What should the movement of movements do if we want to win?

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- abstract -

Many people within the movement of movements, while outraged at the global state of affairs, and determined to bring about large-scale systemic change, are nevertheless reluctant to use the language of winning - that is, to consider what it means to bring about that change against determined and powerful opposition. *In part this reflects a fear that to think strategically is to act like "the system", and is bound to lead to cynical instrumentalism and the attempt to replace one elite-led system with another.*

We start by outlining what is at stake and asking what "winning" means: what actually happens when a social movement project from below achieves its goal of constructing "another world"? We explore the step- by-step processes through which the movement of movements is currently developing the "insurgent architecture" involved in this construction, and noting how this presents a challenge for the powers that be.

We then turn to the massive opposition that the movement has been meeting from above - from multinational institutions, states and corporations. We explore the nature of these responses and argue that while they have failed to defeat the movement, they have brought about something of a temporary stalemate. We ask how the movement can get beyond this stalemate, not *by adopting the logic and methods of its opponents, but by taking qualitative steps forward in its own development, according to its own logic.*

The paper finishes with some brief discussion of the most important practical steps in constructing another world, and the nature of the moments of confrontation that lie ahead.

This is a working draft, for whose failings Laurence takes full responsibility. Please do not quote too loudly!

Introduction

This paper is part of Alf and Laurence's project to rethink social movement theory in a way that might be useful to contemporary movements, and in particular to the movement against neo-liberal capitalism. We started work on this project because of our own experience of movements in Ireland, India and Norway, their struggles to develop better understandings of their practice and the difficulties they face in doing this. In this paper we want to ask a fairly simple question: what should the movement of movements do if we want to win?

Obviously there are many answers out there, and different answers tend to convince different people for a range of reasons: relevance to their specific struggles, ability to answer immediate questions, ideological affinities, language and sheer style are obviously part of the package, and what we have to say will be judged in these terms. We think there are two related reasons why our approach may have something to offer beyond these.

One is that it draws on the experience of previous generations of activists in movements which had at least some success in confronting and changing existing power relations on a broad scale. In other words, rather than borrowing from academic theory (which is often second-hand activist theory minus the good parts) or making up something completely new, we feel that activist theorising has real value, because of its orientation to "this-worldly" practice. While our main shared point of reference is the workers' movement and Marxist theories, we are also drawing on the experiences of women's movements, of national independence movements in the majority world and of the movements of 1968 and their successors. No one movement or tradition has a monopoly on popular struggles for change, or on what people have learnt in the process.

The other reason is horizontal in time: we feel that it makes more sense to rely on the combining and reflecting of the experience and reflection of many different elements of the movement, rather than to pull a rabbit out of a hat based on the processes of a small movement elite – whether the accommodation processes of NGOs, the

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possession of theoretically correct knowledge on the part of political sects, or the radicalisation of stylised violence on the part of young men. As Hilary Wainwright (1994) has put it, we are talking about a "democratic epistemology" in which the most valid source of knowledge about what movements need to do is the shared experience gathered by their different participants, distilled and developed in their internal debates.

So in this workshop as a whole, but also in this paper, we are trying to draw on as broad a range of what we (activists) already know as possible, in order to make sense of what we should do next – and broaden that out in the discussion to bring in the knowledge of other participants. First, though, if we raise the question "how can we win?" we have to deal with people who feel that talking about winning is missing the point.

What does it mean for a movement from below to win?

Many people within the movement of movements, although they are outraged at the global state of affairs, and determined to bring about large-scale systemic change, are reluctant to use the language of winning – in other words, to consider what it means to bring about that change *against determined and powerful opposition.*

In part this reflects a fear that to think in these terms is to act like "the system", and is bound to lead to cynical instrumentalism and the attempt to replace one elite-led system with another. So we need to outline what is at stake and ask what "winning" means. What actually happens when a social movement project from below achieves its goal of constructing "another world"?

The fear of Leninism

One concern can best be described as the "fear of Leninism": the assumption that winning implies a military insurrection whose outcome will inevitably be an authoritarian state. In some ways this misrepresents what actually happened in October 1917, but that is another story: the issue here is the myth of 1917.

