THE BAMAKO APPEAL OF SAMIR AMIN:
A POST-MODERN JANUS?

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Abstract:

The Bamako Appeal is an attempt to move the World Social Forum process from being some kind of agora for discussion of alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation, to the provision of an anti-capitalist leadership for the global justice and solidarity movement. Sponsored by prominent left activist intellectuals of the 'Thirdworldist' tradition, it has nonetheless adopted much of the language of the new movement. Because of its authors' apparent vanguardism, the BA has proven controversial within and around the leadership of the WSF. Such charters, declarations and manifestos are, however, common within the wider movement, occur within the WSF itself and should be welcomed. But the process by which the BA has appeared and been launched reproduces old movement practices that the new movement has been surpassing. The BA's chapter on labour suggests the possibility and necessity for a meaningfully global and open dialogue on the BA more generally. Whilst the BA is commonly seen as a deviation from or opposition to the WSF process, both of these instances reveal the simultaneous backward-looking and forward-looking nature of emancipatory movements.

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> Janus is the Roman god of gates and doors ... beginnings and endings, and hence represented with a double-faced head, each looking in opposite directions. He was worshipped at the beginning of the harvest time, planting, marriage, birth, and other types of beginnings, especially the beginnings of important events in a person's life. Janus also represents the transition between primitive life and civilisation, between the countryside and the city, peace and war, and the growing-up of young people.
> - (Janus 2006).

Introduction

The Bamako Appeal (BA) is a substantial international anti-capitalist document of some 9,000 words, containing a 10-point programme for a global social transformation. It seems intended to do for our globalised informatised capitalist era what Marx's *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 did for his inter/national industrial one. The BA was drawn up at a conference organised to immediately precede one of the tri-continental editions of the World Social Forum, in Bamako, Mali, January 18, 2006. It was sponsored by a small group of overlapping non-governmental organisations: the Forum du Tiers Monde/Third World Forum, the World Forum of Alternatives, the Tricontinental Centre, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, the Malian Social Forum and a Dakar-based ecology and development NGO, ENDA (for relevant URLs see Resources below).

The two leading individuals involved are prominent figures within these NGOs and the WSF, the veteran 'Thirdworldist' thinkers and activists, the Egyptian Samir Amin (based in Dakar/Paris) and the Belgian François Houtart. The BA was either presented or unpresented (accounts conflict) to the Bamako WSF. It was later apparently also presented to the Call or Assembly of Social Movements at the WSF held in Caracas, Venezuela, January 24-9, 2006. It was not, however, approved by either in any shape or form. Around one month later it appeared on the website of the World Forum of Alternatives (WFA), here preceded by an appeal for endorsements. Information about the background, the organisation, the funding and the intention – and even about the individuals involved – is lacking from the site. If I refer to Samir Amin in the title of this piece this is simply for purposes of recognition, Amin being a prime mover of the BA and the best-known of its sponsors.

Since its launch the BA has been reproduced, often without commentary, in newspapers, magazines, on websites and lists, in Europe, the USA, Latin America, South Africa and India. Further information about the BA, its participants/endorsers and funding has had to be gleaned from one of its initiators, or provided unsystematically by some of those involved. There is so far no formal report on the event either by its sponsors, nor an extensive analysis from independent or critical sources. My account above and below has to be therefore considered tentative.

The BA appears to be a second attempt to move the World Social Forum from what has been primarily a space for open-ended dialogue on alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation to one of deliberation, decision, organisation and action. (For recent overviews of the WSF process, see Bourgeois 2006, Vargas 2006) The first attempt had been made by Amin and/or his friends, Bernard Cassen (of Attac, France), Houtart and others, one year earlier, at the Fifth WSF, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2005. Here it became known under such names as the Porto Alegre Manifesto (PAM) and the Appeal of 19. This first initiative provoked the anger or ridicule of many at the WSF, particularly its International Council members, many of whom considered it, variously, as some kind of attempted political coup, as elitist (dominated by white, male

intellectuals, emanating from a chic hotel), as circumventing the well-established 'Call of Social Movements', and (in my case, Waterman 2005a) of being both meagre in extent and lacking in bite. One who thought it worth a critical response was Patrick Bond (2005). In the face of such reactions, even some of the signatories seemed to back off from the PAM. Critical reactions to the new Bamako Appeal have come from WSF International Council members, the Brazilians Chico Whitaker (2006) and Antonio Martins (2006). The former seems to see it as an attempt to reinstate the centrality of the nation state to the project of social emancipation. The latter asks:

> Why should we rush into a 'choice' of campaigns supposedly capable of 'unifying' the world of social forums? Why should we propose them from small groups; are we re-establishing the barrier between those who think and those who fight, and violating the simultaneous commitment to equality and diversity?

He completes his point with a footnote:

> The 'Bamako Appeal', published 24.01.06, has the same structure as the 'Porto Alegre Manifesto' launched in 2005, at the…Hotel San Raphael. A preamble in which the old tradition makes all possible concession to altermondialisation, followed by the announcement of the priority campaigns.

Other members or supporters of the IC have apparently been either holding their fire or preserving radio silence in the hope that the BA of 2006 will follow the fate of the PAM of 2005. Yet others, who like myself are not so identified with the WSF IC, have been expressing themselves for, against, or both for and against the BA.

Both this manifesto and some of the discussion around it are available on line. (See, for example, the WSFDiscuss list in Resources, and Bamako Appeal Spikes Controversy 2006). In addressing myself to the content I will concentrate on Part 6, the Labour Chapter (**Appendix 1**). This paper will have to stand in for what is anyway a stitched-together patchwork of such positions. And it is an area I have been working on for some 15-20 years. In what follows I will argue that 1) such charters, declarations and manifestos are normal within the wider Global Justice and Solidarity Movement (GJ&SM), occur within the WSF itself and should be welcomed; 2) that the process by which the BA has appeared and been launched reproduces old movement practices that the new movement has been surpassing; and 3) that the Labour Chapter suggests the possibility and necessity for a dialogue on the BA. In any case, the initiators of the Bamako Appeal have no more control over what others do with it than does the WSF have over the production of such appeals. This loss of control, thanks largely to the internet, is something that makes feedback on any significant text both consistent with the new technology and a sign of the significance of the contemporary media to contempoary emancipation (de Jong, Shaw and Stammers 2005).

