APPENDIX-I

Interview with Rajni Kothari by Sujit Lahiry
on 1st and 2nd June, 2002.

Rajni Kothari: This is Mr. Sujit Lahiry, from Panjab University Regional Centre, who is doing his Ph.D on "WOMP in Retrospect: A Critical Analysis". In between, he wants me, my name is Rajni Kothari, to give an interview to him. I was associated with WOMP for many years and also produced a number of well known books for the future, under the auspices of WOMP, alongside many of my intellectual colleagues and leading intellectuals of the time, like Falk, Mazrui, Mendlovitz, who also produced books. The credit goes to Sujit. I am here. He is going to interview me in stages. Today is the opening.

I suggested to him that I lay out my own way of methodology. He wants my own views on WOMP for his doctoral work. If he has any questions, he can ask me when we conclude. I will start with a short history of evolution of WOMP, and, then the theoretical approach, and then go on to the methodology, what method we adopted.

1. Historical Background of WOMP

WOMP was simultaneously an intellectual -cum- activist engagement. It was my first intellectual activist engagement. The short history of WOMP is like this:

The idea of world order had developed over time. After 1st World War, when US President Woodrow Wilson came up with the idea of one world. There were radical left-wing intellectuals initially in America and later on expanded also to Europe and Japan. It had developed over last 70-80 years.

So, the idea of world order was confined to the West, and within the West, especially U.S., and within the U.S., especially the University system. Leading people in the peace movement were associated with WOMP. So, WOMP as an intellectual tangent had origins in Peace Movement. Peace movement had its origins in the conflict between the two super powers. Peace
movement began to succeed. China did not join the peace movement directly, but there were individual intellectuals from China. So, WOMP was broadly limited to the West, and thought of as introducing into the pedagogy. The belief was that students, teachers, the academic community all could be involved, and they will bring about some changes in world order.

Generally, WOMP was an idealistic movement — still it is an idealistic movement in the West. The Pant Commission was appointed to deal with international development issues. I was at some stage associated with Pant Commission, when I was asked by the Rector of United Nations University to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In a way, all these issues are related. WOMP represents, I will not call it revolutionary, but in a radical fashion — a movement of ideas, a movement in which different streams could flow.

WOMP was not limited to the West. It established contact with the Third World countries. Saul H. Mendlovitz was the Director of WOMP, teaching at Rutgers and head of the Institute of World Order. Associated with WOMP was Prof. Richard Falk, who is now a leading Professor at Princeton University. When WOMP reached India, they contacted Prof. Harnam Singh, who was at that time, Head of the Department of Political Science in University of Delhi. There was a collaborative relationship between DU and the Institute for World Order (earlier called as the World Law Fund). But, it didn’t go too far. Basically, there took place only a series of meetings and seminars under the auspices of Delhi University, because of the interest shown by some of the Professors, who were specialising in International Relations. However, world order perspective could not emerge.

Next time, when the WOMP group visited India in 1967, the President of India International Centre (IIC), Dr. C.D. Deshmukh was approached by Prof. Every Lizsum of US, who was a visiting professor at CSDS, where I used to work and is still working. Dr. C.D. Deshmukh proposed my name. So, they contacted us and all we could do is to hold some meetings and seminars at IIC, partly due to the blessings of Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, who was also the President of IIC.
Dr. C.D. Deshmukh also set up a leading advisory group, consisting of eminent scientists, social scientists, economists and even people in technical matters. However, at that time, I was busy with research, specially election studies at CSDS. In 1967, we were doing a major all-India level election study. So I said, that at some point of time, I would be associated with WOMP. So, that was how it began.

At that time, when some individuals were contacted, I had the strong support of Prof. R. Bhaskaran, from Madras University. I have mentioned his name in my book *Footsteps into the Future* as well as in *Memoirs*. Bhaskaran persuaded me that I should agree to participate in WOMP. Prof. R. Bhaskaran was the first Director of WOMP/India. So, leading people like Deshmukh, on the one hand and philosophers like R. Bhaskaran on the other hand, that was how WOMP/India was born.

I was not interested in WOMP at that time, because of two reasons: Firstly, I was doing research in India on Indian politics. Secondly, I was going in 1968, at Centre for Advanced Study in Behavioural Sciences, which was on a hill near a Central University. They basically invite people to sit down and write a book. So I was at that time not willing to make a major commitment in getting associated with WOMP. It just so happened that Richard Falk, one of the leading member of WOMP, USA, was a visiting Professor at CSDS. He was spending one year at CSDS. He was doing a major book on Environment and World Order. Saul Mendlovitz visited India from time to time and extended the invitation to me to join this project.

