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**development**  
**digest**

**09**

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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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## Shock and Awe

The tsunami hit us all with sudden ferocity.

It has impacted all of us – those who directly bore the brunt of it, as well as those afar, albeit in different ways. Will this make for a better world?

There was an outpouring of grief, horror and compassion. People led the way in ‘giving’, sometimes even shaming governments into more potent action or provision of aid. There was also the usual politicking and jostling for space, agencies putting their *chhapa*, in much the same way as we occupy seats in buses and trains at crowded stations; governments using the occasion to pull off geo-political coups, and sometimes refusing help, out of false pride.

But beyond the apparent chaos and pettiness, people and institutions, volunteers and professionals worked tirelessly to ease the pain – physical, emotional and spiritual.

*Sainath* takes us to the next point – we may not be able to battle and subdue tsunamis. They will shock and awe us. But do we need to pursue policies and practices that make us more vulnerable to such unpredictable calamities?

Can societies take responsibility, and can the better-off put their ingenuity to use to make the lives of the more unfortunate less of a gamble?



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**More than a million Hiroshimas**, P. Sainath, *The Hindu*, Jan 01, 2005  
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/01/01/stories/2005010100981000.htm>  
[C.ELDOC.1078270]



## More than a million Hiroshimas

*P. Sainath*

THE EARTHQUAKE that produced the tsunami unleashed energy millions of times greater than the Hiroshima bomb. True, comparisons across different physical processes are not straightforward. Yet it is quite common to restate the magnitude of earthquakes in terms that are more familiar. Typically, this is done by asking how much of the common explosive *Trinitrotoluene* (TNT) would have to be detonated to obtain the same release of energy as the earthquake.

A table produced by the Nevada Seismological Laboratory suggests that a quake of 9.0 on the Richter scale has a seismic energy yield roughly equalling 32 billion tons of TNT.

Compare that with the bomb that decimated Hiroshima, whose yield was similar to that from exploding 15,000 tons of TNT. The Indonesian quake last week, like the Chilean quake of 1960, unleashed 2.13 million times more energy than the perversely named "Little Boy" did over Hiroshima.

As geophysicist and climatologist Ashwin Mahesh points out, "Such a look across different processes is tricky. This cannot be a straight comparison but simply a useful indicator of power that ordinary people can relate to.

Also, Hiroshima was an 'atmospheric' blast, not on the ground. Then there is radiation damage, which occurs with nukes but not with quakes. Finally, there is the impact — nearly all the energy from an atomic bomb is released locally, but energy from an earthquake is distributed by seismic action and more widely dispersed. This is why something that happened in Indonesia still packs a punch thousands of miles away from the epicentre."

Dr. Mahesh is, of course, quite right. Yet, the comparative numbers do convey a sense of the sheer magnitude of the quake's power. And apart from the physical and character differences of the two processes, the quake in this case also triggered the devastation that spilt across 12 countries and two continents. It will be ages before we fully measure the damage.

### Could they have been warned ?

There has been much agonising over “those vital three hours” (now spoken of as 90 minutes) in which the Government “could have done something.” Sure, it is always useful to be forewarned of disaster. Every human life saved is worth the effort. Yet, there was little scope for a major response, even if India had been part of the tsunami warning system. (Of course this did not stop sections of the media from identifying the villains and the good guys within six hours of the event.)



Without a network of local alarm systems in place along the coast, membership in the warning system club would have meant little. Those networks would have to be of a kind that do not depend wholly on human agency. That is, they should not need someone to switch them on or off. The coastal disaster struck in the early hours of the morning, when all offices and institutions were closed. ‘Local administration,’ such as there was, was also crippled by the event. Policemen, municipal workers, clerks, low-level officials, engineers, medical personnel, and many others, died in the disaster. Roads were inaccessible, vehicles washed away, electricity shut down. A highly-skilled, ready-round-the-clock entity like the Indian Air Force had a base wrecked (it took a beating during the Gujarat earthquake, too). Many of those we assume

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could have done a lot in those 90 minutes were themselves victims of the catastrophe.

The nuclear site at Kalpakkam was hampered by more than the direct impact. A design engineer employed by the facility was swept away by the waves while praying in Church. Other employees died as well. The apocalyptic scale of disaster ensured a chaos on the ground that paralysed most systems.

### **The blame game, unfolding by whom?**

The blame game, unfolding within hours of the tragedy, is mystifying given that few explain what they would have done in those 90 minutes had they got the warning. Warnings without practised, in-place response strategies and drills might have meant little. Certainly at that hour. (Incidentally, one channel announced that Besant Nagar in Chennai was "under water," leading to panic — outside that locality.)

We may not have been able to do much in those 90 minutes. But every little thing we do now matters enormously. What is needed is urgency on the relief and rehabilitation front and a rational long-term response to disaster.



It is also a little mystifying that the India Meteorological Department is seen as having a major role in the present mess. Tsunami are not weather phenomena. If anything, monitoring events that might trigger

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them could be the task of the Geological Survey of India (GSI). But that is another story. Where indeed Governments must be blasted is for the quality and tardiness of relief efforts. Not for failing to predict the impact of tsunami.

It is also another matter, as John Schwartz points out in *The New York Times*, that 75 per cent of tsunami warnings in 56 years have been wrong. He quotes a NASA website devoted to tsunami as saying "Three out of four tsunami warnings issued since 1948 have been false. And the cost of the false alarms can be high." Already, the panic over the "high wave alert" is an embarrassment for a defensive Government trying to cope with the media charge that it did not respond the last time.

The January 17, 1995, Kobe earthquake in Japan took 5,500 lives, injured 26,000 and inflicted damage in excess of \$ 200 billion. That in a country where seismic activity is massively monitored with advanced technologies. The quake lasted some 20 seconds and measured around 7.0 on the Richter scale. Structures designed for such seismic zones were torn apart like paper. Last week's quake measured 9.0. Which means it was, near Indonesia at least, 1,000 times more powerful than Kobe (The Richter scale is a logarithmic one, not a linear scale.)

The question is not so much whether India should have been a paid-up member of the tsunami warning system. Until last week, elite wisdom would have viewed that as so much money saved. The question is whether Governments in India today will ever spend the modest sums required along the coast to protect the millions of poorer Indians dependent on the seas. And whether we need a disaster this scale to rethink some of our priorities.

### **The Development Squeeze**

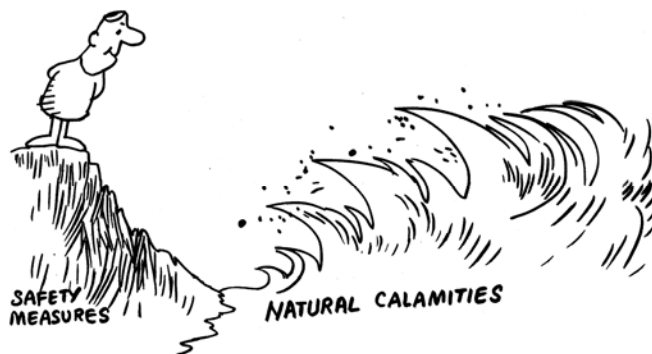
The surprise expressed by many (arriving from Delhi) over the poor medical facilities in these regions is misplaced. The capital city may have such facilities. But we have spent the better part of 12 years gutting public health care, privatising hospitals, and charging user fees in Government facilities from people who cannot pay. Fracturing an

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already inadequate and fragile system. Now, when there is a deadly danger of epidemics, there is little to fight them with. It is odd that we allow Governments to get away with atrocities against the poor, but sternly hold them to blame for an unprecedented natural disaster.

Hundreds of fishing villages have been squeezed into narrower, tighter settlements as `development' Indian-style sets in. Many have moved into unsafe terrain, pushed by resorts, hotels, and construction of highways. Mangrove forests that have always acted as a brake — however limited — against tidal waves, have increasingly vanished. So have another natural barrier — sand dunes, looted by the construction industry. We have put a lot of effort into making the coastline increasingly unsafe.

