

Diversity of Tactics:  
Coalescing as New Combinations

by

Chris Hurl  
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Supervisor: Dr. William K. Carroll

### ABSTRACT

This paper explores the emergence of a "diversity of tactics" in the anti-globalization movement. From the protests against the WTO in Seattle, 1999 to the massive protests against the G8 in Genoa, 2001, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" had been widely articulated by activists, especially in Canada and the United States. The emergence of this discourse in recent protests has been an expression of the changing context of struggle over the past thirty years. It reflects a hegemonic shift from representative modes of struggle towards a solidarity grounded in autonomy and decentralization. In a spectacular wave of protests, such decentralized organizing was able to flourish for a brief period and enable the ascendancy of a radical "anti-capitalist" network. However, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" also reflects the limitations faced in these "summit-hopping" actions.

Supervisor: Dr. W.K. Carroll, (Department of Sociology)

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## **The Beat of a Different Drummer (or) Sound and Fury Signifying Nothing?**

The Sun Machine is coming down and we're going to have a party.

David Bowie, 1969, *Memory of a Free Festival*

The huge bonfire danced underneath the overpass illuminating thousands of clandestine faces in a cavernous light. Thousands of bodies dancing, singing, screaming, banging out a rhythm that reverberated across the whole city. Some took rocks to the steel undergirding of the bridge. Others banged on oil drums, old water coolers, guardrails. Everything that could be salvaged was turned into music. I had taken a couple of sticks and was drumming out a beat on two uprooted "No Parking" signs like a hi-hat. There were hundreds of different beats clanging in their own time, with their own tempo. And yet there was a rhythm, a harmony slowly winding its way up the cliffs of the old town reaching towards the temporary fortress erected for the protection of global capital. It was the most beautiful music I have ever heard.

For me, as for thousands of others, that night in Quebec City embodied the spirit of an emerging movement. There was a sense of solidarity that somehow resided beyond words, taking shape on the streets rather than through the painstaking articulation of equivalence by self-appointed "movement" representatives in lengthy coalition meetings. On my way back to my temporary lodging, getting whatever sleep I could on the floor of an abandoned police station, I saw people clustered at the intersections, hanging around, having a beer as music played from the window of a nearby apartment. An old trade unionist was deeply engaged in an impassioned discussion of Castro's Cuba. He stood out there, arguing the merits of state socialism with a group of young anarchists. They talked quickly and excitedly, discussing the revolution as a very real line of action. The

possibility of overturning everything seemed so close.

But "close" is a relative term. As I returned to my temporary residence, part of me couldn't help but feel uncertain. How was banging on guardrails an effective form of collective action? To what extent was this all just noise? We had been driven down below the overpass earlier that day after the police pushed us from the fence using tear gas, rubber bullets, and water cannons. A few brave activists attempted to make their way back, wearing gas masks, using stop signs as shields, but to no avail as tear gas cannisters were lobbed at the front, back and rolled underneath the large crowd. And so we made our way to our only real avenue of escape, a narrow staircase leading down the cliff to the old town. Somehow, everyone remained remarkably calm as we walked down those stairs. I was doubled over, gasping for air but finding only thick, acrid smoke. I couldn't see anything. But I felt my way slowly, one step after another, feverishly gripping the handrail. At the bottom, somebody sprayed me with a hose rinsing off the poisons that covered my body and told me to find someplace warm because April in Quebec City is still considered winter.

As we were pushed down there like common trolls, I asked myself where do we go from here? It seemed quite evident that we could not keep on going like this. The police were learning our tricks. They had planned ahead. While in Seattle (1999) only 400 police officers were on duty, desperately trying to maintain order, in Quebec City (2001) there were over 6,000, the largest security operation in Canadian history (that is to say, until the G8 protests in Kananaskis in 2002), and they were fully stocked with all the

latest in "crime-fighting" technology (CBC News, 2001; Reid, 2002). I frequently heard people making allusions to Darth Vader's stormtroopers. The way the helicopter floodlights glinted off of their futuristic armor seemed to validate this impression. The intensifying police presence was making it difficult if not impossible to disrupt the meetings.

Of course, this seemed like a moot point considering that the next World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting was being organized in the dictatorship of Qatar, and the next G8 meeting was scheduled to kick off at the remote mountain resort of Kananaskis. The strategy of "summit-hopping" was becoming tired, predictable, less effective and in many cases completely impossible. And yet, what were the alternatives? Were we just falling back on our own noise? It became increasingly clear that something needed to change.

### *Movements*

Participating in the protests in Seattle and Quebec City, I felt like I was part of something much larger, a global "movement" that was actively redefining the range of possibilities. These were not the conventional protests that I had become accustomed to - a well-ordered, peaceful march leading to a series of speakers and then gently dispersing. With its diverse and creative tactics, the wave of protests sweeping across the world under the broad banner of "anti-globalization" had recaptured the Left's imagination. The images and slogans from Seattle, Quebec City, Prague, and Genoa were plastered into a legacy, a fresh inspiration to replace the fading images of

Weathermen in football helmets. The "new activism" as exemplified in the anti-globalization movement appeared as a paradigm shift away from stale social democratic policies and small Marxist-Leninist sects awaiting their turn to play vanguard. In contrast to the homogenizing impulse of global capitalism, resistance appeared to be irreducibly plural.

The purpose of this paper is to trace the practical contours of the so-called "anti-globalization movement" in Canada and the United States. To what extent can this string of actions and events even be described as a "movement"? At what points does a "movement" converge and where does it diverge? There are certainly no clear boundaries surrounding "the movement". Following the confrontational and disruptive actions organized against the WTO in Seattle in November, 1999, the question of what should be considered to be a part of "the movement" became an open and hotly contested question. While some groups and individuals attempted to maintain clear guidelines around what actions would be considered acceptable, others argued for the need to respect a "diversity of tactics", acknowledging the autonomy of diverse groups in organizing actions. I will explore how the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" has been reflective of the changing context of struggle, shifting away from institutions of mediation and representation and towards decentralized and autonomous networks. However, this has been a contested and very concrete struggle rather than a smooth and linear transition.

The identity of the "movement" has always been an open question. The label

"anti-globalization", tacked on by the corporate media, never sat well with most activists. Many activists will tell you that they are not against "globalization" as such but are opposed to the way in which "globalization" is being implemented under a partial ideological program, the program of neoliberalism, freeing capital from the social and environmental costs of doing business. The response to neoliberalism has been varied. Certainly, some, most predominantly trade unions, have argued for the preservation of national borders in trade relations but others have argued for the elimination of borders altogether. Since the battles against the Free Trade Agreement in the 1980s, many groups have increasingly shifted to a position of internationalism, developing international networks, coordinating global days of action, and lobbying supranational institutions<sup>1</sup>.