In 1967 at a small interaction at IIC, I invited Prof. Jagdish Bhagwati, a leading economist to make a small presentation on world order from the economic point of view. He did that. At MIT, they persuaded Justice Bhagwati to join. It just so happened that Dr. Pitambar Pant, who was a leading light on Planning Commission and special assistant to Jawaharlal Nehru also joined WOMP. So, by and large, WOMP was still then a series of meetings. Slowly I also joined WOMP, but I was cautious about making any major commitment. That was their second visit to Delhi and that's how it moved from Delhi University to CSDS and like that and later on MIT meeting. I was on periphery
in the sense that they were contacting me. But I was not able to major commitments. I was at Stanford University, I was doing my major book, Politics in India.

I formally agreed to be part of WOMP and in the long run Director of WOMP/India (Second Director of WOMP). First Director of WOMP/India was Prof. R. Bhaskaran — a leading political sociologist in India. I have dedicated my book Politics in India to Prof. Bhaskaran. So, it had Deshmukh on one side, R. Bhaskaran on the other and a leading group of advisory members.

It was not just that we got the WOMP project and we took it. It was not like many other projects at CSDS. From the very beginning it was carefully thought to have a broader look at world order, international relations, and democracy, especially political democracy. It appeared to us that this was a liberal initiative, though radical people were there and we found it to be interesting.

As I said, I formally agreed to be a part of WOMP/India. It was a general agreement. It needed a bit of funding. A small office was set up. It needed some funds, meeting had to be conducted, individuals had to be recruited and acquired. In the beginning, WOMP was located in Lokayan and CSDS was very much a part of it. That is how gradually WOMP became a part of my intellectual interest. As I go on, I will also speak on the issues on which I was interested.

There was a WOMP/India chapter and I was incharge of that section. It involved many people from Universities of India. Soon thereafter we held a workshop under Lokayan auspices. It had academics and activists interested in the struggle for democracy and development. The workshop was on “Democracy and Development” held sometime in the 1970s. It was a WOMP workshop. This is the broad history/historical background of WOMP. And gradually WOMP appealed to me as an intellectual and to many of my intellectual colleagues. That’s how, I organisationally became a part of WOMP.

In 1975, I initiated the journal Alternatives (I actually gave the name of the journal ‘Alternatives’ when I was at US). I was the first Editor of that
journal Alternatives. That journal was a collaboration between CSDS and the Institute of World Order. We had the privilege of associating Yoshikazu Sakamoto. CSDS had now become the base. I was at its base. It contained many articles — some of them very radical, some of them very philosophical. Radical does not mean radical in the ‘left’ sense of the term. Ashish Nandy had written a number of pieces in Alternatives. He had gone into the roots of the culture, how to engage people not by just looking into the future, but also looking at the past. Ashish Nandy said that 2050 is going to emphasize on cultural issues, civilizational issues — all were interpreted in WOMP and Alternatives. So it was multidimensional. As we grew, we had people like Ali Mazuri, who put forward the cultural perspective.

From the beginning itself, most people had written on WOMP. That was how it began. WOMP was a programme located in India. They wanted to move out of the Western auspices and visited Africa, Latin America and a number of leading Professors of this part of this world. Some of the leading foundations, like Baralochi Foundation made the first major critic of the ‘Club of Rome’s thesis on The Limits to Growth. In Africa, it was basically Ali Mazuri. There were many others also at Makerere University.

WOMP was not only India, but India was important. They thought that Indian scholars would provide a different perspective. I myself had provided a critic of dominant thinking of the West. There were different dimensions and approaches in pursuit of WOMP. Even Saul Mendlovitz found that WOMP should have global perspective. Mazuri emphasised on culture and I emphasised on decentralisation, people’s initiatives, Third Worldish perspective — should be incorporated in WOMP. This is up to ‘Historical background’.

2. Theory of WOMP

There is a broad theory of WOMP. The broad theory of WOMP is the idea of world unity. How can there be in a historical situation, where there were arms build up everywhere, where militarisation was taking place, where there were superpower rivalries of a severe kind, arms build up in a very big
way, but arms build up also went nuclear and how to prevent that from blowing up, particularly given the experience of Hiroshima. So, to some extent, the beginning of WOMP are located in peace movement, as a result of growing militarisation and nuclearisation of world. So, in that way, it was an idealistic beginning.

There were perhaps differences with how to proceed with WOMP. But otherwise, I saw in it a truly liberal, radical, philosophical kind of people. I mentioned later people like John Galtung and others also joined in. Juan Somavia, who organized the Social Summit in 1995 also became part of WOMP. Many people who started with WOMP either under a UN kind of set-up, in their own embassies, in radical thinking that goes on, started with WOMP. So, it did try to mobilise leading minds from different parts of the world. To that extent it was no longer was an American project. It began with that. Even when it was an American project, it was a little idealistic. When I came, there was a theoretical development.

The idea of World unity was essentially a Western, liberal idea. It was believed that if only the world is somewhat united, there would be less friction. The world is dominated by militarisation and all that. Around this time, there developed the whole federal dimension. There are a number of programmes in World Federalism.

