

Making the Road whilst Walking

Communication, Culture and the World Social Forum

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Politics is the art of preventing people from taking part in matters that properly concern them.

(Paul Vallery 1871-1945)

the connectivity and cooperation, the solidarity and simultaneity of the movement is much more sophisticated than the debates about whether to make official declarations and joint campaigns or the arguments over open space versus organizing space are comprehending. It is done through internet and email. It is done through free software and free radio. It is done through free information, free intellectual property, and, to the greatest extent possible under repressive rule, free movement. It is done through network subjectivities that think of information and art and knowledge and power as something that is created in common and that must be kept moving. That not only do you not get to own it, you don't get to keep it. "It" is constantly transforming and can't be held. You are a node in the P2P [Person to Person] network of life and you cannot win anything by accumulation in what is not a zero sum game. You only win through connection, through the ever changing and expanding network. These are the kind of subjectivities created in a global struggle. It is done everyday, by kids in Brazil downloading free software, by women in Chiapas listening to Radio Rebelde, by farmers redistributing native seed to those who have lost its genetic strain, by authors and artists copylefting their work for free distribution.

(Mara Kaufman 2005)

There is a certain irony in suggesting a need to explore the place of knowledge management within social movements — particularly within those openly in opposition to global capital. After all, knowledge management as a discourse has commonly concerned itself with how best to 'capture' those insights and abilities that workers have to date failed to surrender to the organisation that employees them. In this respect, it stands firmly within a managerialist tradition that stretches back to Frederick Taylor's time...

(Steve Wright 2004)

Introduction¹

This paper is intended less to evaluate, far less to theorise, the communications and culture of the World Social Forum (WSF), than to draw attention to these and to make available some relevant information and sources. My reflections are centred on one meeting of the International Council (IC) of the WSF, but I attempt both to reach back and to stretch out. The meeting I am referring is the International Council meeting of the WSF, Amsterdam/Utrecht, March-April 2005 (henceforth: Utrecht IC). I hope to make some of the impressions and reflections coming out of this meeting visible to an interested public internationally. And I am confident that more experienced IC members, particularly from its Communication Commission (CC), will put me right on errors of fact and peculiarities of interpretation.

The World Social Forum has grown exponentially since its first edition, Porto Alegre, Brazil, January 2001. It has travelled to Mumbai, India, 2004. It has taken on regional, national and local form (sometimes on local rather than global initiative). And at Porto Alegre, January 2005, there were some 150,000 people present. Despite repeated complaints of organisational confusion and political incoherence, the WSF is the most organised expression of what the linked Call of Social Movements (see further below) has called the Global Justice and Solidarity Movement (GJ&SM). If even a protest demonstration of the GJ&SM has to be in some way co-ordinated, even more must be such a huge, annually-recurrent and dramatically-expanding event. Management of the WSF has moved increasingly to its IC, a body created by the Brazilian Organising Committee (OC) in 2001. Initially expanded by invitation, this now has a procedure for applications, but which nonetheless allows, for example, the shells of old Communist internationals to join numerous overlapping, self-created and state-funded NGOs, many of dubious international membership or reach. Whilst the WSF has been criticised from its various peripheries, even more has this been the case for its 'opaque', 'bureaucratic', 'reformist', 'unrepresentative', 'oligarchic', 'NGO-dominated' IC.

I have been one of the critics, coming from somewhere on what I would call the 'emancipatory' periphery of the movement. But I have also been fairly marginal to the action-oriented expressions at this periphery, the so-called 'anarchist', 'autonomist' or 'libertarian' or 'direct action' tendencies. I have, moreover, argued against setting up such categories as those above in Manichean or even binary-oppositional terms. And I have co-edited a collection on the WSF, of a rather pluralistic nature, which thus included contributions from the Brazil-based Organising Committee, from IC members and from the WSF's various peripheries, including its Leninist/Maoist one (Sen et. al. 2004a, b, c, 2005). And it should be added that this critical publication project would never have come to fruition had it not been for funding from the rather-incrementalist Dutch development funding agency, Novib/Oxfam, itself dependent on the Dutch state for maybe 70 percent of its income. (Things were easier when the Left - however self-defined, basically self-funded -

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could unambiguously oppose itself to the Right - however specified - supported by capital and state)!

My attendance at this IC meeting was itself marked by the ambiguities common to the WSF. Resident in the Netherlands, I was asked to take part in the IC Communication Commission by the Network Institute for Global Democratisation (NIGD), a tiny Helsinki-based academic network, itself overwhelmingly Finnish in membership and also heavily oriented toward the incremental reform of the interstate institutions. The NIGD, however, has also one major social movement interest, this being the WSF itself (Teivainen 2003), of whose IC it is a long-standing, active and vocal member. NIGD has also, in my experience, been the most consistent public reporter on the IC (see, for recent example, <http://www.nigd.org/wsf/1114451710/index.html>).

My personal qualifications for taking part in the Communications Commission are limited to the following: a long-standing interest in ‘internationalist communication’ and a ‘global solidarity culture’; and repeated criticism of the WSF for what has seemed to me its surprising communicational/cultural limitations (Waterman 2005).

I say surprising *firstly* because the WSF has come into existence during the epoch of what might be called a ‘communications internationalism’, *secondly* because of the cultural/communicational fecundity of the GJ&SM in general. This is suggested in its major manifestations, such as solidarity with the Zapatistas (Olesen 2005), the protest events in Seattle, Prague, and local ones worldwide (Notes from Nowhere 2003a). The general movement, in large part, does not so much *use* the new media as *live* them – in the sense of understanding the potential and significance of such media for the articulation (meaning both joining and expression) of its events and processes. Juris (2004) argues for the concept of a

‘cultural logic of networking’ to characterise the broad guiding principles, shaped by the logic of informational capitalism, which are internalised by activists and generate concrete networking practices... [T]his specifically involves an embedded and embodied set of social and cultural dispositions that orient actors toward: 1) building horizontal ties and connections among diverse, autonomous elements, 2) the free and open circulation of information, 3) collaboration through decentralised coordination and directly democratic decision-making, and 4) self-directed networking...*In practice, networking logics are unevenly distributed and exist in dynamic tension with other competing logics, generating a complex “cultural politics of networking” within concrete movement spheres.* [My emphasis – PW]

I emphasise the last sentence because whilst the WSF may be run and attended by networks, and networks of networks, it has seemed to me to function more like a coalition of collaborating NGOs, these often acting more as organisations/institutions which maybe require some cultural or communicational *service or expression*. Mark Poster (1995), asks whether cyberspace is a Hammer or Germany. My feeling is that it is a Hammer (tool), an existing Culture (Germany), but also Utopia (a non-existing but desirable place/space, that we ourselves must invent). (Waterman 2000, 2001).

I am going to have to leave out of consideration most of the major forms of communication coming out of the Forums, whether printed, audio or visual. For such resources, I refer readers to the documents and listings in Sen et. al. (2004a:372-95, 2004b, 2005, Fisher and Ponniah 2003 and Observatorio Social de América Latina 2005:249-313 – which covers other Latin American forums).

So much by way of introduction. Except, perhaps, to refer to the extensive official minutes of the IC (WSF Secretariat 2005), and a useful short guide and commentary (Wekken 2005). These will provide the motivated reader with a more general impression of what went on at this meeting.

The state of play

Early WSFs have been largely dependent for *internal communication* (but also for that to a wider public) on an official website and lists that were and are often limited, http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=13&cd_language=2. On one of these sites is a 'Library of Alternatives', but the material here is frequently out of date, the principles of selection are obscure, the language of publication may be only Portuguese, and there is no visible human editor to whom one could submit entries or complain. Having on one occasion apparently discovered the gatekeepers, I did get an item of my own posted...and later removed (a painless extraction, given that this is not really a discussion site). The site looks good, and serves certain purposes, but as a place for exchange of ideas? Well, opacity and arbitrariness rule. A little-known, briefly existent but thought-provoking Yahoo Group list, *WSFItself* (a Yahoo Group requiring a password) was apparently inspired by Chico Whitaker, a leading figure from the Brazilian Organising Committee (OC) and the IC.

For its *external communication*, but also for participants and possibly also for committee members, the WSF has been largely dependent on a number of services, mostly of allied NGOs or 'alternative' media operations, of which the InterPress Service (IPS) seems to have been the key one. These have included a daily three-language Forum newspaper, *Terra Viva*, which currently has an online emanation at <http://www.ipsnews.net/fsm2003/index.shtml>, *Planeta Porto Alegre*, a six-language website <http://www.planetaportoalegre.net/publicue/>, itself linked with *Other Words/Other Eyes*, which present analyses of general global issues. This is not to ignore *Ciranda* (market? exchange?), which describes itself currently as 'V International Independent Information Exchange', <http://www.ciranda.net/cgi-bin/twiki/view/Portugues/WebHome?sticklanguage=Portugues>. This attempts to provide services for the alternative media present at the forums but, despite a multilingual interface, is a largely Brazilian operation. Amongst its international partners or supporters is the IPS. (Compare with *Women's Media Pool* below).

One person responsible for all these external communication activities has been Roberto Savio, the now-retired founder of IPS who, as a member of the IC, is the WSF's most prominent media specialist <http://www.ips.org/structure/general/rsavio.shtml>. Savio also has - if I am not confused by another 'other' - a personal list, on global issues, *Other News* <http://www.other-net.info/index.php>. Although he, in correspondence, separates this last effort from those to do with the

WSF more directly, others (other others?) may be inclined to see these as overlapping projects.

