Towards global political parties

Heikki Patomäki*
Department of Political and Economic Research, University of Helsinki, Finland

Abstract
While the transnational public sphere has existed in the Arendtian sense at least since the mid-19th century, a new kind of reflexively political global civil society emerged in the late 20th century. However, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), advocacy groups, and networks have limited agendas and legitimacy and, without the support of at least one state, limited means to realise changes. Since 2001, the World Social Forum (WSF) has formed a key attempt in forging links and ties of solidarity among diverse actors. Although the WSF may seem a party of opinion when defined negatively against neoliberal globalisation, imperialism, and violence, in more positive ideological terms it remains a rather incoherent collection of diverse actors; while itself defined as a mere open space. There is a quest for new forms of agency such as a world political party. Various historical predecessors of global political parties, real and imagined, provide conceptual resources, useful experiences for envisaging the structure, and function of a possible planetary party-formation. H.G. Wells’s ‘open conspiracy’ is a particularly important future-oriented left-democratic vision. Wells believed that only a mass movement of truly committed individuals and groups could have the power to transform the world political organisation, by creating a democratic world commonwealth. Recently, for instance, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have formulated similar ideas. I argue that transformative political agency presupposes a shared programme, based on common elements of a wider and deeper world-view, and willingness to engage in processes of collective will-formation in terms of democratic procedures. From this perspective, I outline a possible organisation and some substantial directions for a global political party. The point is also to respond to the criticism of existing parties and cultivate the critical-pluralist ethos of global civil society, but in terms of democratic party-formation.

Keywords: Arendt; citizenship; civil society; participation; political party; republicanism; rotation; Wells; world parliament; World Social Forum

Global civil society emerged in the wake of the new critical social movements. The concept of global civil society surfaced a bit later, in 1989–1991, at the time of the end of the Cold War and birth of the Internet. Since then, it has become part of the common ethico-political language. Many political theorists and critical political economists have attributed transformative hope, understood in terms of peace, justice, democracy, and sustainability, to global civil society. Is this hope normatively

*Correspondence to: Department of Political and Economic Research, P.O. Box 54, FI-00014, University of Helsinki, Finland. Email: heikki.patomaki@helsinki.fi

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Citation: Ethics & Global Politics, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2011, pp. 81–102. DOI: 10.3402/egp.v4i2.7334
desirable and geo-historically grounded? Are there lacks and absences these theorists might have omitted?

In 2000–2001, in response to the growing dominance of neoliberalism, a self-consciously political part of global civil society formed the World Social Forum (WSF). The aspirations that have been attributed to the WSF are ambiguous. The main slogan is ‘another world is possible’. The implicit promise is that the WSF can facilitate the bringing about of a better world and yet, the main organising principle is that of an open space. How could a mere open space make another world possible unless the only political aspiration of participants concerns the form of togetherness itself? Political agency requires transformative capacity, which a mere open space necessarily lacks.

The dilemmas of global civil society have re-opened the question about transformative political agency in an explicitly planetary context. Legitimate and efficacious collective agency in world politics requires the creation of systemically organised social structures, which make it possible to turn reflectively conscious individual human agency into transformative collective agency. In the following, I analyse the dilemmas and contradictions of contemporary global civil society; and discuss a possible form of future transformative agency. I understand a world political party as an open and generic ethico-political association constituted by a collective programme of societal re-organisation. In their capacity as members and democratically elected representatives of the party, the supporters of this programme can pursue their common agenda in various public spaces.

The idea of a global political party raises a number of critical questions. Given the absence—at this world historical conjuncture—of representative planetary institutions such as a global parliament, what could a global political party actually mean; and what could it do? Moreover, how could a global political party respond adequately to the criticism faced by the prevailing national political parties while, at the same time, cultivate the critical-pluralist ethos of global civil society, so prevalent for instance in the WSF? And how might global political parties come about? In the normative and future-oriented spirit of the early World Orders Model Project, I conclude by outlining a possible way of organising a world political party, grounded on the lessons of the past experiences as well as on relevant thought experiments.

**THE HISTORICAL RISE OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVITIES**

According to Hannah Arendt, the public sphere, or the ‘space of appearance’, comes into being whenever actors are together in the manner of speech and action. This kind of space precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government or governance and ways of organising political life. In this sense, the meeting on 28 September 1864 for the reception of the French workers’ delegates that took place in St. Martin’s Hall, London, and established the basis for the First International, evoked a transnational public sphere. In various manifestations, the transnational public sphere was very much in existence in the pre-1914...
Europe. Some of these manifestations started to attract also non-European participants, especially from within the British and French Empires. How explicitly and self-reflexively political were these efforts? The answer depends also on our conception of the political.

Usually, the 19th- and 20th-century movements—especially liberalist and socialist, but also feminist—focused on state powers and articulated their universalism in terms of ‘internationalism’. The focus on state-power notwithstanding, a series of new multi-lateral and cosmopolitan visions emerged during the late 19th-century era of globalisation and competing neo-imperialisms. The 20th-century catastrophes interrupted and twisted the formation of a transnational public sphere, tending to re-nationalise politics. However, critical cosmopolitan activities were strikingly strong at the end, and in the immediate aftermath, of both world wars, resulting among other things in the establishment of the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations.

The so-called new social movements have arisen since 1968, at first responding to the Vietnam War and the threat of nuclear war. In the 1970s and 1980s, such new organisations as Greenpeace—the Greenpeace Foundation was established in 1971, the Greenpeace International in 1979—started to attract attention in the media and academia. The origins of Greenpeace lie in the protests against nuclear weapons testing, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the peace movement more generally, while focusing especially on ecological issues. Parallel developments occurred also in the global south, although usually on a relatively small scale, and to a degree even within the fairly closed Soviet bloc (civil society played a role in the democratisation of states in these regions). The World Order Models Project (WOMP) discussed the ‘new’ phenomena under the rubric of critical social movements; the world-systems analysis preferred to categorise these emergent actors and networks as ‘anti-systemic movements’.  

An explicitly and reflexively political global civil society surfaced in the late 1980s and early 1990s and, in this self-consciously planetary and civilisational sense, for the first time in human history. Elise Boulding discussed ‘global civic culture’ in her 1988 book, but the earliest mention of the term ‘global civil society’ seems to have been a 1991 scholarly article published by Stephen Gill. In the early 1990s, despite the existence of well-known peace and environmental organisations, and human rights advocates, global civil society actors may have looked almost as insignificant at the end of the Cold War as the Mont Pelerin society did in the 1950s or 1960s. Soon, however, civil society played an important role in the establishment of the Ban on Landmines and International Criminal Court. The Asian financial crises of 1997–1998 triggered a global mass movement that gained widespread and often dramatic attention in the global media, especially through the counter-summits to big international summits.

