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development digest

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This digest features important articles on development and social transformation in order to reach those working in the field and not having knowledge of these documents. It is aimed at promoting further reading of the originals, and generating public debate and action on public issues. The articles are compiled and edited for easy reading and comprehension of the concepts, and not so much to reproduce the academic accuracy of the original texts.

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Time will tell

Recent events have plunged many in the West into despair and despondency, many of us on the outside share that gloom. We see the power of money, of the media, of the fanatic grow and crush all who dare to think differently with disdain.

Those of us outside the OECD countries know and feel differently. Many of us in India have not only understood Brazil and Venezuela, but have also dealt with the far-right in our own country.

But we also know that there are many of us who see no way out of the current dominant development paradigm and 'adjust' to it.

Is there any hope left?

Howard Zinn tells us there is – he is actually talking to his own people, those millions in the US and the many more in Europe that wanted the arrogant neo-cons to go – and have most notably lost in the recent US elections.

In a similar vein **Noam Chomsky** tells us that this is a perennial state of affairs.

Structural Transformation will take place, but it needs to be constantly reinvented – there is always the struggle against those that arrogate power to themselves.

The Optimism of Uncertainty, Howard Zinn, Email Artifice, 02 Sept, 2004. <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20040920&s=zinn>
[C.ELDOC]

'The Struggle for more Freedom and Justice is always an Uphill Task',
N. Ram in an interview with Naom Chomsky, Frontline, Vol.21, Issue 17, Aug 14-17, 2004.

<http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2117/stories/20040827000706200.htm>

The Optimism of Uncertainty

Howard Zinn

In this awful world where the efforts of caring people often pale in comparison to what is done by those who have power, how do I manage to stay involved and seemingly happy?

I am totally confident not that the world will get better, but that we should not give up the game before all the cards have been played. The metaphor is deliberate; life is a gamble. Not to play is to foreclose any chance of winning. To play, to act, is to create at least a possibility of changing the world.

There is a tendency to think that what we see in the present moment will continue. We forget how often the sudden crumbling of institutions has astonished us, by extraordinary changes in people's thoughts, by unexpected eruptions of rebellion against tyrannies, by the quick collapse of systems of power that seemed invincible.



What leaps out from the history of the past hundred years is its utter unpredictability. A revolution to overthrow the Czar of Russia, in that most sluggish of semi-feudal empires, not only startled the most advanced imperial powers but took Lenin himself by surprise and sent him rushing by train to Petrograd. Who would have predicted the bizarre shifts of World War II--the Nazi-Soviet pact (those embarrassing photos

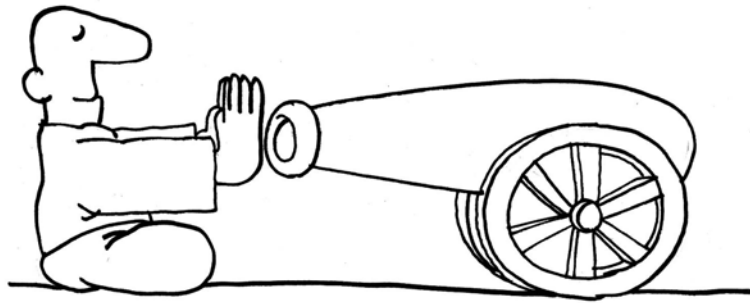
of Von Ribbentrop and Molotov shaking hands), and the German Army rolling through Russia, apparently invincible, causing colossal casualties, being turned back at the gates of Leningrad, on the western edge of Moscow, in the streets of Stalingrad, followed by the defeat of the German army, with Hitler huddled in his Berlin bunker, waiting to die?

And then the postwar world, taking a shape no one could have drawn in advance: The Chinese Communist revolution, the tumultuous and violent Cultural Revolution, and then another turnabout, with Post-Mao China renouncing its most fervently held ideas and institutions, making overtures to the West, cuddling up to capitalist enterprise, perplexing everyone.

No one foresaw the disintegration of the old Western empires happening so quickly after the war, or the odd array of societies that would be created in the newly independent nations, from the benign village socialism of Nyerere's Tanzania to the madness of Idi Amin's adjacent Uganda. Spain became an astonishment. I recall a veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade telling me that he could not imagine Spanish Fascism being overthrown without another bloody war. But after Franco was gone, a parliamentary democracy came into being, open to Socialists, Communists, anarchists, everyone.

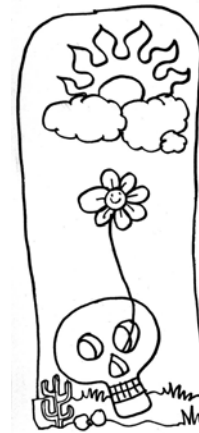
The end of World War II left two superpowers with their respective spheres of influence and control, vying for military and political power. Yet they were unable to control events, even in those parts of the world considered being their respective spheres of influence. The failure of the Soviet Union to have its way in Afghanistan, its decision to withdraw after almost a decade of ugly intervention, was the most striking evidence that even the possession of thermonuclear weapons does not guarantee domination over a determined population. The United States has faced the same reality. It waged a full-scale war in Indo-China, conducting the most brutal bombardment of a tiny peninsula in world history, and yet was forced to withdraw. In the headlines every day we see other instances of the failure of the presumably powerful over the

presumably powerless, as in Brazil, where a grassroots movement of workers and the poor elected a new president pledged to fight destructive corporate power. Looking at this catalogue of huge surprises, it's clear that the struggle for justice should never be abandoned because of the apparent overwhelming power of those who have the guns and the money and who seem invincible in their determination to hold on to it. That apparent power has, again and again, proved vulnerable to human qualities less measurable than



bombs and dollars: moral fervor, determination, unity, organization, sacrifice, wit, ingenuity, courage, patience--whether by blacks in Alabama and South Africa, peasants in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Vietnam, or workers and intellectuals in Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union itself. No cold calculation of the balance of power need deter people who are persuaded that their cause is just.

I have tried hard to match my friends in their pessimism about the world (is it just my friends?), but I keep encountering people who, in spite of all the evidence of terrible things happening everywhere, give me hope. Especially young people, in whom the future rests. Wherever I go, I find such people. And beyond the handful of activists there seem to be hundreds, thousands, more who are open to unorthodox ideas. But they



tend not to know of one another's existence, and so, while they persist, they do so with the desperate patience of Sisyphus endlessly pushing that boulder up the mountain. I try to tell each group that it is not alone, and that the very people who are disheartened by the absence of a national movement are themselves proof of the potential for such a movement. *Revolutionary change does not come as one cataclysmic moment (beware of such moments!) but as an endless succession of surprises, moving zigzag toward a more decent society. We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world. Even when we don't "win," there is fun and fulfillment in the fact that we have been involved, with other good people, in something worthwhile. We need hope.*

An optimist isn't necessarily a blithe, slightly sappy whistler in the dark of our time. To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage and kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places--and there are so many--where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. **The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.**

Global Economics: Time Banking Conference September 14, 2004

Sean Gonsalves

In Toronto last month, I was introduced to “Time Banking” and thought it might be one possible path to the end-goal of a more just and sustainable world, which is what Participatory Economics, seeks to establish.

