

## The Sovereign Power of the People By Vigdor Schreibman

Under the Republican form of Government that provides a constitutional structure for American democracy “all power derives from the people”; but the exercise of this sovereign power is a little understood thing. The campaign of Sen. John Edwards for President of the United States brings to the forefront of our collective concerns the need to clarify this matter. The power of the people is sorely needed to help realize the goal of Sen. Edwards on which so much depends for the future of our country liberated from corporate greed.

It is natural for all human beings to want to be relieved of anxiety about the failures of democracy and to avoid confrontation with dangerous corporate monsters. The strategy advanced by Hillary Clinton, masterminded by her savvy husband in tune with the *status quo*, and the alluring plan offered by Sen. Barack Obama to heal the divisions and offer hope for another “Shining City on a Hill” (Ronald Reagan's biblical theme!), are both understandably looked on favorably by agents of the corporate **philosophy of greed**. Both these schemes will assure the iron grip of capital on the structures of power in the United States; a formula for continued disaster, as Sen. John Edwards has courageously stated during his campaign.

Simply put, Sen. Edwards told a town hall meeting in Concord, N.H., Jan. 5, “**You can't 'nice' these people to death.**” Corporate moguls won't give up their power without a fight. Citizens must fight or perish. That's the law of the tribe.

The strategy to fight pernicious corporate power offered by the candidacy of former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards for President is already in trouble, however. The “Media Aristocracy” that is depended upon as a carrier will prohibit any such message. This media is owned by the corporate power moguls. Dependency on their reasonable collaboration in the transformation of America's corrupt power system is a strategy that is obviously designed to fail.

We have already witnessed how this works. Sen. Edwards has confronted corporate power, and everywhere he went to deliver that message in person the people heard his words and were ready to open their hearts and trust in his historical candidacy, something that has not been seen or heard since the **Golden Age of Pericles**. The strength of Edwards' candidacy that naturally developed from Edwards' amazing populist advocacy against the two candidates funded by the **deep pockets of capital**, is shown by the **McClatchy MSNBC** poll published Dec 30, 2007.

McClatchy-  
MSNBC Poll



### How Iowa stands

Who you'd vote for if the caucuses were held today

Democrats	
John Edwards	24%
Hillary Clinton	23%
Barack Obama	22%
Bill Richardson	12%
Joe Biden	8%
Christopher Dodd	2%
Dennis Kucinich	1%
Mike Gravel	Less than 1%
Undecided	8%



However, once the strength of Edwards' candidacy was shown this showing automatically signaled the dirty tricks of the "Media Aristocracy" who immediately sought to disparage the messenger. The **McClatchy poll report** opens with this derogatory slam: "John Edwards has clawed his way into contention to win Iowa's caucuses on Thursday in the first vote for the Democratic presidential nomination..." On the day of the Iowa Caucuses, Jan 03, 2007, just three days after the McClatchy MSNBC poll was published showing Edwards in the lead in Iowa, the Edwards campaign came up short, **second best**: Obama had won 38 percent support compared to 30 percent support for Edwards and 29 percent support for Clinton.

What went wrong? Obama had jumped miraculously from 22 percent support in the Dec 30 poll to 38 percent support in the Iowa Caucuses – a gain of 16 percentage points, or more than 3 times the margin of error of +/- 5 percentage points of the Dec 30 poll! There are many ways to **steal an election**, unfortunately.

Simply put, the open caucuses in Iowa were easy to stack with unqualified votes for Obama from neighboring residents of Obama's home state of Illinois. Indeed, a report was posted on the Edwards08 blog suggesting "Republicans were voting in our Democratic primaries to skew the outcome" according to discussion Jan 10th, "on Sean Hannity' talk show!" A.J. Simon reported Republicans "gleefully discussed voting for Obama in both states, and their strategy for crossing over in every state primary. "Their stated belief is that he will be easiest of our Dem candidates to beat in November..."

Another compelling report from a married couple who were the caucus chair and precinct captain respectively, in their precinct, **included this revealing comment**:

**First of all, the ONLY requirement to caucus here, is that you must have lived in Iowa for 10 days. You do NOT need to show ID, you do NOT need to show proof of residency upon registering at the caucus site. How many of you knew this? It is strictly an honor system. Your signature is an affidavit and if you are falsely signing in, there is a fine of several thousand dollars. However, this is virtually unenforceable. As a result, especially in the chaos of the huge Jan 3rd turnout, people caucused who should not have. It's easy. For example, visit a friend or relative for Christmas (more than 10 days before 01/03) and stay to caucus. We've lived in our neighborhood 10 years and I grew up here. We've been canvassing for months. (In other words, we are familiar with most folks in our neighborhood.) 2004 saw a record turnout in our tiny precinct of 60 some people, this year 139. Of the 61 Obama supporters at our caucus, 47 were unregistered, 15 had no ID with them (not required, remember) and 2 of them talked openly with each other about being from California and Wisconsin. And before anyone calls me a racist, almost all of us present at the caucus, including Obama supporters, were of the same color. The caucus chair called the Iowa Democratic Party hotline with concerns about lots of people with no ID that did not appear to be from the neighborhood - again, NOT BASED ON COLOR - and was told that chaos was happening all over the state and that there was basically nothing to be done. (accent added).**

This explanation is not intended to offer proof of fraud, but reveals the vulnerability of the primary system through which Americans choose their candidate. The crux of the problem may be more fundamental, however. Citizens have long been accustomed to the exercise of their sovereign powers in American democracy merely as followers expecting our mythical leaders and heroes to carry the burden of our collective salvation. This kind of political action, known as "**crowd politics**" almost always fails the test of effectiveness in mobilizing the sovereign powers of the people.

