



Alliance of Hope

No. 7
June 1997



**Forum of the People's Plan
for the Twenty First Century
(PP21)**

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from the editor's desk

Envisioning the Possible and Shaping Our Future

What comes before the readers here is *Alliance of Hope* in a new format. The first issue of *Alliance of Hope* came out in January 1994 in the form of a newsletter to serve to provide information to and facilitate exchanges among a broad coalition of people's organizations and NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region committed to build trans-border alliances of the peoples in struggle, solidarity and hope. Issue No.6 came out in January 1996, on the eve of the Third PP21 Convergence held in March in Kathmandu.

Following the Kathmandu Convergence, it was resolved at the First PP21 Council Meeting in August 1996 that *Alliance of Hope* should continue to be published, albeit in a different form. The objective is to have the journal serve as a forum for active exchanges apart from disseminating information. As a forum, diverse views and perspectives should be encouraged to articulate, to challenge, and be challenged. And as PP21 strives to become part of a movement of the people collectively making *our own* 21st century, a conscious attempt must be made to facilitate exchanges among the people, especially those from the grassroots. The language barrier must be overcome by making *Alliance of Hope* available in local languages, as well as drawing from the resourceful ideas and experiences already there in many local languages.

The PP21 processes are but a modest one amidst the many courageous and innovative processes of people's interactions and endeavours in different parts of the world. Individually and collectively, we take courage in our strengths and gains, and learn from our mistakes and weaknesses. To quote from the Sagarmatha Declaration of 1996, "We collectively affirm the centrality of our struggles and our visions.... This centrality is the multiplicity of our practices and responses in which lie imaginative alternatives to the dominant systems.... We have come together to discuss our common experiences and exchange the alternatives that we practice and have developed. We are, in this process, strengthening an alliance of hope and self-confidence, as we take our lives and our dignity in our own hands.... We encourage others to join us, in the hope that this is not a dream to be realised in a distant future, but one that is turning into reality here and now!"

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PP21: Steps Towards a People's Century

Tarcisus Fernando



Minamata, a coastal factory city in southwestern Japan, was the site of an unprecedented environmental tragedy. And it happened at a time when there was little awareness of the effects of industrial pollution. The Minamata Disease, as it came to be known later, crept up on the unsuspecting population of the town silently. A fertilizer manufacturing facility set up by Chisso Company in 1902 began producing acetaldehyde that required the use of mercury as a catalyst. As production increased, large quantities of mercury - later estimated to be about 600 tons - were discharged into the Minamata Bay. It contaminated the marine life and moved up the food chain. Toxicity resulting from methyl mercury (MeHg) poisoning affected not only the people but also animals and birds that fed on contaminated fish. Once contracted, the incurable Minamata Disease would quickly destroy the vital organs resulting in numbness and loss of strength in limbs, poor coordination, amnesia and convulsion. Babies born with the disease were detected to have had extensive lesions of the brain, physical deformities and symptoms of mental retardation. What was still more tragic was the refusal of Chisso Company—and the local and central government authorities as well—to acknowledge that the disease was directly caused by the industrial effluents discharged into the Bay.

Over the years, Minamata has come to symbolize not only the tragic consequences of profit-driven industrialization, but also the indomitable spirit of victimized people everywhere who dare to say no to powerful forces that thrive on death and destruction. It took much effort and time, and eventually the Minamata people's struggle for justice was successful in forcing the perpetrators of this crime to admit their responsibility and agree to pay compensation. But the struggle is not over yet. After nearly 30 years, compensation claims are still being settled—demonstrating the intransigence of industrial corporations and the persevering courage of the people.



Minamata 1989

Minamata appropriately was chosen in 1989 as the site for the inaugural assembly and synthesis conference of the People's Plan for the 21st Century. It was the culmination of a series of events including 17 international meetings which were attended by 350 activists from the Asia-Pacific region and about 100,000 activists from Japan itself. Joining hands with a coalition of Japanese people's movements and groups in convening the meeting were 15 regional organizations in the Asia-Pacific region.

The participants adopted the Minamata Declaration (MD) which critiques the prevailing development model that has destroyed communities and dignity of men, women and children, and has spawned in its wake numerous eco-catastrophes like Minamata, Chernobyl and Bhopal. All these force us to ask: Is there not something profoundly wrong with our picture of what to fight for? Is there not something profoundly wrong with our image of here to place our hopes?

The Gathering not only analyzed the widespread consequences of development and progress but also proposed a way of resisting the onslaught of anti-people, anti-nature forces. As the Declaration states: ... global conditions today have placed the people of the world on a common ground with a common fate for the first time in history. If we want to survive, live together in dignity and in mutual respect of our diversity without violating each other's autonomy and right to self-determination, we need Janakashaba wherever we are. Janakashaba, a word in the Minamata dialect, meaning a world standing not like this, neatly summed up the aspirations of all victims of development. At the PP21 Minamata meeting Janakashaba ba hosikayo (we want Janakashaba) became the rallying cry.

But how was Janakashaba to be achieved? It cannot be left to the forces of degraded development,

the Declaration asserted. It must be built by forces resisting it. This is precisely what is being acted out before our eyes today by millions of people in the Asia-Pacific region. They do not accept what has been foisted on them as their fate. They are ready to take the leap, and they are taking it.

Efforts involved in resistance, struggle and search for alternative paradigms of human development would, at first glance, appear insignificant and useless in the face of despair and daunting challenges of confronting the awesome power of global economic and political forces. But time and again, victimized people have shown what they are capable of.

We witness wave after wave of people's movements, emerging, spreading, defying state boundaries, complementing one another, and sharing an increased sense of urgency fostered by new networks of communication. The major struggles of the Korean, Philippine, and Burmese people have shown explosive power. Recently, we have witnessed the rise of a new democratization movement of the Chinese people.



We want Janakashaba

The PP21 Minamata Gathering recognized that it is hope that is the driving force of people's efforts. It is hope that lights up their path in the midst of gloom and despair. It is hope that ultimately gives meaning to their suffering and pain endured for the sake of realizing the dream of a people's 21st Century. Our hope is not an empty one. It is not a mirage. It is born in the midst of injustices, vices and corruption which make us cry and at times make us despair. And, above all, it is grounded in reality. In these big countries and in smaller ones, in every region, town, and village, the people are on the move. And they are aware of each other as never before, looking after each other, communicating, joining in unprecedented ways. All of this is new. It is the main force defining our situation and the main reason for this Gathering. Janakashaba is the spirit of the people

in our time. This is why we do not hesitate, despite everything this century has brought us, to declare that the 21st century will be the century of hope. Hope is strengthened by another factor. The present system carries within it seeds of its own destruction.

Minamata Gathering also emphasized the need for linking oppressed and exploited peoples and their struggles across borders. Common threats as well as common interests and common values need to be organically linked so that a new internationalism can evolve out of local, national and regional popular struggles. For, as the Minamata Declaration affirms, in the long term, it is the transborder political actions of people, marginalizing states and countering the power of international capital, that will produce the 21st century we hope for. Transborder political action, support and solidarity campaigns across borders will gradually develop a new people, that transcends existing divisions, especially between people living in the North and South.

PP21 Minamata thus laid the foundation for a people's process driven by hope and based on transborder alliances. Even though there was no formal organizational structure actively promoting and marketing it, the concept of PP21 continued to gain acceptance in the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere.



Bangkok 1992

Three years after the Minamata event, another PP21 gathering took place in Bangkok in 1992. More regional organizations joined in as co-convenors and worked closely with the Thai organizations for nearly two years in planning and preparing for the event. A National Organizing Committee was supported by an international steering committee composed of representatives of local and regional organizations.

Even though the Bangkok meeting was taking place just three years after Minamata, momentous events had taken place in the intervening period both at the international and national levels: Collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of communist regimes in Eastern Europe; the end of the Cold War;

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the rise of the uni-polar world and the free market; the Gulf War. PP21 Bangkok also coincided with the 500th anniversary of the so-called discovery of America by Columbus that opened the way for western colonial enterprise. In Thailand, a few months earlier, the continuing struggle for democracy notched a significant victory when a ruthless military government was ousted by a people's democracy movement.

Once again, a broad coalition of people's organizations and NGOs came together under the PP21 banner. A series of sectoral and thematic workshops were held in different provinces of Thailand and the main forum was held at the Chulalongkorn University premises under the theme, Making the People Visible: Participatory Democracy at Community, National and International Levels.

Participants at the PP21 Bangkok meeting reflected on the unfolding global situation which has in many ways aggravated the old problems and created new ones as well. Presentations by Chandra Muzaffar, Muto Ichiyo and Gladys Maseko analyzed the concept of New World Order, the emergence of global power centres and symptoms of the global crisis. The Rajchadamnoen Pledge which was adopted at the conclusion of the Bangkok meeting reflects these concerns: There is an unprecedented global concentration of power with the United States and its allies in the Group of 7 exercising virtual monopoly control over political institutions, economic resources, military power, information, and technological products and processes. Institutions like the IMF, the World Bank, GATT, and the Asian Development Bank work together to enforce the dominance of multinational corporations in the name of the free market, totally irresponsible to the basic needs and survival of the marginalized in society. The United Nations, particularly the Security Council, has become a tool of U.S. foreign policy as demonstrated in the Gulf War and in subsequent events.

But amidst these threatening developments, there are signs of hope, the Pledge notes. Since Minamata, people-to-people alliances and processes at the local, national, regional and cross-continental levels have been realized across boundaries and cultures. Significant milestones in this process have been the forming of relations with the indigenous, black and people's resistance movements in the Americas and the establishment of a group in Central

America.

The Rajchadamnoen Pledge goes on to reaffirm the theme of hope. We have no reason to despair. We know that unjust structures whether at community, national or international levels must crumble and collapse. They cannot last. Our confidence is not born of naivete. Our faith in the just future of humanity is not the product of some utopian dream. In the last three years since Minamata, we have seen our struggles grow and develop.

The Pledge also notes that undergirding people's struggles in the Asia-Pacific is a profound commitment to life. It is a commitment that has great meaning since Asia is the continent that has given birth to the world's major spiritual and moral traditions. Equally, these struggles also affirm the relevance and significance of the traditions, cultures and values of the indigenous peoples. Central to these traditions is a vision of life and living inspired by justice, love and compassion.

In concluding paragraphs, the Pledge draws attention to facilitation work and continuing mechanisms. We need to reinforce and strengthen the people's organizations' leading role and participation at the local, national and inter-sectoral levels, in collaboration with regional groups and alliances. On the regional level, a minimum facilitating mechanism to ensure the follow up of the PP21 process is proposed.



Coordination of PP21

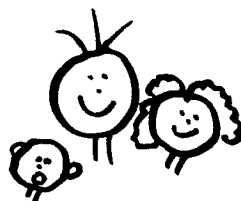
Following the PP21 Bangkok meeting, the co-convenors and the Thai groups held an evaluation meeting. After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the event, the participants discussed the need to set up a minimum facilitating mechanism. Accordingly, a Coordinating Team of 7 persons was appointed. It was also decided that a PP21 secretariat should be established with one or two full-time staff. The Coordinating Team held several meetings but efforts at setting up a functioning secretariat were not successful. As a result, coordination, communications and information-sharing were hampered to a considerable extent. However, several issues of the PP21 newsletter, *Alliance of Hope*, was published, thanks to the efforts of its editor, Mohiuddin Ahmad of Bangladesh.

The role of the Coordinating Team and the

Secretariat was also unclear. The PP21 co-convenors were reluctant to create a formal structure of coordination that might evolve into a super NGO. At a subsequent extended meeting of the co-convenors in May 1994, a set of interim guidelines defining the functions of coordinating mechanisms and terms of PP21 partnership was adopted.

At this meeting, it was also decided to hold another large gathering of PP21 partners to discuss organizational matters as well as regional developments like APEC and other initiatives on regional integration. Sri Lankan delegates offered to host the meeting in Colombo in 1995. A concept paper for the meeting was prepared and circulated among partners. The proposal was further refined at a planning meeting in Colombo in May 1995. The theme of the meeting was to be Asia Pacific People's Convergence: Shaping Our Future. And the dates of the meeting were fixed for 3 - 11 March 1996. The Sri Lankan partner organizations formed an Action Committee and set about making arrangements for the event.

In view of the planned Colombo meeting, an extended Coordinating Team meeting was held in Hong Kong in late January 1996, to evaluate the PP21 process over the years, especially since the Bangkok meeting in 1992, and to finalize arrangements for the forthcoming meeting. As the meeting in Hong Kong ended, it was reported that a bomb has been detonated, allegedly by the LTTE, in the heart of the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, killing many people and destroying several buildings. The incident raised concerns about the security situation in Sri Lanka and prospects of having the PP21 event there. A few days later, a delegation of CT members and Hong Kong Partners went to Sri Lanka for discussions with the Sri Lanka Action Committee. Considering the worsening security situation and



other developments, it was decided to move the venue of the PP21 event to another country. Nepali organizations were approached and they agreed to host the event in Kathmandu.

Understandably, the unexpected events came as a disappointment to the Sri Lankan groups but they did not lose heart. A few days before the Kathmandu meeting, a national event was held, attended by a large and representative gathering. A Declaration summing up their reflections was issued at the end of the meeting. Assessing the Sri Lankan situation, the Sri Lanka Declaration states: We cannot see any space for transformation of the tragic situation of under-privileged, silenced and marginalized sections of the population who have been pushed to a secondary status among the people of Sri Lanka. Whether they are the disabled, or minor cultural or ethnic groupings, their voices go unheard by the state and by society. In this context, the task today is to guide society towards a total alternative which will incorporate principles which permit spiritual health and development of human persons, which respect human dignity and which take into consideration elements such as peace and democracy, social justice, protection of cultural diversity and sustainable development which have disappeared from the agenda of the state and politics today.



Kathmandu 1996

Stressing the need for people of the Asia-Pacific to meet, discuss, analyze, share common perspectives and engage in transborder, trans-network, and trans-issue activities to cope with the emerging realities in the region, the proposal for the Kathmandu event proposed three objectives:

- 1) working out a common person's stance of the Asia-Pacific people in a People's Charter vis-a-vis the rapid ongoing economic globalization-regionalization process;
- 2) Further evolving a common vision and consolidating the on-going experiments to create alternatives; and,
- 3) developing concrete PP21 plans and making arrangements for further alliance-building.



The Kathmandu Convergence

The change of venue did not affect the success of the event mainly because of the goodwill and untiring efforts of Nepali groups. It is all the more

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remarkable considering the fact that until 1990, NGOs there were not allowed to function legally.

As in earlier events, a series of pre-forum workshops were held in Nepal and other neighbouring countries. The main event was held at the Kathmandu City Hall. The main focus of the meeting was on the People's Charter. Discussion papers and presentations on Gender and Asian Realities; Sustainable Systems; the Free Market, NIC Capitalism and Sustainable Development in East Asia; Regional Networking; and, Democracy in the Age of Globalization, facilitated discussions and reflections.

As Muto Ichiyo observed, one major step forward in Kathmandu was that feminist perspectives were proposed, discussed, and largely recognized as perspectives providing defining characteristics of the alternative societies we envision. Addressing the participants who earlier in the day joined Nepali sisters in celebrating the International Women's Day through the streets of Kathmandu, Kamla Bhasin emphasized the need for democracy in the family. True democracy and human rights have also to be respected within the family. Unfortunately, even the family is the site of human rights violations, of violations of democratic norms. Women are battered and raped within the family, they are forced into prostitution, they are forced to slog the whole day long. She went on to say, "Let us create peace not just between countries and communities but within every family. Let us declare every family to be a zone of peace."



Towards a People's Charter

A final statement, incorporating the insights and experiences of participants was issued under the title "Sagarmatha Declaration" (Sagarmatha is the Nepali name for Mt. Everest). Pointing to the challenges ahead, the declaration states: Here at the threshold of a new century, economic and political elites are envisioning and targeting our region as the centre of global economic growth. A hegemonic alliance of international trade and financial institutions, in league and supported by government technocrats, businessmen, military leaders, politicians and other elite groups, is re-configuring each of our societies. Rejecting the myth of linear development that characterizes the dominant paradigm of civilization, the Declaration affirms the

principle of circularity: In our vision, different dimensions of life have to be linked in an organic and dynamic manner so that cycles of production, consumption and reproduction are coordinated with the cycles of nature.

The Sagarmatha Declaration is not a final statement. It is meant to be a draft document to be discussed, commented upon and evolved into a People's Charter. It becomes final when the people can identify themselves with it and own it.



Future Directions

Besides promoting the Sagarmatha Declaration, PP21 in the next few years will focus on the theme of grassroots democracy and people's alternatives. Establishing and strengthening national—sub-regional—PP21 collectives remains a priority. In order to coordinate the work involved as well as to develop PP21 partnership, a coordinating structure has been put in place. A PP21 Council composed of sectoral and sub-regional representatives, a Coordinating Team composed of sub-regional representatives, and a secretariat, have been formed.

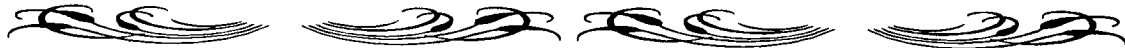
However, as Ed Tadem, Coordinator of ARENA, Hong Kong, put it, PP21 must not be restricted to a four-yearly event. It is important to sustain the flow from one Convergence to the next. The PP21 publications, *Alliance of Hope*, is seen as a means of maintaining continuity as well as ensuring renewal.

The task of building a people's century may appear to be too daunting in the face of anti-people developments, but it should not affect our capacity to dream. As Israel Batista said at the Bangkok meeting: The capacity to wish, to dream, to resist in hope, are part of people's struggles. Let us dream. PP21 is a dream of hope. Let us allow hope to bloom. Hope is essential to people's resistance. At the same time let us deepen our capacity of discernment of dreams and utopias as an unquestionable condition for making decisions and for projecting a vision of life. Today it is not enough to dream or to promote utopias. Today we are challenged to make utopias a reality in the midst of history, to make these utopias come true. Quoting Victor Hugo, Israel Batista said, "Today's utopia will be tomorrow's truth".



Global Democracy and the Transborder Alliance of People

Muto Ichiyo



[This paper was prepared for the Manila People's Forum on APEC 1996 (Nov. 21-23)]

There seems to be no need to talk anew about the disastrous human, environmental, and cultural consequences and implications of the globalization process based on the "free market" neo-liberal model, of which APEC is a salient feature. I understand that the topic given me, transborder alliances, should relate to how the people can counter and ultimately overcome this dominant globalization regime and its paradigm. In this brief intervention I limit myself to raising some points considered relevant to our practice and perspectives.

It is obvious that we need transborder people's alliances in order to counter the overwhelming power of transnational corporations, inter-governmental agencies, and state coalitions rampaging our communities and environment. In fact, this people's forum represents a form of such alliance including people's movements and NGOs of a wide spectrum of concerns. In this sense, this forum already represents a transborder alliance of people. This in itself is new. Decades ago, such an alliance did not exist. Nor was one imaginable. The formation of SEATO in 1954 or of ASEAN in 1967 was not countered by any people's forum. This change is extremely positive -- a historic stride in democratization of the global and regional structures.

But I feel that, having achieved this level of empowerment, we are where we should ask ourselves further questions. As what are we gathered here in an alliance? Are we a pressure group trying to lobby the consortium of states in order to skew their decisions in favor of the people and environment? Are we here seeking a consultative status in the transnational decision making mechanisms? Are we militant protesters morally and politically delegitimizing the transnational power monopoly? We may be, and perhaps are, all these. But are we just that?

Global democracy and people's transborder alliances

I firmly believe that we can be far more than lobbyists, junior partners, and protesters, and that is, if people's transborder alliance is placed in a perspective -- the perspective of global radical democracy.

I argue that global radical democracy is the major challenge of our times. Everyone can see that power concentration has reached an unprecedented height in the late 20th century, in unimaginably more sophisticated and penetrating manner than in the middle of the century. Global inequality has aggravated and environment is being irreparably destroyed, but there is yet no major force to reverse the trend. A single power bloc of a new type is dictating terms of competition and survival to all peoples of the world.

I want to point out here that the APEC process is the most anti-democratic regional integration process ever engaged. It is even worse than the NAFTA and the European integration processes since, despite the vast negative consequences it will inevitably bring about to the people in the region, the people themselves have had, and are going to have, no opportunity to be consulted as it is being promoted without people's mandate, without any formal treaties to be ratified or rejected by the people.

Generally, the global structure has become more undemocratic than in the first half of this century as nation states, in spite of their nationalistic rhetoric, have become, and been forced to become, players in this single globalization game built around the cause of global capital accumulation. Thus, we can no longer expect alliance of nation states to emerge as the actor or the subject to democratize the global structure as we could in the 1950s and 1970s.

Global Democracy and the Transborder Alliance of People

In the 50s, the Bandung alliance of the newly emerging nation states was a great source of hope and inspiration and in the 1970s the group of 77 with the NIEO program struggled to democratize the MNC-dominated global economic structure. Now there is no such state level alliance to democratize the global structure. Instead, we have the single overriding alliance of almost all states in the form of WTO and its accessory organizations as the core of the globalization regime.

If the states cannot, logically it is only the people themselves that can exercise global democracy to change the course of events. This, however, is still a logical induction. What we need to examine seriously is under what conditions the people themselves can exercise global democracy.

For the people of the world to emerge as the determinant of global affairs they must be constituted as an entity. The transborder people's alliance is conceived as such a body. However, I am not talking about "global citizens." The concept of "global citizenship" seems to be a utopian extrapolation of the western civil society model (which again is a construct). Citizens are political individuals with equal rights, but the people of the world cannot be reduced to a collection of individual citizens. Nor is there homogeneity enough in the global community to make one-person-one-vote type of individual participation meaningful.

The actual people are peoples with historical underpinnings. They are gendered. They are positioned differently in the global hierarchy of domination and exploitation. They are with complex, plural identities. This collectivity should not be missed when we talk about the people of the world as the exerciser of global democracy. The transborder alliance should thus mean an alliance of groups of people each with its socio-historical rootedness. This having said, it should be immediately added that all collectives consist of individuals, each of them an actor of free will, not totally reducible to group identities. The

process toward a transborder people's alliance engenders dynamic interaction between collectivity and individuality as well as between groups of people. It is not an alliance constituted once and for all but rather a permanent and dynamic alliance forming process that gradually shifts power relationships in favor of the majority of the people, undermine the dominant logic of maximization of profits and eventually create a new democratic global governance gradually superseding nation states.

This perspective may look like a wild dream. In fact, it is in short term. But here we are talking about a long term project and perspective.

