

# Aequis Libertas

The official newspaper of Eustory  
Academy Tallinn, 2012



**Why.** By Kätliin Lember

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**Russian Dance Instructions.**

By Anton Protasov

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**Critics on democracy.** By Federizo Zadra  
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**The end.** By Sander Udam

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### The editorial

This is the first issue of Aequalis Libertas. All the editors are tired, but rather happy, because after working for hours during Thursday night and an even busier Friday morning, we have finally finished the newspaper. When starting this newspaper, we weren't sure what should be inside, therefore we had a rough start. However, we got back on track and the articles were written.

The first (and possibly last) issue of our newspaper contains two summaries of the Academy. They analyse different aspects of the Academy, but both hope to help You remember our time together. Frederico wrote an article about the criticism of democracy throughout the history, as we have criticised it ourselves for an entire week.

We also have a short tutorial on Russian dance, written by Anton and on the entertainment page we have a crossword to test your recently obtained knowledge. As a hint it contains words from the mind map about democracy that we all did on the second day.

In the end we have treat for you, a collage from all of you that would help you to remember the academy, to remember the people here. It consumes the name and a short description of all academy members with a word they thought would describe themselves the best.

We hope you enjoy the newspaper,

The team.



And here we have our dear and unforgettable team leaders with the hope that one day we'll all meet again perhaps here in Tallinn, perhaps somewhere else..





**The end**

By Sander Udam

This is the summary of our Youth Academy in Estonia. Let me ask, what was the academy? Was it a place to learn new things? Was it a place to sharpen your debating skills or to make new friends? I'm certain that we all gained something from all of these aspects.

What did I learn?

The official goal, undoubtedly, was to educate young people, to make us think about politics, democracy, populism and the media and to get us interested in these topics. For one I'm sure, never before have I had so sophisticated conversations for such a long time period. We are able to stand for ourselves and make us heard!

Recently I've been to couple of lectures that are about populism, but Wednesday's lecture by Kadri Ugur was the best I've been to. Giving us information about the history of populism, thinking through some concepts, populism made itself clear for me and probably for most other listeners. We can spot populism and react to it!

Sometimes it were the discussion groups that actually generated many new ideas or brought out some detail, that we knew were there before, but hadn't turned much attention to them. Those who decided to try and give their best to the formation of discussion, found

that forming one's own opinion, can help create a working and functional system of thoughts, that were previously there, but lacked the structure. Having become easily understandable (for example: what is democracy and what do people consider to be democracy). We can think critically!

What I gained as a person?

It wasn't all learning though. Throughout the days, groups were held awake and satisfactory by numerous games, energizers and by just simple small-talk. It's certainly that which happened outside the studying, that all the students will take with them back to home from Estonia. Rarely do we see so many highly educated, active and happy young people together, sharing knowledge and information about their represented countries. It created an atmosphere, where conversations were not only interesting, but filled with intelligent remarks and well thought arguments.

I can say for sure (Sjur) that I have 25 new friends, all over Europe, and that this academy has been not just a great experience, but a beginning for many good friendships. Writing this, at Thursday evening, I'm feeling really sad that tomorrow is the last day of our academy and after that I will never see many of these people again. I think back to these days and can barely remember the time when I didn't know the people. I must apologize for myself and others,

that I haven't been actually able to get to know everyone as good as I could have. Luckily, due to the New Media (Facebook), I will hopefully be able to fill that hole.

But as always, every good thing has to come to its end, schools need to be visited more often and many tests to be taken. Tomorrow and at Saturday, last good byes will be said, hugs given and then we're all back at home – with our families and friends. It will be a back-to-ordinary transformation. But don't think so. Nothing will ever be the same. We have changed and also changed the others, at least I have.

Thank You.

Good bye!