One way of responding to this myth is with another myth, or at least a factoid: that more people were killed in making Eisenstein's movie about the storming of the Winter Palace than in the real thing. While we have not been able to verify this, the general sense

is true: the insurrection, like most successful insurrections, was a relatively mild event (and paled into insignificance by comparison with what was going on in the rest of Europe at the same time).

More generally, it is true to say that violence has almost always been the preserve not of revolutionary movements[1] but of *states*: whether states engaged in fighting major wars and repressing revolution, or post-revolutionary states repressing internal dissent and fighting external enemies (Halperin). Thus in the three major waves of 20th century revolutions in Europe (1916 – 23, 1943 – 47, 1965 – 70) by far the most violent were those of the European Resistance in countries such as France, Italy, Poland and Yugoslavia. These levels of violence were not only dwarfed by the more general violence of the war; they were to a large extent made possible by Allied assistance and understood as part of the war effort.

There is a simple reason for this peacefulness of *actual* revolutions, which is that under normal circumstances, ordinary people are generally reluctant to engage in systematic violence, and it is in fact a serious practical problem for armies to retrain them so that they are willing to kill on command. It is rare, in other words, for popular movements to be in any position to commit the kinds of mass killing that states can manage with a wave of the hand; and (we might add) it has been less and less relevant to the question of political power since Engels first noted the fact in the 1890s: power (for movements from below, at least) rarely comes out of the barrel of a gun.

A related, but more practical, kind of concern can be called the "fear of Thermidor": the fear that after the rolling-back of a partially successful revolution, or the defeat of an unsuccessful one, will come a counter-revolutionary bloodbath aimed at terrorising the population into submission. Such bloodbaths are unfortunately all too frequent, as the examples of the Paris Commune, fascism in power in Europe, or the Latin American "dirty wars" of the 1970s and 1980s remind us.

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[1] There is one major exception to this, which is conspiratorial, "substitutionist" groups. Some historical examples include the Blanquist tradition in France, the 1916 Rising in Ireland and the RAF in Germany. Nevertheless, even these conspirators were models of peacefulness compared to their opponents.

We draw a slightly different lesson from these experiences, which is that if we create movements which pose a serious threat to those in power we had better be serious about winning, because the costs of only getting halfway (scaring them, or winning but only temporarily) are often too horrifying to be contemplated. Saying "another world is possible" but planning to leave those in power, in power, risks the lives not only of activists, but of anyone who might be seen to be supporting them.

Refusals to win

Another kind of problem can best be described as "refusals to win". One kind of refusal to win is the attempt to replace one elite with another (or, even more narrowly, one policy with another) within the institutions of the transnational state (see Cammack on the World Bank, for example), whether because it is seen as genuinely a step forward or because it is seen as the only game in town. This is in essence the reformist strategy associated with the "insider critics" of the WTO, World Bank, G8 etc. – whether NGOs, defectors such as Sachs and Soros, or celebrities such as Bono and Bob Geldof. Its starting assumption is TINA – "There is no alternative", only mild improvements on the basic facts of neo-liberalism, as though those fell from the sky.

Another is "decoupling" strategies which are "against globalisation" but broadly in favour of locally existing power structures, although these naturally have to be modified to some extent. This strategy runs from LETS schemes through to nationalism and religious fundamentalism; Amory Starr used to argue in favour of these approaches, but seems to have changed her mind more recently.

In some ways these are at least honest in their limited aims. We doubt their feasibility – of reformism because neo-liberalism has so little to offer, of pure localism because it deconstructs its own ability to resist. More serious issues are raised by the strategy of "change the world without taking power". There are two readings of this: one, which we take to be Holloway's own, that the primary power relations, and hence the primary terrain where struggles need to win, is social rather than political; it is possible to broadly agree with this without ignoring the need for a political victory on the back of a social one (which in essence is the strategy proposed by Gramsci for western Europe).

The more damaging reading treats the state as either *irrelevant* or as simply *given*, and is deliberately feeble in its aspirations. We relate this approach, and the celebration by many liberals of "civil society"[2], to the post-1968 settlement in which it was accepted that the power of the state could not be challenged, because ultimately it was backed up by tanks (as was demonstrated variously in Prague, Paris and Derry). The theoretical basis of this celebration of defeat (because that is what is at stake) was overturned in 1989, when it was demonstrated that power does *not* always come out of the barrel of a gun – or more specifically, that military power ultimately rests on political and social power.