One awaits independent analysis of the form, subjects, discourse, reach and impact of all this activity. It is my impression that it is heavily weighted toward the incrementalist tendency within the Forum, which, given Savio's career, <http://www.ems-sema.org/forolac/cvs/savio.htm>, balancing or alternating between UN and other such institutions or media projects, on the one hand, and the WSF, on the other, should be no cause for surprise. These media projects are not interactive, in the sense of enabling feedback or dialogue. Yet, without all the above-listed activities, the media profile of the WSF would be low or flat, with international coverage largely confined to fifty alternative media efforts, each with its own viewers or readers.

Communications proposals

Roberto Savio has also, I believe, been the earliest and most persistent campaigner for a WSF communications policy. This began with a discussion document several years ago (Savio 2002). Another document, this time budgeted, and with the contributions of IC commentators recorded, came to my eyes early-2005. This is an undated memo, apparently emanating from an earlier CC of the IC, but apparently also at least co-authored by Savio (Comisión de Comunicación 2005). In so far as this latter document was clearly meant for IC members, the contributors are indicated by first names only: Sally (Burch of ALAI, a longstanding alternative communications centre in Latin America), Gustavo (Codas of the OC and CUT, the latter being the major trade union centre in Brazil), Carola (Reintjes of a Solidarity Economy network) and Antonio (Martins of the OC, of Attac and, previously, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, or *Diplo* in Brazil), etc. Savio's latest effort has come *after* the Utrecht IC meeting I attended and was concerned with the future of the WSF more generally. A section on communication says in part:

I will finish my paper mentioning the case of information and communication as an emblematic [significant? characteristic? PW] evidence of our ineffectiveness. We cannot have 1,700 journalists attending each WSF, of which at least 600 come from the media, and accept the highly discouraging results of coverage in the media in each forum. But, all the proposals we've [Savio himself? PW] made on how to provide content mechanisms for the...journalists, have been rejected under the slogan: 'nobody delegates to anybody'...Another act of irresponsibility and selfishness is that we haven't even tried to create a communication mechanism between the WSF and the huge amounts of people that share our worries, and would like to receive information about what happens in our forums. Not to say, that those who think the WSF is a process, not an event, think we have done nothing to communicate the experiences and visions of each Forum with the others that are carried out on the same year. In 2006, with this Kafkaesque invention of a forum in four countries... the lack of communication will be a schizophrenic process. But communication means organization, participation, and debate of ideas, the lack of which is emblematic. There is another myth: we don't need organisation, since despite the errors, the movement rectifies them

along the way and continues with its task. We cannot spend years fighting against the theory of the invisible hand of the market, and still think that we have another invisible hand that will solve everything. I challenge anyone to demonstrate that this will happen in information and communication. http://listas.rits.org.br/mailman/_listinfo/wsfic_fsmci.

That the communication issue has been hanging for two to three years could be understood in various ways: as revealing IC concern with a proposal that appeared too institutional and/or centralising (the Savio charge?), or too expensive (circa US\$ 140,000 in the Comisión de Comunicación 2005 document), or as indicating IC underestimation of the *centrality* of communication to the WSF. I prefer to think that this third reason is the underlying one. But to also think that it would have been preferable for the IC to have approved the first, personal, proposal of Savio – an experiment from which we could have at least learned something – than to do nothing and have to begin at this late moment. Like it or not, social movements *do* need knowledge-management.

The late moment

I found the initial commissions and the later plenary session of the Utrecht IC both prolonged and chaotic – which must have to do with my background in organisations and committees of the traditional bureaucratic kind. So I was later impressed with the systematic report of the Utrecht meeting, which I received just a couple of weeks later (World Social Forum Secretariat 2005). The contents page for this can be found in **Appendix 1**. As for the CC itself, I was so impressed by its speed and efficiency that I failed to be delighted by it. We had, as I have suggested, three or four documents on the table, most of which appeared there for the first time and in Spanish (a language I read well enough but have difficulty with listening to or speaking). I had prepared myself on the basis of the now outdated document (Comisión de Comunicación 2005). But it was the new and briefer documents that appeared to be now under discussion. What came out of the surprisingly brief and amicable exchange, between the five or ten of us, was an impressively brief report to the IC plenary session (**Appendix 2**).

This, it seems to me, is a broad and professional proposal, welcome in its apparent openness to those media projects outside the WSF itself. What, however, seems to me most significant for the future of WSF communication work may be what is *not* there spelled out and what is *postponed*. Not spelled out are the financial implications. Postponed to another moment (or level?) of WSF communications policy was decision on the detailed proposals made in the three documents tabled but hardly discussed. Or, for that matter, a document I only received after the Utrecht IC was over (**Appendix 3**). It later appeared that this later moment was to be that of the electronic dialogue mentioned below.

However, **Appendix 3** reveals the existence of precisely such another level or instance of communications initiative, the ‘Brazilian Organising Committee’s Communication Working Group’. This is not some clandestine operation, nor does it have any hidden agenda. On the contrary, it would seem to provide a model for local Organising Committee communication work during other editions of the WSF, as

recommended in the Utrecht document in **Appendix 2**. The Brazilian document provides another set of relevant links to activity occurring in the WSF2005 in Porto Alegre. It was not, however, on the table in Utrecht.

Roberto Savio appears, from the quotation above, somewhat less sanguine than the Brazilian OC about the communications achievements of the last WSF. In so far as I did not attend WSF2005 and was therefore required to follow this on BBC World TV and Radio, as well as through the 'alternative' international media, I am inclined to think that if there were such media/communication successes at WSF2005 as the Brazilian CC document reports, these must have been largely confined to the forum itself, to Porto Alegre or to Brazil.

We need, further, I think, to recognise the existence of other communications projects, tools or activities related to the WSF and its IC or to IC members.

The *first* is an IC instrument which might have preceded Utrecht but might have been given a new impulse by that meeting. This is the WsfToolsWiki at <http://www.wsftools.ras.eu.org/wikini/wakka.php?wiki=HomePage>. A Wiki is a Web tool, increasingly used amongst the internet-literate, and which allows for the discussion or collective editing of texts. Its best-known emanation is, perhaps, the Wikipedia, a collectively-edited, free, multilingual encyclopaedia. This explains that:

A **Wiki** or **wiki**...is a [web application](#) that allows users to add content, as on an [Internet forum](#), but also allows *anyone* to edit the content. "Wiki" also refers to the [collaborative software](#) used to create such a website (*see* [Wiki software](#)).

Those interested in seeing how the WSF has been so far presented in Wikipedia can consult, or amend or improve, it at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_social_forum. The Wiki is a rather sophisticated communication device, with which computer-savvy 14-year-olds are likely to feel more rapidly at home than 70-year-olds – computer-savvy or not. The potential of WsfToolsWiki, also for *communicating about communication issues*, may be suggested by the page on the Barcelona Forum, http://www.wsftools.ras.eu.org/wikini/wakka.php?wiki=English_Version. This will probably, however, be as confusing to Wiki newcomers as to WSF newcomers, whether from the IC or not. They would be well advised to first visit, explore or play with the WSF Wiki at the previously listed URL.

Whilst I welcome IC adoption of this new and potentially democratic communications tool, I cannot but conclude that the growing complexity/sophistication of both the Wiki and the IC itself requires that the IC treat such as requiring significant educational/popularisation work within both the IC and the WSF community more widely. In the absence of this, specialisation and professionalisation will be inevitable, thus leading to the technocracy and hierarchy that the WSF itself has been seeking to surpass. Another requirement revealed by both the IC proceedings and the IC's new Wiki is mutually comprehensible translation. Familiar as I am with both French and Spanish, I have found myself struggling to comprehend translations into English of the terms (from Brazilian Portuguese?) which may, or may not, be comprehensible to those familiar with IC meetings. Work on a relevant multilingual vocabulary is underway. And the Utrecht IC report (**Appendix**

1) itself incorporates a definition of terms used in its own proceedings. Moreover, there exists, as an increasingly crucial part of the WSF community, the efforts of a voluntary network of translators/interpreters, Babels <http://www.babels.org/>. A discussion of this not only points to other projects and technologies (for which I provide URLs) but reveals that translation/interpretation is being conceived by its practitioners *as a problem of social emancipation*:

Babels issued a number of critical public statements and nearly pulled out of the London ESF [October 2004] on several occasions. Th[e] fact that Babels stepped back from the brink each time was partly due to the fact that reaching a consensus to walk away is far harder than agreeing to get involved, especially in a network bringing together people from different backgrounds and perspectives. Moreover, the UK coordinators of Babels who agreed to participate in this year's ESF did so with their political eyes wide open. The reality is that the Social Forums – and especially the ESF – are not politically 'pure' spaces where everyone works together in mutual respect and harmony. They are instead political battlegrounds where self-interested factions fight for leadership and control and are met with resistance from those opposed to vanguardism. Babels thus currently accepts that the innovations and alternatives being generated by projects like itself and and Nomad [\[http://www.babels.org/imprimer.php3?id_article=77\]](http://www.babels.org/imprimer.php3?id_article=77) come not only through the annual process of organising the ESF and WSF, but also in struggle against those within them. And whatever the shortcomings of the organisation of this year's ESF, we still managed to gain an enormous amount of knowledge and experience that we will now share with future processes, particularly through adding value to the Lexicon [\[http://www.babels.org/lexicons/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=24\]](http://www.babels.org/lexicons/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=24) and Sitprep [\[http://www.babels.org/a243.html\]](http://www.babels.org/a243.html) projects. Most importantly, pulling out would have stopped the ESF from taking place – this was not a decision that Babels alone should have the power or right to make. (Boéri and Hodkinson 2005)

The *second* project I consider of considerable significance since it suggests, if successful, the possibility of holding consultations at distance, in principle therefore open to a wider circle of participants. This is an email chat exercise. I have not myself previously taken part in such. Once again a Wikipedia definition may be helpful:

Online [chat](#) is a generic term for what are now mostly known as [instant messaging](#) applications—[computer programs](#) that enable two-way typing to connect users to each other...Today there are many chatrooms, some incorporating instant messaging features without having to install additional chat software...Some of these systems also provide telephone [voice mail](#) access. These are usually known generically as just chat systems [...] A chat log is a record of a chat. Sometimes this is put on the [web](#). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_chat.