**Why?**

By Kätliin Lember

For already a week now 25 young persons, somewhat activists already (how else could they be here at all?), have been elaborating on different aspects of democracy, its flaws, perks, enemies and allies. I think everybody leaves a piece of themselves behind and will not forget all that we've done, but still, it wasn't only for fun that all the wonderful people were flown together, was it? While going around and interviewing the Eustory group I had mainly one question in my head. I wanted to know why are we here in Tallinn talking about such a strange and contradictory little (or big?) thing like democracy? To explain it maybe a little better: what is it that we, the participants, are supposed to take back home with us? What may have been the initial aim that Ljubov and Tina wanted to reach when they started out with our group? Walking around our group of different personalities I got into quite a few interesting discussions that actually went a lot deeper than planned. With Sjur we reached the question about the challenges of the Norwegian Democracy and ended up talking about cultural differences as far as on the family level, but as it is not my duty to report on that without further due it's time to get to the

real story. So what do we think we gained from this eventful week full of talking and thinking and learning? I think a lot of us learned or, to be exact, improved their skills at all the previously mentioned activities, which already in itself is enough a reason to have this type of academies. By chance it happened that our team did not get an opportunity to present its discussion about the biggest challenges to democracy In our opinion while working with the quotes. Together with Petra, Martin and Björn we decided (Or did WE? It might as well be my populist decision and I think I am the one to blame.) not to raise our voices since our message was quite the same that almost everybody had come up with from their own personal angle. But I think it is the right time and place to correct my mistake now by inserting our idea here. Namely we found the biggest obstacle to an efficient democracy to be low participation: the fact that people whine but do nothing about the things they are not satisfied with, never take initiative. They genuinely tend not to care about our governing systems. It is as if many of them liked the idea of having the power of the people but at the same time preferred to have decisions and conclusions made for them not by them. I think that is where the snowball was supposed to start rolling. Moreover I think that the aim was for us to enroll all

that derives from this source during the week and in the end be aware of what it actually is that enables us to live the way we do today - in peaceful democracies. With time passing democracy seems to be taken for granted more and more when it actually can be sustainable only if the people that are supposed to have the say actually open their mouths and take action. Where better to start a change than from eager students that have the will and can gain the knowledge to make the world a better place, even though the phrase itself is quite cliché. So the exercises, simulations and lectures were there to provide us with the courage necessary to be able to step up either at school, in a local community or even a greater body of power. This courage comes from having knowledge which as we established is one of the basis of democracy and luckily it is what we have been obtaining the whole week. No one forces us to start great changes but the kind of discussions we have had made even me, the utter pessimist, wonder that it really is us, the young, that can do a lot thanks to our flexibility and innovation. Another trait that was in the mind of Tina when she thought of the aims of the program is critical thinking. Question everything. Question everything. Meanwhile try to keep sane, because it is said that it is unhealthy to think too much. Whether any of us actually obtained that ability is a



question itself but I think everybody is going to look at the media a little more suspiciously in the future. But to sum up my long blather: the answer to the posed question lies within ourselves. I guess we all came here to gain something- whether it was just the great company for some or the desire to be better or know better for others. Thanks to that we were open to new ideas and challenges and thanks to Ljubov's and Tina's dedicated work and shared care we are now ready to enter the world and become the rightful and perhaps active citizens that we now at the age of (almost for all) or over 18 are allowed to be. Such events are already a form of active participation and I think are one of the few effective ways to grow the interest in democracy in the young. I'm grateful for the possibility to take part and at the same time sad that not everyone can have such motivating academies. At least not yet. I hope that there will be a day that they can. Full stop. Leaving behind the serious stuff, I personally think that we are much cooler people now and with that I want thank You all for this incredible week.

### **Let's Learn Russian Traditional Dance.**

By Anton Protasov

Russian Traditional Dance has a long history. There is a story, dating back to the 10th Century, about a man in Kiev. He was a shoe-maker, and spent all of his days sitting down to work. The story goes that one day while he was out stretching his legs with his "dance" moves, the Grand Duke Vladimir Monomah was passing by. The Duke so liked what he saw, that he invited the man to his palace to perform these dances for him every morning, noon and night over dinner.

It was customary that each Russian Duke (and later the Tsars) had many special entertainers, such as dancers, and actors, to perform for them, and perhaps this is one reason why the traditional dances have remained such an important aspect of Russian culture.

Russian Traditional Dance can be described in three words: rich, dynamic, colorful. It consists of different elements such as:

- "prisjadka" - dancers are jumping on the floor as if trying to stretch their legs after sitting for a long time;
- "khorovod" - all dancers are dancing together in a circle;
- "koza" - the goat dance, etc.

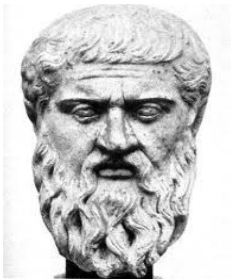
I am major in "Kalinka" and "Cossak" dance, because in my opinion it is the most beautiful and complex. If you learn russian dance you will discover its philosophy and it will help you to understand deeply "mysterious Russian soul" which includes more than 100 nationalities. Your attitude towards the Russian culture will be changed too.