It was at this point that global civil society became increasingly explicit as a new global political force and constitutive of a new form of agency. It was protesting against neoliberal globalisation and professing institutional alternatives such as international debt arbitration and the Tobin tax. The ATTAC, founded in Paris.
in 1998, has been a perhaps the key building block of the movements that emerged following the crisis of 1997–1998. The acronym ATTAC was conceived before deciding what it would stand for—the idea being that it was time for more proactive politics after years of reactive opposition to neoliberalism. The idea of global taxes was a particularly appealing one.

In January 1999, various organisations started preparing a counter-event to the World Economic Forum (WEF) under the banners of ‘another Davos’ and ‘anti-Davos’. Practical difficulties of reaching Davos and ethico-political considerations concerning the importance of taking the initiative led to the idea of an alternative forum, the World Social Forum. It quickly became clear that ATTAC, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, and other influential organisations within the transnational activist networks would support the initiative. Eight Brazilian civil society organisations decided to form an Organising Committee. In March 2000 they formally secured support from the municipal government of Porto Alegre and the state government of Rio Grande do Sul, both controlled by the Workers Party PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores). The first WSF was held in Porto Alegre in January 2001. By 2004 and 2005 the Forum had become so big that the organisers began to consider alternatives to a single-event forum.

Global civil society in general, and the WSF in particular, represents continuity to the new critical social movements of 1968–1991. Many of the organisations of that earlier era remain active, but usually they operate outside the confines of the WSF and related social and political spaces. Nonetheless, also the networks of the WSF have been used to mobilise anti-war activities. Notably, a day of massive anti-war protests in February 2003 across the world against the imminent invasion of Iraq was coordinated from within the World Social Forum (WSF) process, although officially the WSF did not take a position on the war. In the 2010s, there are indications that global civil society activities may be again on the rise. For instance, global warming has been becoming an increasingly focal point of contestation in planetary politics. The idea of a global financial tax has gained new prominence due to the global financial crisis of 2008–2009.

**THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL LIMITS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVITIES**

There are diverse conceptions of global civil society and their empirical manifestations. Mary Kaldor, for instance, defines civil society as ‘the medium through which one or many social contracts between individuals, both women and men, and the political and economic centres of power are negotiated and reproduced’. This definition goes beyond standard state-centric definitions by including efforts to negotiate regional and global political contracts and to counter-balance transnational centres of power. The ‘civility’ of civil society comes from settling conflicts by peaceful means through public deliberation and in accordance with rightful legal procedures.
For Kaldor, global civil society also involves elements of active citizenship, political self-organisation, and thus expansion of democracy. The concept of global civil society in this sense is often linked to the promise of future transformations towards global democracy and social justice. Already, civil society plays a role. In the multi-layered, multi-dimensional and multi-actor systems of global governance, NGOs, and transnational advocacy networks are ‘playing a role in various domains of global governance and at various stages of the global public policymaking process’. The participants in transnational public spheres and associations create the conditions of communication that enable the exercise of public influence across diverse and dispersed institutional structures. From a critical political economy perspective, it can be further argued that global civil society involves a new ‘post-modern Prince’, which ‘may prove to be the most effective political form for giving coherence to an open-ended, plural, inclusive, and flexible form of politics and thus create alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation’.

The social conditions of successful transformations and ethico-political limits of global civil society remain under-theorised, however, with a few exceptions. Sometimes, it may be recognised that the capacity of global civil society actors to be effective ‘depends to a great extent on recognising and exploiting discursive opportunity structures by crafting framings that resonate across cultural, racial, ethnic, national, social-class and experimental boundaries’. Moreover, as Kléber Ghimire argues, the national setting and dynamics of engaging with global processes matter. Typically, civil society organisations must work with relation to the state in order to make a difference. A further point is that most civil society organisations are pushing for change in the context of a single issue or, at best, a few related issues. While they may well be capable of authentic public reasoning in that context, this does not give them deliberative authority over any other issues, and there is always the suspicion that they may be acting on behalf of sectional interests.

There are also general practical and normative limits to the use of deliberation in global governance. For instance, Christopher R. Pallans maintains that civil society organisations may lack legitimacy to serve as an authority in transnational rule- and policy-making because they are accountable only to their members, and because their constituency and membership are usually fairly limited. Andrew Kuper argues that deliberation theorists fail to take seriously the problems and opportunities of scale and demand too much from persons and institutions. So although civil society, as widely conceived, can be important in communicating ideas and demanding responsiveness, a large number of institutional mechanisms at various social layers are required to ensure democratic responsiveness and representation.

Global civil society has succeeded in bringing about some changes of policy or institutions in certain issue areas, especially peace and security, and human rights. Civil society organisations co-contributed to the end of the Cold War and to the creation of the International Criminal Court and Ban on Landmines. They have been able to further human rights, perhaps in particular women’s rights, and shape framings about the causes of extreme poverty. However, no ‘post-modern Prince’ has
risen so far. It may be argued that the opposition to neoliberal globalisation has made a contribution to the formation of agenda in some forums, but it has failed to achieve significant changes in policy or institutions. The movements and organisations taking part in the World Social Forum have not proven effective in providing alternatives to neoliberal global governance.

THE AMBIGUITIES OF THE WSF

The World Social Forum is a space that, according to its Charter of Principles, ‘brings together and interlinks only organisations and movements of civil society from all the countries in the world’.\(^{21}\) According to Article 6, ‘the meetings of the WSF do not deliberate on behalf of the WSF as a body. . . The participants in the Forum shall not be called on to take decisions as a body’.\(^{22}\) In practice, this has meant that the WSF as a body never made a declaration, for example, against the war in Iraq. According to many of its ‘founding fathers’, such as Chico Whitaker, making a declaration would be a violation of the Charter of Principles.\(^{23}\)

Debates have been waged in and around the WSF about whether it should be considered simply a space for these movements or could it become some kind of movement of movements itself. Many would like to see the WSF evolving into a fully fledged political movement, the idea being that it should make a real political difference by altering the course of globalisation. The official line in the WSF process has, however, been that political projects that go beyond the Charter of Principles can be conducted by the organisations that take part in the WSF but never by the WSF itself.

The most important attempt to move beyond the self-imposed limits for declarations and other forms of political action is the Assembly of Social Movements that has taken place in all annual events of the WSF. Should most of the participating organisations sign such declarations, they could have powerful political impact. Until now, however, the social movement declarations produced during the WSF events have not been circulated particularly widely and their impact has been relatively modest. Nevertheless, they have created controversies among the WSF organisers.