The invitation to take part in this was received by me whilst I was drafting this paper. The announcement arrived indirectly, having been addressed to a WSF IC list,

wsfic_fsmci@listas.rits.org.br, May 6, 2005, and combined Utrecht documentation, the now customarily acerbic note from Roberto Savio, ('It is ironic that a commission of communication cannot find its way to communicate...let us do it in the most simple way, via email'), and the following proposed agenda:

1. comments and observations on the CC meeting report
2. comments on plans presented by Sally Burch and by Roberto Savio
3. proposals for implementation of the plans
4. financial issues
5. new proposals for adoption prior to Barcelona
- 6 any other matters

This was to take place for an hour a day, May 9-15, at 1430 GMT. Before hypothetical contributors could find their way to the Chat site, however, the proposed discussion was moved to yet another mode, a Blog <http://wsfcom.blogspot.com/>! A Blog, this particular service informs us, is

a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts. Memos to the world.

Your blog is whatever you want it to be. There are millions of them, in all shapes and sizes, and there are no real rules.

In simple terms, a blog is a web site, where you write stuff on an ongoing basis. New stuff shows up at the top, so your visitors can read what's new. Then they comment on it or link to it or email you. Or not.

Since Blogger was launched, almost five years ago, blogs have reshaped the web, impacted politics, shaken up journalism, and enabled millions of people to have a voice and connect with others.

Jason Nardi, who proposed the movement of discussion to this mode, clearly thought it the most accessible and flexible for IC discussion purposes. And, by Friday, May 19, several visible contributions had already provoked 10-20 comments. I also received the proposal, this time on the 'old-fashioned' WSF IC CC list, Wsfic-communication@listas.rits.org.br, that the discussion continue for another week or so. Nardi, who was not present in Utrecht, appeared from his mailings to be an IC veteran. Based in Florence and connected with One World Net, <http://www.oneworld.net/>, and campaigns for the democratisation of international communication, www.crisinfo.org, Nardi seems, by default, to have become the coordinator and animator of this post-Utrecht process. The electronic discussion process seemed, from mailings, to have stimulated the contributions of various media groups and individuals likewise absent in Utrecht. I cannot here go into detail, nor do I wish to evaluate this exercise, which was on-going as I tried to complete this paper. My initial impression is that we are witnessing only the very beginning of an effort to move the IC, or at least its Communication Commission, from a geographical place to a cyberspace.

The *third* project I want to mention here was emailed to me by Christophe Aguiton, long associated with Attac-France and with Left unionism there, a leading figure in the Trotskyist 4th International, and a longstanding member of the IC. I have been given to understand, in correspondence with Teivo Teivainen, that it actually represents a merger between different WSF-related projects for more systematic collaboration between movement-oriented intellectuals/activists from Latin America, Europe and North America, some associated with the IC, others not. Those involved in such efforts include Teivo himself, Immanuel Wallerstein (USA), Anibal Quijano (Peru), Moema Miranda, Ze Correa (both Brazil), Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Portugal), Hilary Wainright (UK), Marco Berlinguer (Italy) and Mayo Fuster (Catalonia). The last pair of these have themselves taken the initiative in creating the Guide for Social Transformation in Europe: ESF and Surroundings, <http://www.euromovements.info/english/who.htm>.

(No apologies here or elsewhere for mentioning individuals and sketching backgrounds. It is through such efforts that WSF and IC activities are being informally developed, with consequences that will later require more detailed consideration).

What I will continue in this paper to call the Aguiton initiative is an ‘Activists Researchers Website’, based on a Wiki, <http://www.criticalnetwork.org/wakka.php?wiki=MainPage>. Intended as an online forum for activists and researchers, this had, a month or so after launch, not taken off. For those interested in learning about Wikis, however, its simple design might be less daunting than that of the IC. The Aguiton project also reveals a common feature of the WSF, the manner in which even leading members of the IC feel free to simultaneously express themselves in autonomous media or even organise themselves in ways that clearly both overlap with, yet can exercise independent influence, on both that committee and the WSF more generally. This has been already suggested above in the case of Roberto Savio. Christophe Aguiton, if I am not mistaken, is a leading figure within the Call of Social Movements, the action-oriented expression of the WSF, from which other IC members have tried to distance the WSF as such (more below). Whatever the confusion such multi-vocality might create in the minds of external observers (of which I have mostly been one), this has to be considered a sign of a new networking rather than old institutional mode of operation.

Finally, we need to at least record the overlap between WSF communication concerns, in the narrow sense given by the IC’s CC, and other areas, dealt with in other commissions. And then we need to consider the relationship of all this with culture in more general senses.

The *overlapping areas*, partly recognised as such, include ‘Methodology’, which has in large part to do with how to WSFs should be programmed, and ‘Memory’, which has to do with documentation, archives and attempts to get participant organisations/networks to both record their evaluations and make proposals directed toward future forums. It is worth noting the latter, <http://www.memoria-viva.org/fsm05/indexen.htm>. On this page, entitled ‘Social Forum’s Living Memory’, we can find ‘WSF 2005’s Wall of Proposals’, this apparently being a site on which those registered for that forum can publish, read and research proposals for future WSFs. When I searched, there were over 300 such

proposals. I searched for 'labour', in three languages – surely an important human activity, site of alienation, and of significant human protest activity – and found very little indeed. Nor was there too much either on 'women', apart from a contribution from the World March of Women. Moreover, this process seemed to attract, overwhelmingly, Brazilian contributions. Apart from this geographical/cultural/linguistic bias, there are two inbuilt restrictions on the nature of contributions. One is that they appear to have been structured according to existing themes of the WSF. The other that the form hardly encourages more than the briefest of proposals http://www.memoria-viva.org/bdf/listeespaces_en.html. One can only assume that significant groups, organisations and even individual participants prefer to make their proposals, or consider that can have greater impact, elsewhere. Thus, for example, an individual such as Samir Amin, a veteran anti-imperialist theorist and a leading figure in the World Forum of Alternatives (see below), has published his critique of, and offers his alternative for, the WSF elsewhere (Amin 2005). The same is the case for such an organisation as the traditional international union organisations (European Trade Union Confederation 2005). Such open and collective spaces as that represented by the Wall of Proposals will need to become much more sophisticated if they are to not so much compete with traditional individual or institutional commentary and proposals but attract them.

Not yet a cultural revolution

This leads onto a major area unrecognised within at least the Utrecht IC. It seems to me that the IC, and the WSF itself, suffer from certain kinds of *cultural blindness*. I mean this in two senses. The first relates to culture in its traditional or commonsense understanding, the second in its relationship to the political.

The *first sense* has to do with cultural expression – plastic arts, banners, song, theatre, dance, street performance, film, posters, videos, CDs, DVDs and computerised multi-media production. The WSFs are, it seems to me, surprisingly weak here, particularly when one considers their base in Brazil, a country rich in cultural expression and counter-cultural expression (Vandresen 1993). Even in Mumbai, where there was apparently a surfeit of popular cultural self-expression, at least one critic pointed out that this was the sphere of the local popular sectors, distinct from that of the spoken or written word, largely in English (D'Souza 2004).

My point of comparison with the WSFs here, paradoxical though it may seem, would be the international Communist movement in its emancipatory moment, up to the 1930s. Exemplifying this period would be the songs of Bertold Brecht and Hanns Eisler, two giants of world high culture, who produced musically innovative but popular words and music, for the movement, that could be and were spread worldwide. English speakers can consult Eisler, under the Resources, where they will find multiple music samples of music they can play on their computers, using the freely downloadable Real Player. Readers can also seek out the brilliant video on the life of Eisler (Solidarity Song 1997). Much of the music is in march time, clearly intended to accompany demonstrations and revolution. It also presents a Manichean worldview. This was in terms of capitalist/worker, capitalism/socialism, capitalism-fascism-war/*eine sozialistische weltrepublik* (a socialist world republic). This worldview might be literally out of tune with the aspirations and practices of a contemporary international and internationalist movement that has 'one no and many

yesses'. Yet it raises the question of why neither the GJ&SM nor the WSF have yet found their Brechts and Eislers. (For a more critical view of international Communist cultural activity in this period see Waterman 2004).

A notable exception, at least in my experience of the WSFs, has been the activities of the Articulación Feminista Marcosur. This presented its campaign against fundamentalisms not only through the customary panels but also through hoardings, masks, balloons, and a five-minute Flash programme on CD, with a total of only about 100 words (divided between English and Spanish) projected to much applause at WSF2003 in Porto Alegre (Articulación Feminista Marcosur 2003). Unfortunately, however, the characteristic mode of communication, reproduced at the ESF, London, 2004, has been *the panel* – a few-to-many form of a strikingly non-dialogical nature.

