

Excerpt from Learn or Die



Illustration #26

US 2.0

So, how do we do it? How do we implement a government and an economy of the People, by the People, and for the People? How do we defeat the vampire capitalist and Leviathans that will try to stop us from taking back our country?

I believe that one of the ways that we can do it is by living the dream and creating an alternative United States of America that we will call US 2.0. US 2.0 will be an Internet voting system of direct and participatory democracy where the citizen/members of US 2.0 can initiate “on demand” legislation, reject and demand the repeal of laws passed by their legislatures through the referendum process, and recall representatives and public officials who are not working for us and serving the common good.

This is not an “advisory” initiative, referendum, and recall process. This is an “on demand” process. By this I mean all the citizen/members of US 2.0 will pledge to support the initiative, referendum, and recall process of direct and participatory democracy no matter how they voted on any individual proposition. By support I mean that we are pledged to oppose and campaign against any representative or public official that does not support and work to

implement the will of the people. On the other hand, we will support and work for candidates that work for and fight to implement the will of the people as manifested in our “on demand” initiative, referendum, and recall process of direct and participatory democracy. By support, we also mean that candidates for public office and representatives will have to support and work actively for the amendment of city and county charters, state constitutions, and the Constitution of the United States so that the initiative, referendum, and recall process of citizen lawmaking becomes part of the formal voting system.

In cities and states that have the initiative and/or the referendum, and/or recall process in one form or another, we will work to make certain that they have all the instruments of direct democracy, including the right to amend their charters or constitutions. We will also work to eliminate all unreasonable obstacles to the will of the people, i.e. obstructionist signature requirements and time limits; lack of financial, technical, and legal aid; and a platform from which the supporters of a proposition can inform the public, debate, and recruit volunteers. Essentially, we will make the process more accessible to the average American so that we all can do it.

In mirroring our Phase One and Phase Two plan for political and economic democracy in America, US 2.0 will reflect our aspirations for an economy by the people. Our citizen/members will be able to initiate propositions, which will essentially be business proposals, where we the people will go into partnership with American labor and share in the profits mirroring organizationally the formal structure that we described earlier in the study of direct and participatory democracy in the workplace.

US 2.0 will be supported by a university quality information and research base, and we will get to know one another through our forums, blogs, tweets, and our equivalent of face book. We will also get to know one another in real time, in real life beyond our virtual reality network of democracy through social events, gatherings, recreation activities, activism, fairs, festivals, concerts, and mass assemblies where we will celebrate our shared dream of a New America.

The success of US 2.0 depends on us standing as one and honoring our pledge not to be tempted by the taste of blood that the vampire capitalists will offer us. Unity is fundamental to winning the new American revolution and taking back our country, and it is not surprising that the need for unity in the

defense of democracy can be traced back to the origins of democracy and how the ancient Athenian Greeks fought their wars. The key to understanding how the Athenians fought and were successful, often against superior number and power, is to be found in the concept of the phalanx.

The phalanx as a battle formation was essentially a moving human wall of shields, a fortress of men eight to ten rows deep or more behind which the Greek citizen soldier fought with spear and sword. If one man fell in the front ranks, another man took his place in the wall. The key to the plan was always to fight as one and never break ranks. The army of Ancient Athens was a citizen army made up of all classes of Athenian society that trained together and fought together as one. Their strength was in their unity, so when it came time to determine whether or not they were going to war, they assembled in mass and voted for or against the war by banging their swords against their shields.

This primitive concept of democracy and the power of free will were forged in the fire of battle where blood is blood, and it reached its fullest realization and sophistication in Athens during the Age of Cleisthenes and Pericles. In 510 BC, Cleisthenes in his struggle with Isagora, a rival aristocrat, promised the Athenians that if they supported him he would institute a democracy in Athens. In the struggle between these two men for supremacy in Athens, Isagora got the support of the Spartans who then by force took control of the Acropolis, the Athenian citadel and seat of power. Believing in Cleisthenes promise of democracy, the Athenian people rose up and drove the Spartans out in what was the first democratic revolution in history. However, it was during the Age of Pericles that democracy reached its zenith.

