

Work Group on a Solidarity Socio-Economy – Alliance 21

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On Social Movement

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I will present something about the movements, the characteristics of these movements, and also some of the tendencies we can talk about toward the new movement. The first thing is that as people from my generation know, we had a large movement in 1970s, but there was a setback in the 1980s with the Reagan/Thatcher years. But now the departure point is to analyze the fact that we are in new wave of mobilization and new cycle of mobilization, and that this new cycle of mobilization is one of the most important ones ever. I'd like to give you an example, though it is quite obvious for us. The 15th February against War was probably the biggest demonstration ever organized in the world, and ever organized as a coordination and common action all over the world. But the behind this world mobilization of the 15th February, if we look at our national realities – and this is particularly true in Europe, but also in the South and in some Asian countries -- we have now a process of national mass mobilization in several fields and several kinds of actions.

It is very clear if you look at France. We had in the last year three major mobilization with more than 1 million people, in a small country. Well, there are only sixty million people in France, so it is not like US and Japan. We had a big demonstration when Le Pen and the fascists were going to have an election one year ago. And 15th February involved a lot of countries, not only France obviously. After the big strike against pension system reform in France, like in several countries, we had 1 million demonstrators in the streets. These examples are not specific to France. If you look to Italy, after Genoa, they had several waves of mobilization and demonstrations in which one also they had more than 1 million people, including the ethic against Berlusconi trying to have an amnesty, and corruption and so on. They had several mobilizations. Some of them were close to a million people and in the social issues and obviously anti-war issue. This is also true for Greece, Austria, Spain, Germany and England in which it is quite fantastic country now to live. It was the country in Europe which had little mobilization in the past, and now it is an enormous transformation. It is impressive to see how the country is changing and mobilization is growing. Then there is the example of Iraq, we could talk about the lot of the countries.

These movements obviously started out with anti-globalization, because Seattle was the turning point. Even in some countries the movement started before the Seattle; it is impossible to understand Seattle without understanding the root of Seattle. This was true in Europe and

France, which was probably the first country with a wave of mobilization, in 1995. The US had also new unionism and the new youth movement in 90s and several countries had the same things. After Anti-globalization, there was the anti-war movement, but this anti-war movement – and this is a big difference with anti-war movement we knew for example in 80s against the Pershing and missile deployment in Europe – this anti-war movement was totally related to the anti-globalization movement. That is not the exactly the case in US, I think, where the anti-war movement has its own specificity because after September 11th, things are more difficult to manage. But looking at other countries, it is clear that anti-war movement is strictly related and coming from the anti-globalization movements. And the main proof of that, it is the fact that the day 15th February was decided first by European countries in the Forum in Milan last November. After that, at the world level, in Porto Alegre during the world social forums, it is clearly possible to see that the correlation between those two movements is extremely strong. And now we have in Jakarta, Jakarta the peace conference, where two movements get together. And clearly everyone knows the only way to develop these movements is to do it inside the big movement which now exists at the world level in particular inside the world social forum in several continents. And next event, for example, for the anti-war movement could be Mumbai, next January to organize several activities, such as the Watch Center and Monitor Center in Baghdad, the Caravan in Baghdad and Palestine, the big day of mobilization, the Tribunal against Bush and Blair, all activities in development on anti-war issues. That is really important, but it is also important to see that in several countries these anti-war and anti-globalization movements are the beginning of a more classic social movement. These classic social movements, and this is quite new, are really looked at by their own actors as part of a global one. I was fascinated to see how, for example, in the second social forum, people from Argentina looked at their own movement against IMF and neo-liberalism, how this movement was related to the world one. Also, there was the big strike we had in France in May and June. It was clear that the strike was part of the global justice movement. That is really general picture.

