

## ***Epilogue to An Alterglobalist Strategy***

### ***The Movement's Strategic Challenges***

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Since the publication of *Une stratégie altermondialiste*, history has shifted into high gear. We can say that the hypotheses and proposals of the book have been confirmed, together with their uncertainties and contradictions. They now need to be specified in light of recent events. The deepening of the structural crisis is confirmed and the ruling class has intensified its violence to maintain its power and privileges. This goes hand in hand with the exasperation of peoples who are reacting to and changing situations without yet succeeding in radically transforming them. The future is taking shape. Globalisation is changing as the differentiation between each major region is causing the beginning of a political continental shift. These geopolitical changes are signalling an upheaval of the world order. These developments are challenging the Alterglobalist Movement and questioning the World Social Forum process. They are facing new movements that are opening up broad perspectives. The strategic issues still feature the necessary invention of new relationships between power and politics.

### ***The Global Situation***

The global situation features a crisis that is worsening. The financial aspect of the crisis is the most obvious and it has caused open food, energy, climate, monetary, etc. crises. The structural crisis involves four aspects:

- economic and social, such as social inequalities and corruption;
- environmental, with a threatened planetary ecosystem;
- geopolitical, with the end of US hegemony, the crisis of Japan and Europe and the rise of new powers; and

- ideological, with the questioning of democracy, as well as xenophobic and racist upsurges.

In fact, there are three interlocked crisis:

- the crisis of neoliberalism, as a phase of capitalist globalisation;
- a crisis of the capitalist system itself, combining the specific contradiction of the production mode, that of capital versus labour, with the contradiction between the productivist mode and the constraints of the planetary ecosystem;
- a crisis of civilisation, which follows from the questioning of the relationship between the human species and nature that defined Western modernity and has marked some of the foundations of contemporary science.

The peoples' resistance movement has intensified the crisis of neoliberalism. It has confirmed the role of social and cultural struggles in the exhaustion of this phase of capitalist globalisation. Social inequalities, unemployment and the deterioration of working conditions have reduced popular consumption levels and opened up a crisis of "overproduction." Resorting to overindebtedness has reached its limits. Through the extension of the derivative financial markets, it has contaminated every securities market. The "subprime" explosion marked the transition from household debt to banking institution debt. The States' rescuing of banks launched the public debt crisis. The reduction of deficits through austerity plans is supposed to produce an exit to this crisis that doesn't affect profits and maintains shareholder privileges and the control of world capital markets. Popular resistance movements are challenging this exit.

Meanwhile, changes are making their way that will have long-lasting effects. Among these changes, even in the midst of the crisis, there are extraordinary scientific and technological disruptions, particularly in information technologies and biotechnologies. The cultural revolution carried by the ecological movement is exacerbating the confrontation between two broad orientations: that of increasing emancipation and that of domesticating progress in the service of exploitation and alienation.

It is not always easy to take stock of how strongly neoliberalism has been shaken even though it still remains dominant. A long-term view of the movements gives us the required perspective. The development of the labour movement started in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It experienced a long period of progress from 1905 to 1970. Despite the wars and fascism, it realised revolutions in Russia, China and several other countries. Through its alliance with the national liberation movements, it almost encircled the colonial powers. It imposed social

contracts and the Welfare State in the countries of the capitalist centre. A forty-year period of defeats and rollbacks for the social movements started in 1970 in the decolonised countries, countries that underwent revolutions and industrialised countries. The current disruptions and the crisis could very well represent the end of this long period of regression, without being able to predict exactly what the future has in store.

### ***Possible Futures***

The exhaustion of neoliberalism doesn't necessarily mean an exit beyond capitalism. It will lead to a new phase of capitalist globalisation with a new logic, its contradictions and new anti-systemic forces. In the longer term, a confrontation between several possible future outcomes, several worldviews will resolve the structural crisis. In their strategy, the movements have taken position regarding the different possible outcomes and their underlying concepts. These were specified in the debates of the Peoples Summit organised by social movements as a counterpoint to the June 2012 Rio+20 Heads of State Conference. Three horizons and three concepts came out of the debate:

- the reinforcement of neoliberalism through the financialisation of nature;
- a reorganisation of capitalism based on public regulation and social modernisation; and
- a rupture leading to an ecological, social and democratic transition.