The WSF may be conceived as a parliament in the original, Latin sense of the term, as a place to talk and converse (parlar means to talk, mentum a place or space). For the time being, however, there is no general session of deliberation, neither are there other mechanisms for democratic will formation. Even if George Monbiot has suggested the WSF could form the first moment of the process of building a world parliament,\(^{24}\) the WSF cannot be considered anything like a parliament in the contemporary, deliberative sense, nor has it powers to create any sort of legislation. There are many groups within the WSF that aim at building global democratic institutions, and some of them place considerable emphasis on world parliament as a key to any global democratisation. Only few of these groups, however, believe that
the WSF itself could or should be transformed into a world parliament. But what else could the WSF accomplish?

After the fifth World Social Forum that was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil 26–31 January 2005, the WSF process started to lose momentum. The organisers began to see the annual mass-meeting in part also as a practical-financial burden, over-expending on their limited resources that would have been needed for other purposes as well. What is more, although the WSF may appear as a party of opinion when defined negatively in terms of opposition to neoliberal globalisation, imperialism, and violence, in more positive ideological terms it appears as a rather scattered and incoherent collection of diverse actors. Christopher Chase-Dunn and Ellen Reese have conducted surveys among WSF participants. The results from their 2005 and 2007 surveys show a number of ways in which respondents are sharply divided on critical ethico-political issues. Table 1 shows their results for the question whether the WSF should remain an open space for public debate or whether WSF participants should take public positions on political issues; the respondents were split nearly in half in 2005, but an overwhelming majority seemed to support the WSF status quo in 2007.

Table 1. Please rate your opinion on the following statement: ‘The WSF should remain an open space and not take public positions on political issues.’

| Response                        | WSF 2005  | WSF 2007 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Agree                           | 46.3%     | 69%      |
| Disagree                        | 48.5%     | n/a      |
| Chose both answers              | 1.1%      | n/a      |
| No answer                       | 4.1%      | n/a      |

The opinions are similarly divided—as shown by Tables 2 and 3—on creating democratic global institutions and the possibility of a democratic world government. By far the most popular response to ‘how should the problems created by neoliberal globalisation or global capitalism be tackled’ is by way of empowering local communities. This may be indicative of the radical democratic sentiments of many participants, evoking a Rousseauan need for small political communities.

Table 2. Which of the following approaches would best solve the problems created by global capitalism (2005)/contemporary problems (2007)? (choose one).

| Response                                  | WSF 2005 | WSF 2007 |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Empower local communities                 | 48.2%    | 51%      |
| Strengthen nation-states                   | 8.0%     | 10%      |
| Create democratic global institutions     | 24.6%    | 40%      |
| Chose more than one answer                 | 13.5%    | n/a      |
| No answer                                 | 5.8%     | n/a      |
However, Chase-Dunn and Reese go on to argue that ‘respondents from the semi-periphery are statistically less likely than other respondents to prefer the creation of democratic global institutions as the best strategy for solving the problems of capitalism, to support democratic world government proposals, and to support the replacement of the WTO and IMF with more democratic global institutions’. Chase-Dunn and Reese suggest that this is due to different historical experiences. However, whatever may be the right explanation of these splits and divisions, they must spell major difficulties for any attempt at collective will-formation within the WSF. Open-space pluralism may thus be the only feasible alternative.

Table 3. Do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to have a democratic world government? (choose one).

| Response                      | WSF 2005 | WSF 2007 |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Good idea and plausible       | 26.8%    | 47%      |
| Good idea but not plausible/possible | 35.5%    | 38%      |
| Bad idea                     | 29.3%    | 15%      |
| Chose more than one answer    | 0.6%     | n/a      |
| No answer                    | 7.8%     | n/a      |

The WSF is now part of the established agenda of many organisations. However, a widespread disillusionment about the possibility of actually achieving something has gained ground. How could it be true that ‘another world is possible’ without some sort of transformative agency? In addition to the splits and divisions among the participants, and to the consequences of the ‘open space’ concept, there is a further problem behind this disillusionment. In world politics, still dominated by legal agreements among states, it is not clear what forms political activities and actors could assume. In practical terms, many NGOs are also dependent on state-funding and support. Should civic society organisations follow the Greenpeace model by following a corporate/foundation model and by organising spectacular publicity stunts against naval vessels or industrial sites, thereby gaining millions of fee-paying members?

As there are no global sites of political action analogous to national parliaments, it is not easy to specify what it is exactly that real global political parties should—or could—do. What could the activities of a political party mean in the context of contestations over the governance of global political economy? What kind of a political office could a global political party pursue, if any? Or should actors first form more loose legal associations that could possibly then, in the longer run, be turned into political parties?

**HISTORICAL PREDECESSORS OF GLOBAL POLITICAL PARTIES**

Political parties—as we now know them—emerged in Europe and the Americas in the 18th and 19th centuries. Although there were parties of opinion and cliques in
the ancient city-communities of Hellas, and in similar communities in India and elsewhere, the metaphor of body politic and related organistic—and Aristotle-type communitarian—ideas dominated political imagination in most places until early European modernity. The basic idea was that it is not ‘healthy’ to have conflicts or contradictions within one organism or body. Organised political parties as legal associations were invented only when this metaphor was replaced with the individualist idea of social contract. 28

However, also the idea of a party representing the universal interests of humanity emerged in the 19th century, contributing, after the Russian revolution of 1917, to the construction of one-party states, characteristically with violent and totalitarian implications. Since the 19th century, however, the model of polyarchy (competitive elitism with two or more major parties) has prevailed in the West. In the polyarchies of the West, multiple parties are accepted and members of political parties stand as candidates in elections and for various state offices. Thereby the elected party representatives gain access to the process of law- and policy-making through deliberation and voting. Other political actors may lobby representatives and officials or pressure them through media. Even though in reality the powers of national legislators and policy-makers have been increasingly limited, and the relations of accountability are also transnational, a relatively unambiguous idea of what politics is remains dominant.

There are several historical examples of internationalist party formations, also dating back to the mid-19th century. The Communist League, a secret international association of workers founded in the 1840s, commissioned Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, at the Congress held in London in November 1847, to write for publication a detailed theoretical and practical programme for the Party. The 1848 the Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels declared: ‘Proletarians of all countries, unite!’ Following the International Workingmen’s Association (1864–1876)—the ‘First International’—a series of competing socialist internationals succeeded each other, including:

1. Communists: the second international (1889–1916) and Comintern (1919–1943)
2. Trotskyists: various fourth internations (1936–)
3. Anarchists: International Workers’ Association (1922–)
4. Social democrats: The Socialist International (1951–)

The nationalist fervour of the First World War seemed to signal the end of internationalisms, but as can be seen from this list of internations, various left-internations remained active through the 20th century. Whereas internationalist communism collapsed in Stalin’s era, the social democratic Socialist International and the fragmented Trotsky-inspired Fourth Internationals continue to exist.