Now, let us look a little at the problems and characteristics of the movement to understand the strength of the movement. First, there are some similarities with '68. One of the main similarities with '68 is the fact that the movement started among the youth and started in the North even in the best university in the North with in fact I think it is a proof of universality of the movement because it is not only a resistance movement of the poor people who had no choice but to resist the system. It also gives some credibility to the worldwide movement we are now. It is a crisis of the system because the people in the heart of the system are involved. For example, in the US in Harvard the movement is the strongest in the US. And that is the proof that these movements are coming from the heart of the system. It is a problem of a crisis of the system no more than that. It is the similar to the '68. If you remember '68 in France, it started at the Ecole Superieur, the biggest university in our country. After that, ??? part of the youth. We had the same kind of process. There is a big difference is that in 68s youth movement was world-wide one, but it was opposing majority of the country to the union and classic working class movement. This is understandable because '68 was the end of the big wave of economic growth after WW II.

Unions believed that they had been able to win a lot of conquests through collective bargaining. Generally they had good conclusions with bargaining. And Unions thought the system were able to give them a lot of things. It was true that between the 50s and 70s they won lot of advantages and benefits all over the world, particularly in the first world, through this process. In opposition, the young and youth movement were opposing the Vietnam War, but also the system and consumer society. That was a big shock, a cultural shock, between the youth and working class movements. And in the majority of countries, a link between youth and working class movements was not possible at all. Even in the US, if you remember, unions were in favor of the Vietnam War and absolutely opposed to the youth movement.

That is not true anymore. Unions are really weaker than they were in '67 and '68, and they have lost half their members all over the world. They understand they need some links and networks and common actions. If we look at the movement even in there are differences between unions and movements and farmer organizations -- we saw that in Cancun, where you had statements with a quite difference from the other ones -- despite these differences, we are in the same movement. Unions were in Cancun, Porto Alegre and Paris. That shows a correlation of forces because now we have a movement in which more less all NGOs and all unions and all youth movement and farmer organizations are apart even with differences and different point of view and so forth. That is a global picture, and quite an optimistic picture.

Now I would like to discuss two things. The first is weakness of globalization, and strategic and problems it created for the movement. And after that, another issue deals with the characteristic of this movement, talking about the network and this new way to act to take decisions to represent the movement with "networks" and "consensus" and all consequences of the new ways to organize things with to for the social movement, not only for the social movement.

First about the weakness of globalization, we had in the last year two proofs at least of the weakness of globalization. Even if people think generally that globalization is very strong, because the system is strong, George Bush is strong, and so and so, the proof for me was the first clash between the big States around the war. It was the first time since the WW II, the clash was so strong that several diplomats say it was from them a major crisis, the biggest since the cold war between US and USSR. If you look at the reality, you had all continental Europe, including Russia, in an absolutely new way, in common against US and Britain. That was a big shock, and the second one was Cancun. If you have two shocks, this is really icing the proof of the weakness of the globalization.

I think it is useful to have a sort of flashback to the end of the first phase of globalization the world knew . The world had the first phase of globalization between 1850s and 1870s-80s and more less. And the reason why the globalization collapsed more than one century ago was really interesting, because the globalization collapsed first at all in Germany but after that, it affected France and England, Russia, for two reasons. First is the economic crisis. Secondly it was the growth of the working class movement, and a little bit the farmer's movement. If you look at the social story of the 1870s, the French movement which was quite strong until '71, when it was defeated with the Paris Commune, which was crushed with a huge defeat and massacre of the

Paris people. In Germany in which the movement was growing also a lot, in 70s the movement was not at all the same situation because the working class people were able to organize themselves. They were able to organize themselves, unions were growing and democracy was growing also. Against that, Bismarck reacted with two kinds of policy. First one was to repress social democracy. He put out laws forbidding social democrats from running in elections, etc. Bismarck was clearly the head of state, and repression was not enough, as it risked revolution. Hence, he pushed the bosses to give some advantages and benefits to the working class and at the same time, he proposed several laws to give Germany the first social security. Germany was the first country in the world to know global social security, with retirement security and accident insurance, in 1880 more than 70 years before France and other countries. And he was forced to do that because the movement was strong, and also because of the economic crisis. The economic situation was bad in Germany in the middle of 70s. The cost of labor was increasing importantly and quickly. Bismarck had to put in place several tariffs to protect national industry. Against this, France reacted, putting its own tariffs.