So, in the idealistic part of the West, these kinds of things were happening. There were critics of the dominant structures in the West, including American Presidency, American political system and so on. But at the same time, they essentially represented the left movement within the West. And, it was not truly global. And the effort that was made through WOMP was to make it a leading organisation. I say deliberately a little more. Even today, it is not truly global in the sense that it really doesn’t have deep roots in the people’s movements. This is what we are trying to develop at the Center, at Lokayan, and to some extent that we participated in WOMP, that we are developing. But this was not there. So, WOMP was global in the sense of groups starting at global level. It was not global in the sense of having any deep roots in the socio-cultural milieu of the world. That became
increasingly important as groups started, articles began to be written in *Alternatives*, statements were issued, and many conferences were taking place. Gradually, it was a move towards having a social base. But by and large, it was broad international relations and political science kind of approach, beginning with West. So WOMP had the idea of world unity. We also thought that the socio-economic issues, like the issue of poverty can be handled only if the world is united, only if there is not nationalism and nationalist conferences, only if there is not superpower rivalries. That was the broad thinking. WOMP was a movement for reforms in the world, that had to be thought in macro, global terms and through those reforms, bring about socio-economic changes and also bring about a truly federal structure of the world and, in some ways, try to have the cultural roots also.

The major contribution of Ali Mazuri in this whole thing was to emphasise the cultural roots. In participating in WOMP, each of the leading intellectuals came up with a book. The book which Ali Mazuri wrote was called *A World Federation of Cultures*. In world order, there is a ‘World Federation of Cultures’. The fundamental thing is culture. I talk about my thing later. But in my *Footsteps into the Future* also, it was basically a critic of the domination by the West over the Third World and it’s essentially a manifesto for how Third World regimes and the Third World academics and others can reform to overcome this kind of domination. There were other works by Richard Falk, Johan Galtung, Yoshikazu Sakamoto from Japan and a number of people from Africa and Latin America, all of them had contributed to this output. So, there were a series of books which came out. Saul Mendlovitz was the person who organised all these books and gave a broad Foreword and Introduction.

The Westerners had a great deal of faith in the United Nations. They thought that global reforms will require the United Nations support. Despite the fact that the United Nations was dominated by the Security Council, the Yalta Agreement got transferred to the Security Council. The Security Council is still dominated by the five big powers. Nevertheless, they had faith, because they believed that United Nations had a very large membership (116
or more) and so they had faith in UN. And even today, there are advisors and so on, and an advisory panel in U.N. So, United Nations on the one hand was intervening in the superpower conflict in terms of how the superpower confrontation can be reduced.

It is interesting that Saul Mendlovitz approached intellectuals, even people who belong to the overall academy, and all that, and somewhat also in terms of discussions and meetings, etc. So there was an interest in lowering the confrontation and arms build up between the superpowers. In some way, it was just the beginning of the Global Peace Movement in the West. If I would have to think of, I would think of WOMP as part of Global Peace movement, as far as the West is concerned. As it moved closer to the South, many other dimensions came up — democratic development, rural development, the whole idea of culture and civilisation being central to WOMP. It was not there in the original thinking. They came in eventually and gradually as members began to join. That's the broad theoretical output.

It is good to mention here right in the beginning, that almost from the beginning, there were differences, differences between the Western legal mind to join WOMP and some of us who differed. I, for instance was constantly arguing for thinking of world order in federal terms, in terms in which the decentralisation process is taken care of. In other words, world order thought of as beginning from the grassroots. As it later on developed, in terms of our own thinking, the Third World thinking in India, and so on. The whole critic of parliamentary democracy that developed there, in which some of us played an important role, in which we emphasised on grassroots, the bottom up process of development rather than the top down process of development — somehow got reflected in our participation in WOMP.

On the other hand, Saul Mendlovitz in particular and even to some extent, Richard Falk was thinking of world order in global terms, essentially in terms of global reforms, setting up global institutions, changing the nature of UN and making it more than effective. So the focus was global. For us, the focus was Third World and to some extent, also grassroots. This internal critic was developed over time, so much so that, I, in mid 1990's or so began to
doubt whether, I should devote so much time to WOMP, because it is still to some extent, dominated by Western thinkers. And I gradually pulled out. I remember, I have sent Ashish Nandy for one of the conferences of WOMP and with him, I have sent a draft resignation of my own participation in WOMP — which doesn’t mean that I am not interested in the theoretical, methodological and historical dimensions of world order. But simply I don’t want to be associated with WOMP any longer. It does not mean anything important.

Even at that time, I should mention that we had doubts about the nomenclature of the term — World Order Models Project — it was a funny name. World Order is okay. But why ‘Models’? The US had one model. Africans had another model. Asia had another model. So, why not think of having 3 or 4 models; or 10 models and make it a project in which these different models interact with each other. That is their justification for World Order Models Project. Funny name. And people who have not heard of it, think of it, begin to laugh. They simply say that it is radical International Relations. These are some of the important things in WOMP. But, by the time, critics came, WOMP had developed as an institution.