The state of the state and trans-national-border alliances

One of the most difficult, yet challenging, aspects of alliance building is trans-national-border alliance building. The sovereign nation state is the most deeply entrenched universal institution of the modern period, and particularly in Asia, nationalism has historically been the most powerful source of inspiration for the vast majority of the people struggling for liberation. For this reason, going beyond it is not easy.

But it is as well clear that we are at a time in history where the nation state as the universal institution of power has run its course, with many of its seams breaking up. The limited length of this paper does not allow any consistent argument about the state of the state today. But it should be pointed

out that the APEC scheme itself represents the deep contradiction in which the state is involved. The APEC process is aimed at removing obstacles to regional-cum-global integration of economy so as to create a borderless economy subject to the interests of maximum capital accumulation on a global scale. Various state barriers are the major obstacles to this process.

And this is a violent process of the strong preying on the weak, giving free rein to corporate complexes and victimizing the majority of the people. The contradiction is that it is precisely the nation states that promote this process -- a process



that makes them increasingly cosmopolitan and irresponsible to their own people. In this process that erodes the basis of legitimacy of the nation state, the nation state feels it its imperative to assert and impose itself on its people. This self-assertion is needed in order to compensate for the thinning of the "natural" basis of legitimacy. The state feels that it should show its presence by the use of brute military/police force to silence the masses of people, by emphasizing nationalist rhetoric based on arbitrarily concocted "Asian values", by newly inventing artificial national identities, by agitating hostilities toward neighbors, by promises of better consumer life (which will be fulfilled for a sizable middle class but not for the majority), or even by quickly mastering and using the new UN/NGO language of sustainable, human, and social development in order to recruit an elitist ideological entourage to legitimate it. In this sense, the historical weakening of the nation state does not lead to the physical weakening of the state. On the contrary, globalization can, and in many cases does, motivate the state to take strong-arm policies to circumvent democratic popular upsurges, suppress dissent, and resort to national-chauvinist rhetoric.

It is not accidental that this Manila APEC summit is being held in an ominously anti-democratic atmosphere shrouding Asia, generated by a series of anti-democratic and anti-human rights government actions in Indonesia, Burma, Malaysia, and China. The globalization process is not compatible with democracy in the country involved. It requires a silent and divided people.

It therefore follows that successful struggle for democracy is the people's immediate countermeasure to the actual and possible destructive consequences of globalization. As the states are allied in jointly imposing the globalization scheme, they are also helping each other in silencing the people. The Malaysian and Philippines governments' solidarity with Mr. Suharto is a blatant case in point. This calls for the immediate need of trans-national action on the part of the people.

But generally, given this historical weakness of the nation state, it is easier now than before, say, in the 50s or the 70s, for us to demystify the nation state and work together to let emerge transborder alliances of the people in their struggle to democratize the oppressive structures beyond national borders. Actually, this is already an

ongoing process involving multifarious aspects. Solidarity with the East Timorese people is boldly manifested in Indonesia itself against Indonesian politico-military power structure as well as by international networks while expression of solidarity with the Burmese people struggling for democracy against the SLORC dictatorship is widespread. These are saliently political expressions of transborder alliances. Numerous other forms of linkages are now developing, farmer-to-farmer, worker-to-worker, human rights, environment, women, alternative development, and all other sectoral issued-based networks are developing and criss-crossing. Besides, millions of people now migrate to other countries to work under the impact of globalization. This is a process that involves tremendous sufferings, but it inevitably undermines the national borders and gives rise to new critical perceptions about statehood. Last but not least, the amazing development of means of communication, which primarily facilitates the globalization-from-above process, serves as a double-edged sword, also demolishing national barriers for people-to-people communication.

Interaction for alliance building

But these are still a description of what is going on. When we envisage people's alliances as alliances exercising democracy at all levels, global parexcellence, we are talking about processes that allow the people to ally and empower themselves as the subject of global governance.

To me interaction seems to be the key to such processes. But we need to qualify as vicious interaction is also at work. Armed conflicts, whether between states or ethnic groups, are a way of two groups interacting.



Global Democracy and the Transborder Alliance of People

In this connection, the Zapatista movement, it seems to me, has opened a new perspective. Though it is an armed struggle, it does not follow the conventional armed struggle line of seizing state power or creating their own separate state. Instead, they appeal to the rest of the Mexican civil society to stand up to liberate themselves by changing the oppressive state structure of Mexico. With this attitude, they appeal more to discursive powers rather than military strength, shaking the hearts and minds of the rest of society, expecting the latter's responses. Zapatistas' perspective is highly interactive. They engage in interaction with a view to releasing self-liberatory potentials in other societies so as to create new relationships with them. It is through this interactive process that they want to form a large people's alliance. They do seek support for their struggle for the Chiapas campesinos' survival and dignity, but it is not unilateral solicitation of solidarity for their specific situation. They are engendering interaction, in an effort to help form people's alliances with other societies in a joint effort to transform the unjust power structure. In this sense, they are fighters and mediators at the same time. This kind of interaction goes beyond national borders. In Zapatistas' case, they mobilized people's movements and NGOs from all the continents in an international program this year to fight the neo-liberal imposition as typified by NAFTA.

Interaction in our context changes the inner life of the groups (and individuals) entering into it. We have experienced this in a number of productive encounters and dialogues. Japanese citizens visiting and exposed to Manila slums being demolished amid the dwellers' cries and protests find Japan differently after learning that Japanese ODA is used for the project. The more or less complacent image of Japan thus is put to crucial test, and the assumed understanding of Japan is swayed to its foundation. In the People's Plan 21 program (PP21), launched in 1989 and continued as people's alliance building processes, we have experienced numerous mutual



discoveries involving perceptive and structural transformation of the parties involved. In 1992, when 13 mountain and ocean tribes of Thailand met in Northern Thailand as part of a large PP21 program in that country, female participants in the workshop asked their chiefs why women were not given the equal status as men in the community life at a time when they were petitioning the Thai government to give them an equal status with Thai nationals. That was an unexpected intervention. The chiefs did not look very happy, but did not object. Thus, this passage was written into the resolution: "The right of the indigenous women to participate fully in the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of our life." The women were happy. The articulate women later joined an international meeting of indigenous people held in Bangkok and spoke up actively. This happened through interaction between the indigenous women and NGOs for some time as well as their first encounter and interaction with women from other minority communities. It should be noted that this process occurred as a remaking of the community's indigenous identity, and not as a damage done to it by external imposition. The chiefs were persuaded to accept women's equal rights, and that moment the tradition was remade to include women's rights.

Obviously, no community is monolithic and any culture is a composite product of various other cultures and influences. Monolithic appearances are almost always a construct imposed to suppress multiple identities from unfurling by those who try to preserve their domination. Multiplicity in identity is the ground for the possibility, and also the reality, of mutually liberatory interaction.

In other words, transborder alliances we envisage are not alliances between monolithic collectives each characterized exhaustively by a single, static identity, like the Japanese, or the Filipinos, or the Malaysians, or the Muslims, or the Christians. Though those identities

do exist and matter, transborder alliances will encompass various other relationships between peoples and, for that matter, between individuals.

Mediation and alliance building process

Mediation thus emerges critical for the formation of people's transborder alliances. The myth of monolithic identity presented (by misleaders) as incompatible with another monolithic identity leads to mass killings in too many places. So-called fundamentalisms of diverse sorts are rampant throughout the world, even making advocacy of transborder alliance sound a joke. It is only by proper mediation that helps engage groups in productive interaction. This is a complex issue and it is beyond my capacity to address all the problems involved. However, there seem to be two requirements for the process of resolution of antagonisms.

The first is a discursive process, mediating an interaction that will help disintegrate the myth of monolithic identity. Interaction properly mediated will help the people involved find more commonality as women, workers, farmers, etc. than unbridgeable differences as, for instance, Pakistanis vs. Indians, Koreans vs. Japanese, Muslims vs. Christians, Hindus vs. Muslims, etc. Antagonisms are rooted not only in the existing conflicts of immediate interests but also involves the past interpreted in the present context -- history. Identity bases itself on it.

In Japan, for instance, influential politico-intellectual groups are all out to spread revisionist views of history trying to justify, using one or another rhetoric, the conduct of the Japanese Empire, some advocating deletion from school text books the mention of "the dark sides" of the modern Japanese history, particularly sexual slavery, Nanking atrocities, and so on. This is the core part of their drive for the re-establishment of Japanese national identity. This campaign is to counter the growing people's consciousness about war crimes Imperial Japan committed against Asian people, a self-critical consciousness engendered by energetic movements in the past decade on "comfort women" and other issues involving Japanese war responsibility. Thus, an intense struggle in the discursive arena is now under way. Should the Japanese people fully identify themselves with the rightist view of history, then there would be little room for them to hope to be in alliance with the people in neighboring Asia with

historical memories of Japanese colonialization and invasion. An unrepentant Japan would then strengthen the stereotype image of Japan as a racially warlike people, which also is a wrong assumption. A vicious cycle would then be set into motion, perpetuating antagonism. We need to put into motion the reverse process of disentanglement, and this is a highly discursive process for productive interaction.



The second is structural processes. As antagonism more or less has its roots in the actual material and social interests (whose distorted presentation justifies the myth), interaction leading to alliance building should be so mediated and developed that it engenders a process of structural changes, in some cases gradual but cumulative changes, to overcome the relationship of domination and exploitation exercised by one group over another. It is here that the notion of social classes should be redefined in reference to power distribution and reintroduced. This has nothing to do with the notion of the sacrosanct working class with the historic mission of liberating itself and the rest of the oppressed people, a thesis already proven inept. Nor is class defined as a monolithic, exclusive entity. Class here is a relational concept. We need to talk about class relations in this sense as we live in a global class society where power, economic, social, and intellectual, is distributed extremely unevenly, and this status quo is maintained by institutional arrangements and ideologies. This is a structure in which people are divided and abetted to fight each other because a group of people who are exploited in one context are themselves exploiters in another context.

Global Democracy and the Transborder Alliance of People

From this angle, the people's alliance we envisage should be seen as an alliance of classes in a process of structural transformation. When we say that alliance building is a dynamic process, it is dynamic because it involves processes to remake the inter-class relationships toward the redistribution of power toward more equality. This by definition must involve transformation of the structure.

Take, for example, gender relations. Seen from the angle of power distribution, there is no doubt that for centuries women as women have been placed in an inferior position in society under what is generally termed patriarchy. In the past decades,



powerful women's movements arose in sisterhood; empowered women, have won considerable, successes in changing the power relationship in women's favor. To the extent these movements succeeded, broad changes in the thinking, institutions, laws, and structures had to undergo modification. No-nonsense struggle for power has been, and is being, fought because what is at stake is a major change in women's favor of existing social relationships (democratization if you like) in the household, community, workplace, and in society generally. At first, most men positioned in superior power positions in the structure of patriarchy felt threatened and drew a scare picture that women were against men. But interaction with women's movements and feminist ideas gradually worked a change of culture in social movements and gender justice is now being not only accepted but also embraced by the majority of them as part and parcel of their own agenda. As gender sensitivity and concerns gradually permeate social movements, trans-gender alliance emerges. It is easy to see that here discursive processes are intertwined with structural transformation processes.

The structural and discursive change thus worked out has far-reaching effects, not confined to particular aspects of institutions. Informed by feminist approach, we develop a whole new perspective about human society, nature, and our ethics. "Our vision informed and enriched by our feminist perspectives," the Sagarmatha Declaration of PP21 Kathmandu convergence says, "will release us from the trappings of the 'male'-centered logic of dualistic thinking that dichotomizes relations into two poles -- body and mind, nature and man, public and private, traditional and modern, unpaid therefore worthless work and paid therefore valued work, as well as the gender dichotomy assimilating women to nature and men to civilization." It goes on, "Our vision projects a process of integration of productive activities with reproductive activities -- our pursuit to eat, feed, bear, nurture, enjoy, mourn, to regenerate ourselves and the next generations in social relations -- into a wholeness of life." This is only one way of reading the messages of feminist movement, and there may be many others. But whatever the reading, feminist views and practice inform all other movements and enrich the visions of our alternatives.

The alliance building processes integrate not only gender aspects but also are informed and enriched by interaction with many other arenas of class struggle involving a number of issues -- farmers and agriculture, indigenous people and environment, and so on. Besides, though women present themselves as a class in the patriarchy context, they are not in other contexts. The power position of rich urban middle class women far excels that of a small peasant man in the countryside. In the struggle to change unequal power relationship between the rural and urban, peasant women and men will emerge united. In this context, peasant unity will be stronger than sisterhood between well-to-do urban middle class women and peasant women.

Thus, there are criss-crossing contexts, each designating a definite power redistribution pattern and therefore classes in relational terms. New structural relations obtaining from the struggle/negotiation will be integrated with transborder alliances of the people.

But understanding classes in relational terms should not take us into the marsh of infinite relativity

where everybody is somewhat to blame but none really responsible. Out of the projection of thousands of intersecting class contexts on the same screen emerges a general and definite pattern of overall class domination, which will designate the major arena wherein alliance building work should be most energetically carried out -- the global South. In the unequal and undemocratic world we live in, conspicuous class polarization exists between the global North and global South.

Beginning to build alternative society

In concluding this presentation, I venture to emphasize that transborder alliance building is a fecund process generating visions of an alternative society and also creating and substantiating, if partially, the realities of an alternative society as new peoples join the process.

This would require a drastic change in our perspective of global change. When the state was historically strong (when the sovereign state was sovereign), the generally assumed strategy was to change society using the state as the almighty leverage. There, the primary instrument to seize the state was the party, either the vanguard party or the social democratic party, representing the interests of lower classes. As the party is a pre-state state, it is symmetrical to the state, centralized, vertically commanded, and bureaucratic.

The state of course matters. We must coexist, and work in interaction with, the state in the foreseeable future. We must come to grips with state policies and programs, democratize the state, and pressure the state to become accountable to the people. But the point is that we need to build ourselves into alliances which are not symmetrical to the state. Symmetry represents the oppositionist stance: we are formed by our adversary as the latter's mirror image, or we simply emulate the dominant model.

Transborder alliances of peoples are not defined, if conditioned, either by the state, or by the

dominant globalization regime. As resistant, we are conditioned, in fact, somewhat shaped by the adversary. As builders we escape being shaped symmetrically to the regime of globalization.

As they grow and enrich themselves, the transborder alliances will begin to weave new relationships among collectives as well as individuals -- an autonomous and dynamic global human society itself. The alliance is more than a utilitarian coalition defined by the immediate need to fight the same adversary. In other words, the effort to create and animate transborder alliances is one to help the embryo of the global society of tomorrow to live, palpitate, and grow resisting, interacting with, and ultimately overcoming the dominant regime.

I believe that the coalitions of people's movements and NGOs, like this forum, PP21, and many others, are important as facilitators in the work to weave transborder people's alliances as an alliance of hope.

We still do not know very much about how. Jointly we are in eager and constant search for new ways.

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Alternative Practices

Based on the premise that the search for alternative development paradigms is a valid enterprise, PP21 seeks to promote a wide discussion on the key debatable areas of theory development as well as to make available alternative practices to the people in struggle. The project will gather case studies, both documented and undocumented, on experiences in alternative development models/systems and will cover different areas: economic (macro and micro), political, social-cultural and ecological. The findings will be used to further develop the People's Charter and will be shared with the PP21 network through sub-regional workshops and publications.

The close relationship between these two strategies will also be stressed. The publications and movement-building and consolidation efforts like sub-regional workshops and collaborative activities with non-PP21 networks will serve as the means of promoting PP21's vision and goals of strengthening trans-border people's alliances and promoting alternative development paradigms based on economic and social justice and gender equality.

These activities will culminate in the next PP21 Assembly (scheduled for the year 2000) where the results of studies and discussions on alliance building and people's alternatives will be further clarified and sharpened in thematic forums.

The first workshop on alternative ideas and practices is scheduled to take place in Hong Kong on June 27-28, 1997. Among the cases to be presented and analysed are experiences in alternative education (such as the Freedom School in Japan, the People's Science Movement in India, and the Folk School in the Philippines), sustainable agriculture (such as Kalikasan in the Philippines), and alternative organizing (such as the Forum of the Poor in Thailand).

Below, we publish a brief description of some of the cases for study in the June workshop. Partners and readers are most welcome to send in reports, analyses or relevant materials on alternative ideas or cases. Please send to Wanchai PO Box 23467, Hong Kong.



PARC Freedom School and the Freedom School Movement in Japan

Koshida Kiyokazu

PARC Freedom School, which was established some 15 years ago, is a unique experiment in its diversity, concept, composition, and methodology. It is an important experiment within Japanese society to create a new type of adult education. It is intended to be an alternative school as well as to be an alternative to "school". The majority of its "students", who are termed participants, are

working people. They come to the classes after 5pm, one day a week, for generally two-hour classes.

The Nature of Freedom School

The Freedom School's basic idea is to provide knowledge and understanding of the present situation of the world, as a first step toward acting

for change and for creating an alternative society. The curriculum aims to provide a basic understanding of the foundations of daily life in a global context.

The relationship between those who teach and those who learn is not one-way, but consists of a mutual learning process. Every participant is expected to participate actively. This is totally different from the teacher-student relationship in the official Japanese educational system, where the students merely listen passively.

Another important element of the Freedom School experience is the "encounter". People who live in divided Japanese society have the opportunity to encounter people whom they rarely have a chance to meet, since the participants come from a wide range of background and age.

Freedom School provides a chance for people to have discussions that go beyond the boundaries of job, gender and age. A truck driver, a trading house employee, a school teacher, and a housewife might participate in the same class from an equal position and share their experiences. The discussions often continue after the end of class.

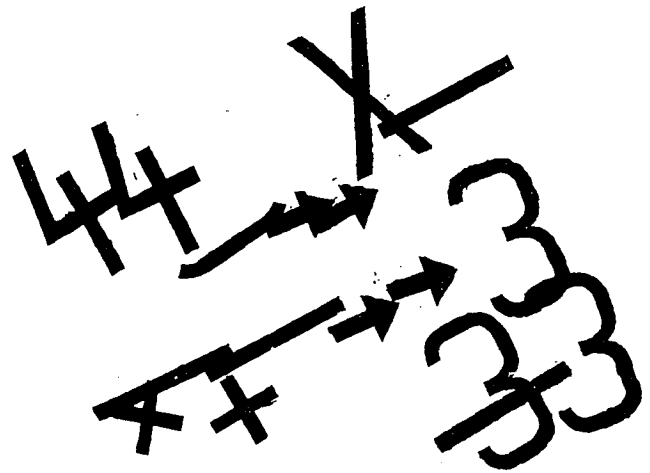
The Freedom School is operated by the Pacific Asia Resource Center (PARC), a Tokyo-based NGO which was founded in 1973. In addition to the school, PARC publishes an English-language magazine, AMPO: Japan Asia Quarterly Review, and a Japanese monthly, Gekkan Oruta.

Freedom School has continued for 15 years now, and there are more than 3,500 graduates. These alumni are active in a variety of fields, including local citizen movements, consumer cooperatives, academics and NGOs. School teachers make use of their knowledge in their own classes. Workers have become active members of the trade union movement. In addition, staff members of NGOs have joined to develop their own understanding, skills, and knowledge.

The History of Freedom School

PARC Freedom School was launched in 1982. The basic concept of the first few years was to "learn about Asia, and think about Japan". The curriculum included a history of Japan-Korea relationship, the history and social structures of Southeast Asia, agriculture in Asia, and the activities

of Japanese corporations in Asia; all things which are not taught in Japanese formal schools. Gradually, the school expanded, and with it the curriculum.



In the early days, PARC Freedom School existed as an isolated experiment, but gradually this movement began to spread around the country. In 1990, after the PP21 gathering (a series of international conferences held in 1989 throughout the Japanese peninsula), other schools have opened in various places around Japan: Sapporo, Toyama, Nagano, Osaka, Kyoto, and Fukuoka, and they have formed a network of Freedom Schools.

Each of these different schools is being operated independently by citizens' groups in those areas, and though they share common basic concepts, each school's character reflects the local context. For instance, the Sapporo Freedom School takes up the issue of the Ainu, the indigenous people, and the Kyoto Freedom School includes in its curriculum the discovery of an alternative history of Kyoto, focusing on the relationship between the Korean Peninsula, China, and Japan.

Curriculum

The individual courses last basically one year, starting in May and ending in March. The classes are held once a week for two hours. Most of the classes are comprised of lectures, discussions, reports from participants, and exposure trips, both domestic and international. The participants visit different localities and learn from local people.

Lectures are given by specialists in different subjects: researchers, farmers, professors and organizers of NGOs or labor unions. The lecturers are expected to provide specific knowledge or

PARC Freedom School and the Freedom School Movement in Japan

experiences, and to encourage the participants to think about the theme and discuss the subject among themselves. Within two hours, half hour is expected to provide for free discussion.

The following are some examples of curricula used in recent classes:

<The global economy from the point of view of citizens>

- ◆ The structure of GATT/WTO
- ◆ The meaning of deregulation on our lives
- ◆ The analysis of the national budget
- ◆ Debt and the lives of people in the "South"
- ◆ What is a bank?
- ◆ Global companies in Asia

<How to achieve self-governance>

- ◆ How to utilize information from a citizen's perspective
- ◆ Alternative challenge and experiences in local society
- ◆ The election system
- ◆ How to make use of international treaties
- ◆ Strengthening local autonomy

<Sustainable development>

In each class the participants read from one book on theories and practices of sustainable development and hold discussion.

<Rethinking Human Rights>

- ◆ Gender and Japanese society
- ◆ Rethinking human rights from the viewpoint of death penalty
- ◆ What is the right to development?
- ◆ Human rights and Islamic society
- ◆ The US's human rights diplomacy in Central America
- ◆ Children's rights and Japanese education

<Courses on regions and countries>

In 1996, courses were held on Africa, South Asia, Indonesia, Indochina and China. Every course tried to introduce actual development in society and to discuss how to build alternative realities between these regions and Japan.

<Action research>

In this regularly held course, the lecturers teach the basic methodology of participatory research, planning, obtaining basic data, and recording. Every year the participants choose a common theme of research, and each participant takes responsibility for research. Themes involve the

commodity chain and surveys of the relationship between Japan and other Asian countries by focusing on daily commodities such as coconut, shrimp, wood, coffee.

<Language courses>

In these courses, students learn to communicate in different languages such as English, Spanish, Indonesian, and Tagalog, mixing this learning with experiences of the other cultures. In one course, in particular, Dialogues with the World, students hold discussions in English with a variety of scholars and activists. Our basic concept on English class is totally different from dominant English classes in Japan. Most topics in mainstream English classes are shopping, sightseeing, travel, and students are trained to talk and act like Americans, but Freedom school has long been changing this dominant ideology of English class. Our concept is that English is a kind of tool to help express our feeling by writing and in discussion.

