

## Learning To Be Loyal To Each Other : Conversations, Alliances, And Arguments In The Movements Of Movements

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We must learn to be loyal, not to 'East' or 'West', but to each other.  
– European Nuclear Disarmament Appeal, 1980<sup>1</sup>

### I

#### An overwhelming task

I should start this Afterword with a confession. When Jai Sen as editor asked me to write an essay reviewing and responding to this book as a whole, I found the request hugely exciting – but also incredibly daunting, almost impossible to live up to. At an individual level, many of the authors are extraordinary human beings, and figures who carry an aura with them that goes beyond their own : In their lives and their words, they express the realities of the struggles of enormous numbers of people, in some cases across great spans of time, engaging with huge challenges. Collectively, too, this book is an unparalleled record of thought and action, an attempt to grasp something of the immediate backdrop to where our movements are now. It comes out of a long series of practices, among them the 'auroras of the Zapatistas', popular struggles in India, the Social Forum movement, the extraordinary summit protests, the attempts to remake states in Latin America and – not least – the work of Jai Sen, Peter Waterman, and their many collaborators, who have attempted to construct conversations between the experiences of these different movements in books like this, online and in and around the Forums. It is a great privilege to read the resulting book, but there is almost a sense of vertigo in trying to grasp the struggles that lie behind the individual chapters, let alone in reading them collectively.<sup>2</sup>

In the end, the only basis I can find for my own responses and reflections lies in the way in which my own work has been shaped by some of these same experiences and practices, in more local and specific ways. Along with others, and after many years of involvement in a range of different movements, I became part of the process of networking between movements in Ireland from the late 1990s, including the 'Grassroots Gatherings' series of movement encounters from 2001 to the present<sup>3</sup> and the protest against the EU's 2004 enlargement summit,<sup>4</sup> all of which fed into a new wave of movement alliances. At the National University of Ireland Maynooth several of us set up and now run an MA for activists from different movements based on popular education methodology.<sup>5</sup> Internationally this practice of 'learning from each other's struggles' developed into the online journal *Interface*, a network of activist researchers supporting dialogue between movements and academia and across movements.<sup>6</sup> I have also been involved in a dialogue between Marxism as a theory from and for social movements and academic social movement research, which has found shape among other things in co-writing the book *We Make Our Own History*<sup>7</sup> with Alf Gunvald Nilsen, who works on social movements in the global South, and attempting in our own way to grasp the 'movements of movements' theoretically and historically from an activist point of view. In all of this, I – and I think most of those I have worked with on these various projects – have been conscious of being shaped by, and participating in, this wider experience of people in movement, struggling for a better world : Too many, and too diverse, to ever really know closely even within a single country, let alone globally.

In some ways, perhaps, writing this wider experience, as *The Movements of Movements* attempts, is strictly speaking impossible – to engage with what Marx variously called "the movement as a whole" and "the real movement of society"; but precisely the impossibility of this task is what gives this book its strength. Rather than taking refuge within a particular political discourse, national or regional context, disciplinary theory, movement issue or theme, type of strategy or tactic, particular kind of organisation or institution, the book presents a challenge that can't be so easily dodged; one that comes from explicitly recognising each of these as partial, and asking what kinds of ways of speaking with and listening to each other can do most to deepen and broaden our understanding. Boaventura de Sousa Santos' phrase "an ecology of knowledges" is helpful here, with its clear implication that there is no perspective from which one can claim to see the whole – or put

another way, that what we are reaching for is a way of speaking across worlds, but with all the humility and awareness of barely understanding and barely making ourselves understood even for specific purposes that comes from living in a world of seven thousand million of our own peers.

## II

### Talking about movements

So what are we doing when we speak and write about movements ? Some years ago I was involved in an abortive attempt to create a dictionary for European movements from within the networks around the movement thinktanks of the Transnational Institute, Transform, and the Rosa Luxemburg Institute.<sup>8</sup> The challenge was – and remains – a real one : Even within what is often represented as a homogenous space, we do not mean the same thing by what we say.<sup>9</sup> Conversely, we often mean something comparable but spoken in different ways; in different countries and movements, activists often express broadly similar practices through different inherited languages. In the past, allegiances to powerful internationals – not only the Second, Third, and Fifth but also those of anarchism and radical nationalism, of liberalism, feminism and so on – obscured this fact through their construction of powerful centres.

Today it is perhaps less the relative power of Moscow - or for that matter US feminism - that is at stake, and more the way in which our movements have adapted to neoliberalism by constructing themselves as a series of niche markets : Just as aficionad@s of a particular kind of jazz, metal, or folk come to have a very skewed map of the world which essentially represents particular touring circuits and record labels, so too do activists. We are dependent on what for lack of a better word can be called export / import channels : The networks through which we come to hear particular versions of struggles elsewhere (on social media, as visiting speakers, in reports from movements abroad, in the one-line explanations we get of how this or that author is situated politically). What those of us outside India, or South Africa, or the US, think we know about the struggles within such huge countries is almost inevitably dependent on such arrangements.

*Almost* inevitably – but the kind of work represented in this volume has sought precisely to overcome these self-referential accounts and to open our ears to the limits of our knowledge about the rest of the world – and, by extension, our own countries and for that matter our own movements. In this sense we have to be multilingual : Operating for everyday purposes within our own mother tongues but shifting to other languages when we meet in different spaces, and so becoming conscious of the peculiarities of our own and how hard it can be to say what we want in some other form – while learning to doubt how well we are understanding each other.

Of course, in reality, none of us are born speaking activist theory : Even growing up in movement households it is something, like the vocabularies of love, which we have to learn to inhabit for ourselves and remake for our own purposes as we come to be agents in our own right. And like the language of love, it is inevitably metaphorical, perhaps particularly so when we think we are being most concrete. A party, to take that apparently concrete term, first meant literally 'a part', and was used – as late as the manifesto "of the communist party" in 1848<sup>10</sup> – to mean a faction or tendency (within a parliament and, later, a movement). It is also from our own movements that parties in the modern sense were formed, starting with the mass party (as in Germany's Social Democratic Party) and then the cadre party (as in the Bolsheviks). Of course those forms have themselves in turn been superseded by history : The rise of party-states in the state socialist and postcolonial worlds, of catch-all parties in the postwar global north, of sectarian micro-parties, of parties as electoral alliances between micro-parties, of instant parties constructed online, and so on all mean that when we say 'party', we are really asking a question rather than pointing to a single, clearly-understood thing. This is not less true for 'union', 'NGO', 'movement', 'struggle', 'campaign', and all the rest of it – as we know when we try to make alliances with one another.

Some of the time – as in the first flush of love – it may not seem to matter so much what we mean if we can agree to agree that it means the same thing; and many alliances which do not have to bear very much pressure can be constructed on this basis. Of course, it is only when we are actually trying to work together in the teeth of real pressure from outside that we come to see what we actually did mean and how far we have actually understood each other. What can we say, then, about the metaphors we use to grasp that strange experience of 'movement' ?

*At some level*, I want to suggest, movement theory comes from movement practice and is developed as a tool to help us do concrete things. Sometimes movements exist in a 'state of nature', cut off from other movements and having to invent all their terms themselves, more or less

consciously. More commonly, they repurpose and rework an older language that belonged to a previous movement in the same space. Or, as Alf and I suggest,<sup>11</sup> they “reclaim, reuse and recycle” a form of frozen or sedimented movement theory from some academic source which has preserved the ideas of a previous generation of activists.

But because we are starting from different social experiences, different local cultures, different processes of movement development and different forms of intellectual socialisation, it is not strange that mutual incomprehensibility is a frequent experience. When we cannot rely on a mechanical similarity that comes from comparable sources, it is really only through alliance-building and long conversations that we can come to speak each other’s languages, or develop a new, creolised, language that expresses our new and more complex reality : New and more complex because we now have to speak effectively to a wider range of realities and say something that works across these.

Not every movement language, it should be said, is subject to these pressures. Sectarianism is defined among other things precisely by being impervious to any real learning from its interlocutors : Its only concern is to fit a selective account of what they think within its own framework. But this is not different for academic languages which are only answerable to their own disciplines and where the determining power relationships do not include the movements themselves; and it is also true for the kind of celebrity writing which is mostly concerned with its reception in the centres of intellectual production which determine its saleability. Or – put more constructively – if we *do* owe allegiance to an organisation, to a discipline, or to publishing, we also owe it to the movements we are working with to ensure that they form a determining part of our conversations and not simply the raw materials we work on.

There is a good side to this, however : Language is a tool that we use to enable not only communication but also collaboration. It is in listening to each other and trying to communicate across difference that we come, sometimes, to forge effective alliances and overcome our own partial situations, in part : To engage more deeply with the other worlds that shape our movements and the other worlds they are trying to make.

Of course this does not always happen : Language can have many purposes. For example, the century-old distinction between agitation, organisation, and education<sup>12</sup> suggests that some ways of movement talking are more useful for talking to those who are *not* yet active (agitation). Those same languages – the language of outrage and a call to action – are only sometimes useful when directed at other activists. They can mean, or be understood as, a lack of respect – a failure to recognise that the other person is just as committed and engaged as we are, and an assertion of the central importance of *our* issue as against theirs. Though there are of course times when internal agitation is necessary to raise awareness of issues which are being ignored or excluded.

So too, an organising language can be used to express a macho, ‘just do it’ impatience with questions (themselves often the fruit of bitter experience) about the implications of fetishising action as against strategy; or it can be used to construct a nuanced relationship between two *different* ways of doing things, their different tempos and fields of action – which can, perhaps, enable a different way of working to arise in a new movement. An educational language too can represent a means whereby a certain kind of movement intellectual tries to bring everything into a zone where they are likely to be central – or it can be a very different kind of (collective, popular, self-) education where what is heard, and thought, learned, and done is of more importance than what is spoken directly.

Just as with love, where we may be aware that different cultures or different relationships have more or less of a language of praise and romance, a language of daily tasks and care, a language of articulated feelings, or a language of bodies and children, and that any of these can be (used as) a barrier to communication just as much as a tool for real connection and collaboration across time – so too with movements. How can we speak our different kinds of languages together in ways that help to make movements work, and that are more shaped to contributing to our shared spaces and practices than to asserting our own place within that space ?