Especially after the mid-20th century, non-socialist parties, such as the liberals and the conservatives, have also built international structures. The Liberal International, established in 1947, and the International Democrat Union, founded in 1983, have
remained relatively small organisations, by no means much more than the mere sum of their member parties. There is also a similar internationalisms for Christian parties.

The transnational links of the Green parties that emerged in the final decades of the 20th century can, on the one hand, be considered distant offspring of the earlier internationalisms. Rauli Mickelsson has suggested that Green parties tend to have more global and postnational identities than the traditional internationals. Green party activists in different parts of the world sometimes consider themselves members of the ‘Earth’s only global political party’. Nevertheless, the Global Green Network (GGN) is merely a network of representatives of national Green Parties from around the world, established in 2001. The Transnational Radical Party that was founded in Italy in 1989 is, however, a related example of a single supranational party formation.

The fact that there are no global elections or parliaments means that building party-like transnational organs tends to remain a relatively unattractive idea. If there are no offices to capture, why bother? The global elite does have its politically relevant organisations, such as the Bilderberg Society, Trilateral Commission and Mont Pelerin Society, but there are few signs of the emergence of dynamic global right-wing organisations in the form of a political party. The network-form of elites is sometimes used as an argument for relying on a similar form in resistance and transformative activities.

One of the most important existing spaces for transnational party formation has been the European Parliament. The European Parliament was first elected through direct elections in 1979. The experience of the European Parliament shows that parties can become transnational. Members of the European Parliament have generally grouped according to political affiliations rather than in national blocs. In 2003, the EU adopted regulations for governing and funding political parties at the European level. By 2006, there were 10 European political parties eligible for funding from EU institutions that had been formed based on Europe-wide party alliances.

It is noteworthy that since the 1960s and 1970s, most national—including EU-level—political parties have evolved into a direction that Colin Crouch classifies as ‘post-democratic’. The shrinking of the blue-collar working class in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries has eroded the traditional mass-base of social-democratic and socialist parties. In nearly all parties, membership has been in decline. The various circles of leadership and activists have been, by and large, replaced by an overlapping network of professional advisers, consultants, and lobbyists of various kinds, the latter mainly for corporations seeking favours from government. Party elites are now networked first and foremost with business elites, while trying to reach the voters directly via the media (without the mediation of party members). Instrumentalist responses to marketing research and media campaigns have replaced explicit ideological commitments and visions.

The globalisation of regulation and structural power of transnational capital have reinforced the sense that ‘there is no alternative’ (TTNA) to neoliberalisation.
the perceived absence of alternatives, party politics has lost legitimacy among large parts of citizenry. These developments have made many civil society activists very suspicious not only of all existing political parties but also of the idea of political party.

**FUTURE-ORIENTED LEFT-DEMOCRATIC VISIONS OF GLOBAL POLITICAL PARTIES**

Are there already existing conceptual resources from which one could draw in developing the idea of transformative global political agency? In terms of political imagination, the idea of a world party has been historically associated with the notion of a world state. From the frontiers of ethico-political analysis and science fiction, the possibility of a world party has been imagined and scrutinised by H.G. Wells in a striking way, who in turn has inspired many others, including W. Warren Wagar.34 Wells developed the idea of a transformative movement in his fictional stories and analytical essays from the first decade of the 20th century onwards.35 Probably most important of these works is *The Open Conspiracy* (1933), an account of a pluralist mass movement for world unity that would eventually create a functionalist world state.

To date, *Open Conspiracy* still appears as the most daring conceptual effort to envisage what a global political party could mean, even though Wells often prefers to use the term ‘movement’ and denies that it would be any sort of simple centralised organisation. Tellingly, chapter XIV is entitled ‘The Open Conspiracy Begins as a Movement of Discussion, Explanation and Propaganda’.36 While in some regards reminiscent of global civil society of the 1990s and early 2000s, Wells’ open conspiracy is a mass movement in a deeper sense than for instance the WSF process.

The open conspiracy is constituted by partially shared world-understandings, starting with Wells’ cosmopolitan humanist portrayal of world religion, world history and potentials of humanity. It answers the question about the purpose of human life at this historical moment, despite equally real and valuable diversity and pluralism. ‘Let us get together with other people of our sort and make over the world into a great world civilisation that will enable us to realise the promises and avoid the dangers of this new time’.37 A non-anthropomorphic religion has faith in the development and ‘soul’ of the human species-being ‘which lived before he was born and will survive him’.38 Wells even demands a quasi-religious devotion to the new movement:

> We see life struggling insecurely but with a gathering successfulness for freedom and power against restriction and death. We see life coming at last to our tragic and hopeful human level. Unprecedented possibilities, mighty problems, we realise, confront mankind today. They frame our existences. The practical aspect, the material form, the embodiment of the modernised religious impulse is the direction of whole life to the solution of these problems and the realisation of their possibilities. The alternative before man now is either magnificence of spirit and magnificence of achievement or disaster.39
Wells seems to have believed that only a mass movement of truly committed individuals and groups could possibly have the power to transform the world political organisation, by creating a rational and, perhaps, democratic world commonwealth or republic. What is truly novel about *The Open Conspiracy* is Wells’ pluralist perception of the multitude of actors that would constitute this movement, from the remnants of communist parties and labour movements to progressive bankers and other professionals; as well as the multitude of different national and religious cultures.

Moreover, Wells refused to accept what would now be called the domestic analogy according to which the experiences and institutions of modern domestic polity can and should be applied to the society of states or to the world as a whole. ‘We may have systems of world controls rather than a single world state’. 40 These systems of control of different functional areas—for instance the practical regulations, enforcement and officials needed to keep all humans in good health to the extent possible—may be only loosely related to each other. In this sense, Wells stresses that the institutions of the world political organisation probably would, and perhaps also should, look different from the institutions of modern liberal-democratic states. Finally, he argues against any stable utopia, whether democratic or not:

Mankind, released from the pressure of population, the waste of warfare and the private monopolisation of the sources of wealth, will face the universe with a great and increasing surplus of will and energy. Change and novelty will be the order of life; each day will differ from its predecessor in its great amplitude of interest. Life which was once routine, endurance, and mischance, will become adventure and discovery. [...] We believe that the persistent exploration of our outward and inward worlds by scientific and artistic endeavour will lead to developments of power and activity upon which at present we can set no limits nor give any certain form. 41

So by the early 1930s, Wells had concluded that world political reorganisation would require (1) quasi-religious devotion and a shared world-view by (2) competent people participating, in different ways, in a world-wide mass movement for a new world organisation, and, possibly, (3) a major world-wide catastrophe that would prepare the conditions for the success of this movement in realising its visions. Moreover, although advocating conscientious objection in national contexts, Wells did not hesitate to talk about the need to defend, also violently, the new world commonwealth. 42 This a problem for Wells’ conception, since a security community cannot be built on the threat of violence. 43

Wagar has written a single-path scenario entitled *A Short History of Future* (1989), involving a world-transformative political party. 44 More consistently a democrat than Wells, Wagar tells a story—following the model of Wells’ *The Shape of Things to Come*—of a nuclear War in 2044, consequent mass starvation, and, finally, the founding of a democratic socialist world state in the 2060s. In Wagar’s story, the World Party is secretly founded already well before the Catastrophe of 2044. After the Catastrophe, it starts to gain ground, both through elections and by conquering the hearts and minds of political elites. 45 Gradually countries and regions start to join
the new democratic and socialist Commonwealth, occasionally, however, only following violent struggle. There are also debates between the Gandhians and Leninists within the Party.