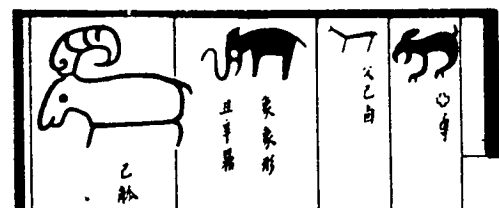
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Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP): A People's Science Movement

Siu Yun Yee

KSSP (Science Writers' Forum of Kerala) is a voluntary, non-governmental organization, working for the dissemination of scientific knowledge among the people. It also strives to oppose the abuse of scientific knowledge and propose alternative models for development.

Founded in 1962, with about 40 members as an organization of science writers in Malayalam, it has now grown into a mass People's Science Movement (PSM), with a membership over 60,000 from all walks of life. KSSP members and activists have developed a sense of equality and camaraderie among themselves, making it a pleasure for them to work together. KSSP functions at four levels: village, sub regional, district and state committees. It holds elections every year and no one holds a particular post for more than 2 years.

KSSP is an independent organization. It is not dependent on any grant from the government or other agencies for its own activities. It raises its funds through publication and sale of books, accounting for Rs. 5 million (US\$150,000) a year. For specialized activities like running a campaign, it collects donations from the public. For some research and development projects, it receives money from the government and other agencies.

KSSP is involved in almost every sphere of human activity, in areas like development, education, energy production, environment, drinking water, irrigation, sanitation, literacy, local planning etc. Several institutions have been established, providing knowledge base to support the above activities.

KSSP uses several media to communicate to the people, through print, posters, locally-spoken languages, games, plays, dramas etc. It has been experimenting with the medium of arts for taking science to the people. A unique form of theater called Kala Jatha has been developed as a useful tool in literacy campaigns. KSSP believes if there is no art, there is no science either.

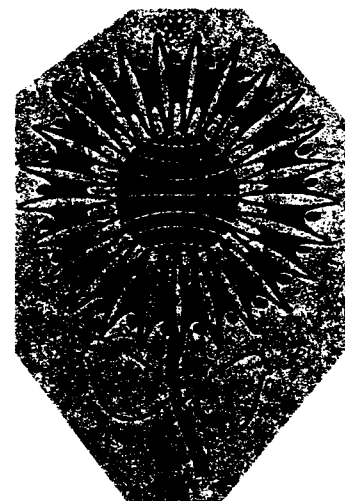
KSSP now is widely known among the people, the public, and the teaching community. Local self governments recognize it as an essential partner in their effort to better school education.

In 1989-94, a mass literacy campaign was carried out by the Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samithi. The program covered more than fifty million persons who have become or are becoming literate, and nearly five million volunteers are mobilized in implementing the programs. Now the BGVS has become the central force for mass literacy campaigns taking place in the country.

Apart from literacy work, KSSP is also interested in the universalization of elementary education, and making higher education and technical education relevant to society.

KSSP is a part of the All India People's Science Network (AIPSN), which is a network of thirty PSMs spread all over India. AIPSN organizes a congress every year, strengthening the communication and co-operation among its members.

KSSP views Indian Society as one divided into two groups: the minority and the majority. The minority is continuously getting enriched at the expense of the majority, while the majority is continuously getting impoverished.





It understands that today science and technology are in the hands of the minority, for exploiting the majority. Hence it works to arm the majority with the "weapon" of science and technology, in fighting against impoverishment and the minority/oppressors.

KSSP draws its inspiration mainly from Marx and Gandhi, as well as other socialist experiences. It adopts the slogan "Science for Social Revolution", that is knowledge for human revolution. It dreams for a world without government, without borders, without wants and wars.

KSSP knows such a world has to be built from bottom up, from individual to society, from nation states to global statelessness. Hence a world order resting on local self governments based on creative and direct participatory democracy is essential for the transformation of the world.

KSSP Publications

Publication has been a major activity and source for the sustenance of KSSP. It has long been using the medium of print-periodicals and books, as well as spoken words-lectures and discussions to achieve its objectives.

It has published nearly six hundred titles, ranging from small booklets to substantial reference books. More than 95% of the books are sold through KSSP activists, who take them from house to house and from school to school.

KSSP has sponsored the "Scientific, Technical and Educational Publishing Co-operative Society" (STEPS) for its own publications since 1971. It also co-operates with the State Institute of Languages on publishing. KSSP publications include:

- 4-monthly periodicals with a total circulation of about 100,000
- books with a total face value of Rs. 4-5 million (US\$150,000)
- bibliography of science books, and glossary of technical words in Malayalam
- literature in Malayalam and other regional languages
- popular science books for children and adults
- books on different educational aspects

Major Campaigns Undertaken by KSSP

Panchayat Resource Mapping (PRM) and Development Program

The primary objective of the program is to formulate a model for local level planning and carry out the concept of participatory democracy in practice. The volunteers involved learn techniques of mapping their local resources. This further helps them to identify local development programs.

Alternative Housing Program

In response to rising cost of building materials and housing demand, alternative techniques of wall construction and systems of roofing, mortars and plasters have been experimented and proven successful. Different agencies have involved in the diffusion of these alternative techniques and other related technology packages. Besides, training camps of masons are run on a regular basis.

Parishad Chulha Program

The activity is carried out by the Rural Science Forums of the KSSP to improve the efficiency and safety of woodburning cookstoves. The program involves three stages: experimentation, implementation and diffusion of the improved stove. It acts as an entry point in carrying technological innovation into rural households.

Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha

It has been run since 1987, to carry out the message of literacy and science. It is popularly known as Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC), which are based on the understanding that illiteracy cannot wield science and technology or political power.

Training and Orientation on TLC

KSSP together with other PSMs are very successful in persuading people into action -- at least five million volunteers were mobilized to work as voluntary instructors in the mass campaigns for literacy. Now it is preparing expertise for "Education for All 2000 A.D" programs.

Co-operation with the State Institute of Languages

Seminars, symposia and workshops have been organized under the joint efforts of the KSSP and the Institute. They also work together in publications, developing scientific literature in Malayalam and other regional languages.

The Kala Jatha

The Kala Jatha is a unique form of street theater evolved from 1977-80. It is a combination of street, folk and open theater. Now this art form is very popular and is used in many PSMs for literacy campaigns and other activities throughout India.

Pedagogic Experiments

Numerous experiments have been carried out including: integrated science teaching, science festivals, science clubs, teacher and children exchange programs, science talent festivals, school complexes, curriculum development etc.

KSSP also organizes courses beyond the formal school system. The emphasis is the organic interconnection of knowledge and relations with real life situations, and on helping teachers enjoy teaching through a process of activity-based, child-centered, life-related and environment-oriented pedagogy.

"Joy of Learning" Campaign

Its objective is to demonstrate that the teaching-learning process can be joyful, enjoyable and life-related. It also prepares the ground for other literacy campaigns.

Agitation Campaigns against the abuse of science and technology

The major areas of agitation campaigns are: misconceived development health hazards, drug abuse, militarisation of science, the danger of nuclear war, industrial pollution's, environmental degradation, irrational resources management, etc. The campaigns promote rational, people-oriented policies on different aspects of the communities. Under each of these headings a number of distinct campaigns separated in space and time have been undertaken, and the overall aim is a highly conscious and knowledgeable citizenry.

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School of the People, School of Life - the Philippine-Danish Folk School and Grassroots Democracy

Marichu Antonio

[The following is excerpted from a booklet entitled *School of the People, School of Life*, which is record of a speech by Marichu Antonio delivered in November 1994 in Denmark.]

Popular Education: From Training to Formation

Our participation in the democratization process was not only to help in having free and fair elections and freedom of press, but to enable ordinary people, especially in the basic communities, to participate in democratic discussion and decision making to effect changes in their situations to enable them to take control of their lives. To do this they need self-organization, and various forms of social mobilization around issues that affect their lives. This meant enhancing the capacities of people's organizations through education and training.

In 1986 and 1987, we convened two conferences of educators in order to review and improve our frameworks and methods of popular education. We believe that the role of subjectivity -- the sense of self confidence, and the development of critical and creative consciousness -- is crucial for democratization and empowerment. These conferences led to the formation of a network we call PEPE, Popular Education for People's Empowerment.

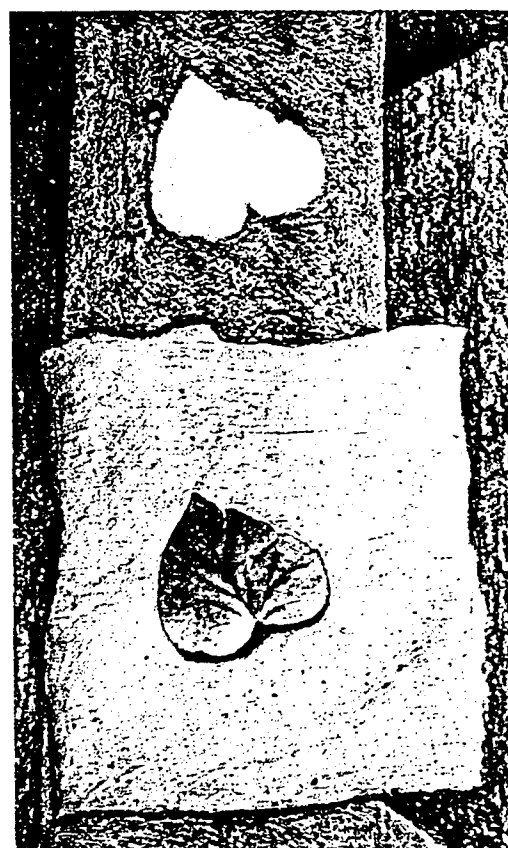
While most leadership education initiatives among non-government organizations (NGOs) were limited to short-term, and conjectural training focused on either specific skills or inputs on ongoing projects and campaigns, we were concerned with the long-term enhancement of capacities and critical consciousness. From this we conceptualized what we called a Comprehensive Leadership Formation Program (CLFP), which moved from training to a whole formation process incorporating training activities, exchange and interaction, access to continuing distance education and other possible activities. We intended too to expand the themes to

be covered to include culture, politics, empowerment, history, etc.

The Philippine-Danish Folk School: A Child of Two Traditions

At this time we received news from Ed dela Torre (who visited Denmark in the end of Denmark in the end of 1987) about the folkehojskole and Grundtvig. The folkehojskole concept helped crystallize some of the ideas and pedagogical concerns that we have started to grapple with. The residential character of the school, which facilitated informal interaction and the moulding of collective identity and endeavors was of particular interest.

Another early reading that interested us was of the Highlander Folkschool in Tennessee which paralleled our idea of linking education with practical activist work.



The two year preparation for our pilot six-week residential course was itself a learning process. Somehow we became what we now seek to develop among the grassroots leaders -- a community of learners. Many popular educators, social activists and development workers from different NGOs met formally and informally, shared our lessons and observations from different areas of the Philippines, and designed the overall course and specific modules.

We initially located our folkschool and leadership formation program in the context of a broader concern - integrated area development at the scale of "biodistrict" or life-district (based on an analysis of ecosystems, local market and social linkages). Our earlier emphasis on local communities and local democracy deepened through new insights about sustainable development.

School of Life

The school's relevance will fully be comprehended in how it has changed the individual and collective lives of leader-learners and how it has contributed to the process of democratization and development.

One innovation was what we called life-history workshops. Most leader-participants find the workshops deeply moving because it makes them realize how important and rich their life experiences are. Marginalization has instilled a feeling of helplessness and low self-regard and many participants, at face value, feel that there is not much from their lives that can be learned. Telling stories about themselves to a sympathetic community enables the participants to learn from the difficulties and trials each has gone through and makes these experiences collective. It also creates connections through the recognition of commonalities and of each individual's basic humanity.

The six weeks course on Leadership and Empowerment is a process of coming together of leaders from people's communities in an endeavor of collective learning. It is also the building of a community of leaders engaged in the life-long task of learning.

People's Enlightenment Across Borders

I know that the immediate meaning of this is the influence of ideas and methods across different countries and cultures. But maybe one insight I'd like to share from our learning process is that enlightenment precisely happens across borders - when we enable people to overcome the emphasis on compartmentalized and specialized knowledge and encourage them to cross the borders of modules and subjects to discover the interconnection and cross-learning possibilities.

We look at enlightenment the way we look at life, which exists in adversity of specific life forms, but is ultimately one. That's why the different contexts, content and methods of our folk schools can only benefit from a living dialogue and exchange. If I may use our vision of a community of leaders our vision of a community of leaders and learners, let us also work hard toward building a global community of folk schools and life-schools.

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Sustainable Agriculture: Plugging Income Leaks

PRRM

In this era of GATT and Philippines 2000 and so-called modernization, the small rice farmer, this vital member of our economy who brings our staple food to our table, is fast becoming an endangered specie. More trade liberalization is expected to dismantle protection for these small food producers, something they had little of in the first place. The Medium Term Agricultural Development Plan intends to reduce by 52% the country's rice lands by 1998. What little remains is threatened by massive land conversion. Already, some 10,000 Certificates of Land Transfer (CLTs) had been canceled as of end June 1995, while 53,000 hectares have been applied for conversion in the same period. Meanwhile, of the 248,800 hectares of land targeted for redistribution, only 11% has been accomplished.¹

The above situation does not at all assure how government can raise agricultural production by an average of 4% annually. The highest growth rate ever reached was 3.5% at the peak of Marcos' green revolution. That was when the soil had not yet become toxic from the chemical fertilizers and pesticides needed by the high-yielding varieties (HYVs). For the past 10 years, the country's rice production have had an average shortfall of 100,000 metric tons (mt). This peaked at 300,000 mt at the height of the rice crisis in 1995.

Income figures are even more grim and give small farmers little reason to continue tilling the land. In 1993, a farmer in northern Nueva Ecija spent US 17 cents to produce a kilo of palay (of HYV). If s/he got the best farmgate price, this could earn some US\$109 a month. In 1995, the same farmer spent some US 24 cents per kilo of palay produced. Again, assuming s/he got the best price, net income would be US\$172 per month.²

However, in 1993, the cost of living for a family of six for agricultural households was US\$266 per month. In 1994, this rose by 9% to US\$290; and by 8% in 1995 to US\$314.³ Thus, barring inflation, our small farmer's income can only meet 27 to 36% of his/her family's daily needs. This assumes that s/he is able to plant 2 croppings per

year, and perhaps, is able to get the best palay price.

How our farmers are coping with the odds is a "debt-defying" story of holding several jobs and mobilizing the whole household in gainful activities. Not a few have given up their farms to repay their debts, and joined the ranks of landless agricultural workers, or seekers of "greener" pastures in the cities. Not a few who own lands are tempted to sell their plots to real estate speculators. Clearly, Philippines 2000 is inadvertently ushering in a new era of struggle for millions of rice farmers who depend on the fast shrinking agricultural lands for their survival, and for Filipinos, as a whole, who want to secure their food staple.

In several northern villages of Nueva Ecija, one of the biggest rice producing provinces in the country, a fast growing group of small rice farmers are battling it out through an alternative pattern of production or what they simply call APP. Organized under PRRM's Sustainable Rural District Development Programme (SRDDP) in 1992, the Organization of Farmers for Sustainable Agriculture (or Kalikasan) is committed to the promotion of ecological farming, an alternative system of trading and marketing, development of alternative sources of rural finance, and establishment of farmer-managed post harvest facilities. How they are winning the battle, so far, is told below.

Plugging Income Leaks

In conventional rice farming -- meaning the use of HYVs and chemical inputs -- the purchase of farm inputs for a one-hectare farm take up an average of 60% of total production cost, land amortization payments (for CLT holders) 10%, and interest expense some 30%. Total production cost eats up as much as 70% of palay income. Of these, the biggest expense goes to chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

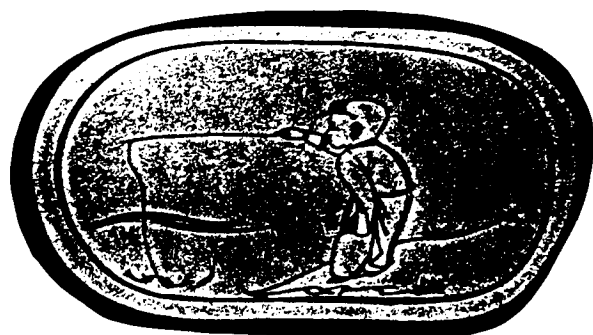
Kalikasan's experience with the APP model, on the other hand, has shown a sharp reduction in the production expenses as a result of a shift to organic rice farming, where chemical-based inputs are

substituted with low-cost bio-organic fertilizers and pesticides. Instead of costly HYVs, improved traditional rice varieties (ITRVs) are used to maintain productivity and their adaptability to local farm conditions. Despite the lower yield of 80 cavans, compared to the 100 cavans from conventional farming, Kalikasan farmers enjoy a higher price for their produce, especially in the urban market which puts a premium on organically-grown products.

For Kalikasan members, savings as a result of reduced production expenses averaged 46% in the three year period. Additionally, an increase of 7 to 14% in income was realized through alternative trading, that is, the direct producers market their produce to consumers without passing through the regular channels dominated by the trader-usurers.

For purposes of comparison, even if the produce of Kalikasan APP adopters were priced similarly as the HYVs, there is still a marked rise in income as a result of savings from lower production.

The proven benefits of this alternative model has led to a phenomenal rise in the number of farmer-converts. From an original seven farmer-demonstrators in 1992, Kalikasan membership shot up to 32 in 1993, 70 in 1994, and 103 in 1995. Mario Imperio, head of the Organic Farming Unit (OFU) in Barrio Trialala in Guimba municipality, explains, "For us farmers, the important considerations are the yield, cost of production and palay price. Even if the harvest is smaller under organic farming, we spend less and are able to sell it higher. Imperio averages 98 cavans in a one-hectare irrigated ITRV farm in Barrio Trialala in Guimba municipality.



The high cost of production of conventional farming requires small farmers to borrow higher capital, which means higher interest expenses, especially if they borrow from usurers. Although Kalikasan is still unable to finance its members' total cost of production, it lends ITRV seeds during the planting season. Fifty kilos of palay borrowed is repaid during harvest at 75 kilos; a portion of the latter is treated as equity of the repaying member. The organization likewise sources its own organic fertilizers. Meanwhile, some of the production loan needs are provided by the SRDDP savings and credit fund.

The Real Green Revolution

Convincing other farmers to shift to organic farming did not come easy for the seven pioneers. Ligaya Oria, one of the original members, relates, "When we started, people made fun of us, especially me since I was the one working the land ever since my husband died. I would plow the land at night because I was ashamed. My neighbors kept saying we were crazy to risk our harvest with something that does not assure us of a good yield. But now, they are the ones who come to us because they see themselves the fruits of our hard labor".

Jun Galapon also attests, "In the beginning, the yield was low because the soil was still acidic. But now, the soil has been revived, and our harvest is comparable [to HYV] while spending has become less". He further reports that from a mere 3 adopters in the last cropping season (Dec. to Apr.) in his barangay, 22 others are now pursuing their membership in Kalikasan to be able to plant ITRVs. "It is because they now realize that the soil is no longer poisoned, and the food they are going to eat is chemical-free," Imperio adds. In his barangay in Trialala, another 18 farmers have signified their desire to become full adopters in this year's main cropping season, from 9 in June 1995.

Danilo Gatchalian, another member, further relates that ITRVs are more adaptable to changing conditions than HYVs especially during the rainy season. "You can see that in the HYV farms the palay droop, while ours remain sturdy and upright."

Slow But Sure

In this year's main cropping season, Kalikasan has its hands full due to the growing number of small farmers shifting to the APP. Here, the education and training inducted by the program

Sustainable Agriculture: Plugging Income Leaks

through the years are tested. Among the effects of their success is the rigor the organization has adopted in processing applicants for membership. While most applicants prefer to get the ITRV and organic fertilizers right away, Kalikasan strictly enforces the policy that only those who have undergone the training on Ecological Farming for Sustainable Agriculture will receive these. New members are likewise required to put up their equity and pay their member dues. The lessons of the past regarding recruitment are well-impressed among the Kalikasan constituents -- an applicant who is truly sincere in pursuing Kalikasan's vision must be willing to bring in his or her share of the stakes.

The organization is also careful about venturing into its other dream projects such as owning its own post-harvest facility. It gives priority to the members' immediate need for quality seeds and providing adequate supply of organic inputs. It is already midway into the establishment of a small organic fertilizer plant in PRRM's training facility in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija. Warehousing and milling services, on the other hand, is accessed through a Land Bank-assisted cooperative that owns a post-harvest facility and has agreed to provide the services at a reasonable price.

The expanding scale of Kalikasan's work is replete with apprehension. In an interview with the SRDDP manager and some Kalikasan officers last May, one of them expressed their anxiety, "We are also anxious about how fast things are moving. We already took the gamble. How are we going to secure the capital to buy the more than 3,000 cavans of produce of our members?"

Some two million pesos, at least, will be required to buy the palay produce of Kalikasan adopters this October-November harvest. A joint task force at the PRRM Manila and Nueva Ecija offices has been formed in July to negotiate with potential buyers and to mobilize other interested investors. Some PhP300,000 from the SRDDP Savings and Credit Fund had also been sunk into the joint alternative trading project with Kalikasan. However, as more and more farmers join the Kalikasan movement, new sources of financing and investments would have to be tapped.

Government resources should be the ideal source, yet government continues to ignore the viable case already presented by the successful experiences of Kalikasan, of thousands of other farmers in the

country engaged in sustainable agriculture. One of the main stumbling blocks is certification of the ITRVs developed by the farmers themselves. In this uphill battle, government policy provides that only certified seeds, all under state control, will be guaranteed of support from government agencies such as the Land Bank. On the other hand, government boasts of an almost 50% increase in the agriculture budget for 1996, amounting PhP24 billion. "To make the agriculture sector globally competitive, the government has set aside funds for basic infrastructure such as farm-to-market roads, telecommunications and electrification, post-harvest facilities, irrigation, credit support to farmers and research and extension services, and a shift to a high-value crops for a period of ten years."⁴ This last item does not seem to augur well for our small rice farmers since global competitiveness simply means focusing more on export crops, to the likely detriment of food security and self-sufficiency, and the millions of small rice producers whose lives depend on these.

How the Philippines will look like at the turn of the century all depends on who wins the battle for land and how this space will be used. For Kalikasan, and the millions of other rice farmers whose survival is on the line, it is clear where the stakes are -- defense of their livelihood and economic space, of the lands that yield their and the country's food, and of the habitat on that anchors and nurtures their communities.