I hope you will be brave to learn Russian traditional dance and enjoy it

**Critics on democracy.**

From ancient Greece to nowadays.  
By Federico Zadra

Generally we found democracy in the 508 BC in Athens but we have many examples of democracies that started before the Athenian one. From 508 BC to now the concept and the modality of democracy has changed, but the main meaning remained the same: "Power of the citizens". The ancient Athene was an example of direct democracy. The whole men who were considered citizens could vote for any problem. However, this form of government has suffered a lot of



Plato (428 BC - 348 BC) critique.

A great example is **Plato**. Plato rejected Athenian democracy on the fact that it seemed to be more like an anarchy than a democracy. He wrote on one of his Socratic dialogs, Πολιτεία (The Republic), that he thinks that in Athens freedom is confused for anarchy. Maybe he wrote it because Athenian democracy killed Socrates, maybe not.

During the first century BC another great philosopher spoke again about democracy: **Cicero**.

Cicero in his "Res Publica" (he copied the title from Plato's opera) explained his political theory on governments, and it criticized a lot the "equality", one of the base concepts of democracy. For him all citizens aren't equal, therefore the people must not have the same rights to vote.

During the Italian Renaissance **Machiavelli**, who emphasized that representative democracy without populism can't exist. He thought that populism is the main factor that degenerates Democracies in Anarchy.

The greatest critique to democracies, however, was made during the last two centuries. The last two centuries had a boom in philosophy. In particular in the last century we had **B. Russell**. Russell didn't directly criticize democracy: he criticized the concept of democracy during the Cold War.



**B. Russell (1872 - 1970)**  
*"West of the Iron Curtain the word democracy is generally taken as implying that ultimate power is in the hands of the majority of an adult population. East of the Iron Curtain it means military dictatorship by a certain small minority of people who have chosen to call themselves democrats."* (What

is Democracy? The Batchworth Press, 1s 6d)

His main point was that democracy may not be a positive, good and at the same time go with persecution and intolerance, but is the best method to avoid the birth of the group that ill-treats the rest of the society.

After Russell we can find a lot of criticisms of democracy. One is the intrinsic **democracy paradox**: "If the greatest part of the population don't want a Democracy, it will die, nevertheless, if we decide to oppose, it will be the end of democracy because the people don't have the right to decide."

Another criticism concerns the voting system. **Arrow's impossibility theorem** proves that if the voters have more than 2 alternatives it will not be a democratic vote – the winner might actually not have the support of the majority (50% + 1); but not being able to found a third party would be against the democratic principles. Arrow's theorem for politics is considered the same of the Godel theorem for mathematics. We have jumped over many thinkers who have criticized democracy, so we have to mention also: Nietzsche, Tolstoy, and many other.

Even though democracy has received a great amount of criticism throughout history, the criticism has probably had one of the biggest impacts on the development of democracy and thus because of the criticism, have democracies developed into what they are now.

**Poll.**

By Sander Udam

During our stay at the Hugo Treffner Gymnasium and the train ride back to Tallinn, I conducted a small survey among most of the members of the academy. The main objective of the poll was to map the attitude of academy members towards different democracy-related topics, which we also touched during our discussions.

One part of the survey asked about students' opinions about democracy, how well it works and whether there should be exceptions, where democracy isn't honoured. Second part of the survey asked about people's personal societal-political activity.

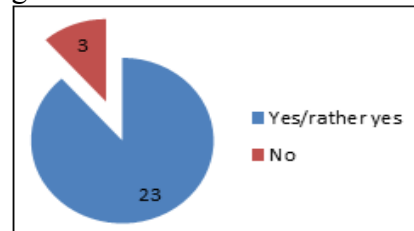
Considering our week long discussions about the flaws of democracy, it isn't a surprise that almost everyone thought that democracy has its great flaws, but only few of us dared to admit, that democracy isn't the best and should sometimes be overruled.

It's interesting that exactly half of the people polled considered themselves to be active in politics, while the other half didn't. It's also in correlation with the number of people who have been/are active in their school student councils, because ten participants admitted being involved with the councils and considered it having the biggest effect of the society they have made.