The last skirmishes between Commonwealth militias and local resistance groups take place in 2068. The new world state is governed by a democratically elected world parliament and built on a sustainable ecological basis. In Wagar’s story, also the socialist world state is transitory and lasts only for about 100 years. It is eventually replaced by a community of smaller political communities, some of them living outside planet Earth and reaching further into space by 2300.

Wagar has taken Wells’ vision of an open conspiracy towards a direction that sounds, in terms of its identity and organisational structure, like a globalised version of many of the 20th century political parties. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, on the other hand, have tried to envisage the possibility of a new kind of global political identity and organisation, a ‘multitude’, consisting of a complex network of a plurality of actors and thereby constituting a space of communication. Even if in part inspired by the recent experiences of the globalisation protest movements, and even if it can be read as a modern substitute for the Marxian working class, the idea of a ‘multitude’ also bears some resemblance to Wells’ open conspiracy. In their widely discussed book *Empire*, Hardt and Negri argued that the network has become the dominant economic model. It’s follow-up, *Multitude. War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, elaborates on a network form of power, from warfare to networks of global struggle. When asked about how the notion of multitude compares to that of Marxist class, Hardt replied:

[...] Multitude is meant to recognise what the class formation is today and, in describing that class formation, to recognise forms of its possibilities of acting politically. In the incorporating sense—the connotations of class as industrial working class are also important. When we talk about the Multitude today we are talking about recognising what the forms of labour and forms of production are and trying to name them—because that’s what Multitude is doing—it certainly doesn’t exclude the industrial working class. There are plenty of people still working in the factories, in fact the numbers globally working in the factories has not declined. It has only declined in the most dominant parts of the world—but like I said—the industrial workers are one part of a much wider range of forms of labour that cooperate together in production and need to be understood in a much broader let’s say horizontal mode of the possibilities of political organisation.

This understanding is thus somewhat different from the Wellsian concept of multitude, which can and should include people from any class, category or identity. However, like in Wells’ account, Hardt and Negri have developed these ideas in part in response to the global problem of war, focusing on the war against terror. For them, a quasi-permanent Orwellian war against a largely unspecified enemy can also be a way of justifying and reinforcing one-sided domination and legitimising the use of violence and other exceptional means against any opponent (basically, any suspect identity).
In response to war and asymmetrical domination, Hardt and Negri argue, the multitude should become a basis for a reformist, transformative world-wide network, aiming at global democracy. ‘The multitude is one concept, in our view, that can contribute to the task of resurrecting or reforming or, really, reinventing the Left by naming a form of political organisation and a political project’.\textsuperscript{50} This alludes to the possibility that the multitude could even organise itself into a political party, but so far Hardt and Negri have not explicated this possibility in any detail. My reading is that they are taking steps towards something akin to Wells’s open conspiracy, but are not quite getting there.

**BY WAY OF CONCLUSION: A SKETCH FOR A POSSIBLE GLOBAL POLITICAL PARTY**

An inclusive and open space may be good for various purposes and also necessary for many public gatherings and conferences, but it cannot involve common, directional agency. Despite contrary hopes, an open space may fail to generate, encourage or trigger the formation of collective transformative agency. What should thus be learnt from the WSF experiences is that political agency presupposes shared public opinions, based on some common elements of a wider and deeper world-view, as well as clear willingness to engage in processes of collective will-formation.

A shared world-view may include progressivist—perhaps up-dated and revised Wellsian?—stories about the meaning of life and world history. In any event, they include ideas that are more general than mere contestations over neoliberal globalisation, or over early 21st century neo-imperial wars, or over any other geo-historically specific phenomena. A positive common spirit is thus required, ‘but it is quite conceivable that between many of its contributory factors there may be wide gaps in understanding and sympathy’.\textsuperscript{51} Differences are also good because they strengthen collective learning-capacity.

If those who favour democratising global governance, and who may also support democratic world government proposals, conclude that they share the basics of a world-view, ‘a common spirit’, and are ready and willing to engage in the process of collective will-formation, they must first address the dilemmas of democratic political agency in world politics. In the absence of adequately democratic global institutions, the question is what a non-state global political actor, taking the form of a political party, could do to further common visions and aims of its members?

In the Arendtian sense, the party itself would constitute a public sphere; and the already existing international regimes, or systems of regional and global governance, already provide sites for a public sphere and political actions, as do elements of global media. However, the raison d’être of the party must lie in furthering transformations and various new institutional forms in which the planetary public realm can be organised. For this purpose, the largely shared opinions will be forged into a programme of change. We can distinguish between three moments of transformative global-democratic action:
1. Activities within the confines of established institutions.
2. Advocacy to transform global institutions and create new ones.
3. Participation in the newly formed global institutions.

These three moments also form a logical order: (1) activities within existing institutions can include (2) advocacy of, and legislation for, global-democratic institutions; while successful attempts at creating institutions of planetary democracy (3) make participation in them possible. Over time, new institutions will become established, and the cycle can continue from (1) to (2) to (3). There is no end to history; and not all new institutions will have to be planetary in scope. Global institutions can, and in many cases should, increase the contextually overlapping, multi-layered autonomy of actors.

Jan Aart Scholte has helpfully analysed different types of possible activities within the confines of the currently existing institutions.\(^52\) Firstly, educating the public about global affairs is a condition *sine qua non* for authentic will-formation concerning planetary *res publica*, i.e. all those issues that belong to the global public realm. Of course, struggles over the boundaries of the public realm are part of democratic contestation. Non-global issues can be decided quite independently of planetary considerations; and non-public issues do not require common decisions. The rationale for world public education is, however, that we are all inextricably interconnected and it is not possible for any group of people to opt out.

Secondly, a global political party can take part in the operation of the existing institutions, but it does not have to occupy national and local executive office in order to democratise policies and regulations. It can also act as a watchdog for public accountability, particularly in the context of multi-lateral negotiations on various planetary issues. Like civil society organisation, a global political party can engage with the already existing systems of global governance as an advocacy group.\(^53\) On the other hand, by occupying state office, the party could directly shape state’s policies on global issues and also take part in creating new international law, turning it into increasingly cosmopolitan law. This is important because, in the short- to mid-term, it is difficult if not impossible to create new international law without sovereign states.