My experience has become that celebrating and/or demonising movements and organisations has little real value; or put another way, the spaces in which this is the primary activity are not spaces geared towards collaboration between movement participants. Rather, they are spaces of recruitment and opinion politics, of asserting our own value through ridiculing others or praising those who we feel reflect well on ourselves. But the world in which we award stars or red marks to other groups is not one in which we build links with them : Particularly, it might be said, when we do so on the basis of our allegiance elsewhere (to some superior version of Theory, whether academic or

sectarian; an assertion of the primacy of our own Issue as against all others; or our ability to provoke particular kinds of reaction from an audience approached via commercial publishers or the opinion politics of the Internet and social media). There are words to describe the activity of turning other people's painful and difficult struggles into fodder for our own personal strategies, but they are not pleasant ones.

The Mexican scholar of Latin American history and politics Adolfo Gilly, reflecting on his reading of many different kinds of radical theory, talks about how the best approaches share "a concern with the preoccupations of the people, based on the impulse to understand their world and what motivates them".<sup>13</sup> This suggests a critical, and more constructive, means of talking *between* languages, which neither assumes the automatic and unquestioning validity of each language in its present form nor that one language can be 'right' and another 'wrong'. Gilly again :

"... [parties in Latin America] often think they are the ones organizing and instructing the people on how to mobilize, but that's not the case – they were the best institutional form for securing particular ends, and the impulse comes from elsewhere, from long years of suffering, from an intolerable reality."<sup>14</sup>

This goes equally for movements, organisations, and intellectual traditions : They may not be the best form, and people can change as they assess this, more or less consciously.

So we can have a serious and honest discussion about the adequacy of a particular (intellectual, organisational, cultural) form to needs; and along with this a discussion of the selectivity of which needs are met, or not met, by particular approaches, with a view to developing the practice of movements - a critical dialogue of solidarity geared to finding ways of working together that enhance what we are all trying to do.

However, this also has to be earned. The trust and respect of our interlocutors has to be earned, not least through their seeing that we are trusting them, and being open about our own standpoints (in a way that the intellectual or political sneer excludes) – but also that we are respecting them fully. In particular, of course, we have to respect that they understand the everyday experience of their own world far better than we ever can, and that there is a relationship between that experience and the strategies and languages they are choosing to deal with it.

That does not mean that we necessarily agree with their interpretation of that experience, or their strategies : To my mind, respecting others as equals entails including our own perspectives in the conversation, and being open to discussion (or argument). But it does mean recognising (in a materialist way) that other people are not actually going to accept our assertions about what they should be doing on the basis of where we stand – nor, perhaps, should they: the real gain of our encounters is often simply a clearer understanding of where each other is situated and why they struggle in the way they do.

If at times we are able to suggest something sensible to others, or make an argument that strikes them with force, it is usually because we have listened to them - and to others like them - closely and are able to bring out the discontents they are not fully articulating, or that they are not managing to resolve through the forms they have chosen. In my experience the ability to do this is usually (perhaps not always) a result of being aware of the learning processes of *other* people who have already gone through a similar process : Familiarity with the struggles of those who became second-generation feminists, for example, can help us say something useful to some teenage girls (not all); or familiarity with working-class community education can help us say something useful to people who have previously accepted their place in the social and cultural order (or not found effective ways of resisting it). But these are skilled and cautious conversations, depending on decades rather than years of *listening* and *learning* and on a basis of honesty and equality.

In a similar vein, I want to say, university-based rants against the limitations of contemporary movements are easily recognised for what they are, as is the desire to elevate one's own cultural capital (the particular theoretical variant, or life experience, one is staking claim to). They may offend and hurt, but I suspect that this is often secondary, in that their form shows how little they are intended as dialogue : The movements mentioned in such rants are caricatures, punching-bags against which our authors show off their cleverness and radicalism at the expense of people who are risking much in their attempts to bring about *any* change in the present situation. This does not mean that we should not criticise the ways in which reformists seek to shut down discussion of – for instance - repression, the limits of capitalism, ecological destruction, racism, settler societies, patriarchy, and so on. But if we are serious about wanting to change this, we have to do so either by honest engagement where we think something can be learned, or by bringing in the missing subjects

into the conversation and letting them speak for themselves. I have never seen a rant about police violence change the opinion of someone who believes the police version of events, for example; I have though seen direct encounters with real victims shake such belief to the core.

To my mind this is a core tenet of political responsibility : To think about what we are doing when we say something, and why we are doing it, to consider its intended effect on others, but also its actual effects, to think about how it is distributed and how it is understood; and to see our speech as an integral and conscious part of our practice and hold it up to the same standards.

This is the foundational proposition of the MA in Community Education, Equality and Social Activism at Maynooth. Grounded in a long experience of popular education struggles around class, gender, ethnicity, ecology, and anti-capitalism, the central learning point of the course comes from sharing an intense space over a long period with very different others who are also, unmistakably, one's peers as organisers, community activists, and radical educators (and I am referring equally here to participants, to the activist staff, and to the other activists we bring in, visit or work with in the course of a year). In the space of a weekend, or even a week at a space like a social forum, we naturally gravitate to those who are like us and can have more or less fruitful conversations; but the most useful work takes place on the margins of the formal presentations and debates, in networking with those who are not quite like us.

Over a year, spent with activists who scare us, upset us, argue with us, and in other ways bother our own sense of who we are, we have to come to take them more seriously. Not necessarily to agree with them – but to recognise that their experiences are as real and valid as ours, to understand what they actually mean when they say something, and to come to intuit something of why a particular response makes sense to them. As we say when we bring the group together at first, most do not need to learn how to connect with the activists who are most like them : The real challenge is in making the allies they actually need to win, those who do not automatically see the world, or respond to it, in the same way.

One great merit of this book, then, is precisely to keep drawing attention to the wider movements (plural) of movements – or (put more generally) the movement realities that lie outside our own immediate experience, network of allies, political niche and so on. If at times the perspective that comes from attempting to integrate these very different perspectives and the struggles that lie behind them is a vertiginous one, still doing so strengthens the muscles that we need to use when engaging with the specific movement realities that we actually bump up against outside of our own existing practice. Without these muscles, or the orientation that makes us want to learn and listen, make allies, and develop shared projects, it is we who are condemned to remain in relative isolation, trapped within the limits of our own social and political order – who are unable to move.

### III

#### **Loyalty to each other : A humanist perspective**

How then can we hold these two perspectives together ? Jai Sen's remarkable Introduction attempts to draw our attention to the widest boundaries of movement, to go "beyond the fields we know".<sup>15</sup> I think there are at least three steps in his dance (but he may see more, or fewer). Rather than repeat his analysis, I will try to argue alongside him, perhaps accompanying him in the dance, but from my own perspective.

Firstly, Sen reminds us, we should set the movements we know in contrast with those we do not; or (as we put it in Interface or our MA) we need to learn from each other's struggles, even or particularly those we are not already connected with. Or, as social movements researchers might say, we need the comparative perspective that can help us to think about our movements *as* movements. Secondly, those movements come out of deeper social realities and injustices : They do not exist in and of themselves. EP Thompson's famous comment "no worker in history ever had surplus value taken out of his [sic] hide without finding a way of resisting"<sup>16</sup> points to this : Behind the movement are the people who move, and the things they move against. Alf Nilsen and I try to generalise this Marxist point : We need to understand how movements grow out of the material social relationships that shape people's lives, and to see the people and their lives.

Thirdly, movement is in some sense *what we do*, as full human beings – or rather as human beings who are attempting to become more fully ourselves in the act of movement. Our lives are diminished by the fact of living in a world marked by oppression, exploitation, and stigmatisation, whether we are among the victims, among the beneficiaries or among the bystanders. In recognising and struggling against these structures, and in creating other kinds of relationships – of solidarity and

communication, of resistance and creation – we become more fully human. In this sense, movements represent some of the best that the human spirit has to offer, in a world which prefers to offer degradation and violence, ignorance and obsession, isolation and despair.

I want to enter a small point of disagreement, in relation to Sen's comments about "faith" (or rather religion) and movements.<sup>17</sup> It is, of course, absolutely true that religion is an important aspect of many movements, either as a 'given' feature of the social world which is then drawn upon in movement (as, for example, the US Civil Rights Movement drew on the black churches of the South) or as a mode of movement organising (as, for example, in the use of conversion to Buddhism by Indian dalits resisting caste).

But (temporarily putting on the rather different hats of a scholar of religion and an engaged religious practitioner), it seems to me that the key questions to be asked of *any* religious behaviour or way of talking are what needs it expresses and what people are doing with it. The same religion that can represent the self-defence of a minority in one place can be a central form of domination in another; or in a time and place where some people use religion as a means of asserting and organising ethnic power, others find it imprisoning (for example, in relation to gender). When we meet each other as potential allies in the social world, then, what is most important is to try and understand what *this* particular religious expression is actually expressing – which is not an easy question, as only a small number of adherents are typically in a position to say, lucidly, why and how it has become their preferred organising mode.

This is not only true of religious language and action. Marxism and the language of class became languages of oppression used by states covering substantial parts of the world for several decades during the twentieth century. Most of the world today is formed into nation-states, often built on the basis of anti-imperial or democratic movements which expressed themselves in terms of ethnicity, nationhood, or race. In less direct forms, we have seen forms of feminism and, more recently, gay / lesbian (not yet, to my knowledge, bi / trans / queer) emancipation pressed into service to justify western military interventions.<sup>18</sup>

Put another way, there is no safe place to stand within language or theory : It is in 'real human practice' that the actual meaning of particular words, organisations, and traditions in particular places becomes clear. When is a trade union a form of liberation, and when is it not ? When is community activism a mode of the self-assertion of the poor, and when is it a form of clientelism ? When is counter-culture disruptive of central power relations, and when is it a new cultural niche ? If we can ask these questions, we can also see that there is little point in making broad assertions of the form "X is...." - and that we have rather to look at *what people are doing with it*. This, to my mind, is the fundamental importance of Marx's historical method. To return to religion, this is why Marxist historians have been able to write about religion variously as a mode used by elites to express their power, as a form of social control, as a mode of radical self-organisation, and as a quietist escape : It can be all of these, depending on circumstances.