On the ground, these three logics are structured in specific ways.

The first concept is that of the financialisation of Nature. This was exposed in a working document prepared by the United Nations and States for Rio+20. In its vision, the exit to the crisis requires the development of an "unlimited market." It bases the extension of the world market, called the green market, on the financialisation of Nature, the commoditisation of life and the generalisation of privatisations. This approach recognises that Nature produces essential services (it captures carbon, purifies the water, etc.). But it considers that the degradation of these services is caused by the fact that they are free. To improve them, they need to be commoditised and owned. According to this viewpoint, only private property can ensure the proper management of Nature, which would be handed to major financialised multinational corporations. The idea would then be to restrict references to fundamental rights that could weaken the markets' pre-eminence. International law would be subordinated to business law.

The second concept is that of the Green New Deal, which is promoted by renowned establishment economists such as Joseph Stiglitz, Paul Krugman and Amartya Sen, who are often said to be neo-Keynesians. It is based on controlling the “green economy” and involves a radical reform of capitalism through public regulation and income distribution. This alternative is still little known because it implies a confrontation with the prevailing logic, that of the world capital market, which rejects Keynesian references and is not willing to accept any inflation that would reduce profit levels. It should be recalled that if the New Deal was adopted in 1933, it was not fully applied before 1945, after the end of the Second World War.

The third concept is one that social and citizens movements made explicit in the World Social Forum process. It promotes a rupture, that of the social, ecological and democratic transition. It puts forward new concepts and new ways of producing and consuming, including:

- common goods and new forms of property,
- the struggle against patriarchy,
- control of finance,
- the end of the debt system,
- well-living and prosperity without growth,
- the reinvention of democracy,
- common and differentiated responsibilities, and
- free public services based on rights.

Societies and the world would be based on access to rights for all and equality of rights.

The movements’ strategy defines alliances with respect to these possible futures. The most urgent task is to unite those who refuse the first concept, that of the financialisation of Nature. All the more so since, despite the exhaustion of neoliberalism, the imposition of the prevailing system could very well lead to a form of war neo-conservatism. Such an alliance is possible because the social movements are not indifferent to the improvements in employment and purchasing power that a Green New Deal could produce. But many movements have noted that public regulation of this type is impossible as long as the current balance of power remains. In addition, they consider that capitalist productivist growth, even when regulated, must necessarily take into account the limits of the global ecosystem. Over time, and if the threat of war neo-conservatism can be avoided, a positive confrontation will eventually oppose the promoters of the Green New Deal and those of going beyond capitalism. The actual alliances that will be developed will depend on the situation of each country and major region.

### ***Differentiation of the World's Major Regions***

Social movements are confronted with the evolution of the globalisation process. The financial bourgeoisie still remains in power and the prevailing logic, that of financialisation. But globalisation is evolving and its contradictions are increasing. This can be seen in the growing differentiation between the major regions of the world, a continental drift of sorts. Each major region has its own change dynamics and social movements are trying to adapt to these new situations. This is changing the conditions for the convergence of movements.

In Latin America, a broad cultural revolution is sweeping the continent. It is reshaping societies as the Latino, Afro-American and Indian cultures are imposing themselves and even emerging in North America. These movement are influencing development-centric or “developmentalist” regimes that are attempting to establish post-neoliberal policies, policies that are in no way anti-capitalist and combine pledges to the global capital market and national social policies together with wealth redistribution. They result in the trivialisation of Alterglobalism and fragmentation of social movements.

In several large countries of Asia, differentiated alliances are combining State, national and globalised bourgeoisies. The social movement is organising around workers who are struggling to defend their rights and income. Attempts are also made to create specific and contradictory alliances with State bourgeoisies who share control over the productive apparatus with the private bourgeoisie and multinationals.

In the Middle East, the new cycle of struggles and revolutions has opened a period of strong contradictions. The movements are divided in power struggles between military regimes and emerging political forces inspired by Islam. These situations are favourable to an instrumentalisation by major powers who are seeking to compensate for the fall of their dictator allies by exploiting situations and diverting mobilisations into civil wars.