1. Let a hundred charters bloom!

This subtitle paraphrases the famous slogan of Mao in the mid-1950s, 'Let a hundred flowers bloom: let a hundred schools of thought contend.' Whilst, in the Chinese case, this turned out to be a momentary and Machiavellian *policy*, which ended with the chopping off of 99 blooms, it would seem to well represent the *ethic* of a movement which has as its orientation 'one no and many yesses' (a Zapatista slogan). There have been, are and will be 96 others. A generation apart, and addressed to different identities/interests, consider the South Asian Feminist Declaration (1989), the Declaración de Caracas (2006). (For yet others, see Manifestos 2006 and International Endowment for Democracy 2006).

The *Bamako Appeal* (Appeal of Bamako 2006) calls for the creation of a new 'historical subject' (a collective force for social transformation). This concept is close to the classical Marxist one, in which this subject was the working class. However, the BA does not seem to have either this class or a homogeneous substitute for such in mind. It seems to the thinking of an emancipatory force, the goal of which would be

'a radical transformation of the capitalist system. The destruction of the planet and of millions of human beings, the individualist and consumerist culture that accompanies and nourishes this system, along with its imposition by imperialist powers are no longer tolerable, since what is at stake is the existence of humanity itself. Alternatives to the wastefulness and destructiveness of capitalism draw their strength from a long tradition of popular resistance that also embraces all of the short steps forward indispensable to the daily life of the system's victims.'

The BA declares the necessity to

1. Construct a world founded on the solidarity of human beings and peoples…
2. Construct a world founded on the full affirmation of citizenship and equality of the sexes…
3. Construct a universal civilisation offering in all areas the full potential of creative development to all its diverse members…
4. Construct socialisation through democracy…
5. Construct a world founded on the recognition of the non-market-driven law of nature and of the resources of the planet and of its agricultural soil…
6. Construct a world founded on the recognition of the non-market-driven status of cultural products and scientific acquisitions, of education and of health care…
7. Promote policies that closely associate democracy without pre-assigned limits, with social progress and the affirmation of autonomy of nations and peoples…
8. Affirm the solidarity of the people of the North and the South in the construction of an internationalism on an anti-imperialist basis…

These principles are then spelled out in 10 parts or chapters:

1. For a multipolar world system founded on peace, law and negotiation;
2. For an economic reorganisation of the global system;
3. For regionalisations in the service of the people and which reinforce the south in global negotiations;
4. For the democratic management of the planet's natural resources;
5. For a better future for peasant farmers;
6. To build a workers' united front;
7. For a democratisation of societies as a necessary step to full human development;
8. For the eradication of all forms of oppression, exploitation and alienation of women;
9. For the democratic management of the media and cultural diversity;
10. For the democratisation of international organisations and the institutionalisation of a multipolar international order

Finally, the BA proposes a series of working groups, presumably to develop the chapters or to spell out the action necessary to achieve them.

Although the Appeal makes a gesture toward the Bandung Conference of 1955 (see Resources), that was an inter-state conference of Third-World countries that, whilst condemnatory of Western and (implicitly) Eastern imperialism or domination, was sponsored and endorsed by states mostly of a single-party or military nature. Moreover, the grand hopes of creating a unified, autonomous and peaceful Third World bloc rapidly broke down, most dramatically with the China-India War of 1962. More substantially does the BA reveal its origin in the Dependency Theory or Neo-Marxism of the 1970s, and a related Thirdworldism – the notion that the primary contradiction under capitalism was that between core and periphery, and that the states and/or peoples of the Third World were the primary force for development and/or revolution (the latter exemplified in Gerassi 1971).

Curiously but significantly, the BA makes no reference to the Organisation of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL, Resources). This was a Cuban state project launched 1966, of more populist address and revolutionary rhetoric than Bandung. That project was, however, also limited by its state-sponsorship, its foundational state-movement alliance and an ideology that justified this. The OSPAAAL continues a shadow existence today, with an office in Havana, remembered more for its brilliant posters than any political achievements or inspiration. There is, moreover, a Cuban Connection with the Bamako Appeal, in so far as several of its prominent supports, like Chilean Marta Harnecker, have close relations with the Cuban regime.

Moreover, the BA notion of internationalism seems to reproduce, by implication, the OSPAAL project in seeing international solidarity primarily in South-South or North-South terms, and in its failure to specify what is meant by this term. Yet, given the problematic history of the concept, calls for internationalism surely today require discussion of at least the subjects thereof (workers? citizens? women? peoples? states?), its axes ((East-West?), its directions (North to South?), its type (identity, substitution, complementarity, reciprocity, etc), its reach or target (India-Pakistan as well as India-Nicaragua?), its impact on those involved, its meaning for them (Waterman 1998/2002). Gerassi (1971) reveals the Thirdworldist weakness here, in putting a 'New International' on his book cover, whilst having no single word about it inside! Samir Amin is himself today proposing a 'Fifth International', of a specifically Socialist or even Communist nature (Amin 2006:48), whilst again failing to surpass the 1970s rhetoric. (Those promoting any such Fifth International today might like to consider the League for the Fifth International, in the Resources: this is predictably dismissive of the WSF - but also of Amin).

Yet whilst the BA is indebted to the past, it at the same time reveals the impact of the WSF and GJ&SM, recognising a variety of contradictions, stressing diversity, here avoiding the word 'socialism' (too identified with failed Communist and Radical-Nationalist states or Social-Democratic regimes?): rather does it suggest that democracy without prescribed limits will lead to 'socialisation'. The BA seems, unlike both Dependency Theory and Thirdworldism, to be primarily addressed to social movements. Thus, although possibly coming from closer to the WSF than other such collective or individual declarations related to the new movement (Callinicos 2003, Monbiot 2003), it hardly seems to warrant the anxiety that has been revealed (or concealed) about it.