I mean culture in a *second sense*, that of understanding the WSF in cultural terms. This matter is discussed by Michal Osterweil (2004), in an argument that clearly relates to the earlier-mentioned one of Jeff Juris. Osterweil herself finds the WSFs culturally innovative and rich, but argues that

despite the fact that the salience of culture to the WSF is more than evident, for the most part, the implications of this centrality have either been underestimated or have not been fully understood. More often than not, culture is perceived – notably, by many who have substantial influence within the Forum process – as subordinate to more serious political issues. As such, cultural elements such as diversity, internal democracy, epistemology, narratives, etc., are conceived of as desirable, but not nearly as important as the 'real' political issues at stake. (496)

Whilst not ignoring the meaning of culture as artistic expression, Osterweil is here primarily criticising a traditional understanding of the political and arguing for a 'cultural-political' approach to the WSFs. This approach is intended to subvert traditional liberal (and Left) understandings, practices and structures of 'the political', understandings that still inform much of what goes on in the WSFs. Her own approach is summarised as having the following implications:

1) Pointing to the importance of organisational form and political structure. This includes working towards internal democracy, the use of networks, as well as opposition to hierarchical and institutionalised political organisations. It is also related to a focus on the micro-processes of daily life, including social relations, the production of subjectivity, as well as many other aspects of daily life that are usually excluded from political reasoning. 2) Placing a high value on diversity and multiplicity... 3) And finally, working towards disrupting dominant truths and creating new narratives and notions of value. This is often done through the use of art and carnival, as well as other forms of communication that try to tell new stories and create new meanings about social reality. (504)

Osterweil believes that such understandings and practices are easier to find at the margins of the WSFs, amongst the so-called 'horizontals'. And she makes specific

reference to three instances of such, Intergalaktica at the WSF, Porto Alegre, 2003 (see further below), the Hub at the ESF, Florence 2002 (for which see <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/space/hubproject.htm>), and the Globalisation des luttes et actions de désobéissance at the ESF (GLAD, Globalisation of Actions of Disobedience. Paris 2003. <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/wsf/paris2003/evaluation.htm>).

The precise, or even imprecise, nature of these events or processes, is not dealt with in the Osterweil article, and therefore must be sought for in the Links or the Resources (including such recently discovered ones as Jones 2003, Nunez 2005). But what they appear to represent (or re-present?) are anarchist/libertarian/autonomist happenings, mostly of a loosely-structured kind, often themselves based on or demonstrating (computerised) networking in its more radical forms, as well as exhibiting or learning cultural/communicational techniques, whether electronic or not. Despite the possibly Manichean opposition, in some libertarian declarations, between Horizontals and Verticals, an Intergalaktica event, in the Youth Camp at the WSF2005, Porto Alegre, was apparently the site of a discussion, proposed by the NIGD. It was attended by such IC stalwarts or WSF personalities as Teivo Teivainen, Michael Hardt, Meena Menon, Chico Whitaker, Moema Miranda, Gina Vargas, Thomas Ponniah and Immanuel Wallerstein (See Nunez, Dowling and Juris 2005, and photos at <http://www.yachana.org/reports/wsf5/fotos/jan30.html>). Although a couple of the participants have informed me that this meeting was for them a highlight of WSF2005, I have yet to see any extensive account. The point, however, is that such marginal or even 'satellite' events (meaning outside the official place, as in the London ESF, 2004) are open to, or overlap with, the more central spaces. And vice versa. Yet the absence of any public reporting by the influentials/notables means that any learning process from this encounter remains amongst them.

The Osterweil piece includes interesting and relevant discussion on the difference between a 'political-cultural' and a 'cultural-politics' approach to the WSF. The first might concern itself with the difference, in traditional Left discourse, between the political culture of Right and Left, which would not necessarily note or criticise the Left for occupying the positions or reproducing the cultural practices of the Right. The latter, as indicated in the quotation from Osterweil above, suggests the possibility and necessity for what I would rather call an 'emancipatory cultural practice' – i.e. a recognition that struggles for emancipation increasingly take cultural rather than political form. I think, in any case, that we need to de-naturalise 'the political', recognising that, as with 'political-economy' in the classical Marxist critique, this indicates both an alienating practice *and* a mystifying discourse.

The extent to which any emancipatory cultural practice is endorsed or demonstrated by the WSF may become visible in the (over?) ambitious 'decentralised polycentric' forum, of which one is planned for the Americas in Caracas, January 2006. A preparatory meeting of the Hemispheric Committee in the Americas took place in Cuba, shortly after the Utrecht, April 2005. This was clearly concerned, amongst other things, with calming fears, previously expressed in the IC, that the WSF might be instrumentalised by the radical-populist regime of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. So far as its attention to cultural activity is concerned, this consultation was hardly reassuring (I depend here on a personal communication). In the first place the Cultural Commission was badly attended. In the second place, the cultural activity

was proposed to take place in terms of anti-imperialism and the assertion of Latin American culture. Whilst it was here suggested that the cultural activities be not only of resistance but also affirmation, the nature of positive expressions in other-than-national terms was not specified. It here strikes me that the possibility of developing some kind of global solidarity or internationalist culture did not arise, except in so far as it might relate to Latin America. However, there was proposed an international competition for a Forum song. This is urgently needed to surpass the unsingable Forum TV jingle of Porto Alegre. And it was proposed that cultural expression be considered an integral part of the programme, as in the 'transversal themes' of the WSF. How this might pan out in Caracas, January 2006, or at either of the other two 'decentralised polycentric' Forums will be worth following.

Back to the past. It occurs to me that the limitation or failure of two initiatives to make the WSF less 'discursive' and more 'political' must be put down to their reproduction, in both cases, of old ways of 'being political' or 'giving leadership'.

I refer here in the *first place* to the Call of Social Movements. For an action-oriented project, which at one moment proposed a world network of social movements, <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/wsf/socialmovements.htm>, this has proven to be a simultaneously rhetorical and opaque operation. The Call takes shape, regularly, at all editions of the WSF, and at different geographical levels of such, organises panels, issues a declaration on the state of the struggle and then a list of future campaigns or actions to be supported. It then disappears until its next emanation. Its website, http://www.movsoc.org/htm/call_2003.htm, was apparently updated after WSF2005. But the 'Unions Chapter' on this consists of outdated appeals...including a long, lone, conceptual paper of my own http://www.movsoc.org/htm/unions_chapter.htm. The annual Calls are sometimes long, sometimes brief, sometimes have signatures attached, sometimes not. Amongst the 'Political and Intellectual Organisations' signing the 2002 calls was one individual name - that of the US academic, James Petras (admittedly some kind of institution of or monument to the traditional Left).

One major reason for the irregularity and ineffectiveness of the Call may be that a number of its sponsoring networks and individual activists are themselves major figures within the IC and even within the Brazilian OC. (In 2003 sponsors of a proposal for the world network of social movements, that seems to have never taken off, included the CUT trade union confederation and MST, the landless workers movement, both from Brazil, the World March of Women from Quebec, Attac-France and Focus on the Global South, Bangkok). The dual-membership may limit the energy available for the Call, restrict its form of operation, its analysis and its calls for action. It is, to my mind, further constrained by a failure to make clear to itself or others what a 'social movement' is. Do those bodies that sign, those whose names are mentioned above, become 'social movements' by their sponsorship or signatures? The traditional international unions seem to believe that the Call, or those associated with it, are threatening the WSF by their radicalism (ETUC 2005) – something I am clearly throwing into question. But it might be useful if the Call not only made clear what it is and where it stands, but also provided space for a dialogue with such critics. One should, finally, compare and contrast this operation with the autonomous Peoples' Global Action <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/>, an international coordination that preceded the WSF, that highlights anti-capitalism (as well as

feudalism and imperialism), and is oriented toward grassroots social movements and direct action.

I refer in the *second place* to the now other-than-famous ‘Consensus of Porto Alegre’, issued by a ‘Group of 19’ from the luxurious Hotel Plaza San Martin, during WSF2005. Initial signatories were Aminata Traoré, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Eduardo Galeano, José Saramago, François Houtart, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Armand Mattelart, Roberto Savio, Riccardo Petrella, Ignacio Ramonet, Bernard Cassen, Samir Amin, Atilio Boron, Samuel Ruiz Garcia, Tariq Ali, Frei Betto, Emir Sader, Walden Bello, Immanuel Wallerstein. Inspired by the intention of giving the WSF more political direction, it reproduced many WSF concerns in a declarative form:

The points include debt cancellation, adoption of the Tobin tax on financial money transfers, dismantling of tax havens, the promotion of equitable forms of trade, a guarantee on the sovereignty of a country’s right to not only be able to produce affordable food for its citizens, but also to police its food supply; the implementation of anti-discrimination polices against minorities and females, and democratisation of international organisations which would also include moving the United Nations headquarters far South of its current New York location. <http://www.ipsterraviva.net/TV/WSF2005/viewstory.asp?idnews=153>.