Against the idea of a single identity, a single unified "movement", some argue it is best described as a "movement of movements". From the endangered sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico to the privatization of water in Bolivia; from the organization of autonomous communities in Chiapas to the anti-roads struggles in east London, what appear to be parochial struggles intersect in a broader global resistance movement. There are no clear boundaries distinguishing these movements from others as the systems of control that are adopted on a national, regional, and municipal scale appear to reinforce the policies as they are manifested globally. As Hardt and Negri (2000) argue, there is no longer an outside position over and above the world market, or so it would seem. The avenues of mediation have dissolved, leaving a multiplicity of struggles all targeting a common enemy, an overarching supranational order manifested in the expansion of free

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<sup>1</sup>This is exemplified in the changing position of the Council of Canadians, a predominant opponent to "free trade" and later corporate globalization, comprised of over 100,000 members.

trade and free trade institutions such as the WTO.

And yet while Hardt and Negri proclaim the death of "civil society" and an end to intermediaries, others have proclaimed the birth of a "global civil society" movement. "Civil society politics," Barlow and Clarke argue, "are the politics of the twenty-first century" (Barlow & Clarke, 2001, 5). Barlow and Clarke go on to trace the colossal rise of the non-profit sector since the 1970s, showing how NGOs have played an increasing central role in international politics through the 1990s. Certainly, trade unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played an important role in the advanced capitalist countries in lobbying governments and organizing actions to spread awareness of what "globalization" entails. They have attempted to stand as mediators between the State and the "public interest", seeking inclusion at the bargaining table. And yet the twisted labyrinth of institutions and associations that constitute "civil society" seems even more ambiguous than "globalization".

Antonio Gramsci refers to civil society as "the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private'" (1971, 12). Civil society reflects the divergent avenues of organization beyond the bounds of the State and yet maintains an integral relationship to the State. For Gramsci, the leadership of the ruling bloc is achieved through the organic alignment of the "State" and "civil society". A hegemony is actively accomplished through developing connections to the State and capital through this porous network of relationships. Civil society is a place of "trench warfare" where diverse groups struggle over diverse and multifaceted systems of control. Business lobbies are understood by the

WTO to fall under the broad banner of "civil society", alongside anti-poverty organizations, wilderness societies, and churches. So then is this a "movement" *of* civil society or *in* civil society? Can it be included in civil society at all?

Perhaps all these labels are too abstract. The "movement", as such, has been most widely recognized in the advanced capitalist countries in the wave of large protests that swept through Birmingham, London, Seattle, Prague, Quebec City and Genoa from May, 1998 to July, 2001. The "movement", at its most concrete can be understood in the physical convergence of thousands of people in a shared time and space. In protest, concrete relationships tying together diverse groups were actively negotiated. These protests reflected plurality in action, bringing together groups employing wide-ranging tactics without a falling back on a centre. Converging in action, rather than under a broad ideological umbrella, these protests have moved beyond single issues. They have been the most visible manifestation of a budding activism organizing action laterally, refusing to fall back on intrinsic identities.

### *Direct Action*

"Direct action" has played an important role in these protests. Direct action is a way of constructing alternatives directly without appealing to an external mediator, such as the State. For decades, networks of resistance have grown and developed around the idea of direct action. As early as 1912, American anarchist, Volairaine de Cleyre argued,

Every person who ever had a plan to do anything, and went and did it, or who laid his plan before others, and won their co-operation to do it with him, without going to external authorities to please do the thing for them, was a direct actionist. All co-operative experiments are essentially direct action...

These actions are generally not due to any one's reasoning overmuch on the respective merits of directness or indirectness, but are the spontaneous retorts of those who feel oppressed by a situation. In other words, all people are, most of the time, believers in the principle of direct action, and practitioners of it. . . (Cleyre, 2005, 167)

Cleyre outlines a very broad definition of direct action, grounded in everyday struggles, rather than under any broad ideological unity. Direct action is constituted through what Negri (1989; Hardt & Negri, 2000) refers to as the constitution of *singularity*, building action in a manner that cannot be fragmented, reduced or represented.

Direct action has spread across diverse points of resistance, incorporating a whole multitude of different traditions from the wildcat strikes of the Wobblies, to women's centers organized by radical feminists, and the tree-sits of radical ecologists (Jordan, 2002). All these actions involve the construction of immediate alternatives, refusing to appeal to the State for assistance. In advanced capitalist countries, the impulse to direct action has inspired the Do It Yourself (DIY) sensibility of youth counterculture growing from the "free stores" of the Diggers resurrected in Haight-Ashbury in the 1960s, the squatted homes of the punk movement, and rave culture budding through the 1990s.

The high profile meetings of the ruling bloc have provided spectacular opportunities for the exhibition of direct action. Through laterally organized networks, activists have attempted to shut down the meetings of unaccountable, hierarchical institutions rather than appealing to them for reforms or *demonstrating* their opposition. An alternative community, established around the principles of direct democracy, decentralization, and autonomy is temporarily constructed, residing beyond State power,

and exhibited to the world. The successful shutdown of the first day of World Trade Organization's (WTO) millennial round in Seattle gave considerable impetus to the direct action movement. This energy would carry over into dozens of large protests around the world.

"Direct action" is often conflated with violent confrontation. However, this is not always the case. The most visible "direct action" that was exhibited in the recent wave of protests in the advanced capitalist countries has been largely symbolic and episodic. In fact it is debatable whether these protests can be considered to be a form of direct action at all insofar as they have been clearly oriented action towards appealing to or disrupting the meetings of the ruling bloc. To what extent have these action directly constituted alternatives? Certainly a form of "direct action" has been exhibited in the whole network of relationships that make this action possible. Food, housing, meeting space, training workshops and medical aid have all been organized through decentralized, autonomous collectives. These relationships have been organized laterally without recourse to an external mediator or internally, a central committee. However, the "movement" has remained limited insofar as direct action has been limited to temporary and spectacular protest actions.

*(Respect for a) Diversity of Tactics*

The organization of collective action through lateral networks has prevented any single group or organization from asserting control over collective action. This has led to significant debates and disagreements between those who argue it is necessary to

represent the movement in some way, making it clear which forms of action are acceptable or legitimate, and those who argue for the need to respect the autonomy of the different groups involved. Leading up to the Quebec City protests, I found the debate around a "diversity of tactics" difficult to avoid. In lengthy coalition meetings in Vancouver, on listserv discussions, at the local student union meetings, the question of "diversity of tactics" had become a hot topic. However, I remained unclear on the meaning of this phrase. As one activist argued, "I think that there's a different interpretation for every person who ever uses "diversity of tactics". I think it's different for everyone" (Interview 8).

It all started after the protests in Seattle in November 1999. A small group of protesters had targeted a series of banks and retail outlets, breaking windows and covering storefronts with political graffiti. Discussions flared around the use of "property destruction" as a "legitimate" tactic. Many condemned the actions, arguing that they effectively took away from the broader message of the protests, and endangered thousands of people by provoking police violence. They differentiated themselves from these activists. As one activist argued, "The revolution we are trying to create didn't and doesn't need these parasites" (Parrish, 1999). However, others reinforced a commitment to autonomy. Activists engaging in such tactics should not be marginalized or excluded; rather, there should be a "respect for a diversity of tactics". A commitment to "direct action" has resonated strongly with an emerging "anti-capitalist" perspective, which has rejected the possibilities of reform or mediation.