So what does winning mean?

This section is about "what revolutions look like", given our general understanding of the process of social movements as one of the widening and deepening of the scope and direction of collective skilled activity. In this perspective, winning consists of society *defeating* the state, breaking up at least some of the existing power relations, and starting to create and substitute its own, democratically-controlled, institutions in place of the old ones[3]. Some such experiences – the French Revolution of 1789, the Paris Commune of 1871, the "two red years" in Italy, the Spanish Revolution, the institutions of the European Resistance in 1943 – 45, the dissident agenda of 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Prague, the "utopian moment" of the 1960s in advanced capitalist countries, the Zapatista movement in southeast Mexico – are well known, others less so.

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[2] Obviously there are other, and more useful, meanings of "civil society", starting with that used by Gramsci.

[3] In another historical period, the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" was used to define this – in ancient Rome (and before Mussolini) a "dictator" was someone to whom power was given for a limited period of time to act outside constitutional limits. In other words, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" consisted, in cases such as the Paris Commune, of ordinary people (the proletariat being those who had nothing but their children) directly taking power, outside the legal bounds set by a collapsed regime, while they put a new kind of social order in place. Obviously in the 20th century the phrase has come to have very different connotations, and we are not suggesting reviving it.

Revolution, then, is not an "imposition" coming from a vanguard elite, but a collective "achievement" of ordinary people going far beyond what they previously believed to be possible. What these experiences have in common is a situation where human self-development (not in an isolated, consumerist sense but including development of social relations) is able to flourish beyond the normal limits set by exploitative and oppressive social relations, leading to institutions driven by human need rather than by profit and power. In turn, this tends to give rise to self-management in workplaces and direct democracy in communities, while on a wider scale it has historically always been connected with a strong internationalism, a refusal of racism and advances in women's power.

This process does not come from nowhere. As Michael Lebowits has argued, the "political economy of labour" – the way in which ordinary people try to meet their needs in the face of capital and the state – is something which people are constantly struggling towards, albeit most of the time in a less dramatic way. In "revolutionary moments" people see, and seize, the opportunity to push things further – but what they are doing comes out of this broader, everyday struggle.

This is sometimes talked about in terms of "organic crisis". We want to stress, as Cleaver does, that such crises are not the outcomes of the mysterious workings of the objective laws of capital, but rather are the result of working class struggle against capital. The issue is not one of astrology – the correct alignment of objective conditions and subjective perceptions, but "untimely events" as Bensaid has it.

Rather than try to brand these revolutionary experiences for any political party, we would argue that these core elements are not the exclusive property of any organisation, but are part of the core aspirations which ordinary people consistently express whenever they feel they have a real chance to do so. These "everyday utopias" do not need to be installed from above by executive fiat; what they do entail is a breaking of the power relations within workplaces, state institutions, local communities and globally which stand in their way.

Not coincidentally, these transformations (and the personal transformations which those involved consistently report) are part and parcel of the *process* of developing movements from below which challenge existing power relations (as Sewell has

argued, for example, revolution in the modern sense was *invented* at the Bastille). In other words, it is by standing up to power that people can develop real alternatives – not by accepting authoritarian power relations in the things that really matter and trying to win small battles within the "margin of error", and not by giving up in advance.

Winning, then, is about human development in many dimensions: in changing social relations on a micro-scale, in creating new ways of working, living in places, of gender relations, in constructing broader global connections – and in constructing movements which can carry this change forward against determined, even "last-ditch" opposition, even "last-ditch" opposition armed with tanks. This is difficult, and success is not guaranteed.

But it is also not impossible. Charles Tilly has calculated that Europe, for example, experienced roughly one revolutionary situation a year over the last half-millennium. Put another way, in the twentieth century most people in most countries could expect to experience on average one revolutionary moment in their lifetimes, even if most were either defeated or recuperated by new states. It is possible to win, in other words; people try to do so with some regularity; and this experience – of ordinary people reshaping their world in the face of state opposition – is one which our movements have to reclaim as theirs.