Under Pericles, all Athenian male citizens eighteen years and older were freed to participate equally in the Athenian state. The General Assembly, which was comprised of all the male citizens of Athens, became the law making body of direct and participatory democracy where each and every citizen had the right to debate, initiate, repeal, and pass laws for the community and these laws applied to every one equally. The most important executive functions of the state were conducted by a representative people's council of five hundred citizens chosen by lot, fifty from each of the political and defense units that Cleisthenes created. Most public officials and administrators of the government and civil

servants were also chosen by lot as were the jurors in legal cases. In the trials, there were no lawyers and the accused and the accuser had to argue their own case in front of the jurors.

Athens, it was estimated, had a population of approximately 200,000 people at its peak, and democracy thrived in Athens for approximately one hundred and fifty years before its demise with the defeat of Athens by the Spartans and its allies in the Second Peloponnesian War of 431-404BC. What Athens was to the Athenian people was probably best expressed by Pericles in a funeral oration in honor of the Athenians who had fought and died for their city during the Spartan Wars.



Illustration #27

Our form of government does not enter into rivalry with the institutions of others. Our government does not copy our neighbors but is an example to them. It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not of the few. But while there exists equal justice to all and alike in their private disputes, the claim of excellence is also recognized, and when a citizen is in any way distinguished, he is preferred to

the public service, not as a matter of privilege, but as the reward of merit. Neither is poverty an obstacle, but a man may benefit his country whatever the obscurity of his condition. There is no exclusiveness in our public life and in our private business. We are not suspicious of one another, nor angry with our neighbor if he does what he likes; we do not put on sour looks at him which, though harmless, are not pleasant. While we are thus unconstrained in our private business, a spirit of reverence pervades our public acts; we are prevented from doing wrong by respect for the authorities and for the laws, having a particular regard to those which are ordained for the protection of the injured as well as those unwritten laws which bring upon the transgressor of them the reprobation of the general sentiment. – Excerpt from Pericles Funeral Oration as recorded for posterity by Thucydides

Five hundred years later, Plutarch saw the city that Pericles and the Athenian's built and wrote, "Such is the bloom of perpetual newness, as it were, upon these works of his, which makes them ever to look untouched by time, as though the unflattering breath of an ageless spirit had been infused into them."

In the short period that Athens thrived, this moderately sized city by contemporary standards, became the birthplace of Western Civilization in politics, philosophy, architecture, arts, drama, history, mathematics, and science, and its spirit is very much alive two thousand five hundred years later. Our concept of beauty came from the aesthetics and artistic standards of the great Athenian artists Myron, Orates, Praxiteles, Phidias and the architects Ictinus, Lakatos, and Karpion. Our literary, linguistic, and dramatic forms came directly from the linguistic and dramatic analysis of Aristotle and the literary and dramatic form created by Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Euripides, and Sophocles. Logical analysis, philosophy, and the scientific approach was born in the minds of Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras, Democritus, and Archimedes as was the mathematical mysteries of reality hidden in Euclid's geometry of nature. Ancient Greek mythology has been an inspiration to modern poets and psychologists to the point that we could say that Freud merely translated the great myths and Greek dramas into modern terms.

Amidst all this greatness, however, probably their greatest achievement was the fact that they discovered the Idea of an Idea. From that Idea all ideas were born and flourished, and one of the greatest ideas that they created was the idea of democracy that tragically died with the Golden Age of Ancient Athens. We would not see that idea again until the American Revolution of the 1770s and the taking of the Bastille on July 14, 1789 that started the French Revolution, and even then and now we have experienced only a shadow of the greatness of that spirit. However, today we are at the threshold of a New Golden Age of Democracy, but we are going to have to fight for it, and the question once again becomes the question that was asked at the origins of democracy when the Ancient Athenian citizen soldiers stood at the front ranks of an idea and a vision of immortality. What are we fighting for?

A Vision for America

True democracy recognizes and cherishes the uniqueness of each and every one of us. It recognizes that there will never be anyone like you or me ever again. No one will ever again quite see the world from our point of view, right here, right now, where we stand or sit or lie or run or weep or cry or laugh with joy at the magnificence and the horror of it all. We are the secret. We are the mystery.

When quantum physics probes the essence of the universe, it is probing the essence of the human mind and spirit. The universe is not something out there. It is within us, and it is that mystery, that infinite creativity, that quantum universe at the heart of you and me that makes us human, makes us unique, make us precious; and, at the same time, makes us everything that ever was and will be. We are the mystery. We are the secret; and collectively, We the People are the spirit that transcends each of us alone.