Since the rise of the New Social Movements in the 1960s, the term "diversity" become a core and instrumental value in social movement. With the emergence of a multitude of struggles beyond the workplace around so-called "identity" issues of white supremacy, patriarchy, homophobia as well as war, environmentalism, and nuclear power, the idea of elevating any single struggle above all others has been widely rejected (Melucci, 1980, 1989; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Attempting to move beyond the "fragmentation" of struggles under the rise of the New Right, the progressive movements of the 1980s focused on constructing broad coalitions, respecting the diversity of the different groups involved. These coalitions have attempted to include representatives of diverse struggles in an attempt to build a united popular front.

The call for a "diversity of tactics" draws on the discourse of "diversity", extending it beyond identities to include actions. There should be a respect not only for who people are, it is argued, but also for what they do. While there may be disagreements, these should be dealt with through communication and solidarity rather than condemnation and exclusion. It seemed like everyone was speaking for "diversity". As one activist told me, "Well, I mean, I think that just the name "diversity" is very popular. I mean who can be against "diversity"?" (Interview 7). The call for a "diversity of tactics" draws on the widely held value of "diversity" to construct a place for radical action in a broader movement.

A group called the Mobilization for Global Justice (Mobglob)<sup>2</sup> came together in

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Following the organization of the broad mobilization committee that had organized against the

Vancouver to organize events, educate the community, pool resources, and mobilize for the protests in Quebec City. "We are for a 'diversity of tactics'," I remember a Mobglob spokesperson asserting at a local meeting, "with the exception of property destruction". The discourse of a "diversity of tactics", initially articulated as a way of maintaining solidarity with activists engaging in more disruptive actions, was reappropriated and turned around. He did not disavow that popular word, "diversity". "Diversity" was universally accepted in abstraction but its concrete and practical form was contested.

Emerging out of the phenomenal success of direct action in Seattle, the call for a "diversity of tactics" had penetrated the discussions of the progressive Left, from the top-down bureaucracies of trade unions to local community organizations. At a semi-annual meeting of BC student unions, I noticed a workshop on "diversity of tactics", to be followed by workshops on student health and dental plans. Here, I was told that a "diversity of tactics" must follow from our institution's goals and strategies, building a coherent basis for action through centralized coordination and planning.

And I encountered the term yet again at a 2004 conference bringing together diverse groups to organize action against the provincial government. Workshops were organized on the General Strike that had nearly exploded in British Columbia's public sector in late April. Indigenous activists talked about their struggles against the incursions of developers on unceded First Nation's territory. Anti-poverty activists talked about the upcoming legislation that would fine homeless people who panhandled too

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IMF/World Bank in Washington DC in April 2000, these groups were organized in a number of cities in Canada and the United States.

"aggressively". We all came together to discuss a broad basis for unity, a common front. The call for a "diversity of tactics" was widely articulated. I found it notable that even seniors groups that had come from the conservative "heartland" of the province were arguing for a "diversity of tactics" as a broad basis for provincial unity. For many, it seemed like the only reasonable basis of unity, as these different groups were building from diverse traditions with different capacities.

A "diversity of tactics" has been most clearly articulated in two interrelated arguments. First, as exemplified in the call for a Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc in the April 16, 2000 (A16) protests against the World Bank/IMF in Washington DC, it was declared that "the greatest diversity of tactics is the most effective use of tactics". Articulated in this way, the call for a "diversity of tactics" becomes an affirmation of the efficacy of diverse tactics in protest. Coming from a very specific mode of organization, it asserts the power of decentralized, laterally organized action. Second, building to the Quebec City protests in April 2001, the call to "respect a diversity of tactics", focuses on the need to maintain solidarity. While activists may disagree with the tactics utilized by others, they should refrain from public condemnation and seek to work out their differences productively through communication and coordination. This broader definition seeks to build solidarity between diverse modes of organization. Certainly, the argument for the efficacy of diverse tactics and the argument for the need to maintain solidarity with those utilizing more disruptive tactics have always been closely linked. Depending on the context of discussion, I will draw variously on both a "diversity of tactics" and a "respect for a diversity of tactics".

*A North American Phenomenon*

Following the protests in Seattle, the call for a "diversity of tactics" reverberated across Canada and the United States. The call to "respect a diversity of tactics" was not widely articulated in Europe or the Global South, where different historical experiences have prevailed. In many parts of the world, militant traditions have maintained strong roots. Guerrilla insurgencies, terrorism, and riots remain common points of reference. Certainly, the question of violence remains a controversial issue, but it has been articulated in different ways. In Europe, the recent "anti-globalization" protests have clearly resembled the actions in Canada and the United States, and similar divisions have emerged between the "spikeys", advocating more confrontational forms of action, and the "fluffies", seeking to maintain an autonomous space built on nonviolence (Klein, 2000; WOMBLES, 2000; Aufheben, 1995, 2001). Nevertheless, the call for a "diversity of tactics" never really took root in these discussions.

Collective action in Canada and the United States has been shaped by a strong tradition of pacifism, individualism and liberalism. This has entailed a predominant focus on the nonviolent action of individuals appealing to the State for social change, although certainly there have been notable exceptions at different times and in different regions. Radical pacifism has maintained a strong tradition, particularly in the United States where there is a long history ranging from the conscientious objections of the Quakers during the First World War, through to the American Civil Rights movement and early anti-war movement of the 1950s and 1960s and the peace movement, anti-nuclear movement, and ecofeminist movements of the 1980s (Lynd, 1966; McAllister,

1982; Epstein, 1991; Sturgeon, 1997). Civil disobedience goes all the way back to Henry David Thoreau refusing to pay his taxes in opposition to the war with Mexico in 1846. Protest has been imbued with a strong current of individualism -- the heroic individual standing in the face of the repressive government. In contrast to the more social democratic governments in Europe, a more liberal tradition has prevailed in Canada, and especially the United States, based around the concept of rights and freedom from government control. The labour movement has been much less prominent as compared with Europe. These currents ran strongly through the 1960s New Left and have been quite influential in the recent wave of protests (Gitlin, 1987; Sanbonmatsu, 2004).

Moreover, the laws in Canada and the United States remain stiff as compared with many European countries (Katsiaficas, 1997). For instance, the squatters movement has provided an important basis for radical activism in Europe in part because the laws have been more lenient there. Squatting has never achieved a sustained presence in Canada and the United States, where the occupants are quickly booted out by the police. While there is a long tradition of confrontational protests in much of Europe, more confrontational actions in Canada and the United States are often treated with a heavy hand.

Compared with the United States, Canada has maintained stronger social democratic traditions. The labour movement has maintained a stronger presence, particularly in the public sector. The State has socialized the economy to a greater degree, including public health care and post-secondary education. The move towards

free trade and privatization has threatened these public services. Since the late 1960s, there have been waves of economic nationalism, opposing American incursions into Canada (Carroll, 2001). Thus, in Canada there has been a stronger movement against free trade and privatization, building from a base in the trade unions, the "social democratic" New Democratic Party (NDP), and in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Council of Canadians. These forces have built a strong opposition movement building from the resistance to the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States in 1988.

