

Debate on Sortition

Marxism Channel

27th August, 2012

Disclaimer: the position taken in this debate by modulus and VIPPER was *for the sake of the argument* and does not correspond to their actual position.

VIPPER First I'll explain this debate's structure, since it's a little different

VIPPER In previous debates we have done free-for-alls, but this debate is a team debate

VIPPER The structure is similar: there are constructives, cross-examinations, and rebuttals

VIPPER However, instead of each person doing two of each, each team will do two of each So instead of, say, me doing first and second constructive, I may do first and my partner will do second, and we will each do our respective cross-examinations

VIPPER The order you go for constructive will determine the order that you go in rebuttal And only one team member may answer questions during cross-examination

VIPPER You are encouraged to collaborate with your team members throughout the debate

VIPPER In addition, you can write things down during an opponent's phase and paste it during your own in order to get more said, although this often comes at the price of not being as concentrated as to what they are saying

VIPPER You will receive five minutes of extra time to be used whenever you wish: to extend your phase or even in between phases to prepare. You can use this in whatever increment you wish

VIPPER Since we don't have a real moderator this time I'll be both participating and moderating, except during my own phase, in which case either jacobian or modulus should moderate for me to prevent bias

VIPPER I will now voice you and you may ask any questions

VIPPER In addition, I pose the question of prep time: do you guys want a few minutes to collaborate with your team members before first constructive?

modulus I think i'm ok as it is

jacobian Who will do moderation though

modulus I think it would be best if jacobian moderates VIPPER since i'm your co-debater, so one from each team

VIPPER jacobian: I will moderate for everyone except myself

VIPPER You will moderate for me if you so choose

VIPPER So what about prep time?

VIPPER Is anyone for it?

jacobian Yeah, I need a moment

modulus Ok

modulus BTW, order of debate?

modulus Also, someone keeping logs?

VIPPER I'm keeping logs

VIPPER Order of debate is the affirmative team first (jacobian & Q) and negative team second

modulus Also for all non-debaters, you can join #marxism-ot to talk

VIPPER The order in which team members speak, however, is determined within the team

jacobian Ok, do teams choose order?

VIPPER Don't get too worked up about this: this debate is essentially preparation for the EU one and hopefully we can have a bit of a laid-back feel

VIPPER Any more comments or questions?

modulus None here

modulus I hope it won't happen but I may have to pause for dinner

VIPPER Also, please inform me who will be going first in the affirmative team when you are ready

VIPPER jacobian, Q-collective: Are you ready or do you need more prep time?

Q-collective Still discussing this :)

VIPPER Alright, no rush

Q-collective Ok, ready to start

VIPPER Alright

VIPPER Who's going first?

VIPPER You?

Q-collective Yup

VIPPER Alright

VIPPER You may start now

Q-collective The subject of today is demarchy or sortition. Now, what is meant by this? I'll start with a short bit that I also used in a previous debate. It's not much, but enough to get this started:

Q-collective The concept of demarchy seems difficult, but is actually quite simple and revolves around a few key concepts:

Q-collective 1. All positions are not elected but selected by lottery, much like juries are formed in the US judiciary system.

Q-collective 2. All positions are not filled by a single person (like ministers, etc) but by a group of people that statistically represent the collective.

Q-collective 3. All positions have a high turnover rate, time between selections shouldn't be longer than a year.

Q-collective This has several implications:

Q-collective 1. Since the positions that are filled are statistically representative of the collective, we can genuinely state that “the people are in power” (dêmos and kratos, the two Greek words making up “democracy”). As Aristotle put it, which was well known with the concept of lottery-democracy which was common practice in Athens:

Q-collective “. . . But one factor of liberty is to govern and be governed in turn; for the popular principle of justice is to have equality according to number, not worth, and if this is the principle of justice prevailing, the multitude must of necessity be sovereign and the decision of the majority must be final and must constitute justice, for they say that each of the citizens ought to have an equal share; so that it results that in democracies the poor are more powerful than the rich, because there are more of them and whatever is decided by the majority is sovereign.” (*Politics Book 6 Part II*, Emphasis by me)

Q-collective 2. Since everyone “governs and is governed in turns”, this requires a rather high level of general education among the whole party membership and, since the party-movement seeks to replace society by a new one, indeed the whole working class. Educational societies are not just a nice feature of alternative culture, but an essential component.