(Source: The PRRM's series of publication on Building Community and Habitat, edited by M.P. Razon and Antoinette Raquiza, September 1996, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, Kayumanggi Press Building, 940 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City 1103, Philippines. Tel.: (632) 985576, 985563, 980070, Fax: 997919, E-mail: prrm@mnl.sequel.net)

¹ Ibon Facts and Figures, Volume 19, Numbers 13 and 14, 15-31 July 1996

² PRRM Comparative Study of Conventional and Organic Rice Farming in Selected SRDDP Sites in Nueva Ecija

³ Ibon Facts and Figures, Volume 19, Number 11, 15 June 1996

⁴ APEC and food security, page 3, The Evening Paper, 16 September 1996

Forum of the POOR in Thailand

Bantorn Ondam

Background

Sixteen people's organizations (POs) and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) jointly organized the Conference entitled: Forum of the Poor: Empowering the People through Exchange, a Regional Meeting on "Mega Mal Development Projects: Impacts, Experiences and the People's Responses" during December 10-15, 1995 in Thailand. The time was chosen to mark the International Human Rights Day and the Thai Constitution Day and it coincided with the ASEAN Summit in Bangkok.

The organizers were composed of six POs and ten NGOs as follows:

POs: Isarn Small-Scale Farmers' Assembly; Northern Farmers' Network; Network of People Affected by the Dams; Network of Urban Poor People; Network of Workers and Trade Unionists; and Network of Women.

NGOs: Friends of People; Youth Training Program for Social Development; Thai Volunteer Service Foundation; River Basin Protection Network; Thai Farmers' Network Support Project; Thammasat University Students' Union; Student Federation of Thailand; Thai Development Support Committee; Wild Life Fund Foundation Thailand; and Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD).

More than 250 participants – two hundred twenty Thais and thirty foreigners – joined the Conference which was composed of three main parts:

- ◊ Activities at Thammasat University, Bangkok to mark the International Human Rights Day and the Thai Constitution Day;
- ◊ Exposure Program, Ubon Rajchathanee province; and
- ◊ Conference, Ubon Rajchathanee province.

Foreign participants were from the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Cambodia, Nepal and Australia.

The Birth of Forum of the Poor in Thailand

During the conference, representatives from various groups of people affected by the mega development projects came to attend the Conference to exchange experiences. The conference room was crowded with more than 300 participants everyday. These representatives met and agreed to form a loosely structured Network called the "Forum of the Poor" focusing on their problems and seeking solutions to their problems.

The Forum of the Poor resolved at the Conference to make two main deliberations: the listing of demands to present to the ASEAN Summit in Bangkok on December 15, 1995, and the setting up of a network center with ACFOD as the Central Coordinating agency. Among the demands are calls for ASEAN Governments: to determine an appropriate development policy; to recognize the community's rights in managing natural resources; to decentralize power to local organizations; to reform political system under the concept of "People-Centered Development"; to amend laws to suit sustainable development; and to accept and support people's organizations in participating in all development projects.

ASEAN Summit: A First Public Appearance

On December 15, 1995 some six hundred members of Thai grassroots groups and NGOs from nine countries – Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Cambodia, Burma, Nepal, and Australia – staged a demonstration calling for human and community rights to be respected in the wake of the trade liberalization plan being discussed by the government leaders at ASEAN Summit. The Forum

Forum of the Poor in Thailand

of the Poor gave a 30-day deadline to the Thai Premier to come up with proper action in response to their calls.

ASEM: Another Challenge

During February 27-28, 1996 some members of Forum of the Poor joined the parallel NGO Conference on ASEM (ASEAN – Europe Meeting) at the Asia Hotel in Bangkok. Simultaneously, other members staged a rally in front of the Government House on the same issues.

On March 1, 1996, Forum of the Poor on their own part took demonstration to present their demands to ASEM and the Thai Prime Minister. Though some demonstrators were arrested, to be released later, the government promised to solve their problems.

PP21: A Greater Interaction

Many members of Forum of the Poor were invited to participate in PP21 held in South Asia during February.

VIA CAMPESINA:

A Global Alliance of Farmers and Peasantry

Forum of the Poor was also accepted as a member of the Via Campesina, a global alliance of peasants and farmers since March 1996 at their Global Assembly in Tlaxcala, Mexico. Its member was elected to be the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) member.

At the national level, Forum of the Poor became convinced that the government was not going to solve their problems as promised during the ASEM Summit and decided to put pressure on the government. A rally was staged in front of the Government House from March 26 to April 22, 1996. Ten thousands of demonstrators joined forces to put pressure on Banham's Government in Thailand.

On April 23, 1996 the cabinet agreed to enact resolutions that specifically addressed four main issues Forum of the Poor had considered as urgent matters and recommended to the Chair of the Government-appointed Special Task Force to look into the petitions. The four main issues are: Forestry and Land Problems; Dam Construction Issues; State's Development Projects and Slum Communities; and Environment and Sickness in the Workplace

(Industrial Hazards).

The Committee of 23 members composed of representatives from the government and Forum of the Poor was set up on May 14, 1996 to supervise and monitor the implementation of the cabinet resolutions.

In the implementation process, Forum of the Poor witnessed many obstacles due to the limitations on the part of the concerned ministers and bureaucrats as well as laws and regulations.

When the Premier Banham dissolved the Parliament, Forum of the Poor witnessed another problem in the implementation process since both concerned ministers (politicians) and bureaucrats were not interested in the implementation process but turned their attention to the coming general election instead.

After the general election, Forum of the Poor sent its representatives to meet the new Prime Minister on January 3, 1997 and urged him to solve the problems being faced by the members of Forum of the Poor. In response, the new Prime Minister requested the Forum of the Poor to submit its problems to him on January 9, 1997.

Three main rallies organized by Forum of the Poor to present their alternative views on developments to the international events and to pressurize the government to solve their urgent and immediate problems were peaceful and non-violent. These were tacitly carried out in order to avoid harassment on the part of the state apparatus and to attract sympathy of the public.

The tactic proves fruitful. When some demonstrators were arrested during the ASEM Summit, they were all released since the government found no charge against them while a month-long rally in front of the Government House really attracted sympathy from the public. The National Security Council used this rally as a case study in which conflicts were peacefully managed both by the government and Forum of the Poor.

This is just only one year's experience of Forum of the Poor in its efforts to participate in democratic sense in the peaceful way. The efforts will be continued with the new Prime Minister in this new year.

Visions and Expectations

From its very inception the main foci of PP21 have been trans-border alliance-building and promotion of people's alternatives. In order to develop PP21 as a viable and meaningful alliance, the views of a cross-section of those who have been associated with PP21 are necessary to collectively define the role of PP21 and its priorities. The Editorial Board has invited input from partners from different sectors or sub-regions on the following questions: What are your visions and expectations for cross-border alliances; what sort of concerns or activities do you feel PP21 should take up; how do you see you can benefit from PP21 activities and what would make you desire active involvement in PP21; what sort of alternative practices or ideas are you aware of that you would like to recommend to PP21 partners, for dissemination, discussion and exchanges?

Below we publish some of the views. They serve as basis for more exchanges and debates. We hope this discussion can go on. Partners and readers are most welcome to contribute to this discussion. Please send your views to Wanchai PO Box 23467, Hong Kong.

Coordinating Team Discussions

Trans-border Alliance-building

PP21 has a visionary perspective which is not restricted to any particular issue as such; it is concerned with the future. In 1989, it was already talking about the next century. The 'long-term-ness' of PP21 also tends to create a sense of non-urgency. This is true especially in the case of local organizations. What is more urgent for them are the immediate issues and not visions. Thus, there tends to be a dichotomy between practical work and the visionary (intellectual) work, but this dichotomy is fast disappearing.

Similarly, a distinction is created between regional and national work. How to relate one with the other has been a source of confusion. What is important, therefore, is to look at and understand the national issues through that particular national perspective. In other words, one should not try to impose one's national perspectives on others. It

becomes a barrier to the understanding of regional issues.

Initiatives of national groups especially at the civil society level often lag behind the State-led efforts at regionalization. We need to be able to counter such State-sponsored alliance-building with civil society level alliances.

This holds true for sectoral or thematic initiatives as well. From national issues one can identify the issues that are common to a particular sub-region or to the whole region. Similarly, human rights initiatives have also been focused on identifying common issues like the universality of human rights. PP21 provides a viable framework for such efforts.

How do we move towards the PP21 vision? How does one overcome the over-emphasis on national interests? The 'national' is real, while 'regional' is abstract. Therefore we need to explore ways of 'jelling' national interests together. National movement is a reality. However, it has to be linked to the regional. 'Regionalizing' certain issues is important for certain countries. Even if a country is land-locked, the impact of certain developments transcend borders. So one cannot separate the national from the regional. Therefore we need to identify these regional processes and different (i.e. positive and negative) perceptions on them as well. Take globalization, for instance. There are some in NGO circles who think it is good. We need forums to thrash out such divisions and differences of perceptions.

Information-sharing -- especially people-to-people information-sharing -- and campaigns are effective means of promoting inter-country co-operation. In certain contexts, dissemination of information is very much a matter of culture. South Asians, for instance, do not correspond much.

As far as the question of national organizations' participation in the PP21 vision is concerned, organizations themselves need to change in order to widen their perspectives. Often, national organizations do not have people with a vision of the future. Invariably, it is the organizations that have such a vision that will join in trans-border alliances. And transborder alliances should go beyond attending international or regional meetings. PP21 is in a position to facilitate alliance-building for

Visions and Expectations

organizations in need of them. Regional processes should give support to national/local processes.

Another point raised was about the need for PP21 process to be activated within our respective organizations so that it becomes relevant to what our organizations are engaged in.

PP21 vision is informed by activism and aspirations for change. However, there is a limit to what we can do. So PP21 should be very well defined: what Partners can gain from it as well as what they can contribute to it. Some of these things have been spelt out in the Sagarmatha Declaration. An agenda should be worked out based on the 'dreams' articulated in the Sagarmatha Declaration.

The uniqueness of PP21

The uniqueness of PP21 rests on the following characteristics:

- Emphasis on alliance-building across borders and sectors.
- It is a dynamic, future-oriented process.
- Not tied to any particular issue.
- No hierarchical leadership, and partners have equal participation.
- It does not seek to impose its vision or co-opt groups/sectors or existing alliances. Instead, it supports on-going initiatives and alliances.

The importance of the PP21 transborder alliance building process must be seen in the present context where market forces are gaining strength while the State is becoming weaker. The role of the States is being re-defined. They are becoming less accountable to the people as they become mechanisms at the service of business interests. The emerging situation calls for the strengthening of civil society through alternative paradigms/systems.

Chun Sath, Cambodia (Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association)

It's only a continuous effort in building our movement through active linking and resisting that will gain full participation and sustainable involvement of all PP21 partners and also the sharing of information related to the development of civil society in the country and the exchange of experiences among partners in know-how to face the occurrence of the serious cases of human rights violations through non-violence. For the success, we should build alliances of hope which will be formed in dynamic interaction in the spirit of peace, tolerance, to live in a serene environment and peaceful coexistence.

The post-cold war period is the one that has given more chance to the former oppressed people who are just coming out of the scratch, such as Cambodia, to rehabilitate and strengthen the civil society that have been completely demolished during the totalitarian rule, despite the fact that political intimidation, death threats and all forms of discrimination are against vulnerable people.

To assist them to retrieve and enjoy what they had been deprived of, we should help them build self-confidence and encourage them to participate in decision making. Our address should be focused on the centrality of our struggles and visions. This centrality is rooted in our daily lives and in leading our ways through the political disturbances. We should be brave enough to demonstrate our common commitments and actions in fighting for justice, equality, dignity and human rights. The lack of human resources and skills to quickly set up and manage civic associations effectively constitute major obstacles to the emergence of civil society.

So we need not wait only for our representatives and political leaders to address and resolve for us. We should gather strength as we struggle against poverty and deteriorated environment, to provide assistance to indigenous people for self-rule. We empower and encourage women to participate in leadership and to have one voice to reject the social thinking that women are inferior to men.

The PP21 meeting is an excellent event in sharing experiences and updating information, building linkage and inspiring future practice in different contexts and countries. We will come together working through issues, agendas and then reproduce case studies such as: Literacy (writing and reading) has been proclaimed a universal human rights, and whether or not the position of reading and writing skills has influenced the values and organizations of society; it is regarded by all of us as a technology; it is created by human beings for limited purposes. But literacy can also be used to change both the individual and society.

Felix N. Sugirtharaj, India (South Asia Network for Small Fisherfolk)

Please relate PP21 to the fisherfolk and Dalit Labour Unions in Tamilnadu which have been fostered by different NGO groups so as to make the Labour aware of PP21 activities and get involved on people's action plan for 21st century.

As the globalization process engulfs the whole world, let us make PP21 a pro-people agenda for the 21st century and let us build a world movement to oppose World Bank, IMF and other Bretton Wood institutions.

On Sustainable Livelihood as an alternative to conventional jobs for rural peasants and fisher folk, I have done some research. I will be presenting my experiments in Spain at the end of May in the World Conference on Society for International Development. I shall send a paper later.

Jagath Siriwardana, Sri Lanka (PP21 Sri Lanka)

Partners of PP21 Sri Lanka network still feel that PP21 is a regional alliance of people who wants social change at all levels. Some of our Sri Lanka partners have not understood the role or meaning of PP21. They think PP21 should be an umbrella organization and assist the partner organizations in their national or local struggles. Hence, first of all we have to make them aware about what PP21 is. Those who work in close collaboration with PP21 Sri Lanka and Action Committee members know that the role of PP21 is somewhat missionary with essential understanding of the importance of some involvements in national issues. The visionary role of PP21 has to be promoted by consciously relating the vision to the day to day struggles of the people. For example today Sri Lanka partners of PP21 want PP21 to do something to stop to privatization and war. The partners are already doing what they can do. They want PP21 to join them and lead them and support them. We PP21 should identify our role in national struggles of this nature. We should envision the future of privatization and ethnic wars. We have to be in a position to provide our partners with the essential literature on the issues they are involved in. We have to be in a position to theorize the practice of partners and synthesize their many work and stories.

On the other hand some important people's sectors like peasants, workers, fisher folk, plantation workers, women, ethnic minorities, youth and students, do not feel that PP21 is doing something for them. The literature produced by PP21 on these sectors are not adequate at all. It is true we have our limitations but we could have disseminated at least available relevant literature among our partners.

Though we are talking of transborder alliance, we do not have sector wise alliances. As far as I know only once we had a meeting in Calcutta with the theme of South Asian Peasant Alliance. There is some collective work in the workers sector.

But, other sectors do not have such transborder alliance. Even if various people organize workshops and seminars at regional level, PP21 does not have any mechanism to make PP21 part of them or follow up their activities.

The other important aspect is organization and coordination. We are still very poor in this respect. The PP21 Council is supposed to be consisting of 10 sectors and 7 sub regions. Still we have not filled the vacancies in the Council Membership. I feel at least for some time a strong central coordinating body is necessary to take off PP21 as a true people's alliance at regional level. The partners of PP21, not only in our region, but also in other regions, should see PP21 as a people's international for the 21st century.

Other PP21 partners in Sri Lanka and elsewhere should know PP21 is not another regional NGO or an umbrella organization. They should understand it as the totality of their collective vision and hope. But they should always be vigilant about the relevance of this vision to their struggles. The national partners of PP21 have to play a dual role. On the one hand they have to be in the struggle of the people in their respective countries or localities. On the other hand they have to contribute to a global vision for the future. They, particularly the people who are involved in national coordination, should always synthesize and theorize the activities and the dialogue of their national partners. PP21 national partners should get together and organize a somewhat loose structure so that they can work collectively. Individual partners of the network should feel that PP21 (that loose structure) is relevant and useful for them. To make them feel like that PP21 national coordination should provide them with something they do not have. This something is essentially visionary.

Regional partners of PP21 can play a bigger role for PP21. They should work in close collaboration with PP21 regional secretariat. They also can organize workshops, seminars, campaigns, lobbying and studies on behalf of or in cooperation with PP21. Even financially they can support the weaker partners. We suggest the PP21 regional secretariat should discuss with regional level partners about financial support they can offer for the PP21 national networks.

There are a few alternative practices (initiatives) going on in Sri Lanka. They are in the field of agriculture (biofarming) trade, banking etc. Report on these practices can be sent.

Visions and Expectations

As we have mentioned in one of our earlier e-mails we are preparing two concept and situation reports on privatization and peace package. The report on privatization will be adopted by partners on 20 and the report on ethnic issue and peace package on 28. The proposal for a national health policy was adopted on 30 March 1997 in a workshop attended by 50 partners. We also have planned a meeting of partners on May 30 to protest against privatization and deregulation.

Muto Ichiyo, Japan (People's Plan Study Group)

We are now preparing to organize a People's Plan Study Group (PPSG) in Tokyo consisting of action-concerned academics and social movement activities. The organizing committee consisting of 15 persons has already started activists. By way of setting up round table discussion on matters of common concern related to alternatives, such as Self-determination (Autonomy) of the Body, Global Democracy (June 1; with Labor Historian and Counter-NAFTA Activist Jeremy Brecher and myself as panelists), Rethinking the View of Japanese and Asian History (to counter the Reactionary Revisionist View of History spread by New Right), Relevance of Cultural Studies to the Asian Realities (with Chen Kuang Hsing as the guest speaker in July), etc. This group has in its prospectus a clear mention of PP21, saying that it seeks to participate in the "Think Tank" activities of PP21 as suggested in Kathmandu. The English version of the prospectus will be ready soon. At this preparatory stage, the PPSG has about 50 members, half of them academics. It has its desk at the office of the Japan Negros Campaign Committee (JCNC), 3rd floor, Sunrise Shinjuku Building, 2-4-15 Ookubo, Shinjuku-Ku, Tokyo, Japan 169. Telephone and fax is 81 3 5273 8362. Coordinator is Ms. Aoyama Kaoru. We plan to fully inaugurate the Group early next year, and hope to organize workshops for the study of alternatives jointly with ARENA and other PP21 partners as a way of our participation in the PP21 process.

I still think that the major problems to be jointly and collaboratorily tackled by all partners are those related to the establishment of the truly functional, efficient, and active secretariat. What we agreed on, on the basis of the reflections on the past, namely, the Secretariat should be organization-based so as to ensure accountability which should be remembered and carried out. I welcomed, and still welcome, the Hong Kong groups' decision to take upon themselves the secretarial functions. I fully appreciate the dedication of individuals but the first

step is to organize a minimum of institutional (organizational) support involving commitment. This promise is still to be fulfilled in a satisfactory manner. I wish that Hong Kong friends will again seriously discuss this matter, including financial and administrative responsibilities, prior to the Council Meeting. I think PP21 should look forward particularly as what was a lone voice back in Minamata is now being echoed by people beyond our region. (Incidentally, Samir Amin called me up seeking to tie up with PP21 and other Asian networks for a "Global Forum of Alternatives" inaugurated in Europe. I am sending their prospectus through Asia-Net. We should think of creating people's voices from grassroots up, at all levels, people's action, programs, intellectual, cultural etc.)

There are plenty. But PP21 is basically not an arena for examination of case studies but a process to link them up into a meaningful, operating network. In this sense, I cannot fully understand the decisions of the last CT Meeting about the workshop and case studies. We need a policy, strategy, and programs, which we must identify in order to make PP21 a real people's process. My sincere hope is that the coming Council Meeting concentrates on:

1. immediate and medium term policies (including the next convergence and effective sustained processes leading to it),
2. settlement of pending organizational matters (including secretariat and financial problems), and
3. re-integrating partners some of whom seem still traumatized by the past.

Santha Fernando, Hong Kong (Asia Alliance of YMCAs)

We see PP21 as a network of people's organizations. Our expectations are not from PP21 per se but really from the PP21 partners, since, what PP21 partners do ultimately make up the product of PP21. Therefore for us to relate to and be closely involved in the PP21 process we expect PP21 partners to be more active and expressing a stronger need for transborder networks of people's organizations. Furthermore we would like to see PP21 partners show more willingness to bear the responsibility (even financial) of maintaining the PP21 network. The real need for a PP21 process can only be assessed by the degree of responsibility taken for its maintenance on a regular day to day basis by the partners involved. In short the commitment of the partners to the PP21 process will make us want to relate to and be closely involved in the PP21 process.

In the past we have seen the interest of the PP21 partners to occasionally come together depending on the availability of funds from outside sources. But we believe that this type of transborder people's alliances, to be meaningful, should be actively involved in the day to day struggles of the peoples. PP21 should really provide the leadership for such involvement.

The concept of "PP21" as a loosely knit transborder network of "People's Organizations" is the most appropriate to address the emerging peoples' needs globally. Through various networks such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organisation (WTO), Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), South Asian Regional Co-operation, etc., the government and business sectors have established networks for co-operation. These networks will essentially look after the power of the elite and the profits of the businesses. Therefore, unless those who are committed to the welfare of peoples take seriously the formation and effective management of networks of Peoples Movements, like PP21, the people are going to be utterly marginalised and made helpless, thus making them vulnerable to merciless exploitation by the businesses and harsh subordination by the powerful. It is only through the networking and working together of People's Movements globally that peoples can get even (on par) with the governments and businesses in the present globalised world. It is towards this global unity and solidarity of peoples that PP21 should work. This would be only achieved by globalising peoples' struggles. Hitherto the programmes of the PP21 mostly consisted of occasional gatherings where consensus was reached about the need for people's solidarity across the globe. However, the progress in practical action is very much limited. How we could translate our thinking into action is our question, for example, how can we mobilise peoples all over the world to struggle for democracy in authoritarian countries or how we could bring workers in free trade zones spread all over Asia under one banner or how we could bring together migrant workers dispersed all over Asia to demand for their rights including minimum wages, etc. These are all crucial questions that need answering by PP21 if it is to be owned by the peoples.

We see PP21 as an emerging phenomenon which has the capacity to address adequately the people's issues. We do not know of the existence of

alternative practices/case studies that can be recommended to PP21. But we know of initiatives to form transborder alliances of workers in toy factories, migrant workers, workers in free trade zones, students, fishermen, etc. The task of the "PP21 secretariat" should be to accelerate the formation process of these sectoral networks and thereafter promote the formation of a global composite network of all these sectoral networks. This in effect will be the organised global civil society which should ultimately be capable of pushing the "peoples" agenda in the presently lopsided international organisations (leaning blatantly to political and business interests) and make them stand firmly on the tripod -- Peoples (Civil Society), state and business.