And not just the coastline. There seems to be no concern over the fact that the many small dams in the western part of the country might be responsible for what is known as 'reservoir-induced seismicity.' Our planners still aim to turn every river into a chain of lakes.



Growing seismic activity in Maharashtra has not led to a rethink on the ever-higher skyscrapers being planned especially in Mumbai city. Nor has the harrowing experience of the Gujarat earthquake had any impact on Mumbai's mighty builder lobby. We could perhaps have done very little in "those crucial 90 minutes," but there is much we can do on other fronts – if we wish – to make people safer.



It would not be too much of a challenge to India's much-celebrated IT and software genius to make the lives of traditional fishermen along India's coastline a lot better. A PCO type box, modified for at-sea use, could do plenty. It could act as a weather alert and SOS mechanism. It could work as a GPS device. It could even be used to help fishermen in shoal tracking — a huge advantage that predatory big boats and trawlers have over them. All in all, it might be possible to install these in the vessels of traditional fishermen at maybe less than Rs.2,000 a boat. It is a small thing that may have little to do with tsunamis. But it could make a big difference in many life-threatening situations.

That it has never happened on a major scale means it is just not a priority. When advanced technological systems do come in, they will likely be installed with an eye on tourists rather than fisherfolk. The latter, right now, do not even have boats on which to install any safety device. Thousands of boats, catamarans and fishing nets were simply destroyed in the calamity.

Maybe we can never fully and correctly predict a tsunami or, more importantly, its likely impact. On the other hand, it is easy to predict that our priorities, our ways of thinking and living, render us vulnerable to disasters of our own making.▶

## NOTES

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## **Twenty-Two Theses on the Problems of Democracy in the World Social Forum**

*Teivo Teivainen*

In the meeting of the Strategy Commission of the World Social Forum's International Council, held in Paris in November 2003, some tasks were distributed among the participants. I was asked to prepare notes on the strategic challenges of the World Social Forum process.

In the following notes, I will focus on one particular issue that I feel we have not discussed sufficiently. There are also other important issues we should discuss about the future of the WSF process, and I do not pretend to cover all of them in this note.

My main argument is that the WSF in general and its International Council in particular, have such depoliticizing features that may hinder our possibilities to apply democratic principles. In order to make your comments and refutations easier, I will present this argument below in the form of twenty-two theses. In some parts, I have formulated my arguments in a somewhat simplistic way to make them provocative so that we may have a debate. I send these theses now in a very preliminary form to get comments from you.

Before formulating the theses, let me say a couple of words about my general understanding of democracy, which takes into account the institutional features that enable the processes through which people can take control over their lives. In most theories of democracy, the relevant

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**Twenty-Two Theses on the Problems of Democracy in the World Social Forum**, *Teivo Teivainen*, Jan 2004, *World Social Forum*.

[http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/dinamic.php?pagina=bib\\_teivo\\_fsm2004\\_institutions](http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/dinamic.php?pagina=bib_teivo_fsm2004_institutions) [C.ELDOC.6009323]

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are associated with states. While I believe that states are important, my definition of democracy does not depend on them. I find it more important to analyze to what extent particular social processes are democratic than to rely on nation-state-centric categories of democracy. In this case, I find it important to reflect on the extent to which the WSF process is democratic. More particularly, I will focus on the politicizing dimension of democratization.

#### **About Politicization**

- Politicization is a key aspect of democratic struggles. It means showing the political nature of such relations of power that are presented as neutral. It has been a central feature of most socialist (politicize the capitalist economy), feminist (politicize the patriarchy) and other radically democratic movements.
- The growing power of the seemingly nonpolitical global economic institutions during the last decades of the 20th Century generated conditions for the politicizing reaction that was symbolized by the massive protests during the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999. It was no longer possible to reproduce the claim that global economic institutions were nonpolitical and neutral.
- Politicization is important both for the movements that aim at transformations within the limits placed by the capitalist system places and for the movements that fight for a post-capitalist world.

#### **About Democracy in the WSF**

- It is strategically and morally desirable that movements wanting to radically democratize the world apply democratic principles to themselves and the articulations they build with other movements. Democratic principles should be applied to the way the World Social Forum (WSF) is organized.

- The WSF rules and practices include depoliticizing elements that block the possibilities for more democratic and transparent procedures. Some depoliticizing elements are more problematic than others.
- Pretending that there are no relations of power to be made visible within the WSF process is the most harmful of these depoliticizing elements. Even if it is often presented as "not a locus of power", "not an organization", and "only a neutral space", the WSF does have relations of power.
- The fact that these relations of power are not sufficiently transparent does not necessarily mean that there would exist a conspiracy or conscious attempt to silently rule the International Council and other WSF organs. It does, however, mean that we have a problem that we should face.



- Claiming that the WSF is "not an organization", and that therefore questions of power and organizational democracy are not relevant, resembles the claim that the International Monetary Fund is a purely technical institution. Both claims are ideological mystifications. Both claims should be rejected by those who believe in radical forms of democracy.
- The rules and procedures of the International Council should be made more explicit and transparent. Without more formalized rules, it will be particularly difficult for movements and organizations with

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few material resources to take part in the decision-making of the  
WSF process.

### **About Representation**

- Traditional conceptions of territorial representation cannot and should not be applied to the WSF process. Nevertheless, if we want to create a more democratic International Council, considerations related to representation should not be rejected in an absolutist way. A binary opposition between (good) participatory democracy and (bad) representative democracy leaves unaccountable power relations with too many places to hide.
- If we accept that Africa and Asia do not have enough presence in the International Council, that they are in this sense under-represented, we should also accept that some principles of representation do have a role in our attitudes toward the WSF.
- When the WSF process was less well known, it was relatively easy to organize the International Council without too many concerns about who its members are and what they may represent. The problems the International Council has had in trying to establish a procedure for incorporating new members are an indication of the difficulties of trying to operate without formal structures and procedures.
- As there exists an increasing number of "national" social forums, there will be increasing demands to articulate them with the International Council and other official organs of the WSF. This will increase the pressures to talk about issues related to balanced representation in the International Council. This does not necessarily mean that we should create numerical formulas to ensure fair representation of the unjustly under-represented groups or areas.

- In the construction of the WSF in India, issues of representation have been more explicitly debated than in the construction of the global WSF process. We should learn from the Indians.



- The depoliticizing elements of the WSF rules and practices can help to avoid conflicts within the WSF, but at the same time they make the WSF governance bodies an easy target for accusations of reproducing non-democratic practices.

**About Strategic Goals**

- Apart from the depoliticization that hinders democratic practices within the WSF, there also exists another kind of depoliticization. It consists of the idea that the WSF is not a movement or a political actor but simply a space, an arena.
- This second kind of depoliticization is reflected in the practice that the International Council has not made public declarations about political issues, for example about the imperialist war in Iraq. This unwillingness to take a public stand has been used by many opponents of the WSF process to claim that the WSF serves no good purpose in anti-imperialist struggles.
- We have to move beyond rigid movement/space dichotomies if we want to understand the role of the WSF. The WSF can play and has played a role in facilitating radical social action. One example is

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the fact that the massive anti-war protests of 15 February 2003 were to a significant extent initiated and organized from within the WSF process. We should use this example more consciously to counter the claims that the WSF is politically useless. We should also use it as a learning experience, to build more effective channels for concrete action without building a traditional movement (of movements).

- The slogan "another world is possible" has been useful in partially breaking the hegemony of the there-is-no-alternative discourse. Since learning implies growing, the WSF must move to a new stage in its learning process. At some point, it is no longer enough to repeat that another world is possible. It is increasingly important to envision what the other (post-capitalist) world may look like.
- The WSF should not be turned into a political party or a new international. It should, however, have better mechanisms for exchanging, disseminating and debating strategies of radical transformation. More explicit mechanisms and procedures mean more possibilities for getting things done.

