

Towards the Autonomy of the People of the World: Need for a New Movement of Movements to Animate People's Alliance Processes

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I. The Second Wave

My point of departure in imagining 'another world' is that we are in the second historical wave of people's movement against capitalism, the first wave being the 19th to 20th century communist-socialist movement concentrating on the seizure of state as the decisive instrument of social change. Here I can hardly go into a historical assessment of that state-centred paradigm but it is obvious that the historic movement guided by that paradigm was tested and failed in a big way, leaving global capitalism triumphant, though in a miserable shape. The second wave is there to undermine and overthrow the capitalist regime in new ways, that is, in ways not dedicated to the seizure of the state and establishment of the party-state. I believe that that is the major lesson learned from the failure of the first wave. The second wave struggle certainly requires new practice guided by new visions and using new means to achieve 'another world'. What then should be the visions and strategies of the second wave?

There seems to be a broad consensus among many of us who desire change that the world today is managed and ruled by a composite global power centre to keep extremely destructive capitalism going. Empire or not, this is a de facto global centre of rule consisting of diverse agencies, national and transnational as well as public and private, an organic formation into which nation states have become inextricably enmeshed. True, this global power is not monolithic but is divided by clashing interests among its components. Yet, they join forces when it comes to the point of defending their basic logic and rule, as well as their interests, against the actual and possible resistance from popular forces. There is in fact no legitimacy for this power, nor is there any democracy in the way global affairs are managed. The second wave of anti-capitalism movement therefore has to be a political struggle to resist, undermine, and overthrow this global power structure, a struggle for global democracy of a new type. It is clear that the global democracy we need is not a world government, as a resurrection of the sovereign nation state on a world scale. We are not struggling for a United States of the World, a universal state vested with the mission of abolishing capitalism from above.

What we envisage as 'another world' must be a self-governance of the people of the world (global

autonomy) that manages social and economic systems in non-capitalist ways. If this is to be our perspective, it follows that the key to bringing a change of this nature is the ability of the people of the world to organise themselves into a global democratic autonomy, politically and morally forcing the capitalist power centre and capitalist markets to follow their rules, finally terminating capitalism. Is such a perspective grounded?

The first step toward answering this question is to recognise that there is as yet no such entity as the 'people of the world' as a potent agency of autonomy. It therefore follows that the possibility of bringing about 'another world' depends on whether and how the people of the world can emerge as a body of global autonomy and, more specifically, whether and how social movements can be instrumental to the emergence of global people exercising autonomy.

People's Alliance and Transborder Democracy

Let me take a look into this problematic using as a referent some of our pre-WSF experiences, namely, the People's Plan 21 (PP21) [1]. In hindsight, this programme was a forerunner of the movement of movements for another world, projecting visions of global social change beyond the state-oriented perspective. As a chief organiser of the programme, I feel it worthwhile to look back on it from the point of view of historical continuity as a contribution to the ongoing discussion.

It was in August 1989, immediately before the fall of the Berlin wall, that we, a coalition of movement groups in Japan, took the initiative in organising, together with popular movements and NGO friends from other lands mainly in Asia, a large international programme titled the People's Plan for the 21st Century. It was a multi-issue, multi-sector movement-project-attempt to search for a 21st century planned and created by the people themselves, not by big business and elitist bureaucrats. The programme, held in the form of close to 20 thematic and sector-wise international events all over the Japanese archipelago with more than 120,000 Japanese and 300 overseas participants, culminated in a synthesis gathering in Minamata, a place known for mercury pollution that victimised hundreds of thousands of people and for the resulting grassroots struggle against the polluting company [2]. That struggle of the poorest of the poor in a peripheral Japanese locality was launched in the 1950s and culminated in the 1970s, raising environment concerns in Japan and beyond. The purpose of the PP21 programme was to get people's efforts together to bring about *janakashaba*, a 'world that does not stand like this', an original phrase coined by fishing people victimised by pollution and in the midst of the struggle. The synthesis conference adopted the Minamata Declaration, setting the keynote of the programme, and it was agreed that PP21 should be continued as a people's linking process. The second PP21 convergence was held in 1992 in Thailand and the third in South Asia in 1996, culminating in a big mobilisation in Kathmandu.

