

Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation

**There's a fair distance to cover to get from a
coalition of anti-globalisations to an alliance
for another globalisation**

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We can ask ourselves: what is needed today? An anti-globalisation coalition or the creation of an alliance for another globalisation? And, if indeed there is to be an alliance, what should be its agenda, its goals, its methods, its steps and its proposals?

As long as it's a question of opposition, a coalition suffices and conflicts of interest, simplifications and analyses of an approximate nature hardly matter since what really counts is being more numerous and more powerful. However, the challenge is of a quite different nature if we advocate not only opposition but also, and above all, the building of another world: asserting that another world and another form of globalisation are not just possible but, more importantly, are essential. A very different sort of challenge emerges if we consider that the issue at stake is the very survival of humanity insofar as evidence shows that current social and ecological models have reached a dead-end and that current regulations between states are no longer adapted to ensuring peace and justice.

This first requires a broader right of usage of words. The imprecise character of the concepts involved is suitable for a catch-all strategy and for attracting the attention of the media but forms an important obstacle to the building of perspectives.

There is only one word in English for globalisation, although this term can be used to define the action of numerous global forces, some of which are directly opposed to one another. Thus, confusion arises when proponents of the "anti-globalisation" movement say that they are defenders of "another sort of globalisation" or when those who develop democratic and efficient global regulations declare themselves opposed to the notion of world governance.

To avoid confusion a distinction must be made between two different forms of globalisation: between what can be called on one hand, a "positive globalisation", and, on the other, a "market-driven globalisation".

Positive globalisation involves taking into account the irreversible interdependencies that exist between all the societies and all the individuals on this planet. From internet to the greenhouse effect, from the interconnection of ideas and monetary currencies to that of ecosystems, from the competition for access to fossil fuels to the circulation of music. We are all in the same boat, a fragile boat that could well be a Titanic heading straight for an iceberg and finding itself sinking with both first and second class passengers trapped on board. This is a positive globalisation's primary message. We must change course while we still have time, but this requires identifying common perspectives and piloting methods. Consciousness of the notion of humanity was limited to philosophical concepts before 1940. But humanity became a legal entity after the Holocaust and, today, the notion of crimes against humanity has provided the justification for the creation of an international tribunal. Ensuring the progressive emergence of a genuine global community equipped with regulatory abilities is the twenty-first century's big challenge. At the end of World War II the "citizens of the world", were conscious of this fact, as were the founders of the UN. The first, however, were idealists, wanting to immediately establish a world government, and their movement faded away. The second were realists and limited their "union of the Earth's peoples" to international institutions that, as a result of the radical heterogeneousness of states, ultimately led to either jammed-up procedures or American hegemony. It was in fact the European strategy of progressive construction of a supranational body, with mechanisms designed to prevent

backtracking, that turned out to be the most positive movement. We shouldn't forget that it was conceived, from its inception, as only a first step towards a world federation.

The emergence of a world civil society, that uses global meetings (its own and those of others), that benefits from the internet phenomenon and deals simultaneously with political, ecological, economic and cultural issues, is nothing more than the expression of a positive globalisation. From this point of view, whether their respective participants like it or not, Davos and Porto Alegre are more similar than they are opposed! They both create spaces for dialogue and platforms for public debate that are at the level of new challenges, without involving the monopoly of interstate relations.

Although it may feed on it and reinforce it, "market-driven globalisation" isn't the same thing as positive globalisation. It isn't an irreversible phenomenon: it's an ideology that, in its current form, is dangerous. In the 80s and the 90s, with the implosion of historical communism, it benefited from the death of its challenger and potential predator. The collapse of the productivist – centralised – totalitarian model found in the USSR and China made it possible for a right-wing thought system, until then subject to some containment, to assert the universal character of pseudo economic laws, to herald the end of history and political debate, thereby paving the way for the timeless reign of market forces.