To quote the European Nuclear Disarmament appeal of 1980, "we must learn to be loyal, not to 'East' or 'West', but to each other".<sup>19</sup> Activists wrote this in the context of a difficult, limited but nonetheless significant dialogue between Western European peace activists and Eastern European dissidents in the face of the threat of a 'limited nuclear war' between the USA and USSR, to be fought in Europe. The implication was of course not an uncritical acceptance of the other's views, but rather a ('materialist') recognition that the other spoke for a partial reality which was different from one's own and that it was through the encounter between the two that something could be changed.

The meaning here of "not to East or West" was of course the attempt to construct a dialogue between west Europeans who were radical in the context of their own states and opposed to Stalinism, and eastern Europeans who were seeking, for example, a 'socialism with a human face' that would suit neither Moscow nor Washington. Today, we might seek other ways of being loyal to each other that do not involve ignoring who we are in our own realities, but ask more clearly on what basis we seek and offer solidarity across our different worlds, what it is we recognise when we are moved by each other's struggles to develop our own, and what kinds of loyalty we are hoping for.

#### IV

#### Imagining movement, living movement

The remainder of this Afterword responds, selectively, to the chapters in this book. Rather than simply summarise them, I have tried to pick out themes that - from my own, idiosyncratic standpoint

- may help either to make connections or to understand what we mean by the words we use to grasp what we and others are up to.

The opening 'Movementscapes' section gives a series of seven, very different, perspectives on how we might imagine the movements of movements – including, of course, very different senses of which movements are significant. In keeping with the perspective outlined above, I want to ask some questions of these perspectives, in terms of the practice they suggest or refer to, by way of developing a dialogue of critical solidarity which does not ask us to agree with the other but rather to find a common space for action.

### **What democracy looks like**

David McNally's chapter gives us a stirring overview of struggles against capitalist globalisation from the Zapatistas on.<sup>20</sup> He writes rightly that "oppressed people around the world regularly re-emerge as conscious makers of history", and shows us how "utilising mass strikes and uprisings, land occupations, popular assemblies and direct democracy, [movements] are carving open the spaces of opposition to globalising capitalism. And yet..."

His "And yet" though, is an interesting one : "[T]hey confront the dilemma of moving from a politics of resistance to a politics of liberation" ... "they only episodically venture toward the beginning of something entirely new"... "Radical movements cannot change societies without such a vision"... "this search for a radically different society has to mean clarifying concepts of anti-capitalism". And here is where I start to have doubts : Historical doubts, and Marxist ones.

For if there is one thing the *Marxist* study of revolutions has shown, it is that, more often than not, the visions, concepts, and forms of organisation of and during revolutions have come out of the processes of mass mobilisation rather than preceding or producing them : Actual revolutionary movements are often filled with people who feel that they are challenging the king's bad advisors rather than the institution of monarchy, who challenge actually-existing religion in the name of true religion, who "anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service", as Marx put it<sup>21</sup> – dressing up 1848 in the clothes of 1789, dressing up peasant revolutions in the Third World during the 1950s and 60s in the clothes of 1917 or of the Paris Commune of 1871, or for that matter, and in our times, dressing up resistance to capitalist globalisation in the clothes of an imagined but now defunct (communist) Party.

There have indeed been periods when The Party and The Programme have been effective tools. On the longer historical view, these were rather short periods, associated with the period of 'organised capitalism' in which the nation-state was a central economic actor and the central protagonist of modernisation, and in which the structured delivery of popular support to contending elites might be expected to deliver particular kinds of redistribution. There were also (we might now remember, looking back at the experience not just of actually-existing socialism but also that of independent post-colonial states) a series of disappointments, problems, and disjunctures between the visions, programmes, and organisation of such parties and the actual results; sufficiently so that we might wonder just how compelling the argument is, even in respect of that history.

But more broadly, I have come to have strong doubts about the general proposition that revolutions cannot be successful without a clear vision or a central organisation. I would say that it is only in a minority of cases that participants have had such visions or organisations going into revolutions; that neither vision or organisation is alone capable of *producing* revolutions; and that it would be more accurate to say that over time the *process* of revolution has led participants to reach their "hic Rhodus, hic salta" : the point where they suddenly had to make a leap into the unknown.<sup>22</sup> And when they do reach this stage (again following the classic Marxist historiography of revolutions), it is not through this external reaching for a vision or an organisation - but rather through the internal development of movements' own logic, what Alf and I have called "local rationalities".

For example, the Paris Commune *evolved* working-class democracy out of the structures of everyday life and in particular out of the self-organisation of small artisan workplaces and plebeian neighbourhoods into the democratic militias that formed the de facto basis of the National Guard, and the practical location for popular debate and action. This extraordinary, creative experience started from ideologies which had more to do with Blanquism and the heritage of previous radicalisms than with Marx (or Bakunin). The substance, it could be said, went beyond the form.

Something slightly more complex might be said of 1917 : Although the military committee of the Petrograd Soviet, which carried out the October Revolution, came out of the process of council formation and radicalisation in a similar way, most Marxist commentators today would surely say that the organisation and programme of the Bolsheviks did *not* successfully translate into the state that

Stalin built. If we hold that there was any value in Leninism, we must surely also hold that it was *not* all that effective in making the kind of revolution that was intended.

My own feeling is that what today's movements need is not to look outside themselves for a vision of the future. There are more than enough such visions ('cookbooks for the future'), and most do not produce revolutions. Nor do they need to *import* a model of organising. If anything, they need to come to the point which Marx, in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, describes thus: "There [in the liberal-heroic revolutions of the 18<sup>th</sup> century] the phrase went beyond the content – here [in the social revolutions] the content goes beyond the phrase". This is, of course, a *democratic* as well as a *social* perspective: It places the emphasis on the creative and reflective activity of ordinary people in their everyday struggles, and support strategies that proceed from this and take it further, rather than to place the emphasis on the writers of visions and the organisers of parties.

I do not want, as the argument is sometimes put, to remove 'the conscious element' from the equation: I want to suggest that it is a question of seeing the 'conscious element' in everyday struggle, and attempting to find adequate forms for articulating this further, rather than identifying the 'conscious element' with a particular type of people engaged in a particular type of activity. I may be misreading McNally on this, but it seems to me that it is not in "the history of socialism" that we should be looking for our visions; rather, reading that history as activists can help us to see the non-linear relationship between the visions developed by movements in struggle and their actions, and the ways in which (to quote William Morris):

"[people] fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other [people] have to fight for what they meant under another name".<sup>23</sup>

This, I think, is a better way of reading how vision and organisation have worked – not only in relation to 1917, but also (for example) in relation to the welfare states now under massive assault in my own corner of western Europe, the state socialisms now largely destroyed across the globe, the post-colonial states in so many parts of the world which have disappointed so many of the hopes that made them possible, or for that matter the uprisings of 1968 in Europe and North America, Mexico, and Japan. Something was gained in each case, but not what we thought or planned for; there were new battles to be fought; and the new organisational forms that were created turned out to have logics of their own.

### **Dialectics of presence**

In responding to McNally, then, I find myself echoing Drainville's comments in his essay in this book:

Where classical left internationalism was shaped by programmatic fights fought on behalf of abstract subjects, the 'new internationalism' drags actually-existing human beings, in all their bounded plurality, into the terrain of the world economy.<sup>24</sup>

Of course, that plurality sometimes includes the *language* of the classical left, whether in post-colonial continuity with not-yet-resolved processes of struggling over the direction of national development, or in 'the second time as farce', as often happens in our universities. But Marxists, of all people, should not mistake the image of rationality for its substance. We need a sociology of knowledge (and not a morality play) that explains why, for example, the language of the classical left seems more attractive for many movements in Greece than for most in the USA. And we also need to avoid the naive assumption that if our comrades in India or Argentina use what seems to be the same language we use, or if our organisations have good relationships with one another, that this means we have a simple, transparent understanding of what, *in their own local contexts*, their language means.

Drainville's argument is, I think, a bottom-up one, or one that seeks to bring out bottom-up realities as against what he sees as the closure of categories like 'altermondialisme': "[T]ransnational praxis re-establishes the continuum of experience between global and local contexts of struggle, in a manner that may radicalise and socialise both". He also writes: "[W]e need to think from concepts of resistance drawn from what men and women acting against capitalist restructuring have already invented" – without losing the specificity of particular struggles but without losing touch with each other.

This is, I think, the spirit in which this book is couched, and it is one in which we stand to learn much from each other and, perhaps, win some real battles: It is precisely in the specificity of struggles that we are sufficiently grounded to do so – but at the same time, we need to be aware that if that is all we do, our gains will be incorporated into the wider system rather than contributing to create 'cracks' in capitalism.<sup>25</sup>

### **Social imaginaries in the world-system**



Kalouche and Mielants seem to be arguing, on grounds of definition, the opposite to McNally's case.<sup>26</sup> Where he sees movements as coming from below, but struggling to evolve visions and organisation, they write :

"We have not yet used the word 'movement' since it entails conscious and self-reflective teleology... Movements have rarely been expressions of the lower strata of the oppressed classes since they are usually intertwined with aesthetic ('bourgeois') values. Movements are motivated and directed, as conscious or self-reflective action, towards specific goals or aims that are provided through social imaginaries at particular social-historical intersections. It is *always* [my emphasis] through emerging social imaginary significations (in the name of something that becomes historically accessible to others within a social imaginary) that movements may undermine dominant economic, social, political, or cultural aspects of social-historical institutions."<sup>27</sup>

For these authors, then, movements are defined by the conscious element, and that conscious element is in a sense a prisoner of "social imaginaries". The periods 1968-89 and up to the present, they tell us, "have been marked by the permeation of the world-system's multiple cultural systems by dominant capitalist social imaginaries". This feels circular to me, and perhaps a reflection of the different things we are looking at. There is no doubt that Kalouche and Mielants are talking about something real. Societies do indeed shape culture, and intellectuals of a certain ("aesthetic, 'bourgeois'") kind operate at the leading edge of that culture, in more or less interesting ways.<sup>28</sup> And there is indeed a sort of change which consists of the inner logic of that culture coming to operate in some sense against its current manifestations – within limits, of course. But is that all there is ? Is this all that happens ?