It is this spirit that reveals itself when we are at one with ourselves, at one with each other, and at one with the world around us. It is this spirit that reveals itself in family, friends, community, and country. It is this spirit that embraces the global family. It is this spirit at the heart of the universe. It is the spirit of love, the one word that is the

key to the Gates of a New Eden and the nexus of the universe around which all else revolves. This is the lesson of true democracy. This is the essence of *The New American Revolution*. This is the lesson we must learn, or we will die.

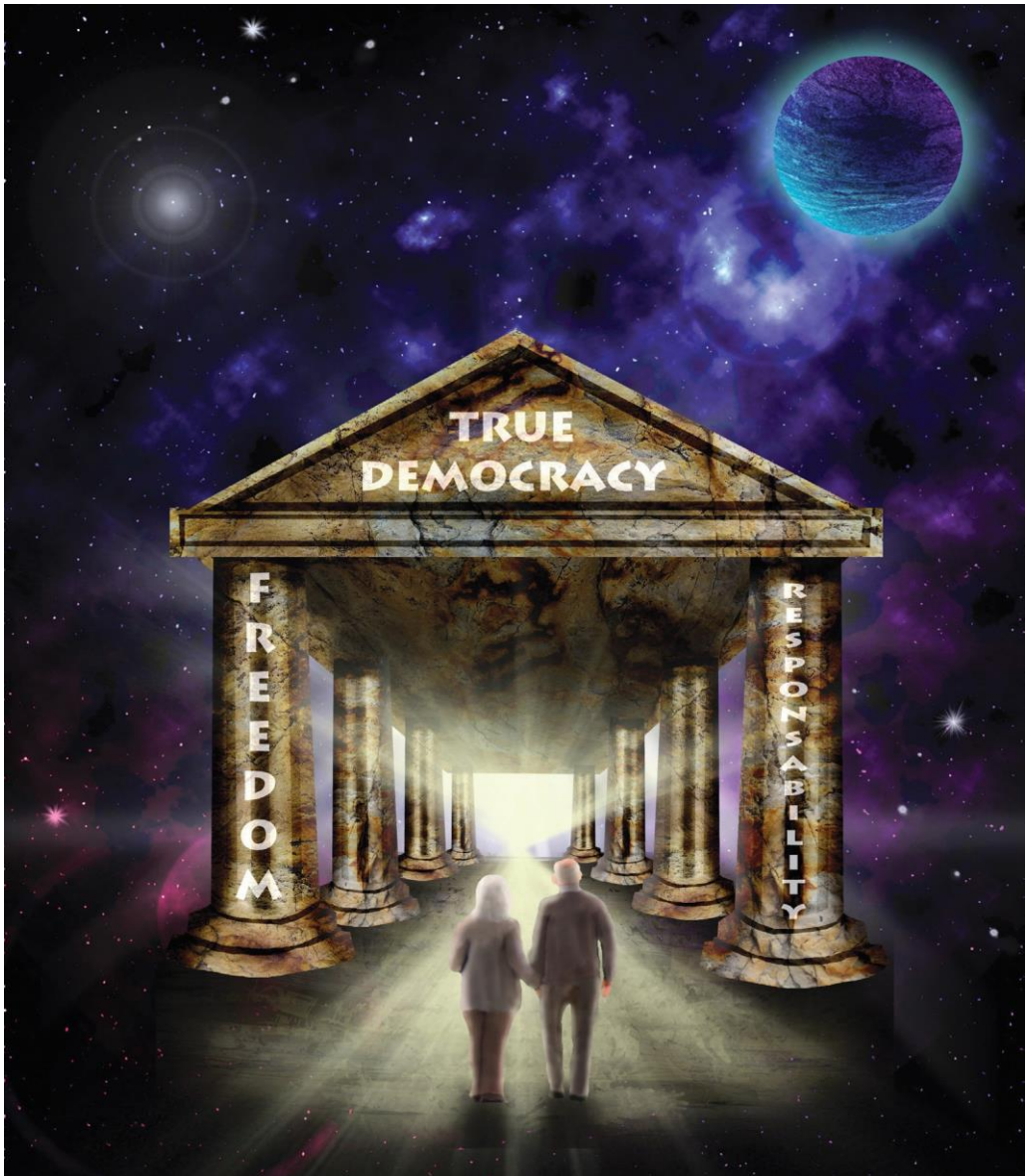


Illustration #28

Coming Home