE ACT

The specifics

Why?

Campaign finance isn’t just about money, or even special interests -- it’s about leveling the playing field. It’s about who we are as a people, and what we stand for as a nation. It’s about the quality, credibility and integrity of the issues that get argued, hashed out and decided every single day in Washington and in statehouses – issues like health care, immigration and Social Security that impact millions. It’s about what we can do, as voters, to make sure everybody gets a fair shake. Not just a few, or those with deep pockets. In short, this is about America’s character.

CO-SPONSOR THE ACT
The campaign

Represent.Us is an unprecedented movement of conservatives and progressives to pass the American Anti-Corruption Act. The Act is comprehensive legislation written by former Federal Elections Commission Chairman Trevor Potter with help from dozens of constitutional attorneys, advocates and academics. It would sever the tie between politicians and special interest lobbyists, without requiring an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Who’s behind the campaign?

Our board of advisors can be found on the Represent.Us website

Our plan to win

Five steps:

1. We started with the people, not Congress. Unlike most previous legislative reform efforts, the campaign to pass the American Anti-Corruption Act began by mobilizing a massive national movement. The campaign is enlisting disillusioned members of organizations beaten by K Street: tax reform, energy, environment, healthcare, and economic along with every American who cares about issues that are always beaten by monied interests.

2. We are a coalition of liberals, conservatives, and independents. Americans self-identify as roughly one-third liberal, one third moderate, and one third conservative; and nearly all support sweeping reform. Highly visible supporters from the right and the left will inoculate us against the maddeningly effective nonsense of spin doctors who label basic democratic values as radical or un-American.

3. Represent.Us will force politicians to act through electoral pressure. We will unseat politicians who fail to co-sponsor the Act in its entirety. Hard-hitting political accountability is the only strategy that will compel our leaders to fundamentally change the system.
4. The American Anti-Corruption Act is comprehensive. For decades, legislative efforts have been focused on singular policy reforms. Political money is like water, with the uncanny ability to slip through the cracks. The Act puts sweeping reform agenda into one airtight package.

5. Reform will only occur at a moment of crisis. The 2012 election cycle was wrought with the worst political corruption in American history. We are harnessing the outcomes of the crisis - anger and demands for ambitious change - to position a consensus reform solution for legislative action. The American Anti-Corruption Act is the solution.

The **Represent.Us** timeline

**Nov. 2012:** Launch the American Anti-Corruption Act and [Represent.Us](https://represent.us).

**Nov. 2012:** Call for one million Citizen Co-sponsors.

**Late 2013:** Introduce the Anti-Corruption Act to Congress and ask every member to co-sponsor it.

**Early 2014:** Unseat members of Congress who refuse to co-sponsor the Anti-Corruption Act.

**Beyond:** Throughout history, campaigns that come from the people have been the only way to create real change. When the people lead, the leaders will follow.

**How can I get more involved?**

We need people like you recruiting their friends, families and neighbors to become Citizen Co-Sponsors. You can do this using social media and email or, if you're interested, you can become part of a [Represent.Us](https://represent.us) local action group which are forming all over the country. If you want to get more involved email [info@represent.us](mailto:info@represent.us).

**Citizen Co-sponsors are...**

A "Citizen Co-Sponsor" is someone who has added their name in support of the American Anti-Corruption Act, the new law to get money out of politics. That's it. No money, no work, just add your name to help reach our goal of one million co-sponsors.
We borrowed this term from Congress, because laws are typically "co-sponsored" by members of Congress when they introduce a bill for consideration by the Senate and House of Representatives.

But with special interests having near-total control over Congress these days, our representatives aren't likely to co-sponsor, pass, or even consider a law like the one we're proposing. That's why we need a million Citizen Co-Sponsors – ordinary Americans – united behind the Anti-Corruption Act before we ask Congress to pass it. We need to show them we've got the political power to hold them accountable if they don't support this sweeping reform.

That's where you come in. Add your name and be a Citizen Co-Sponsor of the Anti-Corruption Act. We promise we won't spam you and your information is completely private.

How this campaign complements the efforts to amend the constitution

We support those trying to amend the constitution to get money out, and we want them to succeed. We also believe that winning reform is like climbing Mount Everest. If you’re at base camp and you have enough climbers, you should send a few teams up different routes to increase the likelihood of success. That’s what Represent.Us is about... adding another team, and taking a different but complementary path... and rooting for each other along the way. An amendment requires two thirds of the Congress and ratification by three quarters of the state legislatures – a mighty task. Common sense requires other proposals co-exist alongside those efforts.

The Anti-Corruption Act has been crafted for the past year by a top-caliber team of constitutional and campaign finance attorneys. The Act was written by former Federal Elections Commission Chairman Trevor Potter, with help from dozens of constitutional attorneys, advocates and academics. It will sever the tie between politicians and special
interest lobbyists -- without requiring an amendment to the U.S. constitution. We received feedback from most of the other reform organizations in the field as we focused on taking the best legislative ideas and packing them together into one omnibus bill... and moving it forward as one proposal.

The Anti-Corruption Act is completely transformative, and will end business as usual in Washington. Most importantly, our strategy is in no way competitive with or damaging to constitutional amendment efforts. Those efforts are being led by some of the finest organizations and activists – many of whom have already joined our effort.

The constitutionality of the Anti-Corruption Act

Read a detailed explanation of the constitutionality of the American Anti-Corruption Act here. The Anti-Corruption Act has been crafted with a sharp eye toward avoiding provisions that could be overturned – even by the current Supreme Court. According to feedback from a dozen top constitutional lawyers, we have done that. While the Act does not eliminate SuperPAC’s, it does curtail their power while protecting free speech rights. It prevents them from coordinating with candidates; it limits contributions to SuperPACs that do not act truly independent of campaigns, and it limits the ability of secret “501c” nonprofits to funnel money to SuperPACs.

We work with many other reform groups. We all meet on the phone regularly to keep each other abreast of our plans. We spent several months vetting Represent.Us and The American Anti-Corruption Act with nearly every group, and we collaborate with various groups on actions and sign-ons.

For this campaign, we're making a concerted effort to enlist the active support of groups and constituencies that have not historically been a major part of the reform movement. Our proposal is specially designed to be both hard-hitting and appeal broadly: from Occupy on the left to the Tea Party on the right; Republicans, Democrats and everyone in between.

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IN THESE TIMES

many excellent online journals, blogs, essays maintain the voices of grassroots democracy, anti-war/empire, human rights, free speech. And this tradition continues in print with magazines like *The Progressive*, *Z Magazine*, *The Nation*, and *In These Times*. The April 2013 no. of *ITT* includes articles on the Tea Party, the Congressional Progressive Caucus, capitalism taking over the internet, the National Domestic Workers Alliance, violence against women, parent-teacher unions, Cuba. --Dick

END US DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER

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My blog:
War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/
Newsletters
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

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