#### **About the Charter of Principles**

- The Charter of Principles, as the key document that defines the political orientation of the WSF, should not be amended or replaced too easily. It could, however, be useful to define procedures for revising it if needed in the future.
- The article 6 of the Charter of Principles, in a phrase that is strangely missing from the Spanish version of the Charter, states that the WSF "does not constitute a locus of power to be disputed by the participants in its meetings". It is a useful reminder of the fact that the WSF is not a party-like organization. If, however, the phrase is interpreted to mean that there are no relations of power within the WSF, or within its International Council, it becomes an element of ideological mystification.



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## Building On the Success of the London ESF

*Alex Callinicos*

The third European Social Forum in London (14-17 October 2004) provided further evidence – if more were needed – of the vitality of the *altermondialiste* movement. It also confirmed – after Porto Alegre and Paris, Mumbai and Florence – that the social forum remains an astonishingly dynamic and successful political form. The success of the London ESF can be demonstrated in various dimensions:

**First of all, the figures:** approximately 25,000 people took part in 500 plenaries, seminars, workshops, and cultural events, which were addressed by over 2,500 speakers. The figures for pre-registered delegates show that the participants came from right across the continent and beyond the boundaries of even the expanded European Union.

The concentration of the bulk of the ESF at Alexandra Palace recaptured something of the atmosphere of the Fortezza at Florence, producing an intensification of energies by bringing together a large number of different actors and debates in a confined space for two and a half days.

London also displayed the same interplay of mobilization and debate that has been the driving force of all the great social forums: the ESF culminated in a demonstration in central London of around 100,000, before which the Assembly of the Social Movements launched a call for international protests against neo-liberalism and war on the weekend of 19-20 March 2005.

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**Building on the Success of the London ESF**, *Alex Callinicos*, *Znet*, December 01, 2004.

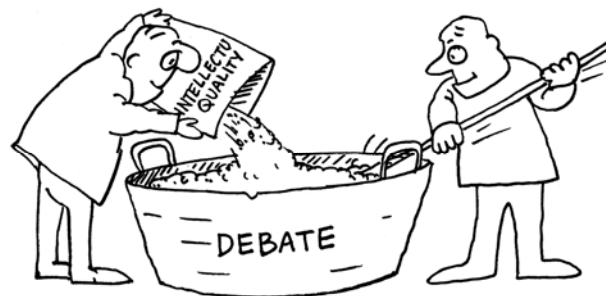
<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=1&ItemID=6775>

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These are all measures common to the London ESF and its predecessors. But in certain respects, the ESF marked a significant step forward.

- The mainstream of the trade union movement in Britain was actively involved in both the preparatory process and the Forum itself: feedback from various unions has been overwhelmingly positive, with reports of highly successful seminars involving important networks of activists.
- There was also a marked increase in participation by black, Asian, Muslim, and refugee networks: this is an important achievement given the Europe-wide offensive against civil liberties and the rights of migrants and asylum-seekers.
- There was a very rich and ambitious cultural programme. The number of plenaries was sharply reduced, giving more space to self-organized events. Moreover, the efforts to reduce the number of plenary speakers, establish a gender balance among them, and allow more time for discussion from the floor were quite successful.
- My impression - and that of others to whom I have spoken - was of



a significant increase in the intellectual quality of the debate: in the seminars that I attended I was very struck by the extent to which both platform speakers and contributors from the floor avoided the ritual denunciations of neo-liberalism and imperialism for serious analysis and discussion. All these improvements did not occur randomly. They were among the aims of those centrally involved in organizing the ESF. We are therefore entitled to claim a fair measure of success.

The ESF in London was smaller than its predecessors in Florence and Paris, which each attracted around 50,000 people. This is hardly surprising: the *altermondialiste* movement first began to take shape in Europe with the formation of ATTAC in France in 1998; since Genoa the movement has been strongest in Italy. In Britain there has been a very strong anti-war movement, but only a widespread, but diffuse anti-globalization consciousness.

**The London ESF was accompanied by plenty of political noise.** To a significant degree this reflected the fact that our very diversity means that there are plenty of political disagreements. For example, many comrades, especially from France, didn't like the fact that the war in Iraq was very prominent in London, as it was in Florence.

In part, this disagreement reflects differences in national context. In



Britain the war dominates politics and is far and away the biggest mobilizing issue. Without the prominence of the war and the leading involvement in the ESF of the British peace movement, the Forum would have been a far less dynamic affair, and the final demonstration

would have been little larger than the participation in the Forum itself.

At different stages this process embraced a very wide range of forces – stretching from the Trade Union Congress and mainstream NGOs to autonomist groups with a history of intermittent violence. Holding this coalition together would have been difficult in any circumstances. Of course, the Italian and French comrades also have developed very broad coalitions, but it was probably an advantage that these had been constructed well in advance of actually organizing the ESF, so that people had an experience of working together.

In Britain, by contrast, the *altermondialiste* networks that had participated in the earlier Forums were relatively weak. A coalition had to be created from scratch to organize the London ESF. This involved

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bringing together very diverse organizations with no history of working together and huge differences in political culture. Working together would have been hard in any circumstances.

### **Disagreements spilled over into several attempts at disruption**

A very heavy responsibility for the difficulties that developed must rest with the autonomist circles. Their attitude towards the ESF varied between outright opposition (theorized in a critique of the Social Forums as inherently reformist) and variable but usually not very constructive participation in the process.

Every effort was made to accommodate them: for example, the London



ESF provided an Autonomous Space along the lines of those organized in Florence and Paris. As agreed at the European Preparatory Assembly, all meetings of the UK Organizing and Coordinating Committees were open.

But even if the criticisms that have been made of the British organizers were largely correct, this would not justify the introduction of violence inside the Forum. Violence and debate are antitheses: those who believe that diversity and discussion are among the greatest strengths of our movement cannot tolerate attempts to settle arguments by force. Moreover, those who bring violence into the movement bring the state in with them: the attacks in Trafalgar Square gave the police the pretext to intervene and arrest people.

Overall these incidents had very little impact on the ESF.

**It is, in any case, the future about which we need to be thinking.**

The next ESF will be in Athens in the spring of 2006. What political lessons does the experience of London offer? The most important is that, as the Italian comrades pointed out after Florence, the great strengths of the movement are radicality and diversity. We have managed the near-miracle of developing a movement that embraces an extraordinarily wide social and political range but that has mounted a challenge to capitalist imperialism as a system. This was very evident in London: as at Florence, many of the largest and most dynamic meetings were dominated by the politics of the radical left.

But London also showed that combining radicality and diversity becomes harder, not easier, over time. Important divergences have crystallized over a variety of issues - the war, the European Constitution, the *hejab*, the role of the radical left. There are also differences over how to build the movement: some networks are much more ambivalent about involving the trade-union mainstream than others.

We must also confront the fact that the process itself is becoming increasingly dysfunctional. ATTAC France rightly points to the fact that attendance at the European Preparatory Assembly has stagnated since Florence and argues that 'the functioning of the EPA must be improved in a logic of democratization, of representativity and of enlargement'. This is easier said than done, particularly given the stress laid in our procedures on meetings being open to all and deciding by consensus, which can give great power to disruptive but unrepresentative minorities.

We still have a fair distance to travel before we can imagine having achieved any of the concrete goals adopted in all our seminars and plenaries. But our successes - most recently at the London ESF - leave me confident of our ability to build a movement that can start to win real victories.



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## Can the Left Deliver?

It has become almost trite to say that 'Revolution is no longer around the corner'. What then are the alternatives for the activists and NGOs in the field to work towards?

The Left has gradually been coming to power in Latin American countries, Uruguay being the latest to join the band. Does this bring about radical change? Do we expect too much too soon? Do we judge these governments by a more rigorous yardstick?

There are lessons for us in this analysis. In India the unexpected victory of the Congress-led front has also been interpreted to be a backlash from the 'common-man' against the elitist 'India Shining' thrust of the previous government. The Left has been in power in West Bengal for decades, and is a major force in Kerala, forming governments there intermittently. Can we hope for much from these sometimes-unexpected radical shifts?