In Africa, the rush for raw materials and land grabbing and the multiplication of the resulting conflicts and wars is disrupting the economy and the liveliness of movements. The second phase of decolonisation will need to help the African peoples to seize opportunities by imposing public powers that are concerned about their sovereignty and democratic freedoms.

In North America, the situation features the hegemony crisis of the United States and its allies. New movements, such as Occupy and the Quebec student movement, are facing the violent reaction of economic powers and witnessing the disturbing rise of conservatism.

In Europe, the movements have three main challenges: lack of job security; rising racist and xenophobic ideologies; and no clearly defined alternative European project that would resolve the impasses of the prevailing European project. The European social movement is having a hard time defining a common position regarding Europe's deteriorating economic and geopolitical status.

Confronted with the new situation and the vigour of the conservative reaction, movements are demonstrating very strong combativeness and a lot of creativity. They have yet to redefine the new forms and priorities they wish for the convergence of international struggles. This is the key issue in the debate in the spaces of the Social Forum process.

### ***The Geopolitical Disruption of the World***

In the analyses and mobilisations related to the crisis and transition, the geopolitical dimension is often neglected. It is too strongly subordinated to the economic and social dimensions even though conflicts and wars remind us that geopolitics can determine social situations and their outcome.

The dramatic changes in the world are confirming the crisis of Western and US hegemony. This does not mean the end of their domination. This period started with the implosion of the Soviet empire and the end of a world organised around a relative balance between two superpowers.

New powers are participating in these sweeping changes. But these "emerging" countries do not form an homogeneous group. They are not neutralising the current domination, which remains a relevant characteristic to understand the state of the world and relations between countries. But this domination is evolving and geopolitical relations are changing. The new powers are imposing themselves in major regions and are contributing to their differentiation.

The nature of the emerging economies is contributing to the changing world economy. In the decade of the 2000s, several countries asserted themselves with sustained growth rates, positive trade balances, and large currency reserves. These countries, of which there are about 30 worldwide, resisted the 2008 crisis. After the emergence of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), a new group of countries has asserted itself, the CIVET (Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt and Turkey). This group of countries features young populations, diversified economies, sustainable debt levels and a relative political will. They continue to benefit from strong foreign investments and special attention on the part of multinationals. In addition, let's not forget the geopolitical role of some rentier States such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

These countries are initiating changes in the new international division of labour. Even if confrontations related to research and new technologies are intensifying and there can be drops in the growth rate, it is unlikely that the reorganisation of trade and redistribution of wealth will bring us back to the previous situation. The world ruling class is already being reconstructed with financiers from the new economic powers. This will have a major geopolitical impact.

The geopolitical upheaval first has impacts at the economic level. Emerging economies state they are in favour of an open economy but don't let the financial market steer investments and set prices and exchange rates. Economic policies assign a strategic intervention role to the State. They don't break with the world capital market, but try to control its impact in particular through public investment funds. They seek new economic policies that combine compliance with neoliberal constraints and partial wealth redistribution that reduces poverty but doesn't make up for inequalities.

In some countries, emerging economies are leading to sovereignty aspirations that spread to the geopolitical realm. The issue then becomes military as well as economic. The next decade could very well see a conflict between China and the United States. Movements are faced with the very difficult issue of new military strategies, that of an endless war and systematic destabilisation. The military strategy is evolving. It is multiplying conflicts in order to contain the new powers. It is extending destabilisation to countries with raw materials and takes into account the new theatres. The cyber-war has already started and the hunt for whistleblowers is part of it.

In Durban, in March 2013, at the fourth BRICS heads of State summit, for the first time ever, a counter-summit was organised by movements from these very countries. Relations were

established with the Tunis WSF. The call for this counter-summit included the question: “BRICS: Anti-imperialist, sub-imperialist or in between?” The social movements of emerging countries have several demands: social negotiation; democratisation; the rejection of domination and external ukases. These movements will play a central role in the redefinition of the Alterglobalist Movement.