The advocacy to transform existing global institutions and create new ones can assume various forms. The development of Greenpeace provides an interesting precedent case.\(^54\) In 1979, the Greenpeace was facing financial difficulties and its members were divided over fund-raising and organisational direction. David McTaggart lobbied the Canadian Greenpeace Foundation to accept a new structure that would bring the scattered Greenpeace offices under the auspices of a single global organisation.\(^55\) With these ideas, McTaggart went against the anti-authoritarian ethos that prevailed among the environmental activists. Under the new centrally led structure, the local offices would contribute part of their income to the international organisation, which would take responsibility for setting the overall direction of the movement. Greenpeace’s transformation from a loose network to a global organisation made it possible to concentrate on selected environmental issues,
assessed to be of global significance. McTaggart summed up his approach in a 1994 memo: ‘No campaign should be begun without clear goals; no campaign should be begun unless there is a possibility that it can be won; no campaign should be begun unless you intend to finish it off’.56

In order to establish clear goals and form realistic expectations the party has to have plausible, scholarly scenarios of possible and likely future developments. The problem is that knowledge and power are intimately linked. A key reason for democracy stems from the epistemological argument that we cannot trust anybody to know a priori better than others. This applies also, and in some ways especially, to knowledge about possible global futures. Scenarios of possible futures are not predictions. Anticipations of the future start with an analysis of the existing structures and processes and their inherent possibilities, but the future remains in many ways open until a particular possibility is actualised. Scenarios are also conditional on actors’ understandings and their actions. The future is an increasingly shaped and structured possibility of becoming, mediated by the presence of the past. The closer the future is to us, the better we are positioned to make a judgement about the probability that a particular scenario will be actualised.57 The precise content, the precise content of the future remains contingent on multiple concept-dependent actions, until it gradually fades into the past.58

Without fully established and generalised free speech with all its institutional guarantees and everybody’s equal access to will-formation, a community or organisation such as a political party may be led astray in its anticipations of the future. There is also the spectre of a vicious circle of the accumulation of power in the hands of powerful groups or individuals, just because they are powerful, not because they know any better (they may know worse). Therefore, the establishment of a too fixed centre that is authorised to set the overall direction of the organisation may create more problems than it solves—unless there are guarantees of responsiveness and change, i.e. that the direction-setting mechanism are democratic, accountable, and capable of learning and thus revising its anticipations and goals. This is especially important when the aim is to democratise practices and institutions. To avoid both performative contradictions and counterfinality, actors’ aims and means, just like their theory and practice, must cohere.

How would it be possible to combine (1) the capacity to establish an overall, binding direction to the activities of the party with (2) a democratic process of will-formation that also maximises its learning capacity? In an Arendtian or republican manner, a global political party could combine a self-selected core of cosmopolitical activists with a wide basis of more passive supporters. However, unlike Arendt,59 the party should not fail to theorise the social conditions and structures co-determining the self-selection of those who care and are willing to take the initiative. For the party, ‘the obvious inability and conspicuous lack of interest of large parts of the population in political matters as such’60 would not be a given condition but something that can be, at least in part, changed.

Similarly, a key problem of Wells’s open conspiracy plan was the absence of a plausible sociological account of the life-conditions of those who could actually
partake in such a movement and organisation. In effect, Wells was assuming that anyone could be like him, a free-floating successful writer who would eventually become so wealthy as to possess several households in at least two countries (UK, France) and have time and resources to travel across the Northern hemisphere, to interview Lenin and meet Maxim Gorky in Moscow, and then to go to New York to negotiate another lucrative book contract, meet his mistress or attend an interesting conference on de-militarisation.

It is telling that the cosmo-political activists of the WSF tend to be NGO professionals; academics and students; free researchers, writers and journalists; and internationally oriented functionaries of nationally based movements or trade unions. A global political party would have to recognise, on the one hand, the limited possibilities of many to become cosmo-political activists. On the other hand, the party should work systematically to widen the social basis of activists and dedicate a substantial part of its resources for this purpose. It would also be committed to advocating the re-organisation of the institutions of mass media and systems of education in a way that would encourage public virtues and engender well-informed citizens. For instance, as part of the idea that the choice of institutions ‘determines in part the sort of persons they want to be as well as the sort of persons they and their children will become’, a left democratic party would advocate the notion that every citizen of the world must be granted free and equally good public education.

If local chapters of the party take part in elections, some of the activist members will inevitably become professional politicians in a relatively limited setting (the local chapters would also be autonomous in some regards). The possible and likely social consequences would have to be countered by means of rotation. The self-selected core members would not have only rights but also duties to participate in elections, meetings and other activities of the party organization, including various (self-)educational activities. The number of core members should in no way be limited. Anyone can freely opt either for being a core member or just a fee-paying supporter, fees being steeply progressive on incomes. Those who cannot or would not like to be core activists can nonetheless be fee-paying support members. Only continuously active participants can consistently sustain their status as core members. What is important is that the line between the two categories can be made fuzzy.

Global activities of the party would be planned by its Global Board, elected in a general election among activist members. The process of will-formation would also include on-going republican discussions among the members and supporters and binding referenda among the activists. The Board would follow the principle of rotation. The principle of rotation can be operationalised to mean, for instance, that no one person can be Chairperson for two consequent periods; and no member can be on the Board for more than three or four consecutive periods. The global board, discussions and referenda would set the overall programme and direction of the organisation across its various chapters around the planet. The local chapters would decide everything else.
Despite various procedural safeguards built around rules of representation, rotation, public finance and other key issues, this kind of a global political party would recognise a generic tendency towards post-democratic forms of governance—towards oligarchy—and face it as a permanent challenge for its own legitimacy as well. Hence, oligarchic tendencies would have to be countered also in terms of cultivating the republican virtues and courageous participation of its constantly shifting groups of activist members. This is a necessary but not sufficient condition for ensuring democratic responsiveness and learning.

NOTES

1. Some sections are partly based on texts I have co-authored with Teivo Teivainen. This paper thus owes not only an intellectual debt to him (despite his characteristically more cautious attitude towards the idea of a global political party) but also many pieces of information as well a few formulations. The relevant texts include Heikki Patomäki and Teivo Teivainen, A Possible World. Democratic Transformation of Global Institutions (London: Zed Books, 2004); Heikki Patomäki and Teivo Teivainen, ‘The World Social Forum. An Open Space or a Movement of Movements?’, Theory, Culture & Society 21 (2004): 145–54; Heikki Patomäki and Teivo Teivainen, ‘Researching Global Political Parties’, in Global Political Parties, ed. Katarina Sehm-Patomäki and Marko Ulvila (London: Zed Books, 2007), 92–113. I am also thankful to the Bice Maiguashca and Raf Marchetti for comments and feedback; to Jennifer Gidley and Katarina Sehm-Patomäki for insightful suggestions and editorial work; and to the editor and three anonymous referees of Ethics & Global Politics. I take, of course, full responsibility for all the remaining errors and misinterpretations.