**Arundhati Roy** in a radio interview warns us against expecting too much from the new government in Delhi.

**Plinio Arruda Sampaio**, on the other hand, analyses the first two years of Lula in power to understand whether he has been able to deliver, and what are the implications of his presidency for the masses, in general, and for the left, in particular.

We bring you a perspective on the Left in Bengal and Kerala in a later issue.

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**Indian Elections and Resistance : Arundhati Roy on the Indian Election, Her support for the Iraqi Resistance and the Privatisation of war, Amy Goodman interviews**

Arundhati Roy, Znet, May 19, 2004.

<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=32&ItemID=5553>

[C.ELDOC.6009320]

**What has changed after Lula?** *Plinio Arruda Sampaio*, Zmag, January 11, 2005.

<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=48&ItemID=7003>

[C.ELDOC.6009324]

## **Indian Elections and Resistance**

**Arundhati Roy on the Indian Election, Her support for the Iraqi Resistance and the Privatisation of war**

*Amy Goodman interviews Arundhati Roy*

*Welcome to Democracy Now!, Arundhati.*

Thank you, Amy

***It's very good to have you with us. Can you explain what is happening right now in India? Were you surprised by the victory of the Congress party, and then the rejection by Sonia Gandhi of the prime ministership?***

I think many people were surprised by the victory of the Congress, because it was really hard to see beyond the sort of haze of hatred that the Hindu nationalists had been spreading. One wasn't sure whether the people would be blinded by that – and they had been just a few months ago in a local assembly elections in Gujarat – or whether the real issues of absolute poverty and absolute [separation] from the land and water resources would be the big issues. A lot of us, when the results came out were – leaving aside one's cynicism about mainstream politics – thought it couldn't have been a better result.

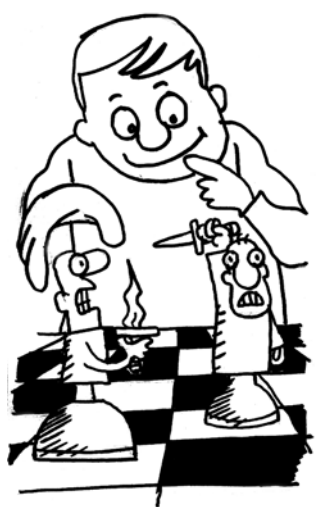
The Congress party sort of shackled to the left parties in a coalition which would make them a pretty formidable opposition to the B.J.P. But subsequently, what has happened has been actually fascinating because you can just see the forces at play, both internationally and nationally, so blatantly, just so blatantly that, you know, just in order to understand what's going on, it's been a fascinating few days.

***Can you talk about the differences between the B.J.P., which has been defeated, and the Congress party? I understand that you have just returned from the house of the man who we believe will replace Sonia Gandhi since she has turned down the prime***

**ministership.**

No, no, no, not returned, but I was in the market and to come back home I had to drive past all of the politicians' houses, and I could see all the crowds outside and the television cameras and so on. I have no access to them in that sense, but, well the fundamental difference between the Congress and the BJP is that one is an overtly fascist party, proudly fascist. It doesn't feel bad if you call it that. The culture which the BJP's big leaders subscribe to, which is the RSS, openly admires Hitler.

The Congress – I mean, obviously, the way it has happened is that the Congress has historically played covert communal politics in order to create what in India we call vote banks where you pit one community against another and so on in order to secure votes. So, somehow the BJP is the horrible specter that has emerged from the legacy of the Congress party. You know, you begin to realize that hypocrisy is not a terrible thing when you see what overt fascism is compared to sort of covert, you know, communal politics which the Congress has never been shy of indulging in.



Economically, again, it's the same thing. You know, the Congress really was the party that opened India up to the whole neo-liberal regime. But the BJP has come in and taken it much further, to absurd levels. Today, we have a situation in which 40% of rural India has food absorption levels lower than sub-Saharan Africa. You have the biggest rural income divide ever seen in history. You have millions of tons of food grain rotting in government programs while starvation deaths are announced all over.



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You have the W.T.O. regime making it possible for the government to import food grain and milk and sugar and all of these things while Indian farmers are committing suicide not in the hundreds now, but the figures have moved into the thousands. And you have a middle class which is glittering, which is happy... I just wrote a piece about how corporate globalization and this kind of Hindu nationalism, communal fascism are so linked. If you see what has happened after the elections, after the people of India made it clear that their mandate was against communalism, their mandate was against economic reforms. Even in state governments where the Congress party had instituted these reforms, the Congress was also overthrown. It wasn't a vote for Sonia Gandhi or a vote for the congress, it was a vote against very serious issues.

What has happened is that as soon as the election results were announced, the BJP, the hard-right wing members of the BJP and its goon squads started saying we'll shave our heads. We'll eat green gram and make a revolution in this country against this foreign woman on the one hand, and on the other hand, equally hard core corporate groups were acting – they were out on the streets. They were yelling like fundamentalists would, and all of these corporate television channels had split screens where on the one hand, you saw what is happening in Sonia Gandhi's house and on the other half, you just had what the stockbrokers are saying. And the whole of the one billion people who had voted had just been forgotten. They had been given their photo opportunity, their journeys on elephant back and camel and whatever it was to the election booth. Now they were just forgotten. The only comments you get are what the industrialists think... and what the centrists think about Sonia Gandhi. It is an absolutely absurd kind of blackmail by fascists on the one hand and corporate fascists on the other.

***We're talking to Arundhati Roy, speaking to us from Delhi. She recently wrote a piece in The Guardian of Britain, Let Us Hope that the Darkness has Passed and the Veil of the Virtual Worlds has Collided in a Humiliation of Power. On the issue of Sonia Gandhi***

**and why she is stepping down, what this means, do you think it is significant at all?**

I think there was a real dilemma there. All of us are so used to being cynical and reading meaning into meanings. But she was faced with a party and with a climate and people at the helm of the BJP, who we know now are capable of going to any extreme – as we saw what happened in Gujarat two years ago when they openly supported a pogrom in which 2,000 Muslims were massacred on the streets, and not a single person has been brought to book or punished.



I think she was aware of the fact that this kind of vilification and this kind of chauvinism is in the air. It could have resulted in a situation where a new government comes in and all it's doing is firefighting on a non-issue, on whether Sonia Gandhi is a foreigner or whether she should be there or not there. Whereas, in fact, there are so many really pressing issues that need to be looked at. So, I think that there was a real dilemma there, and perhaps strategically it has taken the wind out of the BJP's sails and has exposed them for being absolutely uncaring for a massive mandate. If you look at all of the secular and left parties together, it's 320 seats, which is a huge majority.

***As we return to Arundhati Roy in India, as she reports on what's happening there with the elections that have routed out the B.J.P. party. Arundhati, as you listen to this report of the Israeli helicopter gun ships firing into the crowd of thousands [in Rafah in***

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***Gaza], a number of people are dead, and it's certainly an issue you have followed as well as what you're hearing about what's happening in Iraq, could you share your response?***

It's just that you have to sometimes, you have come to a stage where you almost have to work on yourself. You know, on finding some tranquility with which to respond to these things, because I realize that the biggest risk that many of us run is beginning to get inured to the horrors. Next time around, only if it is ratcheted up, will it get our attention? I have always maintained that it's very, very important to understand that war is the result of a flawed peace, and we must understand

the systems that are at work here. You know, we must understand that the resistance movement in Iraq is a resistance movement that all of us have to support, because it's our war, too. And it will



not do for them to call people terrorists and thugs and all of that. That time is over now. The fact is that America's weapons systems have made it impossible for anybody to confront it militarily. So, all you have is your wits and your cunning, and your ability to fight in the way the Iraqis are fighting. You see that system. You see Iraq as the culmination of a system, and you see how hard that system is pushing even here. You can see the clear links between what's happening in the Indian elections and this whole global economy and how it's suffocating the breath out of the body of poor people.