The end of the globalization took place more or less in the 80s and 90s. The important things to see what were the consequences of the end of the globalization. There were two kinds of consequences. The first consequence is analyzed by Polanyi in the Great Transformation. In fact, with these national states, the States were able to give more to the workers. It was the end of the world of Dickens and Zola, the awful world the workers knew in the 90s. And that was the possible because States had the means to have a redistribution and have the beginning of real social policy, though it was not enough. It was the beginning of the social policy. But Polanyi did not explain at the same time this breakup of globalization, and beginning of the new empires, because the colonialism was stopped at the moment and colonialism was looked at as a former story for former times. With the breakdown of globalization, every European country needed to have a backyard, and a new colonial empire like Japan. This was the run-up to WWI and WWII. With the consequence of those clashes – the breakdown of the first phase of globalization --- it is interesting for us to understand little bit what could happen now. I think we are in a quite similar situation. I am not saying that globalization will collapse tomorrow, no one knows, there are many factors, particularly the economical situation. But if we look at the today's situation, we have economical crisis with real difficulty in recovering after three years of bad cycle. At the same time, we have strong movements and the only tool for the movement is the nation state, and for the workers in France as well as in Japan and US., the only way is to crush the government. The only way to development is to ask benefit and better social security and better wages. And these two clashes, one economical crisis and the other social movements in the nation states, are the real roots of the weakness of globalization, because every state is protecting the market and the reason that is not demanding globalization, but more demanding protection for itself and the working class and more global movement including the farmer is demanding for some protecting rules to protect themselves against globalization and delocalization and so on. That is important issue I think because that puts on the table several strategical descriptions between the movements. First at all, is the debate between alter globalization or anti-globalization but in a

way nationalistic way. And we have in the movement, even if I think it is really in the minority. Some people will think that only way to a good world is to come back to the nation states. We have this kind of nationalistic thinking in the movement and we have also part of it is Malthusian. It is possible to say that, thinkers in the movement, I am thinking of Goldsmith. For example, we are explaining clearly that Goldsmith, the guy from The Ecologist, who is really explaining in his book that only solution for globalization is to come back to small villages, family life and so on. That is the first debate.

The second debate is out to fight against Bush, and for the Europeans it would be the Japanese and the people from Mercosur, how to do with our own states bourgeoisie. For example, in Jakarta we had a very interesting debate because you had the one hand the people from the USA. I do not know if you have the same thinking as them?? It was the people from United Peace and Justice, Philis Benigs, Bob Wings. They were explaining that for them, main challenge of the movement is to defeat the George Bush. For this reason, everything against George Bush is correct; even to have an alliance with Jaques Chirac. Main target is to defeat George Bush is so dangerous for the world that we have to have the world alliance against George Bush. The analogy they use is with 1928, 33, 38 just before WW II. They thought that really the main goal for the movement is to have huge unity between obviously different parts of the movement, even with the European governments who opposed to the war. Against that, we explained that the analogy with the years before WW II, was quite dangerous. It becomes easy to valorize the European model against US model. That is the beginning of the end in my position Because it would be possible for you to take the same line in Japan. Japanese is much more egalitarian than those countries, which is true, even if the homeless are growing. And doing that, it is the shift between different parts of the big countries with the beginning of the end, a bad way to finish with globalization, I think so. A good way would be to have a global policy, world response for global movement and to fight for global justice with the all the part of the movement and to understand that our best allies are the people in the US fighting against Bush. And their best ally is us and not Jaques Chirac, for example. It is a real interesting debate, at least in the last year That was the first point that I would like to put on the table because I think these debate has started right now.