Even today, as I said, Alternatives is brought out by WOMP. A number of articles in Alternatives are provided by Richard Falk, Saul Mendlovitz and many Westerners. So there was a kind of difference of opinion, here and there, on certain basic issues. But, even then, we decided to work together in WOMP. I mentioned some discomfort with the name, but we agreed to keep it. I wrote incidentally at that time two-three interesting notes for WOMP to consider. And these are available in the Documentation Centre of World Order Models Project. It was semi-critical and raised different dimensions — federal, intellectual, Third World issues and so on, to which we broadly agreed.

Somewhat later, I while assuming the role of Director of WOMP, India (because by that time, Prof. R. Bhaskaran had unfortunately left) spent some time in US. I was at Stanford Centre earlier and then also I spent a whole year at Columbia University as a Visiting Professor. It was an endowed chair
by one Mr. Aria Walet, a fairly leading person interested in World Order Studies. It was called Aira Walet chair in World Order Studies at University of Columbia. After every year, the chair is rotated, so that every year, there is a different person becoming the Aria Walet Professor. I was the first. I inaugurated that chair. When I was doing this at Columbia, we came closer, because it was in New York. I must admit, to some extent, Saul initiated that I became the first Director, the first Aria Walet visiting Professor. I had no hesitation in saying that precisely at that time, I had difficulties at that point as a result of emergency. I spent the first year of emergency here, at America. I had really accepted the Aria Walet Chair. I think to some extent it helped me to internationally propagate against the issues. I moved around from campus to campus, and the World Order Models Project was not a difficulty, because it was completely with me. So, as a result of Aria Walet Chair, I was able to propagate WOMP, not directly. But Saul persuaded me to accept the Co-Directorship of WOMP which I did.

As we moved on, we had intellectuals from other parts of the world. I began to play a more important role in WOMP. I ensured the participation of intellectuals from all the major regions of the world, from Eastern Europe, from Latin America, from Africa and so on. It was the beginning of a heavy weight model in which intellectuals as intellectuals, universities and parties, all participated, essentially they were not party politicians, but individual kind of thing.

Gradually, we were able to draw in Latin American, African and Asian scholars in it. We had a fairly large base at Tanzania, in Dar-es-Salem, in University of Dar-es-Salem, fairly later in Zimbabwe. Nushan Somavarika, who is currently one of the major leader of Zimbabwe government in Zimbabwe. Nushan Somavarika was one of the Co-Director along with Ali Mazuri of the African programme. These are some of the names in order. I had laid out this in more greater detail in Memoirs, a copy of which Sujit already has, and looked into it. He will definitely acquire and make use of it.

I don’t know whether I have mentioned about Juan Somavia. Juan Somavia was part of the early group that was developed in New York in
WOMP. He later on rose to become the Director, in charge of Social Summit. They held a major social summit. Juan Somavia persuaded me that Rajni don’t give up. We need people like you. Sometimes, I thought of pulling out. But he persuaded me. He rose to became the Chilean ambassador to the UN. He was the head of the Social Summit Programme. I came very close to him. The Indian government didn’t even allow him to see me, because I was on the other side. He came to India, visited India. So he had to make a special request to the Chilean ambassador. I met him in the Chilean ambassador’s room. Those are interesting juggernauts, but nevertheless important. Juan is at present Chairman and Director of ILO, he is a very leading person. I am very happy to be associated with him. I am very fond of him. It began with WOMP.

Many concepts and relationships began in the early years of WOMP. But, then, not everybody stayed on. Each of them played an important role in their own countries, or in United Nations, or in international organisations, and so on. But they all remember WOMP relationship. Even today when we meet each other, we discuss about WOMP, we discuss about alternatives, we discuss about what’s happening in the global world, particularly after the end of the Cold War. How do we respond? We are very critical, all of us of the manner in which U.S. is still trying to dominate, and the WOMP itself had been a singular critic of the American official conservative domination. So we played a dissent role even in U.S.

When I went to Columbia University as a Aira Walet Professor, I took my whole family with me. Because the emergency was going on there. So I had some fear that if I don’t go, they would create problems for me and my family. I had taken my whole family to Columbia University during that period. My son, Miloon stayed on after that. He joined Columbia University. I struggled against emergency internationally from one centre to another.

So, WOMP provided the academics and activists to play a critical role, a dynamic role, sometimes even a worth role within their own countries and at a global level representing that critique, so that there developed a kind of symbiosis between the struggles going on within the Third World or within the
West, or even within the socialist world and the manner in which that was facilitated by our participation. In projects like WOMP, UNESCO, also UNICEF and many other organs we made our participation.