Only direct engagement of the whole people can mobilize their sovereign powers. We are each the leader of our destiny. We must discover the unvanquishable power of the people to carry our message of liberation from corporate greed. No “Media Aristocracy” can ever be depended upon to deliver the collective message of the whole people.

Indeed, this is the strategy for development of a real democracy, one in which every citizen is a leader of democratic engagement to the maximum of their individual creative capabilities. Such a democracy requires a cellular structure. This is the structure of all natural elements and all life forms, replacing the old fascist top-down structure of leaders and followers. How could an authentic American democracy be indifferent to such basic elements of existence?

In a democratic society, the basic cell is the community group: 10 or 20 individuals organized to explore community needs and interests, and committed to their realization (“*DEMg*”). Every “**true individual**” as Mary Parker Follett explained, should organize one or more of these *DEMg*, while serving many others, thus unfolding the multiple dimensions of human personality. Thomas Jefferson called for such a structural organization of democracy based on the “**elementary republics of the ward.**”

The New England “Town Meeting” was heir to Jeffersonian democracy. Ross Perot, in our own time used Internet Relay Chat to conduct an **Electronic Town Hall**, commencing at 9:45 a.m. CDT August 12, 1995, as reported by Billy Vaughn Koen, Mechanical Engineering Department, The University of Texas at Austin. The excitement generated by that amazing event was **huge and fearful**; particularly for the media moguls who would become obsolete! Advances in knowledge and changes of the time, including the extreme complexity of the technological civilization and our telecommunications systems, together with the horrible dynamics of corporate greed and the globalization of human societies have worked to undermine the various forms that democracy has taken during the last two centuries. Obstinate continuation of “**crowd politics**” under all of these conditions is obviously no sound response. Moreover, the cellular structure, itself, must be adapted to the times. **A Technology of Democracy** is needed, to embrace the **New Agora**, and to squarely challenge the corporate greed that has already robbed the people of our democracy and threatens the extinction of all Planetary life! To discover the strength and learn how to embrace these ideas, one needs **Moral Imagination**. LoD has proposed **The Democracy Game** that each citizen can join to facilitate organization of this historical challenge.

The candidacy of Sen John Edwards has brought a magnificent gift to the American people: trust in a worthy leader who has deep understanding and a profound grasp of the threat we must all address. Edwards is the candidate who can best deliver the change that voters have shown they want; yet, Edwards has been sinking in the polls following the McClatchy poll published Dec 30. How can this be?

Reviews of Sen. Edwards performance at the New Hampshire debate, Saturday, Jan 5, clearly indicate that his performance was outstanding :

**George Stephanopoulos (ABC):** “Edwards showed passion and vitality and energy tonight. He was on-message. He had a strategy tonight. I think this was one of his best debates.”

**DailyKos:** “Edwards probably had the best performance of the night. He came across as passionate, and was more energetic than the other candidates. With the debate closing on economic issues, he was able to play his populist card to great effect and dominate the closing minutes of the debate.”

**AmericaBlog.com:** “Edwards is really unparalleled when it comes to connecting with people. I certainly find it very effective.”

**Rick Klein (ABC):** “Edwards may have turned in the strongest pure performance.”

**Matthew Yglesias (The Atlantic Monthly):** “John Edwards gave a fantastic answer about the need to combine short-term effects with a long-term commitment to 'rid the world of nuclear weapons' as part of a broad push to revitalize the non-proliferation framework.”

**New Hampshire Presidential Watch:** “The press center is eating-up John Edwards' attack on the status quo.”

**David Schuster (MSNBC):** “I thought the guy who stood out the most was John Edwards. Last night Edwards, who does not take money from corporate interests or PACs, hammered that issue again and again.”

**Rick Klein (ABC):** “John Edwards comes back to his message again and again, in an effective way. If a debate could vault him back into the game, he may be having that very debate.”

**Chuck Todd (NBC):** “Edwards, by the way, had a very good night.”

News reports of the debate tell a very different story, however. Despite Edwards' exceptional performance in the democratic debate Jan 5, the story was buried: by [Bloomberg.com](http://Bloomberg.com), by [FoxNews.com](http://FoxNews.com) by [The New York Times](http://TheNewYorkTimes.com), by [The Wall Street Journal](http://TheWallStreetJournal.com), by [Newsday.com](http://Newsday.com), and for Michael Dobbs at [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com), Sen Edwards simply did not exist.

Despite the exceptional ideas and advocacy offered by Sen. Edwards, his vital message was clearly not conveyed to the voters. Indeed, electioneering communications systems (i.e., cable, broadcast, or satellite communications), are designed to serve not the speaker or the listeners and viewers, but the media, itself. Marshall McLuhan, the sage of culture and technology, will be remembered for his metaphor "[the medium is the message](#)" suggesting that the content of communications are subjected to the control of the medium itself.

Investor driven politics combined with the influence of undependable electoral polls and the insidious machinations of the “Media Aristocracy” that is owned by capital, simply cannot or will not faithfully carry the story of Sen. Edwards challenge to the corrupt and corrosive system of political power. These instrumental systems have manifestly defeated the integrity of the democratic electoral system in America. Continuing dependency of American democracy upon these structures is a self-destructive illusion.

Sen. Edwards commented “the fight to save the middle class will be an epic battle, but I will never give up.”. It is a great paradox, however, to see this unprecedented effort to transform the American system of political power by means of the same method of “[crowd politics](#)” that has been the dominant mode of failed political discourse during the past 2500 years.

Americans need each other in this fight for our democracy. Every citizen is needed to become the first defense of our democracy and liberties as a witness to history and reporting the news of our favored candidate for public office, especially the one candidate who is pledged to take on “the entrenched moneyed interests who are strangling our government.” We should immediately convene a national dialogue and conference to take up this challenge.

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GOOGLE: LOVERS OF DEMOCRACY