Q-collective 3. It also implies a party-movement of genuine mass proportions. Indeed, such a model can only work on a massive scale. It is not said that the left, if it was to unite, could already implement demarchy in all aspects. Indeed, as you put it, in the beginning we would probably need a brand of “enlightened moderators”.

Q-collective 4. In extension to the last two points: Demarchy is the concrete link between the party-movement and the society of the future. The party-movement represents the politically conscious part of our class that wants to take power and if it doesn't consist of the majority of the working class outright, the majority has to be sympathetic to this project.

Q-collective Conclusion for this short intro: Sortition is the genuine form of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the way our class can organize itself as a class-collective. It undermines the need for entrenched bureaucracies and instead builds on the principle Lenin summarized as “if everyone is a bureaucrat, then no one is”.

Q-collective I think I'll leave it at that for now.

VIPPER Alright

VIPPER Cross-ex

VIPPER Right

VIPPER Cross-ex is now

VIPPER So let's start

Q-collective Ok

modulus Q-collective: you speak of the juries in the US judicial system as a case of sortition. yet they are far more conservative and unenlightened than, say, french criminal justice, judge-led. can you explain this discrepancy?

VIPPER Time is up

Q-collective The US jury system is not exactly a genuine sortition system as it operates within a rule of law context that is indeed very conservative, neither am I saying that sortition by itself is a panacea for all our problems. I was merely giving an example of sortition in practice, for those not familiar with the concept.

VIPPER Although I guess we'll let Q-collective's answer stand

VIPPER NOW it's my turn

VIPPER Alright, tell me when to start

jacobian When ready

VIPPER Alright

VIPPER We cannot broach the topic of sortition without first examining the "why" of the question: that is, "why" sortition as a mode of government is inherently better than another. The answer is that it is allegedly more fair and democratic than elections, which are a so-called "aristocratic" principle.

VIPPER But Marxists cannot be compelled to bow down before the altar of democracy: the question of "why" must be extended to the question of democracy as a whole. We cannot say that proletarian dictatorship is a government wherein the majority of the population, even if they are mostly proletarians; a perfectly democratic state that, nevertheless, continually elected capitalists and bourgeois parties to positions of power could not be considered a proletarian dictatorship; likewise if the proletariat directly exercised power, but, owing to their consciousness, did so on bourgeois terms. Proletarian dictatorship can only be determined by a revolutionary communist content.

VIPPER Therefore, we say that democracy is not a principle of proletarian dictatorship: the dictatorship of the proletariat does not depend on ephemeral forms but exists as the "conscious dictatorship of the socialist party" (*Serrati*). Therefore, to us, a proletarian dictatorship is a state ruled by the party of the proletariat in the interests of

the proletariat and against the bourgeoisie: whether or not we are to support it based on statistical majorities is an abandonment of the proletarian cause and is a democratic and libertarian deviation.

VIPPER The Marxist method allows us to see classes not in the bourgeois sense, as static groups of certain income, but in a historical and dialectical sense, as actors in history with conflicting interests and burning antagonisms

VIPPER A proletarian dictatorship can only be a dictatorship in the interests of the proletariat, codified in their highest form by the communist program, by the proletarian class party

VIPPER To attempt to fix the problem of revolutionary rule by tinkering with forms is absurd

VIPPER Is democracy incompatible with this dictatorship? By no means. If the party is able to lead a statistical majority of the population then by all means it has every right to rule democratically. But we should not be fooled into thinking this is the only form in which a proletarian dictatorship can come about. The party, of course, needs a sizeable base in order to rule, but this is not guaranteed to be a majority and it does not strive for one based on a deference to democratic principles but on a tactical consideration of stable rule

VIPPER Therefore the question of sortition as opposed to elections is, in its essence, a secondary one to democracy as opposed to proletarian dictatorship.

VIPPER We cannot say that sortition is inherently superior or inferior to another form based on abstract theorizing

VIPPER The correct form, sortition or not, can only be deduced from the social and material context in which it is placed

VIPPER Nevertheless, even if we are to assume that democracy is a suitable form, we cannot say that sortition is the correct system of democratic methodology

VIPPER This is something my partner will get into in our next constructive

VIPPER I would wish to end my constructive by summarizing my point as: democracy is not a principle for us, and therefore the consideration of sortition as a form cannot take place on the basis of whether it is more or less democratic than elections

jacobian Ok

VIPPER Cross-ex!