The anti- market-driven globalisation coalition (and not simply "anti-globalisation" coalition as it is frequently referred to in the media), reflects the numerous forms of reaction to this perilous trend. This "enough's enough" coalition signals an awakening that has occurred following a long period of lethargy; a cry of protest, a call to give more precedence to life, history and democracy than to the grey routine of patents, mergers, power rationales and the formatting of thought. But once this awakening has occurred it becomes necessary to get to work, to build, and this requires establishing an agenda.

The first step is to identify diversities and make them the starting point. Neither Davos nor Porto Alegre really represented the world's diversity. China, Africa, the countries of what was the Soviet empire, the Indian subcontinent and Muslim countries were either absent or nearly so. Western or Westernised businessmen and politicians could be found at Davos while Porto Alegre hosted NGOs that, for the most part, were funded by Western countries. In other words, whether considered in social, professional or geographic terms, only a minority of the world was represented. The assortment of current global issues that the two forums dealt with didn't benefit from a broad world perspective. Building an alliance for another, positive, globalisation and contributing to the building of a global community should, on the contrary, be rooted in the world's diversities and should involve seeking out the common ground from which to address common challenges.

What diversities should be the starting point? Geocultural diversity, of course. Each people should be fairly represented with respect to its numerical importance so as to put an end to the recipe of "one Western horse, one Asian or African lark". But perhaps even more important than geocultural diversity is the diversity of social and professional milieus. For our globalised society is an "organ pipe" society in which, with the help of

internet, some milieus – big companies, NGOs, scientists, etc. – exchange ideas from one corner of the world to another while neighbours, meanwhile, drift further and further apart. To establish a real exchange between milieus and points of view, it is first of all necessary for points of view to exist and be built. Within milieus, international networks of individuals conscious of their responsibilities with regard to the world and the future need to take form. There exists a rift within milieus between corporatism – both right-wing and left-wing – and potential participants of an alliance for another globalisation. Once “collegial communities” of individuals conscious of their responsibilities appear within a milieu a dialogue can take place with other milieus so as to identify common challenges.

And what should be debated? For which issues should we develop new perspectives? In democracy and in companies, the definition of problems and the fixing of the terms of a debate count more than the negotiation itself when it comes to developing strategies for change. By limiting democracy to the staging of contradictions and debates between opposing positions, and by limiting history to the outcome of collisions between opposing interests, whether national or class oriented, we fail to grasp what is at stake in politics: the emergence of progressively bigger communities capable of organising the regulations needed for survival and development. This polis, this community that should emerge, is, today, planetary. A strategy for lasting peace isn't limited to a series of conflicts followed by treaties that are always temporary: it is a strategy of co-operative conflict in which differences and opposing interests are expressed and are accompanied by a search for modes of co-operation. This is why the process of identification of common challenges is today at the heart of every strategy of an alliance for another globalisation.

Is this identification possible? Is the diversity of cultures, outlooks and interests not a major obstacle to dialogue? Supposing such a dialogue is possible: can it lead to the emergence of common challenges and strategies for change? Is it possible to break away from specialised outlooks so as to develop a more global, more systemic approach to emerging changes? Is it far-fetched to imagine finding individuals, belonging to each social and professional milieu, that are ready to recognise and live up to their responsibilities and participate in a process of conflictual co-operation, at the risk of being called idealists by some, traitors to the cause by others? All these questions have become even more significant since the September 11th, for people are beginning to understand that with simplifications we end up with crusades and that with crusades we end up at war. Thus, these questions are at the heart of the process of work and dialogue that we call the “Alliance for a responsible, plural and united world.” And they were at the heart of the World Citizens Assembly that was conceived within the Alliance and backed by the Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humanity (FPH) and that took place at Lille from the second to the tenth of December 2001.

Within the Alliance framework (www.alliance21.org) various “colleges” were created – bringing together people of different nationalities belonging to the same milieu – and thematical workshops also took shape – drafting perspectives for change in education, ethics, science, the economy, governance and the management of natural resources.