Smitu Kothari, India (Lokayan)

We need to further the PP21 vision and the declarations, we must consciously see how this spirit can be more clearly integrated in our work and our lives and how we can more regularly stay in touch with each other not just about the work that we do, the campaigns and struggles we are involved in, but our life journeys. There is an awful lot of creative work going on in our societies against grave odds and providing a modest platform for exchanging some of this would be another important contribution. In addition to this, we must have regular access to the declarations, statements and reports of activities across the region.

Sushil Pyakurel, Nepal (Informal Sector Service Centre)

I would very briefly suggest, firstly, to frequently communicate information amidst all PP21 partners of any development, its immediate and long-term plans. You give them some task to perform which will interest them as well as serve the purpose of PP21. Keep in touch, share information with all.

PP21 process serves the purpose of building a cross-cultural people's community. This should be genuinely in the interest of peoples, to fight unitedly the ills which have affected their lives and will continue to affect the future. This needs to be communicated amidst the people in respective countries. People's Pressure Groups under the PP21 process should be set up in each country wherever possible.

Visions and Expectations

Another immediate task would be to closely monitor, study and analyze how the capitalist world is reacting on natural resources. Peoples should be kept informed of their intention and the consequences of their actions. *AOH* in this sense should be an analytical tool which on the one hand informs of PP21 movement and on the other hand charts ways for future movement.

In a word, the process should genuinely be of and for the people. The *AOH* should bear this spirit.

Tan Chi Kiong, Hong Kong (Asian Migrant Centre)

I am appreciative of the work done through the many peoples' movement, non-government organisations, and interested leaders in the social movements through the process of PP21 since its inception in 1989. There is the investment of time, and concerns, and the process of convergence at PP21 forum, have led on to others related activities and platforms on World Bank, APEC, and Movement on Vasco Da Gama, (500 years of Colonialism). One of the other aspects is the build up of both regional, sub regional and national network, concerning civil movements, which will be further streamlined in each of our contexts, and through the process of local governance will be able to see further development in peoples' participation as to their future and their roots in Asia. As the dynamic changes are happening in Asia, the transformation of our society, will therefore be in the hands of each of the communities searching for a paradigm of their own participation and destiny. If this is the way ahead, there will be many issues, which are at the same time common, and different as it is in each one of our set up. It is therefore important that the process of networking, sharing, and co-operation that was begun, be continued in the process of PP21.

The realities of Asia, and the realities and emphasis of each one of our movements and institutions are so diverse, and different, it is often difficult therefore to point to one single process or methodology of working together or responding homogeneously. But whatever it is, PP21 can be a platform, process, forum, to plough along, the various initiatives, and initiatives taking roots in each of our society. In the process, therefore, we can also see a relationship extended with the global process. Though, this has been slow, nevertheless, we are beginning to identify common problems in the various parts of the world and those systems that exploited and caused the suffering and struggling to life. Poverty, injustices, marginalisation, and the

erosion of basic rights, in the aspects of food, clothing, shelter, and jobs (productive labour), is the common dilemma, in the present times and paradigm of development. Therefore in such a crisis, both loud and silent, therefore, the process of PP21, through its various linkages, can build up a viable process to respond to the present difficulties. One is beginning to see that PP21 should be able to both directly and indirectly engage with and strengthen the grassroots organisations, so that they themselves would be able to from strong national networks to counter those anti people and national alliances. There is therefore also the temporal role of both the regional and sub regional alliances, because in the global process, these vehicles are needed both for coherence and consultation. A conceptual process therefore has to be understood in its networking sequence, that of multi-national, multi-sectoral, and multi-dimensional growing out of the struggles of the peoples and the understanding and responding very much to the various bodies created from the globalisation process to subjugate and exploit the general masses of the peoples. Today, the yardstick of measure, or the scale of justice, must not be the development and maldevelopment, but rather it must be on the strength of the input of the common men and women, and the ability to sustain themselves, their basic necessities. If in the absence of one of these either of food, clothing, shelter and productive engagement of labour, if globalisation means only a western lifestyle and understanding of "profiteering and accumulation", we will in our own efforts to development fall into the trap of being enslaved through our own and wrong concepts of development and globalisation, and more victims would result.

PP21 therefore has to establish certain basic understand and principles.

It must therefore be a broad-based alliance of hope.

It must provide the leadership to converge on the various initiatives going on in Asia.

It must have the ability to synthesis therefore the various movements, processes and goals, which means fostering the network of multi-dimensional, through bringing together, the academic, the grass roots practitioners.

It must be able to articulate the aspirations of the peoples, and therefore, challenging the globalisation process through both its articulation and its alternatives, venture for sustaining of peoples' effort.

Part Four: Events and Documents

In this section, we report on events that have taken place in the past few months, and reproduce some statements in an abridged form. Partners and readers

are welcome to send us information and documents. Please send to Wanchai PO Box 23467, Hong Kong.

Interactions with Latin American Groups

Tan Chi Kiong

[Tan Chi Kiong was invited by World Council of Churches (WCC) to attend the Assembly of the People of God meeting in Colombia to introduce the PP21 process to the participants.]

I would like to share some reflections on the Assembly of the People of God meeting held in Bogota, Colombia, in 1996. Initially, I had difficulties with the term “macro-ecumenism”, but after being in the Bogota meeting for four days, exchanging, through sign language, interpreters and being surrounded with the Spanish language, I could imagine, it is a world on its own, and a greater part within the global realities of main languages of English, French, Spanish etc..

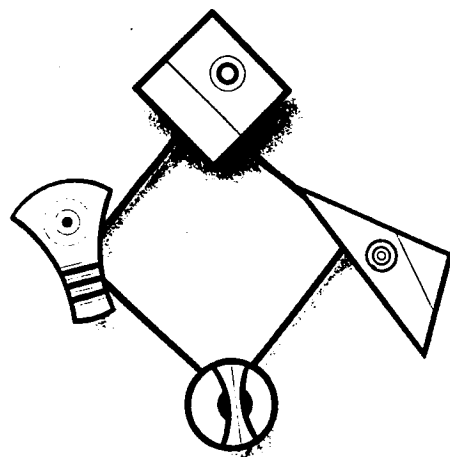
“Celebration” for life, was well-meaning and appropriate in this context, especially so in the midst of the “struggling and suffering millions”, and I see lots of similarities between Latin American context, and to whatever initiatives we have in Asia, either it is PP21, or the various organizations and institutions, and movements of peoples and grassroots. In fact, in the last ten years, while I was working with the Asia Alliance of the YMCAs, the theme of celebrations was the same, including the last one where we had some three hundred leaders fully funded by all the YMCAs in Asia. In the fullness of times, our response and responsibilities, there were much celebration and cultures in the YMCA conferences, and for that, I was appreciative of the various contributions into the devotions, from the different parts of Latin America.

In the varieties of presentations in the devotions, I was hoping to find more of indigenous expressions and symbols, which would have made the thrust into indigenous emphasis meaningful for

those of us who were there.

The other good impressions were the role played by the women in the conference. I am sure these are the leaders in that area, and for me, it is a good sign that women are playing effective roles in the conference. But as always, we need to encourage the “grassroots” to participate; maybe that area is missing, maybe the process of the participation of the grassroots is there, unseen; if we could capture this area of work and involvement, it will be a great inspiration for us.

Often, I see the faces of youth, and here again I missed their corporate voice, perhaps, it is again, of another process, where the youth is clear in their stance. If I had not stayed with the host, I would have missed the youth and young adults involvement, because as a stranger it is difficult for me to read the role and task of youth in the open process. One is able to feel and be convinced that the youth and young adults are a committed lot to justice, and they have their mentor or ideals, and have understood the



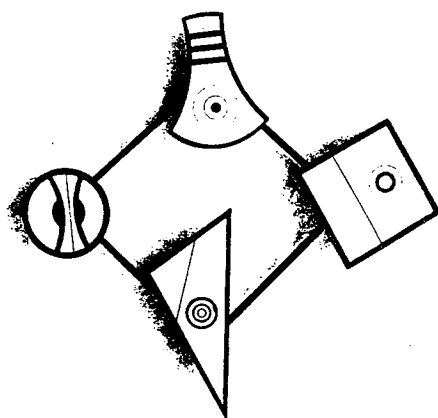
Interactions with Latin American Groups

price of justice and injustices. In our conversations with one of the couples we stayed with, we were surprised to find the level of commitments, and the kind of literature, and in one of the publications, there are the combinations of more than a hundred personalities, who have given their lives in the contextual scenes fighting for justice. The price exacted was clear, and perhaps in that of cultures of violence, of paramilitary forces, judicial killings, one is inspired with the clarity and sacrificial involvement of the peoples.

These similarities are also in the midst of Asian struggles and sufferings and I was very much impressed.

In my contacts with individuals, the bishops or the church leaders, I am impressed with the courtesy and humility, and their commitments. Staying together in the context, and coming together in small groups, sharing experiences and solidarity, to me, this is the highlight of the spirituality that is ongoing, not only in the conference, revealing in a good and real way, the hope which is theirs is around the corner, and so therefore, the reality within reality, can be grasped. This I believe is the inspiration of the peoples.

This confirms my own conviction, that God is working among His people in contemporary historical contexts and therefore our response is the perception and understanding to recognize these initiatives and forces working both in our midst, and also in many of the peoples' processes. We must try to create some corridor or space between the continent of Latin America and that of Asia. This LAA (Latin America Corridor) or ALA will be interesting for the new world order. In fact, the APEC move is to link and relink the business sectors,



but ecumenical centers must also find some way of linkages.

The other realities are that of the Spanish and English worlds. From our side, the Spanish language is a problem and from their side, English is a difficulty.

We must find the movements of peoples and understand and discover one another. So my participation was rewarding as we begin to know of their own struggles, their contexts and their understanding of the ecumenical.

Although this is a Latin American event, there is so much potential of sharing with other parts of the world, where the common struggles and convergences are taking place, and in the future, we need to build this network of solidarity. Very little perhaps is known or fully understood, that there are the ongoing processes and initiatives taking place all around the globe on the struggles of the peoples. It is these initiatives and peoples' actions that will bring about a new world order for the next century. I see this potential of sharing and solidarity. Already there are other initiatives taking place. There must be a wider sharing both within the churches and other civil movements, and we must make an attempt to capture and to share in a global context. It is in this area of Civil Movement that we begin to appreciate some commonness and diversities in our midst. Rightly so, because around here we are able to follow through the various national movements, and NGOs, POs and popular movements, which will be the leading light of hope for our peoples here.

We must continue to strive to bring the two corporate communities together, that of Asia and Latin America. In my past experiences I have been instrumental in bringing some ten Latin American friends to our advanced training, and since then, both the Latin American and Asian alliances of YMCAs have been able to meet in August at Shanghai. This culmination and corridors of communication and contacts is important. In fact, there is a great deal of capacity for most of the local churches in Asia, because some wealth are in these places. Somehow, we need to get them together to share new ways of networking, through the multi-sectoral, multi-national, multi-dimensional, and multi-levelled cooperation units. The other two areas which I feel are important are that of self-reliance and lifestyle.

Manila People's Forum on APEC: TOWARDS A CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Tarcisius Fernando

In November 1996, the Philippines hosted the annual Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting. For the officials of APEC member-economies, it was the venue for pushing the 'Action Plan' based on agreements reached in previous meetings. For the business community, it was the forum for impressing on the political leaders that the State should be at the service of business interests. For the Philippines government, it was show time: an opportunity to showcase the achievements of the Ramos administration.

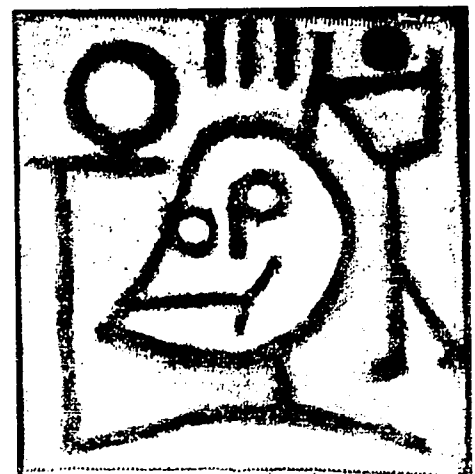
For the slum-dwellers and squatters in Manila, APEC was something else. They became homeless as their humble dwellings were demolished so that the visiting dignitaries would be spared the pain of seeing how the other half lived. And for the peoples' movements, sectoral groups, NGOs and activists, it was yet another occasion to register their opposition to what APEC stands for.

One such major 'parallel' event was the Manila People's Forum on APEC (MPFA). Attended by participants from APEC member-economies as well as from other countries, MPFA consisted of four pre-forums culminating in the main conference held at the Manila Midtown Hotel. The pre-forums were People's Rights and Democratization (Cavite), Labour and Migrant Rights (Cavite), Economic and Social development (Davao City), and Ecology and Environment (Cebu). Held simultaneously from 19 - 20 November, the pre-conference forums were attended by nearly 100 foreign participants and local NGO and PO representatives. There was also an International Women's Conference on APEC (IWCA) attended by 74 women delegated from 14 countries. It centred around the theme "Defining Women's Perspectives and Alternatives for a People's Agenda on APEC."

Welcoming the participants of the main conference, Mr. Horacio ("Boy") Morales, chairperson of the Philippine Hosting Committee,

said: "Around here are gathered hundreds of men and women who dare to voice the concerns of billions whose lives and living environments are going to be affected by the decisions of a few. We come from different parts of the world, from countries in and out of the APEC region. We represent a diverse spectrum of culture and interests, of views and experiences, of causes and movements. But we are united around a single purpose - *to build a countervailing force to the negative globalization which APEC symbolizes and represents*" (emphasis added).

In spite of the unprecedented media campaign by APEC officials that sought to put a positive spin on APEC, its negative impact on the people was already being felt in a very tangible way. Besides clearing away the slums, the Philippine government made every effort to scuttle protest activities. Immigration controls at airports were tightened to prevent activists from other countries, including the Nobel-laureate Ramos Horta, from entering the Philippines. And the Sri Lankan



Manila People's Forum on APEC: Towards a Critical Engagement

delegates to the MPFA were deported. The Subic Bay area, where the APEC heads of governments were scheduled to meet, was cordoned off to prevent protest activities.

At another level, the APEC's "sustainable development" rhetoric was seen as a thinly-disguised attempt to cover up its real agenda. Activists and academics attending the MPFA slammed it as a scam. Lori Wallach of the Washington-based group, Public Citizen, said: "...underlying the hype and press management tactics is a back-ward looking APEC agenda full of political conflicts and missing entirely the substantive agenda items of most interest to the majority of citizens in the APEC nations". Suthy Prasartset, Associate professor of Economics at Chulalongkorn University, pointed out the dangers of isolating economic issues from socio-political and environmental issues. It would give impetus to the re-emergence of authoritarianism in Asia where governments are pursuing economic development at the expense of democracy.

The sectoral groups too added their voice to the chorus of protest. The women participants at the IWCA denounced liberalization as jeopardizing food security especially in agriculture-based economies. The massive conversion of prime agricultural lands for commercial purposes and the shift to capital-intensive export crop production would adversely affect subsistence farmers, their families and entire rural communities. "The majority of women in the region have found no release from debilitating poverty, despite the fact that the region is home to the so-called tiger economies. Nor have their subordinated position in their own societies changed even as advanced technology sweeps across national boundaries. On the contrary, the neo-liberal order has made women more vulnerable to market forces", the IWCA declaration stated.

The labour and migrant rights activists expressed serious concern over the impact of globalization on workers. It was felt that globalization would encourage governments of labour-sending countries to continue making use of migrant workers as a source of earning revenue. It was also feared that globalization would make governments of receiving countries more restrictive.

The MPFA should not be seen as an isolated event. Over the years, there have been various campaigns and parallel events organized around the GATT-Uruguay Rounds, World Trade Organization (WTO) as well as previous APEC meetings in Jakarta and Kyoto. MPFA was a project to consolidate the gains of these initiatives and carry forward the struggle against attempts to further marginalize the people from decision-making processes that affect their very survival. Hence, MPFA made a special effort to involve grassroots movements throughout the process.

The MPFA ended on a note of hope. It expressed confidence that "the efforts of people throughout Asia, Pacific and the Americas to expose the false promises of APEC have succeeded in challenging the narrow interests that are driving this process. We have grown in numbers and understanding, in mobilization and strength during the past three years of popular activity. We have established an ambitious program of research and mobilization to prepare for the next phase of our work in developing livable and sustainable alternatives to APEC."



WOMEN REJECT APEC

and

CALL FOR A PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CO-OPERATION

Statement (abridged) of the International Women's Conference on APEC, Manila, Nov. 15-16, 1996

The women of Asia and the Pacific Rim reject APEC because the blatantly promoted free trade policies lead to the violation of people's human rights, loss of democracy and social justice, environmental degradation and increased impoverishment of peoples.

Economic growth has created more inequalities within the countries, and between countries, as a result of profit-oriented and investment-led policies. Corporations have pursued cheap labor within the region and the use of unfree migrant labor has increased dramatically. This pattern of economic growth is unsustainable and has left environmental devastation in its wake. APEC will only exacerbate this situation and cause the further marginalization of peoples, particularly women and children. The indiscriminate opening up of the economy will heighten unfair competition, benefit only those who monopolize capital and technology, marginalize the poor and accelerate the depletion of natural resources. As a result of trade liberalization, we see large-scale, capital intensive agriculture, monocropping and changing land use patterns. This has tightened monopoly control of transnational corporations and their practices of double standards which in turn have caused the people's loss of control over basic resources such as land, seed and plant varieties, and fuel.

In every country, women are the poorest of the poor. Women are carrying the brunt of free trade policies which have had a devastating impact on

women's rights. The loss of livelihoods and decreasing control over resources are increasing women's marginalization. Unemployment and underemployment of women are forcing many of them into prostitution, even as the horrendous poverty of women and their families has led to an explosion in the trafficking in and sexual slavery of women. As migrant workers, women's exploitation

has been further intensified as receiving countries have refused to protect their rights as workers, making them vulnerable to sexual harassment and increased exploitation. In the name of so-called free markets, governments have destroyed social programs which protect women.

Not one of the governments that are part of APEC have a mandate from their peoples to negotiate anything.

Free trade is bringing about an erosion of democratic rights and the destruction of democratic institutions as governments are becoming more authoritarian and dictatorial. New forms of human rights violations are emerging, and the women of this region unequivocally condemn this agenda.

We call upon our governments to:

Ensure women's full participation in policy formulation and decision-making processes; Regulate and control TNCs and international financial institutions (IFIs); Live up to



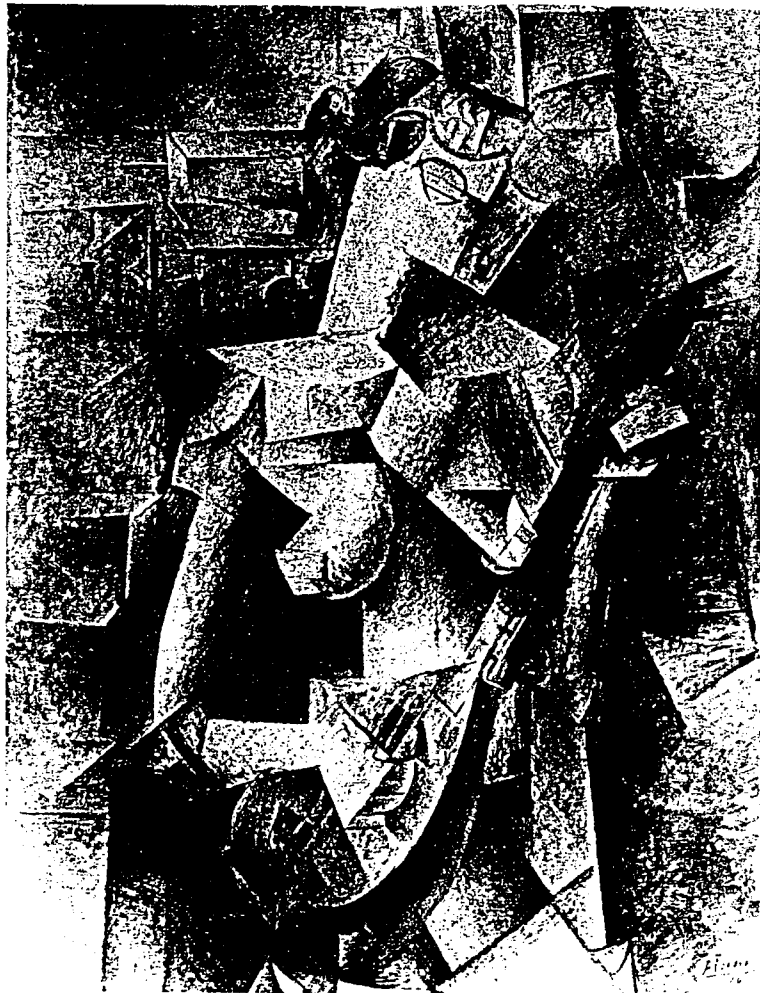
Women Reject APEC and Call for a People-to People Co-operation

commitments made in the UN conventions on the rights of women, migrant workers and children; Allocate resources for the basic needs of people, such as health care, education, housing and social assistance, especially for women and children and all disadvantaged persons; Promote regional cooperation based on promoting self-sufficiency, capacity building through technology transfer, information flow and special courses; Stop demolitions, ensure proper relocation in cases where it cannot be avoided and generate more jobs for urban poor dwellers; Recognize women's role and contributions in safeguarding the environment, including the conservation of local plant varieties; Provide adequate employment locally with decent living wages to discourage labor out-migration. Governments of receiving countries should provide crisis centers for migrant workers; Make food security a priority, ensuring the food needs of peoples and immediately stop the dumping of cheap food that is detrimental to local food production; Subsidize and support efforts for sustainable agriculture, stop land conversion and enact or implement land use laws, and provide support services to small farmers, particularly women farmers; Furthermore, ensure fair prices for farmers' produce.

Henceforth, we call upon NGOs and people's movements to:

Develop people's alternative structures of fair trade; Undertake campaigns to raise awareness, and to mobilize and organize peoples movements against APEC; Initiate and strengthen links between and among women, indigenous and aboriginal peoples, trade unions and migrant workers organizations; Respond to urgent alert actions for migrant women and women workers and victims of human rights violations; Make the struggle for women's equality a priority agenda; Call upon trade unions to include organizations of workers in the informal sector; Hold the TNCs accountable for the social and environmental impact of their operations;

We call on all governments, peoples' organizations, non-government organizations to unite in resisting and rejecting APEC.