### ***The Alterglobalist Movement***

The Alterglobalist Movement proposes a movement-based approach to politics. This movement is defined as the anti-systemic movement of the last phase of capitalist globalisation, neoliberalism, and an historic movement that extends and renews the major movements of preceding periods: the civil and political rights movement, the workers movement, the women’s rights movement, the decolonisation movement, the democratic freedoms movement, the environmental movement, the First Nations movement, etc. The Alterglobalist Movement is being built through the convergence of movements around a few principles:

- the diversity and legitimacy of all struggles against oppression,
- the strategic demand of access to rights for all and equality of rights, and
- a new political culture bringing together individual and collective commitments.

The Alterglobalist Movement is more than just the World Social Forums. In the World Social Forums, which are strong moments of the WSF process, two concerns are present: defining immediate measures required to address the effects of the crisis on living conditions of the popular strata and the need to define an alternative orientation. These two concerns define strategic thinking and the integration of the urgent issues with that of structural transformation.

Many immediate proposals have been put forward at the Forums in the last ten years, including:

- eliminating tax and legal havens;
- taxing financial transactions;
- separating deposit banks from business banks;
- nationalising the financial sector;
- prohibiting derivatives markets;
- redistributing income; and
- providing universal social protections.



These proposals are not revolutionary in and of themselves. Establishment economists and even some governments today support these proposals. But they haven't followed up their statements with actions because such measures require a rupture with neoliberal dogma and the dictatorship of financial markets. These forces are still dominant. They will not accept to relinquish their huge privileges without a fight.

The alternative that has come out of the World Social Forums is that of access to rights for all and equality of rights from the local level all the way to the world level. Each society and the entire world can be organised differently from the prevailing logic of subordination to the global capital market. Social movements are in favour of a rupture, that of a social, ecological and democratic transition. They are pushing forward new concepts and ways of producing and consuming. This rupture has today already started in struggles on the ground. Creativity arises from resistance and concrete emancipation practices, which, at all levels, foreshadow the alternatives.

The process must help the movements reinforce their struggles and mobilisations and set them in the global context. In the first years of the WSF, actions directed towards international institutions and international law extended the large mobilisations of the late 1990s. The WSF process should support the global mobilisation against financial power, the global capital market, economic power, multinationals, political power and international institutions. Progress in these fields is clearly a necessity and new proposals are required.

Diverse political debates constantly take place within the WSF process. In the early years of the process, participants were polarised between an "anti-neoliberal" line and an "anti-capitalist" line. This debate lost some of its acuteness as the need to go beyond capitalism became an increasingly popular position. A second discussion arose between those who are satisfied with the forum space and others who want other "International" initiatives. This debate also lost some of its intensity since it has been acknowledged that possible extensions do not call into question the interest of the forum space and the need to transform it. This difference overlaps with that of extensions giving priority to national alliances between certain governments and their national social movements. A third difference tends to make a distinction between social movements and NGOs. This distinction is faced with the problem of determining whether certain citizens movements are social movements or NGOs. In addition, some NGOs are reformist and others, radical, and the same goes for social movements. None of these distinctions lacks interest or relevance, but they have not polarised the process around two clear-cut positions structuring the forums' political debates.

### ***The WSF Process***

The World Social Forum process is spreading. The new political culture is permeating initiatives and mobilisations far beyond the process. The diversity of movements and their convergence, self-organised activities, and the search for non-hierarchical forms of authority are all becoming accepted models.

The March 2013 Tunis World Social Forum was an huge success. About 70,000 people participated belonging to 5,045 organisations and associations from 128 countries, including 1,750 Tunisian organisations. This forum featured the strong participation of women, youth and migrants. It also saw the first massive meeting of movements from the Maghreb-Machrek region. The organisation of the forum was very open. The FTDES (Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Économiques et Sociaux, Tunisian forum on economic and social rights) insisted on including in the preparation of the WSF the Maghreb/Machrek Social Forum organising committee as well as any member of the International Council that wished to do so. The Forum was led by Tunisian society, which was still under the spell of a great revolutionary moment. Every Tunisian political and cultural current participated and the Forum was for the most part spared from a confrontation between Islamists and lay persons.