We were subsequently unable to maintain the momentum, largely due to internal difficulties. In 2002, following the initiation of the World Social Forum process in 2001, the organisers of the PP21 process met and decided to stop holding large multi-issue, multi-sector convergences so as not to duplicate the WSF. But the ideas and linkages created through PP21 have left some imprints in the later movements. Unlike WSF, PP21 adopted declarations, beginning with the Minamata declaration in 1989, through to the Rajchadamnoen Pledge adopted by the Thai programme in 1992, to the Sagarmatha Declaration adopted in Kathmandu in 1996.

The key concepts we introduced then were transborder participatory democracy and a global alliance of the people, posited as the people constituting themselves to exercise autonomy. Emphasising that our hope for the future hinged on the formation of such a global people's alliance, we called it the 'Alliance of Hope'. We envisioned both transborder participatory democracy [3] and a people's alliance, not as static institutions or bodies but as dynamic processes of constant formation and renewal. In other words, we adopted these concepts as movement concepts. I believe

that these concepts are relevant in designing our global strategies of today.

II. The State of the Global People

Bound Together in Hostile Relations

In PP21, we chose the word 'people' to designate the body to self-rule but, as pointed out earlier, we were keenly aware that there is no such 'people' as an actually existing body to exercise democracy as self-rule. On the contrary, drawing from my presentation to the PP21 Assembly in 2002 [4], we said that:

"...they (the people) are "divided into various groups positioned differently in the global hierarchical structures, divided by gender, ethnic, religious, geographical, class, cultural, and national borders" [5], while the people's identities are not static, but dynamically changing, overlapping, and mutually interacting. As such "these groups are being forced to live together under conditions imposed upon them." We said that "state-supported global capital is organizing all these groups into a system of international and hierarchical division of labor" and that "this order is lauded as the world of interdependence." Read interdependence globalization. "But it is an interdependence forced upon the people and permeated by hostility and division. The dominant system perpetuates itself by organizing internal division, and setting one people's group against another." We had in mind "national chauvinism, machinated communalism, cultural exclusivism, sexism, and the whole varied panoply of radical ethnic prejudices" that "serve the ruling elites well in their efforts to establish a great organization incapable of its own unity."

Currently, capitalist globalisation entails two parallel phenomena. On the one hand, the accelerated development of communication technology and networking beyond borders has created a cosmopolitan arena, in which people, especially the young, from far-flung cultural and political as well as geographical locations and milieus are communicating and sharing information, sentiments, and cultures. Actions resisting the capitalist global rule spread fast benefitting from this development. On the other hand, we witness serious divisions ripping the people into antagonistic collectives and causing conflicts among them. People are badly divided, segmented, and set to fight each other, often to the point of violence, even murderous conflicts. The divides run between collectives of various kinds as well as individuals. Inter-people conflicts of various social, historical, and economic origins have often been rekindled and aggravated under the spur of competition for survival most communities are forced into. Religious and other 'fundamentalisms', jingoism, misogyny, racism, other hate campaigns, internal wars, and other forms of violence wielded by common people against one another are now part of the daily life on the surface of the globe. During the Bush war, Empire's exercise of vertical violence bred, aggravated, and exploited horizontal violence among people's collectives. How then can the people across the world autonomously rule themselves?

This perception leads us to the rejection of the notion of a global civil society that sees the world society more or less as an association of homogeneous individuals. The 'civil society' discourse, prevalent in the 1990s, reflected the rise of NGO culture over social movements as complementary to the neoliberal offensive of capitalism. Similarly, we take exception to the idea advanced by some overoptimistic theorists who argue that the 'multitude' under the hegemony of non-material labour already embodies the 'common' and comes together preserving and benefitting from their singularities [6]. I wish things were like that, but this postulate of predetermined harmony among people's communities is not borne out by people's realities unfurling in front of our eyes.

Building Alliances

The capitalist globalisation regime is dividing people into conflictual situations in the same process that links them up in the unequal global division of labour. The new inter-people relationships thus made, characterised by antagonistic closeness and not made by the choice of the people involved, breed inter-people violence and conflicts. On the other hand, this same process can, as it often does, generate the urge and initiative among some of the people dragged into antagonism to create new mutual relations beyond the externally erected barriers. The two diametrically opposed urges are stimulated by the same capitalist globalisation process.

Alliance building therefore relates to the effort to demolish from within of the structural and subjective barriers separating / linking the people's communities. In other words, if members of the groups linked together into externally determined relationships begin to interact with one another, find that relationship not fatalistic, and discredit, weaken, and overcome it by creating new relationships of their own making, in which people from both sides find each other different than before, then the process to an alliance gets down to a start. In the PP21 programme, we called it 'inter-people autonomy', meaning that communities self-manage not only their internal affairs but also their mutual relationships. People's alliance — as a step toward people's autonomy on a global scale — emerges as people's collectives and communities create new relationships of their own making.