Given the manner in which this reproduces the (less-radical?) issues discussed in the WSF, one can only wonder at what moved such prominent and often-respected Left intellectuals – ranging from the ultra-moderate Bernard Cassen, via the ‘street-fighting’ Tariq Ali to the emancipatory Sousa Santos – to take an action which could have been predicted to cause confusion and even hostility, if not ridicule, amongst not only leading IC figures but WSF participants more generally. I note that the signatories consisted overwhelmingly of notable male intellectuals (over 60?) from Europe and the Americas. And one has to assume that they felt that they had some right or duty to take this action, to the apparent eventual embarrassment of not only the WSF but also of at least some of themselves. The Consensus, as far as I recall, was not even mentioned at the Utrecht IC.

As already suggested, Samir Amin, one of the signatories, has made his individual position clear, but here from the more conventional place of his own institutional website, that of the Third World Forum (Amin 2005). Without going into the content of his argument, largely concerned with reminding the multi-class Forum of the continuing importance or priority of class or mass demands, it is worth noting that his piece is 1) issued from the same kind of middle-class NGO he is castigating, 2) hostile to the kind of new emancipatory theory associated with not only the WSF but the GJ&SM more generally, 3) innocent of reference to culture and communication, and 4) reproductive of traditional political practice:

I am suggesting the setting up of a probably ‘informal’ and ‘open’ but restricted working-group, in order to avoid the mistake which doomed the “[International Council] of the World Social Forum” to powerlessness.

As someone who actually identifies with part of his argument – though not the part I have just quoted - I suppose that what I am suggesting is that it would be better voiced within such a space as the not-yet-existent Activists Researchers Website mentioned earlier!

By way of contrast with such experiences, I would like to consider the World March of Women (WMW <http://www.marchemondiale.org/en/index.html>). The Canada-based WMW seems, in many ways to reproduce the composition of the WSF, combining the characteristics of traditional international/ist NGOs with those common to such action-oriented networks as the PGA. It also participates in both the WSF and the broader GJ&SM. Its founder and leader, the Quebecoise Dianne Matte, is a member of the WSF IC and was present in Utrecht. WMW funding sources, ranging from interstate agencies to development funding agencies and unions, are similar. It is also associated with the Call. In a number of ways it might seem to reproduce, for example, the international peace movements of the past. What would seem to distinguish it from the Call, the Consensus and the past would be 1) its base in and address to women as a (actually the) major classlike global constituency, 2) its feminist ideology, 3) its institutional autonomy from the WSF, 4) its impressive international reach, and 5) its combination of anti-patriarchal *and anti-capitalist* positions and actions. The latter are encapsulated in a Charter, signed 2004, after apparently extensive discussion amongst its adherents internationally. This Charter, although inspired by feminism and addressed centrally to women, is also inspired by the GJ&SM. It occurs to me that it could well be also addressed to the WSF and would surely be endorsable by nearly all who attend it. The Charter reads in part:

We represent over half of humanity. We give life, we work, love, create, struggle, and have fun. We currently accomplish most of the work essential to life and the continued survival of humankind. Yet our place in society continues to be undervalued.

The World March of Women, of which we are a part, views patriarchy as the system oppressing women and capitalism as the system that enables a minority to exploit the vast majority of women and men.

These systems reinforce one another. They are rooted in, and work hand in hand with, racism, sexism, misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and forced labour. They breed manifold forms of fundamentalism that prevent women and men from being free. They generate poverty and exclusion, violate the rights of human beings, particularly women's rights, and imperil humanity and the planet.

We reject this world!

We propose to build another world where exploitation, oppression, intolerance and exclusion no longer exist, and where integrity, diversity and the rights and freedoms of all are respected. This Charter is based on the values of equality, freedom, solidarity, justice and peace. <http://www.marchemondiale.org/en/charter3.html>.

Without idealising the WMW, which has been criticised by other feminists for territorialism (claiming excessive space within the WSF), it therefore seems to me that the Charter *could* literally move the Forum forward in a new manner. Whilst, for example, the international unions (also represented in the IC) have been campaigning within the Forum for signatures to a campaign or petition on ‘Decent Work’ (Waterman 2005) – which nowhere questions capitalism – the WMW Charter does. And whilst Decent Work is, for the traditional institutionalised unions, basically a lobbying issue, their Charter is, for WMW, a public mobilising one, preparatory to a local/global demonstration in October 2005.

Finally, I would like to mention, as surely the most striking and successful example of emancipatory cultural work under a globalised networked capitalism, that of the US film-maker Michael Moore, <http://www.michaelmoore.com/>. It seems reasonable to consider Moore as part of the GJ&SM and to publicly invite him to a coming WSF. Moore’s stock in trade, ever since his first, self-financed, devastating satirical attack on General Motors for ‘de-structuring’ his home town, ‘Roger and Me’ (1989), has been the exposure to embarrassment, ridicule, or outrage, of US corporations, the US military and state, and of US social myths and faiths more generally. Moore’s combination of a working-stiff or cheeky-chappy persona, his apparent naivety, indefagatability, fearlessness and often devastating wit (in both word and image) has actually created a new cultural genre. All this was prior to his attack on the US-led war on Iraq in ‘Fahrenheit 9-11’, a film that won prizes in the US and at Cannes, and that popularised Michael Moore in Europe and possibly more widely. Unsuccessful in preventing a Bush re-election in 2004, one wonders which of these two events is going to be absolved by history.

Returning to the WSF and its IC, it does seem to me that they are presently terrains of dispute between traditional emancipatory practices (embodied largely in the 19th century Left and the 20th century NGOs) on the one hand, and new emancipatory practices (embodied largely in the various libertarian tendencies) on the other. This statement should *not* be taken to endorse the binary oppositions of the old Left(s), because it goes paired with other recognitions: 1) that there are other axes of tension within the WSF (e.g. between the 19th and 21st Century Left) and 2) because of the fluidity of the relevant borders, both within and around such instances as the IC, such as those between a) the IC and the WSF, b) the WSF and its semi- or illegitimate children (such as the Call or the Consensus), c) the WSF and its satellites, and d) the WSF as an identifiable and institutionalised instance, and the global justice and solidarity movement as an inchoate whole.

Whilst I have mentioned in passing various other organisational or cultural expressions in and around the WSF, I want to now consider a few more specifically communicational projects that may contrast with, or feed into, any present or planned effort of the IC.

Another World of Communications is...in Existence!

Although some mention is made of the media of the general GJ&SM in the documentation of the WSF-IC, these seem to be almost as marginal to the ongoing concerns of the IC as is the GJ&SM to the WSF itself.

Somewhere in the abundant documentation of the IC CC mention is made of an offer by Michael Albert, of the US-based *Znet*, <http://www.zmag.org/weluser.htm>, to host a WSF communication effort. *Znet* is a highly-professional and well-respected independent socialist site, and Albert promoted the ambitious 'Life after Capitalism' programme at WSF 2003 <http://www.zmag.org/lac.htm>. There is little doubt in my mind that *Znet* could host much of the WSF efforts for far less than the \$140,000 – the only estimate we so far have for a systematic WSF communication project.

Choike (Mapuche for Southern Star) describes itself as 'a portal on South civil societies' and is based in Montevideo, Uruguay, <http://www.choike.org/>. It belongs, in my mind and memory, as belonging to the same wave of alternative international communication work as IPS. It is an attractive, well-presented two-language site (Spanish, English) that has as its main rubrics People, Society, Environment, Communication and Globalisation. But it also indicates such different types of material as a Directory and In-Depth Reports. The latter are of particular interest in so far as they cover not only many, if not all, of the topics coming up at the WSF but also the WSF itself. The index page on the WSF 2005, moreover, contains much of the discussion around the event, and links to previous editions of the forum and other relevant matters. Indeed, Choike carries most of the book on the Forum I co-edited in 2004, http://www.choike.org/nuevo_eng/informes/1557.html. And it has published several other items of my own, and various other pieces I have recommended. However, Choike has also done In-Depth reports on matters not so well covered by the WSF, in particular, Global Labour Rights, http://www.choike.org/nuevo_eng/informes/1872.html, where it goes far wider than this subject as legally understood. I mention Choike, finally, because of its proximity (overnight by bus) to Porto Alegre. It seems to me that it could be approached by the IC CC both as a possible carrier of WSF material and as a contributor to discussion on IC communication policy.

Mention is made in WSF-IC CC documentation of the *Independent Media Centre* (IndyMedia, IMC), the dispersed multi-media network, now operating in maybe 50 countries and all continents, appearing in 20 or more languages – and reaching into a zone largely isolated from the WSF, the ex-Communist world. At least one such node, in Brazil, publishes not only in Portuguese but also in English, Spanish and Esperanto (once favoured in the international labour movement as an internationalist language). IMC was actually a creation of the GJ&SM, having been born during the Battle of Seattle, 1999. This suggests a greater intimacy with the more general movement than that of the WSF.

Indymedia has been written about journalistically and also researched (Notes from Nowhere 2003b, Coyer 2005, Morris 2004). It also researches itself (Indymedia Documentation Project 2005)! And here describes itself *as* a movement. Finally, it encourages independent academic research on itself, whilst urging or requiring researchers to themselves act and publish in a manner consistent with Indymedia principles. Such principles are presented in summary by Morris (see **Appendix 4**). They seem to me of interest in so far as they touch on issues of structure, coordination and democracy that arose at the WSF IC in Utrecht.