The conventional wisdom accepted uncritically by economists, points to THE global economy, as if there is only one – or rather, the only one worthy of our attention.

However, those who attended the 3rd International Time Banking Congress in Toronto on the last weekend of August know better. In addition to the dominant global capitalist economy, there is another emerging economic order, global in scope and universal in its appeal.

It’s a “time banking” economy that uses “time dollars” as its currency and is based on the reality of human interdependence, rather than the myth of rugged individualism that barely holds together the so-called free-market order.

The simplicity of time banking

The time banking concept is elementary, really. Valued exchange in “time banking” is measured in “time dollars,” which are a tax-exempt form of money that anyone can access with their time, energy and special (not necessarily “specialized”) skills, such as lawn mowing, babysitting or woodworking.

Global Economics: Time Banking Conference, *Sean Gonsalves*,
Znet, Sept 14, 2004. [http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?
SectionID=13&ItemID=6223](http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=13&ItemID=6223) [C.ELDOC6008855]

The exchange rate: One hour of service provided to another time bank member, or to the community at large, earns one “time dollar.” So, a “time dollar exchange” is formed whenever “time dollars” are earned and spent.

At the 3rd International Time Banking Congress, held on the idyllic grounds of the Kingsbridge Center just outside of Toronto from Aug. 27 to Aug. 29, a glimpse of how time banking is actually working in nine different countries outside of the United States, including Japan, Scotland, Spain and even the Northern Antilles, was on display.

Edgar Cahn, who first dreamt the dream of time dollars in a Washington, D.C. hospital bed 25 years ago, welcomed the 125 congress representatives after dinner on Friday, Aug. 27.

“What was a dream is no longer just a dream. This is no longer one person’s vision. It belongs to all peoples and all nations.

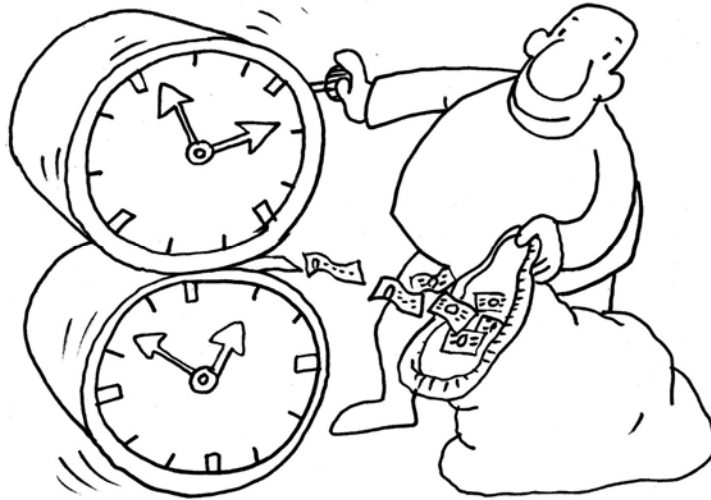
“We want to change the world...but we don’t always savor the moments of triumph - moments when human beings dare to assert hope.”

He concluded his welcome with an insight into the very heart of time banking: “We have what we need if we use what we have.”

Throughout the weekend - in panel discussions, in workshops and over dining room tables - stories of human beings daring to assert hope using “what we have” were shared. And, like with any fruitful congressional gathering, there were intense cross-cultural discussions about the direction of the emerging time banking movement in its various expressions around the world.

The global ‘time banking’ economy

Martin Simon, co-founder of Time Bank UK, provided the first peek into the international time banking movement. He gave a brief overview of a half-dozen time bank projects across the UK.



He outlined the workings of Time For Health, a local time dollar economy in which health care services are provided using time dollars. In fact, Time for Health has been so successful, Simon reported that the UK's National Health Service has commissioned a study on how it works.

Simon also said that Time Bank UK has been coordinating other time banking initiatives, such as Time Between Generations in which youth, including juvenile offenders (or "no hoppers" as they are called in English-speaking Europe) have formed a time banking community with the elderly, exchanging services using time dollars.

"Their self-confidence grew to no end," Simon said of the youth participants, many of whom struggle with issues of self-worth.

Time banks for child care and for food have also been established, he said, noting that the time banking movement, in addition to being studied by the National Health Service with regards to health care, 10

Downing Street is in the process of planning and co-sponsoring a series of seminars for politicians to become familiar with time banking.

In Wales, 20 time banking projects across Wales Valley are being partially funded by the European Union, as time banking leaders there are “looking to mainstream” with communities of mineworkers breaking down under the weight of “globalization.” And as in England, time banking has caught the eye of government officials, earning Cahn an audience with the Wales National Assembly.

All told, in the UK there are 143 time banks up and running, exchanging over 200,000 hours of service involving over 5,000 time bank members.

In Spain, time banking took root among leaders at the forefront of the women’s movement there. According to Elvira Mendez, who spoke at the Toronto gathering with the help of a translator, time banks in Barcelona were initially promoted by women’s community organizations to “promote the conciliation of family and professional life” under the banner, “Compartir: Promoviendo El Reparto De Los Tiempos Entre Mujeres y Hombres,” which translates “Sharing: Promoting the Equality of Time Among Men and Women.

“We only exchange services and not material goods,” Mendez said. Time dollars, she added, are “instruments for reconciling family and work. We use time banks for community building. It’s a bank of dreams.”

On the other side of the globe, time banking has taken root in Japan on the tiny island community of Seizken. Masko Kubota spoke about her introduction to time banking when Time Bank USA Director of Outreach and Technical Assistance Ana Miyares visited Japan in 1991 at the invitation of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation.

“I was so interested I came to the U.S. to learn about time dollars and to meet Edgar (Cahn),” Kubota said. Kubota came to the U.S. in 1994. Five years later she set up a time bank on Seizken Island with just 12 members.

Today, the Seizken Time Bank counts 72 members, exchanging everything from wake-up calls to an intergenerational project in which the community elders tutor the young in history and other school subjects.

“The life stories (of the elders) were compiled in a book and gave to the elders as a gift,” she said, noting also that she’s translated and helped distribute Cahn’s book “No More Throw Away People” into Japanese.

Also to Kubota’s credit, she created a time dollar board game designed to help people steeped in market morality, acknowledging “it’s difficult to ask for help” - reciprocity being one of the four “core values” of time banking.

Neighbor-to-neighbor vs. ‘co-production’

Though time banking is practiced differently in different parts of the world, all time bank participants adhere to the four “core values” - assets, redefining work, reciprocity and social capital.

In time banking, assets are defined by a simple acknowledgement that everyone has something within themselves to offer, whether it’s house cleaning or the gift of making people laugh.

Redefining work means that, in contrast to a market-based understanding, building community is real work.

Reciprocity is perhaps the most important of the core values because in time banking those who receive help earn it by giving something more than gratitude in return.