WOMP had to be seen as part of these family of institutions, global institutions, in which it was not only a world order project, but it collaborated with critiques of that. So through all these I was able to grope the WOMP facility, participate as Co-Director in WOMP itself, but at the same time, use WOMP as a base from which I can play my dissident and radical role in India. So did Ali Mazuri the same thing. Ali Mazuri accepted a Chair in University of Michigan. Now he holds a chair in Birmingham and he had been moving further with the idea of ‘World Culture’. So he was almost haunted out of Uganda, where he was earlier associated. There were some other factors, like Idi Amin and all those phenomenon. He just couldn’t survive. But he was there in United Nations University essentially to promote the global cultural interests. So, this is how the broad theoretical dimensions can be looked.

The African group — I have already mentioned Tanzania, Dar-es-Salam, Juan Somavia. These persons, I met were important individuals. Persons like Somavia got rich eventually. But, seen as a movement, the movement was dominated by the military dictators. I have not mentioned here two other organisations — IFDA (International Foundation for Development Alternatives), of which I still happen to be the Co-Chairman, now I am the real Chairman. And, the other organisation is the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, located in Sweden. I have mentioned in Parsi that Dag Hammarskjold Foundation played a role in Japan getting the Right to Livelihood Award. So, interesting combination of things in which we were involved. So, WOMP had to be seen as a multidimensional initiative with differences within, yet at some time, there were collaboration.

I think, I have said enough for today. We also intervened in other debates and initiatives like ‘The Limits to Growth’, essentially arguing that there is reason enough in this world to halt the rate of growth. But to some extent it was broadly conservative. There were critics of the Club of Rome’s
‘The Limits to Growth’, that was developed. Many of them participated in the programmes initiated by WOMP.

Environment has been an important streak in WOMP thinking. My own interest, Richard Falk’s book, which was written in the Stanford Centre. Later on, Vandana Shiva from India joined the effort, and in fact provided and started by a critique of the Western way of looking at WOMP. She was gradually accepted as a kind of participant in WOMP. In fact, she is now essentially more involved in WOMP than I am. I have withdrawn from WOMP and is more deeply engaged in my own struggles.

I must end by saying that when I played a leading role, a critical role in WOMP, I tried to involve intellectuals from different parts of the world. I used the journal Alternatives essentially for some of my writings. There is a big critic of Globalisation, that I have written in Alternatives (about 3 years ago in 1999) apart from three articles I have written in Economic and Political Weekly, again on globalisation.

So, in many ways, it was a multiple, intellectual forum, which began in WOMP along-with UNO, in which number of individuals and nations were involved. It required a lot of travel. I do not travel as much these days. Today whether we are part of one organisation or the other, we recognise each other, individually and otherwise. I don't travel there much probably these days. But I want to tell you that I always contacted Saul in the way I can. Mary Kaldor was very critically important in the Global Peace Movement. They had been also from time to time invited to participate in WOMP. When we finally brought out the peace as a struggle kind of thing, all of us participated in it. I was the Director of WOMP, India. Many others had set up their own institutions.

I have laid out broadly, historically and theoretically about WOMP.

3. Methodology

What I have not done so far is the methodological aspect which we can take up next time when we meet.
Why World Order kind of a thing? The idea was that the world was going on in a very illuminious direction, which was started in the late 60s and then got further. By the time Cold War ended, new kinds of development were taking place. It took on different shape.

The methodology was: Given the present trend, if the present trends continue, “Where will the world go?” I was interested in “Where should the world go?” So if the first question is “A” and the second question is “B”, the methodological point is how to move from A to B, i.e., from a highly conservative developments are taking place, and the world is going on in that direction to somewhat radical direction. That was called the transitional scenario. How do we make a transition from where the world is going to where the world should go? And, what are the issues of transition? That is the broad methodology. If Sujit reads up things and have any questions to ask, probably some of them will be in methodology.

One other thing which I forgot to mention is that in the broad methodology, we agreed that there should be a set of values. The main purpose of WOMP was to maximise certain values, in which:

(i) Value of Peace
(ii) Value of Economic Well being
(iii) Value of Environment
(iv) Value of Social and Political Justice.

Later on, came Women’s role. And I brought in ‘Democratic Self-Reliance’. These were the set of values, which were sought to be maximised by this model — from where the world is moving to where the world should move.

We would like to move the world on the basis of a set of values. So it was a normative framework. It is to that extent, in my own work, it made me move. I was already moving. It helped me to move away from sheer empiricism (research studies which many in my Centre still continues, like election studies and all of that). So, it was a normative approach in which we follow a set of values and maximise those values. It was a shift from empirical
to normative — in some ways, it has been helped by my participation in WOMP.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Rajni Kothari: After what I have said yesterday plus what is there in Memoirs and your own understanding of WOMP, if you have any questions or queries, you can ask.