Declaration of the Manila People's Forum on APEC

November 21-24, 1996 (abridged)

Reaffirming the historic Kyoto Declaration of November, 1995, we have gathered in Manila as representatives of people's movements, women's movements, trade unions, non-governmental and religious organizations from 22 nations of Asia, Pacific, the Americas and Europe. In five Pre-Forums we have studied and developed plans of action related to gender equality, labor and migrant rights, people's rights and democratization, environment and ecology, and economic and social development. In each of these events we prepared recommendations for action and further research related to APEC. While we recognize the importance of trade and rules to govern trade, we are here to oppose the kind of trade represented by the APEC process of global economic integration in service to a corporate agenda at the expense of the human rights, dignity and well-being of the peoples of this region. We are also here to learn from each other and to strengthen our linkages and solidarity with organizations and movements throughout the APEC region.

APEC'96 has been portrayed by the host government as having injected a "social face" into the process by the inclusion of elements of civil society in preparation for this week's meetings. However, the real face of APEC has been deftly revealed by the refusal of the host Philippine government to allow Nobel Peace Prize winner Jose Ramos Horta and other foreign delegates entry into the Philippines to participate in this forum, as well as the repression of any form of protest for the duration of the APEC meetings. It has also been painfully demonstrated by the demolition of urban poor homes and the forced removal of hundreds of thousands of poor people from Manila so that the corporate and political elites attending APEC will not be disturbed by seeing them.

The people are not "human resources" to be minded, exploited and depleted. The people are the wealth and the future of our nations, whose well-being defines development and whose participation makes it possible.

We recommend to the governments of APEC, NGOs and people's organizations the following considerations and principles for action:

Gender and Economic Liberalization

In every country, women are the poorest of the poor. Women carry the brunt of free trade policies which have had a devastating impact on women's rights. The loss of livelihoods and decreasing control over resources are increasing women's inequality. We reject economic and social systems which create and perpetuate the exploitation of women's bodies, and call on governments to make the eradication of women's poverty a priority. Further, the unpaid labor of women should be measured and included in satellite accounts parallel to national accounts as agreed to at the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995.

Economic and Social Development

In a global economy dominated by transnational corporations with their operation in almost every country, the theoretical underpinning of free trade is no longer tenable. Yet, free trade is still dominant in APEC's development policy.

Genuine development must be centered on the needs of people and nature, and deliver real social and economic justice. However, the kind of globalization being pushed by big business and neo-liberal governments and institutions is creating an economic and financial framework that widens poverty throughout the APEC region. In both developed and underdeveloped countries, poverty continues to deepen both in character and magnitude. No longer do most people of developed countries enjoy the economic and social benefits of their countries' affluence. Worse, structural adjustment, which is integral to APEC agenda, dictates severe cuts to social infrastructure, leaving poor people more vulnerable and intensifying social stratification and disintegration.

Human and Peoples' Rights

We reaffirm the universality, interrelatedness and interdependence of human rights as the highest priority of states. The rights of the majority of our populations continue to be violated. We are already living with the negative impacts of economic liberalization. In the face of overt human rights violations spawned by the accelerated economic liberalization policies of Asia-Pacific and Latin American governments, we call on the peoples of the region to assert and defend their rights, including the right to basic

Declaration of the Manila People's Forum on APEC

food security and livelihood; to independent economic, social, political and environmental policies and programs, to self-determination to manage, protect, develop and defend ancestral domains of indigenous peoples; to gender equality; and to the rule of law in respect for human rights.

We demand the end of state-supported violence in the name of economic and financial liberalization, and the incorporation of respect for human and peoples' rights in the negotiation of trade and economic agreements. We demand the unconditional release of all political prisoners.

Governance and the Role of the State

What is urgently needed now is a strategy to mobilize democratic forces against the arbitrary powers of state, corporations and policy bureaucracies and their economic institutions, including APEC.

Governments must put in place rules and mechanisms to regulate and monitor the conduct of TNCs, particularly with respect to their ecologically damaging practices and their obligations to their employees with respect to laws regulating wages, benefits, health and safety and other labor standards.

We demand a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies so that no major social group is excluded. We demand a level of civil and political liberties -- freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form organizations -- sufficient to ensure the integrity of governance and meaningful participation. We further demand support for the democratic values associated with community and social justice which lend substance to a genuine concern with social and economic rights.

Labor and Migrant Rights

Governments must respect, improve and enforce national labor laws, which are consistent with internationally recognized basic labor rights, and refrain from involving military or police in labor disputes to intimidate workers, or as corporate scabs. We insist that each government develop and maintain workplace health and safety laws and that failure to provide, or continually lowering, workplace safety standards no longer be used to entice or retain investment.

We demand the repeal of anti-migrant laws and policies in both sending and receiving countries. These measures must include the regularization of all undocumented workers. Governments should ad-

vance the welfare and protection of migrant workers by ratifying the UN Convention for the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and through bilateral agreements with receiving countries.

Ecology and Environment

Exploitation of natural resources for export resulting in deforestation, depletion of fish stocks, destruction of coral reefs and mangrove forests, desertification and loss of control by communities and indigenous peoples over their ancestral domain (land, air, water, skills and knowledge) are what we have already witnessed. Continuing to rely on non-renewable, polluting energy sources to fuel the demands of industrialization causes irreversible damage to ecosystems and human health, and robs future generations of a resource base for their survival. The dumping of toxic waste, export of hazardous materials, and migration of dirty technology to developing countries leads to environmental catastrophe, with terrible consequences for human health.

To prevent these devastating effects, we bind ourselves to the principles of ecologically and sustainable social development that is people-oriented and environment based, protects biodiversity, and places a premium on preserving women's livelihoods, people's participation, and improved quality of life. We reject any slogan of "sustainable development" which fails to include these elements.

We call for the support and strengthening of people's movements, especially farmers and fisher-folks, who are resisting injustice and encroachment to their lands and livelihoods by transnational corporations and so-called development programs.

Onward to Vancouver

We are confident that the struggles of people throughout Asia, Pacific and the Americas to expose the false promises of APEC have succeeded in challenging the narrow interests that are driving this process. We have grown in numbers and understanding, in mobilization and strength during the past three years of popular activity. We have established an ambitious program of research and mobilization to prepare for the next phase of our work in developing livable and sustainable alternatives to market-driven globalization based on the principles of democracy, equality and social justice. We will meet next year in Vancouver to continue this effort. During the next year, our work will focus on the role of the state, the environment, and an alternative economic agenda.

Report on the Human Rights Forum

Boonthan Verawongse

Introduction

The South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre (SAHRDC), India on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Human Rights NGOs Facilitating Team, Thailand, held an Asia-Pacific NGO Human Rights Congress in New Delhi from 6-8, December 1996. The Congress is an attempt of the Asia-Pacific Human Rights NGO Facilitating Team to discuss the human rights issues and challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and set the agenda of the Asian NGO movement for the 21st century.

Four important themes of human rights: reasserting universality, integrating women's rights in the day to day activities of the human rights NGOs, human rights violations under the National Security Laws and developing a module for coordination amongst the Asia-Pacific human rights NGOs will be addressed in the Congress.

The Long Road from Vienna

The issue of human rights has never been so much in the forefront of the international scenario as it is today. In a euphoric spirit after the end of the Cold War, the member states of the United Nations passed a resolution to convene the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June 1993.

The Preparatory Committee meetings and the Vienna Conference brought into sharp focus many facets of human rights reality. Many authoritarian and totalitarian governments continue to rule in Asia. Besides cultural cleansing of the Tibetans and Jummas of the Tibetans and Jummas of the Chittagong Hills in Bangladesh, the East Timorese and the Bougainvillaeans demand their independence. There are more than a dozen major ethnic conflicts across the Asia-Pacific region, all seeking varying degrees of self determination. Most ethnic conflicts have a background of domination, injustice and repression of one ethnic group by another.

Prior to the Asian Regional Inter-Governmental Meeting in preparation for the Vienna Conference, regional NGOs gathered at the Asia Pacific NGO Conference on Human Rights, which took place from 25-28 March 1993 in Bangkok. The Bangkok NGO Declaration on Human Rights reflected the true spirit of Asian aspiration for fundamental freedoms and human rights. After the Vienna Conference, Asia-Pacific NGOs were the first to meet again to evaluate the conference and set the agenda for the future. About 107 NGOs participated in the meeting in 1994 in Bangkok and formed the Asia-Pacific Human Rights NGO Facilitating Team for a period of two years.

The Challenges Ahead

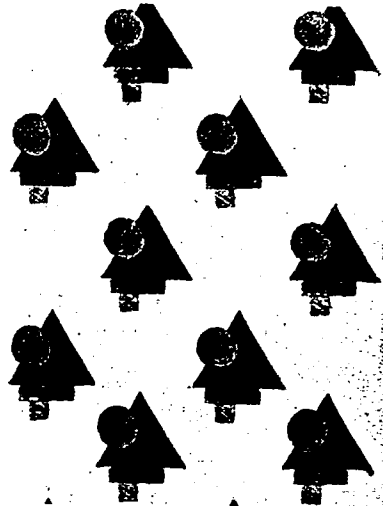
Asians face many challenges ahead. The most serious one is, as many government delegates say, "cultural specificity", the peculiar patriarchal pattern of democracy in which "an authoritarian Government considers itself as the sole guardian of the State and which see its own good as public good and equates all opposition and criticism as treason".

The right to freedom of association of NGOs is greatly curtailed across Asia. Human rights NGOs have been facing denunciation, vilification and physical assault by the State and its agencies, whenever they take up the cause of the democratic rights of the downtrodden, unorganized labourers, minorities and indigenous peoples, and when they take up the case of ordinary citizens caught in armed conflicts. The State-sponsored hate campaigns against human rights NGOs, hitherto carried out by the bureaucracy, the police and a section of the media, have in recent years received a fillip by the direct leadership provided by the authoritarian Governments.

Bangkok Declaration on Peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

26 February 1997

Boonthan Verawongse



Seventy delegates, including observers from diplomatic missions, of some twenty countries and peoples of Asia, the Pacific, the Americas, Europe, Australia, and representing over 40 organisations, met in Bangkok from 23 to 26 February 1997 to review the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and to explore ways of assisting in the process of peace and reconciliation between the indigenous Jumma peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the government of Bangladesh.

The participants to the conference,

CALL FOR

1. Recognition of the distinct cultural and national identities of the indigenous Jumma peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the implementation of effective measures to protect and promote them through organs of regional autonomy with constitutional guarantee;
2. An effective end to the movement of settlers into the Chittagong Hill Tracts and agreement by the parties on a programme for the withdrawal of settlers from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Such a programme should respect the human rights of all concerned, and could include financial incentives or compensation for the persons who are being relocated;

3. The development of a legally protected system of land titles consistent with their customary rights which ensures that land ownership reverts and, in the future, remains in the hands of the Jumma peoples;
4. Recognition and the safeguarding of the customary rights of the Jumma peoples to use and control the land and the natural resources of the Chittagong Hill Tracts;
5. Adoption of a time table for the de-militarisation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts;
6. Recognition of an administrative region with organs of self-government, having powers that are constitutionally guaranteed so that no modification thereof is possible without a constitutional amendment and without informed agreement by the representative bodies of the indigenous Jumma peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The creation of a regional council, elected democratically by the indigenous Jumma peoples and containing safeguards for the representation of all the indigenous Jumma peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, women, and minority residents of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The council should have real political powers -- including budgetary powers -- to make and execute decisions;
7. Respect for human rights including the rights of women as stipulated in the UN convention on all forms of discrimination against women.

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Japan's NGO Network on ODA

AMPO

On September 29, 1996, a group of NGOs met in Tokyo to set up a lobbying group called Japan's NGO Network on ODA. The coalition includes groups working in international development cooperation, such as the Japan International Volunteer Center (JIVC), Sodoshu Volunteer Association (SVA), People to People Aid (P2), the Japanese Association of NGOs for International Cooperation (JANIC) and the Japanese Network of NGOs for Indonesia (JANNI), as well as advocacy groups such as the Pacific Asia Resource Center (PARC) and People's Forum 2001. The Network will do advocacy work toward the government on the issue of Japan's ODA to developing countries.

The Network agreed to work on the following short-term and long-term objectives: as long-term projects, the enactment of a Basic Law on ODA and the establishment of a special agency or ministry dealing with ODA; and in terms of short-term objectives, a review and reform of yen loans provided by the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) under the auspices of the Economic Planning Agency and to undertake debt relief for heavily-indebted countries.

In 1995, Japan's ODA amounted to slightly over US\$14.7 billion, on a fulfilled level Japan's share is now nearly one fourth of total ODA flow from the North to the South.

These yen loans have been used to construct large-scale infrastructure development projects such as dams, power plants, highways, modern hospitals, and irrigation. The top ten recipient countries, with the exception of Egypt, are all in Asia, and these Asian recipients, of which Indonesia and China are at the top, have absorbed 80% of the loans.

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WOMEN'S DECLARATION

History cannot be erased! Women cannot be silenced!

Women will never allow the removal of 'Comfort Women' from School Textbooks!

Matsui Yayori

When former "Comfort Women" from many Asian countries, who were forced to be sexual slaves for the Japanese Army during the Asian-Pacific War, came forward to speak about their painful experiences nearly a half century later, we Japanese women were shocked and moved by their courage.

In the countries colonized and occupied by Japan, young women were hit with guns and swords, bound with ropes, pushed into military trucks, and subject to other forms of violence. In other cases, they were cheated with false promises or taken by intimidation. In both cases, they were forcibly recruited, confined in "comfort stations" which were directly run by, or under the control of, the Japanese military; and raped by many Japanese military men everyday, sometimes by several dozens of them.

Upon the defeat of Japan, they were disposed -- abandoned in the jungle, shot in caves, stabbed with Japanese swords, or thrown into wells. Those who survived and returned to their home countries suffered from alienation and poverty in the postwar days.

These women who testified about such painful experiences still have dreadful scars on their aging bodies; they attest to the physical and the sexual violence committed by soldiers of the Imperial Army. They suffer from unimaginable trauma.

Tens of thousands of women were not only tortured by sexual violence during the war; but after the war, they had to face a second violence of total neglect, receiving neither compensation nor words of regret from the Japanese government or people. Now, they are exposed to a third violence: Right wing forces are growing in Japan. They are insulting victimized women, discrediting the testimonies of the victims who finally dared to come forward with the support of the women's movement. The right wing claims that those women were not forcibly taken on the ground that no official state documents have been found which prove it.

The right wing claims, "Those days prostitution was authorized by the government. 'Comfort Women' were prostitutes doing business". In short, they want to say that those women were sold by their own parents for money or they themselves volunteered to be-

come army prostitutes to earn money; they got money from soldiers and now they come forward to tell false stories in order to get money from rich Japan. They shamelessly state that 'Comfort Women' system was necessary and they do not have to apologize.

Last December, a group of right wing people formed "The Group for Writing New History Textbooks" and began to organize a systematic campaign to remove the description of the "Comfort Women" system from the textbooks.

We women can no longer keep silent about this dangerous move to erase history. Based on international recognition of women's human rights and the fact that sexual violence against women during wartime is a war crime, we demand sincere apology and compensation from the Japanese government, and demand that history textbooks include the "Comfort Women" system.

We must listen to cries of all the war victims in Asia, including "Comfort Women" and pressure the government to claim state responsibility for the aggressive war and colonial rule. Moreover, we should question ourselves about Japanese people's collaboration with the war and our postwar responsibilities.

We will work out our own understanding of Japan's modern history which can be shared with other Asian peoples and promote history education based on such historical views. We demand that the reality of the "Comfort Women" system must be described clearly in school text books as a historical lesson so that the next generation, who will live in the 21st century, will never repeat such atrocities and will be responsible for women's human rights and peace. We believe that by doing so, we can obtain trust of the people in Asia and be proud of being Japanese in the international community.

We are determined to resist the right wing's arrogant and brutal historical view based on racism, sexism and excessive nationalism, which justifies aggressive war, colonization and 'Comfort Women' system. We will start a women's network in order that history not be erased and we can move forward into the future.

Anti - Right Wing Women's Rally, 20/3/1997, Tokyo

The 5th Anniversary Commemoration of the Popular Uprising of May 1992

Regional Conference on Human Rights Democratic Development and Civil Society

Introduction

The Regional Conference on Human Rights, Democratic Development and Civil Society brought together more than 80 people from Thailand and the Asian region to share their experiences and ideas on democratic development, human rights and popular movement.

The Conference recognised the shared experiences of people from Asian countries in their struggle for democratic development and human rights including: the May 1992 popular uprising in Thailand; the current struggles of the democratic movement in Indonesia against the military dictatorship; the suppression of political opposition in Malaysia; the democratic and human rights implications of the impending handover of Hong Kong to China; the brutal suppression of the 1988 uprising in Burma and the refusal of the SLORC to handover power to the legitimate, democratically elected government of Burma led by the National League for Democracy; the ongoing human rights violations in the Philippines and other countries.

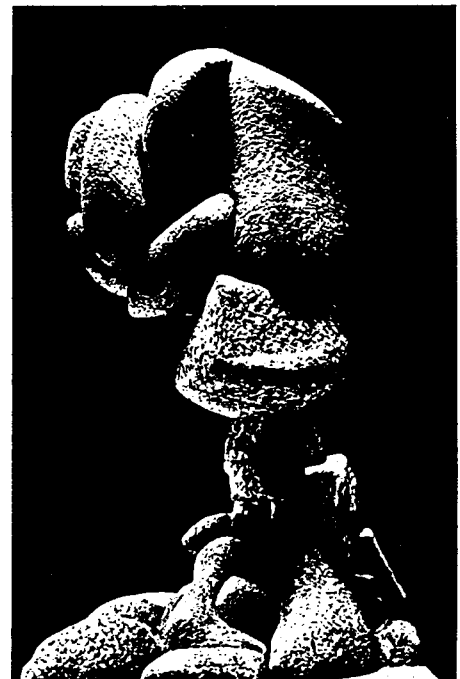
The conference raised serious concerns about a number of issues which are impediments to democracy in Asian countries:

1. The conduct of elections that are neither free nor fair, noting in particular the rise of "money politics" including vote buying and the use of state funds for election campaigning;
2. State control and censorship of the media;
3. The lack of separation of power between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The lack of democratic structures in political institutions and a lack of democratic institutions;
4. The rise of authoritarianism and the power of the military;
5. Suppression of opposition parties;
6. Denial of basic human rights;

Rachadamnern Declaration (abridged)

We, the delegates attending the Regional Conference on Human Rights, Democratic Development and Civil Society in Bangkok adopt the following declaration. On the occasion of our Regional Conference, we bow our heads in reverence to the martyrs of the democracy movement in Thailand.

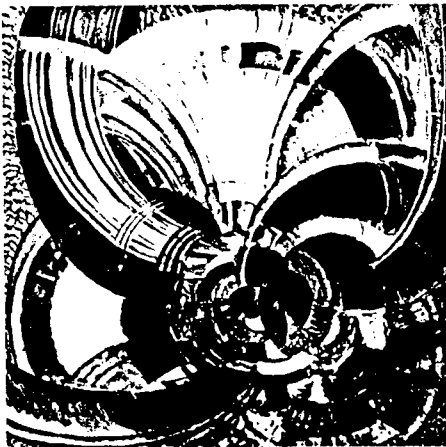
We are enthused by the active engagement of civil society in Thailand in the discussion around the Constitutional Draft Proposals. We are cognizant that the process that culminated in the setting up of the Constitutional Drafting Assembly arose thanks to the vibrant articulation of the democratic aspirations of the Thai people. We remind ourselves that the history of humankind is witness to the fact that Constitutions are merely the formal imprimatur or seal of approval that legislatures give to peoples' aspirations in their unending quest to bridle arbitrary power and codify the rights and duties of peoples and the state.



The 5th Anniversary Commemoration of the Popular Uprising of May 1992

We are aware that a transparent dialogue by all sections of society is essential in the building of a just and human society. A constitution provides the legal architecture towards this end.

We, who represent people's organisations, NGOs and democratic groups, are part of a civil society that is going through unprecedented changes. Our people are being held at ransom to development policies promoted by powerful international multi-lateral institutions (World Bank/International Monetary Fund) policies which are being slavishly carried out by our governments under the pretext of liberalisation and growth. The direct consequence of this model of development is that people in civil society are rapidly losing control over their own livelihoods, their natural resources and their future. Furthermore, the genuine peoples' organisations and movements that have been painfully developed through struggle in the preceding decades are being dismantled by government in the name of "national security".



We believe that the prerequisites to people-centred and sustainable development is devolution of power to the lowest administrative unit. Democracy at grassroots level that represents the genuine aspirations and grievances of the poor and the vulnerable -- children, women, minorities, indigenous peoples, refugees, migrants and others. Strengthening civil society therefore means for us building democracy at the grassroots levels and providing for the "voice of the people" to be expressed and taking into account government policy and practice.

Strengthening civil society means democratising the State and the economic interests that are in the mainstream of development in this region. We need to move beyond formal and electoral politics that is monopolised by traditional political parties. We need to creatively challenge the basic economic and political orientations of our governments.

Towards the implementation of all the aforesaid we believe that only through an active process of interaction through public dialogue, debate and rights education and conscientization that the constitution of any country will be a living document reflecting the aspirations of those it seeks to address.

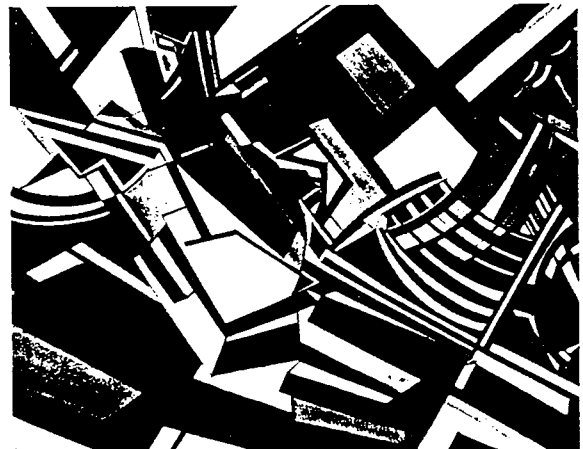
14-16 May 1997
Bangkok, Thailand

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The General Assembly of PP21 Partners was held on 11 March 1996. In the Assembly, some major decisions were made.

1. Recognizing operational deficiencies and limitations of the coordinating mechanisms that were put in place at the 1992 Bangkok evaluation meeting, the General Assembly discussed possible alternatives. It was agreed that more effective mechanisms of coordination were urgently needed thus a multi-tier structure for PP21 coordination was approved:

A. **PP21 Council** composed of:

a) two members each from the following sub-regions/areas: South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and the Pacific region;

b) one member each from the following sectors: workers, peasants, women, indigenous people, youth/students, fisher folk, children, urban poor, plantation workers, artists;

c) members of the former PP21 Coordinating Team.