Here I am talking about very diverse groupings of global people with intersecting identities. Their diversity, instead of being developed as the richness of human civilisation, is exploited by the capitalist regime as the base of competition useful for capital accumulation. Alliance building is to give back life to diversity as the wealth of global society.

But what groups of people are we talking about? Global society is articulated into extremely complex, in fact infinite, sets of relationships, both macro and micro. These are constantly changing, so it would be useless to try to enumerate them. They come to the surface as new resistance occurs asserting certain identities. But some of the macro divisions are historically present, brought forward by major movements of the oppressed people involved. Among such division lines are those relating to North-South, gender, class, urban-rural, national, ethnic, cultural, and religious relationships.

These and numerous other burning issues are now closely intertwined, precluding the likelihood of separate solutions for each of them. Discussing this topic, I presented a sketchy view years ago, which I think may still have some relevance though it certainly needs elaboration and updating. Allow me to reproduce some relevant paragraphs from that paper:

"(G)lobalization of capital supported by the global power center has not only made the world smaller, but also has telescoped major events and problems having arisen in the past centuries into the present. This defines the nature of alternatives we are committed to create. In other words, in resolving burning problems of today, we must undo history tracing back to where the problems originated. As it were, we face a single complex of problems. And the problems integrated into this single complex, having arisen at different times and settings in history, not only have been bequeathed to us unresolved, but have been fused in peculiar combinations so that the possibility of resolving those problems separately and one by one is close to precluded. To simplify, the present condenses in its midst at least the following problems and their legacies:

1. Thousands of years of domination of women by men;
2. Five hundred years of domination of the South by the North; the conquests of the people and their civilizations in the 'new continent' legitimated the notion of conquest in general — the conquest of people by the 'civilized' and the conquest of nature by human beings;

3. Two hundred years of domination of agriculture by industry (industrial revolution);
4. Two hundred years of domination of society by the modern state and inter-state system;
5. Two hundred years of the domination and exploitation of labor by capital;
6. One hundred years of imperialist domination of colonies;
7. Forty years of destruction of nature and diversity (homogenization) in the name of development" [7].

You can add any number of 'current' problems that have survived through history. The point is that none of them has survived in its original shape. These have been brought into a deformed synthesis in diverse combinations. Modern capitalism, for instance, integrates (2) to (5) on the basis of (1), while (7) integrates all the preceding problems. Item (2), mediated by (1), (3), (5), and (6), produces (7) in the form of the widening gap between the North and the South. And so on.

Our alternatives address precisely this problem complex. Given the organic intertwinedness of the problems, the process to overcome it needs be a single process. 'Single' does not mean 'in one fell swoop'. Nor do we anticipate an apocalyptic settlement. It means disentanglement in the same historical time and in interrelatedness. It means that trying to fully resolve any one of the problems as separate from the others cannot, after all is said and done, succeed in resolving even that problem. This is a crucial point. For instance, the environmentalist movement will never succeed in preserving nature if it refuses to consider Southern poverty.

The clue to disentanglement is to begin with alliance builders taking sides with the dominated in the above list: women, indigenous people, other oppressed minorities, the South, agriculture, labour, civil nature, and diversity. Already, vigorous voices have been raised and demands presented by or on behalf of them. We have fairly active social movements on all of those issues. The starting point in our search for global alternatives is to exert our full force to work changes on the dominating side in line with the demands of the dominated — on men, conquerors, North, capital, state, human arrogance, and homogeneity. Without the prerogative of the dominated, there is no emancipating alternative.

As hard as we might try, we shall find that an alternative world cannot be constituted by a mere mechanical summing up of such efforts. For there is no guarantee that alternatives evolved by different sectors and on diverse issues fall in predetermined harmony into a single picture of an alternative world. Alternatives pressed by urban citizens may collide with those developed by farmers. A feminist perspective may create misgivings among traditional communities. Conflicts are bound to occur.

But the differences and even conflicts can be constructive. They may be a driving force toward weaving comprehensive alternatives. If the conflicts end in antagonism, the current system will survive, capitalising on them. Mere compromise is postponement of antagonism. But if the differences are brought to a higher level of synthesis through dialectical interaction, then we have an Alliance of Hope with ever self-enriching alternative visions and programmes that fully cope with the entirety of the historical problem complex.