The fourth and final core value is **social capital**, which is the immeasurable wealth built by tying people into networks of social cooperation.

These core values are present wherever time banks operate but that doesn’t mean all time banks are organized in the same fashion.

Some time banks are simply “neighbor-to-neighbor” while others engage in “co-production.”

Neighbor-to-neighbor is essentially self-explanatory, working as it does outside of official institutions. Co-production is the marriage of time banking with established social service organizations or programs.

In one workshop, Edgar Cahn illustrated the importance of co-production by recalling how Legal Services for the poor was gutted by government budgetary cuts. When Cahn realized other government funded social service organizations suffered the same fate, he began to ask why.

His conclusion was that social service clients didn’t organize and pressure legislators and other community leaders to leave these vital services intact.

Cahn attributes that to the fact that most social service workers didn’t have a true communal relationship with their clients.

“As a lawyer, if you came into my office I would ask how I can help you. We never asked how you can help me too. We didn’t consider that these people have something to offer. What if we said: ‘I can help you with your legal problems in exchange for you walking my dog or something like that?’”

That line of thinking led Cahn to the idea of co-production, weaving time banking principles into the very fabric of established agencies and institutions with specific missions, such as the criminal justice system.

The Time Dollar Youth Court in Washington, D.C. is an example. The Youth Court, which is composed of former juvenile offenders serving as jurors for their first-time offending peers, can earn time dollars doing various community service projects.

“There’s a qualitative difference between neighbor-to-neighbor alone and co-production, where time banking works along with informal support networks,” Cahn said.

The Anthropological Evidence

Perhaps the most intellectually interesting presentation of the weekend was delivered by anthropologist Polly Weissner.

Weissner, who has studied reciprocity among tribes in South Africa and New Guinea for over 30 years, said time banking principles are affirmed and corroborated by anthropological study.

She said there are certain criteria anthropologists use to determine “biological behavior,” among them being: Is the behavior universal and does it manifest itself in children at the same age in all cultures?

The anthropological evidence, she said, refutes the assumptions of classical and neo-classical economics; namely that human motivation boils down to maximizing monetary acquisitions.

“There is scientific evidence that there is a neuro basis for social cooperation” and when there is a breakdown in systems of non-market reciprocity, aggression naturally follows.”

She also emphasized that because time banking is not a charity program but a non-market system that relies on reciprocity, it does not inflict “charity wounds” on those who participate.

To illustrate her point, Weissner pointed to the American rebuilding of Europe after World War II. Because that act of charity didn’t involve any reciprocity it has injected a false sense of superiority into the American popular consciousness. Also, she said, conventional development programs offered by western economic institutions like the World Bank and the IMF tend to stress the importance of economic capital at the expense of social capital, which fosters an unhealthy dependent relationship between the aid provider and the recipient.

In her studied view, Weissner added, time banking is not only crucial for peaceful human societies; it is also vital in terms of environmental health of the planet, given the ecological destruction wrought in the wake of market-driven forces.

Furthermore, “satisfaction from human relationships” - which time banking fosters - “reduces the desire for material things, she said, providing both an indictment and insight into the environment-destroying a culture of conspicuous consumption.

The appeal of time banking

If this all sounds like a love-fest to make people feel good about each other - something that people in the “real world” wouldn’t bother to give much credence, that would be mistaken, as time banking has drawn the financial interest of people like Mark McDonough and Richard Rockefeller - two time bank funders who’ve had great fortune in the market economy.

McDonough, an MIT Sloan School of Business graduate who sold database interfaces to the world’s largest supplier of microcomputer databases and the acting CEO for Time Banks USA, was one of three panelists who spoke about funding time bank projects.

Considering time banking from a philanthropical businessman’s point of view, McDonough said it was “universal, efficient and effective. It gives you the most bang for the buck.”

“For every one dollar of value you put in you get \$6 of value out,” he added.

Richard Rockefeller, another time bank funder with deep pockets, said he “bought into this because of the idea of social capital” and the realization that economic growth, as it is currently conceived, destroys social capital.

He said an article written by Jonathan Rowe about the misleading nature of America's primary measurement of economic health - the Gross Domestic Product - caught his attention.

"It's a faulty measure," Rockefeller said, referring to the GDP's inclusion of social ills like the cost of environmental clean-up as something that helps fuel economic growth.

"Yet we are making social policy based on it," he said. "Cash economies cannibalize society. I find that argument very convincing...So I feel very fortunate to hitch my wagon to the time banking movement."

Time banking, Rockefeller added, helps us see the limits of a cash economy.

Limits of cash economies and the rise of 'grass roots globalism'

The limits of cash economy were laid bare later that evening when Dr. Hazel Henderson took the podium.

Henderson, an evolutionary economist, internationally syndicated columnist and author of "Beyond Globalization" among others, offered a sobering analysis of globalization in its present crisis and an upbeat assessment of an emerging "attention economy" - "the rise of grass roots globalism."

"Money has no value but we are controlled by it," she said, agreeing with billionaire financier George Soros that a global "financial meltdown" is possible, even likely, contrary to popular economic assumptions. And that's precisely why time banking and economies that deal in local currencies are so vital, particularly at this historical moment, she said.

The discussion following Henderson's remarks sparked an underlying concern raised the previous day by Calvin Pearce, a time banking phenom from Chicago who has been at the forefront of a city-wide

tutoring program using time dollars that spans 45 schools and has delivered 4,075 refurbished computers to Chicago students.

Pearce asked: what about jobs for those involved with time banking organizations but who are also living in dire economic conditions?

After Henderson's presentation, Pearce once again challenged this year's theme of "Time To Unite," telling the story of a time bank member who had earned 300 time dollars in Chicago but was without a car, nearly destitute, and coping with news that his wife was terminally ill. Pearce wanted to know how those time dollars would help in that situation.

The challenges ahead

Embedded in Pearce's concern is the question: how can the time banking movement be even more responsive to the immediate needs of communities of color in particular, and to poverty-scarred communities, in general.

It's a challenge that Time Banking creator Edgar Cahn is ready to confront, having left the three-day gathering with a notion to establish a working group to look more carefully at possible shortcomings and/or perception gaps that may exist in communities of color suspicious of movements that don't offer empowerment.

Having served communities of color for over three decades, perhaps most notably in his role in establishing the Time Dollar Youth Court in Washington, D.C., Cahn has seen first hand how time banking has empowered African-Americans struggling to make ends meet.

But, he said, he would like to see time bank leaders more aware and proactive on issues pertaining to where race, class and time banking intersect.