Q-collective Your first attempt at an answer seems to attack the notion of democracy as such and in its place puts the dictatorship of the party (as opposed to the class?). This definition of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is from the early comintern (second

congress), which was a reply to the failure of direct soviet rule and was worked out by, for example, Bordiga for it completely trashes the concept of democracy.

Q-collective For my part I completely disagree with this proposition as it is inherently a Stalinist trap in my view. The party cannot rule "in the interests of the working class" if the class didn't have anything to say about it. Instead it creates a void between class and party that cannot be bridged. We end up with bans on fractions and all that Stalinist crap.

Q-collective So, my questions: Why narrowly define democracy as *bourgeois* democracy and why defend the stalinoid model of party as rules *over* the class "in their interest"?

VIPPER Well first I would like to address your concern: we must recognize the corollary to your concern that the party cannot rule in the interests of the class without the class having "anything to say about it." Well, first of all, there is no guarantee that the class would rule in its own interests anyway: in Germany 1919 the workers voted en masse for the SPD which sold them out. Likewise even in the bourgeois democracies the proletariat, for the most part, does not rule in its own interests

VIPPER I'd like to take two minutes please

jacobian Ok

VIPPER Second of all the essence of Stalinism is not "rule over the workers" but the rule of a counter-revolutionary and bureaucratic clique over the workers

VIPPER The dictatorship of the Stalinist party has nothing to do with the dictatorship of a genuine revolutionary party

VIPPER And, third of all, while it may not be democratic in the last instance the system in place may in fact interact to a great extent with the mass of the population

Q-collective how?

VIPPER And a ban on fractions is not inherent in any sort of party dictatorship

VIPPER Well look at the experience of the post-civil war Soviet state

VIPPER The soviets were by no means "free"

VIPPER The Bolshevik party was without question the ruling party

VIPPER Yet it interacted with the masses in a variety of ways, through the unions and the factory councils and so on

VIPPER There was a great deal of attention called to the "non-party masses" even if in the end the party was the master of the state

jacobian Time, unless you want more from your reserve

VIPPER No, I'm done

jacobian The dictatorship of the proletariat is in my view quite a confused concept in the history of socialism which has saddled us with a number of unnecessary problems.

jacobian Firstly, the proletariat itself as the revolutionary class was a hypothesis, rather than a moral judgement. It need not be the proletariat and as the change in economic conditions advances, we must be able to reorientate ourselves according to these conditions. It has never been the case that a too narrow acceptance of the proletariat as the only important actor has been successful.

jacobian The problems here quite apparent in the peculiar fact of the substitution of the Bolshevik party, representing the supposed *interests* of the proletariat, but actually being composed of the precarious petty bourgeoisie in large part.

jacobian This party which took dictatorship to mean dictatorial control *over* the peasant class, and in so doing annihilated the peasant class as well as the proletariat.

jacobian The fundamental problem that the Bolsheviks faced is that a society which does not function on acceptance, must rule by force.

jacobian The fundamental reason for the democratic principle is not some “deviation”—it is in fact in opposition to idealism.

jacobian The idealism is that the perfect society needs only to choose the right goal—in fact, it’s much harder. You must also get society to cooperate with you.

jacobian The democratic principle is essentially a principle of expanding cooperation amongst the various actors in society.

jacobian Now, in our current social order, it is very difficult for us to have any voice when compared with the bourgeois class.

jacobian The idea of democracy is really so distorted by their control that we might look at democracy as a whole as corrupt and unworthy of saving—indeed I think this is the reason for so much interest in anarchism and various left communist currents in recent times.

jacobian However, there are reasons that an electoral democracy is more subject to control by such forces than a sortition based democracy would be.

jacobian Exercising controlling power over a group brought about by random lottery would be made much more difficult. Instead of cultivating those friendly to your interests, slowly building up alliances within those groups and attempting to move decision making towards success for capital, capital would have to focus on a broader education campaign that was more extensive than simply causing apathetic agreement.