III. Characteristics of Inter-Movement Politics for Inter-People Alliance

Social movement today, in my view, faces this kind of historic challenge. For alliance building,

movement plays a decisive role in helping this process get underway. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, discussing the World Social Forum and the global left, noted that one of the salient contributions of the WSF was “the passage from a movement politics to inter-movement politics” [8]. By ‘inter-movement politics’, he signalled “a politics run by the idea that no single issue social movement can succeed in carrying out its agenda without the cooperation of other movements”. I fully agree. Inter-movement politics, however, is not complete in itself. Nor is it merely a matter between issue-based movements. In the people’s alliance context, it carries a more general signification. A few important features involved include the following :

- **Inter-people politics:** Inter-movement politics, if relevant, must involve inter-people politics. Meaningful social movements are always an organic part of their respective constituencies. Inter-movement politics can have significance only when it is integral to inter-people politics and is not closed within itself. In other words, inter-movement politics is tested by the degree to which it engenders inter-people interactive politics conducive to people-to-people alliance making.

- **Movement and constituency:** This does not mean, however, that a specific movement ‘legitimately’ and monopolistically represents one constituency considered more or less homogeneous. The constituency itself is a mobile entity comprising complex identities. The relevance of inter-movement politics should prove itself by the organic relationships it creates and recreates with the community. Inter-movement politics also works within the same constituent community that usually generates plural movement initiatives.

- **Interaction:** Interaction between people, as collectives and as individuals, in a positive context is one of the main modes of alliance building. Interaction in a hostile context would mean escalating hostility, distrust, and clashes, but we have abundant experience that people from usually unfriendly or even hostile groups, meeting in a favourable context, find each other just common human beings and friends [9]

- **Mediation:** Let me call this kind of interaction ‘virtuous interaction’. The other type is a vicious interaction, that aggravates conflicts. For virtuous interaction to take place, mediation is essential. Movement is expected to be an essential element of mediation. Assumptions under the old paradigm were that classes are represented by their parties and class alliances are deemed arranged when the parties representing them come together to sign a joint front agreement. But we know that movements, let alone political parties, do not represent people’s collectives. It is the people’s groups themselves that interact and enter into alliance processes. And it is in these processes that movements based in their constituencies can play indispensable mediating roles.

- **Bonds:** How can virtuous interaction take place among different communities, even those apparently antagonistic to one another? I cannot go too far here into this crucial question that would involve philosophical inquiries. But we all know that there are some certain bonds which enable human beings to live together in friendly relationships. Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, tempting us to be cynical, we cannot totally deny the working of this deeply seated social despite all evidence to the tempting us to be cynics. Christians may call it love, Hardt and Negri “love,” Confucians “jin” (perfect value, or benevolence), Buddhists “jihi” (mercy), and others by other names. I dare not give it a name though in 1969 we called it “peopleness.” [10] At a more practical level, John Brown Childs, theorist and advocate of trans-communality, talks about “general ethics of respect.” [11] All these terms seem to point to the ability of the people to make human linkages, displayed in multi-faceted actual practices.

Internal impacts: Virtuous interaction can cause changes not only in the mutual relationships between groups, but also in the internal power relationships and cultures within the groups involved, in emancipating directions. Contacts and interaction with others may first make a

community repulsive and defensive, but if the ideas are emancipator and interaction is properly mediated, there emerge people in the group liking them and using them to change the dominant structure, if any, of the group they belong to. This is very complex processes sometimes leading to imposition but if channels of mediation are properly constituted, it will create mutually learning and changing processes. As Childs observes, "These ethics of respect can lead to some transformation of interacting participants" and "this transformation is not a one-sided conversion to a single perspective, but rather involves an opening up to shared understandings." [12]

Structural changes: We have said that under the capitalist regime different communities and collectives of the people are bound together, even despite themselves, in antagonistic relationships, typically of hierarchical formation. Alliance building therefore would not continue, even if virtuous interaction is constituted, if the oppressing / oppressed, exploiting / exploited, dominating / dominated relationships that exist between collectives are allowed to continue. For alliance building to continue and develop, this process should entail processes mitigating the structural and subjective inequality in power relationships toward the goal of their abolition. Otherwise, alliance building will remain a mere lip service and be discredited.