In the end, he said, **time banking is a universal concept that transcends race, class and gender divisions as long as we remember “we have what we need, if we use what we have.”**

Extract

Bite Back! The Return of the Co-Operative

Johnston Birchall

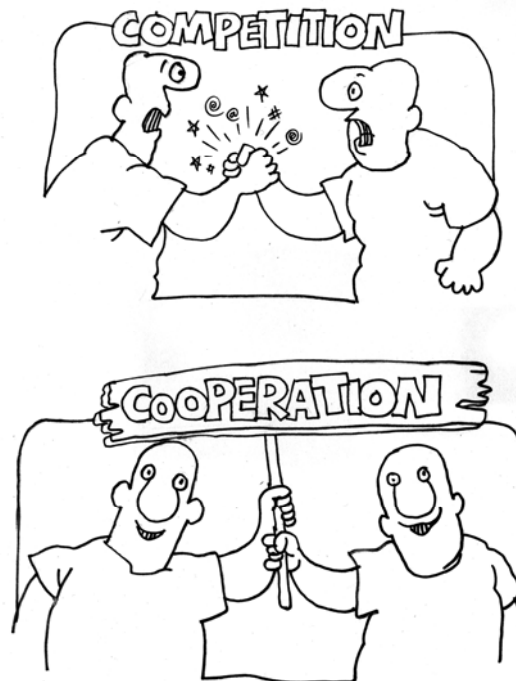
First signs There is evidence of co-operative tenant farming in Babylon and of burial benefit societies in Greece as early as 3,000 BC. Indigenous cultures in Africa, Asia and Latin America often placed great value on co-operative social structures. Gruyl're cheesemakers formed a co-op at Desservilliers, Switzerland, in 1228. Various forms of mutual aid 'guilds' and 'leagues' were common in medieval Europe. 'Friendly societies' were set up to provide help in case of sickness. By 1600 communal granaries, shaso, were well-established in Japan.

Pioneers

With the growth of industrial capitalism, and its ethos of ruthless competition, a co-operative movement soon emerged to contest it. Industrial capitalism started earliest, and grew fastest, in Britain. In 1821 the Co-operative and Economical Society published *The Economist*, the first newspaper dealing with co-operative ideals (*The Economist* of today, which has rather different ideas, was not founded until 1843). By 1830 there were 300 co-op societies and 12 co-op newspapers. Robert Owen in northern Britain and William King in Brighton experimented with similar ideas. Conditions in industrial towns became so appalling that in 1848 average life expectancy in Rochdale was just 21 years. In 1844 the

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Bite Back! The Return of the Co-Operatives, by Johnston Birchall, *New Internationalist* 368, June 2004.
<http://www.newint.org/index4.html>[C.ELDOC.6009049]



Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers set up a consumers' co-op (followed by a housing co-op) that paid its members a 'dividend' on what they bought and was to become a model for the movement. By 1900 there were 1.7 million members of 1,439 different (mostly consumer) societies around Britain; by the beginning of World War One in 1914 the number had almost doubled.

Variations

Elsewhere co-ops explored different territory. Credit unions were pioneered in Germany and Canada. Often promoted by parish priests, by 1905 there were 13,000 Popular Banks in Germany, one for almost every village. In 1900 Alphonse Desjardins began a mutual savings society in Levis, Quebec. By 1909 the Movement des caisses

Extract

Desjardins had over 100 caisses populaires in the Quebec region, many of them, as in Germany, sponsored by parish priests. In Canadian mining districts co-op stores aimed to overcome the 'truck' system, which forced miners to spend their wages in company stores. Agricultural co-ops developed earliest in North America, Denmark and Japan. By 1867 there were 400 co-op cheese factories and creameries in the US.

A Danish delegation visited a co-op creamery in Philadelphia in 1876. In

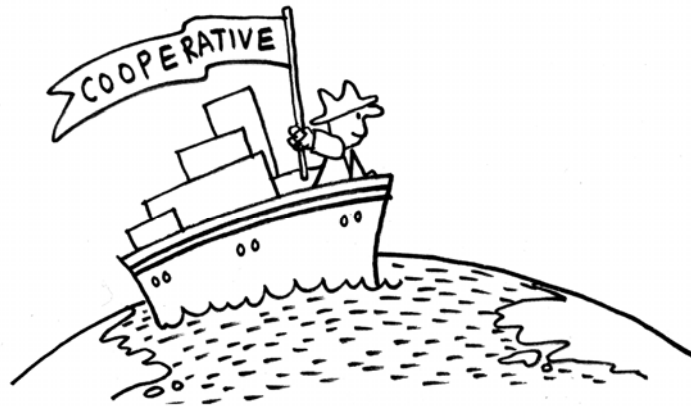


1882 the first one opened in Hjedding, Denmark. Co-ops of all kinds spread across Scandinavia, while Scandinavian migrants to North America (particularly from Sweden and Finland) stimulated the movement in return. In Japan, four agricultural societies were formed in 1878. By 1920 there were 13,442, 37 per cent of Japanese farmers belonged to them. Co-ops were important to industrial agriculture in Aotearoa/New Zealand from the outset.

Worker co-ops were pioneered in France, Italy and Russia. In France, Charles Fourier planned self-sustaining communities called

philansteries. After the Paris Commune in 1871, JBA Godin encouraged workers to buy him out of his stove factory. By 1906 there were three large industrial societies, an iron foundry, a spectacle manufacturer and a cab-drivers' society, as well as 340 smaller ones. In Italy, the Associazione Artistica of glass-makers was set up in Altare in 1856. By 1906 there were 25 societies of bakers, 153 industrial societies and 454 labour and public service societies, mostly around Turin, Genoa and the industrial north. In Russia village communes and artels (labour associations) were common and represented nationally by a powerful federation, the Centrosoyus. As early as the 1820s some of Robert Owen's methods were tried in the Hunter Valley, Australia. The first consumer co-op in Australia was founded in Brisbane in 1859.

Follow the flag



Industrializing countries in Europe had been carving out empires for themselves around the world, taking the co-op idea with them. Co-ops were thought to be a useful way of organizing rural workers to produce for export. The French created the formal structure of the Society Indigine de Prievoiance with this in mind. In Tanzania the first co-operative laws were passed in 1925 and in Zimbabwe in 1926. In India 'registrars' were appointed by the British to regulate co-ops 'from the top down'.

Extract

During the 1890s Sir Frederick Nicholson made his name as the 'Father of Indian co-operation', mostly by promoting credit co-ops. Indigenous forms of co-operation were inhibited. In 1892 a group that combined credit with land reclamation in Hoshiapur, Punjab, was disbanded. In the Caribbean they were swept away. After the abolition of slavery ex-slaves in Guyana bought 38 villages on 15,000 acres of land and ran them co-operatively, but the still-powerful plantation owners broke them up. The huge US-based United Fruit Company encouraged 'co-ops' in the Caribbean because they were more convenient to deal with than individual tropical-fruit growers. In the 1940s the Grenada Co-operative Nutmeg Association had only one representative on its board from its 6,000 growers.