Things are still changing within IMC. Discussion on the principles and practices of Indymedia continue unabated <http://docs.indymedia.org/view/>

[Global/PrinciplesOfUnity](#). Indymedia demonstrates a complex, sophisticated and technically advanced model of not only international/ist communication but emancipatory culture. It should be considered by the Communications Committee of the WSF and others concerned with WSF communication and cultural practice. And it should be surely also systematically involved in the development of a WSF model. Amongst other interesting and relevant features of Indymedia functioning are that its international decision-making, in so far as this exists, itself takes place in virtual space rather than in the kind of repeated, frequent, expensive *and therefore inevitably selective* meeting places of the WSF IC. A good majority of WSF IC members were, fortunately perhaps, unable or unwilling to attend at Utrecht.

In so far as digital radio broadcasting over the internet is becoming an increasingly interesting medium for international/ist communication (Lee 2005), a recent model, appropriate for events-cum-processes like the WSF would seem to be offered by the *Women's Media Pool* at the Beijing +10 Conference held in New York, 2005, <http://www.womensmediapool.org/>. Whilst the pool included radio it covered alternative international women's media more generally. That particular exercise has been evaluated by Maria Suarez Toro, a veteran of the feminist Radio Fire, based in Costa Rica, who has been previously active within the WSF and also written on autonomous international women's encounters (Suarez Toro 2002, 2004, 2005). Once again, the purpose of mentioning this project is to suggest the range of resources, experience and expertise available to those concerned with developing WSF communications. It would appear that there is little reason why there should not be a permanent international WSF radio or - on the model of Indymedia and the Media Pool - a network of such.

Conclusions

I am aware of having here written an unstructured paper, shifting between impression, reflection, intervention and even conceptualisation. This, as my opening words might suggest, was not my intention. The unsystematic form has to do with writing in the middle of this WSF IC tsunami, trying to both keep afloat and to find bearings. My major concern has been to negotiate between the devastating initial quotation from Vallery, the ironic realism of Wright, the new emancipatory thinking on culture and communication, and my own headline. If I attended Utrecht, and started this paper, from a position of considerable scepticism with respect to the IC, and with few expectations of its CC, I feel obliged to conclude, at least provisionally, that *this* road is made by walking. The problem is: who is walking this walk (as well as talking this talk)?

And who is reporting the talk?

Just as I was trying to meet a NIGD deadline on this paper, I was confronted with another brief report on the Utrecht IC (**Appendix 5**). This appears to have been written by Marco Berliquer, someone rather more familiar than I with both the IC and the European Social Forum (ESF). The report is valuable not only for revealing the relations between the WSF and one of its regional emanations but also because it adds significantly to my own paper, particularly in revealing yet other aspects of WSF communication – or communication aspects of the WSF.

My final conclusion must therefore be that we still need one or more extensive reports, analyses, evaluations, theorisations and strategy proposals on WSF communications and culture. I will be satisfied if this essay contributes toward such.

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Appendix 1



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Report on the World Social Forum International Council meeting

Utrecht, Holland, from March 31st to April 2nd 2005

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Appendix 2

Report on WSF-IC Communication Commission meeting - Utrecht, March 30th 2005

Prepared by Sally Burch (ALAI) y Roberto Sávio (IPS)

(Minimally edited and commented - PW)

There was an agreement concerning the need of defining communication mechanisms for the WSF, emphasising three levels.

- Information and diffusion about the process
- Mechanisms for internal communication
- For the Polycentric 2006 WSF [intended to take place simultaneously in Africa, Asia and Latin America but still in question - PW], it is important to assure communication among the different places of the Forum.

Three proposals were presented to the Commission, concerning many aspects of the levels above. And we also received some recommendations from the Expansion Commission [addressed to both the IC and the WSF itself – PW]. The Commission has many ideas and it is working on a consensus proposal. Particularly, they include the strengthening of collective coverage initiatives, among independent, community and alternative media that are linked in some way to the Forum process. It would be a matter of giving them a more permanent character, related to the Forum process. The organisation of a evaluation and exchange seminar among those media, preceeding the World Forums, has already been considered.

Some other proposals concern:

- Multimedia coverage initiatives, in order to interconnect the many places where the Polycentric Forum will take place in 2006.
- Promotion of a pool of journalists who identify themselves with WSF purposes and principles.
- Creating tools that can facilitate intercommunication and mutual knowledge within the Forum process (database, dynamic virtual library etc [Advanced proposals, extensively discussed in another IC commission - PW]).

In the next few weeks, we propose to extend the Commission to include, particularly, some other networks and communication media, and specially to achieve a greater diversity in the Commission's composition, which now mainly consists of Spanish speakers. We propose that the Commission have a meeting in May to start preparing the process of making these proposals more concrete.

The Communication Commission presented the following proposals to the International Council:

- Recognising the importance of communication for the WSF, in its different meanings: activity of massive diffusion [mass media activity? – PW], participatory communication with the sectors and groups that are interested in the WSF process and, specially, regarding internal communication.
- To give priority to the initiatives that tend to create a communication web, always taking into consideration the Charter of Principles.
- Organising Committees at each place where the forum will take place should create a communication working group, integrated by networks and information and communication media, as well as for the social organisations that have activities in the communication field. These groups will work together to ensure intercommunication among the Decentralised Forums in 2006.

The following people were present at the meeting: Mae Ocampo, FOEI [Friends of the Earth International]; Sally Burch, ALAI [Agencia Latinamericana de Información]; María Pía Matta, AMARC [World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters]; Salette Valesan Camba, IPF [Instituto Paulo Freire]; Azril Bacal, IPF; Antonio Martins, ATTAC-Brazil; José Oliveira, ICFTU/CIOSL [International Confederation of Free Trade Unions]; Peter Waterman, NIGD [Network Institute for Global Democratisation]; Roberto Savio, IPS [Interpress Service]; Pierre George, Caritas.

Appendix 3

Report by the Brazilian Organising Committee's Communication Working Group on WSF 2005 Shared Coverage Projects

(Commented but uncorrected – PW)

This set of documents you are receiving now – collectively written by the Communication Working Group (WG) – is intended to be our contribution to the World Social Forum (WSF) process. We hope it is good not only for coming next WSF editions, but also for related meetings – regional, local, thematic forums – as well as activities that only identify with the WSF spirit.

The texts describe the ideas that guided the projects, the discussions for their formulation, and reports on their practical experiences. We have tried to be strict about the achievements of each project, displaying its application problems, what could not be carried out in practice, or the aims that were achieved in a very distinct way from what we expected.

Why another communication is necessary

Along seven months of debates and formulation within the Communication WG, we have evaluated that the WSF has a large deficit regarding communication policy. We believe that the WSF has never had a defined policy to communicate with its participants or with other people who identify with its universe and are not able to take part in the meeting. And much less with people that barely know the process, but should still be contacted as part of the battle for hearts and minds in favour of another possible world.

Facing the need for general formulation about WSF communication, but aware of the WG's limits for acting, and realising the importance to carry out this debate in a stronger way and within mid-term, the Communication WG's option was to focus initially – that is, for the WSF 2005 – on a WSF policy for alternative media. That decision was based on two principles. Firstly, because we considered that alternative media is a strategic ally in the WSF construction, since the media and organisations that practice it identify with the WSF principles. They are also professionals and media that follow the WSF world closely, being thus more able to provide a closer view of what the WSF is. They are also media that speak directly to the public connected to the struggle for another possible world, that is, people involved in the WSF process – even when they are not based in the city where it is taking place.

The other reason was the WSF general configuration. As it has been decided since the constitution of the Brazilian Organising Committee, the 5th edition should show in practice how feasible some alternative proposals within the Forum were. That is, to show, in the very constitution of the WSF, that another world and other forms of organisation, thinking, and production are possible. Therefore, in communication, nothing is better than respecting the logic of shared action that had been proposed by the alternative media that are part of the 2005 WSF's universe, pointing at its own

sharing as an alternative both to the siege and to the selection conducted by market journalism.

Four embracement [inclusive? PW] projects

About that initial – and more conceptual – debate, the WG became a laboratory for the shared construction of an alternative media project at the WSF 2005. Those media proposed working formats and infrastructure that were distinct from those offered to conventional media and went on to define how that would be configured.

Due to the broad, diverse, and unifying nature of the WSF, the WG projects could not have anyone's name written on them. They should not be the objects or the property of one group. Rather, following the WSF spirit, they should be a space for articulating and strengthening alternatives already existing or under construction.

The relationship between the Brazilian Organising Committee (BOC) and the WG internal construction was promoted through a work of “facilitation”² that was decisive for the success of its projects: interlocution respecting the independent construction of alternative media; sensibility to see the WG space as a laboratory of a communication projects for the WSF and not a service to the WSF; and translation of the stages of that project within the BOC (as well as the IC, during a meeting in Porto Alegre) and vice-versa.

The result of that process was a proposal covering four broad and inclusive initiatives that served to embrace alternative, community, independent media that came to Porto Alegre. They were four because that number reflected the existing media areas.

V International Independent Information Exchange – It promoted its 5th edition – it exists since the 1st Forum, in 2001 – of shared coverage of the World Social Forum, acting as a platform for joint work of hundreds of journalists from alternative media, social communicators, and distinct shared projects that offered to take part in the initiative. Participation took place through collective and simultaneous feeding of a website in six languages, organised according to the thematic architecture of the WSF and connections with the embracement projects, and the management of an international editorial staff room within the WSF, including teams for reception and edition of contents, embracement activities, free subjects, and joint subjects. Oriented to free reproduction, the Exchange uses the principles of copyleft, under which contents can be reproduced by other media as long as the source is acknowledged. The coverage of the V Exchange can be found at www.ciranda.net

Radio Forum – In its 1st edition, it developed shared coverage including community and independent stations from all over the world, broadcasting 24 hours a day via streaming in its website, and a few days on air for the Social Territory. The programs were totally produced by stations and organisations interested, which struggle for the democratisation of communication, broadcasting in up to six languages, thus guaranteeing the WSF's spirit of cultural diversity. To access part of the programming broadcast by the Radio Forum, go to www.forumderadios.fm.