Sujit Lahiry: This is the second part of our interview with Prof. Rajni Kothari, who was a leading WOMP, World Order Models Project scholar and academic activist also, who had been deeply engaged with WOMP for more than two decades. He had been a very leading light on WOMP, India chapter. He was also the Director of WOMP, India. I would like to express my thanks to him that he had taken so much pain at this age to find some time for me for giving this interview. Because it is very important for me for my Doctoral work. I based on what he had said yesterday in the first sitting and my own understanding of WOMP and along with his recent book "Memoirs", where he had discussed about the differences within WOMP, the idea of building WOMP; there are some small questions which I would like to put before him.

Sujit Lahiry: Q1. Sir, you said that WOMP was a Western Liberal initiative. It was global in the sense that it had leading minds from different parts of the world — like America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Japan, Latin America. But WOMP did not have roots in the deep 'socio-cultural milieu' (about which you have talked about yesterday). Do you think that WOMP had succeeded in achieving the goals of a peaceful and just world which it originally intended to achieve?

Rajni Kothari: Ans: Yes, I think this question needs a two pronged answer. One is that since WOMP had set out a set of values to be realised — peace, development, a world without super power kind of war and all that. To the extent that, WOMP was a movement for peace generally in the Western world. The reason I said it was a liberal initiative in the sense that in WOMP, you can identify liberal, conservative as well as radical elements. By and
large, I consider it as coming out of a liberal democratic space within United States to which later on of course some of the European, Japanese joined. Some like Sakamoto from Japan joined. Sakamoto had a socialist background. But on the whole, more or less, it was a liberal initiative. Beginning with Delhi University, Prof. Harnam Singh and later on me and my colleagues, essentially it was a liberal democratic initiative, some of them may have in their domestic issues more radical views, but, on the international arena, it was a liberal democratic initiative. That is the crux of the initiative.

They succeeded in two ways:- One is for the United States itself and for the rest, the values they wanted to pursue particularly, as I mentioned yesterday, they operated through the intellectual arena — the university system, the pedagogic system, the knowledge system. They had a lot of confidence that if only the younger generation of students and the faculty would join the peace initiative and consider WOMP as part of the peace initiative they would succeed. I think that to that extent, they had succeeded. My only critical references to that phase of WOMP was that it was too much of a Western project. But, to that extent, they later on expanded. They went to Asia, visited Asia, Africa etc., it certainly expanded. But for a long time, it remained fundamentally a Western liberal initiative, involving peace loving people. People wanted also a degree of justice. In the real, values they had were laid out — Peace, Justice, Development. To that extent, as far as the domestic constituency is concerned, they seem to have made a headway.

The fact that WOMP had survived for more than 20 years now, which was seen in the beginning as a romantic effort just by a few individuals who had the vision of a peaceful, single united world and all that. But the fact that it has survived for so long and was able to bring within its fold a large number of intellectuals, peace-loving people, policy-makers and all that.

But I must mention that from the very beginning, even in the West, WOMP had opponents. There were people in typical international relations field who thought of WOMP as just a romantic effort. They thought it as wastage. There were many criticisms of WOMP, which appeared in
international journals of the West, who were pursuing typical international relations approach, international law approach. Incidentally I must mention that some of the key people in WOMP came out from International Law. Saul Mendlovitz himself is an expert in International Law. Richard Falk is a major expert in International Law. As I mentioned yesterday, the first institutional initiative was taken by an organisation called the World Law Fund. They wanted to create a World Law, which will apply to all nations. Later on it got converted to Institute for World Order. From that point of view, it was influencing curricula, influencing the process of knowledge, the minds of the students. If you remember at that time, anti-Vietnam war protests started. And gradually the younger people were looking for a more idealistic, utopian kind of way out of the mess in which the state department and the government of US had gone. Ultimately a major citizen movement developed against the Vietnam War and to some extent people in WOMP got also associated.

So, considering all these in terms of their impact within the Western parameters it certainly shows a degree of success, despite the fact that the leading voices within the International Relations thought that it was a rather romantic thing. There is no question that it was to some extent romantic. If you want to create a new set of opinion, you have to start as an utopia. And that is what WOMP was to begin with but as they grew, set up institutions, and later on got associated with a journal called Alternatives, which I actually started and is also now brought out from CSDS here and WOMP there. To that extent it became part of an intellectual effort within International Relations, a radical thinking in international relations of course. But people like Richard Falk are today occupying very senior and very eminent positions in the field of International Relations. So I would say that it was a partial success. It was not a complete success. It remained basically a movement on the periphery of International Relations for a long time.

The fact that WOMP has so far survived, it has an Institute for World Order and also has a journal Alternatives. Now the Institute has its own journal, which is different from Alternatives. All these shows that though it was
a limited success, it was a success as far as the West is concerned. The important question is whether it is also influencing other parts of the world?