Turbulent times

The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) was named at a meeting in Britain in August 1893. There was a strong vein of political 'neutrality' within the international co-op movement, but conflict proved impossible to avoid. Socialists in Europe were often critical of consumer co-ops (which wanted lower prices) and supported trade unions (which wanted higher wages). Co-ops became for 'consumers' what trade unions were for 'producers'. Then, following the revolution in Russia in 1917 and the rise of fascism in Europe and Japan, there was turmoil. Co-ops were attacked by fascists in Italy in 1921. Mussolini promoted his own form of 'fascist co-operation'. In Germany the Nazi Party also attacked co-ops, which were eventually taken over by the German Labour Front. There were similar developments in Japan. In Spain, anarcho-syndicalists promoted workers' co-ops vigorously, but they were crushed by General Franco after the end of the civil war in 1939. Co-ops in fascist 'Axis' countries were generally cut off from the ICA during World War Two.



However, the Centrosoyus in Russia had been a member since 1903, and it remained so after 1917, despite the subordination of co-ops to the

Soviet system of state enterprises. After the revolution in 1949 enormous numbers of co-ops were formed in China, but they were isolated from the international movement.

Dinosaurs, giants and minnows

As Cold War followed World War, the prospects for the international co-op movement began to look bleak. It was questionable whether independent co-ops could exist at all in the Soviet Union or China. In the West they were viewed as 'dinosaurs'. Even so, they began to compete directly, and often very successfully, with conventional businesses, inventing the chain store, among other things. In Spain the Mondragón workers' co-op became the biggest employer in the Basque region. By the mid-1980s almost 40 per cent of Japanese households had at least one co-op member. In Canada 12 million people now belong to at least one co-op, while 18 giant agri-food 'co-ops' rank among the country's top 500 businesses. Major US brands, like Sunkist and Ocean Spray, are agri-food 'co-ops'. Huge, wealthy co-ops like these became almost indistinguishable from conventional businesses. The British Co-op network went into sharp decline, from which, after an attempted takeover, it has now started to recover. In 1995 Consum in Austria was the first major co-op retailer to go bankrupt.

In the Global South, however, and particularly in Latin America, co-ops of all kinds began to flourish. There were only 175 in Argentina in 1930, but by 1976 there were 4,800 with seven million members. They grew, too, in Paraguay, promoted by Mennonites from Canada and the US, and in Mexico under the tutelage of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). In Chile they were active in the Popular Unity movement until it was crushed by a military coup in 1973, an ugly pattern repeated across the continent. In Africa, co-ops were often promoted by newly independent nation-states. Tanzania developed the ujamaa concept of multi-purpose village co-ops. Informal naam groups or youth associations became active in Burkina Faso. Farmers in Kenya were required by law to be in a co-op.

In a bizarre twist, the number of co-ops in the Soviet Union rose from 8,000 in 1987 to 220,000 in 1990, President Mikhail Gorbachev tried to graft them on to his 'opening up' of the Russian economy. Most were promptly privatized or dissolved in scandalous circumstances, within a few years they went from being minnows in the Soviet system to

Extract

minnows in a privatized one. But here, as elsewhere, the instinct for co-operation persists, to take yet another shape in future.

Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World is Possible, 2nd Edition



Alternatives to Economic Globalisation: A Better World is Possible, 2nd Edition, John Cavanagh and Jerry Mander (ed), Berrett – Koehler Publishers, Oct 10, 2004. p. 336, \$12.89.

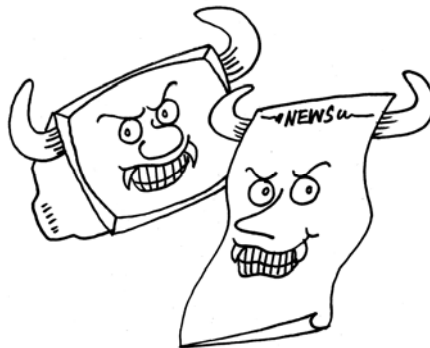
Five-years after the "Battle of Seattle", pre-eminent global scholars present real alternatives to economic globalization and declare A Better World is Possible!

San Francisco – November 2004 marks the fifth anniversary of the emergence of the unprecedented coalition of civil society movements that took to the streets in Seattle to oppose policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The "Battle of Seattle" sent the WTO into a retreat from which, many argue, it has yet to recover.

To mark this historic anniversary, the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) announces the release of the second edition of ***Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World is Possible***.

Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World is Possible, 2nd Edition by Sarah Anderson, Debi Barker, Maude Barlow, Walden Bello, Robin Broad, John Cavanagh, Tony Clarke, Edward Goldsmith, Randy Hayes, Colin Hines, Antonia Juhasz, Andrew Kimbrell, David Korten, Sara Larrain, Jerry Mander, Victor Menotti, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Simon Retallack, Vandana Shiva, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, and Lori Wallach, Media Advisory published by Antonia Juhasz, The International Forum on Globalization, San Francisco, November 16, 2004. www.ifg.org [C.ELDOC.6009066].





In 1999, work began on the report that became the 2002 book *Alternatives to Economic Globalization*. That book spelled out not only the critique of corporate globalization, but also for the first time provided a comprehensive policy road map away from the current model toward a more equitable and sustainable planet. Now, as part of the ongoing effort to continue to show that "a better world is possible" – and to explain how the "war on terror" and other events of the past three years are related to globalization – the authors have written an updated and expanded second edition.

Written by an eminent group of twenty-one thinkers and activists from around the world and edited by best-selling authors John Cavanagh and Jerry Mander, the book lays out the alternatives to corporate globalization more fully, specifically, and thoughtfully than has been done before.

The second edition provides crucial new information in three new chapters covering the global balance of power, the continuing war in Iraq, the "outsourcing" of high paying American jobs, the media, and includes stories of communities building successful alternative models in many sectors – food and agriculture, energy, water, loan schemes, municipal budgeting systems, and many more.

Specifically, *Alternatives to Economic Globalization* offers:

- A new introduction that analyzes the emerging opposition to U.S. economic and military policies (and an explanation of how both are intertwined);
- A new section on the powerful and often negative role of global media, and what to do about it;
- Alternative operating systems for energy, agriculture and food systems, transportation, and manufacturing;
- An expanded discussion of how vital goods and services (such as water or genetic material) can be administered for the common good rather than privatized for profit;
- New sections on such significant growing problems as climate change (particularly with regard to energy policy and agriculture) and the controversies over "outsourcing";
- Ten governing principles for building sustainable societies that will lead to greater democracy that benefits the many rather than the few;
- An expanded discussion of new institutions of "global governance" to replace the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). And a set of new principles that these institutions should fulfill;
- A new section providing examples of successful alternative policies and systems already in use by communities around the world today; and
- A new chapter, "Global to Local: What You Can Do," that demonstrates what an individual can do as a consumer, worker, investor, depositor, local citizen, national citizen, and global citizen.

The International Forum on Globalization is an alliance of leading activists, scholars, economists, researchers, and writers representing 60 organizations in 25 countries, formed in 1994 to stimulate new thinking, joint activity, and public education in response to economic globalization.