² The facilitators of the Communication WG at the BOC were: Salete Valesan Camba from Paulo Freire Institute and Viliano G from the Youth Camp.

TV Forum – The TV Forum was aimed at gathering several video productions about the WSF and organising them in a one-hour TV show called *Panorama Forum*. The programming, which included over 60 videos by independent producers, college, and community TV stations, was offered daily to several countries in the world via satellite signal by Radiobras. All college, community, and educational channels interested in broadcasting a production with a different approach were able to receive it and include it in their programming. To watch the videos shown on *Panorama Forum*, access www.forumdetvs.tv

Laboratory of Free Knowledge – Installed within the Youth Camp, the Laboratory brought together all possible experiences on free information exchange – video, audio, radio, software... In order to get to know the experiences of that laboratory, access www.lablivre.ig3.net.

Looking at the attached report on each of those projects, you can have a thorough description of their bases, the political actors that formulated them, and their aims. You can also see an honest report on the practical difficulties found to achieve them and the successes they have reached.

Learning from the past, with an eye on the future

Besides evaluating the project of shared coverage, this document is aimed at giving a historical contribution to all other individuals and organisations that take part in future meetings within the WSF process, and to put forward a few propositions. All of us who are members of the Communication WG believe that alternative media should be a strategic ally of the WSF. In order to achieve that, it will have to keep receiving a distinct treatment within the WSF process, for the same reasons already listed above:

- media and organisations that practice alternative media are also political actors in the struggle for another possible world, in the fight for democratisation of communication.
- they speak to a focused audience – the WSF stakeholders.
- they have a better understanding of social struggles and demands.

In order for that preference for alternative media to take place, we understand that it is necessary to maintain the communication projects for the next WSF editions. The importance of keeping the network formed around this group and the actions resulting from it, which happened at the WSF 2005, was clear in the debates about Communication conducted both during the WSF and at the 1st World Forum on Communication and Information, which preceded the event in Porto Alegre. One of the main challenges is the construction of a large network of counter-hegemonic communication, a media forum that serves the WSF process.

That network, besides the mainstream media, would be the main agent responsible for reaching an audience that does not take part directly in the Forums, informing them about its debates, struggles and articulations, as well as connecting more people in the task of building another possible world. That is, it would be a way to use communication as a tool in the process of constructing and globalising the WSF and

to help that process in areas that lack a more active participation by social movements and organisations, such as Africa, Asia and the United States.

The relationship with mainstream media is part of that scenario. It is a known fact that the very existence of the World Social Forum goes against the interests of several communication companies, which will not miss the opportunity to diminish its achievements and criticise its functioning as much as they can. On the other hand, the WSF has acquired such a stature and importance that even the media's specific attacks cannot harm its growing process, supported and sustained by a significant part of civil and academic society as well as by political and government bodies at all levels.

We cannot deny, however, that press coverage as well as the spaces it can offer for the expression of WSF actors' opinions have their relevance in the process of publicising its events and proposals. Therefore, in order to evaluate the best way to negotiate the coverage and to take advantage of spaces that can be occupied, we should take into consideration the individual characteristics of each media, or each country or region's press.

Maintaining embracement projects and international participation in debates on WSF communication

Relationship with mainstream media is also a task to be debated by the WSF's distinct bodies that will proceed with discussions about communication after this specific WG closes with the end of the COB works. However, the main horizon ahead of us is the strengthening of the experience started by the four embracement projects in this WSF 2005 in the next editions and their extension to other WSF events, both in local, regional, and theme-oriented editions. Guaranteeing those future experiences requires ascribing international character to the work so far conducted by the Communication WG – which includes mainly Brazilian and Latin American organisations and media – and at the same time, requires its establishment and horizontality in the several countries.

One suggestion is that such actions, articulation and debates are assumed from now on by an international group linked to the International Council's communication commission, which would be open to interested organisations and would guarantee participation to the four projects, in an articulated and articulating way. That group would work as an international dialogue channel with the WSF several actors. In order to consolidate shared coverage of the Forums in their several editions, the work of that international group can be strongly based on local media, exchanging experiences after what has been done in Porto Alegre, in order to potentiate correct actions and avoid mistakes that have restricted initiatives.

Regarding the WSF 2006, for instance, it is possible to work with the possibility of a parallel coverage in the three countries where the Forum will take place and, through projects TV Forum, Radio Forum, Laboratory of Free Knowledge, and VI International Exchange of Independent Information, to allow programmes and news generated in the Americas to be seen in Africa and Asia, and vice-versa, in a shared programming not only within each Forum, but also between its distinct host cities.

An international seminar and a communication project for the WSF

A solid communication project for the WSF cannot be built hastily, neither it is advisable to freeze in strict criteria without a previous maturation process that includes mistakes and correct actions. A decisive factor for starting that work is the commitment of WSF organisations, entities and movements with the event's communication, seeking the non-hierarchisation of struggles and the identification of crucial tools for the success of demands raised by the WSF process. Another factor is to create a space where that debate can start based on broad participation of the several social actors and movements that now represent the foundation of the World Social Forum.

Therefore, organisations that are current members of the Communication WG and intend to continue with the debate on WSF communication within a possible international body to be created propose an International Communication Seminar to the WSF International Council, to take place in Caracas, Venezuela, from August to September 2005. That seminar would aim at strengthening the idea of shared communication and defining the continuity of embracement projects in the WSF, strengthening a permanent network for communication sharing; promoting an interchange of experiences in communication between participating countries; and preparing the field for experiences in communication to be conducted during the 2006 World Forums. It would also be an essential space to continue, at international and democratic level, the discussions about a communication plan and policy – internal and external – for the Forum, keeping the process of collective construction of the WSF communication platform started by the Communication WG 2004/2005.

The initial methodological proposal for that seminar includes a first day of introduction of participants, projects and experiences, and a historical recovering of communication experiences within the WSF process. A second day of visitation to some Venezuelan community, alternative, and independent communication experiences, exchange of impressions and reflections about field visits, and a conceptual debate among participants. And a third day of debates about the place of alternative communication within the WSF communication policy that starts to be collectively constructed.

Until we meet in that seminar – the proper place to define the directions of communication within the WSF process, a task that has already been posed for movements and independent media that took part in embracement projects of the WSF 2005 is the encouragement to keeping articulations started in Porto Alegre to carry out specific coverage, after the agenda of social movements formulated in the last WSF.

Possible recommendations for the International Council

Therefore, the several civil society organisations that were members of the COB Communication Working Group would like to propose that the WSF International Council approve recommendations for the concept of shared alternative media, born with the 1st WSF and strengthened as multimedia at the 5th WSF, to be prioritised and facilitated in the WSF universe and events. Those recommendations would include:

- 1 – Facilitating shared action by alternative media within the World Social Forum process.
- 2 – Guaranteeing full conditions for conducting works of shared coverage in each WSF spaces – including text, photography, audio, video, and other media that might be developed.
- 3 – Guaranteeing spaces for experimental projects on the distinct media during each event within the WSF process, similarly to the Laboratory of Free Knowledge, conducted at the WSF 2005.
- 4 – Promoting conditions for international debate about the shared coverage process by alternative media and World Social Forum communication (see proposal for International Seminar mentioned in this document).

We believe that by guaranteeing conditions for the continuity of this work started at the WSF 2005 and for widening this debate at global level, we can soon be able to strengthen alternative and shared communication as one of the most important tools for globalising the World Social Forum and in the essential counter-hegemonic dispute for the construction of another world.

Reports on the evaluation of each of the projects of shared coverage and the history of the COB Communication Working Group are attached.

São Paulo, March 23, 2005

Innovations in Indymedia

(Morris 2004: Table 1)

Principles

1. **Global justice:** Indymedia grew out of the emerging global social justice movement that integrates the social justice concerns of many previous social movements.
2. **Grass roots democracy:** Indymedia is rather unique in being a cooperative global network of consensus-based media collectives.
3. **Open publishing:** The “newswires” are open. Anyone can help run Indymedia. This allows a great deal of creative and social freedom in the discourses on Indymedia.
4. **Copyleft:** A non-proprietary publishing criteria (no private ownership of intellectual property), copyleft, is used for both the code running Indymedia servers and for the original articles posted to Indymedia.
5. **Unity and Diversity:** Indymedia offers spaces to negotiate the dialectic of difference and unity, a fundamental challenge of a globalizing world.

Media Practices and Processes

6. **Interactivity:** Dialogue and debate about stories is encouraged through a story comment feature and the open wire. This is similar to a newsgroup process, but oriented to news reporting.
7. **Online coordination:** Many discussions are conducted through listserves, chat rooms, and email: at local and expanded (national, regional, and global) levels.
8. **Website design:** Most Indymedia websites organize a wide variety of information helpful to activists and readers.
9. **Online documentation:** A documentation project (docs.indymedia.org) uses group authorware to enable co-creation of documents, including: an index of IMC local histories, local organizing outlines, descriptions of various media projects, etc.