— My answer to that would be, the fact that it involved leading individuals from Asia, Africa and Latin America and Japan, they saw the limitations of keeping it just an American venture. So they went out. They in fact started with India. It began with Delhi University first, and then with me and CSDS and Lokayan. Some of the major projects, conferences that we held at that time was supported by them. They went to Makerere University that is Ali Mazuri’s University. They opposed the authoritarian and military rulers like Idi Amin and others openly. So gradually, they were beginning to have acceptability within Third World, some relatively radical elements within the Third World, not the traditional elements, not the foreign policy people but the intellectuals, and so on. So it was a partial success in that respect also.

I emphasise the fact partial success, as WOMP have not brought about fundamental changes in the nature of governance. It also did not bring about fundamental changes in realising social justice, although its aim was to create a better and just world. That is where my differences with them lay, that to create a better and just world, you have to start from the bottom. While Saul Mendlovitz and others emphasised on a global institutional model and global institutional efforts under United Nations, I emphasised on a process of decentralisation, federalisation, etc. That continued to be my basic difference with them. It was in fact argued, I wrote a major booklet called “Towards a Just World”, which was also published in ‘Alternatives’, showing that Justice demands not just a dominant global thinking, but it demands the involvement of citizens.

In my whole thinking on grassroot and all that also contributed to this dialogue. I don’t think that the dialogue had completely resolved. But, somehow as I mentioned yesterday, I felt, I need to give more time to problems within India after Emergency. And I must confess that I got full support from Saul Mendlovitz and others during Emergency, so much so that he created a special chair for me in Columbia University called the Aira Wales Chair for World Order Studies. I would say that it remained on the whole an
important effort, but did not have an effect in changing the nature of study of International Relations.

Q2. Considering the fact that most of the leading members of WOMP, like Richard Falk has gradually moved out of the WOMP movement, can WOMP succeed under the existing conditions? If not, under what conditions can it succeed?

Ans: No. Richard Falk has not moved out. Richard Falk continues to remain one of the leading lights of World Order Studies. What has happened is that as the International Relations has moved in a way, where for instance, after the collapse of Soviet Union, Senior Bush talked of a New World Order. The very idea of World Order here meant an extremely conservative way of looking at World Order. It was at this point that I moved on. Richard Falk did not gave up World Order thing, but said clearly that this is not World Order. It is domination by the only remaining superpower calling it New World Order, essentially taking advantage of the collapse of Soviet Union. So now, a peculiar situation has arisen in the sense that there is a broad framework of World Order Studies, in which there is an official point of view, represented by U.S. government, and the other in which there is a intellectual and radical point of view represented by people like Richard Falk, Sakamoto, Ali Mazuri etc.

Q3. Taking into account the present fluidity of International Relations can we once again have the dream of a normative benevolent World Order, a peaceful and just world based on the four world order values of peace, economic well being, social and political justice and ecological balance? Can we reinvigorate WOMP in the present international scenario?

Ans: My own feeling is that the time is ripe to reassert those values, to reassert the politics of those values. Because it is the time when after the end of the Cold War, militarisation is growing, authoritarian tendencies are growing, fascist tendencies are growing. Then there is
the need for in the academic field itself and then in the broad social movement, we need a WOMP kind of effort. Unfortunately, gradually because of the differences within WOMP, and the phasing out of the key figures in WOMP, this is what is happening in all efforts, individual effort becomes more important, and the collective effort that was taken on looses its clout. Today these individuals along with younger people added to it, motivated younger people added to it, should resume a move again to a collective effort for peace, for justice, for disarmament, for an ecologically very sound world and ethnic way also of responding to it. These are some of my thinking, which have been laid out quite often in *Alternatives*, but also in *Economic and Political Weekly* and so on.

If anything, today is the time WOMP, or WOMP like effort, is needed all the more because of the serious situation developing today, at both the domestic level, and then, at the international level, both within the West and what we call the South.

This, particular effort, WOMP (World Order Models Project), which started in U.S. and then grew, on the whole, has slowed down. It is not moving. Key figures in it are seeking out recognition for themselves. Ali Mazuri has his own Institute on Cultural Studies in Birmingham, a very influential person. I myself, as I said yesterday that I have sent a resignation letter to Saul Mendlovitz, as I could not travel much. It requires a lot of travel. WOMP was a big travel thing. I did not travel too much these days. Except for Westerners, who can afford it? Even if WOMP itself provided the funds, Saul Mendlovitz was a good fund raiser for WOMP, even then, it had become difficult.

What is needed, which have been my emphasis for long, is a multicultural effort. In different parts of the world, WOMP like initiatives should be taken for peace, for justice and for ecological balance. And, as they develop in different regions of the world, they can then meet together (or in international conferences, etc.) And, then they should rebuild it in a federal way. It should start from the bottom. This was what
it was lacking in the earlier WOMP. In fact, today, multiple regional
effort, multiple cultural effort, multiple socio-economic effort, multiple
political effort is needed where inequalities are growing, where injustice
is growing, where violence is growing, where terrorism is growing, and
in this situation, new initiative within the Third World countries, within
the West, new types of communication are needed. Fortunately there
are a lot of younger people in International Relations, who without
joining WOMP directly, are highly idealistic thinkers, who are writing a
lot not only in *Alternatives*, but also in leading journals of International
Relations.