However, activists in North America have been inspired by events going on in other parts of the world. Many of the more confrontational forms of action adopted recently by activists have been imported from struggles in other countries. The Zapatista's uprising in Mexico, the Autonomen in Germany, and Reclaim the Streets in the UK have provided notable examples that have influenced the activists in Canada and the United States. The Global South has provided a key reference point as strong popular movements have grown out of everyday struggles for land, culture, and livelihood. The influences can be seen in the slogans, apparel, and formations of the movement. I will touch on these influences as I go along. The recent protests have swept across borders. A continuity can be drawn through Seattle, Prague, Quebec City, Genoa and dozens of other cities as large scale protests appear transient, shifting from place to place. Moreover, the composition of these protests has been international, bringing together activists from around the world.

Nevertheless, these tendencies should not be overemphasized. It is important to note how borders continue to exist for the vast majority of people around the world. Some have been more willing and able to take time off, pay for travel expenses and inhale tear gas than others (Martinez, 2000). The composition of the protests in Canada and the United States have primarily consisted of the so-called "middle classes" in those countries. Mobilization has generally been the heaviest in the region surrounding the meeting place. For instance, the protests in Seattle involved organizing throughout the Pacific Northwest, from San Francisco to Vancouver, BC. As such, protests in the United States and Canada have been heavily influenced by regional cultures and traditions.

### *Methods*

This paper is intended as both a history of an emerging activist sensibility and a critical intervention pointing to possible trajectories for radical action in the future. As an active participant in the movement, I do not maintain any pretensions of being 'objective' or 'nonbiased'. In fact, the recent wave of radical actions have called into question the presence of such a transcendent space, where actions can be impartially judged or evaluated as if from a bird's eye view. This paper is based on my own personal experience, an analysis of movement discussions and literature which can be found in abundance on the Internet, and a series of conversations that I have had with activists. I begin with my own personal experience and build my understanding from there.

My first real involvement in social movements began in 1997 as I came out of

high school and got myself ready for another four years at the University of British Columbia (UBC). With a few of my friends, who were involved in the local punk scene, I went to a public meeting being held on "free trade" and an organization that I had never heard of before, "Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation" (APEC). APEC would be meeting in Vancouver to engage in preliminary talks to establish a climate of free trade across the pacific rim, eliminating trade barriers between Canada and many countries more notable for their dictatorial regimes, union-busting, and sweatshop conditions. I began attending meetings more regularly after that.

As I stepped for the first time onto the UBC campus I was bombarded with messages from every street light and telephone pole -- "Corporate U", "Fuck APEC", and mimicking the glossy UBC orientation propaganda, "Imagine UBC" . . . "without corporate sponsorship". A large tent was eventually constructed in front of the Student Union Building (SUB) providing information on upcoming protests and serving as a general convergence point for organizing action. The boundaries of an "APEC-free" zone were spray-painted in large orange and green circles around the Goddess of Democracy, a statue that had been erected in front of the SUB to commemorate the Tiananman Square uprising. The concentric circles expanded each week, building up to the meetings, when the perimeter would surround UBC entirely.

The day of the protests brought nearly 5,000 people onto the campus, well out of sight from world leaders. It was later revealed that arrangements were made to keep protesters out of view at the request of President Suharto of Indonesia who did not want

to risk a public embarrassment. As protesters approached the fence surrounding the security perimeter, the police responded with pepper spray, liberally diffusing it through the crowd, hitting innocent bystanders and journalists alongside nonviolent protesters. The police response to the protesters turned into a national fiasco, leading to a national investigation ("The APEC Files", 1998).

My experience at UBC got me more deeply involved and interested in social activism. I began involving myself more in a number of different groups in Vancouver focused on globalization and other issues. I also became actively involved in student politics, the labour movement, the fair trade movement, anarchist and libertarian communist circles. This would eventually motivate me to go to Seattle to protest against the World Trade Organization in November, 1999. And I also wound up in Quebec City for the protests against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas in April, 2001.

While I may take a particular position in this paper, it has been important for me to seek to capture as many different viewpoints as possible in order to get a rich understanding of the different threads that run through these protests. The Internet has provided a vital resource for the exploration of movement discussion and debates, and has been extensively utilized by activists in organizing and coordinating recent actions. Thousands of movement documents are available online. In fact, a Google search on the topic "diversity of tactics" brings up over 10,000 results, mostly applying to the "anti-globalization" movement. I have extensively searched a series of websites including the network of Independent Media Centers that have blossomed around the world, as well as

the websites of many prominent groups that have been actively involved in the "movement". I have drawn on documents that I have found emerging frequently in movement discussions.

I also talked with 14 activists from Victoria, Vancouver, and Montreal on the topic of a "diversity of tactics". I tried to figure out the extent to which groups and individuals in different parts of the country have picked up on this debate. I wanted to explore the different interpretations and understandings of this term, building a richer understanding of the "movement" through a variety of different perspectives. I talked to people from wide-ranging social backgrounds. They were involved in trade unions, the environmental groups, and international solidarity campaigns. They were socialists, anarchists, and social democrats. Some had been involved in a long history of activism going back to the civil rights movements, while others had been initiated through the recent wave of protests. I had initially encountered some of these people in my own activism. Others I had come across in my Internet research and still others I got a hold of through my initial interview contacts. I talked with them about their activism, the recent history of the "anti-globalization" movement, and their take on a "diversity of tactics", utilizing an open-ended and largely unstructured format. They each had their own interpretations of a "diversity of tactics" and how it worked (or didn't).

### *Eternal Return?*

The recent protests have been informed and influenced by a whole multitude of threads running through movement politics for decades, even centuries. Consider the

recent calls to "Reclaim the Commons", influenced by the Diggers movement in 17th century Britain. Activists have in fact drawn continuities with these movements insofar as they are engaged in a continuing struggle against the privatization and parcelization of public space. As such, it is important to draw continuities, showing how collective action has been rooted in deeply held traditions and experiences. While I cannot hope to capture all the influences that have shaped the movement, I will briefly consider three major points of intervention.

In chapter one, I will trace the emergence of these debates in the explosive actions that shut down the first day of WTO meetings in Seattle, November, 1999. I will explore the articulation of a "diversity of tactics" in response to attempts to marginalize or exclude more disruptive activists. I will then seek to contextualize these debates in a broader political economic context. In chapter two, I will explore the emergence of diverse struggles from the ashes of the Fordist Compromise in the 1970s. I will explore the deepening of capital's command into diverse areas of life, creating the basis for a many-headed resistance movement. In chapter three, I will trace the emergence and development of the direct action movement, exploring the development of more lateral forms of organization and action through the 1970s and 1980s. In chapter four, I will connect these developments to the changing attitudes of activists towards violence. Noting these deeper historical movements, I will then trace out the development of the debates around a "diversity of tactics" over the ensuing two years, until these discussions were abruptly cut short following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. I will then attempt to tie it all together and point to some promising (and less than promising)

trajectories for radical activism in the future.