***We're talking with Arundhati Roy in India. We have also gotten these reports of some Indian workers who were working for a western contractor in Iraq, who alleged that they were kept there against their will, hardly being paid. It was a report that was first reported in the Hindu and then followed up in this country, a group***

***of 20 Indians who ran away from a U.S. Military camp in Iraq where they worked in the kitchen claiming they had been abused for nine months. Is this a story that you have been following? They have returned, I believe, now, to India.***

They are all people from Kerala which is where I come from, you know, and apparently, these kind of job contractors took them to Kuwait, pretending that they had got them work there. A lot of people from Kerala work in the Middle East. And then they were put on a bus basically and they realized they were in Baghdad before they knew it. So, I think, you know, this is the bottom end of the privatization of war. Torture has been privatized now, so you have obviously the whole scandal in America about the abuse of prisoners and the fact that army people might be made to pay a price. But who are the privatized torturers accountable to? Eventually, you have a situation also in which – as it becomes more and more obvious to the American government



that when American soldiers die on the battlefield, pressure goes up at home. So they're going to try to hire other soldiers to do their work for them. You know, they're going to try to hire poor people from poor countries who would be willing to do it. I'm sure they're going to try that. They're trying that already, trying to get, of course, the Indian army and so on in – we know Hamid Karzai's securities are all privatized. I think it's a nightmare and ultimately, terrorism, in way, is a privatization of

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war. It's the belief that it's not only states that can wage war, why not private people? Why not have your nuclear bombs in your briefcase? All of these policies that America upholds, nuclear weapons, privatization, all of these things are going to mutate and metamorphose into these dangerous things.

***I want to thank you for joining us from New Delhi, India.***

## NOTES

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## What has changed after Lula?

*Plinio Arruda Sampaio*

To evaluate is to compare facts and values. In this evaluation of the first two years of Lula's government, we chose as a term of comparison, the project for national construction. Using a synthetic and precise formula from Caio Prado Jr. (*to what extent these two years of government have contributed to accelerate the transition between the "Brazil-Colony from yesterday into the Brazil-Nation of tomorrow"*), three aspects of this transition will be examined: reduction of inequality; increase in autonomy; and political organization of the people.

As for the reduction of social inequality, it should be mentioned that for the two year period, the growth of the Gross National Product (GNP) was mediocre and did not even manage to affect the GNP per capita. There was an improvement in 2004, but without a larger impact in terms of jobs (there was a small increase in comparison to the size of the work force) or salaries (in fact, the average salary decreased in the two year period).

The government made an effort to demand the formalization of job relations – which would be reflected in better salaries. In spite of that, the number of registered workers is still lower than those working under informal contracts. That might help to explain the shocking fact that the income of almost a fourth (23.8% according to Ipea [Institute of Applied Economic Research]) of Brazilian workers is below the minimum wage. Having inherited a centennial situation of inequality, the government could claim the impossibility to reverse this scenario in only two years. This argument would be acceptable if, in those two years, efficient measures had been taken to alter the corrupt structures that create inequality. That is not what we have seen.



The agrarian reform did not come out of the paper. The goal of settling one million families in four years, which in itself would be enough to generate the virtuous dynamic of wealth redistribution in the countryside, was cut to half, and that half is not being executed.

There was no mention of urban reform – another structural measure for the reduction of social inequality. Even a traditional housing programme for the construction of popular houses did not get off the ground.

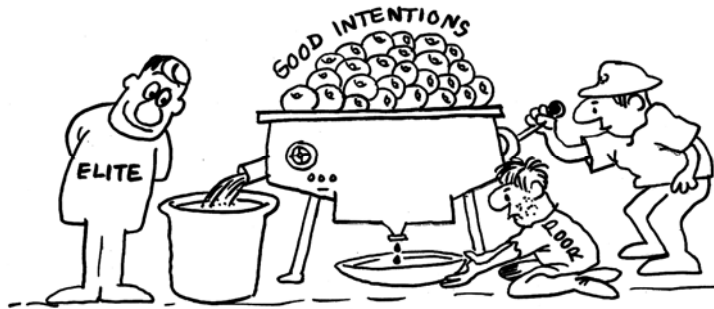
The use of taxation for wealth redistribution -an instrument used by developed countries in Europe and North America- was not even contemplated. What we have seen was a tax collection fury, completely indifferent to the fact that the current tributary system places a disproportional burden on the poorest layers of the population.

### **Good intentions but insufficient programmes**

In the absence of structural reforms, the battle against social inequalities was limited to the *assistentialist* expenditure of the State. What we have seen there is that after two years of the Hunger Zero programme, Bolsa Escola (School Incentive), Minimum Income, and so many other programmes under good sounding titles, the government did not entirely manage to get rid of the neo-liberal concept of “focused social expenditure”. The announced “structuring” vector of those income

transferences to the poorest sectors did not go beyond the level of good intention. The disproportion between the amount of resources allocated (even if they were superior in relation to the previous government) and the scale of the demands of the immense mass of poor has frustrated the objectives.

Miniscule transferences of wealth do not generate a favorable social dynamic for the political and social protagonism of marginalized people. In other words: in spite of their good intentions, it is not possible to come out of the traditional *assistentialist* line practiced by the dominant elite, which is merely destined to lessen the explosive poverty situation.



The big argument from the conservatives with regards to wealth redistribution is that we first need to have wealth. The government boasts that the economy is growing (only in 2004) at a rate nearing 5% - the best result in nine years. The growth rate is exhibited as evidence that the economic policy is correct. However to put it into perspective, it is appropriate to compare it with economies such as Venezuela (18%); Uruguay (12%); Argentina (8.2%); Ecuador (6%); Panama (6%); Chile (5.8%), in the same period.

In this broader context we should question if the announced 5% in Brazil would actually be the result of a keen management of the economy or the expansionist situation of the international market, considering the



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performance of the US and China. Where is the guarantee that economic growth will continue at this rate?

Yet, that is not the central point of the redistributive controversy. The 2004 rate may remain for five, ten years, or even longer (which no economist dares to predict). However, if the structural scheme of sharing wealth is not altered, the situation of social inequality will be substantially the same, even if the total income level might be a bit higher.

**The conclusion of this analysis is that, in the first two years of Lula's government, there were no significant results in terms of the reduction of social inequalities.**

#### The Neo-liberal adjustment continues

To measure the performance of Lula's government in reducing dependency – a second dimension in this evaluation – the analysis must include two aspects: political and economic. In the economic aspect, the basic and shocking facts verify the continuity of the structural adjustment process of the Brazilian economy to the canon of the neoliberal model: the Pension Reform; the removal of any constitutional hindrance to the autonomy of the Central Bank; the Judiciary Reform; and the Bankruptcy Bill. This structuring legislation, sponsored by all means in hand by the PT government fits rigorously with the prescription of the Washington Consensus – weak state and free market.

All economic policy was subordinated to the same motto: *"Confidence Building"* (as we read in the manuals that instructed the economic team) from the centers of financial capitalism in the government of Brazil. *To reach this confidence, unjustifiable concessions to the energy and communication multinationals were made; speculators and*



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*investors received undue exemptions; we turned a blind eye to the transgressions of the norms of forest protection by foreign logging companies; and a retrocession to the environmental legislation was sanctioned in order to favor GMO transnational companies. Not to mention the maintenance of a primary superávit that is incompatible with meeting the minimum social demands and the urgent needs to recover the economic infrastructure of the country.*

**This inventory of structural and circumstantial measures brings us to the conclusion that, after two years of Lula's government, the Brazilian state has become feeble and less equipped to execute economic policies, since a large number of relevant decisions have been transferred to external centers of decision.**

As for the political dimension and the issue of dependency, the government and Itamaraty tried to push forward FTAA without bending too much to US pressure. They managed to torpedo the assignment of the Alcântara base; to create the G-22; and to defeat, for the first time in the history of trade negotiations, proposals supported by both the US and Europe. These "achievements", though questionable, completely fade in light of the inexplicable deployment of Brazilian troops in Haiti, serving the obscure needs of US and French diplomacy.