And even if Amin were to create a Fifth Socialist/Communist International, such would be likely beset from its Founding Congress – or World Social(ist) Forum? - by all the factionalism of dozens of competing *groupuscules* and a half-dozen People's Revolutionary Armies. It would surely suffer the falling away of both the agencies that funded the BA (because of the Bandung echo?), *and* diverse people and organisations that had endorsed a Bamako Appeal from which the words Communist, and even Socialist, had been diplomatically excluded!

These qualifications made, it is necessary to recognise that the BA is only one of many such documents coming out of the GS&JM. I will briefly mention four.

1. The *Call of Social Movements*, an established feature at the WSF, and at most related regional or local ones, provides a first point of comparison. The Call of Social Movements (2004) appears, on re-reading, to be a shorter, lighter and less-radical version of the BA, coming over rather as a condensation of what has occurred at the WSF, and listing protest events to be supported for the coming year. Although opposed to neo-liberalism, it avoids identifying capitalism as the problem. I have criticised the Call elsewhere (Waterman 2005a), not simply for its lack of radicalism but also for its lack of transparency - and its failure to say what *it* means by 'social movement'. It was, however, the Call that helped make the anti-war demonstrations of February 2003 a global phenomenon (Call of the World Social Movements 2003). The Call of 2005 (Call From Social Movements 2005) was, regrettably, shorter on analysis than previously and even longer as an agenda of coming protest events. The Call to the Social Movements Assembly (2006) specified some interesting new problems or demands (women, gays and lesbians, children) but again stressed protest events and was no more a holistic statement than were previous ones. Lurking in the background of the Call – and possibly forgotten – is or was a proposal in favour of 'Building a Social Movements World

Network' (Focus on Trade 2002, Waterman 2002). This modestly ambitious project, supported by Brazilian labour and rural organisations, the World March of Women itself and others, abandoned without explanation, may prefigure the fate of the BA. In both cases, one would surely prefer public discussion and a published outcome.

2. Nobody identified with the WSF seems to have been alarmed by the production in 2004 of a *Women's Global Charter for Humanity* (World March of Women 2004). Indeed, I have so far been unable, to my regret, to find much comment on it (for an exception see ILGA 2005). And this despite the fact that it *is* a holistic declaration, neither confining itself to women nor avoiding an explicitly anti-capitalist position:

> 'The World March of Women, of which we are a part, views patriarchy as the system oppressing women and capitalism as the system that enables a minority to exploit the vast majority of women and men.
>
> These systems reinforce one another. They are rooted in, and work hand in hand with, racism, sexism, misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and forced labour. They breed manifold forms of fundamentalism that prevent women and men from being free. They generate poverty and exclusion, violate the rights of human beings, particularly women's rights, and imperil humanity and the planet.
>
> We reject this world!
>
> We propose to build another world where exploitation, oppression, intolerance and exclusion no longer exist, and where integrity, diversity and the rights and freedoms of all are respected.
>
> This Charter is based on the values of equality, freedom, solidarity, justice and peace.'

3. As for *Labour's Platform for the Americas* (2005), I fear that simple disinterest or passive acceptance might be its fate. This manifesto was either launched at or presented to the WSF in Caracas 2006 (Valente 2006). It is a classically incremental social-partnership (meaning capitalist-partnership) document, calling for 'Decent Work for Sustainable Development', and claiming, without evidence, to have been co-produced by 'civil society'. The title alone implies an identification with work-for-capital and the development of sustainable capitalism. The platform proposes no such dramatic joint or international action as workers and citizens of the Americas *have* been taking against 'free-market fundamentalism'. Nor does it refer to the fact that such action has been often taken *as part of the GJ&SM*. However, it does at least confront neo-liberalism, does propose an alternative, and was endorsed by the major international and some significant national union centres of the Americas. (For its temerity, it still, early April 2006, remains unpublished on the major international union websites!). It is therefore, willy-nilly, an invitation to labour and social movement commentary and criticism. As well, of course, to comparison with Chapter 6 of the Bamako Appeal!

4. *Observations and Reflections: Bases for Building a Post-Neoliberal Agenda* (Post-Neo-Liberal Agenda 2006). By its cautious, if not self-efacing, title, this document might seem to distance itself from anything so aggressive as a manifesto. Yet it represents just such an intervention into the current process as do the other documents. And, like several others, it seems to have been sponsored and/or funded by a small group of (largely Brazil-oriented) funding agencies and NGOs. In this case they are the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (Germany), Attac-Brazil, the Articulación Feminista Marcosur (Montevideo), Action Aid-Brazil, Planeta Porto Alegre (Brazil) and IBASE (Brazil). This document is unique in so far as it seems to have come from the very heart of the WSF: many of the NGOs and individuals named are members of the WSF's International Council. One of them is Antonio Martins, the Brazilian who first responded to the BA and another is Candido Grzybowski. The PNLA makes clear at various places its intention to 'overcome capitalism'. However, in both its title and its content it comes over as an over-general reiteration of criticisms, of concepts, analyses and propositions produced by five years of the WSF:

'In the debates on building a post-neoliberal agenda, it is fundamental to discuss the question of who the builders are. The supposed existence of political subjects who are special protagonists in the struggle for social change, and the notion that there exists a hierarchisation between the struggles, are conceptions that still persist in our political field and jeopardise dialogue and the overcoming of inequality.

The reciprocal recognition of the presence and pertinence of the proposals borne by the various political subjects is fundamental for creating political, theoretical and methodological conditions for this collective construction. In the past, delegating the task of social change to a single subject – and delegitimising other political agendas that also proposed novelties – led to a repetition of the logic of exclusion and to reproduction of inequality and privileges. It also caused weakening of the collective propositive capacity.