With 1,700 registered activities, groupings made it possible to hold 1,014 activities. Thirty-five convergence meetings were organised. These activities give an idea of what the social movements are discussing at the present time. Even if practically every possible topic was addressed, about forty of them stood out that are structuring the debates of the international civil society movement: migrations, women's rights, youth, debt, financial crisis, labour and social protection, open-source software, extractivism, climate, agriculture, conflicts and wars, religion and emancipation, culture, education, health, etc.

Specific events are held at the World Social Forum (World Forum on Science and Democracy, Forum of Local Authorities, Forum of Parliamentarians, Labour Forum, Free Media Forum, etc.) as well as other activities related to other past or upcoming events (Rio+20, Migrants Forum, Free Palestine Forum, Russell Tribunal on Palestine, Iraq Forum, Peace and Disarmament Forum, Florence+10 on the European social movement, Peoples Social Forum of Canada, Sarajevo Peace Event 2014, etc.). Between each World Social Forum event, the list of thematic, regional and national forums is getting longer; there were about fifty such events in 2012 and early 2013. National and regional forums explore avenues of political transformation and discuss how

regimes change and examine the relationship between movements and States. In addition, local Social Forums are being held in numerous countries.

There is a contradiction in the WSF debates tied to the presence of two groups of people: very well informed activists and newcomers. The debates must inform on issues and at the same time examine them in depth. The proliferation of forums related to the overall process has improved the quality of the debates. These forums refine the strategic focus on equality of rights and mobilisation against the logic of capitalism. They bear and anticipate a new generation of rights ( “rights of Nature,” freedom of movement, food sovereignty, etc.). They put forward public policy proposals and allow discussions on concrete emancipation practices. The task consists in creating another world now based on the alternatives and ruptures that are required to reach this other world.

### ***Organisation of the Process and Role of the International Council***

The organisation of the process is always under discussion. Questions about the future of the International Council and its role remain unanswered. To define its role, it is necessary to go back to the objectives of the World Social Forum process. This process is that of a world space for the convergence of social and citizen movements that share the principles outlined in the Charter of the WSF. The convergence of movements can take on several forms. The International Council does not coordinate the movements. Rather it facilitates the convergence of their international action. The debate on the International Council, its nature, composition and functions is on the agenda. What organisational form needs to be defined to ensure the process’s continuity and development?

A meeting of the International Council (IC) was held in Casablanca from December 16 to 18, 2013, with 140 participants, including 45 women and 47 IC members (38 movements) from 23 countries. This meeting was very productive. The meeting of the organising committee of the Maghreb-Machrek Social Forum that immediately preceded the International Council confirmed the vitality of the region’s social and citizen movements participating in the process. The region is a leader of the WSF process and has confirmed its commitment in its deployment. Political developments in the region were the focus of an intense debate that will continue at the 2015 WSF in Tunis.

The process is not weakening. There are now several proposals to organise a World Social Forum in the Maghreb region, in India and North America. The proliferation of national, regional and thematic forums shows that the process is strengthening. There is a rise in local Social Forums (in Brazil, Belgium, France and Quebec). There are also numerous events linked to the process. The IC was pleased to note that 33 events, including regional, national and thematic forums on every continent were planned for 2014. Two weeks after the IC, the number of events had risen to 42. The IC highlighted the special importance of the Social Forum process in the Maghreb in 2014 as well as the Peoples Social Forum (Ottawa, August 21-24, 2014) as important steps towards the March 2015 World Social Forum in Tunis and the August 2016 World Social Forum in Montreal. Regular updates are available on the open-fsm website at <http://openfsm.net/projects/wsf2012-support/wsf2014-calendar>.

A decision was made regarding the upcoming WSFs. “We are beginning a new collaboration and solidarity process between the South and North, between old and new generations of social players. This process will be developed by having the preparatory processes of the different WSF events work together in an integrated fashion. For 2015, we have decided to hold the next WSF in March in Tunis. As for 2016, we have gladly received and accepted the commitment of the Quebec Collective to work on organising a WSF event in Montreal in August. We are continuing our discussions with Asian movements on their joining the process, depending on their specific situation and interest (including the possibility of a 2016 WSF event with two hosts cities, one in Canada and the other in Asia).”