I want to think about two examples. One is the extraordinary impact of the Zapatistas - *because* they were not operating within the dominant social imaginary, but were speaking from a very different place, which resonated powerfully elsewhere because it was not simply a mild inflection, or avant-garde version, of neo-liberal rhetoric. The other, older, experience is that of what was once called "the social movement",<sup>29</sup> the coming to self-consciousness and self-organisation of what slowly became spoken about as "the social question" or even more simply as "society" : The vast masses of people who were not spoken for in the languages of eighteenth-century politics and culture, and the emergence of radically different ways of being, speaking, and acting that shook the world.

For Kalouche and Mielants however, this is far too simplistic : "[W]hile anti-systemic movements were actively looking to control the state, systemic forces were developing into polished and perfected ways of producing desires and needs and of shaping subjectivities... systemic forces were engaged – for a long period culminating in 1968 and beyond – in moving away from a centre (the state) to permeate all aspects of "material life", thus dominating social imaginaries and inhabiting the "cultural worlds" at the basis of a less stable 'interstate system'.

Well, there is something to this : This is one of the things that Foucault's disciplines, and today's producers of commercial culture, seek to do. But it is perhaps mistaken on our part – politically as well as analytically – to assume that they are entirely successful in this. There is certainly both need and space for an engaged critique of these processes, just as we need a critique of the ways in which some kinds of movement elites transmit the cultural shape of the wider society in their organising practice. But if we are to have a real conversation, I think it has to allow for the world to be larger than this. Carpenters may look at trees and only see the tables that could be made from them; and cultural critics may look at the top-down processes through which elites seek to shape culture, seeing the need to point out the blindness of others and in so doing elevate their own trade to a position of centrality. But even within the frameworks of cultural studies, there is by now rather a long history of demonstrating the active nature of reception, including critical reception.<sup>30</sup> Returning to the discussion with Jai Sen above : Religions are mostly constructed by elites, and yet popular movements regularly appropriate them to say things which were not dreamed of by their founders or by the hierarchies they created. It is just as well that this is the case : If we were to push the top-down cultural critique to its limits, we would have to say that the only ways out are those provided by cultural critics (or radical theologians) - and we would also have to say that the historical record gives little ground for hope that their comments will change world-systems.

I would suggest something different : If we seek always and everywhere to find the effects of a dominant culture, we will find it, and we will confirm the importance of our own analysis, while being unable to do much with it, as the conclusion of Kalouche and Mielants' essay suggests.

Conversely, if we recognise that people have needs – which are not simply produced by the system as Kalouche and Mielants suggest, but may even bang up against it (to take a mundane but powerful example, the need for water regularly bangs up against attempts to privatise and commodify this – and people consciously resist the demand to imagine themselves as consumers), we can see that, unevenly but persistently, people can and do find ways of organising around and expressing these needs; nor do they always cast these needs in the form of ‘identity’.

These things are uneven, and contested. In Ireland at present, some individuals do accept the logic of consumerism – when it seems to suit them. For instance, the 43% of the population who have officially paid their water charges at time of writing fits rather well with the proportion who believe that their interests are best met by the traditional centre-right parties. The rest, not so much. Of these, some of course are free riders, but most have a broader picture : Participants and opponents agree that the struggle is not just about water but about austerity. Of the vast numbers of people who are involved in directly resisting the installation of meters, in local assemblies, and in producing counter-publics and engaging in mass marches, many – but not all – link the struggle against austerity here in Ireland to the struggles in Greece or Spain; many – but not all – link the struggle against austerity to that against neo-liberalism or capitalism; and many – but not all – link it to struggles against privatisation and the IMF in the global South. These things are not given, but to be fought for. It is this process which the top-down definition of the situation fails to see, and fails to contribute to, in its concern to show how movements are ‘cultural dupes’, unconsciously playing out parts scripted for them elsewhere.

### **Storming heaven**

Tariq Ali’s piece deserves reading in full.<sup>31</sup> There is, I think, an element of *‘erano belli nostri tempi’* - ‘our days were great ones’ – justified by his own experience and contribution at the time. I would read something else into it, though, when he says : “How can the lyrical sharpness of politics in 1968 be anything but alien to the spirit of this age that has followed ? The radical politics and culture of 1968 do not cater to the needs of the current rulers any more than they did to the needs of the rulers of that time. The autonomy of the past has to be defended.”

What recognising, and practising, that autonomy can do, I think, is give our present-day actions an urgency, and a scale of vision, that is easily lost. Ali was writing in 2008, and in Britain, which was perhaps not the most inspiring of times and places, and it would be easy to respond that there were other uprisings, even at the time, that he does not mention. But I think it is important to speak for what is fixed in our own emotions and social experience – if it can be done without dismissing others. We do need that bigger picture, somehow, to become real for us as part of our everyday experience, to infuse the mundane actions of any day’s struggle with the bigger picture of what they connect to and what they can mean. I am walking around the corner of a dusty mountain track; I am also, perhaps, storming heaven. This latter only exists in my understanding and in my relations with the others who are doing the same thing : It cannot be read off from seeing my feet move.

What the highpoints of movement such as 1968 offer us is the chance to see ourselves in this kind of relationship to others, around the world, rather than in relationship to how we progress our individual issue within a particular local setup, or the dominant structures of meaning production. Coming to be loyal to each other is, above all, this : Coming to let our reality be defined by each other’s worlds, on the basis of whatever form of mutual recognition we can negotiate. It is, of course, easier to see ourselves as simply trying to change one corner of a given world, within familiar rules – or to engage in forms of identity competition with others. To take that larger position is to grow beyond, but remain rooted in, our own realities – allowing those realities to become plural.

### **Being indigenous : One foot outside**

Alfred and Cornthassel, as Indigenous activists, present indigeness as “oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonisation by foreign peoples”, and go on to write that “[Indigenous Peoples’] existence is in large part lived out as determined acts of survival against colonising states’ efforts to eradicate them culturally, politically, and physically”.<sup>32</sup> They present a situation at once of extreme weakness and of inherent resistance : “How can we resist further dispossession and disconnection when the effects of colonial assaults on our own existence are so pronounced and still so present in the lives of all Indigenous people ?”.

Not being indigenous (but where I live in a postcolonial state, and have been increasingly studying both moments of anti-imperial solidarity and imperial collusion), I want to respond from the

outside, in relation to three elements of indigenous resistance which have had effects in my part of the world.

The first – on the part of a small fishing and farming community in the northwest of Ireland facing a Shell pipeline, and who have developed solidarity links to the Ogoni of the Niger Delta (who have their own history of battles with Shell) – is the extraordinary power of apparently weak groups when their existence is under threat. In recent years Canadian indigenous groups have been remarkably successful at defeating oil pipelines, a matter of major concern to the rest of the planet. In Ireland, where the pipeline has now been built by Shell after some 14 years of struggle, the costs have been such as to minimise the likelihood of fracking being successful. A central reason for this is that the threat of the pipeline is precisely the destruction of communities, families, place and ways of life directly tied to the land and the sea. As a result, local resistance was able to be far more determined and uncompromising than many more traditional forms of movement precisely because of how much was at stake. As with Indigenous communities and struggles, this combination of community and place - which is a part of a wider tradition of rural ecological struggle in disadvantaged parts of Ireland - has an anti-systemic potential which movements that find it easier to 'negotiate' do not have; and such struggles can be strategic in powerful ways even when numbers are small and opposing power is apparently overwhelming.<sup>33</sup>

What this points to, secondly, is the extent to which Indigenous groups and others have one foot outside the apparently all-encompassing whole that is the capitalist (patriarchal, racialised etc) world-system. Of course, as Alfred and Corntassel remind us, the system may go very deep indeed; it may be a painful work of recovery to get to the point where 'one foot' is a fair estimation of how much of one's weight can be rested outside of it. *But what is strategically crucial is that there is an outside*, and that the communities in struggle are aware of this. That outside lies in the existence (or recovery, or re-imagining) of other ways of being that consciously seek not to imitate the system but rather, to imagine, know, and build other ways. Indigenous groups play a crucial role in this for the rest of us, because they remind us that the system is not eternal : That it has a history (and hence an ending) and an outside (and hence a limit). There are other such limits, set by the depths and richness of human needs beyond advertising, electoral systems, managerialism, trade agreements, and all the rest of it. These are the grounds of resistance, of the creation of alternatives (or rediscovery of old ways), and of the independent and self-confident critique of what exists. For other movements therefore, indigenous resistance is a powerful reminder to get on with resistance in our own contexts.

Thirdly, Alfred and Corntassel's rich and multidimensional image of what constitutes Indigenous identity – or, as they observe, what might be an aspiration in this direction - is a challenge to the rest of us and what are often our quite impoverished ways of envisioning the future. (I include in this the forms of nationalism and religious identity which we have experienced in the modern world and among which many post-colonial societies now operate). There is – we now know, after the failure of such cultural nationalisms to deliver emancipation – no liberating path to redefining 'the' way of life that could replace the system. And yet, freed from this notion of nationhood, it remains clear that "history, ceremony, language and land", together with relationships, community, plants, and animals – the full richness of the human experience – offer strength in our resistance and in our envisioning of other futures. Perhaps, here, what we non-Indigenous should be inspired to is not the attempt to appropriate elements of Indigenous culture but rather to engage with the implications of the irreducibility of Indigenousness as insisted on by so many Indigenous radicals.

There is no one way of life that we should all live; nor can we all read off from our ancestry (often mixed and mobile) what we should be individually. And yet, human beings create cultures (and languages, religions, relationships to the land, communities, etc) all the time; it is what we do as a species, and often very rapidly. Can we imagine a world of co-existing - even of mutually interpenetrating - worlds which contain 'a wealth of needs', and where we do not have to communicate with one another along the artificially impoverished terms of narrow economic exchange ? If we seek a world of real freedom, can we do other than recognise that this will allow each to find, rediscover, or create our own places in different ways ? And can we commit to the politics that will make this possible, starting with the politics and movements of surviving Indigenous populations ?