On the other hand, accepting and promoting the diversity of the political actors interested in social change strengthens a democratic construction fed by multiple visions and capable of formulating alternatives and mobilising different subjects from the local to the planetary sphere.' (19)

The assertion of the positive value of diversity is demonstrated by the numerous positive references to women, sex(uality) and femin/ist/ism. Yet this seems to go at the expense of reference to workers, the working class, unions and socialism – reference which is sometimes critical or negative. The first set of terms receives 18 mentions, the second eight. A final chapter, 'From "Conquering" the State to Autonomy', argues that:

'Given the de-politicisation of social life promoted by neoliberal globalisation, a post-neoliberal agenda must first of all propose a re-invention of politics. It is necessary to re-establish political debate in the public space in order to recover the plurality of perspectives and the acknowledgement of new social actors, to formulate the notion and practice of representation and to return the economy to the decision-making power of the community of citizens, because the economy has to do with their work and the wealth that they produce. In short, it is indispensable to rebuild the priority of politics over economics. Re-inventing politics is at the same time radicalising democracy, by placing society under the control of its members, making popular sovereignty effective and democrati[s]ing the public sphere and daily social life. […]

It is necessary to create a *popular counter-power* by articulating social movements, networks of movements, organisations of active citizenship, religious entities, and other entities that represent civil society. These will be the foundations to promote strategies based on the diversity of points of view and emancipatory proposals, whenever the situation calls for a position to be taken and whenever possible anticipating the facts. (Original italics. 29)'

The subtitle and following statement here may be left-democratic in nature but hardly either original or specific. (For something that is both, consider Adamovsky 2006).

These admittedly limited sketches cannot do full justice to the documents concerned. The point is rather to note how common – and similar in presumed intention - such declarations of position are. One could, without leaving one's computer chair, find, if not 96 other such flowers, at least 10-20 more, marked by their condemnation of neo-liberal globalisation and their very varied global alternatives. Within this context, the Bamako Appeal could be considered a challenging addition or alternative. There seems little likelihood of it disappearing into the Saharan sands. And if it were to do so, I would consider it a loss to the movement. At time of writing, however, it seems as if both the BA and discussion about it are emerging out of rather than disappearing into the wastes.

2. An old left political process?

The WSF and the GJ&SM are highly sensitive to process, seeming to have understood that it is actually means that determine ends. Whilst those controlling or coordinating the various fora are sometimes criticised, or dismissed as 'verticals', they spend an inordinate amount of time considering appropriate process. The self-denominated 'horizontals' do the same. There is, again, Zapatista language that encapsulates the aspiration for a 'prefigurative politics' – one which demonstrates in the dystopian present the social relations of a utopian tomorrow. One expression is 'Nos Re-encontramos Caminando Juntos Preguntando...Reflejando' (We Re-encounter Each Other Walking Together Asking….Reflecting). Another, 'Mandar Obedeciendo' (Leading by Obeying). If this is the poetry, prosaic propositions are nonetheless repeatedly made. These concern such issues as control over WSF themes and events; the implications of state-, foundation- or development-agency funding; representativity; the presence of the poor (up to 70 percent of participants in early WSFs have been university educated), marginalisation of the youth camp; protection of women from sexual harassment; the provision of space to women (40+ percent of participants, but on one forum day, according to Obando (2005) subject of four percent of the events; domination *by* the panel form; the dominating role of 'our' celebrities; leadership bias toward the older, the whiter, the more intellectual; and the relationship of the social forums or social movements with political parties, states and statespersons (national or international).

From the earlier-mentioned World March of Women comes a model of charter-development more consistent with the GJ&SM. According to a woman heavily-involved in this process it went like this:

1. a person was hired to write the draft of a first Charter (I was this person). She received the help of a small commmitte of women based in Québec. We held meetings and the committee suggested to write a Charter based on 5 values: freedom, equity, solidarity, peace, justice.
2. the International Committee (IC) of the WMW accepted the principle to write a Charter based on these values.
3. I wrote a second draft, received the commentaries of the IC, my own committee here in Quebec and we sent it to all our members (more or less 6000 groups in 164 countries and territories).
4. In the text Second draft of the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, you'll find a summary of the results of the consultation that was made between April and July 2004 about this draft.
5. I wrote a third draft taking into account the comments received. This draft was sent to Coordinating bodies of the WMW (in some countries, women created coordinating bodies that represent the groups).
6. The final comments were collected during the International meeting held in Rwanda in December 2004 where we adopted the Charter in general assembly. (Verdière 2006)

Whilst this cannot be taken as the final word on the process, it surely suggests another world, or another historical period, in the creation of appeals with emancipatory intentions.

The Bamako Appeal came under immediate scrutiny and challenge because of its pre-history (the PAM of 2005), its manner of creation, its mode of operation, and the fact that it was publicised as a declaration for endorsement. The initiative was funded, according to an unconfirmed report, by various European development agencies, and to the extent of a sum so huge I cannot bring myself to reproduce it! But, in the absence of the kind of accounting that the WSF now feels obliged to publicly make, speculation will inevitably continue. Equally unlikely rumours relate to the provision of assistance to the BA, in cash or kind, from President Chavez. Invitees to the BA launch were selected (not necessarily funded) by the organisers. Those attending were presented with a draft, which was then 'complemented' in working groups, their reports being edited by Amin, Houtart and Rémy Herrera (a leftist French political-economist). According to an account by someone present,

'the reports of the working groups were presented to the plenary session of those at the 'Bandung' conference but at no[] point was the full document

presented to the Bamako WSF – at least not as far as I know! The final version of the BA is an 'edited' (and elaborated/rewritten) version of what was reported from the working groups).'

One particular cause for suspicion or hostility has been the manner in which the two successive initiatives have been given titles identifying themselves with successive forums: *the* Porto Alegre Manifesto at the WSF of 2005, *the* Bamako Appeal at the WSF of 2006. It has been asked why the latter was not rather called the 'World Forum of Alternatives Appeal' (as was its predecessor, World Forum of Alternatives 1997!). And, indeed, it may be noted that few of the other manifestos or declarations (an exception is the annual Call of Social Movements) has such an identification. Houtart (2006a) notes expressed fears in Bamako of the imposition of the Bamako Appeal on the WSF but declares that such fears were overcome. According to Houtart, again, the appeal was later circulated for signature. The results by late-March were, approximately, 21 collective endorsements, 66 personal ones, and 121 invitations pending. Amongst collective endorsers were the major Brazilian union confederation, CUT and Brazil's landless labour organisation, MST, as well as the Assembly of Social Movements at the WSF in Caracas. Amongst personal signatories were Aminata Traoré, a Malian ex-minister prominent in the African Social Forum, Mahmoud Mamdani, an outstanding Ugandan radical academic, John Bellamy, editor of the US *Monthly Review*, Bernard Cassen, President of Attac in France, and Devan Pillay, an academic labour specialist, South Africa. The name of Nicola Bullard, of Focus on the Global South, Bangkok, a leading figure in the 'Call of Social Movements', appears both as a signatory and as a non-signatory on the list provided by François Houtart (2006b). In fact, however, neither she, her NGO or her network has signed it.