VIPPER Time’s up!

jacobian It would in fact require that when people make decisions they make them on

behalf of capital—this is a first step towards a society in which the general populace would be in more control—and elites would find it more difficult to function in the political regime.

jacobian Can I have 2 more minutes

VIPPER Sure thing

jacobian The particular example of the USSR was brought up—this is indeed a very good example of the problems of the party as dictator.

jacobian Firstly, the capacity of those outside of the party to change the political regime are incredibly small.

jacobian This means that if one is ambitious, one needs to join the party.

jacobian The result of this type of regime is a climbing act of the most regressive elements of society which would like to obtain some differential benefit going up the ladder.

jacobian To counter-act this you can have periodic purges on various bases—you can ban factions, ban people for supposed bourgeois tendencies—because they are “capitalist roaders”, because they have petty bourgeois background etc.

VIPPER Time’s up again

jacobian In the end however you will create an "immune-system disorder"

jacobian 2 more?

VIPPER Sure

jacobian The purges will lead to the external dictatorship turning inwards—and eventually to a very hierarchical party.

jacobian Worse, you have generated a situation in which the bureaucracy flourishes. It’s not simply a question of whether or not we want a healthy party or a party with an unaccountable bureaucracy—these things are not entirely unrelated to form.

jacobian Now, the question of whether form is sufficient—well it certainly is not.

jacobian We need to have a population interested in *socialism* and this is the critical need—nothing else can bring it about—however, in the current situation it would be quite difficult to have much access to parliament even in the event that they did—or in the transitional society it would be quite difficult to keep it from becoming controlled by a calcified bureaucracy.

jacobian The form can help with these problems.

jacobian Done

VIPPER Alright, cross-ex time

modulus Given the issue of goals, cooperation and force, what is better, to go to

heaven by force or to hell by cooperation?

jacobian Well, I suppose that's partly a dialectic isn't it—you'll always need a bit of push at the edge by the vanguard—however, the outcome of the trip to hell by force has been displayed.

jacobian The difficulties which the USSR encountered did not produce a legacy that was easy for the western socialists to swallow

jacobian Some of that was due to liberalism—but some of it is just down to the terrible difficulty of supporting the cominform

modulus If you hold parties are bound to degenerate, why does this not happen to the bourgeois parties?

jacobian Stalinism so distorted the project, and it is so indefensible that it make things generally quite difficult.

jacobian Parties are not bound to degenerate—they are bound to be pushed around by the mode of production that actually exists.

jacobian The change that took place in the 30s was a kind of boarder-line slave labour command economy which distorted the political regime in its wake.

VIPPER Alright, modulus' turn

modulus Hello, comrades. comrade VIPPER has explained the limitations of sortition as they regard to any particular form.

modulus I will be more concrete and refer to sortition's own limitations as a form, even conceding that, unlike our position, democracy may be an actual principle.

modulus There are a number of reasons which make more commonly practiced forms more desirable.

modulus Apathy. Not everyone is interested in participating in political life. The imposition that they do is a time tax that would effectively be a regression to feudal times.

modulus Not since then have people been effectively forced to contribute in time to the public administration.

modulus As well as problematic on the standpoint of individual self-determination, it would be problematic as to results; as it is known that compulsory labour is seldom well realised, much less when it is of a directive character.

modulus Another point lies in the matter of the sampling. How shall we choose the sample from which to sortition?

modulus If you say the whole society, we find ourselves before the problem of those who would ordinarily not be considered capable: children, the insane, or those who

cannot physically or mentally participate in such a process.

modulus And once that the principle of strict statistical sampling is abandoned, it is an ever-growing temptation to abandon it even further. Indeed, where lies the precise point at which we must stop?

modulus The representation offered by sortition is also inferior to that offered by elections in that it is perfectly possible, and it will happen with relative regularity, that the formation of a sortitioned body will be dissimilar in composition from that offered up by an electoral system.

modulus Moreover, in an electoral system, many people who could otherwise not be properly represented under sortition as they would be unable to do the work of legislating directly would be properly represented through the election of people who would support their interest.

modulus At last, we cannot speak of proper representation after a selection has occurred, as those people who have been selected are changed by this fact and can no longer be said to represent society's views, but the views of that subset of society which got selected for sortition.

modulus Hence, all claims that sortition is a superior democratic form even in terms of fair representation, are void.

modulus Done.