The peculiarity of the situation is that WOMP like efforts are
needed more today than when it was started. WOMP, when it was
started, it was a typical Western liberal initiative, starting with the thesis
of ‘One World’. What is needed today is a second generation WOMP, a
new WOMP, with new individuals participating and new institutional
structures participating in it. Organisations like CSDS, which is a leading
institute in India, and is highly recognised also abroad. The fact that
some of the individuals in CSDS continues to contribute to *Alternatives*
and such like is worthwhile. But, CSDS provides a major window along
WOMP-like thinking. CSDS in its own way is fighting for democracy, for
justice, for better economic relations, but not within the WOMP
framework. And, the same is the case with Africa, with Makerere
University, with Uganda, with Tanzania, with Nigeria, and lately in
Zimbabwe, there are a lot of problems in these countries. Nonetheless,
there are lot of individuals in these countries, like Ali Mazuri, who are
there in a big way.

So, I would argue that WOMP-II, not WOMP I is needed. We
have to make an effort, some of the individuals who were associated
with WOMP-I, can play a role here, like Sakamoto is a good example. I
can play a role. My own thinking, my own writing, after writing about
politics in India I moved into the futuristic dimension — *Footsteps into*
the Future, the five book series and one of them specially on WOMP. One of them is titled Transformation and Survival: In Search of a Humane World Order. There are some other individuals who are also doing that kind of thing. They are not at the moment associated in a collective way in a WOMP like effort. And arguing that that what is needed, because what we need is both an international and global dimension and a local dimension and of course some form of a regional dimension to the struggle. For many struggles are going on in which young people are involved to create a better and Just World. And yet, they are to an extent on the periphery.

Leading minds who were associated at one time with WOMP, or are associated with such other activities like WFSF (World Federation for the Study of Futures) need to be reworked and we have to move from WOMP-I to WOMP-II. Whether the leading people in WOMP-I will agree to join it or not, whether there are vested interests, whether there are financial constraints, all of these are matter of details, they can be gone in through. We are staying in this world, for instance, where, even American originated organisations are willing to support CSDS and major kind of organisations. They should be made to support not just research on elections and democracy, but also on creating a better World Order. I think it is possible. The thinkers themselves, the writers themselves, from Ashish Nandy to D.L. Seth, they operated at two levels — one is with respect to human rights of local communities, another is with respect to global scenario. I think it is possible. It calls for a major initiative. Some of us are getting old and younger people will have to address themselves.

In my Memoirs, there is a section called “Addressing the Youth” in which I have just worked out that generations like ours can inspire the youth, but they also need to be inspired by the youth because youth today is struggling in a different way. Their perspectives, their thinking, their experience have to be borne in mind by senior people who
happens to be there. Fortunately, some of the senior people still enjoy a visibility with the young. Therefore it is possible to do that. But it calls for an institutional effort, an effort to build a collective, not just a set of individuals who get senior recognition or international recognition or make inaugural speeches in the international arena. What we need is an institutional effort, an effort to build a collective effort and this is where, on the whole there is a failure. Everywhere individuation is taking place, individuals are getting recognition, individuals are coming up all over the frame, but not institutions. We need to build a collective forum for peace, security, justice and ecologically sound world.

Sujit Lahiry: Thank you Sir, I don't have any more questions. I would once again like to record my thanks, my sincere gratitude, my loyalties to Prof. Rajni Kothari who at this age has taken so much pains to give me this interview. Prof. Kothari is not only a great WOMP scholar, an activist but he is deeply engaged in grassroot initiatives in India. He writes frequently. Even today he is struggling for the grassroot rights, with grassroot organisations in different parts of India and travelling all over India, struggling for human rights, social rights, political rights, economic rights. I thank him once again and express my deep gratitude to him.

Rajni Kothari: I must mention that organisationally to which I belong and in which I am currently the Chairman, CSDS, has interest in this. One of my senior colleague, D.L. Seth, happens to be the editor of the journal which is brought out both in India and abroad. So there is an institution connected with it. But this is not adequate. There are also individuals like Ashish Nandy and others who write in Alternatives. But we still don't have a New WOMP that I am talking about. And hoping as a result of new interest in grassroot politics, in struggle for justice, struggle for a better world, to move towards that.

I am happy that I was able to give this much time to Sujit Lahiry, because he was struggling very hard to get an audience with me but I was in the beginning very involved with the work at the Centre. That's when we decided to make this recording at home. Then I happened to have a series of
bad health. Now, I am happy. He continued to persist and persevere and had
the patience to wait and I was able to help in the end. It was a happy ending. I
wish his Ph.D., when it is published becomes a source of influence to younger
scholars and younger minds.