Alliance and economic articulation: This aspect of the matter takes us to the broader field of building another world, or another global society. In the classical Marxist-Leninist understanding, a worker-peasant alliance was not only the key to the formation of revolutionary power, but also the basis for new economic articulation in a new society between industry and agriculture, or urban and rural. The experience of the first wave — mostly negative — should be reassessed from this angle, namely, the economic aspects of class alliances and antagonisms. The people's alliances that we are envisaging here, which embody a far more complex inter-group dynamic than worker-peasant, are pregnant with future economic articulations of another world. This means that people's alliances are not just political partnerships that are likely to collapse the moment political goals they are aimed at are achieved, but rather the embryo of a society yet to come. Alliance building through interaction and relational transformation will involve processes of changing existing socio-economic patterns of articulation toward a better world.

Dialogue with nature: Interaction should take place not only among people. The alliance building process of necessity entails reflection on the whole course of capitalism-driven modern civilisation, particularly its arrogance toward nature, including our bodies. Interaction — or dialogue — with nature will have to be initiated, learning particularly from the wisdom of indigenous peoples, and redefining development and progress, in order to find ways to undo the self-destruction we have willingly inflicted upon ourselves.

Social contracts as steps in an ever-evolving people's charter: Alliance building through positive and virtuous interaction is a dynamic process and therefore fluid and changeable. But at each phase of the process, the parties involved must negotiate terms of agreement at a given time on a certain basis. In other words, the permanent process needs times of punctuation. This will represent the formal aspect of alliance building. This means that we are coming up with inter-people social contracts at diverse levels. Some of them may be written out and signed on and others may be accepted as new habits observed and practised. At a time when nation states still exist, the autonomous agreements may be institutionalised or even made into state laws or written into international covenants. Let me emphasise that these are processes already underway; but they are not necessarily perceived as steps towards alternative world building, as they are usually seen only in the respective issue-based contexts. Thus, in actuality, alliance-building processes are, explicitly or implicitly, social contract making processes. The agreements and contracts are also renewable and actually being renewed reflecting new inter-people relationships. Movements are there as agencies to remake them through inter-movement politics. If these numerous autonomous inter-people contracts and agreements proliferate and are accumulated, linking ever broader segments of

global people's activities, and if they begin to guide the course of events, then we approach inter-people autonomy whose shared basis will be a people's charter composite of numerous agreements and in constant process of renewal.

Movement or Space? The WSF as a New Type of Movement

Now I go back to the actual movement, the 'movement of movements' and its important arena, the World Social Forum. I have heard that for some time the question of whether the WSF is a space or a movement has been debated as an issue relevant to its very essence. I have no doubt that the WSF is a movement, but it should consciously be a movement of a new type. Chico Whitaker, probably one of the stronger proponents of the 'space' school of thought, says that "movement and space are completely different things". I disagree with this dichotomy. According to Chico:

"A movement congregates people — its activists, as the activists of a party — who decide to organise themselves to collectively accomplish certain objectives. Its formation and existence entails the definition of strategies to reach these objectives, the formulation of action programmes, and the distribution of responsibilities among its members — including those concerning the direction of the movement. Those who assume this function will lead the activists of the movement, getting them — through authoritarian or democratic methods, according to the choice made by the founders of the movement — to take responsibility for their commitments in the collective action. Its organisational structure will necessarily be pyramidal however democratic the internal process of decision and the way used to choose those who will occupy different levels of management might be. On the other hand, its effectiveness will depend on the explicitness and precision of its specific objectives, and therefore, of its own boundaries in time and space" [13].

Sure, the WSF should not be, and cannot be, a movement of the type Whitaker has described. True, there may be some people who want to reorganise the WSF in that image. But the rejection of this type of movement does not justify the idea of the WSF being a square rented for free use. In between these two poles is the possibility and necessity of a new type of movement. The WSF, I believe, should develop itself as such a movement — a movement devoted to generating and mediating interactions among diverse groups of people, deliberately igniting processes to build and develop inter-people alliances based on multilateral agreements that will form the body of the people's charter for global people's self-rule.

Is such an effort a 'movement'? I think this is exactly what people mean when they use the term, a 'movement of movements'. This coinage vaguely implies cooperation among various movements but can be understood as only a temporary, utilitarian cooperation. I think it can mean far more.

The WSF has created excellent possibilities for a new type of movement to emerge. In fact numerous workshops and other events in the arena offer various issue-, sector-, class-, gender- and otherwise-based movements to meet, develop common platforms, and common action. But systematic efforts of WSF to encourage inter-movement politics, it appears to me, have been absent or minimal. As far as I know, meetings of social movements which used to be held as voluntary projects were not intended, nor were they appropriate, as occasions to facilitate serious, patient discussion and negotiation for transborder alliance building. Setting dates for worldwide action and agreeing on general goals, it seems, was the utmost that social movement gatherings could aim at. It is time for us to clearly recognise inter-movement politics, and for that matter inter-people politics, in their own right, as new dimensions of movement.