Building movements:

the process of insurgent architecture

Revolution, then, is a development of the collective skilled activity of ordinary people to the point where it can successfully challenge power structures. David Harvey has used the metaphor of "insurgent architecture" to describe this process of human development against opposition, and we want briefly to identify the elements contained within this, using the experience of the Irish anti-capitalist movement as a way of identifying the issues involved and reframing some of the problems facing the movement such as institution-building and strategic thinking.

We next explore the step-by-step processes through which the movement of movements is currently developing the "insurgent architecture" involved in this "political economy of labour", and noting how this presents a challenge for the powers that be. In this section we use the experience of the Irish anti-capitalist movement to look at the

process of insurgent architecture in practice, and reframe some of the problems facing the movement such as institution-building and strategic thinking.

While the movement of movements represents the achievement of globalising existing resistance, the next step is to localise that and "bring it home" to where it started. While the struggle against global neoliberalism is a universal one, it will be fought in particular ways in particular places. To quote Neil Smith, "it's all good and well that $500 million can be whizzed around the world at the push of a button, but it has to come from somewhere and be on its way to somewhere" – and so with resistance.

Irish examples

One element which needs to be mentioned is the long history of urban and rural community-based struggles against capitalist globalisation in Ireland since the 1960s, giving rise to a level of popular organisation which has more in common with the majority world, or with ethnic minorities in the minority world, than it does with dominant minorities. In the 1970s and early 1980s, such struggles often articulated shared identities and ideologies, while engaging in very disparate struggles which only occasionally reached greater levels of organisation. In the late 1980s and 1990s, the development of neo-corporatist "partnership" led to the institutionalisation and fragmentation of these movements. This period is now coming to an end under the pressure of neo-liberal restructuring from above, giving rise to an upsurge in direct action such as the experiences chronicled and critiqued by Tracey and Terry in their paper.

Secondly, we have seen the development of an explicitly anti-capitalist and alterglobalisation movement (more or less since Genoa), focussing on network-building, summit protests, movement media and social forum processes. The relationships between this movement and community-based struggles have been not so much fraught as tenuous: around individual conflicts, such as opposition to the Shell pipeline at Rossport or to the incinerator at Ringaskiddy, solidarity and cooperation has been good; more generally, attempts by activists from either side to build links on a wider scale have tended to run into the sand.

The net result of these two processes in Ireland is a paradoxical situation where (unlike most other northern states) the anti-capitalist movement exists against a background of far wider and longer-standing community organisation; but also where (unlike majority world societies) that community organisation has little organic relationship with the movement.

The key reason for this distance is undoubtedly the successful integration of community movements within the developmental state, and it is the breakdown of developmentalism under the pressures of neo-liberal restructuring that makes a connection now both thinkable and – at least in isolated instances – practical.

But activists themselves have choices to make in this context. It is perfectly possible that these connections will be closed off, if community organisations pursue defensive and particularist strategies in the face of seemingly inevitable change; if individual movements seeking to "mainstream" their issues distance themselves from others whose proximity might threaten their acceptability to elites; and if activists in the anti-capitalist movement are unable to reach beyond the reproduction of subcultures of educated youth.

Developing strategic thinking

Strategic thinking, in other words, is tied into particular kinds of institution-building: both within individual campaigns and movements and between them. The "insurgent architecture" of the movement of movements operates on a particular terrain, in which global processes of neo-liberalism from above are provoking a revival of movements from below. Yet the different vernacular styles of building – existing institutions, traditions of struggle, and local truce lines with the powerful – cannot be wished away, only remade in the process of attempting to find solidarity with one another and win against what is still, for now, a more powerful opponent.

We feel that it is important to hold both aspects - the broad social picture and the narrower organisational situation – in view simultaneously. If we only look at the problem in global social terms, we lose a sense of how the movement of movements is rooted in existing struggles. If we only look at those groups which are already mobilised, we lose a sense of the movement's commitment to broadening participation – not simply numerically, but in terms of power. This process implies the movement remaking itself, or constantly dying and being reborn: a serious challenge to individuals and groups

who have only just staked out positions for themselves within the movement.