2. For standard discussions on agency and structure, see Roy Bhaskar, The Possibility of Naturalism. A Philosophical Critique of Contemporary Human Sciences (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979), for the point of contact between agency and structure, 51; and Anthony Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979); Anthony Giddens, A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism. Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

3. E.g. Richard Falk, A Study of Future Worlds (New York: Free Press, 1975).

4. Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 199–220. For an Arendtian and Habermasian attempt to develop the concept of global public sphere, see Heikki Patomäki, ‘Republican Public Sphere and the Governance of Global Political Economy’, in Value Pluralism, Normative Theory and International Relations, ed. M. Lensu and J-S. Fritz (London: MacMillan, 2000), 160–95.

5. See e.g. Giovanni Arrighi, Terence K. Hopkins, and Immanuel Wallerstein, ‘Dilemmas of Anti-systemic Movements’, Social Research (Spring, 1986): 185–206; Asbjorn Eide, ‘The Human Rights Movement and the Transformation of the Inter-national Order’, Alternatives: Social Transformation and Humane Governance 11, no. 3 (1986): 367–402; Saul Mendlovitz and R.B.J. Walker, eds., Towards a Just World Peace: Perspectives from Social Movements (London: Butterworths, 1987); R.B.J. Walker, One World, Many Worlds: Struggles for a Just World Peace (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1988).

6. Christopher Chase-Dunn has criticised me for making the claim that global civil society first emerged towards the end of the 20th century; Christopher Chase-Dunn, ‘The Evolution of Capitalist Globalization and Possible Human Futures: Hamlet without the Prince’, Cooperation & Conflict 43 (2008): 459. However, my point is not so much an empirical claim about the existence of transnational activities as a claim about quasi-Hegelian developments of constitutive categories and consciousness. What I mean is that when the
concept of *societas civilis* is employed globally it entails that civilising processes, legality and politics are recognised as global in scope, and that there thus is a planetary civilisation in the making. This recognition is compatible with the notion that the word civilisation will continue to be used in both singular and plural; Fernand Braudel, *A History of Civilizations* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 8. For an argument that ‘no contemporary discourse of civil society has managed to add even a single category to Hegel’s categories of legality, privacy, plurality, association, publicity and mediation’, see J.L. Cohen and A. Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004), xiv.

7. Elise Boulding, *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World* (New York: Columbia University, 1988).

8. Stephen Gill, ‘Reflections on Global Order and Sociohistorical Time’, *Alternatives* 16, no. 3 (1991): 275–314; see also Paul Ghils, ‘International Civil Society: International Non-Governmental Organizations in the International System’, *International Social Science Journal* 133 (August, 1992): 417–29; M.J. Peterson, ‘Transnational Activity, International Society and World Politics’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 21, no. 3 (1992): 371–88; and Ronnie D. Lipschutz, ‘Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 21, no. 3 (1992): 389–420.

9. The members of the small Mont Pelerin Society, founded in 1947 around the ideas of Friedrich von Hayek, depicted themselves as ‘liberals’. Milton Friedman was a member of that society. At that point, the 19th century era of classical *laissez faire* liberalism seemed over. Keynes and social democracy reigned in the West, Lenin in the East, and the idea of national liberation and state-led development in the South. The commitment of Friedman, Hayek and others to the ideals of individual (negative) freedom and to the free market principles of neoclassical economics made them appear insignificant and marginal. See David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 20–22, 36.

10. For a full story of the currency transaction tax (CTT) movement, see Heikki Patomäki, ‘Global Tax Initiatives: The Movement for the Currency Transaction Tax’ (Geneva: UNRISD—United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2007); Civil Society and Social Movements Paper no. 27; and for an argument about a strategy for global democratisation that involves as the first step selected financial reforms such as establishing a debt arbitration mechanism and a currency transaction tax organisation, see Patomäki and Teivainen, *A Possible World*, note 1, chapter 10, et passim.

11. ATTAC stands for both ‘attack’ (instead of ‘defence’) and Association pour une Taxe sur les Transactions Financières pour l’Aide aux Citoyens.

12. Since the late 1980s, the Greenpeace International and some other environmental organisations have campaigned to alter the processes that cause global warming. The Kyoto Protocol, adopted initially in 1997, was preceded by years of activism and diplomatic negotiations. The widespread recognition of the seriousness of the problem reached new proportions by 2007, when climate change became a global security issue—and was thus securitised—through various intensively publicised reports and resolutions.

13. For an up-to-date analysis of the CTT proposal, see Heikki Patomäki, ‘The Tobin Tax and Global Civil Society Organisations: The Aftermath of the 2008–9 Financial Crisis’, *Ritsumeikan Annual Review of International Studies* 8 (2009): 1–18; and for an analysis and explanation of the financial crisis and its consequences, see Heikki Patomäki, ‘What Next? An Explanation of the 2008–9 Slump and Two Scenarios of the Shape of Things to Come’, *Globalizations* 7 (2010): 67–84.

14. Mary Kaldor, *Global Civil Society. An Answer to War* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 44–45.

15. David Held, *Cosmopolitanism. Ideals and Realities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 35.

16. James Bohman, *Democracy across Borders. From Dēmos to Dēmoi* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007), 189.
17. Stephen Gill, *Power and Resistance in the New World Order*. 2nd ed. (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 248.

18. Robert D. Benford, ‘Framing Global Governance from below. Discursive Opportunities and Challenges in the Transnational Social Movement Arena’, in *Arguing Global Governance*, ed. Corneliu Bjola and Markus Kornbrost (London: Routledge, 2011), 83.

19. Kléber Ghimire, ‘The United Nations World Summits and Civil Society Activism: Grasping the Centrality of National Dynamics’, *European Journal of International Relations* 17 (2010): 75–95.

20. Andrew Kuper, *Democracy Beyond Borders. Justice and Representation in Global Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), ch. 2.

21. *Charter of Principles of the World Social Forum* (São Paulo: World Social Forum, 2001), http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=4&cd_language=2 (accessed October 24, 2009).

22. Ibid.

23. On Whitaker’s concept of the WSF as an ‘open space’, see Chico Whitaker, ‘The WSF as an Open Space’, in *World Social Forum. Challenging Empire*, ed. Jai Sen, Anita Anand, Arturo Escobar, and Peter Waterman (New Delhi: Viveka Foundation, 2004), 111–21; see also Teivo Téivainen, ‘World Social Forum and Global Democratization: Learning from Porto Alegre’, *Third World Quarterly* 23 (2002): 621–32.