### **Indigenous feminism**

Andrea Smith argues that movements' failure to challenge heteropatriarchy leads us all to internalise social hierarchy, and (in her context, the USA) to seek a "kinder, gentler" US; or for indigenous

movements to seek nation-states rather than a more open and inclusive form of sovereignty. It leads racial justice movements there to imitate “white, Christian America” in a homophobic emphasis on the “Black family” or “Native family”. It enforces a split between our public, protesting selves and our private, gendered selves – creating inaccessible movements. And it leads to single-issue organising strategies that accept the wider structures of domination.<sup>34</sup>

In place of this, she argues for “revolution by ‘trial and error’”, in which we share “our struggles, our successes, and our failures”, giving examples of the attempt to proliferate “making power” in Latin American indigenous-led movements and Incite!’s exploration of how to construct “movements that engage our whole selves, and from which we get back as much as we give”. Her work has been very productive in this respect : The book [The Revolution Will Not Be Funded](#),<sup>35</sup> where she played a key role, has been an inspiration to many Irish activists, despite our very different political situations.<sup>36</sup>

Building on Smith’s arguments, it seems to me that the only way we can challenge the system as a whole *is to see it as a whole*, even with our different starting-points and primary concerns. If we do not recognise, whatever language we use, that there is some kind of relationship between class societies, empire-building and colonisation, racialisation, patriarchy, heteronormativity and so on, we can only construct partial movements. In this context, calls to recognise a specific issue as *the* strategic issue are not so much the point; in the real world, people mobilise in concerted and sustained ways around issues that they feel in their own lives (not necessarily in individualised ways), and the question is rather of how we can make connections between those movements rather than which is most important. Part of the challenge, particularly for those of us working with words and working in universities, is not to let this process of alliance-building be overridden either by the analytic effort of theorising and prioritising or by the systemic logics of competition : To say ‘My issue is the most fundamental one’ is simultaneously to accept a retreat back to the boundaries of those movements within which this claim is credible. That may still mean several hundred million people, but it is not enough, in a world of billions. We do not have to give up the place where we stand, personally, politically, or intellectually, in order to find ways of making alliances : We simply have to commit ourselves not to prioritise the logic of competition in places where it does not belong.

### **Neo-Zapatismo**

Xochitl Leyva Solano’s fascinating piece discusses the social movement networks of “alliances and convergences” around the EZLN at both local and global levels.<sup>37</sup> I share her positioning within “a long tradition that seeks to produce knowledge which is useful not only for academics but that, above all, supports the strengthening of the processes of transformation, liberation, and emancipation put into motion by the collectives, organisations, and movements of which I am an active part” and her commitment to think beyond a “totality that makes us believe that there is literally no way out”.

Critiquing the RAND corporation’s theory of Zapatista “social netwar”, and discussing the shifting discourses of the EZLN, she summarises her research on neo-Zapatista networks in Europe. While in Ireland the direct role of these networks was limited, their indirect role in the development of anti-capitalist networks of resistance completely bears out Leyva Solano’s research, running from alliance-building in the later 1990s through to the development of an overt anti-capitalist movement in the early years of this century, with significant connections to parts of the anti-war movement and contemporary anti-austerity struggles. She writes that “knowledge is always situated” and hence “all knowledge is partial and contingent”.

In Ireland, our understanding and involvement in movements was certainly combined in this way : The impact of the Zapatistas made it possible for us to conceive of a “proximal zone of development” which took existing movements further. (For some of us, this was also informed by the experience of 1968, the history of the workers’ movement, and the experience of movement networks elsewhere.) In doing this we were part of a process whereby movements articulated themselves *beyond* the existing system and came to find allies in one another on the basis of a mutual recognition of commitments to different forms of popular democracy, bottom-up organising, grassroots networking, feminist practice and community activism. These movements were both rooted in their specific realities and struggles and able to reach out beyond themselves : We needed both moments, and we needed, perhaps, the radical otherness of the Zapatistas, outside of the familiar, known, provincialism of day-to-day movement routines, to imagine both more deeply and understand better what we were doing, or trying to do, as we put one foot in front of the other. Xochitl Leyva Solano’s essay is an eloquent and powerful reminder of this.

## V

**Making our own history : Critically engaging with the movements of movements**

This book's challenge to understanding the 'movements of movements' is a challenging task, and one which I have been grappling with for many years.<sup>38</sup> When Alf Nilsen and I wrote We Make Our Own History : Marxism and Social Movements in the Twilight of Neoliberalism,<sup>39</sup> our strategy was to attempt to understand the complexities of movements in a humanist, demystified way by focussing on movements as situated, developmental human practice. 'Situated' because who we are, and the material circumstances of our lives, are fundamental to how we act; 'developmental' because movements rise and fall, as well as becoming more or less radical, networked, transformative, human, and so on; and 'practice' because movements have to be *done* or *made*, in more or less skilled ways.

In relation to Section 2 of this book, but more generally the diversity of movements and of what kind of thing we mean when we say movement, We Make Our Own History explores the range of levels of collective agency that movements are capable of going through – not in order to come up with some fixed ranking, but rather to see what might become possible (rather than simply celebrating or condemning the current state of movements, which does not help) and what might be needed to fulfil the needs expressed in our movements and reach their most radical goals. We look at the local rationalities represented in how subaltern populations live their daily lives and attempt to meet their needs under given conditions; the militant particularisms that arise when these daily strategies come under attack from above; the campaigns into which such militant particularisms can coalesce in alliance with their peers; the wider social movement projects which bring together multiple campaigns around a vision of a different way of organising the world; and the organic crises which such challenges to the status quo can sometimes give rise to.

We also, and importantly, try to theorise the collective agency of the powerful, wealthy, and culturally privileged – “social movements from above” – in particular those which give rise to new ways of organising the world, such as neoliberalism. When we think of these *as* collective agency like our own (albeit collective agency which can draw on very different kinds of resources), it becomes possible to theorise power relationships in terms which are not totally removed from our own experience, with less theology and more practical understanding perhaps (a lesson learnt from Gramsci and resistance to fascism).

Using this broad framework, we try to think historically about the current wave of movements, in particular where we are in terms of the strength or weakness of the hegemonic alliance around neoliberalism and our differing capacities, in different locations, to bring that alliance (further) into crisis and to create possible alternatives. We might think of the current wave in terms of relationships across time : For example, continuities from earlier networks of resistance that flowed into and became the global 'movement of movements' and forced changes of regime in Latin America; from there into the movement against US wars in the Middle East and a rising tide in the Arab world; and into indignad@s / anti-austerity / Occupy movements in the global North – but it becomes possible to ask these questions practically rather than as a matter of definition : How, and why, do particular events, particular mobilisations connect to others or stand isolated ?

One thing which becomes clear in our analysis – but which this volume too also shows – is the relatively greater ease of making connections, politically and intellectually, between Western Europe, North America, Latin America, South Asia, and indigenous struggles. There is a history to this particular set of connections, intersections, discussions, mobilities, and arguments, which simultaneously makes it easier for activists to feel that they understand one another and to organise together across distances. Of course this is a matter of degree : There are other networks of movements, and it is not that movements in the Arab world, or in sub-Saharan Africa or East Asia (for example) are necessarily isolated. Nor am I suggesting that all is homogenous and uncontentious within the “movement (singular) of movements”.

Rather, and partly in contrast with Jai Sen's argument in his Introduction to this book,<sup>40</sup> I think the distinction between the totality of “movements (plural) of movements” and the specific networks which at any given time constitute the “movement of movements” is a real, and useful one. That we know more about each other in certain contexts is part and parcel of our better connections within the movement (singular) of movements as it has been constructed between its participants thus far. Asserting this is not, then, a call to rest on our laurels, but rather a call on the one hand to deepen and broaden connections from what has already been achieved - and on the other hand to move away from celebrating the fact of isolation, which is valuable as academic rhetoric (or as social

media headline) but not good news in political terms. Movements that seek to challenge deep-seated power relationships, and not just insert themselves within given local power structures, need to look for wider alliances. This is a crucial piece of movement learning which should not be forgotten in the celebration of the specific, or of struggles in 'unlikely' places : *of course* people fight where they stand, and start from their own local rationalities; equally, most such struggles are defeated or subsumed, without broader solidarity. A 'forgotten' struggle has a problem, and needs allies.

Conversely, even a partial and limited set of alliances such as that represented by the movement of movements is a huge achievement, and nothing is gained by using its limitations to deny its existence or significance. If we do not see the most recent waves of movement historically – in relation to earlier movements, and earlier movement waves – we will neither understand them intellectually nor be able to take things further politically.<sup>41</sup> In this sense, there is much to be said for the book's strategy of closing its story around 2010 : Because "the owl of Minerva only takes flight at dusk", or in other words, we know things differently when we have acted past them than when we are still trying to articulate them. Both modes of knowledge are crucial for human action, but their shapes are not the same.

Another way of putting this is to say that the structures whereby we know and work with one another are not fixed, but something to work on. It is always hard to assess how deep particular connections go, and one key question has to be whether a verbal acknowledgement of other movements represents significant internal realities within a particular movement, or just a sort of hobby for a handful of network-minded or internationally-minded people. This is where the importance of Jai Sen's, and Peter Waterman's, work comes, and why alliance-building processes - from the various Social Forum movements to People's Global Action, from the circuits of the various international lefts to issue-specific networks such as that against Shell - matter. The journal *Interface* represents a smaller contribution in the same direction : Deepening the 'ecology of knowledges' and enabling us to imagine ourselves and work together as part of a wider world – negotiating the balancing act between staying true to ourselves and our own specific, local struggles and standing in glorious isolation. Even the radical specificity of Indigenous activism entails networks across peoples and across continents, and this is no weakness.

I should also say a word here about "the twilight of neoliberalism". On the one hand this judgement comes from a recognition that *all* previous capitalist accumulation strategies have had a relatively short lifespan (only several decades); and that precisely because they are based on complex alliances, there are good reasons why such things are hard to hold together past a certain point, and any serious strategy for defeating them therefore has to entail disaggregating such alliances and their structures of consent and coercion.