## **Chapter 1: Seattle was just the Beginning?**

### *New Era Neoliberalism*

November 30, 1999 was scheduled to kick off a new era of global trade. The arrangements were all made as the freshly born World Trade Organization prepared to inaugurate its 'Millennium' round of discussions. And what better place to get things going than Seattle? The home of Starbucks and Microsoft, the city exudes the spirit of the new and improved capitalism.

Globalization appeared as an inescapable tide sweeping across the world. Everywhere pundits preached the universal salvation of the world market. US President Bill Clinton argued that, "Globalization is not a policy option, it is a fact". Following Ricardo's old theory of comparative advantage, it was argued that by simply opening up the markets, everyone could benefit. Riding that unprecedented wave of "prosperity" seemed unavoidable. Anything less was considered ignorance, madness, or nostalgia. In the *New York Times*, Thomas Friedman (1999) would later refer to opponents of globalization as "a Noah's ark of flat earth advocates" stubbornly refusing to acknowledge the arrival of a neoliberal Magellan.

The idea of "globalization" became a central reference point around which a "ruling bloc" could rally. As Gramsci argues, the supremacy of a social group is manifested through both "domination" and "moral and intellectual leadership"(Gramsci, 1971, 57). The ruling classes can only achieve leadership over society through a process of gaining consent from subaltern social groups. Through this process, the ruling bloc is able to subordinate the interests of other groups to its own particular project. As Gramsci

argues, "the development and expansion of the particular group are conceived of, and presented, as being the motor force of a universal expansion" (Gramsci, 1971, 182). Hegemony is characterized by the part standing for the whole. The *partial* project of the ruling bloc appears as *universal*.

"Globalization" appeared as universal and inevitable. The broader social processes taking place was conflated with the particular decisions of the ruling bloc. They become one and the same. Hence, the decisions made by the World Trade Organization were already ordained. A partial neoliberal program was conflated with a universal process. It became natural, ever-present, *reified*. It became a "fact" rather than a "policy option". As Carroll argues,

The formidable achievement of neoliberal globalization is to have deepened the naturalization of human practices and to have created a new common sense commensurate with the conditions of global capitalism. The result is widespread sense that history has indeed come to an end in the renewed vigour of the American way (Carroll, 2000, 7-8).

The meetings in Seattle were to serve as a spectacular ritual, a way to exhibit to the world the ascendancy of a new millennium of "globalization" as "free trade".

### *The Left Coast*

But there were undercurrents of resistance bubbling beneath the surface. The Pacific Northwest had become a hotbed for activism. The push for a major protest and even a general strike had emerged from the King County Labor Council which had become one of the more progressive labor councils in the country, fed by emerging conflicts in the region (Judd, 2000). The steelworkers were taking job action against

Kaiser Aluminum, a subsidiary of the Maxxam Corporation, which was also responsible for the logging of ancient redwoods in the area. The steelworkers joined forces with radical environmental groups such as Earth First! in a broad coalition, the Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment (ASJE). This broad coalition achieved some success fighting the Maxxam corporation in 1999 over its treatment of workers and ecologically destructive practices (Hamburg, 2000).

Movements were also growing in British Columbia. In 1993, Clayoquot Sound became the site of the largest blockade in Canadian history, bringing together over 12,000 people in nonviolent direct action, blockading the logging roads that led into one of the last remaining temperate rain forests in the world. This was simply one of the most spectacular actions in a whole series of direct actions, tree sits and blockades being organized across the Pacific Northwest, in opposition to logging practices. The student movement was growing in force, adopting more radical actions such as student strikes in struggles against the federal and provincial governments. In 1996, large student demonstrations were organized across Canada. Large protests were organized in Vancouver, pushing for the freeze, reduction, and elimination of tuition fees. These movements fed into a broader movement against corporate globalization. In 1997, the meeting for Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) met in Vancouver, BC at the University of British Columbia to discuss opening up trade relations. In response, 5,000 people converged in protest on the UBC campus. These protests, and the ensuing controversy over the police response, brought widespread attention to corporate globalization in Canada and provided inspiration for a growing movement ("The APEC

Files", 1998).

Activists were also involved in direct action against logging practices in Oregon. A more militant approach was growing there, including forms of property destruction. Some activists were targeting logging equipment and spiking trees in a very direct attempt to prevent the logging of Oregon's old growth forests. On June 18 (J18), 1999 protests were organized in Eugene, Oregon as a part of the "Global Carnival Against Capital" which was scheduled to coincide with the meeting of G8 leaders in Cologne, Germany. The protests turned into "riots" as a group of activists began breaking store windows, beating on cars, and throwing rocks at the police. 15 people were arrested, one protester was sentenced to 5 years serving for throwing a rock, on the grounds of having assaulted a police officer. The Eugene "anarchists" would later become notorious in the corporate media as the masterminds behind the Black Bloc in Seattle; however, this inference is mistaken. The protests in Eugene were reflective of a radicalism that was developing across the region and the Black Bloc in Seattle brought together activists from other areas as well (Armond, 2001, 208).

These struggles, to varying degrees, all fed into the mobilization against the WTO on November 30, 1999. But the mobilization was not only fed on a local and regional level. It was also nourished on a national and global scale. The large NGOs and trade unions in the United States, based nationally out of Washington, DC, or the 'beltway' as it is often called, had been discussing organizing large scale protests for this unprecedented meeting many months beforehand. While the national leadership of the AFL-CIO

remained wary of organizing protests against an administration that they largely supported, they eventually decided to go ahead with the plans, giving the King County Labour Council a great deal of support. 28 organizers were hired to mobilize rank-and-file workers from across the Pacific Northwest. Many other groups were also organizing heavily for what was anticipated to be a monumental event. Ralph Nader's organization, Public Citizen, set up an office in Seattle for the expressed purpose of organizing action. The office served as the central hub for organizing and coordinating the different groups involved.

In the months preceding the meeting, the Ruckus Society organized a series of training camps which would lead to the formation of the Direct Action Network (DAN). The Ruckus Society was initially established in San Francisco as a center for training activists in techniques of nonviolent direct action. The Ruckus Society grew out of a rising tide of direct action in the environmental movement on the west coast through the mid-1990s. A number of west coast organizations also helped to provide the infrastructure for DAN. These included environmental groups which utilized nonviolent direct action such as the Rainforest Action Network, formed on the west coast in 1985. It also included Global Exchange, organized in San Francisco in 1988, with a focus on third world solidarity issues and fair trade. Art and Revolution came together in order to organize action around the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, 1996. The Chicago actions brought together over 700 anarchists and radical activists in a conference called "Active Resistance" to build radical networks across Canada and the United States. For its part, the Direct Action Network received "unofficial" support, including money,

space, and other resources from larger NGOs such as Public Citizen. However, DAN was not comprised of these organizations. Rather, as DAN activist Nadine Bloch describes, these organizations focused on "providing support for a network rather than building a network" (Bloch, 2000a).