24. George Monbiot, *The Age of Consent. A Manifesto for a New World Order* (London: Flamingo/HarperCollins, 2003), 88–90.

25. See Christopher Chase-Dunn and Ellen Reese, ‘The World Social Forum—A Global Political Party in the Making?’, in *Global Political Parties*, ed. K. Sehm-Patomäki and M. Ulvila (London: Zed Books, 2007), 53–91; Christopher Chase-Dunn and Ellen Reese, ‘The New Global Left and Transnational Social Movements’ (a paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, New York, session on the WSF, February 15, 2009), http://irows.ucr.edu/papers/irows48/irows48.htm

26. Chase-Dunn and Reese, ‘The World Social Forum’, note 22, 69; and Chase-Dunn and Reese, ‘The New Global Left’, note 22, 6.

27. Chase-Dunn and Reese, ‘The World Social Forum’, note 22, 83–84.

28. See Terence Ball, *Transforming Political Discourse: Political Theory and Critical Conceptual History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

29. Rauli Mickelsson, ‘Kosmopolititse puolueen mahdollisuudet’ ['The Possibilities for a Cosmopolitan Party'], *Futura*, no. 1 (2005): 78–91.

30. Green Party of the United States Political Coordinator Dean Myerson on December 6, 2001 in a speech in Belgium, http://www.commondreams.org/news2001/1207-02.htm (accessed December 20, 2009).

31. See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude. War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 79–90.

32. See Colin Crouch, *Post-Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004).

33. For an analysis of the contemporary geo-historical field that determines the plausibility of public speech-acts, see Heikki Patomäki, ‘Neoliberalism and the Global Financial Crisis’, *New Political Science* 31 (2009): 431–42. Within this field, ‘neoliberalism’ is a negatively charged ideological concept that, by and large, is not considered respectable for self-description, not even for those numerous functionaries and politicians who are in effect implementing most parts of Friedrich Hayek’s and Milton Friedman’s ethico-political programme.

34. For the debates generated by Wagar’s world party idea, see e.g. the special issue of *Journal of World-Systems Research* 2, no. 1 (1996). See also Christopher Chase-Dunn and Terry Boswell, ‘Global Democracy: A World-Systems Perspective’, in *ProtoSociology. An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 20 (2004): 15–30. The World Party proposed by Chase-Dunn and Boswell would be a ‘network of individuals and
representatives of popular organisations from all over the world who agree to help create a democratic and collectively rational global commonwealth'.

35. The idea was already present in his early non-fictional bestseller *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1902). The phrase ‘open conspiracy’ was picked from the preface to the 1914 edition; see Norman MacKenzie and Jeanne MacKenzie, *HG Wells. A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 345 et. passim.

36. H.G.Wells, ‘The Open Conspiracy’, in *The Open Conspiracy. H.G. Wells on World Revolution*, ed. W. Wagar (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002, orig. published in 1933), 110–14.

37. Ibid., 54.

38. Ibid., 65.

39. Ibid., 67–68.

40. Ibid., 72.

41. Ibid., 83.

42. Ibid., 86.

43. I have criticised David Held’s model of cosmopolitan democracy for a similar, although less militantly expressed, idea of the need to defend the global democratic community against its outsiders or others. An open and pluralist global security community is a precondition for sustainable political unification. Thus the process of building it on a planetary scale takes priority over local emancipation. A security community consists of geo-historical social systems in which actors do not prepare for the use of political violence against each other. Integration in the Deutschian sense generates capacity to resolve conflict by peaceful means and thus helps to sustain a security community, consisting of a sense of community and expectation of the possibility of peaceful changes. See Heikki Patomäki, ‘Problems of Democratising Global Governance: Time, Space and the Emancipatory Process’, *European Journal of International Relations* 9 (2003): 358–69; and for a subsequent debate, David Held and Heikki Patomäki, ‘Problems of Global Democracy: A Dialogue’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 23 (2006): 115–33.

44. W. Warren Wagar, *A Short History of the Future*. 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

45. The idea of a world political party probably seemed more remote in the late 1980s than in 2009 and that may be one of the reasons why Wagar assumed that a catastrophe is necessary to make such a party possible. But why did he assume that by the mid-21st century there would only be one global party-formation, using the name ‘World Party’. It is more realistic and clearly more democratic and pluralistic to expect that there will be many party-like formations, with different and competing ideologies.

46. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

47. Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, note 28.

48. Jamie Morgan, ‘Interview with Michael Hardt’, *Theory, Culture & Society* 23 (2006): 93–113.

49. Wells, ‘Open Conspiracy’, note 33, 84–86, is also highly critical of the Marxist dogmas of class and class antagonism. Wells argued that attempts to infer self-regarding and other-exclusive collective interests and solidarity from objective socio-economic positions are not only sociologically unsound but can have highly problematical practical-political consequences. ‘In practice Marxism is found to work out in a ready resort to malignantly destructive activities, and to be so uncreative as to be practically impotent in the face of material difficulties’.

50. Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, note 28, 220. See also Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).

51. Wells, ‘Open Conspiracy’, note 33, 88.
52. Jan Aart Scholte, ‘Political Parties and Global Democracy’, in *Global Political Parties*, ed. Katarina Sehm-Patomäki and Marko Ulvila (London: Zed Books, 2007), 12–38.

53. *Ibid.*, 24–28.

54. The following brief account is based on the Wikipedia article on Greenpeace, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenpeace (accessed October 10, 2009).

55. David McTaggart was a former badminton champion, construction millionaire, and ski-lodge operator, when in 1972 he joined up with Greenpeace, then virtually bankrupt, and provided his own boat for its first protest against French nuclear tests at Mururoa. In subsequent years, it was McTaggart who moulded the organisation, setting up national offices first in Europe and then round the world from Moscow to Latin America, and creating a uniquely powerful and centralised non-governmental organisation.

56. Cited on p. 75 of Fred Pearce, ‘Greenpeace: Storm-Tossed on the High Seas’, in *Green Globe Yearbook 1996*, ed. H.O. Bergesen et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 73–80, http://www.fni.no/YBICED/96_07_pearce.pdf (accessed October 25, 2009).

57. Roy Bhaskar, *Dialectic. The Pulse of Freedom* (London: Verso, 1993), 142–44.

58. The meaning of the past is not fully fixed either; it depends on the way the on-going processes turn out in the future, and thus also on what we do. See David Weberman, ‘The Nonfixity of the Historical Past’, *The Review of Metaphysics* 50 (1997): 749–69.

59. For ever a political theorist rather than a social scientist, Arendt had a tendency to mystify the pre-given qualities of the self-selected elites and reify the prevailing tendencies of the masses. See e.g. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1965), 273–79.

60. *Ibid.*, 277.

61. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 259.