VIPPER Alright

VIPPER Cross-ex time

...

VIPPER Alright since we have to get back on track that will end the 'cross-ex'

jacobian Ok

VIPPER Alright, now we're moving into the rebuttal phase

Q-collective Sure

VIPPER The affirmative will go first again, Q is up

Q-collective This will take some concentration as I have a lot to say. Brace yourselves.

Q-collective Given earlier replies, and to build on Jacobian's constructive, I would like to wander a bit deeper on the question of truth. How do we know "the truth"? **VIPPER** in his first constructive makes the argument that we must have a genuine revolutionary party and that democracy plays no fundamental role in this. I asked how to fill then the void between the class and the party and got a somewhat mystified response on it.

Q-collective First in the abstract: Our politics are about the collective of the working class, we seek to empower the working class to be able to organise, emancipate and

liberate itself from capitalism. In other words: Communists seek for the working class to become the new ruling class.

Q-collective However, put in simple terms, *I* know nothing about our collective. *You* know nothing about the collective. *We* might know a very little bit. The bigger the group grows, the higher our understanding of our class and of knowledge in general.

Q-collective However, there is inevitably going to be disagreement. On a personal level we are talking about life experiences, the fact that you're a man or woman, black or white, the education you got, the papers you read, the friends you have, the work you do... is inevitably going to have a reflection on the political ideas you have. On a macro-level there are many currents in the working class movement, some revolutionary, others not, that form the vanguard of the working class. With "vanguard" I mean the most politically aware and militant workers, the actual leaders-on-the-ground that matter.

Q-collective This is why I believe VIPPER's earlier remarks are troublesome: They do not view things from the collective, seek to empower the collective, but put "the party" on a pedestal over the rest of the class.

Q-collective So I want to shed some light on another dimension of sortition, besides the organisation. Namely the educational.

Q-collective So, how do we solve the issue of building our class movement with so many different ideas and currents of thought and experiences? The answer is obvious: Democratically!

Q-collective It needs to be explained here that democracy is meant to be a dialectical process: Opposites conflict and, tried and tested, form a new insight that the collective learns.

Q-collective This is the basic idea of democratic-centralism, which Lenin so famously captured in his phrase "freedom of discussion, unity in action". You could alternatively capture it by saying there is "unity in disagreement".

Q-collective However, the "common sense" on the left (sorry to broaden this VIPPER) does not see it this way. For historical reasons and because most leftwing groups have been reduced to irrelevance, a new content has replaced this method by something else. The idea is that we already have all the experiences, ideas and theories due to the accrued history of the working class movement of the last two centuries. The left groups see themselves as a continuation of this tradition (most groups insisting that they have that monopoly, the other groups are just ultra-left/revisionist/sectarian/etc.). All we then logically need to do is: a) recruit the people to these ideas and b) "agitate, agitate,

agitate" these ideas into the mass movement. This makes them objectively sectarian as it is not the point to organise the class as a collective, but to institute their group as the leadership over the class, only reaching out to a section (hence sectarian) of the working class vanguard.

Q-collective "Oh but wait!" I can hear VIPPER, "I am democratic! I support conferences, discussions with the party, etc.". Be that as it may, and most groups do have some sort of democratic process, these are ultimately undemocratic. Why? There is a big difference between *formal* democracy (conferences, congresses, etc) and *dialectical* democracy (a debating culture).

Q-collective So, sortition requires a *high* culture of politics or it will not work. This is why sortition can't in my view be seen separated from the party-movement and why I called earlier on for the communists of the world to unite, they have nothing to loose but their sects ;)

Q-collective The point, in the end, is that the working class is not a "natural entity" under capitalism, like for example a family is. If it is to unite and emancipate itself and become a ruling class, we *need* democracy and (as such) sortition as the genuine expression of its collective rule.

Q-collective I'll leave it at that. Thank you :)

VIPPER Alright

VIPPER My turn then!

VIPPER I must here object that comrade Q-collective has misunderstood the thesis that I put forth. Contrary to his quip, I have no intention of objecting that I am democratic or that I support the mechanisms of formal democracy: in fact I have no care to do so either.

