

About the Humanist Party and the situation in the world

I think we are in a very interesting moment now in the Humanist Party worldwide. We are experiencing crisis and that is wonderful!! We are in a wonderful opportunity for reflection, asking ourselves who we are and where we are heading. And I have big faith that we will resolve our problems.

I must begin to say that I hate politics as in the “traditional” way, but I really, really love politics when it is about building the human being’s deepest aspirations. I really love what the Humanist Party stands for in the context of Humanizing the Earth.

In Iceland where I live and in the rest of the world we have suffered yet other crash of the financial system. It has brought with it - as in other crashes through times - a lot of human suffering and many people keep on suffering long after the financial system has recovered (at the cost of the general public). But at the same time we have noticed very interesting social phenomena like the Occupy Movements and the emerging of many interesting, more or less grass root groups and organizations challenging the existing order of new liberalism and the monopoly of the banks and their owners.

In Britain there is a group named „Positive Money“ <https://www.facebook.com/#!/PositiveMoney> putting forward the idea to take the power from the private banks to create money through debt, moving this power to the state, where the amount of money created will be decided by a democratically elected body. We have the concept of Unconditional Basic Income <https://www.facebook.com/#!/basic.income> coming up in many countries like Switzerland where they will have national referendum on this matter probably this year. Also it has been found that Cooperatives have endured the crash much better than private companies http://ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS_108416/lang--en/index.htm . And we remember the incredible Mondragon Cooperatives in Spain: <http://www.mondragon-corporation.com> . And we find a nice example of an interest free bank in Sweden: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aW2pj109Cr8> . In Iceland we have also an organization called ALDA (Icelandic name for Wave) for Real Democracy and Sustainability; <http://en.alda.is/> This organization is a legitimate child of the Pots and Pans revolution, founded by mostly philosophers and social scientists, students and professors, as a clear response to the lack of alternative social models to follow up the revolution. They seek reference in forum called Real Utopias in the USA <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/RealUtopias.htm> We in the HP in Iceland have worked very closely with them from the beginning and still do for conferences and social activities. And last but not least we have Prezzensa our wonderful international media for broadcasting the message of humanism to be heard in all corners of the earth.

Those are just a few examples of things moving “our way” some new and other older, but more positive developments will surely have happened that I do not know of or remember.

In the process of the financial crisis and its aftermath we also have had a very useful and inspiring document from the International Humanist Party “Posicionamiento del PHI frente a la situación mundial” from May 2012 where the IHP analyzes the world situation and puts forward the main political proposals of the IHP. This document prepared by the International Team as I understand was a great source of inspiration for us in Iceland when we prepared our political platform for the HP participation in the Parliamentary Elections in April 2013. We also had - during the time of Occupy and the Pots and Pans Revolution in Iceland - a very constructive cooperation with the grassroots groups and organizations formed during the “crash years” and we are still work with some of them.

So we have the financial crash, and we have many positive projects and grassroots initiatives emerging in the world and we have a great crisis in the Humanist Party. What more can we ask for 😊

Of course we are facing difficulties, but difficulties are beautiful learning opportunities. As I see it we tend to be caught in a dilemma between choices; on one hand whether we should present the coherent and revolutionary political program of the HP openly and without compromise at the cost of getting just a few votes (at least as it is) or on the other hand to work tactically with other political parties or governments - even some of the traditional ones - and get more votes or come into position of power and influence, but at the cost of our Ideals that never can be fully met within the existing political system. Also if we are too near to the powers we can lack in the freedom to protest and to express ourselves when those powers go against our basic ideas.

So I think our internal conflict is not about the basic ideas of the Humanist Party, I have not heard any voices opposing or disagreeing with the broad political evaluation and proposals of the IHP. Our internal conflict is mostly about tactics and it is about internal organization and the carrying out of a real direct democracy and open communication within our party and outward in the society.

I think in broad terms that the question of "tactics" need to be decided by the respective HP in each country. But the formulation of our general political message and the general internal organization and carrying out of a real democracy and open communication should be something addressed internationally according to our basic documents and our direction towards a Universal Human Nation.

Lastly I think that we need to be very good listeners, we need to be able to hear the grass growing... There is a big undercurrent of a new political or a social sensibility.... I suspect that the new generations are not thinking along the path of representative democracy. The young people I hear detest the politicians and their farce in Parliament. They think in the terms of the Internet and the access for everyone to take part..... they are for direct democracy in the schools and other spheres...and transparency in all fields. And the young people are not interested in Elections, we saw that very clearly in the last municipal elections this year in Iceland, with drastically less participation from new and younger voters.

Working and sharing with other progressive groups and organizations is also very interesting. I do not believe that the Humanist Party alone (or any other political party) will change the world, but we can give direction and inspire other groups, organizations and individuals moving in our frequency, and in the same direction towards Universal Human Nation.

With a big and warm hug to all,

Julius Valdimarsson

HP of Iceland