The protesters were organized in small groups with no apparent leadership. While the infrastructure was provided by a number of west coast organizations, the actions were organized through a network of "affinity groups". The Direct Action Network's "Action Packet" describes their affinity group structure,

Affinity groups, self reliant groups of 5-20 people, are the basic planning and decision-making bodies for the November 30 mass action. People should join or form an affinity group if they are considering risking arrest in direct action. People can form affinity groups at the end of a nonviolent direct action training, or at an affinity group formation time held most days during the convergence from 6-7pm. Affinity groups may consist of people who are friends, coworkers, from the same neighborhood, city, workplace or school, or people who have a common identity or interest. An hour before each spokescouncil meeting will be set aside for affinity groups to meet. Each affinity group which includes people risking arrest should include support people who will support those arrested before, during and after the action... Affinity groups or clusters should also try to have some people trained in first aid, legal observing and communications/radio. (Direct Action Network, 1999, 3).

These small autonomous groups came together based on close-knit relationships of trust and mutual aid. This enabled the construction of direct and decentralized decision-making and support networks. The affinity groups coordinated with each other through "spokescouncils", bringing together delegates from each affinity group or cluster of affinity groups to make decisions by consensus. They also provided for a division of labour, ensuring communication, first aid and support for those arrested.

Drawing inspiration from a budding radicalism that had been growing through the

Global Days of Action (GDAs) in May and June of 1998, these groups made a commitment to shutdown the meetings in Seattle using nonviolent direct action. A standard set of nonviolent guidelines was adopted -- no physical or verbal violence, no weapons, no drugs or alcohol, and no property destruction (Direct Action Network, 1999). On the streets, groups were coordinated with computers, cell-phones, and police scanners (Armond, 2001). Decisions were made directly by the crowd, voting in the streets. The role of facilitator was rotated throughout the crowd.

A temporary infrastructure for the protests was built up from scratch. A convergence space was set up, where food, housing, medical, and legal aid were provided. Buildings were squatted, to provide housing. An independent media center was established to compile and disseminate the latest news using the Internet, spreading information beyond the tainted lens of the corporate media. Networks of legal observers were organized by the National Lawyers Guild and legal aid was provided for those arrested. For a fleeting moment, an alternative society was created through directly democratic processes outside of the value relationship that the WTO was seeking to extend deeper and farther into everyday life.

### *The Battle of Seattle*

By November 30, 1999, a fitting response had been organized to the celebration of the new capitalism. Early that morning, activists began occupying key intersections surrounding the conference centre. They chained themselves together using bike locks, strapping themselves to manholes, street signs, and whatever else they could find. By 7

am they were joined by thousands of students and other progressive groups, converging from different directions, jamming the streets. The conference center was blocked. No one could get in or out.

The police were hopelessly outnumbered and unprepared for what they faced. Even though the intentions of the protesters had been evident for months, no one really thought they could pull it off. As they were surrounded by thousands of protesters, the police protecting the conference center were cut off, separated from reinforcements, isolated from all sides, unable to make arrests. As the police proved unable to break the nonviolent blockade, they began utilizing methods of "pain compliance", which would later lead Seattle's chief of police to resign from his position, taking an unanticipated early retirement (Armond, 2001; Conway, 2003). With teargas, pepper spray, and rubber bullets, the police attempted to carve out a pathway through the protesters, but to no avail.

While protesters jammed the streets of downtown, the AFL-CIO rally at Memorial Stadium was wrapping up. At 10 am, over 20,000 labour activists and other progressives groups were preparing for their march downtown. Losing control over the downtown core, the police worked with AFL-CIO leaders to find a way to prevent further escalation. The AFL-CIO leadership had always been ambivalent about participating in the protests, fearing that actions would go beyond their control. With their close ties to the Democrats, the AFL-CIO leadership saw their role as a "loyal opposition", critically supportive of President Clinton, pushing for reforms from inside the conference center

while applying pressure on the outside through a large labour "parade". However, thousands of rank-and-file workers had their own plans.

It was decided by the union leadership that the AFL-CIO march would be diverted just prior to entering downtown, with the hopes of flushing out the DAN activists blocking the conference center. Labour marshals lined the streets leading into the city, informing the crowds that the march route had been changed, and diverting them away from the direct action<sup>3</sup>. However, a sizable segment of the march, nearly 5,000 teamsters, steelworkers, and longshoremen, broke through the line of marshals, revitalizing the blockades in the downtown core. This would finally overwhelm all attempts by police to regain control over the streets. In the early afternoon, the opening ceremonies for the meeting were finally canceled. The celebration of a new era of free trade had become a public embarrassment.

As battles between the police and protesters intensified through the afternoon, a small group of black-clad protesters armed with hammers, crowbars, paint bombs and spray paint targeted a series of corporate retail outlets including Nike, Starbucks, the Gap, and Old Navy. They broke windows and spray-painted political graffiti across corporate facades aiming for the symbolic heart of capitalism -- private property. As some participants in the Black Bloc argued, "When we smash a window, we aim to destroy the

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<sup>3</sup>In an interview, Richard Feldman, the director of the Worker Center with the King County Labor Council described attempts to "hijack" the event. His comments reflect the ambivalence felt by the local labour leadership about the need to maintain control. He argues that "the folks who broke the windows" and the "folks who were, in terms of our march and rally, were trying to change it from a family event to something else - push it into confrontation. We invited kids, people brought their kids, we had seniors there and to a degree, as host of something like that, we were responsible for their physical well-being. We usually have the abilities to fully control the event" (Feldman, 2000).

thin veneer of legitimacy that surrounds private property rights" (Acme Collective, 1999). While the Black Bloc moved through the city in a swift, deliberate and well-organized formation, in other parts of the city, local residents could be seen engaging in looting and vandalism (Armond, 2001). While the police stood by and watched, "nonviolent" protesters confronted those engaged in vandalism, forming lines to protect stores, chanting "no violence", apprehending "violent" protesters and turning them into the police<sup>4</sup>, and occasionally getting into scuffles in an effort to ensure that the protests remained "nonviolent" (Acme Collective, 1999; Armond, 2001; Barlow & Clark, 2001; Davis, 2004).

Seattle Mayor Paul Schell, a progressive liberal, had gained support from the trade unions and liberal professionals. In the 1960s, he had been an anti-war activist and he was seeking to build a more collaborative approach of "community policing" in the city. As such, he was seeking the support of many of the groups active in the protests. "Be tough on your issues", he told protesters just prior to the WTO, "but gentle on my city" (WTO Accountability Committee, 2000, 15). However, by the late afternoon, as it became evident that the opening ceremonies would have to be canceled, Mayor Schell declared a civil emergency. Police were marshaled from the surrounding counties and the National Guard was called in. They brought with them their stocks of rubber bullets, tear gas, pepper spray, things that had been long exhausted as the city had only ordered a

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<sup>4</sup>"[T]hese anarchist folks marched in there and started smashing things. And our people actually picked up the anarchists. Because we had with us longshoremen and steelworkers who, by their sheer bulk, were three or four times larger. So we had them just sort of literally sort of, a teamster, just pick up an anarchist. We'd walk him over to the cops and say, this boy just broke a window. He doesn't belong with us. We hate the WTO, so does he, maybe, but we don't break things. Please arrest him" (Lori Wallach from the prominent US NGO, Public Citizen, cited in Davis, 2004, 177).

small fraction of what had been recommended by the federal authorities. A curfew was set to come into effect at 7pm that evening covering the 50 blocks surrounding the conference center, creating a "no protest zone" which was actively challenged as a violation of free speech (ACLU Washington, 2000). Throughout the evening, the skirmishes continued as police engaged with protesters in and around the "no protest zone". Dumpsters were overturned and set on fire. The police with their reinforcements became more forceful in their attempts to gain control of the streets.