VIPPER Rather, I have said that the question of democracy as a whole, either "bourgeois" or "workers'" democracy, is on the whole a secondary question

VIPPER In Marxian terms we can define a state by what class interests and property forms it defends: you could have a state made with perfect sortition or workers' councils or liquid democracy or whatever form you choose as your fetish coupled with a proletarian majority of enormous proportions. However, if they simply elected bourgeois representatives or reactionaries, then could we call this a proletarian dictatorship, despite the fact that, politically, the class in its majority is being represented?

VIPPER I must answer "no"

VIPPER The dictatorship of the proletariat can only be the dictatorship of the class-conscious elements of the proletariat, i.e. the class party

VIPPER If this party is able to rule by winning elections or being sorted through lottery then so be it, but let us not worship this particular form

VIPPER The whole idea that we need a majority must be scrapped in favor of class analysis

VIPPER Therefore, my critique of sortition is as such: sortition, as a form of democracy, cannot be said to be "the" form of the proletarian dictatorship, or the "best" form

VIPPER In fact there is no such thing

VIPPER The only way to determine the best form is by looking at the social context in which we act

VIPPER Now this is a criticism which my opponents have yet to adequately address

VIPPER Likewise, they have not addressed the specific issues of the demarchic form

VIPPER Which comrade modulus has laid out for us

VIPPER One point which he mentioned and which I would like to expand on is apathy

VIPPER In elections, only those who are interested are going to run: there is no risk of choosing someone who is completely uninterested and thus will do their job in a half-assed fashion

jacobian Time

VIPPER I'd like two minutes please

jacobian Ok

jacobian Time

VIPPER In sortition this is not the case: we see it all the time where sortition is done today. Jury duty in the US is in fact something that is dreaded, because people hate it as it is tedious and boring, not unlike most public administration jobs. I personally know a man who doesn't get citizenship precisely because he doesn't want to have to be eligible for jury duty. The random selection of persons for office does not take into account their enthusiasm and emotional well-being for the job they are taking. Whereas in an electoral system only the interested run, in a sortition system the uninterested may be chosen as well, to detrimental effect.

VIPPER Seeing as how I don't have much time left I'll leave it at that, for my partner to expand on in his rebuttal of the main points of the opposing team.

jacobian Ok

VIPPER jacobian: You're up

jacobian First, I'd like to go back to the question of sortition positions with respect

to the complaints made by modulus regarding apathy, and forced labour.

jacobian These are certainly interesting questions, and from our limited use of sortition currently in juries, we know that apathy and disinterest are elements that can in fact manifest.

jacobian However, I think there are sufficient amelioratives for these problems, and that while they are problems they are less difficult problems to overcome than some problems which might arise in the use of elections.

jacobian The problem of apathy in juries is reinforced by the incredibly poor pay that people obtain from being involved in jury trials. The very low pay and the loss of time at work are a big part of the reason that juries will tend towards the more conservative.

jacobian That is, the types of people who are able to actually stay on juries will often be older, better off, and hence socially in the more conservative stratum

jacobian If you have a well remunerated position, or the access to the social product is not a problem for those who are involved in some deliberative body this problem would be much reduced.

jacobian Secondly, the use of media in order to describe the deliberations of bodies which are being assembled would make the position of some body like a congress drawn by sortition much more interesting to the public.

jacobian The public has repeatedly shown an interest in people who are drawn for various different types of competitions or lotteries, if the public fully expected that they too might be at the centre of attention some day, they would likely pay a very keen interest in such a body.

jacobian So there may be some aspect of spectacle that would be required to drive interest in such a body—combined with suitable compensation for time not being involved in some other labour.

jacobian In terms of the question of whether or not it be *forced* that's a decision that could be made by allowing people to choose not to engage.

jacobian It is quite difficult to imagine how not allowing some sort of opt out principle could really be feasibly managed.

jacobian So the problem of coercion could drop to the wayside as well.

jacobian In terms of the representation by elections being more representative than someone who is chosen by sortition, I think this is dubious for a number of reasons.

jacobian Firstly, when someone is elected, rarely is much known about what policies choices they will be faced with in the coming period—neither is it usual to know even what their current political choices will be—only what they say they will do, which often

diverges quite radically from what they actually will do.

jacobian Instead, what tends to happen is that a section of society that fits a certain stereotype of image-coupled with a self-selection on those who are most ambitious, often to the point of psychopathy.