These colleges and workshops produced nearly sixty “proposal booklets”, containing more than fifteen hundred proposals. Is it possible to take this body of work and identify common strategic axes? The answer is: yes, it’s possible.

A comparable experiment was carried out at the World Citizens Assembly. Here, four hundred participants reflected on the diversity of global society. The issues to be debated weren’t decided upon in advance. The participants created their own agenda and identified their shared concerns. And these have turned out to be very similar in nature to the strategic axes produced by the Alliance.

It’s difficult to summarise what came out of all this activity in a few words: the more general the formulation the more trite it seems. But, in reality, the strategic axes have emerged precisely because they are at the points of intersection of concerns and proposals coming from diverse backgrounds. This gives them a federative capacity without which a democratic society can’t conduct major transformations. In a way, they epitomise “common sense”.

The strategic priorities are located within three big fields: thought systems (our outlook on the world and the motivations underlying our actions); systems of production and the organisation of economic and social life; systems of regulation, i.e., governance. They all reflect a basic premise: in a world that has, for the last two centuries, been pulled along, with ever increasing speed, by evolutions in technology and the economy, our value and educative systems and our modes of regulation have evolved much more slowly, resulting in a dangerously unbalanced situation. This unbalance must be rectified.

The first big field of change is that of values and thought systems. The international community needs a common ethical base that can serve, as a compliment to human rights, as the foundation for personal and collective commitments as well as international law and world governance. The Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World has proposed that a Human Responsibilities Charter become the third pillar of the international community, alongside the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Charter. The Charter project, debated and amended by the Lille Assembly’s participants, rests on an enlarged definition of responsibility in which the extent of one’s responsibility is to be commensurate with the importance of the individual’s knowledge and power, and inclusive of the direct or indirect impact of his/her acts. This approach to responsibility has considerable practical consequences. For example, it makes it possible to establish the principle of precaution, to promote equitable trade and responsible financial dealings and, in the case of international debt, to define the respective responsibilities of lenders, governing authorities and peoples. It encourages each professional milieu to develop a code of conduct grounded in a commitment to its responsibilities. The Charter also calls for respect, dignity and tolerance. It thus supplies the other facet of rights: the guarantees that the rights of others will be respected. Also, it leads us to look upon the diversity of knowledge, cultures and ecosystems as part of a common heritage. Refusing to patent the living world, for instance, is an aspect of a commitment to dignity without which there would be no justifiable limit to the instrumentalisation of nature and human beings. Finally, the Charter places the accent on

human beings rather than on “having”. This prioritisation leads us to seek developmental models in which the consumption of merchandise is no longer the standard by which individual and collective progress is measured. Responsibility, respect and putting human beings first all contribute to building a culture of partnership and peace.

The proposals that appeared within the Alliance framework reveal the great diversity of changes that would occur with the application of the Human Responsibilities Charter in the fields of education (e.g., the respect of the diversity of knowledge), science (e.g., the social responsibility of scientists), the economy (e.g., international trade being subject to a common hierarchy of rules aimed at preserving diversity), governance (e.g., the development of partnerships in the management of the common good), ecosystems (e.g., the extension of the notion of the common good and the application of the principle of precaution).

The evolution of values should be accompanied by that of thought systems. A world as interdependent as ours can't limit itself to a segmented, compartmentalised view of human beings, society, knowledge and the biosphere. Education, aimed at teaching about human beings and the world, can't be focused on the transmission of discipline-oriented knowledge. It should be an introduction to common values, a means of understanding the world's challenges and of preparing future citizens to be actors in their history. And it is the same priorities of interdependence, responsibility, democracy and solidarity that should permit the re-orientation of public efforts in the fields of research and technical development.