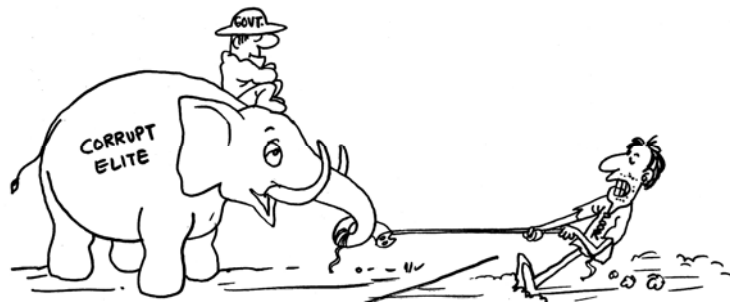
### **Fragmentation of the Left**

*We can now start examining the third axle of analysis: the political organization of the people – an essential aspect, since we all know that the reduction of inequalities and autonomy are not generous gifts from the rich and the foreign powers. Quite the opposite, they are conquests that must be plucked from the powerful through great struggle and sacrifice. Therefore, they require people aware, organized and mobilized.*

There is no doubt here that these have been the worst results of Lula's government in these two years. For a start, the government conducted

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its politics according to the traditional patterns of the corrupt Brazilian elite: collusion, give and take, bogus alliances and obscure financing of the electoral campaign – nothing different from the reprehensible practices of Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government in its relationship with the parliamentary and supporting base.



This behavior only helped to confirm the skepticism of a large part of the population with anything that has to do with politics (“they all come from the same place”) and to demoralize the popular vanguard which, for decades, struggled to convince the people that PT was different. The disappointment with their ethical behavior was followed by total astonishment at the lack of measures that were always part of the party programme and of Lula's speech during his political life.

The indigenous people, for example, could not understand why the government did not demarcate the reserve *Raposa Serra do Sol*. The two hundred thousand families that ran to the countryside when they heard about Lula's election cannot accept that they must remain on roadsides or in occupied areas, under the target of gunmen. Environmentalists saw their hopes for a decisive repressive action against deforestation and the penetration of GMOs being frustrated. Those affected by dams have not received the compensations that they are entitled to. The true trade unionists complain about the value of the minimum wage and against a proposal for a trade union structure. Not

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to mention the elderly, who were hit by a new pension legislation. A rosary of disappointments.

Having in sight that all those demands were the banners of the struggle of the popular vanguards, we can conclude that, today, popular movements are weaker, more confused, and more divided than two years ago. To give a clear picture of that, we should only observe the fact that all the internal tendencies of PT “cracked” and that the various important trade unions are in the process of or have already cut links with CUT [Central Única dos Trabalhadores]. The other left wing parties and popular movements from the countryside and the city also did not escape the process. They find themselves everyday with the dilemma: “break up” with “their government” or retreat, in order not to directly confront it. Lula’s government does not repress the left or popular movements, However, it provokes its dilution and fragmentation.

This evaluation apparently does not fit with the feeling of the people; opinion polls show a 70% approval for the performance of President Lula and 45% for the government. Why such harsh criticism if the “masses” are happy? It is too early to draw definite conclusions from those polls. Would they indicate that Lula is replacing his supporting base – PT and combative popular movements – and bending towards a new kind of “populism”, founded in his personal charisma and in the transformation of PT into an amazing electoral machine? Or would the polls only show a situation which could quickly fall apart if 2005 does not bring the benefits that the masses are still waiting for?

**Whatever the answers are, one thing is certain: Lula’s failures are forcing everyone who struggles to push forward the transition from “the Brazil-Colony of yesterday into the Brazil – Nation of tomorrow” to make a profound effort to revise the strategies of their discourse and their practices.**

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**About the Author**

**Plinio Arruda Sampaio** is the director Correio da Cidadania, founder of PT, and leader of the party in the Constituinte (1987/1988).

NOTES



## Rural Health: Absence of Mission or Vision?

K R Nayar

*It is time to recognise that the utter neglect of primary healthcare and its related institutions has influenced the utilisation of health services and contributed to a worsening epidemiological profile in the country. In its present form, the proposed Rural Health Mission adds to the confusion about the country's approach to healthcare. Cost-effective interventions, such as the rational distribution of medical and financial resources, should be part of the vision but they are often brushed aside in favour of the privatisation logic.*

The 'mission mode' has once again entered governance, this time in the health sector but without an evidence based approach. The recent announcements and press reports indicate that the government is all set to launch a scheme packed with strategies to please all. One of the key strategies that has some political mileage (the press has highlighted only this!) is the designation of health workers in villages, and there is also some suggestion of privatisation of programmes such as maternity care, family planning services, etc. The mission is to be formally launched on November 14, 2004 in 17 states of the country and will be operational from April 2005 with an outlay of Rs 8,000 crore.



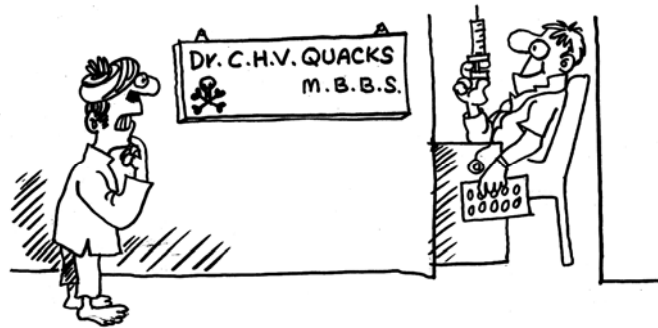
**Rural Health: Absence of Mission or Vision?** K R Nayar , *EPW Commentary*, 6 Nov 2004, Vol. 39. No. 45.

<http://www.epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2004&l>

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**The idea of a health 'worker' from the community is not a new one;** from a public health point of view, it may be an ideal vehicle for another development in the field. But it failed miserably in the case of the Community Health Guide/Volunteer (CHV) scheme due to several reasons. The most serious problem with the CHV scheme was the selection process; it was misused to distribute political patronage and even close relatives of *panchayat* leaders were selected. The training was extremely limited, but in the course of time most of the CHVs became quacks. In many villages, one can see them practising medicine, with huge boards outside, consulting timings, etc! A programme meant to give 'people's health in people's hands' ended up as mere quackery. It seems that the government has not learned from its mistakes and is foisting more of the same on people again using



public money.

The key strategies of the Rural Health Mission include: ensuring intra- and inter-sectoral convergence, strengthening public health infrastructure, increasing community ownership, creating a village level cadre of health workers, fostering public-private partnerships, emphasising quality services, and enhanced programme management inputs. The mission has also suggested certain concrete measures. For instance, inter-sectoral convergence is proposed to be achieved by establishing yet another organisation, this time probably a quasi-government society at the state and district level.

The public health infrastructure will be strengthened by several



measures; a few of them would probably script the demise of the public sector. These include the engagement of private doctors and health committees with the power to charge user fees, etc. Community participation will be enhanced by giving functional responsibilities and powers to the *panchayat raj* institutions, apart from creating a cadre of voluntary accredited social health activists, and a drug and contraceptive depot at the village.

**The public-private partnership aspect is most controversial.** The actions proposed are largely for family planning services and include social marketing and social franchising of services, such as institutional maternity care, immunisation services and provision of bank loans for setting up family welfare clinics. It also suggests the addition of other curative services and the gradual evolution of reproductive and child health to a community insurance programme. The mission will also use management experts, CAs, MBAs, and GIS specialists for its management units.

The mission expects that, through this strategy, the communicable disease burden and disability adjusted life years can be reduced and that the level of universal immunisation can be increased from 50 to 90 per cent. The proposed private participation in institutional deliveries is expected to improve the infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio. This is indeed wishful thinking!



We see that from Rajkumari to Raj Narain to Ramdoss, the country's public sector health system stands discredited by constant neglect and lack of effective and efficient governance. Added to these, cut-backs, preferential treatment for the private sector and the lack of an

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epidemiological vision for rural health have added to the misery of public sector health services. It is this ambiguity, double thinking, and selective and half-hearted actions that have been the bane of public health planning in this country.