On the other hand, this recognition that the structures of the world-system are constructed alliances also means that we cannot expect to have a blueprint, like an elite-in-waiting which hopes to take over a once-colonial state structure relatively unchanged. If we are to be successful in challenging these structures, it can only be on the basis of being alive to this reality and of continuing, deepening, and extending the conversations between movements from below that can allow us to shape an alternative kind of alliance for a different (and more diverse) kind of world, and disaggregate hegemony.

Hence *neither* One Agreed Programme *nor* Fragmented Resistance for its own sake : The phrase 'a movement of movements' itself sketches out a programme of bringing together the various different tacit knowledges, hidden worlds and forms of good sense that arise from our different partial perspectives to create a wider view of what is wrong with the world, how we are coping with that, what we are doing about it, what we might be able to do, together. Such a programme is a process, not a given : Among other things, it is itself a movement from whatever 'movement of movements' we have at present towards whatever 'movements of movements' we can connect with beyond our present starting-points.

## VI

### Struggles for other worlds

Many of the essays in Section 2 of this book have a powerful orientation to practice. Anand Teltumbde's essay on Dalit movements highlights both the weaknesses of much contemporary Dalit activism in its tendency to follow populist leadership which fails to speak to Dalit experience of the effects of capitalist globalisation – and the need for the Indian left to take caste seriously as a strategic political issue.<sup>42</sup> Jeff Corntassel's chapter, seeking a 'spiritual revolution' against colonial

definitions of the self, highlights the weaknesses of indigenous rights discourses in that they encourage a state-centred rather than community-centred framing of movement goals, and so reproduce the power structures that Indigenous demands should seek to transcend. He develops a complex argument for sustainable self-determination which focuses on Indigenous communities' own terrains of action.<sup>43</sup> Notably, he calls for social forum meetings which take place in Indigenous homelands to acknowledge this and follow the protocols of those cultures.

Xochitl Leyva Solano and Christopher Gunderson's extraordinary piece on the many threads which went into neo-Zapatismo defies easy summary, and explicitly disavows the attempt "to identify here what is of universal significance for counter-systemic movements".<sup>44</sup> What it does show, I feel, is the reality of powerful movements : That they are built out of complex and contested human practices, following many different trajectories (for example : Traditions of indigenous revolt, liberation theology, the guerrilla left) but not in any sense a simple reading-off of some Idea. Rather, it is situated human beings who come to take up particular ideas, traditions, organisations, and strategies for their own purposes, interpreting and developing them in their own ways, in conflict and alliance with others. Real, sustained movement is not a simple importing of a model or theory, placing an academic or political organisation as the key protagonist, but this process of patient work, dialogue, conflict, and learning. It does not reduce easily down to the printed page, but its effects reverberate through time.

Roma and Ashok Choudhary's powerful chapter on forest rights movements in India tells an interesting counterpart to the Chiapas story : The 250-year-long struggles of Adivasis, other deprived communities, and women in the forests, and their contemporary struggle to maintain an independent identity from Maoist movements.<sup>45</sup> Forest people's struggles have moved into a phase of creating alternative models to neoliberalism, within the perspective of democratic self-governance, popular control of natural resources and against displacement. In this context, there has been a development of organic intellectual leadership as against the traditional party-linked or independent middle-class vanguards. This poses new challenges for linkage between different movements, and for a process which is developing in the teeth of state repression and pressure from Maoist organisations.

All these chapters restore the primary sense of *movement*, underlining 'development' and 'process' rather than the sense of a fixed 'thing'. Movements try to move : It is not easy, and they do not always succeed, or get it right (in their own terms). But if we do not have this vision - that ordinary people attempt, even under the toughest of circumstances, to shape and challenge their own circumstances -, we fall back into a world populated only by leaders and theorists, organisations and ideas, in which everything falls from the sky and is only 'carried' by ordinary people.

Emilie Hayes' chapter on three waves of feminism in north America, I think, makes a related point : On the one hand she notes the many problems that arise from trying to tell even a selected and limited story when so many different, conflicting, and original experiences, people, and ideas are involved. On the other hand, some framework like that of waves – involving a sense of time and tide, of the histories of mobilisation, and of interconnections and conflicts – is important to think any movement *as* movement, as people whose struggles and ideas relate to one another and do not simply stand in isolation.<sup>46</sup> A history of individual feminist acts would necessarily be different to a history of 'the feminist movement' – which only exists in this interrelation. She explores, critically, the importance of open space and related approaches – in second-wave "structurelessness" or the present-day World March of Women – in providing "an opportunity for dissent, thus allowing for new movements with more specific aims to emerge".

In a companion essay, Virginia Vargas explores some of the developments of international feminisms from a Latin American starting point, particularly focussing on the feminist Encuentros from 1981-2005, the state-related feminisms associated in particular with UN conferences, and feminisms within the World Social Forum, notably the Feminist Dialogues process.<sup>47</sup> She writes of newer movement developments : "These struggles do not erase the differences among groups; on the contrary, what emerges is a multiplicity of meanings, as the social space of experience expands both locally and globally." She notes that the feminist presence in the WSF has helped in "making visible other dimensions of the political, bringing onto the stage new social and political actors, and incorporating new transformative dimensions, drawn from everyday life". Parallel to Hayes' arguments on open space, she argues that the openness of the Forum has been a strength rather than a weakness in this respect. Openness, of course, brings its own contradictions : In the 2007 Nairobi Forum "there was an exceptional presence of church groups from Africa and around the world, including a US based pro-life organisation. Several of these groups organised an anti-abortion march

inside the Forum. Later, in the closing ceremony, there was a verbal attack on a speaker who was a lesbian activist."

This issue goes directly to the heart of the difficulties I have with Lee Cormie's piece on "faith communities" in global justice movements.<sup>48</sup> The central problem – that the dominant form of religious organising in today's world is deeply conservative, and closely tied up with patriarchal and statist power – is mentioned only as an aside ("One kind of religion – 'fundamentalism' : Christian, Hindu, Muslim (and market) – is frequently referred to, and condemned"). The rest of the chapter seems to consist of special pleading – both for activists to say nicer things about religion, and to take religion more seriously. As a *critical* practicing Buddhist and a researcher on the anti-colonial dimensions of the Buddhist revival – whose outcomes have not always been happy ones - I think we can do better than that.

To take a close parallel : Marxists have learned over the years that when we declare our allegiances, other activists will criticise us and be wary of us. They are not wrong to do, so if we consider what 'Marxism' has often meant in world history. Furthermore, we have developed an ethics of *leaving* organisations whose politics we cannot defend. I am not sure however, why activists should ask any less of religious people, or if 'being religious' means that we are somehow inherently more sensitive to criticism or less ethically responsible for the organisations we belong to.

To me, this is what follows from a Marxist focus on human practice, which is a close attention not to the labels we hang on ourselves but to what we actually do and how we are with each other : I cannot expect a free pass from those who do not share my particular religious or theoretical affiliation, but rather to be evaluated and listed to in terms of what I do and the movements I am involved in. Cormie is right to say that many groups and communities organised on a religious basis do good work; of course – but they can (and should) then be engaged with on the basis of that work, and not for being 'a faith community'. One other thing which needs to be said is that – just as Marxists have a responsibility to do what they can to give 'Marxism' a positive meaning in present-day practice – so too do the religious have a responsibility to clean up their own houses, insofar as they understand themselves as being part of a 'community'.

In Ireland, where theocratic power has devastated the lives of so many people, this is the minimum we can ask of those who want to organise under a religious banner – not to become the token 'good religious person' whose actions elsewhere are used to justify unchanged religious power structures, but rather to *do something* about those same power structures. Recalling Vargas' chapter, one would hope that progressive religious groups at the 2007 WSF challenged the homophobic and intolerant behaviour of their co-religionists, or at a minimum gave adequate warning to those who were not familiar with the particularities of these groups as to what to expect.

From a humanist perspective, then, or simply from that of someone who does not share a particular religious or political perspective, it is surely reasonable to return the focus to actual human practice and its meanings. Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, in François Houtart's short presentation, is valuable in this respect : "...working towards a humanistic socialism and an opening for a multicultural state in his country, Sudan".<sup>49</sup> I would comment that along with the recognition that "Islamist movements have hardened, leaving little space for differing orientations", we should also acknowledge that Marxist movements' "rejection of Islam in all its forms" was a reasonable one for those who made it, and a choice that deserves at least as much respect as the actions of those who remained with a problematic religious power structure.<sup>50</sup> If arguments for and against religion are particularly sharp in those countries where religious power has been particularly damaging, I would suggest from an Irish perspective that we owe at least as much openness to those who have made the often difficult (in some countries even life-threatening) choice to leave, or convert.<sup>51</sup>

James Toth's chapter tells a fascinating story of the roots of Islamic militancy in southern Egypt and its ultimate links with al-Qa'ida.<sup>52</sup> It is arguably a story of human practice gone wrong, or (to return to Teltumbde) of a failure to make the right kinds of connections : In a situation of struggles against the injustices of underdevelopment and the failure of Nasserite left nationalism, a mode of explanation which blames degeneration not only on colonialism but "the adoption of French legal codes and the secularist abolition of the Caliphate, later nationalism and its elevation of leaders to godlike status, and, more recently, assaults by crusaderism, Zionism, communism, and others hostile to Islam" and the development among migrants of "religious associations that recreated and reinforced the intimacy of an imagined but bygone village community". As elsewhere, the combination of bottom-up development on religious lines and state repression created a space over



time for a new kind of militancy (perhaps also, Toth suggests, a result of the dominance of moderates within the Muslim Brotherhood, leading to separate organisation).