B. A **Coordinating Committee** to be appointed by the PP21 Council.

C. A **Secretariat** with full-time staff.

2. The PP21 Council and the Coordinating Team will have as its members organizations and not individual persons. Organizations that are not on the PP21 Council are also eligible to be appointed to the Coordinating Team.

3. Task forces will be set up to initiate and coordinate efforts in the following areas: peo-

ple's politics, gender politics, human rights politics, cultural politics, environmental politics, alternatives and health.

4. A committee was appointed in order to constitute the PP21 Council. It was then in the process of liaison with various organizations that are coordinating the selection of respective sectoral and sub-regional coordinators to the PP21 Council which is expected to hold its first meeting in mid August, 1996, in Bangkok, Thailand.

The sectoral and sub-regional representation in the PP21 Council will no doubt help

strengthen the PP21 strategy of building trans-sectoral and trans-border alliances. But such alliances can only be built on partnership and shared visions and goals. And it requires more organizations that subscribe to PP21 ideals to join forces.

5. The Assembly reiterated that PP21 partnership is open to all organizations that identify themselves with the perspectives and goals as contained in the three PP21 statements: the Minamata Declaration (1989), the Rajchadamnoen Pledge (1992) and the Sa-

garmatha Declaration (1996). PP21 partnership does not in any way seek to change the specific character of an organization. On the contrary, it can provide a platform for collective action that will enhance the effectiveness of the partner organization at the service of the people of Asia.

**PP21
THE
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
MARCH 1996**

Report on PP21 First Council Meeting

The meeting was held on 17-19 August 1996 in Bangkok. The following issues were discussed:

I Identity

PP21 is an "Alliance of Hope", a particular movement that facilitates the process of peoples coming together to interact and to build a new society. It is also a regional process to challenge the dominant systems in different spheres. While maintaining its identity and undertaking activities that are uniquely PP21, it does not seek to be exclusive. PP21, through its partners, will actively collaborate with other on-going initiatives in challenging the dominant paradigms and in promoting the process of alliance-building.

II Projects

It was agreed that Grassroots Democracy provides a common ground for PP21 initiatives from local and sectoral to regional levels and its promotion must be linked to the search for alternatives. Grassroots democracy and alternatives, as a matter of fact, must come together as a criterion of all activities in the name of PP21. Proposed PP21 plan of action, with its focus on grassroots democracy and alternatives, will have five aspects: studies on alternative models, alternative media & communications, dialogue & exchange for capability-building, mobilization and campaigns, and organization.

☺ Publications

- i. The first priority is PP21 journal *Alliance of Hope* which will be a new publication maintaining continuity with the past.
- ii. The documentation, study and evaluation of alternative practices in Asia, published in the form of a series.
- iii. Thinkers/activists involved in social movements to be invited to reflect on their experiences which will be gathered into a book.

☺ Promotion of the People's Charter

The Journal will play a significant role in the evolution of the People's Charter.

☺ Workshops

Workshops with the aims of crystallizing various efforts in the area of grassroots democracy and elevating our own awareness and broadening our capabilities will be held around 1998.

☺ The 4th PP21 Convergence may take place towards the end of 1999 or the beginning of 2000.

III Partnership

It was decided that organizations will be encouraged to submit their applications through the national PP21 network in countries where such bodies exist. Applications sent in directly to the secretariat will be referred to the national PP21 network or, where such bodies do not exist, to the sub-regional body. The Council, in consultation with the national or sub-regional group, will endorse the applications. Partnership is open to organizations; individuals may apply to be PP21 Associates.

Report on PP21 First Council Meeting August 1996

IV Responses to other initiatives

PP21 responds to existing and emerging initiatives through the involvement of its partners. PP21 will support such initiatives by sharing our vision and working within them as a catalyst. Support can take different forms and depends on each case. Such support will extend to grassroots struggles as well as to regional efforts.

V Structure and Business

a. Council and Coordinating Team

The Council is co-chaired by Lau Kin Chi and Bantorn Ondam. A 7-member Coordinating Team composed of two representatives from each sub-region of South, East and South East Asia, and one representative from the Pacific, should meet twice a year. Partners are encouraged to form national networks and identify a coordinator.

b. Secretariat

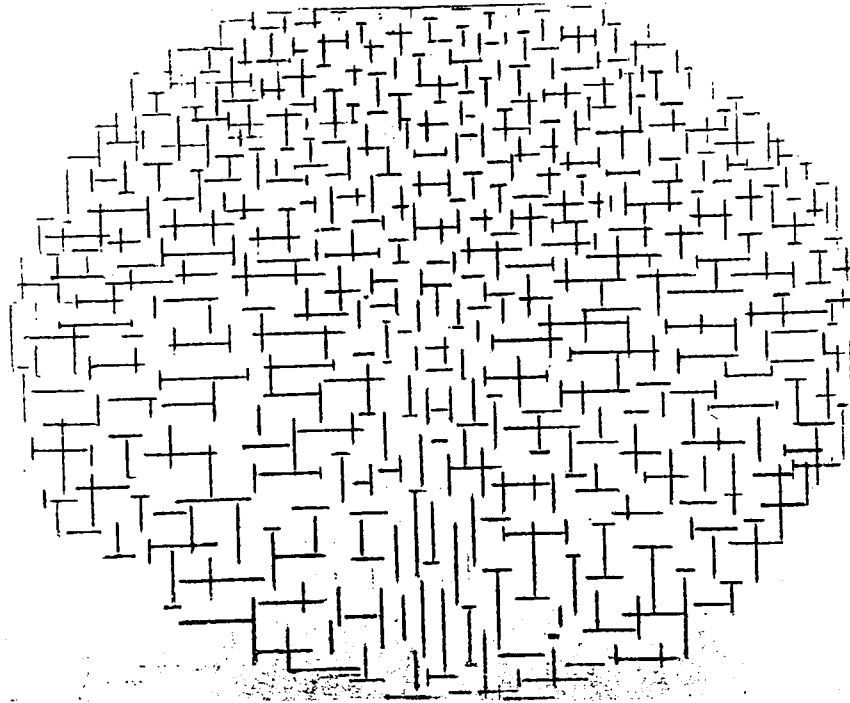
The Secretariat will function with the support of Hong Kong partners: China Social Services and Development Research Centre (CSD), Asia Alliance of YMCAs (AAY), Asian Migrant Centre (AMC), Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (ARENA), and Asian Students' Association (ASA).

c. Financial Committee

Its membership is Tan Chi Kiong (chairman) (AMC, Hong Kong), Inoue Reiko (PARC, Japan), Jean Laguerder (PRRM, Philippines), Santha Fernando (AAY, Hong Kong), Lau Kin Chi (CSD, Hong Kong) and Tarcisius Fernando (PP21 Secretariat).

d. Journal

The Journal *Alliance of Hope* will be published in English and national networks will make an effort to translate it into local languages. Information on partners, upcoming events, actions, etc. is welcome. The Editorial Team for the moment consists of the following: Lau Kin Chi (chief editor), Felix Sugirtharaj, Jean Laguerder, Muto Ichiyo, Boonthan Verawongse, Tarcisius Fernando, Smitu Kothari, Yayori Matsui, Sunil Wijesiriwardena, Lakshmi Daniel.



Report on PP21 First Coordination Team Meeting

The First Coordinating Team (CT) meeting was held on 3-4 February 1997 in Hong Kong. It was attended by 6 CT members, 5 representatives from the Secretariat-Support Groups, and the Secretariat staff. After hearing a brief report of the development of PP21 networks in different sub-regions, there was a discussion on trans-border alliance building. (See P.29-30)

The CT discussed possible projects for implementation, and felt that the focus for the coming few years should be on alliance-building and on the project of identifying and reviewing alternative practices and theories related to grassroots democracy.

Study of Alternatives

On the research study on alternatives, the project aims to gather case studies on experiences in alternative development

models/systems. These include the ones already documented as well as undocumented initiatives and cover different areas:

economic (macro and micro), political, socio-cultural and ecological. Information to be gathered includes concrete experiences as well as available conceptual theorizing on them. Since various debates on alternatives are going on, attention will be paid to key debatable areas. However, the idea is not to promote a particular theory or approach to development. Rather, it seeks to present different views and promote discussions on them. The objective of the project will be to support the struggles of the people for change. It will be discussed by people of various sectors. Hence, a variety of outputs is envisaged.

The search for alternative development paradigms is a valid enterprise. There are some who feel that theory development and meta-theories are not useful. Instead, they advocate addressing very concrete issues only. Challenging such attitudes is necessary especially at the national/local level. On the other hand, the research project is not a mere academic exercise. It is based on concrete experiences and will be used for developing the People's Charter. The output will be available to the people in struggle.

The research project will be coordinated by PARC. PP21 Council and CT members, Secretariat Support Group and PP21 Partners will be requested to gather

case studies, relevant materials and analyses on alternatives and forward them to PARC. A team will try to synthesize the case studies and present a draft synthesis to the Second Council meeting in June 1997.

The following general criteria were suggested for the selection of case studies: Does it promote people's participation; people's initiatives; local autonomy; grassroots democracy; independence; gender sensitivity; empowerment; micro/macro relationship? Is it community-oriented? Does it have a positive impact or bring about change (e.g. in power relationships)?

Concrete examples and principles of alternative paradigms drawn from the alternatives research project

will be incorporated into the People's Charter. Each sub-region could come up with documentation related to grassroots democracy; the Secretariat will disseminate them for feedback which will in turn be disseminated to national networks. It was hoped that various sub-regional or national

networks of PP21 Partners will take the responsibility of translating these into their local languages and reaching out to grassroots groups. The translation work was stressed as a necessary means for PP21 to draw valuable experience from local groups and also to facilitate exchanges across borders of nation, religion, sector, gender, ethnicity, etc.

Building of Alliances

On the question of networking, it was proposed that workshops to promote understanding of regional work as well as multi-sectoral work should be organized. The workshop will be in two stages: An internal workshop for PP21 Council, CT and Secretariat Support Group, coordinated by ACFOD, is to be held during the Second Council meeting in June 1997. Later on, workshops at sub-regional or national levels should be organized.

Partnership

It was felt that the mere acceptance of PP21 Declarations was not sufficient as a qualification for partnership. There should be other criteria like the applicant organization's track record, familiarity with PP21, submission of documents pertaining to the organization's objectives, projects etc.

REPORT ON PP21 FIRST COORDINATING TEAM MEETING 3-4 FEBRUARY 1997

DIRECTORY

PP21 Council (As of June 1997)						
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S Asia	Pakistan Institute of Labour Education & Research (PILER)	Karamat Ali	141-D Annexe, Blk 2, PECH Society, Karachi-75400, Pakistan	4557009, 4552170	4557009, 4548115	karamat@piler.khisdnpc.undp.org
SE Asia	Adhoccambodia	Kimpo Than Vuthy	No 1, Str. 158, Truong Kang, Doum Penh, P.P. Cambodia	855-23-428653, 982407	855-23-427229	adhoccambodia@pactok.peg.apc.org
E Asia	People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)	Yi Daehoon	Rm. 401, Kiwon Bldg., 404 Han-gang-ro 2-Ka Yongsan-gu, Seoul 140-012, Korea	82-2-796-8364	82-2-793-4745	PSPD@soback.kornet.nm.kr
E Asia	China Social Services & Development Research Centre (CSD)	Lau Kin Chi	Wanchai P O Box 23467, Hong Kong	852-28651096, 71168218-8372	852-28651096	laukc@ln.edu.hk
Workers	Asia Pacific Workers Solidarity Links (APWSL)	Robert Reid	P O Box 11.123 Wellington, New Zealand	64-4-3848963	64-4-3848007	robert@apwsl.wgtn.planet.co.nz
Students & Youth	Asian Students' Association (ASA)	Keshav Pandey	353 Shanghai St., 4/F, Kln, Hong Kong	852-23880515 / 71168218-8372	852-27875535	asa@asiaonline.net
Peasants	Institute for Motivating Self-Employment (IMSE)	Biplab Halim	244. Jodphur Park (2/F) Calcutta-700068, India	91-33-473-2740, 477-9047	91-33-4730236	biplab.imse@access.net.in
Fisherfolk	South Asia Network for Small Fisherfolk (SANFED)	Felix Sugirtharaj	No 59. East Mada Church Road, Royapuram, Madras, 600013, India		009-144-5950052	
Plantation Workers	Coordinating Secretariat of Plantation Areas (CSPA)	Subbiah Murgaiyeh / Mohan Subramaniyam	30 Pushpadana Mawatha, Kandy, Sri Lanka	94-8-222955	94-72-21572	
FCT	FAO-NGO South Asia Programme	Kamla Bhasin	P O Box 3088, 55 Max Mueller Marg, (Ex Lod: Estate) New Delhi 110 003 India	91-11-4628877, 4693060	91-11-4620115	fao-ind@field.fao.org
FCT	Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD)	Bantorn Ondam	P O Box 26, Bungthonglang, Bangkok 10242, Thailand	662-3779357, 3702701	662-374-0464, 7312216	acfod@ksc15.th.com

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FCT	Asian Resource Foundation	Abdus Sabur	1562/113, Soi 1/1, Moo Ban Pibul, Pracharaj Road, Bangkok 10800, Thailand.	662-2251753, 9130196	662- 2262077, 9130197	
FCT	Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC)	Lopeti Senituli	83 Amy St., Toorak, Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji	679-304 649	679-304 755	pcrc@pactok.peg.apc.org

* Note: FCT members are in the Council in their individual capacities

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Sri Lanka	PP21 Sri Lanka	Jagath Siriwardana	No. 14. Elliot Place, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka	941698146	941698146	monlar@lanka.gn.apc.org
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PP21 Coordinating Team						
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Japan	Pacific Asia Resource Centre (PARC)	Reiko Inoue	PO Box 5250, Tokyo International, Japan	81-3-3291-5901	81-3-3292-2437	parc@jca.or.jp qwn02425@niftyserve.or.jp
Nepal	Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC)	Sushil Pyakurel*	P.O.Box 2726, Kathmandu, Nepal	977-1-270770	977-1-270551, 278770	kalanki@insec.wlink.com.np
Sri Lanka	PP21 Sri Lanka	Jagath Siriwardana*	No 14, Elliot Place, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka	94-1698146	94-1698146	monlar@lanka.gn.apc.org
Thailand	Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD)	Bantorn Ondam	P O Box 26, Bungthonglang, Bangkok 10242, Thailand	662-3779357, 3702701	662-3740464, 7312216	acfod@ksc15.th.com
Fiji	Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC)	Lopeti Senituli*	83 Amy St., Toorak, Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji	679-304 649	679-304 755	pcrc@pactok.peg.apc.org
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* Interim members

PP21 Secretariat Support Group				
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Asian Migrant Centre (AMC)	Asian Migrant Centre, 4 Jordan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong	852-23120031	852-23677355	amc@hk.super.net tanck@hk.super.net
Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (ARENA)	Flat B1 2/F Great George Bldg., 27 Paterson St., Causeway Bay, Hong Kong. Mailing Add: P O Box 31407, Causeway Bay Post Office, HK	852-2805-6193	852-2504-2986	arena@hk.net
China Social Services & Development Research Centre (CSD)	Wanchai P O Box 23467, Hong Kong	852-28651096	852-28651096	laukc@ln.edu.hk
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PP21 Financial Committee					
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Asian Migrant Centre (AMC)	Asian Migrant Centre, 4 Jordan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong	852- 23120031	852- 23677355	amc@hk.super.net tanck@hk.super.net	Tan Chi Kiong (Chair)
Pacific Asia Resource Centre (PARC)	PO Box 5250, Tokyo International, Japan	81-3-3291- 5901	81-3-3292- 2437	parc@jca.or.jp qwn02425@niftyserve.or.jp	Inoue Reiko
Philippines Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)	Kayumarggi Prss Bldg, 940 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines	632- 985576, 985563	632- 997919	prrm@mnl.sequel.net	Jean C. Laguerder
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	24-A, 1/F, Wong Nai Tau Tsuen, Shatin, Hong Kong	852- 26471718	852- 26377488		Tarcisius Fernando



National / Sub-Regional *NETWORKS* of PP21 Partners -- Reports

JAPAN

The Japanese PP21 network coordinating committee met twice, Sept. 17 and Oct. 22, 1996 discussing what we are going to do in Japan, on the basis of the evaluation of the Kathmandu Convergence and the Bangkok Council Meeting. Earlier, PARC agreed to be a member of PP21 Coordinating Team. On Oct. 22, the committee agreed to produce a Japanese proposal for regional action on a few topics that will keep the PP21 processes to build toward another convergence scheduled for 2000. The proposal, which is now being worked out, will be presented to the February 1997 Coordinating Team meeting for discussion. The general idea is that regional or sub-regional initiatives by taken collectively be interested partners on a few selected topics, including local people's governance and the state, an alternative development, and alternative school. For some such topics, regional or sub-regional workshops are to be hosted by PP21 network in a specific country as closely related to its national program. The Japanese national process will be initiated as part of such regional and sub-regional action, and not isolated from it. It was also strongly suggested and agreed that gender consideration should be at the basis of all these thematic programs. Concerning local governance, it was pointed out, that fresh moves for

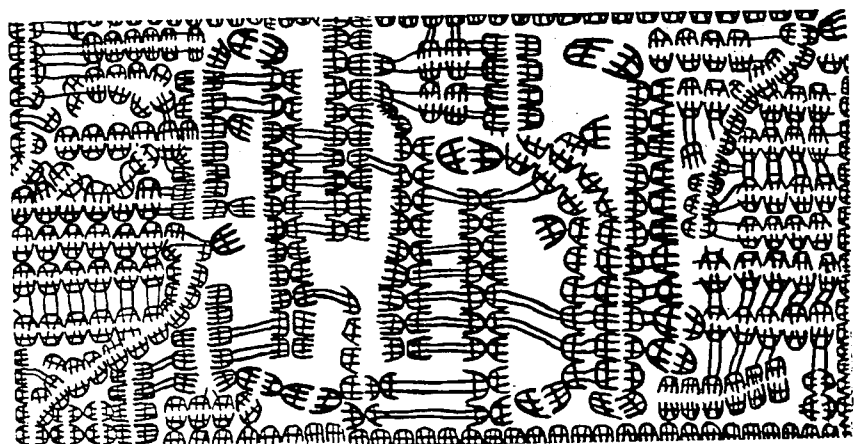
grassroots democratic participation characterize Japanese movement such as the successful efforts of local communities to bring to a virtual halt the government's nuclear power plant siting plan at Makimachi town through referendum as well as the anti-US base movement in Okinawa where women injected new perspectives and energies into the movement.

The Japanese coordinating committee will discuss concretization of action following the February Coordinating Team meeting.

In the meantime, the PP21 Kathmandu Report in Japanese will be published.

The committee also discussed dissemination of information in the *Alliance of Hope* in Japanese. For the time being, the journal's contents will be selectively translated and fed into periodicals and newsletters of Japanese partner organizations crediting the source.

Reported by Muto Ichiyo



SOUTH ASIA

In May 1997, at Kathmandu, an exploratory meeting on “500 Years of Domination: Second War of Independence” was jointly organized by Asian Resource Foundation, ATPP, ACHAN, INSEC and IMSE. 37 participants came from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand. As many of the participants are PP21 partners, PP21 process and problems were discussed during the meeting.

Observations

It took a lot of energy and efforts of many people to organize the PP21 event in Kathmandu. As a program and celebration it went well. Credit goes to Nepali organizers. But structural questions affected relationships among key actors and somehow PP21 spirit was lost.

Most of the networks and Forums are continuing their work but lacking financial support, interregional, intersectoral communication and coordination. However, the agenda that South Asian network has been advocating recent SAARC Summit addressed some of them.

Bhutanese Refugees’ early repatriation, space for civil society, release of detained fisherfolks in India-Pakistan, improvement of economic life, campaign against women- and- child trafficking, migrant workers, minorities concerns, resistance against exclusion and globalization were seen as a priority for follow up in South Asia.

Suggestions

There will be three commissions to ensure follow-up in South Asia with the following objectives:

1. To support ongoing processes and initiatives at South Asian level and maintain links with other regions;
2. To facilitate collective reflections and work out strategic interventions;
3. To mobilize financial resources.

The three commissions are:

1. Forum and solidarity commission;
2. Research commission on conceptualization and future possibilities;
3. Truth accountability and reconciliation commission.

Each commission will function as an autonomous body. Three convenors of the commissions will collectively provide forum for sharing and coordination.

Invitation

The program “500 Years of Domination: Second War of Independence for the Global South” is viewed as a means to strengthen PP21 initiated processes and networks, therefore PP21 is being invited to get fully involved and support the program.

Tentative program

1. Asian Youth Resisting 500 Years of History -- a long march from Calicut (where Vasco Da Gama landed in 1498) to Calcutta (from where the British ruled India), Chittagong (where Subash Bose and Surjya Sen fought against the British) to Palashi (the battlefield where Bengal lost its independence to the British). A monument of Second Independence will be built at Palashi by the youth of participating countries;
2. Voices of the Victims -- Justice for the global south. A series of hearings, workshops, exchanges, seminars on alternatives and empowerment, networking and solidarity will take place;
3. A research team is being formed to work on future possibilities: micro-macro strategic intervention and engagement;
4. Mini summit of resistance with participation of key government representatives from Cuba, Vietnam, South Africa and if possible Maori parliamentarian;
5. A booklet on historical processes and turning points including present trend of globalization will be published towards awareness-building of young generation;
6. Interface with Northern partners “Justice and Reconciliation”;
7. Cultural conversation, book exhibition, film shows, food stall etc.

Calendar:

1997	July	Circulation of invitation and program
	Sept	Review and research team meeting in Pakistan/Sri Lanka
	Oct	Team meeting in Taiwan
	Dec	Local preparation and host committee of the event -- Calcutta
1998	Mar	Final preparation in Dhaka
	May	Final event in Calcutta

NEPAL

Soon after the PP21 main forum in Kathmandu March 1996, the Nepal groups came together to follow-up the initiatives of the Kathmandu Convergence. Since then different sectoral organisations as well as the issue based groups have organised joint action programs on several issues. The meeting has also decided to form the national committee of the PP21 and asked Rajan to work as coordinator of the national network.