The second debate is about the characteristic of the new movement and specificity of the way we act together. If we look very concretely in Porte Alegre as well as in Florence, Paris and Asia, the only way to work to network and to act to take decision with consensus. That is obvious between us and really two these words, “networks” and “consensus” we are using all the time in our movement. With all these movements, it is really common culture: consensus and networks. And these ways to do things bring success. If you look at last four years from Seattle to now, we were able with network and consensus to build a big internationalism we have never had in the world before and also to have the movement able to integrate to accept new topics. For example, during the first phase of the movement between Seattle and Geneva, to be brief the movement was only focusing on economic globalization, no more than that. There was a clear vision between these two years when the countries were not involved in war. Seattle was six months after the Kosovo War, the Balkan War, and Geneva was two months before September 11th, the starting

point of a new wave of war against Iraq and so on. And for those reasons, there were sort of naivety in the movement focusing of only economical institution such as IMF and World Bank, WTO and the G8 as a economical problem more than political one and war one. After the September 11th, everything changed and it was the beginning we know all story. But the interesting thing to see even at the beginning, it was little bit difficult, I remember very well the Second world social forum, which one we had really tension about the issue of war, because part of the union and social democratic parties refused to come down on the Afghan War. But very few very soon the movement was able to recuperate unity in particular once Iraq war started. And the movement showed that it is able to move to integrate new topics to integrate new dimension and it's true in the antiwar movement and also the social movement. Now we have in France as I told in the beginning a big strike against pension system reform. And all these things are related. With consensus and network it is possible to move toward integrating several part of the movement and have a good evolution of the movement. ¥ And I think that these things are not characteristic only of the social movement and global justice movement. If we look at little bit behind, it is more a global evolution of the world. If you look, for example, at the evolution of capitalism, the companies themselves are changing very quickly and transforming themselves, into a new sort of network, very hierarchical networks because obviously headquarters are in North such as US and Japan and European Union in general. And it is a hierarchical network, but companies are changing very quickly. If you look at Nike and Gap or even Cisco, a lot of companies in new economy, the companies are only marketing centers or development centers. All the fabrication, factories, are subcontracted. All of them. It is a dream of the capitalism to be able to have a company without workers and unions, without troublemakers. It is the best dream as possible for a capitalist! But these new ways force the unions to change their strategy because if you are in Malaysia for example, if you are struggling against a subcontractor of Nike to have a better wage and whatever, first you will not win and secondly you will lose your job because Nike will move to another country. That explains in US particular in the beginning why unions adopted new strategies. I am thinking of Unite, or example, the union of the textile and clothes . They are improving new strategy, linking themselves with the south unions, linking the unions with the youth movement and consumer movement with the idea that they need new alliance to focus more and target more in the logo, the brand, as Naomi Kline explained, because it is the new value of the society in the new capitalism. That explains why there is in French we say "isomorphie," from the Greek. It means equivalence of shapes, or shape-shifting, between capitalism and the movement because there is obviously the link between for example the way which one unions built themselves in 50s. There were big factories and Taylorism, in front of that, hierarchical unions and big unions and big factories. Now again this new form of capitalism like Nike and Cisco, you need new forms of social movement unionism, new form of alliance and new forms of network. That explains why these two forms are related. It is not only toward union and company capitalism, this is toward the international institution. If you look at WTO, it is an interesting example, it is like the UN but much better than UN. It is like UN without the security council and without veto of five big countries. WTO is democratic.

Every country has one vote and every one is equal, absolutely perfect. But in practice WTO will never vote because it is impossible for US or EU or Japan to be in a minority in an alliance with Burkina Faso and Bangladesh and Nicaragua, for example. It is impossible and unbelievable. For these reasons, WTO works only with consensus and in fact the form of network. If we look at the evolution of a lot of institution, they are evolving like that. And there is a big correlation between the evolution of the global capitalism and companies as well as international institutions, and the way in which we act, and this new way to act, it is a really serious matter, because it is a something able to function. I explained it at the social movement level. And if we look at the function of capitalism, some analysts explain that the failure of the WTO at Cancun was explainable because their rules are network and consensus. I think it is a total mistake and false understanding because the UN who has more clear rules and capacity to vote for the security council and so on, but was also totalitarized the war issue. The failure of Cancun as well as the failure of UN during the Iraq crisis have the same roots with the big clash between big countries. It is more these weaknesses of the globalization explains why WTO collapsed in Cancun. The problem of rules is really a secondary aspect. These new way to function with network and consensus, it is really I think a long cycle of way to act. We really think about a lot of problems, but before talking about them, we must understand the strength of this way, which is able to work as I explained it. But also, these ways to act give a lot of opportunities for the actor itself. If you are in the union or political party in the 50s, and in 60s the only way to have a change of orientation is to debate in the congress to have a majority. If you have a majority, OK you won and you can put your line on the table. But if you are in the minority, only way to work with is to wait for the next round, at the electoral level. You either control the country, or you do not, you have the city or you don't, and you wait next round.