One of the upcoming IC meetings will be held in Tunis in December 2014 or January 2015. Another will be held some time between March and August 2014 for which four possible hosts have been shortlisted: Brasilia; Sarajevo; Montreal; and Nepal.

At its Casablanca meeting, the IC renewed its work on several topics: decisions on the upcoming WSFs; rebuilding the IC membership; moving of the secretariat to Tunis, the host city of the next WSF; and creation of open working groups.

The IC has decided to create a working group to broaden and extend its membership. This rebuilding requires a more precise definition of the IC. It is an open assembly of social and citizen movements that are ready to actively participate in the organisation and development of the WSF process. To broaden itself, the IC would seek contributions from movements that have participated in the organising committees of the WSF and of any of the forums and events

related to the process. The proposal is that there be three member categories to which each member may chose to belong to.

- Active members make a commitment to actively participate in IC operations and activities. They promise to make a contribution in order to ensure the secretariat's self-sufficiency. This can be a financial contribution according to their capacity, or a contribution in kind by taking on tasks.
- Associate members support the process without being active members. A decision needs to be made on whether associate members can participate or not in the consensus decision-making process, in addition to active members.
- Observer status is for movements that want to attend IC meetings but cannot, or do not wish to, be active.

The IC has also created a systematisation and accumulation working group based on a proposal from Brazil to digitalise documents of the WSF since its inception and the proposal of local Social Forums presented by the Ivry local Social Forum.

The reconstruction of the IC depends on the process's evolution. In fact, the debate on the status of the WSF process reflects the debate on the movements' situation and strategy. The World Social Forum remains an extraordinary convergence space for movements. It is a worldwide meeting place. Its main objective is to define a global strategy for movements, an international strategy adapted to the new period. Movements need to define a new global strategy and the WSF can help them in this process.

Recent changes feature a differentiation between the various major regions of the world. This differentiation is reinforced by the hegemony crisis of the United States and Europe. Emerging powers are seeking to increase their influence as leaders of their region. Social movements are confronted with this change and the differentiated strategies used by the various dominant forces they are facing. This situation is helping fragment the movements and represents a challenge for the Alterglobalist Movement. The IC must show a balanced approach towards all regions by being geopolitically open towards movements from emerging power as well as towards new movements. One possible response is to better organise the WSF process by major region, giving more visibility and space to the major regional Social Forums. One of the proposals is to organise at least one forum by major region every three years.

### ***The New Movements***

Since 2011, massive, almost insurrectional, movements have shown popular exasperation. Popular revolts share a common understanding of the nature of the structural crisis that has been officially recognised since 2008. But movements are not born on the basis of such an analysis. Popular explosions are triggered by unexpected issues and then extend themselves in time.

These movements are tied to the new cycle of struggles and revolutions that started in 2011, three years ago in Tunis, and then spread to Egypt and the Middle-East, crossed the Mediterranean Sea, reaching Southern Europe, Spain, Portugal and Greece. It found new life by crossing the Atlantic with Occupy Wall Street, London and Montreal. It took on broader forms in many countries of the World, in Chile, Canada, Senegal, Croatia, around the bankruptcy of education systems and the generalisation of indebtedness among the young. It re-emerged in mobilisations in Turkey, Brazil and Egypt.

A new generation is rising that is asserting itself in the public space, occupying city squares. It is less youth movement defined as an age group than a cultural generation that is taking stock of the current situation and acting to transform it. It is revealing deep social transformations related to the mass education of societies that has produced a brain drain, on the one hand, and massive unemployment among graduates, on the other. Migrations are linking this generation to the world and its contradictions in terms of consumption, cultures and values. They are reducing the isolation and confinement of youth. Unemployed graduates are building a new class alliance between the children of the lower classes and those of the middle classes. The new student movements are signalling the bankruptcy of education systems throughout the world. Neoliberalism has broken the promise of education leading to full employment and the relationship between living well and consumption. Moreover, excessive debt, particularly that of students, has violently thrown the new generations into job insecurity and precariousness.