NOTES

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San Francisco, CA 94129 Tel. 415-561-7650 Fax 415-561-7651; www.ifg.org*

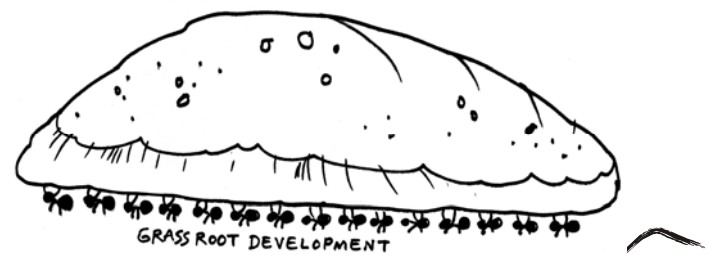
Redefining Politics


The constant refrain of the critics of the efficacy of grass-roots work has been its dispersed nature, and its inability to translate itself into a well-knit representative force at the regional or national level. It has remained a micro-level phenomenon.

Not so, says **D L Sheth**.

It's dispersed and seeming peripheral nature has been the singular feature of what he calls micro-movements. And this has been the source of its strength, and it has the potential to redefine politics and democracy from the grass-roots up, in such a way that it will influence, and in the long run, even define, regional national and international governance and politics.

It is already doing so through a process of horizontal linkages at the national and international level. This is in direct contrast to the centralized hegemonic politics of representative democracy at the national level, and more so in contrast to the absence of even token representativeness in modern international governance.



Globalisation and New Politics of Micro-Movements, *D L Sheth*, EPW 
Special Article, Jan 3, 2004.
<http://www.epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2004&leaf=01&filename=6672&filetype=html> [C.ELDOC6008857]

Globalisation and New Politics of Micro-Movements

D L Sheth

Discourse of Globalisation

The whole discourse on development suddenly changed, globally and in India, when the notion of alternative development was analytically formulated and propagated by the various global groups, clubs and commissions. Some concepts developed by these proponents of alternative development became buzzwords for activists of new social movements: appropriate technology, small is beautiful (a la Schumacher), pedagogy of the oppressed (a la Paulo Freire), eco-friendly life-styles, limits to growth (a la the Club of Rome) were only a few among them.

This discourse of the new social movements in the west found a great deal of resonance among the social activists in India – particularly for the apolitical, westernised ones, for whom it had almost an emancipatory effect. It gave cultural meaning to their activism and even helped them re-discover their own alternativist M K Gandhi.

The conventional argument for development was now made with several caveats, sourced from the theory of alternative development. Thus, sustainability became a key word and consumerism a 'challenge' to cope with. Saving energy and finding alternative energy sources became an important consideration for policy makers of development.

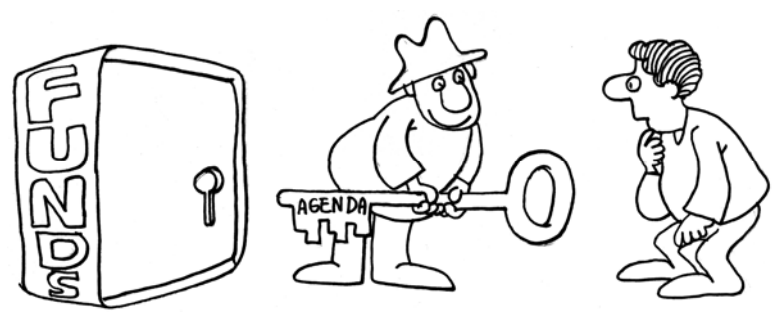
All this changed as the cold war ended, A new discourse descended on the scene engulfing the political spaces. Its immediate, if temporary, effect was to make protests of the grass roots movements against the hegemonic cold war model of development and their assertions for alternative development sound shrill and cantankerous, if not vacuous.

This was the discourse of globalisation.

Counter Discourse of Movements

The grass roots movements took quite some time to recover from the ideological onslaught of globalism and devise their own terms of discourse to counter it. This was mainly because by the end of the cold war and two decades after the emergency, the movement-groups were by and large fragmented into an almost isomorphic existence of each group fighting its own little battle independently.

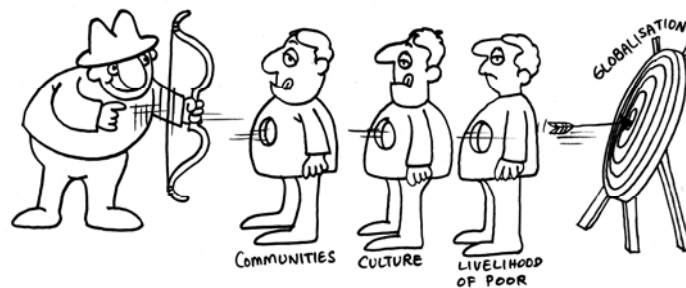
Quite a few had lost the élan of social transformation, having acquired a fairly stable and comfortable financial base. Much larger quantities of funds were now made available to them by the international donor agencies, which had their own agenda for influencing the politics of discourse in peripheral countries. Most movement-groups had thus become routinised in their activities and functioned as NGO bureaucracies.



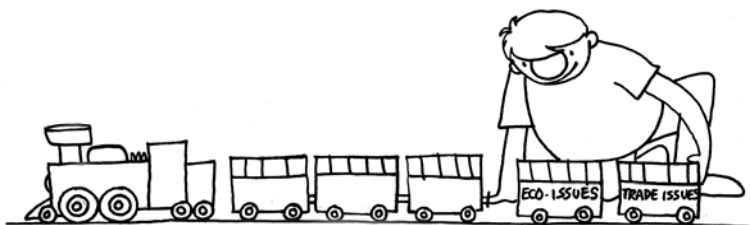
In short, in the early 1990s, the mood among grass roots movements in India was marked by widespread pessimism among the observers and participants of the movements [Kothari 1993]. There were indeed some groups, largely of Gandhian, Left and social-democratic lineage, who stuck-out and kept fighting their battles for rights and socio-economic reconstruction at the grass roots, thus tenaciously retaining their character as movements. They however did not function at their earlier high levels of energy, and remained starved of funds.

All this changed, almost suddenly in the mid-1990s, when protests against globalisation led by the few movement-groups, which had kept the tradition of struggles alive during the period of drift, acquired momentum, as different sections of the poor in India began to acutely feel globalisation's adverse impact. It got a big fillip as many more groups responding to the pressures at the grass roots, returned from their NGO existence to the fold of movements. This produced a high degree of convergence among different types of groups and movements on a wide range of issues concerning globalisation. It revitalised the entire spectrum of grass roots movements in the country, giving rise to a new discourse and politics aimed at countering the forces of hegemonic globalisation. [Sheth 1999; Kothari Smitu 2001] What follows is an account of terms in which the movements view and resist globalisation.

First, activists of grass roots movements see globalisation as an incarnation of the old idea of Development (with a capital D), but representing politically more explicitly, the institutions of global hegemonic power and creating new forms of exclusion socially. Globalisation thus has intensified and expanded the destructive forces of Development – forces which disrupt communities, cultures and livelihoods of the poor without offering them any viable and dignified alternative. Similarly, globalisation, like the Development establishment during the old war, works for the constituent elements of its power structure – the techno-scientific, bureaucratic, military, managerial and business elites and a small consumerist class.