The *Bhore* committee contained a vision for India's health services in unambiguous terms and many of the recommendations were implemented selectively during subsequent years. The Bhore committee had recommended that a health committee consisting of five to seven individuals should be established in all villages. However, this was largely ignored. The need for universality, equity, and comprehensiveness of healthcare was also underlined by the committee. Henry Sigerist's quote in the *Bhore* committee report reflects the vision which prevailed at that time.

Health is one of the goods of life to which man has a right; wherever this concept prevails the logical sequence is to make all measures for the protection and restoration of health accessible to all, free of charge; medicine like education is then no longer a trade, it becomes a public function of the state (vol 2, p 10).



There is no doubt that health services in India are in flux and have moved away from the above vision. The roots of the health service system have to a large extent been uprooted and the offshoots do not appear to be flourishing. The epidemiological and integrated vision at the time of independence has given way to a market-oriented approach. The half a century or more has also witnessed a number of changes in the organisation of health services, most of them concentrated during the last one decade or less. The reasons for this new thinking are quite apparent: the influence of the World Bank and accompanying reforms

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during the post-structural adjustment period, apart from the liability of the ruling classes.

**It is possible to discern a consistent disdain for public health services**, which are viewed as the reason for the poor state of health in India. This view is articulated not only in academic or independent scholarly writings but also in many plan documents. This view is sometimes used as a rationale for public-private partnerships or to suggest other ways of delivering healthcare such as cooperatives, insurance, etc. The rationale for the poor performance of government health sector needs some close examination before we suggest privatising services. This will help in understanding the 'evidence base' of the privatisation logic.

*A few studies on the health services system in the country, and especially on primary care institutions, reveal the overwhelming preference of people for government healthcare.* Some of these studies show that accessibility and availability of healthcare are mediated by structural issues such as institutional inadequacies and inefficiencies in the system and influenced by various social, political and economic factors. The Planning Commission's study on community health centres (CHC) is another which *finds incompleteness in the availability of services as the main reason for the under-utilisation.* The logic of completeness in the package of services, which was responsible for the differential utilisation of CHCs could also be applied to PHCs.

The government has also **given in to the pressure of international donor** agencies to adopt what can be called as the '**one by one approach**' or the categorical approach that takes up disease eradication programmes concentrating on one disease at a time. The *Mudaliar* committee had noted that the method of dealing with diseases individually, through mass campaigns is not conducive to the organisation of unified efforts needed for the promotion of total healthcare. These costly drives are undertaken by mobilising the entire health service system leading to a neglect of all other programmes, including other immunisations. Implicitly it means that India is not capable of eradicating diseases through an integrated and complete

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package of primary health services. The community is also made to believe that this is the programme that is going to save the lives of their children.

It is time to recognise that the utter neglect of primary care and primary healthcare institutions has influenced the utilisation of health services and contributed to the worsening epidemiological profile in the country in recent years. In the present form, the proposed mission adds to the confusion about the approach to healthcare in the country. Cost-effective interventions such as the rational distribution of financial and medical resources, including drugs, effective manpower distribution and primary healthcare approaches, should be part of the vision. These are often brushed aside for ushering in the privatisation logic.

**What is also needed at present is a vision that gives primacy or rather credibility to the vast network of health institutions that the country has built over years.** Strengthening the sub-centres and equipping the government's own health workers (instead of adding posts) would be epidemiologically and economically more effective. States should be allowed to define their own priorities and plan programmes. At present the public health scenario is extremely nebulous and the differential pattern across states is so glaring that it does not allow the imposition of pan-Indian solutions.

Apart from this, there is also a **need to equip and enable elected representatives at the village and block level for handling health**



**issues.** Presently, health programmes are beyond the reach of people who are supposed to govern under the decentralised form of government as these are often considered technical subjects. There is a need to remove the confusion among representatives and officials at the *panchayat* level about the roles and responsibilities around health services.

The government is still busy with macro-economics while the World Health Organisation (WHO) has moved forward to the Millennium Development Goals. The WHO is all set to establish a commission on the social determinants of health, which gives us a tremendous opportunity to define and delimit actions on the social front from a public health perspective. The government should think of establishing its own commission on the social determinants of health, considering the complexity, extent and diversity of public health problems in the social context.

**There should be a rethinking on highly intensive drives, technocentric packages, vertical efforts and costly building activities that are being carried out by using the external assistance received under the safety net programmes.** From a scientific point of view, such a logic does not have an 'evidence base', a term which is often used by the so-called protagonists of techno-managerial packages. The rural health mission would greatly benefit if it follows the vision of those that scripted India's health service system based on *an integrated and unified approach as against the selective interventions* being proposed in recent years.

## NOTES

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## Living the Future into Being

*David C. Korten*

Many of the essential elements of local living economies are already in place. More are being created every day by people who believe a better world is possible and are doing their part to live it into being. These elements include land trusts, local organic farms and farmer's markets, enterprises producing and marketing innovative environmental services and products, community supported agriculture initiatives, local restaurants specializing in locally grown organic produce, community banks, local currencies, buy local campaigns, fair trade coffee, family businesses that take pride in community service, employee and community owned businesses, production networks of small producers taking on large projects, new business incubators, minority entrepreneurship programs, recycling business, independent book stores that serve as community learning centers, independent media, community sustainability indicator initiatives, green business directories, independent business alliances, and many more.

Educator Parker Palmer describes the process through which cultural awakening translates into political and economic change. According to Palmer, the individual who has experienced an awakening of consciousness eventually decides to live divided no more and attempts to bring their personal, family, work and community life into line with their values. Trying to live by authentic values in an inauthentic culture leads to a growing sense of isolation from family, friends and work associates that can be broken only by joining with like-minded persons to form communities of congruence. Initially small and isolated, these communities eventually grow and meld into larger alliances. These alliances create authentic cultural, political, and economic spaces that gradually displace the inauthentic spaces of the dominant system.

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**Living the Future into Being**, *David C. Korten*, March 26, 2002.  
[http://www.pcdf.org/Living\\_Economies/VI\\_Living.htm](http://www.pcdf.org/Living_Economies/VI_Living.htm) [C.ELDOC.6009322]

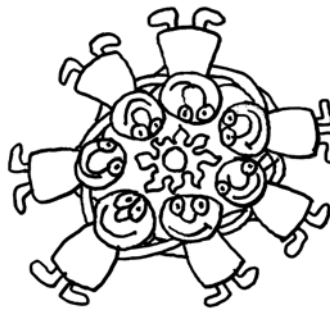
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This pattern is playing out in many ways, including in the world of business. The search for authenticity leads one or more *Cultural Creatives* to launch a living enterprise, which in turn attracts mindful customers who want to live their values through their purchasing decisions and mindful employees who want to live their values through their work. Each living enterprise forms the nucleus of an expanding community of congruence and demonstrates practical alternatives to the ways of the suicide economy.

The search for congruence in all its dealings leads the living enterprise to buy from suppliers that are also living enterprises. Each new relationship among living enterprises redirects life energy from the suicide economy to the growing web of relationships that define a living economy. As the web grows in size and strength, the flow of energy and resources among the participating enterprises increasingly emulates the circulating flows of energy and resources that give mature ecosystems their stability, efficiency, and resiliency.

Although emergent processes are a self-organizing, self-directing expression of the needs, values, and aspirations of their participants, it is important to recognize that they involve mindful intentional action. And it is possible and appropriate for mindful individuals, enterprises, and nonprofit organizations to focus and accelerate these processes through public education and initiatives that:

**Grow the web.** Facilitate the extension and deepening of the web of relationships. The greater the number of members and links in the web the greater the life energy that participating enterprises may potentially attract and recycle within the living economy, thus increasing the strength and viability of both the web and its individual members.