Strategic questions are always easiest to pose in abstract terms, constructing an unhelpful relationship between "objective reality" and organisational action ("the movement must..."). Instead, the logic of our argument is to do what we can, and encourage others to do what they can, to support the process of radicalisation of the "movement within society" (which is what "social movement" originally meant) – supporting what are as yet less articulated, less "radical", or less "organised" layers of conflict, reaching out to what people *are already doing* in broader social groups than those we can currently connect with, and always listening.

The history of the genesis of the Zapatistas – urban radicals seeking to rouse the peasantry, finding that indigenous communities had been resisting capitalism and imperialism for the past 500 years, and starting to listen to and learn from them before proposing processes through which this resistance could develop further – is one which the "movement of movements" can still learn a lot from in this context.

Bringing the movement home consists in learning from each other, not just tactically but also strategically, in constant interaction with our own developing practical sense of the local situation and its possibilities. We need to construct, almost within ourselves and our movements, a dialogue between these two touchstones, not privilege one over the other.

The stalemate

While the movement is constructing its insurgent architecture, this insurgency causes a lot of upset to a lot of powerful people, and draws down some massive opposition from above – from multinational institutions, states and corporations, as well as from the routines of everyday life and the institutional separations within which most people necessarily live their lives.

Elsewhere we have attempted to categorise some of the different forms this opposition has taken: accommodative responses such as co-option and the commodification of revolt (which NGOs, the reformist left and a variety of individual carpetbaggers have colluded with in their own ways) and repressive responses such as the militarization of policing internally and external pressure on "rebel states".

While these responses have undoubtedly been damaging, they have as yet failed to defeat the movement, which is in itself a remarkable fact when seen historically. Dual-power situations have rarely been able to sustain themselves over such a period of time, and rarely have movements from below been able to resist the drive to war. Nevertheless, these responses from above have created something of a temporary stalemate or "phony war": while its casualties are real, we are neither in a revolutionary situation nor in one of military repression.

An obvious historical point of reference for this is the experience of 1968. In different ways, in Prague, Paris and Derry, limits were set on both sides to the escalation of violence – which is not, of course, to say that these were non-violent situations, simply that the use of violence was limited by the broader political situation. In Paris, police and movement organisers communicated with one another to ensure that violence was kept within bounds, and the only deaths occurred after May itself. In Prague, the memory of the Hungarian repression of 1956 limited popular response to the Soviet tanks, and the purge which followed the invasion was itself restrained by comparison with earlier periods. In Derry, both the declaration of "Free Derry" and Operation Motorman, which closed it down, were *primarily* symbolic – as the contrast with the establishment and defeat of the Paris Commune makes clear.

In such situations, to paraphrase Lenin, the movement from above cannot gain consensus, nor does the movement from below have a strategy for moving forward; and the restriction on physical violence reflects this situation. Although the experience of the movement in the South is considerably more violent, on any historical scale it is mild indeed (consider the contrast with the recent civil war in Algeria, or the experience of Argentina, Chile, El Salvador or Guatemala in the 1970s and 1980s).

The movement from above cannot gain consensus, because neoliberalism undermines both the main practical means which Fordist capitalism used to build alliances, developmental redistribution (as Sara and Alf's paper has pointed out) and its main ideological means of doing so, nationalism. The movement from below does not as yet have a strategy for moving forward, in large part because it is not yet strong enough to do so, and the danger lies here.

It is in the nature of movements to *move:* participation is a process of *mobilisation* and

radicalisation. States and corporations are more likely to be able to sustain a period of phony war over time, as they form new layers of institutions dedicated to dealing with dissent and incorporate it into their work routines (Gitlin; Piven and Cloward). In the medium term, if the movement cannot develop strategies for getting beyond the phony war, it will disintegrate, with elements returning to a path of institutionalisation and integration within existing power structures, elements retreating to a process of commercialising cultural and lifestyle elements, and elements marginalised through criminalisation. This is in essence the experience of 1968.

To get beyond the stalemate, of course, the movement would have to remake itself in a form which would make winning a real possibility, and we now turn to this problematic.

Beyond the stalemate: how can the movement develop?