I think the time is ripe for change. The Bush administration ironically gave us a focus — the war — while the WTO gave us another focus — neoliberal globalisation. The WSF functioned as an effective arena where, by the momentum of huge convergences, people emerged as 'another superpower',

making their presence felt. But that stimulus is gone with the downfall of Bush, leaving Empire and global capitalism bogged down, so that the hostile global foci that have so far facilitated people's mobilisations have, equally, become less visible. Instead of constituting ourselves chiefly by reacting to the global power, we need to find ways to constitute ourselves among ourselves through the medium of a movement of movements.

by Muto Ichiyo

P.S.

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<http://www.ppjaponesia.org/modules/tinycontent/index.php?id=7>

* Muto Ichiyo is an activist-writer on political and social affairs, national and global. Born in 1931 in Tokyo, he joined student movement and peace movement in the 1950s; was active in the anti-Vietnam War movement in the 1960s; founded the English journals AMPO (1969) and the Pacific-Asia Resources Center (1973); initiated the People's Plan 21 in the 1980s, and in the 1990s founded the People's Plan Study Group (PPSG) of which he served as a co-president until 2007. He taught at the sociology department of the State University of New York at Binghamton, in the US, during the 1980s-90s. mutoi@mrj.biglobe.ne.jp

Footnotes

[1] The contents of the 1989 PP21 programme are covered in *AMPO*, Vol 21, Nos 1-2 ('Steps into People's Century'); of the 1992 Thai PP21 in *AMPO*, Vol 24, No 3; and of the 1996 programme in *AMPO*, Vol 27, No 2; available from the Pacific-Asia Resource Center (PARC), Toyo Bldg, 3F, 1-7-1 Kanda Awaji-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0063 Japan; Phone: +81 3 5209 3455; Fax: +81 3 5209 3453; Email : ampo@parc-jp.org. The Keynote address by Muto Ichiyo to the Minamata conference is reprinted in Jeremy Brecher et al, eds, *Global Visions*, South End Press, 1993; major documents and declarations from 1989 through 1996 were published in a book form in Hong Kong in 1997. Copy availability can be checked with PARC in Tokyo.

[2] Jun Ui ed., *Industrial pollution in Japan*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 1992; Michiko Ishimure, translated by Livia Monnet, *Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow: Our Minamata Disease*, Michigan Classics in Japanese Studies, No.25.

[3] Transborder participatory democracy is (a) worldwide democracy practiced by the people of the world and (b) the right of the people to participate in any decisions that affect them, regardless of where those decisions are made. This concept was proposed by Ichiyo Muto in the keynote to the 1989 PP21 Minamata gathering.

[4] Go to www.ppjaponesia.org for Muto's paper to the 2002 PP21 general assembly.

[5] Quotes in this paragraph are from Muto's keynote speech at PP21 Minama gathering; see endnotes 2 and 12.

[6] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude : War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, New York: Penguin Press, 2004.

[7] Muto, 'Alliance of Hope and Challenges of Global Democracy', *Ecumenical Review*, World Council of Churches, Jan 1994.

[8] Boaventura de Souza Santos, on ESSF: [The World Social Forum and the Global Left](#)

[9] Due to the nature of this paper, it is difficult to cite concrete examples of interaction among people's groups causing virtuous internal changes. Such occurs both at macro and micro levels. In large-scale interaction, think of encounters between the Zapatista movement and the Mexican civil society organised by EZLN. The systematic interactions caused the Mexican civil society as well as inter-continental encounters. Mediated encounters, interactions, and alliance building efforts are underway at millions of levels from macro to micro, involving interim solutions of all kinds; even 'conflict resolution' processes may contain lessons to be drawn; it is therefore important for us to study these instances from the perspective of people's potentials to create and recreate social / political relationships of their own as against the imposed mutual relationships.

[10] Ichiyo Muto, PP21 Keynote Speech, "For an Alliance of Hope," *AMPO*, Vol.21, No.2-3, 1989

[11] John Brown Childs, *Transcommunality: From the Politics of Conversion to the Ethics of Respect*, Temple University Press, 2003, p22.

[12] Childs, *ibid.*, p.22.

[13] Chico Whitaker, 'The WSF As Open Space', Jai Sen et al, eds, *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, Viveka Foundation, 2004, pp 112-3.