These endorsements nonetheless suggest that the BA already *has* an international appeal to left intellectuals, social movements and NGOs and one that could be predicted to grow. This recognition does not, however, reduce my own discomfort about a document *produced* by a tiny group of individuals, *complemented* by an invited audience, *edited* by the original group, and 'accepted' (whatever that might mean) at the event and, apparently, at (not by) the WSFs in Bamako and Caracas. I had myself originally considered endorsing the document. But it struck me that it would have been more in the spirit of our new movement if the BA had been issued *for discussion* in the wider community of social movements and critical intellectuals worldwide. Such seems to be the general posture of the Indian activist Jai Sen, of CACIM (see Resources). Sen, an energetic, if critical, promoter of the forum idea in India and globally, has also been a moving force behind the collection and publication of information and analyses of the BA. He says

> 'Our opinion is that the Bamako Appeal should have been discussed more widely and more openly before being finalised, especially given the potentials of today's communication technologies but also since the three World Social Fora were then just coming up (Bamako, Mali, January 19-23; Caracas, Venezuela, January 24-29; and Karachi, March 24-29). Having just one day's discussion of such a major 17 page document could not, we feel, have done justice to the wide range of ideas and formulations put forward there, nor really allowed further ideas to come forward. This reading has been/is being echoed by others who have earlier commented or are now commenting on the Appeal, on various listserves. At another level, the Appeal is also quite uneven, with some sections being far more mature than others. There are several sections in the Appeal that – in a document of this potential *historical* importance – demand more complete formulation.' (Sen 2006)

One could add at least two more points.

The first is that given, precisely, the nature of the movement and the informatised world in which it operates, intellectual property is, or can rapidly become, a public good. Just as the WSF cannot operate like either the Vatican or the Union/Party, neither can the initiators of the Bamako Appeal. (Indeed, both the Vatican and the unions/parties are increasingly aware of this). Whilst the authors of the BA seem to have been assuming that this document would have the reception – positive or negative – of the Communist Manifesto, or of the 10-Point Bandung

Declaration (which I cannot find on the web), our new movement increasingly insists on critical engagement and dialogue. Means determine ends.

The second point has been made earlier and now surely demonstrated: in its acts of commission or omission the BA is no lone sinner.

3. The labour chapter: a suitable case for dialogue

The labour chapter, short as it is, may well be the most radical political statement on the topic to be found within or around the World Social Forum.

The WSF has so far proven weak, general and cautious on the general question of labour, whilst producing various relevant positions on aspects thereof. I suspect that this weakness – compared with WSF positions on the environment, war or democracy – is due to two interlocked reasons. It seems to me that the core forces in the forum process are 1) still maybe marked by the previous (1970s-90s) opposition of 'new identity' to 'old interest' movements, and/or 2) that they prefer not to enter territory occupied by the traditional union internationals and the ILO. For evidence on Point 1, consider the meagre address to labour of the Anti-Neo-Liberal Agenda. Evidence on Point 2 is more difficult to come by since this is a matter of an *absence*: in this case absence of criticism or alternatives to hegemonic international union positions in an agora over whose entrance there hangs Marx's injunction, 'Criticise Everything!'.

Be this as it may, the inclusion of a chapter on labour within a manifesto with holistic intentions or pretensions is an achievement to be noted. The BA gives the labour question at least a *formal* equality with the nine others. But the Labour Chapter also gives the impression of having been patched together out of elements from different directions or sources, that are in tension with each other, or which anyway do not form a whole that is more than the sum of the parts. Some of the proposals in the chapter are existing union campaigns or aims, such as 'the constitution of effectively transnational trade-union structures' (compare Davies and Williams 2006). Others can be found in the Labour Platform mentioned above, such as address to the informal or marginal workers and to migrants. Here the chapter merely repeats or continues what is being said or done - if in an important new context. I have a further problem with the title, given that 'United Front' belongs to the historical vocabulary of the Communist International (Comintern), where it actually meant an alliance between existing parties, led by a Communist Party (United Front, Resources). This is clearly different from the new kind of dialogical/dialectical relationship in which it is assumed that all parties involved are (open to being) transformed. I note the brevity and generality of this chapter. It is both shorter and less specific than the one on peasants (reflecting the existence of a *major new* global peasant/farmer movement within the GJ&SM?). It is *behind* both the union internationals and the Labour Platform in so far as 'women' do not even appear within it. In sum, the chapter represents an innovation in degree or of issue rather than one of underlying social theory or ethical principle. Yet such inspirations are surely both necessary to the case of labour and consistent with the stated intentions of the BA. If the international union movement is in relative or absolute decline, and if it is in the deepest crisis of its 150 year history, surely more is called for?

Now, there has, over the last 15 or 20 years, been considerable debate about 'Social Movement Unionism' or the 'New Social Unionism' (reviewed Waterman 2004). There has been considerable innovatory feminist writing here too, primarily, of course, on working women (Chhachhi and Pittin 1996, Hale and Wills 2005). Recently this kind of challenge has been added to significantly by the protests of and theoretical/strategic discussion around the 'precariat', at least in Western Europe (Euro Mayday 2004). Hardt and Negri, in their latest controversial book, have a challenging chapter on labour (Hardt and Negri 2004:Ch. 2.1). This argues that 'work' (labour carried out for capital) is undergoing a fundamental transformation, that the 'multitude' (their alternative to 'people', 'masses', 'working class', 'worker-peasant alliance') are all those who do so work for capital and who can thus potentially refuse this rule (2004:106). This suggests, simultaneously, a relativisation of the traditional proletarian (and his typical organisation), but a considerable extension of the role of labour within a movement for global social emancipation. Given the marginal role of the labour question within our new

movement, this is a powerful and positive argument, potentially attractive to radical unions, union radicals and labour activists beyond.