We ask how the movement can get beyond this stalemate, *not* by adopting the logic and methods of its opponents, but by taking qualitative steps forward in its own development, according to its own logic. Winning, in the terms outlined at the start of this paper, is not a result of elite strategies or of epic moments of confrontation; it is above all a result of the broadening and deepening of struggle throughout society.

The role of the (existing) movement institutions in this context is one of coordination and communication, education and encouragement, taking initiatives and confronting the system – but not of substituting itself for everyone else. Hence we suggest that the best strategy for the movement is a further development of the "political economy of labour" – the everyday struggles of ordinary people for self-development, to secure access to the resources they need to do so, and to create the organisations they need for this purpose.

Dual-power situations

The challenge, then, it how we can build dual power situations in the age of global neoliberal capitalism. The dual-power situations in Chiapas and Argentina highlight some what this means in practice. In Chiapas, an "armed community", rather than a "people's army", has been able to create and defend its own territory for the

past 11 years despite the best efforts both of the Mexican state and its US advisors. We do not want to romanticise the Zapatistas, and we note that strategies of broadening the movement to include other elements of Mexican society as well as global solidarity have always been fundamental to Zapatista thinking. But the strength of the Zapatistas is clearly in the rooting of Zapatista institutions in a "whole way of struggle".

In Argentina, the processes of resistance do not draw on such homogenous communities, and are correspondingly diverse. The complexities of the movement's interaction with the Argentinian state also represent a very different kind of problem. Yet here again the strength of the movements is in their grounding in social struggles which go deeper than formal organisation, and here again a dual-power situation, albeit of a different kind, is represented by the road blockades, the neighbourhood assemblies and the occupied factories.

The strength of these movements, and their remarkable ability to sustain dual-power situations over periods of years (rather than the few months that such situations have normally existed), highlights the resilience and creativity of movements which are grounded in the development of the "political economy of labour" – whether that labour is of a classic working-class occupying its own factory, of unemployed workers tackling distribution networks which exclude them, or of indigenous peasants defending and extending communal land-holding patterns.

The distinction between dual-power situations and stalemate can be stated as follows: in a stalemate, the "movement from above" still rules but does so without consensus; in a dual-power situation, the "movement from above" no longer rules, at least over significant parts of society or of the national territory. Similarly, in a stalemate, the movement from below cannot yet articulate a strategy for moving forward; in a dual-power situation, ordinary people are refusing to allow themselves to be ruled as they have been ruled in the past, but the structures of power have not yet crumbled[4].

At the same time, we have to stress that these movements are *only* at the stage of dual-power institutions, entailing high costs to participants and dependent on extensive networks of international solidarity from

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[4] This definition of Trotsky's was drawn directly from the experience of the Russian and French revolutions...

movements abroad. Neither has successfully tackled the problem of state power locally, and activists from both movements make it clear that what they need most is to avoid isolation.

Standing on the shoulders of giants

We do not want to claim a theoretical position which would place us above the movement as experts who can see what participants do not. In our view, the movements in Chiapas and Argentina see about as far as can be seen at the present time, both in terms of their grounding in local struggles and in terms of their engagement with the wider "movement of movements". While "one, two, three, many Chiapas" will not in the long run suffice as a strategy, for now it represents quite enough of a challenge for the movement in most of the rest of the world. Similarly, while the current development of movement struggles throughout Latin America is not yet enough to transform the basic facts of neo-liberalism - the power of transnational institutions and the US – it is undoubtedly a necessary next step.

In reflecting on the specific role of parties and the state in contemporary Latin America, we suggest that governments such as the Chavez or Lula ones are best seen in this context, although they do not as yet constitute dual power situations. Whether the power of capital is represented primarily in opposition to the state (as in Venezuela) or embedded within it (as in Brazil), there is clearly something interesting going on – another aspect of the stalemate – but as yet it can hardly be said that either genuinely represents direct popular power working through alternative institutions.

Nevertheless, within peripheral situations, the movement has reached a point where it can enable governments which would be unthinkable without its presence, and which enable it both locally and globally (e.g. the group of poorer nations which has been organised at recent WTO summits, from Cancun 2003 on). But it would be an exaggeration to say that the movement is "in power" in any simple sense in any Latin American country.