VIPPER Time's up

jacobian This group can hardly be considered representative of the general population—instead it tends to be a sort of aristocracy.

jacobian I have one minute left in my bank?

VIPPER Sure

jacobian By contrast, those drawn by sortition will be a statistically representative sample of the population, guaranteeing that minority voices who would generally go silent can be chosen, and making it so that those who are less forward and self-selecting, but still interested in being politically engaged can be involved—and these are often the best people!.

jacobian Done

VIPPER Alright

VIPPER modulus next and then we're done

modulus Thanks to the comrades for their participation.

modulus In particular, one of the most illuminating points in this debate was when comrade Q-collective answered my question about juries.

modulus As he points out, juries are institutions which take place in the context of the rule of law, so they have outcomes we should not necessarily expect of sortition under a different mode of production.

modulus And again, looking at jacobian's position regarding the degeneration of parties, parties are pulled by the mode of production under which they develop their tasks.

modulus From these two viewpoints, the core position of comrade VIPPER emerges, so to speak, fully armoured like Athena out of Zeus's head: we cannot look at the question of forms in isolation.

modulus The actual matter is the total composition of society. Sortition under the regime of commodity production shouldn't be assumed to yield any better results than any other form pulled by such a mode of production.

modulus As an exemplar, Switzerland, where people have a very broad power, through referendum, to modify their policies, and what they choose to do is banning minarets.

modulus Comrade jacobian objects to the position that sortition is not advantageous

grounding his argument in the necessity of a pro-capitalist educational campaign above and beyond what already exists, so that sortitioned persons would in effect act as capitalist representatives.

modulus I say: is that campaign already not in place? Is this not the object, and in any event the outcome, of the state control of public education, in particular of that offered to workers, as well as of other means of indoctrination such as military service, and the like?

modulus Furthermore, is such an educational campaign not taking place in the form of advertising and marketing, and through the use of less overtly doctrinaire means such as talk programmes on the media?

modulus Now, referring to the matter of coercion. There is nothing wrong as such with requiring people from participating in tasks that are necessary to the reproduction of society.

modulus The problem with sortition as a time tax is that it is inherently inequitable. While other taxes are in contrast applied equally, sortition is applied to the unfortunates whose names are drawn.

modulus Nor can we easily escape this problem by merely raising the possibility of sortition being through opt-in or opt-out.

modulus In such a case, the non-participation in the system would be equivalent to a complete disenfranchisement, and the decision-making bodies of the state would be populated by those people who jacobian argues should not have power: those who have an interest in altering policy.

modulus I disagree with his position that the self-selection of elections chooses only the ambitious. It chooses the interested. Otherwise, so could we speak about revolutions.

modulus The matter of those collectives who are impossible to sortition because of their inability to participate cannot simply be swept aside.

VIPPER Time's up

modulus While it is true electoral systems have flaws, many of them can be mitigated through binding programmes, imperative mandates, right to recall, or a combination thereof.

modulus I choose to use my 5 mins.

VIPPER All five? Okay

modulus Well, the part of it i need.

VIPPER Okay

modulus Such fixes are perfectly possible, so that in case one particular representative

is no longer exercising their office correctly, they can be replaced for another, and while this is not necessarily a guarantee of good conduct, there is none better in sortition.

modulus Regarding the matter of education, which cde Q-collective wisely raises, I will point out that it is infeasible to expect people to be well educated about all matters.

modulus In particular, people who run for elections are at least educated about some matters which impell them to seek to modify policy. No such case is to be expected in the whole body of the population.

modulus The result of that, would be that there would have to be a strong civil service in an advisory role, helping our directionless legislature to make up its mind.

modulus This would lead, inevitably, and paradoxically, to a far reinforced role for the bureaucracy, which is what we were, unsuccessfully, attempting to flee from.

modulus In conclusion: sortition may have a role to play in particular social formations and for particular institutions.

modulus However, neither is it the solution to our problems, which lies in content, nor is it, as a form, the maximum of fairness and accuracy we should expect under socialism.

modulus Thanks for your time, good night.

VIPPER Alright

VIPPER Thank you everyone for putting up with us

VIPPER And thank you to my fellow debaters for choosing to go along with this