This chapter, furthermore – like the Labour Platform - only gestures in the direction of labour internationalism, whereas there has been much movement innovation here and various attempts to formulate a 'new labour internationalism' or 'global labour solidarity' – sometimes in relation to the new movement (Waterman and Timms 2004). Whilst much of this innovation has been within labour *studies* rather than within the labour *movement* more generally, it surely needs to be fed into any such innovatory and emancipatory labour strategy as Labour Chapter presumably intends. I do not wish to make excessive claims for my own contributions to formulating a new kind of global social movement unionism. But they might allow for a stimulating 'compare and contrast' exercise with the existing chapter (**Appendix 2**). Any such exercise would anyway be only a part of a more general and more global dialogue.

I am not, however, here concerned with awarding white, pink or red marks to the Labour Chapter. I am simply suggesting the value, even the necessity, of an extensive global dialogue around the Bamako Appeal as a whole. Being familiar with the charter of the World March of Women, I suspects that many feminists (and feminisms!) would have a similar attitude towards the BA chapter on women. (For feminist criticisms of the WSF itself see, AFM 2005, Obando 2005). I note, moreover, 'missing' chapters: there is nothing on indigenous peoples and movements – despite their demonstrated significance in Mexico and Bolivia. There is nothing on religious and communal fundamentalism – which cannot be simply ignored or dismissed as a by-product of imperialism. For a document drafted by political-economists, it is surprisingly silent on the informatisation of capital, labour and society (Hardt and Negri 2004, Huws 2006). The Internet only appears in a sub-chapter on 'management' of the media!

One could and should, of course, continue with – indeed start with - the general theoretical approach, analysis and strategy represented by the introductory part of the BA (i.e. that part issued by the authors and not submitted for discussion at the initiating event)! But I have to leave this task for others.

4. Conclusion: the Janus-faced nature of the WSF and the GJ&SM

The 'Modern Janus', according to Tom Nairn (1975) is - or was at least then - nationalism. Referring to the Bamako Appeal as a post-modern Janus is not simply a rhetorical device (although it is obviously this also). My intention is to record the significant transformation *of capitalist society or civilisation* related to that from a national-industrial-(anti-)colonial capitalism to a globalised-networked-informatised one. By transformation I mean such a dramatic development that all the characteristics of the previous phase are relativised. This means relativising also the stable understandings of such, the ruling commonsense. And that means also recognising the extent to which there is, or needs to be, *a significant transformation within the emancipatory movement*. In this case the transformation needs to be from the single subject, and simple formula, of the *Communist Manifesto* (Proletariat-Internationalism-Revolution-Socialism) to recognition of today's 'many-headed hydra' (Linebaugh and Rediker 2001), and its need for a 'world that allows for many others' (another Zapatista expression).

In suggesting that the Bamako Appeal faces the political past as well as the social future, I do not see that it is here on its own, nor that it represents some unique new threat to the WSF and the GJ&SM more generally. I would myself still consider the greatest threat to the new movement to be some kind of global neo-keynesianism, in which smart capitalists, imaginative statespeople, dependent academics and counter-elites (from the unions, left parties, academia and the new movements) settle for the more-civilised capitalism suggested by the UN's Global Compact, the International Labour Organisation's 'Decent Work' (Brand 2006, Waterman 2005b, Waterman 2006), and, for that matter, the Labour Platform for the Americas itself! Here I would echo those feminists who have said that those women who seek equality with men lack ambition.

The Bamako Appeal reveals the distance travelled by the Dependency theorists and Thirdworldists since, well, Bandung, the impact on them of the new movement. It also suggests tensions between their old positions and the new ones. If, moreover, we were to consider the

history of such emancipatory manifestos since 1789 or 1848, we would see – or should see - to what extent each of these was a prisoner of that which it intended to liberate us all from. The same goes for the WSF itself, for the GJ&SM in general – unless one is going to do a selective reading which identifies only the innovatory or emancipatory elements (or those we prefer to consider so). Thus the WSF was launched by a number of mostly-male, mostly-white, mostly-middle-aged, mostly Euro-Latino personalities, themselves coming out of the Janus-faced world of non-governmental organisations, with these NGOs highly dependent on the equally Janus-faced world of national party or state support, Northern development funding agencies and corporate foundations. All this has been extensively discussed elsewhere, as has the relationship of dependence-on/autonomy-from nation-states, political parties, statespersons, municipal authorities and inter-state agencies (for an original and radical statement here, see again Adamovsky 2006).

Here a parenthesis might be in order. It is, admittedly, a new point but it might provoke further reflection on emancipatory social movements and internationalisms. This is the position of André Drainville. Self-associated with the Situationist International of the 1960s (a libertarian cultural movement with, I recall, limited international spread or internationalist activity), he finds the WSF itself to stand in a long and ignoble tradition of programmatic internationals. With the partial exception of Marx's first one, Drainville finds that the following (would-be) emancipatory internationals began with some procrustean ideology, with which they attempted to squeeze or stretch such masses or classes as they cared to address. He concludes:

> 'That 'Another World is Possible' has become the ensign of the left's common sense. For all its engaging cheerfulness, and for all the hope and energy that can be drawn from it…this slogan advertises the wrong kind of anti-capitalist politics. Aping the ways of the ruling class is a sure way to fall into easy ambushes…This is no less true now that governance is trying to humanise neo-liberal concepts of control than it was when Gramsci wrote. Rather than abide by the immense condescension of drawers of programmes wishing to order and stabilise the global movement of multitude, we need to think from concepts of resistance that are drawn from what men and women acting against capitalist restructuring have already invented; rather than consider those inventions too small or not political enough for the world-restructuring task at hand, we need to think with enough imagination to see the relative coherence – and thus the depth and the strength - of what is being born of present circumstances. (I cite from a draft of Drainville 2006)'

Drainville seems to consider all such efforts as bearing the devil's footprint of the Comintern. Yet I (someone who grew up in this very tradition) have been rather energetically defending the production of charters, declarations and manifestos. Perhaps this is because I see these condensations of thought and calls to action as themselves having roots in or being inspired by movements they then, true, have tried to dominate and instrumentalise. If they had had *no* such contact, these internationals would have moved no one. My defence of manifestos is also due to confidence that the 'emancipatory subjects' we are seeking have, at least today, education and – in the case of at least some of their local leaders – internet access. The 'immense condescension of drawers of programmes' only applies, surely, to those draughtspeople who *fail to structure into their projects* the on-going feedback from those they claim to speak for.