Roel Meijer discusses the ideological basis of jihadi Salafism as a modern social movement, focussing on Yusuf al-'Uyairi, the founder of al-Qa'ida on the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>53</sup> In an interesting counterpoint to Cormie and Houtart, he ascribes to al-'Uyairi a "Leninist and Maoist logic of praxis, the eulogy of the revolutionary will and knowledge whose incontestable logic is based on the moral superiority of self-sacrifice, and as having a privileged access to truth during the struggle". On the basis of this chapter at least, it is hard to disagree that " 'Uyairi's work is thoroughly modernist". On the other hand, I have to say that this presentation does not sound as alien or "dismaying to those living out other realities" as Meijer suggests. It sounds in some ways rather similar to the logics of many urban guerrilla organisations in the post-1968 west, for example, not least in its practical implications of a vanguardist elite focussed on military action, leading to a combination of increasing separation from popular struggles and an ever-greater need for spectacle to reinforce the problematic claim that the terrain of violence is the most important one, what Toth describes as "the major clash of the twenty-first century". In most countries which have experienced these conflicts, other Marxists and movement activists have criticised and faced down these kinds of positions, insisting on the need for real social change to be founded in mass participation and highlighting how the logic of spectacular violence ultimately served elite power.<sup>54</sup>

It is absolutely important, it might be said, to recognise the roots of injustice from which movements grow. Even movements which we despise nevertheless represent some real needs, which moreover will not be met following that path (recall the widespread 19<sup>th</sup> century observation that "anti-semitism is the socialism of fools"). It is also important to understand the strategic thinking of particular organisations and traditions. But then it is also crucial to criticise it, and organise differently in ways which support the development of *organic* intellectual capacity and speak more adequately to the needs of those who, today, support destructive movements. There are many who would like to make 'jihad vs MacWorld' into "the major clash of the twenty-first century";<sup>55</sup> but it is important to undermine that strategy on all sides – in other words, to find ways in our own worlds of organising which do not simply dismiss the needs of those who are desperate but equally do not instrumentalise them. We need to be loyal, so to speak, 'not to east or west but to each other'; or rather, to refuse loyalty to those who would claim it in the name of religion, or of the modern project, alike. Religions and modernity alike are valuable only to the extent that they serve human needs and provide a real way forward.

As always, Peter Waterman's reflections – in this case on "labour's others", and more specifically the internationalisms of new worker movements outside of the traditional union form – are thought-provoking and wide-ranging, avoiding easy closure and instead encouraging reflection on the different possible ways of organising, and of conceptualising what is happening in this space.<sup>56</sup> At the risk of over-simplifying, it seems to me that what Waterman is doing, here and elsewhere, is to place the emphasis firmly on the *movement* rather than the *movement organisation*. What he is saying is that in a world where most people are in paid employment and many are organised in some way but where conventional union membership is in continued decline in its one-time strongholds while representing only a tiny fraction of workers in the global South, we need to pay attention to the wider question of how particular forms of organising can be more or less adequate to the struggles of their participants, or intended participants, rather than to fetishise a particular organisational form as the only possible way forward.

Cho Hee-Yeon's account of the anti-globalisation movement in South Korea is a fascinating case in point.<sup>57</sup> Cho charts the "peculiar career" of Korean popular movements, showing how radical forces within the movements found resistance to neo-liberalism and participation in the global anti-war movement a source of strength. In this context, there has been a shift from an older anti-imperialism to a contemporary anti-empire movement, which he defines as a "new global united front movement of differences". He writes "transnational global politics is not headed for extinction but, to the contrary, is emerging strongly. The anti-empire movement as a global united front movement is a key actor for waging and spreading such a global politics."

But what is politics? Emir Sader and Daniel Bensaid both give determined, if to my mind unconvincing answers to this question, from somewhat different statist perspectives. Sader offers an interesting but selective overview of resistance to neoliberalism in Latin America, starting with the national-developmentalism of the 1940s on and moving through the guerrilla movements from the Cuban revolution on, up to the realignment on neoliberal lines after 1990.<sup>58</sup> At this point, highlighting

the resistance of movements to neoliberalism from 1994 onwards, Sader argues against “the dichotomy of ‘state versus civil society’” in order to replace it with a different one between public and market spheres, in which “the autonomy of social movements” is placed in scare quotes as representative of movements that are “unable to move forward into challenging neoliberal hegemony”. Such movements – in Sader’s view - include not only Argentinian autonomists, as might be expected, but also the Zapatistas. In some ways, though, an analysis which fails to see the way in which the latter movement challenges neoliberal hegemony deconstructs itself – and more to the point, fails to offer any serious *materialist* analysis of why movements might find the politics of the traditional left problematic. (In this essay, it is only in relation to Bolivia - where this critique is treated as resolved by the creation of the MAS (the *Movimiento al Socialismo*, the ‘Movement toward Socialism’) - that we are even told what the problem was.)<sup>59</sup>

In saying this, I do not want to ignore the hugely significant experiment of ‘leftist’ governments in Latin America, which as Sader says might be called “post-neoliberal” (although in 2015, rather than when this essay was first written in 2008, we might want to say that the record is somewhat more mixed even in terms of resistance to neoliberalism). Rather, I want to suggest that politics is not only about these macro-struggles, and to focus purely on the goal of “challenging neoliberal hegemony” (important though that is!) is, often, to instrumentalise others and to reproduce logics of power which are themselves not only problematic but at times lethal.

Movements, as popular agents, have good reason to want to see more than simply distributive outcomes. Indeed this is surely one of the main Marxist lessons from the global movement wave of 1968 : That a purely instrumental and distributive solution, however good, is not enough.<sup>60</sup> More specifically, of course, when the instrumental focus is entirely on the level of global capitalism, some other important arenas of power are missed. We might mention workplace power (by no means resolved by nationalisation); land ownership and reform; power and exploitation within the family; the situation of indigenous populations; and the new national-extractivism in Latin America. Increasingly we are seeing movements which once supported radical governments in Latin America dissociate themselves, move into opposition, and face repression. But this was perhaps utterly predictable : Because, as Sader observes, Latin America has had left governments before, and these problems are not new. To write as though the difficulty is simply in the “venom” (his word) directed by the Zapatistas at López Obrador, however, and not to recognise the rather longer history of disappointment both by left governments and by election-oriented mobilisation, is to condemn the left, including the electoral left, to repeating the mistakes of the past.

Much the same kind of response might be made to Daniel Bensaid’s essay on the “return of strategy”, although it should be said here that the “we” which is the subject of this piece is very explicitly the particular Trotskyist tradition to which he belonged.<sup>61</sup> I will limit myself to two observations. Firstly, while it is perfectly reasonable to criticise others for their weaknesses and failings, there is something odd about not applying the same standards to one’s own politics. As he argues, *Rifondazione comunista* may have disappointed in Italy, for example, but can we really say that his *Ligue communiste révolutionnaire* did so well in France ? Perhaps not, in that the LCR dissolved itself two years after this essay was written, into a rather different kind of party.<sup>62</sup>

Or – if we are to be so critical of the illusions, utopias, and defeats suffered by others – precisely what should we say of a list of “great revolutionary experiences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” which includes “The Russian Revolution, the Chinese Revolution, the German Revolution, the popular fronts, the Vietnamese war of liberation, May 1968, Portugal, and Chile” ? We can’t quite misquote Ken MacLeod – “They were all defeats”<sup>63</sup> –, but it does rather have to be said that even those which were successes in their own terms now seem, at least, ambiguous.

What is sauce for the goose does have to be sauce for the gander : Would it be so hard to admit that it is not only Others who have less than a shining track record to show for themselves, but also us ? Such experiences do not, perhaps, tell us What To Do in any simple sense; but they do (and here I agree with Bensaid) tell us something about how people organise in certain circumstances : In other words, about movement realities.

And here, as with Sader, one might reasonably say that there is a difference, and a legitimate one, between the realities of popular movements in struggle and the goals of Trotskyists, or other state-centred lefts. That is no bad thing in itself; as I have argued above, it is important to find ways of articulating situated movement realities with each other, across issues and internationally. This is the difference between a ‘campaign’ and a ‘social movement project’, after all. But to treat movement

realities as simply the raw material for party plans is something rather different. In We Make Our Own History, Alf and I write of party-centric Marxisms :

[This] marks far more the impoverishment of this form of 'Marxism' and its inability to grapple with the question of popular agency. Marxism is not the position that in all times and all places the political party is the best way to organise (counterposed, presumably, to anarchism). Rather, we would argue that its defining feature in a much deeper sense is a commitment to structured popular agency, to representing 'the interests of the movement as a whole', and hence to strategies of alliance-building between movements, of identifying the most radical common potential, and of close attention to the interests underlying different tendencies within movements, not as a means of dismissal but as a means of understanding and preventing movement capture by elites...

[T]he Marxist emphasis has to be on the movement, not the party: a party is worthy of Marxist interest only to the extent that it is successful in placing the movement first. More broadly, the Marxist question should be one about how popular agency is currently structured – or the competing types of structure which movements adopt. Rather than fetishising a particular mode of organising either as universally valid (and hence defining a new Marxist 'tradition'), or as sweeping all before it because it is new, the useful question is one of the relationships between different types of popular organising in a given time and place, and how they reinforce one another or cancel each other out, not only in the struggle against capital and the state but also in the internal struggle to articulate 'good sense' against 'common sense' and to become political subjects rather than objects.

There are reasons, perhaps, why forms of strategy which have ignored this have not produced what could be called emancipatory results.

The volume finishes with three chapters that, while arguing their case, are more open in tone. Peter North and David Featherstone's piece on trade localisation and climate change allows space for left critiques of localisation while arguing that it need not be conservative or xenophobic and noting the scope for a combination of localism and internationalism, with particular reference to some practices of the Brazilian MST.<sup>64</sup>

Guillermo Delgado-P's chapter on Bolivia as "a social movements state" returns to some of the themes of Sader's and Bensaid's pieces in a more dialectical way, showing the interrelationship between movements and state in a situation which is, after all, not new in world politics but constantly challenging for those involved in it.<sup>65</sup> While Bolivia offers no easy 'lessons' or 'models' to be transferred elsewhere, it provides a powerful basis for reflection on the complexities involved not only in what Alf and I call 'movement-become-state' but also in the ensuing tensions that are familiar from previous revolutions (democratic, nationalist, and socialist) when the state does not express movements fully or neatly. This happens not only because of the resistances from forces of the old regime and the international order, but also because of the different strategies pursued by the new, or newly-reformed, state itself, in turn leading to significant tensions with movements. To say this is not to reject political strategies articulated at the level of the state : It is to note that movements are important in their own right, and not simply as tools for achieving power, something which Delgado-P's chapter articulates clearly.