Networking

10. **Network of networks:** Indymedia includes innovations at these levels and ways:

- *Locally*: Locals are sometimes formed amongst networks of media activists and pre-existing groups. Consensus decision-making processes are the norm, with specific tasks often conducted in more ad hoc and individualized ways.
- *Nationally*: Media activists and multiple local media groups in various countries cooperate on press coverage. Exemplary cases include the Aotearoa, Brazil and Germany IMCs.
- *Regionally*: Regional working groups are emerging in Indymedia. Latin American IMCs dialog about anti-globalization concerns. Activists in Greece-Cyprus-Turkey are exploring common issues. At large mobilizations, dozens of IMC activists from many locals in the region converge to share in making Indymedia and making media.
- *Globally*: Indymedia is a unique network in being a primary media of the global justice movements and yet is also more than this in addressing many social justice and democratic issues at local through global levels.

11. **Media projects and working groups**: There are a number of ad hoc cooperative media projects, often involving many media activists working through the Internet, that create media for special events and in an ongoing way within specific media platforms, e.g., text, radio, and video.

12. **Inter-media projects**: Media activists in various media are cooperating together on media production across media platforms.

13. **Broad media networks**: Indymedia is participating in building broad alternative media networks.

14. **Alternative medias**: Indymedia is unique in serving, simultaneously, as a social movement media, a broad alternative social justice media, a network of local media centers, and a global forum for persons interested in global justice.

15. **Flexible decentralized structure elements**: Indymedia is creating in its internal processes three structural elements needed for a successful decentralized network: strong local collectives, rich internal communication processes, and emerging network-wide decentralized decision-making and planning processes.

Appendix 5

Towards 2006: A Polycentric WSF and New Methodology

(This document was copied through to the Debate List in South Africa. Although unsigned, I am informed that it was authored by Marco Berlinguer. Minimally edited.)

Introduction

A meeting of the International Council (IC) of the WSF was held in Amsterdam [mostly Utrecht – PW] in the last week of April. This is a short report of the meeting by European people who attended the meeting. Apart from the opportunity to inform you on the ongoing WSF process, there is an issue concerning the relation between the WSF and the ESF [European Social Forum] which, as you'll see, needs to be discussed, if possible at next weekend's EPA [European Preparatory Assembly] in Prague [May 20-22, 2005]. The next meeting of the IC has been fixed for 19-22 of June at Barcelona, just after the MedSF [Mediterranean Social Forum]. For a full and official information about the Amsterdam meeting, you can read the minutes at: http://www.moviments.net/tiki-download_file.php?fileId= 149.

Towards 2006: A polycentric WSF and new methodology

I. A polycentric WSF.

The next unified WSF will be held in 2007 in Africa, probably in Kenya. In 2006, however, it has been confirmed that instead of a single WSF, there will be a polycentric WSF, with Venezuela, Morocco and India as three possible locations. The WSF in Venezuela is almost definite and it is likely to take place, as is the tradition, to coincide with Davos at the end of January. In Morocco a complex negotiation is going on with the government which could have a positive outcome but with a delay until June 2006. In India, problems are likely to be overcome in the next few weeks and the expected date is February.

The responsibility for the organisation of the single Forums will be shared between the different Committees as determined in the different host countries, the international secretary of the IC of WSF (currently composed by 8 Brazilian organisations and 8 Indians) and the different commissions of the IC.

II. The new methodology

Despite the incomplete realisation of the new methodology [programming by participation], there was, in general, a very positive evaluation of its introduction in POA. In addition to the problems of the incomplete facilitation of the process of convergence and agreeing on action, the most significant criticism concerned the difficulty of enabling strong and easily comprehensible messages to emerge. The failure to find a solution to this difficulty was reflected in the way that, in the absence of any other easily accessible conclusions from the Forum, the media focused on the appearance of [Presidents] Lula and Chavez. The decision to adopt and develop the

new methodology has been confirmed. The IC plans a participative process for defining the thematic axes and territories of the Forum; it gives centrality to the self-organization and inter-connection of activities; and it aims to promote processes of convergence and co-operation on the production of actions. For the next, polycentric WSF, a world-wide process consultation will therefore be coordinated on a single website. This consultation will use a unique database, or at least use data bases that are compatible between the three Forums and able to be used simultaneously. The process would safeguard the autonomy of each Forum's own website. The process will begin early, certainly before the summer. The first consultation will be based on the 11 thematic axes identified in the 2005 WSF, with the possibility of inserting other themes.

It will still be possible for the Organising Committee (OC) and IC commissions to promote specific axes or activities that were not covered by the consultation or the self-managed proposal of activities. The purpose of such an intervention by the OC or IC commissions would be to correct the limits of a participative process carried out only or primarily by electronic means and to ensure the possibility of initiatives by Organising Committees of different Forums, on the basis of local circumstances.

Transversal axes [cross-cutting themes - PW] are being proposed (as in 2005) on gender difference and equality, as concrete mechanisms to guarantee equilibrium and balance.

Another mechanism started in POA - the Wall of the Proposals - <http://www.memoria-viva.org/WSF05/indexen.htm>. The evaluation of this has been generally positive, despite its experimental and partial application. To build on this, it has been agreed to keep the wall open throughout the year. This will make it possible for organisations and the networks to put up proposals of action, to update them, to pick up support after as well as during the Forum. How the database of this wall can be best connected with the process of recording the activities in the different Forums will be studied.

Other new projects have emerged. One example is a project called 'Map to Build a New World'. This is a proposal to build a powerful database that would make it possible to organise a horizontal system of constant flow of information among participants in the Forum process. The information would be self-produced. The use of the database would help to give continuity to the Forum process, beyond the event itself. It would strengthen the participatory, self-managing foundation of the Forum and make it more effective. Other projects are underway related to the construction of tools of cooperation, communications and decisions at distance.

A strategic discussion

IC members identified the necessity to open a strategic discussion within the IC on the state of the movements, on their impact on the political system and on the role of the WSF. There is, as part of the IC, a strategy commission but it has been virtually inactive for the past year. It was agreed to devote a whole day of the next IC to a discussion both about the methodology and the content of such strategic discussions, and how they should be organised.

Expansion of the process of the WSF

The Amsterdam IC agreed that although important steps have been taken to expand the WSF, further action is necessary to extend the process geographically, thematically and sectorally and to correct the unbalances produced by its organic development. For this purpose it has been proposed to build a database in form of [a] 'socio-gram' that systematises and publicises knowledge relevant to achieving this expansion - details of areas, themes and sectors reached and yet to be reached etc. The information should be regionally organised, through a system of information produced by the local, national and regional processes. The diffusion of the vision and the experience of the WSF will be encouraged all over the world through all its participants.

On the basis of an application from the African movements, specific support will be organised for the expansion of the process in Africa.

Expansion of the IC

A discussion about the reorganisation of the IC has been going on for a long time. The IC has long recognised the need to widen its representation. There remains a difficulty, however, about agreeing the criteria, the extent of the expansion and the size of the IC. Currently it is made up of around 120 organisations.

For the next IC, a small group from the Expansion Commission will prepare a profile and an analysis of the existing members of the IC; a proposal for a 'road map' for the reorganisation of the IC in a way which will correct imbalances; and finally a recommend [...] procedure for examining new applications for representation and to define general and public criteria. Eleven new organisations have applied to be members of IC. For the time being, the IC decided to sort out the problem of criteria before agreeing to any widening. The first priority that the IC identified to widen representation from under-represented regions such as Africa and Asia. Some of us proposed that in the meantime the meetings and work of the IC should be opened to observers, thus making the meetings public. We also proposed to explore the possibility of a representation within the IC of the various Forums distinct from the WSF itself - the Asian Social Forum, the European Social Forum etc. No decision was taken for the time being.

Communication

The communication commission proposed a brief document which emphasised the necessity to organise a system of participatory communication both inside the WSF and for the promotion of initiatives related to the WSF. The document also committed the commission to draw up a plan to create a communications network based on the WSF Charter of Principles. Finally it recommended to every OC to anticipate the creation of a WSF working group on communication and to connect their media work with the communication activity of the WSF.

The case of the ESF

The ESF planned for Greece 2006 is not actually part of the polycentric WSF. The

ESF is organised on a continental basis and it would difficult to redefine it as one of centres of the polycentric [...] WSF. The consultation on the thematic axes of the ESF has already begun. Nevertheless, the large majority of the IC felt it was necessary and desirable to develop in organic way the relationships between ESF process and WSF process and between the ESF's Preparatory Assembly and WSF's both for the next ESF and WSF and for the future. Probably the first organic development that could be imagined is a participation of the ESF's EPA inside the WSF's IC. In spite of the structural difference between the two organisations (the EPA an open assembly and the IC a council with a limited number of representatives) maybe we could find a solution such as the regular participation of the ESF's OC (i.e. in this case, the Greek OC) in the WSF IC meeting. The problem does need to be faced urgently. If possible it should be addressed at the Prague EPS [EPA?] this weekend [May 20-22, 2005]. We could take immediate action to try to cross the two processes in practical ways: first we could visual the unity of the two processes (ESF and WSF Polycentric) through their common presentation in one web; and secondly we could co-operate from a technical-political point of view to develop an informatic and informative infrastructure that is compatible as between the two processes. This would make it possible to construct an integrated system of information at a global level. This would in turn make it possible, if the EPA favoured it, for the programme of the 2006 ESF to have connections with the shared themes of the Polycentric WSF.