But forget for a moment the masses being condescended to: *I*, armed with all the (problematic) faculties and facilities of my class, profession, gender, ethnic origin, income group, age and national identity, *I* find these documents essential. The same goes for the famous 'Beginners Guides', with their customarily disrespectful treatment of solemn subjects (see Adamovksy 2005, now available via Amazon, and Rius 2003, now available from Walmart!). And for the Wikipedia (Resources), which reveals its artisan, collectively- created and provisional nature. I have neither the time nor the skill to become myself an expert on urban housing, agricultural production, gender budgeting - even the precariat, migrant and women workers - on indigenous peoples, the position(s) of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals. Their documents, or those drawn up 'on their behalf', allow me to orient myself within an increasingly diverse and complex world of struggle. That such may reproduce capitalist, religious or old failed emancipatory movement understandings and strategies, I take

for granted. But this only obliges me to read them critically. And to make such critical assessment available to others. Which I suppose is what I am trying to do here.

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6. To Build a Workers' United Front

Two of the principal weapons in the hands of workers are the right to vote and the right to form trade unions. Up to now democracy and trade unions were built mainly within the national states. Now, however, neo-liberal globalisation has challenged the workers the world over, and globalised capitalism cannot be confronted at the national level alone. Today, the task is twofold: to strengthen organising on a national level and simultaneously globalise democracy and reorganise a worldwide working class.

Mass unemployment and the increasing proportion of informal work arrangements are other imperative reasons to reconsider the existing organisations of the laboring classes. A world strategy for labor must consider not only the situation of workers who work under stable contracts. Employment out of the formal sectors now involves an increasing portion of workers, even in the industrialised countries. In the majority of the countries of the South, the workers of the informal sector – temporary labor, informal labor, the self-employed, the unemployed, street salespeople, those who sell their own services — together form the majority of the laboring classes. These groups of informal workers are growing in the majority of the countries of the South because of high unemployment and a two-sided process: on the one hand, the decreasing availability of guaranteed employment and increased informal employment, and on the other hand, the continuous migration from the rural areas to the towns. The most important task will be for workers outside the formal sector to organise themselves and for the traditional trade unions to open up in order to carry out common actions.

The traditional trade unions have had problems responding to this challenge. Not all the organisations of the workers - except in the formal sectors - will necessarily be trade unions or similar organisations and the traditional trade unions will also have to change. New perspectives for organising together, based on horizontal bonds and mutual respect, must develop between the traditional trade unions and the new social movements. For this purpose, the following proposals are submitted for consideration:

1. An opening of the trade unions towards collaboration with the other social movements without trying to subordinate them to the traditional trade-union structure or a specific political party.

2. The constitution of effectively transnational trade-union structures in order to confront transnational employers. These trade-union structures should have a capacity to negotiate and at the same time have a mandate to organise common actions beyond national borders. For this purpose, an important step would be to organise strong trade-union structures within transnational corporations. These corporations have a complex network of production and are often very sensitive to any rupture in the chains of production and distribution, that is, they are vulnerable. Some successes in the struggles against the transnational corporations could have a real impact on the world balance of power between capital and labor.

3. Technological development and structural change are necessary to improve living conditions and eradicate poverty, but the relocations of production are not carried out today in the interest of the workers; instead, they are exclusively profit-driven. It is necessary to promote a gradual improvement of the wages and working conditions, to expand local production along with local demand and a system of negotiation to carry out relocation in other ways than simply following the logic of profit and free trade. These relocations could fit under transnational negotiation in order to prevent workers of the various countries from being forced to enter in competition with each other in a relentless battle.

4. To consider the rights of migrant worker as a basic concern for the trade unions by ensuring that solidarity among workers is not dependent on their national origin. Indeed, segregation and discrimination on ethnic or other bases are threats to working-class solidarity.

5. To take care so that the future transnational organisation of the laboring class is not conceived as a unique, hierarchical and pyramidal structure, but as a variety of various types of organisations, with a network-like structure with many horizontal bonds.

6. To promote a labor front in reorganised structures that also include workers outside the formal sector throughout the world, capable of taking effective coordinated actions to confront globalised capitalism.

Only such a renewed movement of workers, worldwide, inclusive and acting together with other social movements will be able to transform the present world and to create a world order founded on solidarity rather than on competition.

**A New Social Unionism, Internationalism,
Communication and Culture:
A Sketch**

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[Adapted from an appendix in Waterman 2004]

A New Social Unionism

By a new social unionism is meant a labour movement surpassing existing models of 'economic', 'political' or 'political-economic' unionism, by addressing itself to all forms of work, by taking on socio-cultural forms, and addressing itself to civil society. Such a union model would be one which, amongst other characteristics, would be:

- Struggling within and around waged work, not simply for better wages and conditions but for increased worker and union control over the labour process, investments, new technology, relocation, subcontracting, training and education policies. Such strategies and struggles should be carried out in dialogue and common action with affected communities and interests so as to avoid conflicts (eg with environmentalists, with women) and to positively increase the appeal of the demands;
- Struggling against hierarchical, authoritarian and technocratic working methods and relations, for socially-useful and environmentally-friendly products, for a reduction in the hours of work, for the distribution of that which is available and necessary, for the sharing of domestic work, and for an increase in free time for cultural self-development and self-realisation;
- Intimately related with the movements of other non-unionised or non-unionisable working classes or categories (the precariat, petty-commodity sector, homeworkers, peasants, housewives, technicians and professionals);
- Intimately articulated with other non- or multi-class democratic movements (base movements of churches, women's, residents', ecological, human-rights and peace movements, etc) in the effort to create a powerful and diverse civil society;
- Intimately articulated with other (potential) allies as an autonomous, equal and democratic partner, neither claiming to be, nor subordinating itself to, a 'vanguard' or 'primary' organisation or power;
- Taking up the new social issues within society at large, as they arise for workers specifically and as they express themselves within the union itself (struggle against authoritarianism, majoritarianism, bureaucracy, sexism, racism, etc);
- Favouring shopfloor democracy and encouraging direct horizontal relations both between workers and between the workers and other popular/democratic social forces;
- Active on the terrain of education, culture and communication, stimulating worker and popular culture, supporting initiatives for democracy and pluralism both inside and outside the dominant institutions or media, locally, nationally, globally;
- Open to networking both within and between organisations, understanding the value of informal, horizontal, flexible coalitions, alliances and interest groups to stimulate organisational democracy, pluralism and innovation.

A New Labour Internationalism

In so far as a new labour internationalism addresses itself to the problems of a globalised networked capitalism (of which inter-state relations are but one part), this would have to see itself as part of a general global solidarity movement, from which it must learn and to which it must contribute. A new kind of labour internationalism implies, amongst other things:

- Moving from the international relations of union or other officials towards face-to-face relations of concerned labouring people at the shopfloor, community or grassroots level;
- Surpassing dependence on the centralised, bureaucratic and rigid model of the pyramidal international organisation by stimulating the self-empowering, decentralised, horizontal, democratic and flexible model of the international information network;
- Moving from an 'aid model' (one-way flows of money and material from the 'rich, powerful, free' unions, workers or others), to a 'solidarity model' (two-way or multi-directional flows of political support, information and ideas);
- Moving from verbal declarations, appeals and conferences to political activity, creative work, visits, or direct financial contributions (which will continue to be necessary) by the working people concerned;
- Basing international solidarity on the expressed daily needs, values and capacities of ordinary working people, not simply on those of their representatives;
- Recognising that whilst labour is not the privileged bearer of internationalism, it is essential to it, and therefore articulating itself with other democratic internationalisms, so as to reinforce wage-labour struggles and surpass a workerist internationalism;
- Overcoming ideological, political and financial dependency in international solidarity work by financing internationalist activities from worker or publicly-collected funds, and stimulating autonomous (independent of capital/state) research activities and policy formulation;
- Replacing the political/financial coercion, the private collusion and public silences of the traditional internationalisms, with a frank, friendly, constructive and public discourse of equals, made accessible to interested workers.
- Recognising that there is no single site or level of international struggle and that, whilst the shopfloor, grassroots and community may be the base, the traditional formal terrains can be used and can also be influenced;
- Recognising that the development of a new internationalism requires contributions from and discussion with labour movements in West, East and South, as well as within and between other socio-geographic regions.

Elements of such an understanding can be found within both international union pronouncements and practice. It is, I think, becoming the common sense amongst left labour internationalists, although some still seem to consider labour (or even union) internationalism as the one that leads, or ought to lead, the new wave of struggles against neo-liberal globalisation. Yet others are beginning to go beyond ideal types to spell out global labour/popular and democratic alternatives to 'globalisation-from-above' in both programmatic and relational terms.

Internationalism, Labour Internationalism, Union Internationalism

We need to distinguish between the concepts of 'internationalism', 'labour internationalism and 'union internationalism'. Within social movement discourse, *internationalism* is customarily associated with 19th century labour, with socialism and Marxism. It *may* be projected backwards so as to include the ancient religious universalisms, or the liberal cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment. And it *should* be extended, in both the 19th and 20th century, so as to include women's/feminist, pacifist, anti-imperial and human rights forms. In so far as it is limited to these two centuries, and to a 'world of nation states', we need a new term for the era of globalisation. Some talk of 'global solidarity', in so far as it is addressed to globalisation, its discontents and alternatives. As for *labour internationalism* this refers to a wide range of past and present labour-related ideas, strategies and practices, including those of co-operatives, labour and socialist parties, socialist intellectuals, culture, the media and even sport. As for *union internationalism* this is restricted to the primary form of worker self-articulation during the national-industrial-colonial era. Trade union internationalism has so displaced or dominated

labour internationalism during the later 20th century as to be commonly conflated with the latter. Yet it is precisely *union* internationalism that is most profoundly in crisis, and in question, under our globalised networked capitalism.

Networking, Communications, Culture

We really need an additional, even an alternative, principle of worker self-articulation (meaning both joining and expression) appropriate to our era. In other words, we need one that would continually and effectively undermine the reproduction of bureaucracy, hierarchy, and dogma that occurs also within 'radical' and 'revolutionary' unions.

This principle is the *network*, and the practice is *networking*. There is no need to fetishise the network or to demonise the organisation. 'Networking' is also a way of understanding human interrelations, and we can therefore see an organisation in network terms, just as we can look at a network in organisational ones. Nonetheless, it remains true that the movement from an inter/national-industrial to a globalised-networked political-economy is also one from an organised to a networked capitalism. It is from the international labour networks and networking that the new initiatives, speed, creativity, and flexibility tend to come. An international unionism concerned with being radical-democratic and internationalist will learn this, or it will stagnate. International union networking itself will stagnate if it does not recognise itself as a part of a radical-democratic internationalist project that goes far beyond the unions, far beyond labour problems.

'Networking' relates to communication rather than institutions. International labour networking must be informed by and produce a radical-democratic style of communication and sense of culture...a 'global solidarity culture'.

Labour has a long and rich cultural history and has in the past innovated and even led popular, democratic, and even avant-garde cultural movements. Once again, international trade unionism has to either surpass its reductionist self-definition or remain invisible in the international media arena, which is increasingly challenging and even replacing the institutional terrain as the central site of democratic contestation and deliberation.

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