Second, a section of social activists, and those who were relatively apolitical but active in alternative development movements earlier, have become acutely aware of the role that politics of discourse plays globally and nationally, in influencing policy choices of governments and international organisations. Consequently, some of them now are participating actively in shaping the terms of discourse globally on such issues as biodiversity, global warming, construction of big dams, regulations concerning international trade and intellectual property rights and so on.



Fourth, the movements reject the claim of the Indian state that in the process of globalisation, it has been playing a positive role for the poor, giving a 'human face' to economic reforms. In the view of leaders of some urban movements for citizen rights, the Indian state, in fact, systematically and blatantly discriminates between the rich and the poor in the implementation of economic reforms [Kishwar 2001a].

Fifth, the combined impact of the retreat of the state and the globalising economy, is that the poorest among the poor are neither able to become full wage-earners in the economy nor even full-fledged citizens in the polity. For them there is no transitional path-way in sight that can lead them into the market. Nor can they return to the old security of the subjugated, which they arguably had in the traditional social order. They have even lost the claims on the state which the bureaucratic-socialist state at least theoretically conceded.

Finally, the new ideology of globalisation has, in the view of the movements, made issues of poverty and social deprivation in the peripheral countries of the world ever more unintelligible in the global discourse. Even more, it has blunted the transformative edge of the new social movements, which were once (when they really were new) in the forefront of the alternative development movement in the west as well as globally.



Global Discourse of Protests

A significant shift has also occurred in the way the movements in India relate to the global discourse of protests. The increasing focus on issues of 'governance' in the current global discourse has in their view, reduced the importance of issues pertaining to social and political transformation. This has resulted in the agencies of hegemonic globalisation seeking, simultaneously, to depoliticise development and undermine democratic movements by co-opting, financially and politically, some protest movements in the developing countries and in the global arena. In the process such issues as environment, gender, human rights and even democracy are being redefined in terms radically different from those that were developed by the grass roots movements in the earlier paradigm of alternative development.

The issue of human rights is being viewed in terms of economic and foreign policy considerations of the rich and powerful countries.

In this new hegemonic discourse the thinking on human rights has been dissociated from concerns like removing poverty, fulfilling basic human needs and social justice.

This has made it easy for the global hegemonic powers to target some poor, peripheral countries 'not playing ball' with them for human rights violations, even as they ignore similar violations by governments of the countries pliable to their hegemonic designs.

In the discourse on democracy, the idea of global governance is gaining ground but, paradoxically, democracy still continues to be viewed as the framework suitable for internal governance of nation states and not for global governance. Hence it is not difficult for an organisation like the WTO to function without reference to any principle of transparency or representational accountability, and also autonomously of the United Nations institutions, even when it sits in judgment on issues that fall in the purview of international law and representative bodies such as the ILO.

In this globally homogenised culture of protests some movement-groups in India find it increasingly difficult to join international campaigns, even though they may share many of their concerns. This is done not so much for 'nationalist' considerations as for the fear that it would undermine the by now established democratic political authority of the state in protecting the secular and democratic institutions in the country. For, when the poorer classes have found long-term stake in democracy and have begun to acquire their due share in governance, the power of the state (elected governments) itself is being denuded and undermined by the global power structure in collaboration with the country's metropolitan elites. In other words, they see globalisation as undermining and delegitimising institutions of democratic governance. They see it as a force which seeks to undo India's democratic revolution.

New Politics of Movements

Based on such an assessment of globalisation's adverse impact both for development and democracy, grass roots movements conceive their

politics in the direction of achieving two interrelated goals: (a) re-politicising development and (b) reinventing participatory democracy.

Re-Politicising Development

They now view development as a political struggle for peoples' participation in defining development goals and devising means to achieve them. Thus, rather than altogether 'opting out' of development they now seek to change the power relations on which the conventional model of development is premised. In the process some new elements, essentially political in nature, have entered in the grass roots movements' thinking and practice of development.

First, the old post-colonial critique of development which invoked *pre-modern nostalgia has ceased to appeal* to a large section of these movements.

Second, the change in perspective was also a response to the change in the post-cold war global politics of development. They are, therefore, not surprised that it has dismantled the cold war structures of aid and assistance, and in their place a new global economic regime of trade and fiscal control has been set up. *The movements see this change as representing a new political agenda on the part of the global power structure which aims at dispersal of state control over the economies of the peripheral countries on the one hand, and centralisation of global political and military power in the hands of the world's already rich and powerful countries on the other.* This awareness has led some movement-groups to form transnational alliances aimed at democratising the global power structure. For example, quite a few movement-groups in India have been actively associated with such counter hegemonic global initiatives as the Convention on Biodiversity, Agenda 21, World Commission on Dams, Alliance for Comprehensive Democracy and so on. These initiatives are not just confined to the transcendental global space. They are concretely embodied in their activities at the national and local levels in the form of disseminating awareness and activating organisations at the grass roots level to

identify and oppose specific policies, programmes and legislations meant to expand hegemonic global power.

Third, all types of grass roots groups today, including even some conventional development NGOs, articulate basic issues of development in the framework of rights. They see it as a function of social-structural locations of the poor, because of which they are excluded from development (which is guarded by the legal, political and economic immunities it provides to its insiders) and imprisoned in poverty (the world constituted of vulnerabilities and exposures to exploitation for its politically unorganised and economically marginalised inhabitants). Their mobilisational strategies, therefore, focus on the new social-political formations which combine the categories of class, caste, ethnicity and gender.

Fourth, the movements now see more clearly that the roots of rural poverty lie in the pattern of urban growth in India. This has, among other thing, led to greater interaction and building of new organisational linkages between the city-based and village-based social action groups. Further, the movements now realise the inconsequentiality of the established wisdom of 'inputs' serving as a major factor in rural development.

These inputs are simply swallowed up by the upper stratum of the rural society. So, the focus of their activity is now on creating capabilities of self-development among the rural poor, even as they fight for their rights to create and secure resources for collective development.

To sum up, the politics of different groups and movements, which began to converge in mid-1990s, have acquired a common direction and a fairly durable organisational base. The convergence has been attained on the point of resisting the ongoing efforts of the bureaucratic, technocratic and the metropolitan elites to support policies of globalisation and depoliticise development.

Movements' Politics of Participatory Democracy

The distinctive feature of movements-politics is to articulate a new discourse on democracy through a sustained political practice.

This is done at three levels: (a) *at the grass roots level* through building peoples' own power and capabilities, which inevitably involve political struggles for establishing rights as well as a degree of local autonomy for people to manage their own affairs collectively; (b) *at the provincial and national level* through launching nationwide campaigns and building alliances and coalitions for mobilising protests on larger issues (against 'anti-people projects and policies') and creating organisational networks of mutual support and of solidarity among movements; (c) *at the global level*, by a small section of movements-activists who in recent years have begun to actively participate in several transnational alliances and movements for creating a politics of counter-hegemonic globalisation. In all this, the long-term goal of the movements is to bring the immediate environment (social, economic, cultural and ecological) the people live in, within their own reach and control.