If you look at the consensus and network, things are not the same. If you have a problem with the union, you do something new. If an NGO, you do something new.. This new way to act in the movement creates much more opportunity to self-organization and what is people named in US affinity group, which is a good example.

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Traditionally I am thinking about Spain in the 30s or some unions at the end of 19th century. We had also some aspect a little bit like these new forms of affinity groups and so on. These experience were a minority in some parts of social movement. The new thing is really that it's a new way to act for everyone now. That creates three problems that I will talk about before going to my conclusion with the alternative and problems around that. First, the fact is that it can be extremely violent, in the sense that the majoritarian way to resolve the conflict, the classic way, whether a representative democracy or participatory democracy, has a majority and minority. If you are in democratic country, the majority has to respect the right of minority and these relations between majority and minority are the key of political science in all our countries. If you look at the consensus because it is more difficult to have a consensus with a big assembly, when you have it, it is extremely violent against people who are not in consensus. I cannot explain now, but we have to understand that consensus is not so soft. It can be extremely violent.

The second characteristic of consensus is that it gives visibility to the actors themselves when you have a vote with majority and minority you are supposed to understand what are the terms of vote and the alternative. When you have a consensus, it is extremely difficult to understand which way the consensus was attained, and how it was built. For the actors in these movement is quite impossible to understand. If you look, for example, at Europe, the country that are the most post modern are following the US model -- or example it is Spain now. But Spain has probably the biggest movement in Europe, particularly Catalonia, Barcelona, it is absolutely incredible. The movement is moving themselves extremely quickly and dissolving themselves and are creating themselves extremely quickly. In this way, to work with network is very flexible and open and horizontal, but there is little memory and few common stories between the people. Few people are able to tell the story and to give the memory to the actors themselves. That is a real problem.

That introduces my last part with the lack of strategy in the networks and in this kind of movement. This movement functions because you can have a common political goal to fight against IMF and WTO and so on, but the strategy to change the world is something you never talk about because you have to maintain the unity between all the partners and the strategies are something made without discussion in these kinds of movement.

Now I will finish with alternative and kind of policies and alternative movement can put on the table. First at all, it is clear that traditionally the ways to do things was simple. We had the social movement or NGO, whatever, and political response was given by political parties. The political parties were representatives of alternative in general. That now functions less and less. And even if these movements had political consequences, I am thinking in Latin America it's so obvious, with Lula's victory in Brazil and the change in Argentina, the victory of Gutierrez in Ecuador and so also the growth of the mass in Bolivian and so on. Even not talking about Venezuela, which was another case. In our country, in Europe, it's the same. The Social democratic party in France, for example, is moving very quickly and now is trying to make common link with the movement and so on. And we can see that. But the same time, it is obvious in the case of Socialist Party in France, that looks more like rhetoric. It looks more like political opportunism. And even in the case of Brazil and Ecuador, we can talk about the concrete policies of Lula, but for sure Lula is not breaking with neo-liberalism for sure. That gives an example of difficulties to change the things and think to do alternative. Interesting case of Brazil is the fact that Lula, even he had some good thinking on policies, as Brazil played a role in the Cancun collapse, concrete policy in Brazil changed little

At the same time, the most radical part of social movement and I am thinking of Amnesty<??> .for example, has no alternative policy, no real alter policy. There is no real other policy. They have their part, the land aspect. I did not see in Brazil forces able to defend another program. And it's sort of a lack of program in. The Lula government has few alternative ideas about how to change their country and same for the left side. It is a little bit light if we do not have the equivalent of a big strategy some we had some decades ago. Obviously the socialist way collapsed, but also in our country social democracy had Keynesianism as the main ideology.

That has collapsed also and a lot of South countries tried local import substitution, but that collapsed also. Those are the three big ways to see that the change in the world is we had in common in the 60-70s collapsed without an alternative.