On following morning, after most of the AFL-CIO protesters had packed up and gone home, thousands returned to the streets with a renewed vigor. They staged a nonviolent sit-down protest outside of Pike Place Market which was met with mass arrests. As the police would arrest one protester, another would sit down and take their place. Over the next few days, over 600 people would be arrested, although later the vast majority of them would be acquitted due to the failure of police to follow proper procedures. There was no room in the local jail, so the protesters were left on buses throughout the day. They refused to give their names to the police, using pseudonyms like "Joe" or "Jane WTO".

Throughout the course of the events, the police became indiscriminate in their use of violence. With their colossal failure to maintain control of the streets, the top-down structures of police command fell apart (Armond, 2001). This culminated in the vicious police crackdown on Wednesday night. As protesters marched away from downtown in the light-hearted spirit of celebration winding up a long day of successful resistance, the

police followed. Refusing to let the crowds dissipate, they continued to beat protesters, residents, and whoever else got in their way late into the night. While city councilors tried to regain control of situation, they found there was no way to get a grip on the police, as the central chain of command had broken down.

President Clinton arrived earlier that day, after considerable speculation about whether or not he would show. He appeared to reinforce the demands of the protesters, arguing that labour standards should be respected by the WTO, going so far as to suggest that those countries that do not follow labor standards be open to sanctions. Of course, he did not expect these suggestions would be adopted and he was widely criticized by Third World delegates for proposing superficial solutions while failing to address the deeper issues (Barlow & Clarke, 2001). Through the meeting, significant divisions emerged that proved to be insurmountable. Many delegates, especially from Asia and Africa, had deep concerns about the power imbalances between the North and South. They pushed to make this a priority as the promises that had been made in Uruguay four years earlier had failed to materialize. As a consequence, there was no agreement on an agenda for a new round of negotiations. The meetings had reached an impasse.

While the headlines screamed "Trade talks end in Failure", "Shipwreck in Seattle" the streets of Seattle were covered with the slogan, "Remember, We are Winning!" (Barlow & Clarke, 2001). From all sides, activists declared Seattle to be an overwhelming success. The protests had gained phenomenal attention around the world. Public Citizen deputy director, Mike Dolan claimed "We won the day, we made a little

history here" (Perlstein, 1999). The illusion of inevitability had been shattered. "We dragged the snake out from under the rocks," Kevin Danaher from Global Exchange argued, "so that people could see it in the light of day" (Danaher, 2000). The universalizing discourse of neoliberal globalization had been effectively disrupted through targeting its very particular manifestation in Seattle.

This seemed to be the beginning of something even larger, something more confrontational. "Seattle was just the beginning," the president of the AFL-CIO, John Sweeney warned, and "if globalization brings more inequality, then it will generate a volatile reaction that will make Seattle look tame" (Morrison, 2000). Disparate groups were brought together in budding alliances. Finally, the neoliberals appeared to be backpedaling from their relentless program of free trade, privatization, and austerity. However, the protests were deemed a success for divergent reasons. Cockburn and St. Clair argue, "Hardly had the tear gas dispersed from the streets of downtown Seattle before an acrid struggle broke out over the nature of the protests and their objectives, as well as who should claim the spoils" (2000, 53). Certainly, Dolan had proclaimed the protests to be a success, but he went on to argue, "[w]hat's disappointing is that our message got lost in all this stuff", referring to the property destruction (Perlstein, 1999).

### *Divisions*

And I don't actually believe that, you know, people are talking about Teamsters and Turtles together and how wonderful it is, and that divisions are over, and that's just bullshit.

Nadine Bloch, DAN activist (2000a)

The divisions in the fresh-faced movement were already becoming apparent.

They were visible in the open collusion of the AFL-CIO with the police, and the attempts by labour marshals to steer crowds away from the blockades downtown. They were visible in the confrontation and subsequent condemnation of those engaging in property destruction by "nonviolent" activists. They were visible in the inability of the police to gain control of the streets, in the inability of the AFL-CIO to control its own members, in the headless autonomy of direct action. The very "success" of Seattle emerged out of broken expectations. As Armond notes, "The outcome of the Seattle protests was mostly due to the failure, not the success of the respective strategies of the AFL-CIO, the Direct Action Network, and the Seattle Police" (2001, 209).

The debate around a diversity of tactics erupted in Seattle due to the collapse of boundaries and guidelines for action. With so many different groups converging in a shared space, it became difficult to maintain broad parameters for action. As David Hyde from the University of Washington Network Opposed to the WTO argued,

I think that it's hard with this many people and when things are this decentralized. Where there's no two or three architects that figure out how the movement's going to be. But where it's lots of diverse groups of people that define this movement really ... We all got surprised. No one knew what was going to happen" (Hyde, 2000).

There was no way to ensure that these parameters could be maintained. The Seattle actions brought together a number of disparate groups in a temporary convergence which could no longer be defined organizationally, but rather broadened to the coexistence of multiple forms of organization in a shared space and time. Nevertheless, the Direct Action Network attempted to dictate the parameters of actions. A Seattle organizer poses the dilemma that was faced by the Direct Action Network,

One problem with spokescouncils is that they can become a

universality that tries to impose a single model on a territory, which is what happened in downtown Seattle. And you had people who didn't feel like the spokescouncil was really what they wanted to do, you know. And they wanted to approach it from a different angle, but they still wanted to be down there, and that became problematic, because you had two groups in the same territory with different ideas of what should happen (Interview 5).

With the coexistence of multiple communities in this extensive space, a nonviolent discipline could not be maintained.

There were no mechanisms in place to deal with difference. Confronted with actions that were not deemed to be appropriate or legitimate, some activists resorted to public condemnation, quickly dissociating themselves and calling for arrests. Medea Benjamin of Global Exchange was notoriously quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "Here we are protecting Nike, McDonald's, the Gap and all the while I'm thinking, 'Where are the police? These anarchists should have been arrested'" (Egan, 1999)<sup>5</sup>. For many, the apparent success of the Seattle protests had been marred by the broken windows. The "message" was lost. The broken windows had been taken advantage of, it was argued, in order to discredit the 'movement' and justify the rampant police repression. However, those arguing for the enforcement of nonviolent guidelines were faced with a context in which nonviolent discipline could not hold.