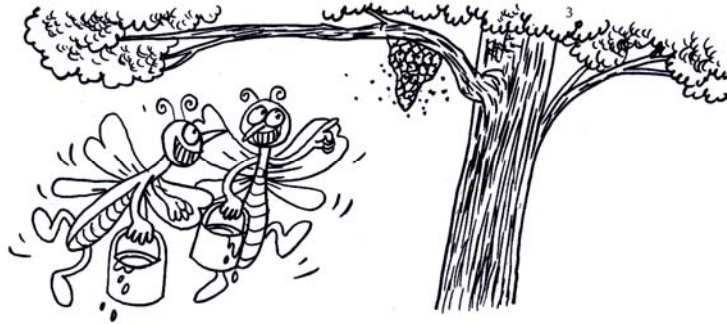
**Ground it locally everywhere:** Maintain an active local preference in both purchasing and sales. This applies to individuals, as well as living enterprises. A healthy living economy is locally rooted and intimately adapted to its local social and natural ecosystem everywhere. Firms and individuals that buy local products and services from local independent firms and in turn sell their products and services locally whenever reasonably possible increase the vitality of the local living economy. They also create a secure and stable foundation for the growth of relationships among similar local economies that may eventually weave millions of living enterprises and hundreds of thousands of locally rooted living economies into a locally rooted planetary web of cooperative economic relationship.



**Encourage walking away from the institutions of the suicide economy:** Build relations with like-minded persons and enterprises and walk away from relations that strengthen the dysfunctional institutions of the suicide economy. Walking away from the evil they opposed was key to the successful change strategies of both Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Gandhi called it non-cooperation and its practice was a key to gaining India's independence from British rule. King learned it from Gandhi, and his call to refuse to cooperate with evil was the moral basis of the Montgomery bus boycott that was a critical moment in the civil rights movement. In the present instance, it is a matter of choosing life over money and exercising all reasonable opportunities to transfer life energy from the suicide economy to the

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living economy by walking away from institutions bound by law and structure to serve money to the disregard of life.



Walking away from dealings with the institutions of the suicide economy may be the most difficult part of growing a living economy. It is also one of the most essential. The living economy is about mutuality and partnership, democracy, equity, and sustainability. All of these are incompatible with global rule by powerful institutions that are obligated by law, custom, and structure to use their power to the exclusive short-term financial benefit of absentee shareholders. For a healthy living enterprise to do business with a publicly traded corporation is like a healthy body trying to form a partnership with a cancerous tumor.

It is important here to distinguish between corporations – exclusive clusters of legally and culturally defined relationships – and the persons employed in their service doing the best they can to make a positive difference under adverse circumstances. Tens of thousands of former corporate employees have made an intentional choice to live divided no more and have walked away from their former corporate employers to join the living



economy — often by starting new businesses aligned with their values. They were once among the suicide economy's best and brightest. Now they are birthing a living economy and providing role models for others from the corporate world who feel a similar discontent.

Some corporate defectors to the living economy may bring corporate resources with them by spinning off a human-scale piece of their former employer and taking it private through a stakeholder buyout. A more ambitious effort might break an entire corporation into human-scale units for sale to mindful stakeholders.

It is important for those who own and lead living enterprises to be mindful of the pressures to grow beyond a natural human-scale placed on them by the culture and structure of the suicide economy. Growth

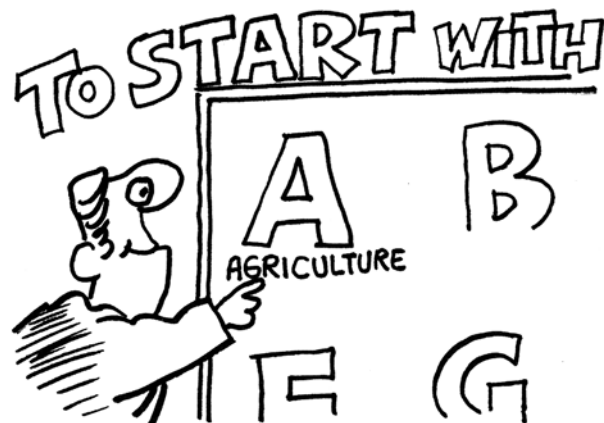


creates a need for financing, which creates an incentive to sell public shares, which creates demand for larger profits, and makes the enterprise vulnerable to take over by a still larger publicly traded corporation. It is a tragic path from health to pathology. Author and entrepreneur Jamie Walters calls keeping an enterprise small a lifestyle choice. In *Big Vision, Small Business: The Four Keys to Finding Success & Satisfaction as a Lifestyle Entrepreneur*, she provides guidance and encouragement for those who want to keep their businesses healthy, and life serving.

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Many social entrepreneurs are motivated to grow out of a sense of pride in the positive contribution their enterprise is making to providing good service, good jobs, and healthful, quality products. It is a slippery slope. The more promising way to replicate the success of a living enterprise is by helping others with similar drive and values to create similar businesses that may eventually choose to form themselves into a buying, branding, and promotional alliance accountable to its members.

In many communities, those interested in growing a living economy will find food and agriculture a logical place to start. Everyone needs and cares about food. It can be grown most everywhere, is freshest and most wholesome when local, and is our most intimate connection to the land. A farmers' market or a restaurant selling locally produced organic foods can serve as the initial organizing catalyst.



From there it is a matter of asking: What do local people and businesses regularly buy that is or could be supplied locally by values-based, independent enterprises? Which existing local businesses are trying to practice living economy values? In what sectors are they clustered? The answers will point to promising opportunities to grow the

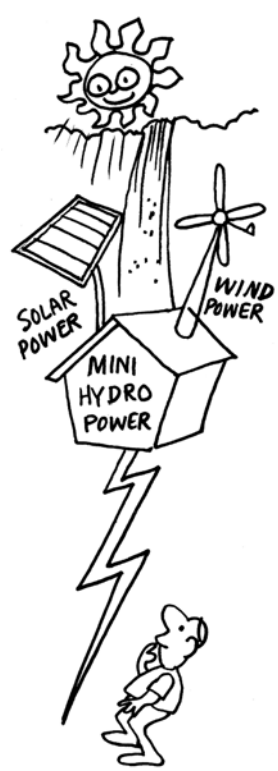
web.

There is a wealth of possibilities. For example, a cluster of businesses devoted to energy conservation and the local production of solar, wind, and mini-hydro power may form a living economies web devoted to advancing local energy independence. A group might issue an interest free currency that supports local business and facilitates transactions among local people and local living enterprises. Perhaps a group of socially conscious local investors might establish an independent community bank dedicated to financing independent, local enterprises.

The larger and more diversified the web of an emergent living economy, the more self-reliant, secure, and stable it becomes, and the greater its potential contribution to the larger planetary web of local living economies.

We have become so dependent on the institutions of the suicide economy for our daily needs that we see no viable alternative. Thus, we remain hostage to their dehumanizing demands even though we may know they are killing us.

Many of the elements of healthy living economies are already in place. They need only be grown into webs of healthy, productive, life-serving relationships. The stronger and more visible these webs become, the easier it is for each of us to transfer our life energy from the suicide economy to the living economy by our individual purchasing, employment, and investment choices. Each choice for life demonstrates



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the possibilities of a more attractive and satisfying way of living — and moves humanity toward a more positive future.

### RESOURCES

Exploration of the many possibilities for action toward the creation of a living economy goes beyond the scope of this essay.

For additional suggestions and resources see

"What You Can Do To Build a New Economy," *YES!* magazine issue #9, Chapter 14.

"Engaging the Future" in David C. Korten, *The Post Corporate World*;

Michael H. Shuman, *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age* (New York: The Free Press, 1998);

Richard Douthwaite, *Short Circuit: Strengthening Local Economies for Security in an Unstable World* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1996);

Ellen Schwartz and Suzanne Stoddard, *Taking Back Our Lives In the Age of Corporate Dominance* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2000);

Colin Hines, *Localization: A Global Manifesto* (London: Earthscan Publications, 2000);

Jaime S. Walters. *Big Vision, Small Business* (San Francisco: Ivy Sea: 2001; and

Barbara Brandt, *Whole Life Economies: Revaluing Daily Life* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1995).