The second big field of change concerns systems of production and economic and social life. It is a multiform reaction against an economic model that puts mercantile exchange and monetary value at the centre of the economy and society. Industrial and territorial ecology, that draws attention to material exchanges between companies or between local communities and their environment rather than just focusing on monetary exchanges; the valorisation of exchanges independent of their monetary counterpart; establishing social capital within companies; the possibility of organising a controlled flow of exchanges at every level, creating ties as much as goods: a movement is occurring of progressive unification between innovations and scattered experiments, some that derive their inspiration from the idea of durable development, others from that of a humanised economy, others, finally, from the will to break away from the determinisms and dead-ends of the all-mighty global market.

The third and biggest field of change concerns governance, i.e., all of the regulations established by societies aimed at ensuring social cohesiveness and long-term development. Governance reform is, in terms of the sheer quantity of proposals, the number one priority emerging from both the World Citizens Assembly and the work of the Alliance. This priority appears at all levels – from the local to the global levels – and in all fields – from the management of eco-systems to the reform of financial systems. The scientific and economic upheavals of the last two centuries force us to rethink the modes and levels of regulation, including those of democracy or the organisation of states

whose foundations date, for the most part, to before the industrial revolution. The vast array of proposals can be grouped into four big chapters.

The first chapter deals with the organisation of governance, at all levels, from the local to the global, that is legitimate, democratic and efficient. That these three values have eroded is the chapter's central premise. Around the world the gulf is widening between governance's legality – its conformity with constitutional rules – and its legitimacy – the population's impression that it is justified in giving up liberty for the needs of the common good. Democracy, in particular representative democracy, loses much of its substance when the conditions for transparency aren't guaranteed, when no real counterbalances to power exist and when the genuine motors of change can neither be accessed nor controlled by the society's citizens. And our compartmentalised public systems' ability to efficiently deal with new challenges is questionable. One of governance's main challenges today is harmonising the need for local societies to benefit from some control over their future with the need for co-operation between different levels of governance with regard to the management of interdependencies. This requires, at the global level as well as the European or municipal levels, the application of the active subsidiarity principle, which defines the mechanisms for co-operation between levels of governance.

The second chapter deals, first, with international structures for different socio-professional milieus and social agents conscious of their responsibilities, secondly, with the organisation of partnerships between agents and public authorities. We move away from a rigid dichotomy between public and private spheres. Governance is no longer limited, nor even has as priority, the organisation of public services. The management of the common good requires that everyone assert their responsibilities and co-operate, and it is this that needs to be organised. There will be no democratic governance at a global level as long as the different social agents don't also adopt structures at this level.

The third chapter concerns governance's role in protecting the rights of the weakest. The first priority of public regulations is rebalancing cumulative economic and social mechanisms that concentrate power in the hands of increasingly powerful countries, unions and business lobbies, or individuals. Whether dealing with the terms of negotiation, for the poorest or weakest countries, or the rules of international relations, or the possibility, within each country, for the weakest to have their rights defended and be full-fledged citizens, this rebalancing effort is urgent today.

Finally, the fourth chapter concerns the creation of new public regulations adapted to humanity's new social and ecological challenges and opposed to the total domination of mercantile relations. From water and soil management to the reform of monetary systems, from the limiting of individual property to the defining or preservation of common goods, this chapter encompasses and structures many of the concerns of the anti-market-driven globalisation movement. To succeed at bringing about effective change, beyond victories that are more symbolic than anything else (e.g., the abandoning of the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI)), these concerns should be structured into a coherent alternative vision and lead to the creation of a new architecture

for global governance. The alliance has made detailed proposals pointing in this direction.

Thought systems, systems of production, systems of governance. It is because the changes will be enormous, therefore long, that it is necessary and urgent to carry them out. Only an approach that is in harmony with the goals we set has a chance of succeeding: a democratic approach, whose starting point is diversity, from the bottom up, linking proposals, perspectives, information, creative initiatives and individual energies coming from the world's various regions and milieus. This, in my mind, is the real agenda for another globalisation.