Campaign to uphold the property rights to women

Campaigns have been launched by the women organisations, women concerned groups and the other NGOs together with the several mass organisations on the issue of property rights. Due to the massive campaigns of the groups and the pressure built up by the movements, the government has agreed to introduce a new bill by guaranteeing equal property rights to women as well. But still the bill is being drafted and not presented at the parliament. So, the pressure continues to be built up. During the campaign, they have organised rallies, mass meetings, lobby work with the parliamentarians, government ministers and the political parties. The campaigns were spearheaded by the All Nepal Women's Association (ANWA).

Voters Education Campaign and the Election Monitoring

In the recently held local bodies elections, PP21 Partners came together and organised a nation-wide voters education campaign. The purpose of the campaigns is to promote the consciousness of the village people as well as to educate them about the importance of the election and the role of the elected representatives. During the campaigns they have used posters, pamphlets, small coaching classes and the rallies and mass meetings. The program were focused mainly in the remote areas.

Similarly, the National Election Observation Committee (NEOC), an umbrella body of the different human rights NGOs, have organised election observations in the recently held local bodies election. The committee came out with the report that the election was generally free and fair and held in peaceful way except for a few disturbances in some places where the election had to be postponed.

Bonded Labour Concerned Group meets

Representatives from Trade Unions, NGOs and INGOs including representatives from the government came together in a meeting organised by the Bonded Labour Concerned Group. A one day meeting discussed extensively about the problem of bonded labour and the future plan of actions. The meeting decided on the future plans of actions at two levels, a) to launch mass level campaigns and b) to do lobby work. For the campaigns the meeting agreed to form a joint committee headed by General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) and organise mass level campaigns to build up the pressure to the government.

They have also decided to lobby the concerned ministers, parliamentarians to introduce a separate bill in the parliament dealing with bonded labour issues.

All the participants agreed to work together on the issue.

Reported by Rajan Bhattarai



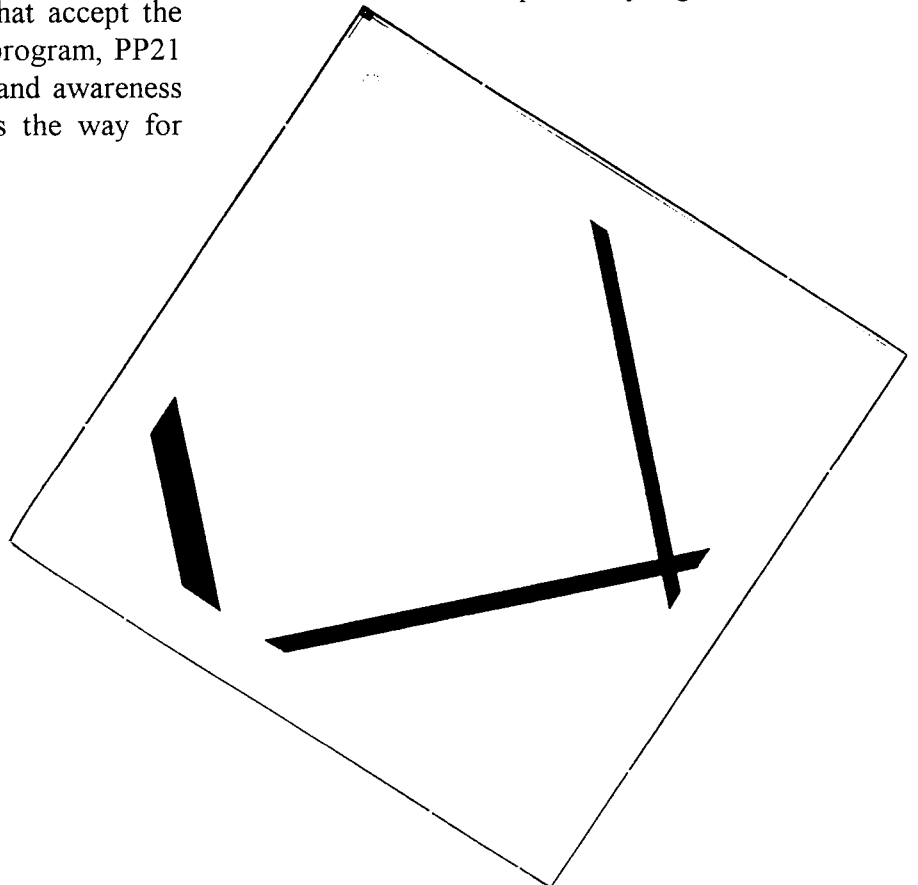
SRI LANKA

The Sri Lanka network meeting was held on 14 Sept. 1996. 215 delegates representing about 100 organizations participated in this meeting. Sagaramatha Declaration was endorsed unanimously. However, participant organizations were requested to mention their endorsement in their application forms for network membership which we are getting now.

Discussions taken by the network meeting are as follows:

- A 52-member PP21 National Council has to be elected by 8 people's sectors and 5 consensus namely peasants, workers, fisher folk, plantation workers, women, youth and students children, marginalized groups, environment, consumer protection, human rights and general interests. Each sector has to elect 4 representatives for the council.
- PP21 Sri Lanka is not an umbrella organization or a federation-like organization. It is a network of organizations that accept the vision of PP21. Through its program, PP21 provides forum for dialogue and awareness building which in turn paves the way for action.
- The PP21 Sri Lanka Coordinating Secretariat has to be continued and maintained for the purpose of facilitating the dialogue and awareness building program.
- The financing of the program is the responsibility of network members. However at the moment network members are not in a position to take the full responsibility of financial support. Hence, a project proposal for financial assistance has to be formulated.
- The program consists of the following components:
 - ◊ Workshops, seminars, public meetings;
 - ◊ Studies;
 - ◊ Translation programs;
 - ◊ Publications.

Reported by Jagath Siriwardana



PROFILES OF PARTNERS

In each issue, we will be publishing a brief description of PP21 partners, on their history, activities, main concerns, and contact addresses. It is hoped that direct interactions among partners can be encouraged. We start in this issue with the

five PP21 Secretariat Support Groups in Hong Kong, and will go on with the Coordinating Team, Council members and PP21 Partners in future issues.

The Asia Alliance of YMCAs (AAAY)

The Asia Alliance of YMCAs is the regional federation of YMCAs in Asia formed in 1949. It is the representative body of the YMCAs in Asia and Pacific and an integral part of World Alliance of YMCAs. Twenty National YMCA Movements in Asia and South Pacific constitute the Alliance. These are Australia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tahiti, Taiwan, Thailand and Western Samoa.

The General Assembly of the YMCAs in Asia is held once in 4 years. The 14th General Assembly of the YMCAs in Asia was held in September 1996 in Malaysia. According to the consensus of the Assembly the program priorities for the YMCAs in Asia during the quadrennium 1996-1999 are as follows:

- Y Organize the affected communities (children, youth, women, dalits, indigenous people, peasants, fishermen, migrant workers, urban poor, workers, etc.) through programs of social education of conscientisation and self help and setting up of community organizations.
- Y Develop leadership skills through specialized training programs including technical knowledge, managerial knowledge for organization development.
- Y Develop and widen the civil society by fostering civil movement in areas such as environment, consumer rights, media monitoring, alcohol abuse, etc..

- Y Network with the NGOs, IVOs and ecumenical partners engaged in working with people.
- Y Share experiences and learning opportunities through exchange programs, field exposures, information dissemination, etc. to promote solidarity and joint action programs.
- Y Lobby and engage in advocacy work to influence the public opinion and government decisions.
- Y Revive the YMCAs in advocacy work to influence the public opinion and government decisions.
- Y Revive the YMCAs in the schools, colleges and universities with focus on issues and struggles of young people.

The following Standing Committees and Task Groups under authority of an Executive Committee will give leadership to the implementation of this mandate. The program to implement this mandate was approved at the Executive Committee meeting held in March 1996.

- Standing Committee on Culture, Religion and Spirituality
- Committee on Empowerment of Peoples
- Committee on Youth and Women
- The Task Group on Migrant Workers

The Secretariat of the Asia Alliance of YMCAs is based in Hong Kong at
No. 23 Waterloo Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong.
Tel: 27808347 / 27703168
Fax: 23854692
E-mail: asiay@hk.super.net

Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (ARENA)

ARENA is a regional forum for the promotion of alternative paradigms and development strategies that contribute to:

- ▲ the promotion of equity among social class, caste, ethnic groups and gender;
- ▲ the strengthening of popular participation in public life as against authoritarian centralisation;
- ▲ preventing the marginalisation of communities in the face of incursions by modernising and post-modernising influences;
- ▲ improving the quality of life for Asia's underprivileged;
- ▲ the promotion of ecological consciousness; and,
- ▲ the capability to draw upon aspects of indigenous knowledge systems which relate to the agenda of social emancipation.

ARENA's mode of intervention in the process of social change is at the level of ideas. Its primary Western long-term enterprise is to participate in building and nurturing a community of concerned Asian scholars and conscientised intellectuals who shall contribute to the process of social awakening that will result in the sharpening and deepening of Asian perspectives. Unlike armchair thinkers or purely academic thinkers, the concerned Asian scholar is committed to contributing to the people's search for liberating alternatives that would pave the way for a more humane social order.

The ARENA network is a forum for critical thinking and exchange of ideas among Asian activists, scholars, and action-oriented researchers. This takes on an added importance in the light of the prevailing perception that the theories, perspectives and frameworks of analysis that have informed the activities of progressive groups over the past decades "have blinded more than enlightened". In other words, the search for a new consciousness to interpret the world in emancipatory terms has come

full circle. There is a need to start afresh, relearn the art of free and autonomous intellectual enterprise and recapture the magic of discovering new and exciting ideas.

ARENA is not a network of the grassroots even though some individuals come from the basic masses. But as the concerned scholar is not an academic in the traditional sense, it follows that ARENA activities must provide organic links between intellectuals and grassroots activists. The concept of "reflexivity" must always operate between the ideas and formulations of the concerned scholar and the actual social practice and the experience of grassroots organisers. In other words, as theory unites with practice and the real world, it must also constantly reflect the latter's dynamism and continuous motion.

ARENA seeks to challenge the intellectual hegemony of dominant concepts and models of development and knowledge systems. Without denying the existence of universal human values, the concerned intellectual at the same time submits that these values take on particularities within a given historical and cultural milieu.

The ARENA community is a collegial network where each member is the equal of another. In the spirit of plurality and equity, relations between network participants are based on mutual respect, recognition, and sensitivity for each one's intellectual work, political convictions, conceptual frameworks, and cultural, religious, and social backgrounds.

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Asian Students' Association (ASA)

*"I am a witness to the suffering of my struggling people
and I shall bear witness to their liberation"*

ASA THEN AND NOW

The Asian Students' Association (ASA) is an independent and non-aligned regional body of 52 national student organisations from 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific.

Formed in 1969, ASA aims at promoting students' solidarity in our struggle for democracy, self-determination, human rights, peace, justice and liberation.

Students are a vital component in the people's struggle for social change historically and presently. The rich history of the student movement in the Asia and the Pacific provides tremendous lessons to inspire and guide the student movement today in its continuing search for relevance in this region.

This is a challenge which ASA must unflinchingly meet.

To facilitate its work and campaign, ASA has 5 Sub-Regional Coordinators (SCR) and 3 issue based centres. The day to day affairs of ASA is carried out by a 3 person Secretariat based in Hong Kong.

The SRCs and the Secretariat form part of the Executive Council (ExCo) which is elected every 3 years by the General Conference. The ExCo meets every year to make decisions and to evaluate ASA's program.

In addition, ASA has developed the Activist Training Centre (ATC), ASA Media Centre and A SEED-Asia. These 3 formations take charge of ASA's work in training activists, theoretically and on practical skills; actively promote alternative student media and disseminate fresh information and analysis; and work on the issue of environment and

development as issues inextricably linked to issues on social justice, peace and human rights.

PHILOSOPHY

ASA draws its philosophy from the people, developed in the process of their struggles for social change. As a regional student body, ASA is actively developing a philosophy which reflects the sentiments of the oppressed people in the Asia-Pacific.

ASA opposes imperialism and all forms of foreign domination and intervention. ASA also opposes racism, Zionism, discrimination and oppression on the basis of class, ethnicity, religious belief, disability, gender and sexuality. ASA is against the exploitation of both human and the environment.

ASA belongs to Asia-Pacific and the Third World. We believe in the richness of the Asian people's cultural heritage - the source of our struggle for liberation. In ASA, we share a commitment to transcend all barriers and express solidarity with one another towards the promotion of an Asia-Pacific identity and a Third World consciousness.

CAMPAIGNS

ASA undertakes various activities including campaigns, training seminars, activist exchanges and workshops. In the past, ASA has actively campaigned in support of the pro-democracy struggles in Burma, China, Mongolia, Bhutan and Nepal. ASA had also campaigned in support of the anti-military bases and peace movements in Korea, Japan, Philippines and in the Pacific.

In addition, ASA has campaigned against the military regimes in Thailand, Fiji, Bangladesh and Pakistan. ASA has also campaigned against the violation of human rights in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Syria and Jordan.

Asain Students' Association (ASA)

Moreover, ASA has campaigned in support of indigenous people's struggles and liberation movements in Kanaky, East Timor, Palestine, Kurdistan, Australia and Aotearoa.

ASA is also committed to training student activists so as to equip them with the necessary skills to carry out their task. In addition to training, ASA organised workshops whereby Asian student activists can come together to discuss and develop joint action on various issues of importance to the Asia-Pacific student movement.

ASA publishes 2 regular news magazines, a monthly Movement News Round-up, a quarterly ASA magazine and other occasional publications. Its funding sources come from international funding partners, membership fees, sales of publications and private donations.

As Defination of ASA

Human Rights

Human rights is not a passive concept nor mere enumeration of the different rights and liberties of individuals and peoples. But rather, it is the active practice of collective human equalities that realises the full human dignity and freedom to develop their potentialities to the fullest, and their power to change any societal structure, both internal and external.

Democracy

Democracy is the empowerment of the people. It is the people's right to make decisions affecting their lives and society. It is in favour of decentralisation of power whereby every person or community can freely participate in societal processes. It includes everything: personal relationships, the family, the school, the workplace and the society.

Development

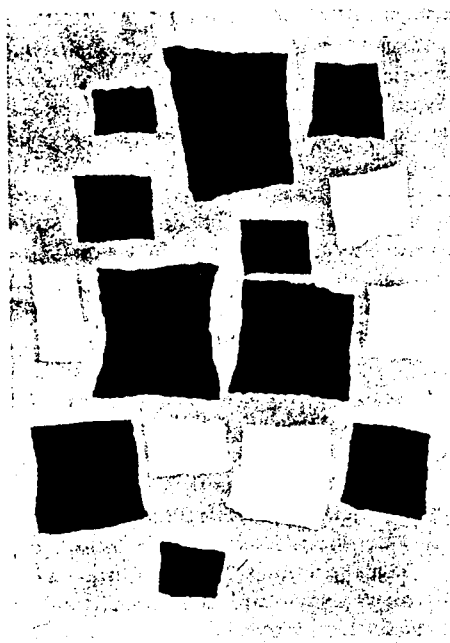
Development is a socio-economic, political, moral spiritual and cultural on-going struggle of the oppressed people to have the power and the resources to create and decide their own future in a progressive ecologically balanced way.

Third World

Third World consciousness is a recognition that people in the Third World are bound in a common struggle against their local elites and Western domination. Therefore, Third World liberation cannot be archived within the restrictive state boundaries set up by the colonial powers. Only through the unity of different sectors and nationalities of the Third World can we attain a just global system and genuine self-determination.

Solidarity

Solidarity is the realisation that one's liberation is bound up with other people's struggles. It is a commitment to participate in the quest for freedom and change - a struggle which recognises no boundaries. It is the reaffirmation of our responsibility to one another for we all belong to one human race. It means "*your struggle is my struggle*".



Secretariat Team

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Asian Migrant Centre (AMC)

Asian Migrant Centre started work in 1989 with a small and modest beginning at Kowloon Union Church, 4, Jordan Road, Hong Kong. The work then was with on-site services locally, counselling and paralegal assistance to individual migrants on public education and information in Hongkong.

After five years of work, it has broadened its scope of involvement with migrants in Asia.

1. It has set up the Migrant Forum in Asia - a regional network of 45 migrant organisations, national coalition and support NGOs in 14 countries in Asia.
2. It initiated the Combined Migrant Support Group in Hongkong, a coalition of 14 organisations, unions of migrants and support NGOs.
3. It has set in motion and energised the regional lobby and advocacy work for the promotion and

protection of the rights and welfare of migrant workers, including the campaign for the ratification of the 1990 UN Convention on Migrant Rights.

4. It has caused other organisations and churches in Asian countries to take up migrant concerns.
5. It has introduced an alternative strategy for a productive re-entry of migrants into their home country.
6. It has organised groups of migrant workers from respective sending countries into self-help, reliance groups, for their welfare and empowerment.

Address: 4 Jordan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

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The China Social Services and Development Research Centre (CSD)

The China Social Services and Development Research Centre (CSD) came into being in 1993 as a non-profit-making NGO. It was brought forth by a group of people coming from a wide spectrum across society in Hong Kong. They include social workers, university lecturers, editors, journalists, postgraduates and medical professionals. What brings this heterogeneous group of people together is their common concern with the question of development in China and, above all, the common understanding that we can better address this question through long-term commitment in supporting and participating in projects for community development. To address the question of development, relevant research is indispensable. It is our understanding that the more research can be conducted with the people who are the subjects the research is mainly concerned with, rather than on them with the research project already formulated outside the sphere of their influence, the more it will be useful for our approach to the question of development in China.

CSD's key work lies in promoting development at the grassroots in Chinese society. The livelihood of the grassroots constitutes the main terrain of its concern, while questions relating to their economic, educa-

tional, health, women and environment situations cross one another, forming grids that traverse this terrain.

The projects currently undertaken by CSD include:

- Women's education and income-generating co-operation in poor villages in Wanzai County, Jiangxi Province.
- Health care project for women and children in Yushui District, Jiangxi Province.
- Development project in a mountain village in north Guangdong Province where the area is mostly limestone.
- Green Empowerment project to promote a green-minded consumer network in Hong Kong and to engage in alternative trade with producers cooperatives in China.

CSD also conducts research on sustainable development, experiences of development in third world countries, development in China, and gender issues. It organizes seminars and publishes translations of Asian experiences into Chinese.

Address: Wanchai P.O.Box 23467, Hong Kong

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Marketplace

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of the contact person and organization. The Editorial Board reserves the right not to publish any promotion text. Please send to Wanchai P.O. Box 23467, Hong Kong.

National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)

The National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) is a platform of people's movements in India. These movements arise from the compulsions of the oppressed toiling people that force them to cry out in despair, in anger and launch movements against the increasing injustices that are inherent in the present social structure.

The NAPM platform provides an opportunity to people from different movements to come together and to have frank dialogue without losing their autonomy. On this platform they can work out methods to support one another and to evolve in that process an alternative ideological framework and an alternative development path for changing the present unjust social, economic and political system and for ushering in a new, just one.

NAPM publishes *NAPM Bulletin*. Annual subscription is US\$10.

NAPM Bulletin is also publishing a booklet highlighting the state of India during the last fifty years since the British Raj. This will contain statistical information and short explanation about the data.

Address: 268 Jodhpur Park, Calcutta 700 068, India.
Contact person: Dr A.N. Bose

Asia Alliance of YMCAs Publications

- Y **We Come With Hope:** Compact Disc (CD) and Audio Cassette containing "Songs of Prayer and Social Commitment", emanating from the AAY Consultation on Culture, Religion and Spirituality. Compact Disc: US\$10 + mailing; Audio Cassette: US\$5 + mailing.
- Y **Search For Meaning And Community:** Report of the Regional Consultation on Culture, Religion and Spirituality, 19-26 October, 1996, New Delhi (88 pages). Mailing cost only.
- Y **At The Threshold Of The Third Millennium:** Report of a South-South Dialogue, 2-9 September, 1996, Shanghai, China (56 pages). Mailing cost only.
- Y **Ymca Mission Imperatives:** Report of the Regional Consultation on YMCA Mission, 26-31 January, 1997, Tozanso, Japan (74 pages). Mailing cost only.

Available from Asia Alliance of YMCAs, 23, Waterloo Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong, Tel.: (852) 2780 8347, Fax: (852) 2385 4692, E-mail: asiay@hk.super.net



AMPO

Japan-Asia Quarterly Review

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Annual subscription rates: US\$28 for individuals, US\$40 for institution.

Address: PO Box 5250, Tokyo Int'l., Japan.

The Dispossessed Victims of Development in Asia

ARENA has conducted a research on adverse impacts of development in an attempt to provide data on the extent of displacement, marginalization and impoverishment in the Asian region. This compilation is confined to two areas, falling largely under impacts created by environmental degradation and industrial malfunctioning.

A general introduction puts in context the impoverishment and marginalization process in Asia. 9 country profiles critique the development policies in nine randomly selected economies in Asia. The spectrum is wide and includes newly-industrialized South Korea, and the economies of Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, China, the Philippines, Thailand, India and Pakistan.

Over 80 case studies and 750 definitions and descriptions of environmental, industrial and social problems in Asia are compiled in the book's glossaries. This original collection brings together widely scattered information for purposes of quick reference and recent and relevant statistics on the extent of victimisation in Asia.

Individuals: US\$12

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SHAPING OUR FUTURE

Asia Pacific People's Convergence



People's Plan for the 21st Century
Report of the Third Convergence since Minamata
February-March 1996
in South Asia

Editor's Foreword

It gives us great pleasure to offer you this celebration of the PP21 process from 1989. From its inception, PP21 has always been ambitious. And yet those who envisioned the process saw opportunity and challenge, in spite of doubts voiced by both detractors and supporters.

Seven years have past since committed groups and individuals met in Minamata, Japan. Our world was in the throes of ideological and economic upheaval then, and we continue to experience its cataclysmic repercussions today.

This book, *Shaping Our Future*, is a compilation of documents primarily from the Kathmandu Convergence held earlier this year, but also including the discussion papers for the "Towards a People's Charter" Workshop, and reports and declarations of international forums prior to the Main Forum. The Minamata Declaration of 1989 and the Rajchadamnoen Pledge from Bangkok, Thailand, 1992 are also included for reference.

The purpose of putting together these documents is not to simply add to the plethora of conference papers. It is to catalogue and evaluate alternative movements and processes, and thereby hopefully encourage others to join further convergences.

The material in this collection is not exhaustive, nor can it be stagnant, as movements, struggles and initiatives continue to develop.

As the editors of this book, we encourage you to share with us your stories and join us in our quest of dismantling those structures that oppress us.

Shaping Our Future Asia Pacific People's Convergence

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Copies may be obtained from:
CSD, Wanchai PO Box 23467, Hong Kong.
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