This is why we feel it is crucial *not* to romanticise what we see elsewhere: because while the experiences of other activists have much of value to offer, they do not have all the answers, in part because we hold some of them in relation to our own movements.

What other movements need is not so much our uncritical allegiance as our own development of comparable movements at home.

We need to reflect in turn on the relationship between today's forms of dual-power (and related phenomena) and those of previous generations; and to explore whether the different relationships between movement and state we can see in Latin America reflect fundamental theoretical / strategic differences or rather local peculiarities.

At this point, therefore, we return to our own contexts and ask how some of the struggles we are most familiar with – the NBA, the Irish anti-capitalist movement – could develop to a comparable level. What would be involved in them doing so? And how can activists encourage this? How can the momentary anti-war mobilisations of 2003 become a broader recognition of each other across the world?

Beyond neo-liberalism? Possible outcomes of the movement

At this point we should, if we can, offer some concrete proposals for getting beyond the stalemate and bringing the movement to a point where it can successfully confront the transnational state, transform capitalist relations at the point of production and create the dual-power institutions that are part and parcel of constructing another world.

It is traditional to draw on Gramsci's reflections at this point. We feel it is important first to move back a step and explore the situation that Gramsci was reflecting on: the movement wave of 1916-24, which led to the collapse of three empires, a nationalist revolution in Ireland, a democratic revolution in Germany and a socialist revolution in Russia. Gramsci, and his fellow-activists (such as Connolly, Luxemburg, Lukács, Trotsky and Lenin) were heavily involved in this movement wave and made significant contributions to movement theorising.

Nevertheless the primary experience was one of the failure of revolutions and proto-revolutionary situations, and Gramsci's thinking about hegemony and the relationship between state and society takes place against this background of the rise of fascism, the increasingly desperate putschist strategies of the KPD in particular, and the need to think both in a longer term and on a broader basis about the problem of

revolution. We have been here before; though we can still hope not to arrive at the situation from which Gramsci was writing.

In other words, rather than using Gramsci as a talisman *against* serious thinking about revolution, the point is that his political thought is entirely geared to the question of *when* and *how* revolution can become possible: not simply through a political process, but through the reorganisation of society from the bottom up.

The nature of (counter-) hegemony

A certain kind of reading of Gramsci uses the term "counter-hegemony" (which does not appear in the Prison Notebooks) to mean the multicoloured, but essentially *separate* resistance to currently dominant social forces. The notion of counter-hegemony would certainly be legitimate in terms of Gramsci's thought, but rather in the sense of the construction of a different *kind* of hegemony: a radically democratic one, but nevertheless connected in a shared direction developed through solidarity, cooperation and communication.

In other words, the issue is not simply the dismantling of existing relationships of direction and ideology, but (by definition) their replacement with new kinds of relationship, growing out of local rationalities and the "political economy of labour". These need to work both at a practical ("directive", says Gramsci) level locally, but also to be integrated together conceptually and communicatively with developments elsewhere. (Gramsci's sketchy notes "On the Southern Question" – on how to link up the struggles of peripheral peasants and the urban working-class – are still relevant today in this context.)

If we can achieve this – developing existing struggles and communicating together – we are in the process of "building another world within the shell of the old", another world which is by definition in conflict with older forms of social relations. This does not in itself guarantee that the new world will win that conflict, but without this process it can be guaranteed that there will not even be a contest. To summarise our understanding in a phrase: we need to connect with other people's struggles beyond those which are already connected in the movement, or we will fail. If we do this, we have a chance of success.

What might happen in a revolution?

We want to finish by addressing the question of whether revolution is still a meaningful concept today. "Revolution" can, after all, mean simply that popular struggle gives a push towards the next phase of capitalism (as has been the case with the three previous "world-revolutionary moments" of 1916 – 23, 1943 – 45 and 1965-70), or the building of another world, however patchily. This in turn raises the question of whether it consists of the construction of a single new world or of many interlinked worlds.

This raises some core conceptual issues about the relationship between state and society as it is problematised in revolution: that revolutions entail society rising up and overthrowing the state, yet this is necessary in part *because* of the role of the state in fixing key social relations such as power and ownership. Another way of putting this is to ask what has to be the case in order for people to be able to develop freely.