Through its demands and creativity, this generation is building a new political culture. It is enriching the ways in which determinants of social structuring can be linked together: social classes and strata, religions, national and culture references, gender and age identities, migrations and diasporas, territories. It is testing new forms of organisation by mastering digital and social networks, and asserting self-organisation and horizontality. It is trying to redefine, in different contexts, forms of autonomy between movements and political authorities. It is searching for ways of linking the individual and the collective. This is probably where various

social networks are bearing new cultures, such as open software collectives that can collectively lead struggles and at the same time watchfully protect their individual independence. The taking back of public spaces is the expression of a demand for popular sovereignty. The occupied squares are renewed agoras. We occupy and we exchange, not for the right to vote, which always remains important but is seldom sufficient. This process is not changing the relation to politics, but rather it is redefining politics itself.

Economic power and political power, and their collusion, have been pointed out for causing the crisis. What was unmasked is the dictatorship of financial power and the “low-intensity democracy” it has created. Defiance towards established political parties and traditional forms of doing politics has already been expressed by the Spanish “*Indignados*” (“You do not represent us”) and the Occupy movement (“You are the 1%, we are the 99%”). It has now spread to Brazil. This defiance is expressed in the systematic condemnation of systemic corruption. The fusion of politics and finance has structurally corrupted the entire political class. The rejection of corruption goes beyond the world of finance to reach politics. How can trust in the system be maintained when the same people, sometimes with different faces, apply the same policies, those of financial capitalism. The subordination of politics to finance calls into question the independence of the political class.

These movements are spontaneous, radical and heterogeneous. Some observers claim that these movements have failed because they don’t have a perspective or strategy and haven’t created an organisation. This criticism needs to be discussed more in depth. It is lacking because the most ancient of these movements is only three years old. These movements do not reject all forms of organisation. They are testing new ones. They showed their interest in organising the mobilisations, reacted quickly the situations and expressed new demands. They achieved all of this even if the discussion on the relationship between organizational forms and power has not yet started and still has a long way to go before being completed.

The new social movements have their own dynamics. Ties exist with the older movements of Alterglobalism, but they are diffuse. All the more so since neither of these two groups is homogenous nor do they have any forms of representation allowing formal discussions. Many participants in these new movements (*Indignados*, Occupy, Red Squares) came to Tunis. They decided to mark their differentiation by either participating fully in the WSF, or creating the Global Occupy Forum and Occupy WSF initiatives.

The first linkages have to do with the slogans that were made explicit in Tunis and Cairo and that other movements later completed. These slogans refer first of all to the refusal of social misery and inequalities, respect of freedoms, dignity, the rejection of forms of domination, and linking the environmental emergency with the social emergency. Numerous movements refined the condemnation of corruption; demands for “real democracy,” environmental constraints, and the control over raw materials; and opposition to land grabbing. Linkages were also present in the always difficult attempts to build a new political culture.

These movements have not organised themselves within the Alterglobalist Movement, even if many ties were established right away. Our hypothesis is that this cycle of struggles represents a new phase of the Alterglobalist Movement. An this means that we need to consider that the Alterglobalist Movement, an historic and anti-systemic movement, has already been through several phases since the triumph of neoliberalism:

- in 1980, in countries of the South opposing the debt, structural adjustments, the IMF and World Bank;
- in 1995, with the struggles against job insecurity, unemployment and the dismantling of social protections; and
- in 2000, with the World Social Forum process.

Today, the new movements are marking a new phase that does not cancel out preceding phases, but rather extends and renews them. This new phase is forcing the movement to transform itself.

The new movements represent the transition between the protest movements of the last phase of the cycle opened by neoliberalism, on the one hand, and the anti-systemic movements of the upcoming phase, on the other. It is assumed that both sets of movements will participate in the changes leading to the creation of the new period’s movements. This new period will follow the crisis of neoliberalism whose outcome is still unknown. The older movements of Alterglobalism will need to learn the lessons of their successes and limits.

### ***A need to Reinvent Politics***

In a certain way, the WSF process has helped delegitimize neoliberalism. But this success has not been reflected in the political realm. Ideological confrontations and the struggle against the prevailing cultural hegemony are necessary but they aren’t sufficient. The movements cannot change society without taking politics into consideration, without raising the issue of power and



reinventing forms of power. This central issue of the strategy debate was extensively examined in the book. Recent events show the importance of approaches on political parties and the State; revolutionary times and transitions; the democratic issue and elections.