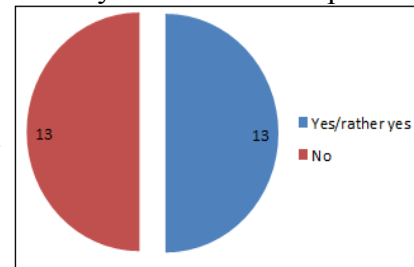
It's important to note that not all academy members were polled

and that some of the leaders were polled. This poll only hopes to represent the view of the academy members.

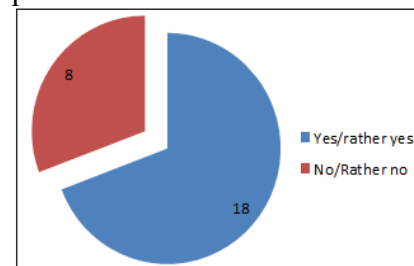
**1. Number of people who think democracy is the best form of government**



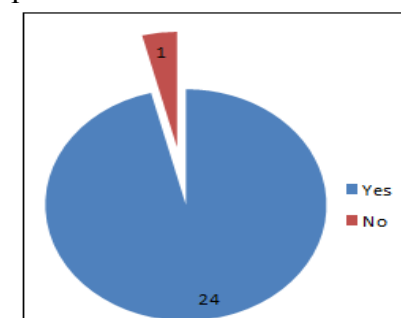
**2. Number of people who are actively involved with politics.**



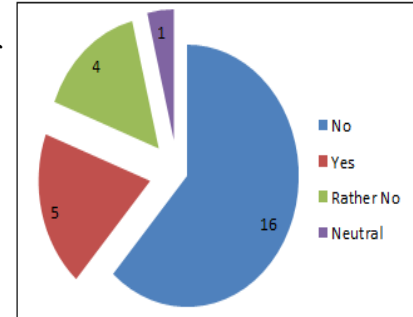
**3. Number of people who feel that they are able to influence politics.**



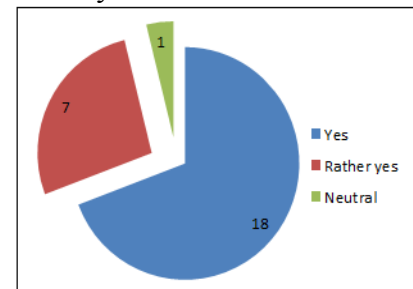
**4. Number of people that think democracy doesn't work in some situations on national politics**