Finally, Alex Khasnabish explores the "resonance the Zapatista struggle achieved among activists transnationally".<sup>66</sup> He writes :

[T]his encounter between Zapatismo and diverse communities of radical activists has produced novel ways of imagining and enacting struggle toward a more dignified, democratic, just, and peaceful future. Beyond this, these experiences and this consciousness are beginning to materialise the possibility for the articulation of a new political terrain and political practice rooted in a mutual recognition of dignity and humanity, an affirmation of diversity, and the reclamation of the capacity to build a world capable of holding many worlds precisely because we are the only subjects capable of bringing it into being.

Such radical imagination has always been one of the key elements of the encounters that constitute the 'movement(s) of movements' – and previous generations of international encounters.

## VII

### **And lastly... : Learning and listening**

This book – along with its companion volume, The Movements of Movements, Part 2 : Rethinking Our Dance<sup>67</sup> - documents the extraordinary capacities of human beings in struggle – to transform social relationships, remake the world, and overturn what seemed fixed and unchangeable – in many different shapes and forms. In this context, we are compelled to encounter each other, for good or ill. In the space that lies between fundamentalist attacks or sectarian polemic on the one hand, and interfaith love-ins or the simple celebration of everything that exists on the other, there lies, perhaps, a space of learning. This learning, I have tried to argue, comes from listening not only to what the other says but also trying to understand what the other is saying *by the fact of their existence as*

*social movement, as a collective subject* – even or especially when we disagree with what is said and done. Gramsci suggests at one point that to really defeat an opponent is to show that your position can account for and subsume theirs; even if it is easier simply to dismiss the existence of the other, it is certainly less productive politically in the long run.

Learning and listening are not simply political strategies : They are practical necessities in a world in which none of us can claim 360-degree vision or speak from all positions simultaneously. One of the most important political challenges of going beyond the centrality of the nation-state as the privileged locus of action is recognising and grasping the potential of the variety of actors and movements which need not just to act together, but to raise themselves to considerable heights of understanding and capacity for action. These are not impossible goals : This book, and the political and intellectual processes reflected in the work of its authors, are testimony to that.

In the Introduction, Sen writes eloquently about the challenges involved in attempting to select authors and “to make the book truly international, intercultural, and transcommunal, both in terms of the contributors as well as in terms of the essays included”. Of course this cannot mean a simple numerical representativity : If this can be achieved in terms of gender it becomes far more challenging when it was sought in terms of ethnicity or geography, and would break down completely if it was attempted in relation to social class. Instead, the book approaches difference by seeking and highlighting key moments of otherness : Indigenous activists and Dalits, writers on Zapatismo and Islam, feminists and Marxists, above all authors from and working on the global South (understood in structural rather than geographic terms). This is neither the comforting representation of the political platform nor the soothing homogeneity of the academic book.

The academic homes of so many of the authors (not all) are striking, nonetheless. In some ways this is a fact of our times, and one which Sen (and this series) is contributing to relativising : The proportion even of movement-oriented intellectual work which takes place within universities. Our challenge – for those of us in this situation – is always to ask how we can relate our work back to movements, and how to avoid ‘institutional capture’. The construction of this book has the great merit of placing *movements* – and not a particular academic field or type of performance – in the centre : It is a book from and for movements and those interested in movement. The scholarship represented here bears witness to that (as does Sen’s excellent editing) : Too often in academic work the logics which have to be obeyed mean answering *upwards* – to promotion committees and commercial publishers, to anonymous referees and funding agencies. But when handled properly, the intellectual logics of movements are that much *sharper* : We are describing, analysing, and critiquing people putting themselves, even their lives, on the line; and our suggestions and proposals can have huge implications, for ourselves and others. The difference between the almost theological pursuit of academic respectability and the situation of putting our whole selves into what we write can be huge : There is a reason why it is movements which push new fields of study into universities and not the reverse.<sup>68</sup> The writing is ferociously sharp, but (in most cases) the opposite of inaccessible, at least for those who have sharpened their thinking in struggle. The movements write the author, and not the other way around.

The movements which write through the authors in this book represent an extraordinary combination of experiences *outside* the banal grind of everyday life and thought in neoliberalism. Put them side by side : The long histories of movements since 1968; waves of feminisms challenging the dull power of patriarchy; indigenous struggles moving from the margins to the centres of political discourse in so many settler societies; Dalits and Adivasis overturning South Asian forms of oppression; the Zapatistas catalysing struggle around the world; the extraordinary Latin American cycle of movement experiments; Islamic politics and its new languages of organising; and the ongoing grumble of labour, still refusing to have surplus value taken out of its hide without fighting back.

All of these are woven together in this book in a process that goes beyond the existing circuits of the ‘movement of movements’, but is also shaped by those experiences. The result is like, and yet unlike, our existing movement realities : To some extent, perhaps, it is what we might hope to bring together not only on the page, but in struggle, together. That moment is within reach – not only of the imagination, but also of our organising languages and our networks. It still has to happen; or perhaps we still have to find ways of making it real in ways that speak back to the struggles we come from and help them develop. And yet the book is a real contribution to that process.

This particular challenge, but also the wider one of *listening to* and *learning from* each other, is a way of growing, as human beings. It is not in acquiring new words or expressing ourselves

beautifully, still less in imitating what is often a very damaging education system, that we truly develop. It is in somehow extending our sense of self so as to include the voices and challenges of others, and in turn of the realities and struggles they speak from. This is why movement matters : It is how we change our world, *and* how we change ourselves. In the process, perhaps, we can become less loyal to this or that movement organisation or political tradition, and more loyal to each other. In so doing, we become more fully ourselves, in all our depth and complexity – and develop the alliances that we need to struggle for a better world.

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## Notes :

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<sup>1</sup> END (European Nuclear Disarmament), April 1980.

<sup>2</sup> I wish to record my deepest thanks to Jai Sen for his kindness and patience in supporting me while writing this chapter, as well as for his immensely careful editing.

<sup>3</sup> <http://grassroots.pageabode.com/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://struggle.ws/eufortress/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://ceesa-ma.blogspot.com>

<sup>6</sup> Interface : a journal for and about social movements. @ <http://www.interfacejournal.net/>.

<sup>7</sup> Cox and Nilsen 2014.

<sup>8</sup> I would like to take the opportunity here to apologise to all concerned for the fact that this project did not get further.

<sup>9</sup> Flesher Fominaya 2015, Gagi 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Marx and Engels 1848.

<sup>11</sup> Cox and Nilsen 2014, p 6.

<sup>12</sup> This distinction was used in so many different movements from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that it is not clear who first came up with it.

<sup>13</sup> Mulhern 2011, p 170.

<sup>14</sup> Mulhern 2011, p 171.

<sup>15</sup> Dunsany, 1924.

<sup>16</sup> Thompson, 1966, p 115

<sup>17</sup> Sen, 2016a.

<sup>18</sup> Ed : For a closely related discussion, in this case of the suppression of civil society and free expression, see the essay by Josephine Ho in the companion book to this one (Ho 2016).

<sup>19</sup> END (European Nuclear Disarmament), April 1980.

<sup>20</sup> McNally 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Marx 1852,

<sup>22</sup> A pun usually translated "Here is Rhodes, jump here!" Marx 1852. Ed : For those interested in knowing more about this phrase, see <https://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/h/i.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> Morris 1886.

<sup>24</sup> Drainville 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Holloway 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Kalouche and Mielants 2016.

<sup>27</sup> I am not sure how this mode of analysis is not vulnerable to their own critique of Castells and Touraine's definition of movements; in their own words, "such criteria could not elucidate the nature of movements but would rather 'construct' it".

<sup>28</sup> Williams 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Cox 2013a.

<sup>30</sup> Hall 1980.

<sup>31</sup> Ali 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Alfred and Corntassel 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Cox 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Smith 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Incite! 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Cox 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Leyva Solano 2016.

<sup>38</sup> I like Jai Sen's distinction between the 'movement of movements' and the 'movementS of movements', but would say that both are important. We certainly have to attempt to grasp the full range of what movements are happening, globally, and use that to attempt to extend our own alliances. At the same time, the (relative) empirical reality of a movement of movements, in the sense of a relatively coherent network (to whose construction Sen among others has contributed hugely) should not be overlooked. As always in social movements, we have to keep one eye on who we are already talking to and working with, and one eye on who we might hope to include in those conversations – or be included by.

<sup>39</sup> Cox and Nilsen, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> Sen 2016a.

<sup>41</sup> Cox 2014b.

<sup>42</sup> Teltumbde 2016.

<sup>43</sup> Corntassel 2016.

<sup>44</sup> Leyva Solano and Gunderson 2016.

<sup>45</sup> Roma and Choudhary 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Hayes 2016.

<sup>47</sup> Vargas 2016.

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<sup>48</sup> Cormie 2016. As a Buddhist and scholar of religions, I do not find the word 'faith', which is particularly linked to some forms of Christian rhetoric, usefully represents the huge diversity of the world's religious practices.

<sup>49</sup> Houtart 2016.

<sup>50</sup> As ex-Muslims have observed, there is something rather problematic about the proposition that it is fine for those born Christian to become secular or atheist, but not for those born Muslim.

<sup>51</sup> Cox 2013b.

<sup>52</sup> Toth 2016.

<sup>53</sup> Meijer 2016.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Gitlin 1980, or Hamon and Rotman 1988.

<sup>55</sup> Barber 1995.

<sup>56</sup> Waterman 2016.

<sup>57</sup> Cho 2016.

<sup>58</sup> Sader 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Ed : For a discussion of the dynamics of the politics of MAS in Bolivia – up to 2009 -, see the essay by Guillermo Delgado-P in this book (Delgado-P 2016).

<sup>60</sup> Wainwright 1994.

<sup>61</sup> Bensaïd 2016.

<sup>62</sup> Ed : Just for the record, and in relation to this point, Daniel Bensaïd wrote the original version of his essay in 2007, but the version published here was finalised with him two years later in June 2009, just six months before he died – and therefore, perhaps ironically, around the time that the author says the LCR was dissolving.

<sup>63</sup> MacLeod 1996, p. 215

<sup>64</sup> North and Featherstone 2016.

<sup>65</sup> Delgado-P 2016.

<sup>66</sup> Khasnabish 2016.

<sup>67</sup> Sen, ed, 2016b.

<sup>68</sup> Cox 2014a.