In questioning political power, the role of political parties is important. Alterglobalism has defended the movements' need to be at arm's length from parties. This isn't sufficient to fully define the relationship between movements and parties. The relationship is defined on the ground in situations that feature opportunities and constraints. Movements acknowledge that parties often pave the way to local, national and international political decisions. They work with parties without becoming their cog. The independence of the movements is not a tactical issue. Movements participate in the separation of powers that is required to respect the individual and collective rights that define democracy.

It is through the concept of the political party that several historic issues took shape:

- that of the collective and organic intellectual;
- the relation between the State and institutions;
- the conquest and control of power; and
- elections and democracy.

The discussion on political parties is undergoing a much needed deconstruction phase, in order to sort out their different functions. The challenge for movements is to renew organisational forms by taking into account their resistance to the ruling classes, their control over confrontations when ruptures occur and ways of renewing power and politics.

In this renewal, two trends need to be taken into account.

The first is the historic repudiation of parties and the party form with respect to the objective of going beyond capitalism, the historic defeat of the Soviet Empire, and the relationship to State power and its transformation.

The second has to do with the defiance of politics and the massive popular repudiation of the political class that the new movements made explicit.

The issue of politics, that of power, is not exclusively limited to the taking of State power. But this issue cannot be ignored. The associations that are specialised in politics, that is, political parties, have focused their efforts on the State and its institutions. The primary issue is that of the dialectic contradiction of the State, which is an instrument of bourgeois domination and

reproduction, but at the same time an instrument of general interest and public and citizen regulation.

Although State intervention remains essential, the task of changing society cannot simply be handed to the State, even if the revolutionisation of the State is assumed. This is related to the debate on the nature of transitions. Transitions are long and contradictory periods. Revolutionary processes are specific moments in time. They are not linear. Ruptures don't occur in a brief "great upheaval." Transitions involve a confrontation between the old social relations, that have long been dominant and continue to be present even when they are no longer dominant, and the new emerging social relations. These new relations are carried by movements through their resistance, debates on ideas, and new concrete practices. The new social relations being developed feature a refusal of inequalities and discrimination, a demand for equality and freedoms, and struggles for public policies based on equality.

There are two statements in the expression "You do not represent us." The first one calls into question the oligarchy together with the subordination of politics to finance. The second questions representative democracy, and sometimes, more broadly, representation itself. The reinvention of democracy involves several issues including those of elections, majority rule and world democracy.

The debate on representative democracy versus direct democracy cannot be limited to the issue of participatory democracy. The elections issue is more than simply a question of situations. It also involves election theory. It is hard to imagine democracy without elections and many activists get killed because they are seeking to have elections when dictatorships are prohibiting or manipulating them. But elections aren't sufficient to ensure democracy nor are they the sole feature of democracy. This is a current issue. Isn't organising elections one of the ways to bring back order when faced by an insurrectional movement? In order for a movement-led upheaval to be legitimised in elections, long-term ideological battles first need to be waged in order to advance its ideas and values.

The discussion on revolutions and ruptures is back in the public space, amplified by the new cycle of struggles and revolutions. The ruptures are not definitive. Some situations have been diverted in order to convert popular insurrections into civil wars. Popular revolts against dictatorial regimes are faced with bloody repression and all kinds of manoeuvres by the prevailing and nearby powers.

Part of what is new is making its way at the regional level and is visible only at a generational scale. It is at this scale that the new social and citizen movements are changing situations and creating conditions for possible new changes.

Beyond the required democratisation, there is the issue of an alternative orientation to capitalist globalisation. It involves the major challenge of a new decolonisation phase, which means, beyond State independence, peoples' sovereignty. This orientation places at the forefront issues of natural resource depletion, in particular water, climate, biodiversity, control over raw materials, land grabbing as well as cultural and civilisational renewal.

Progress is being made on essential issues regarding democracy and organisational forms thanks to struggles and mobilisations, research on new practices and sustained development efforts. The stakes of the new revolution are becoming clearer: the definition of new social and cultural relations, new relationships between the human species and Nature, a new phase of decolonisation and the reinvention of democracy.