The movement activists have developed their own critique of the prevalent macro-structures of political representation as well as a view of local politics. In their view the representative institutions have imprisoned the process of democratisation in the society. The way out from such impasse is the spread of their kind of politics – the politics of micro-movements. Movements, they believe, by involving people deeply in politics will in the long run, change the terms of justification for the state for holding and using power. This probably explains their epistemic preference in articulating their politics in terms of 'reconstruction of state', rather than of 'acquisition of state power'.

Although the movements usually work in local areas they invariably define local issues in trans-local terms. Theirs is thus a new kind of local politics which, unlike the conventional politics of local governments, is not linked vertically to the macro structures of power and ideology, either of a nation state or of the global order; nor is this politics parochially local. It expands horizontally through several micro-movements of people living in different geographical areas and socio-

cultural milieus, but experiencing the common situation of disempowerment caused by mal-development and contemporary forms of governance which are imperiously distant, yet close enough to feel their coercive edge.

Thus viewed, the long-term politics of movements is about withdrawal of legitimation to the hegemonic and exclusionary structures of political power and horizontalising the vertical structures of social hierarchy, through strengthening the parallel politics of local, participatory democracy.

In this process, the micro-movements address, on the one hand, the problem of making institutions of governance at all levels more accountable, transparent and participative and, on the other, create new political spaces outside the state structure, in which the people themselves are enabled to make decisions collectively on issues directly concerning their lives.

All this however, does not mean that grass roots actors and organisations define the politics of movements in direct opposition to the institutional framework of Indian democracy. In fact they view institutional democracy as a necessary, though not sufficient condition for pursuing their parallel politics of movements through which they seek to raise social consciousness of people and democratise the hegemonic structures of power in society. In that sense, their politics is about working around and transcending the prevalent institutional structures of liberal democracy – rather than confronting them directly with a view to capturing state power.

In a nutshell, the movements conceive of participatory democracy as a parallel politics of social action, creating and maintaining new spaces for decision-making (i.e., for self-governance) by people on matters affecting their lives directly. As a form of practice, participatory democracy for them is thus a long-term political and social process aimed at creating a new system of multiple and overlapping

governances, functioning through more direct participation and control of concerned populations (i e, of those comprising these governances).

It is envisaged that through such politics the almost total monopoly of power held today by the contemporary (totalist) state would be dispersed into different self-governing entities but, at the same time, the macro-governance of the state, albeit confined to fewer nationally crucial sectors, would be carried through democratically elected representative bodies, at one level overseeing the system of micro-governances and at another, being responsive and accountable to them.

Tongue-in-cheek

We often tend to take ourselves too seriously, so sometimes it is good to have a hearty laugh at ourselves. **Sainath** helps us along with this *collage* of buzz words and pretentious processes.

If this piece touches some remote corners within those of us who take our work, our communication and programmes seriously, it would be an appropriate moment of self-deprecation – and enable us to reflect on where we often get out of touch with reality.

If this piece touches a chord in the hearts of some of those who suspect our bona fides, and chortle in delight at the obvious pompousness of our rhetoric, these would then deride our actions and programmes. To those of who do so, it would be a good moment to reflect that while this is probably true for some of us, and possibly more than a few of us, it is not the whole truth. It is this kind of snideness and sneering that keeps the ‘good’ from getting along, from being able to converge and create a synergy in our efforts to make ‘another world possible’.

So in good spirit let us have a laugh at ourselves to see how ridiculous we can sometimes seem.

Thank goodness this is a superficial understanding of our worth!



The Tower of Gabble, P. Sainath, *Infochange News and Features*, Feb 2004.
<http://www.infochangeindia.org/features153.jsp>

[C.ELDOC 6008226]

The Tower of Gabble

P Sainath makes the case for sustainable rhetoric

I have reflected in recent times on all the useful words that Development has taught me. It seems to me this is something Civil Society needs to ponder, right from the Grassroots to Emerging Leaders. At some point, a Knowledge-Based Society needs to learn something. What this might be, I do not yet know, but hopefully it is something that demarcates us from all those ignorance-based societies of these past millennia. Perhaps we need to have a Consultation of NGOs, Action Groups, CSOs and all other Stakeholders to work out the Best Practices in this regard.

These groups could then work towards a Summit , bringing together the best talent from amongst whom we create a Task Force which will then seek to Empower the Target Groups in each sector. The Summit itself will work out an overall Declaration to be translated into concrete Action Plans by Focus Groups. The Exploratory Sessions will be based on Interactive Communication, while ensuring complete Gender Equity.

Since by this time we might be running low on Sustainable Resources, we could initiate a number of Private-Public Partnerships to ensure that some share of the *Moloch* goes to at least a few Beneficiaries. The Livelihood Issues of the leaders of Non-Profits, for instance, are not unimportant. A few Micro-Credit Strategies could further be supplemented through Budgetary Allocations by other Facilitators (sometimes called governments). They could be roped in via a Plenary Session on Good Governance, Accountability and the importance of Networking.

Given the need to create an Alternative Dialogue with an Innovative Conceptual Framework, we could enlist the Traditional Knowledge of Development Consultants who would call Workshops to decide on how

to Mainstream Development Issues in the Media. We must, after all, examine Paradigm Shifts in the Development Debate while strengthening Conscientisation, Advocacy Outreach and Institution-Building.

It is best to begin with a Preparatory Meeting (at an Eco-Friendly locale) which can formulate a Mission Statement on how best to further the goals of Human Development and Natural Resource Management to build a better Common Future. Realisation of our Millennium Goals would undoubtedly require serious Capacity Building . Any number of Ideas on how to ensure Food Security for the participants in the Pre-Summit Brainstorming are welcome. Undoubtedly, in this era of the Information Society, the first session will be on ICTs and Poverty Alleviation.



There will be, of course, a Focus Session on Resource Mobilisation; (our friends in Self-Help Groups are asked to show a little restraint at this point). Deliberations resume after a quick Participatory Research Lunch. Germane to the Fund-Raising focus will be the Study of Issue-Based development of Institutional Linkages to the right Donors. The whole area throws up several Challenges/Opportunities that call for Strategic Planning aimed at ensuring Control/Access over Resources.

The next session can be devoted to looking at Integrated Strategies that adopt a Holistic Approach in ensuring Local Participation and Community Control. Case studies of Successful Interventions amongst Marginalised Communities will be presented by Subaltern Voices from the grassroots. A Core Group will do Environmental Impact Assessments of the radical new rhetoric. Our Documentation & Research Centre will preserve all relevant material in Gender-Sensitive Databases. All irrelevant material goes into the Final Report of the Conference.

About the Author : P Sainath is one of the two recipients of the A H Boerma Award, 2001, for his contributions to changing the nature of the development debate on food, hunger and rural development in the Indian media producers.