In this sense, rather than the most radical theoretical position on offer, it might be useful to consider socialist feminism (for example) as something of a minimal programme: if we can arrive at a point where everybody has access to the means of producing a reasonable living without destroying the planet, where nobody is subject to arbitrary power relationships at home or in the workplace, where rape, torture and slavery are things of the past – then we can get on with the real business of living, and leave the "prehistory of humanity" behind us with a sigh of relief.

Moments of confrontation

It cannot be expected, however, that the global capitalist class, the transnational state, patriarchal masculinities or institutional racism will simply apologise for their past misdemeanours and disappear. In thinking towards the nature of the moments of confrontation that lie ahead, a key feature to consider is that of uncertainty: in the nature of things, movements from above will try to intervene at a point when the success of movements from below is not yet guaranteed. This presents activists in movements from below with a choice between taking a risk on a confrontation ("hanging together") where the costs of defeat are massive and widespread, or pulling back and taking individual consequences ("hanging separately"). What is the best way to judge such situations?

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In the process of unmaking states, both positive and negative lessons can be learned from "1989". Positively, it is clear that states cannot simply rule "out of the barrel of a gun": since the cost of failed attempts at military repression is inevitably high for the rulers (Ceaucescu), it is crucial for movements from below to try to create situations where states are unlikely to be able to use military force successfully (Honecker) and to avoid the possibility of "Tiananmen" situations (which in turn entails exploring the conditions for those)[5].

This strategy fits with our broader argument for developing local rationalities from below, in effect undermining the top-down control structures of the police and military with alternative logics and the development of new kinds of legitimacy from below. The wider process within which these "insurrectional" questions are embedded, then, is that of the development of new kinds of everyday practice, grounded in new kinds of institutions developed from below – a practice which in turn gives rise to new forms of constitutionality and legitimacy, however understood (not necessarily in state-like terms).

Four possible outcomes

The possible outcomes of the process we are charting, and arguing for, are many, but we conclude by isolating four possibilities, and relating them to current activist perspectives on what needs to be done.

In one, "Fourth World War", low-intensity counter-insurgency becomes a way of life for "dissident zones", based on their isolation from more powerful, and essentially conservative areas. This connects to movement strategies of self-ghettoisation, the romanticisation of protest as such, and radicalism as style or moralism.

In a second, "Ebbing Tide", a strategic or dramatic defeat such as that of Prague or Paris in 1968 leads the way for the isolation of key activists, the retreat of ordinary participants – but also a "composting" of this

experience and resentment in a flow of local struggles such as characterised most of western Europe in the 1970s. This connects to "organisational patriotism", the egoism of a single-project focus and the more general phenomenon of particularist "free riders" on a general movement.

In a third, "Settling for Less", movement elites are coopted with the offer of formal victories (restructuring of international financial institutions, for example) masking a more substantial informal defeat (for example within workplaces and communities). This connects to NGO strategies within the movement. Characteristic of all three of these options is a failure of movement participation: geographical isolation in "Fourth World War", demobilisation and institutional fragmentation of participants in "Ebbing Tide", and lack of democratic control in "Settling for Less".

Our fourth and most hopeful option, "Constructing Another World", represents by constrast a situation where the movement has been successful at broadening participation geographically and socially, deepening its engagement with everyday struggles and in building strong forms of counter-hegemony.

At this point, though moments of confrontation will certainly be part of the story, interest shifts to processes of "transition": how workers in multinational corporations might restructure their activities, for example; how thoroughly globalised communities might develop adequate structures for self-government; how financial capitalism might be dismantled without a global recession; and so on.

Readers will perhaps be relieved that we do not attempt to offer any recipes for this transition, except to express our confidence that "humanity never sets itself problems which it is not capable of solving"…

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Sorry for the lack of bibliographic references – email us if you need any!

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[5] These are more specialised than might appear, given that the PLA is a conscript army. They included the use of the last leading military survivor of the Long March, the selection of a unit from a rural area far away from the main centres of unrest, and the isolation of that unit in barracks for a lengthy period prior to the suppression of the insurrection. Tiananmen was not inevitable, in other words.