**5. Number of people who think that these situations should be solved using non-democratic methods if possible.**

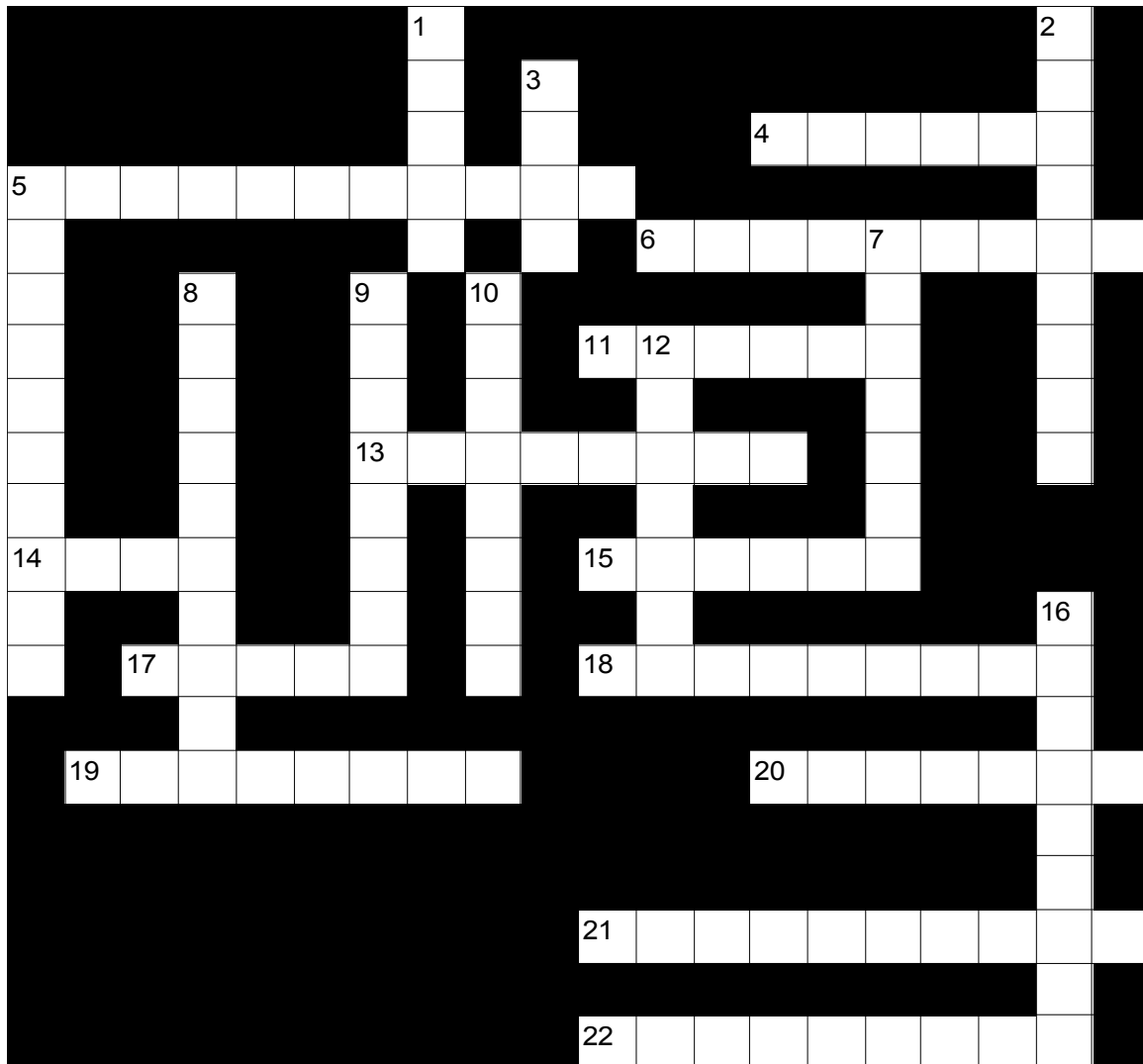


**6. People who think their country is democratic**





# CROSSWORD



Down:

**1.**“The fourth power” **2.** The time of the year when politics come to life **3.** The first word to describe democracy (hint: think back to the beginning **5.** Abuse of power **7.** Acknowledging other peoples opinions is showing... **8.** A group of people living on a certain area **9.** Source of force **10.** A political movement orientated to the people mostly **11.** Subjective argumentation **12.** Something very controvercial we should all know by heart now. **16.** Majoritarian decision-making process

Across: **4.** The unknown ahead of us **5.** The lose-lose situations **6.** Multitude **11.** The vulnerable yet most powerful group in politics **13.** Aequalitas **14.** The product of thinking **15.** The form of democracy that is practiced in Switzerland for example **17.** In democracy not participating is my ... **18.** The source of education **19.** The people left out of the decision-making **20.** The ability to do what You want **21.** The representative of the people **22.** The biggest part.



Petra: "food"



Ljubov: "shrimp"



Martin: "nerd"



Eva: "friendly"



Estera: "crazy"



Ruth: "nice"



Federico: "research"



Ingrid: "active"



Inés: "smiley"



Anton: "the happy small elephant"



Tina: "traveller"



Mara: "concrete"



Bianka: "strawberries"



Linda: "talkative"



Ania: "the fantastic spring chocoholic"

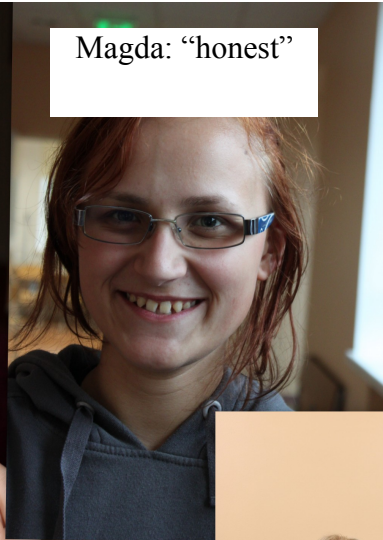




Ola: "multifascitated"



Silvia: "creative"



Magda: "honest"



Sjur: "ecstatic"



Kätliin: "the pessimist"



Mare: "diverse"



Tiiu: "history"



Björn: "open-minded"



Matilda: "cheerful"



Anne-Mari: "clumsy"



Hanna: "perky"



Flore: "chocolate"



Sander: "super-smart"