Now our problem is to understand how to build alternative, there are several idea on the table. Marcos presented a lot of interesting ideas. I will focus on just two ideas. First, I think extremely important to follow the concrete demand expressed by the movement because if there is a common lesson, evaluation we can have for the last century. It's the fact that it's worst when you or we try good way to change the world from the bottom down. Obviously so called communism in several countries, but also social democracy, even if it was different from the USSR and so on.

For me the first evaluation is to start from the concrete demands of the people. It is very obvious and it looks very simple, but I think it is quite elementary, and generally the government did not do it. What the landless demand in Brazil and what homeless people demand in Japan and France, to start with that, that is elementary. Second idea which is my conclusion is to think that the change of the society starts from actual society. I agree with Marcos' presentation. If we look a little bit at the vision of the alternative and socialism for the future made by the working class movement or more generally the social movement, it is interesting to see that always it started from the realities of their economy at the moment they existed. I give you very simple example. I come from a movement with a strong Marxist tradition. But obviously we saw ourselves in 70s as the people able to have a scientific response against the pre Marxist which was looked as sort of as an archaic way to think of the world. This archaic way was the Proudhon way, important in France but more than France I think. He thought that the way to shift capitalism was protecting local and small property. His idea was to protect small handicraft workers and small producers and small farmers against big capitalism, who in this period was seen as only robbing the skill of handicraft workers and individual workers. And Proudhon had a very simple way to see the socialism of the future, though I don't know if he used the term. He saw the need to have sort of society of small producers sharing between themselves, and no more than that. Not Marxist itself, Marxism is more complex and I have no time to explain our common Marxism. But according to it, a good way to change the world is to use the state to have a nationalization of the big means of pollution and so on and so on.

We did not realize in this period that this way to see society was totally related to the situation of capitalism at the beginning of the 20th century. It is really funny to see that if Lenin used the term "communism is the electricity plus the circuit." Before Lenin it was really Kautsky, and Kautsky was really the pope of the social democracy, and the pope of international socialism, but the Second International, social democracy. And when someone asked him what means socialism for you, he said it is very simple, it is like a train and highways administration at the scale of the society. That is really interesting because it shows at this period the big thinker of socialism -- and Kautsky was the biggest at this time -- shows socialism as the only way to use the existing big services and big companies at the level of the society and no more than that. And now what we are able to see is to think the first that Lenin and Kautsky were wrong in several

parts.

For example, the farmers of the Via Campesina, Jose Bove shows the very clearly that it is much better to have a good cheese made by the local producers than big capitalist companies. There is a sort of rehabilitation of the small producers, in particular in the farm, but not only farm, but more general than that. It is sort of rehabilitation in part of Proudhon.

However, there is new very interesting thing in this new movement, which is really related to do with networks. It is all the story of the free software. That is for me, it is fascinating because if you look at the way to have a shift or rupture, with capitalism, we saw always thought that the State was the only way. When people did not think of the State, they think local production as in Proudhon. But for the first time in the history of humanity probably, there is a new way to do a non-profit economy to do a non-profit action with world-wide one absolutely against rules and against State and against planification. If you know Linux, all the software is free software production. The idea is exactly against property rules, against the states, against any kind of regulation. The only thing they say is leave us alone to do what we want, no more than that. That works. Now if you look bit at profession at software production, the only big competitor to Microsoft is Linux and free software world. It is so strong that big countries such as China and India, as well as Japan, are thinking to use that to limit Microsoft. It is really impressive to see that because it shows another way to lead a solidarity economy if possible to say that, absolutely disconnected with the market, but disconnected with the traditional way to see the change of the society.

Obviously my conclusion it is not possible to change the world only with the system like free software because to have a train arriving on time. It is useful to have a good administration. For that we must imagine the new form of economy for combination this kind of total free activity based on the idea of giving which is important, and also to defend public services and sort of planification. Not only trains: we need a lot of social services and small economy with the small pollution. To be able to think at these three levels, it will be a better to have a common answer, but I did not talk about the regulation because you will do it a lot. Thanks a lot.