While some reacted with condemnation and marginalization, others attempted to build a more flexible basis for solidarity. As multiple groups pursuing their own actions shared space, the demand to organize action in a more fluid way grew. The discipline of

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<sup>5</sup>In the face of widespread criticism over her comment, Benjamin later argued that she had been misquoted, although she maintained a position publicly condemning the actions of those pursuing property destruction.

nonviolent direct action could no longer maintain solidarity. No single group could set such guidelines for action. Thus, a limit was placed on the organizational form. If no group could "enforce" parameters for action, then how did groups handle disagreements over tactics? As one DAN activist argued,

The fact is, the much larger body of affinity groups that had planned (and was successful in) non-violently blockading the WTO delegates -- including myself -- knew of the plans of the window-breakers. They announced it at various meetings, and it was one of the debates within the overall body of some 1,000 people: How does a movement deal with a subgroup within it which generally supports the ideals and strategy of the larger body, but announces that it will employ tactics that the overwhelming majority don't wish to engage in and actually oppose at that time? Do we call the cops? Do we police them ourselves? Do we let circumstances take their course? There was no agreement on any of this, except that we would not call the cops on anyone. It would just become part of an ongoing discussion. Throughout the prior week, this discussion raged through the direct action circles in Seattle, although it was, most certainly, hardly the only thing we were occupied with. (Cohen, 1999).

The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" reflected the inauguration of a more flexible form of solidarity, allowing for disagreements over tactics without falling into public condemnation or criminalization.

### *Diversity of Tactics*

For a two year period, emerging out of the Seattle protests in November 1999 and building up to the Genoa protests in July, 2001, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" became a central and often controversial point of discussion for activists in Canada and the United States. While in many other parts of the world, broken windows had come to be expected as standard fare, in North America there were considerably stiffer penalties for such behavior and a strong tradition of radical pacifism had prevailed. While more confrontational tactics had been developing through the 1990s, these tactics remained largely restricted to a radical counterculture. The Seattle protests brought together a broad

cross section of the North American Left. In this context, the use of more confrontational tactics became an open question.

The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" reflected the growing power of lateral networks beyond the prescriptive controls of any single organization. Out of the apparent success of decentralized organizing through the Seattle protests, it was posed as a response to the attempted marginalization and exclusion of the more confrontational segments of these protests. It was a call to maintain momentum rather than getting bogged down in divisive discussions, respecting the autonomy of the myriad of groups that were organizing in the manner that best suited them. Over the course of the following three chapters I will explore the basis for a diversity of tactics in a broader historical context.

It is frequently argued that resort to such diverse forms of action in recent protests has been "inevitable". Activists describe the presence of a diversity of tactics as "a statement of fact", simply articulating "what already existed". I will begin by tracing the explosion of multiple points of resistance to the globalization of capital. Tracing the rise and fall of the Fordist regime of accumulation, I will explore how capital has deepened and widened its command and control across society, which has ultimately condensed as an ideological project. In response to the ferment of the 1960s, neoliberalism served as the justification for an emerging supranational order. Hardt and Negri look to the emergence of "Empire", a flexible regime which dissolves any outside space of resistance. Resistance appears as irreducibly plural, somehow escaping all

previous modes of organizing and struggle. These diverse struggles open onto one another in flexible networks that directly target a common enemy.

The anti-globalization protests have brought together wide ranging groups and individuals with different commitments and tolerance for action, from the top-down chain of command of trade unions and NGOs to the loose and temporary formations of revolutionary anarchists. Participants include families and senior citizens, immigrants and refugees who may not be able to risk arrest, people of colour who are targeted by the police everyday. As War Cry argues in the well-known Indymedia documentary on Seattle, *This is What Democracy Looks Like*,

You kind of have to embrace a diversity of people as well as a diversity of tactics. If you're forty-five and you are working in a factory and you have a family of four to feed, your tactics are going to be different than if your 17 or 18 or 19. Our differences are our strengths. I don't think anyone wants to live in an homogenous culture. (War Cry, quoted in IMC & Big Noise Films, 2000).

Acknowledging the unique skills and abilities of these different groups, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" is an attempt to provide a space where all these groups can coexist.

Second, I will explore the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" as a product of the growing strength of the direct action movement. By the "direct action movement", I mean the radical communities, developing since the 1960s, building forms of resistance and struggle outside of conventional political avenues. The direct action movement has adopted increasingly lateral forms of organization and decision-making, refusing to appeal to any transcendent body. The direct action movement has resisted the fragmentation of struggles into single issues, seeking to build a basis for alternatives

directly in everyday life.

A "diversity of tactics" is not only necessary, it is often argued, it is also extremely effective -- something, the Seattle police quickly learned as they were swarmed from all angles, unable to decapitate a headless monster. The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" gains strength through the diffusion of power across these radical networks in which small groups are empowered to decide on the best course of action. The radical networks that have grown through the 1980s and 1990s have worked to actively construct spaces of autonomy and self-organization, empowering diverse groups to decide on the best course of action. The dissolution of any privileged point of decision-making has undermined any attempt to set guidelines for action.

It is argued that in the context of street protests, the use of top-down decision-making structures becomes unwieldy and debilitating. The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" acknowledges the fluid context of action which, it is argued, demands fluid and flexible organization. As Chuck Munson argues, "Diversity of tactics ... recognizes that the tactical situation on the streets during a protest can break down and become fluid" (Munson, 2001). In such large scale actions any attempt to direct the course of action is necessarily limited. In this context, lengthy discussions on tactics were widely recognized to be counter-productive. Groups need to make decisions quickly and efficiently. Moreover, in this context there is no way of preventing groups from pursuing whatever actions they see fit.

Third, I will explore how the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" is reflective of changing conceptions of violence and nonviolence. Out of the fragmentation, state repression and sectarianism of the 1960s through to the radical pacifism and terrorism of 1970s and 1980s, the tactics utilized by social movements have often constituted their identities. Through the 1990s, nonviolence has been increasingly viewed as a tactical decision rather than an ethical one. The call for a "diversity of tactics" has shifted the debate away from the simple question of violence versus nonviolence, opening up a consideration of wide ranging tactics without dogmatic prejudice. "We're going to respect diversity of tactics as we organize," Montreal activist Jaggi Singh argues, "and then decide on that basis what is appropriate and not appropriate, what is effective and not effective and move away simply from non-violence'." (Interview 1).

The call to respect a diversity of tactics emerged in defense of the Black Bloc actions in Seattle. It was argued that while some may disagree with the use of a particular tactic, they should not condemn those engaging in that tactic publicly. This simply contributes to the "dynamics of marginalization", as one activist described it, in which a clear division is drawn in the public between "good" protesters and "bad" protesters. On the contrary, it is important to maintain solidarity with those who may disagree with us. Of course, as Jaggi Singh argues, respecting a "diversity of tactics" does not mean that we keep quiet when we disagree with the tactics of another.

it creates a context of solidarity whereby while we have disagreements about what might be effective or appropriate in a given situation, we can disagree about them while maintaining a certain level of solidarity in the face of a very concerted effort by the State and by the police to marginalize political movements (Interview 1).

Indeed, communication plays a critical role in building solidarity. However, there is a time and a place to debate over the efficacy of tactics, and it is not in public, where these divisions can be played up and further split the "movement".

For a two year period the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" became a central point of debate, reflecting the changing context struggle. It became the centerpiece of what David Solnit sees as the "the evolution of a new model of unity and expanded definitions of solidarity" (Solnit, 2004, xv). It was an attempt to reconceptualize conventional notions of organization and action, growing out of radical undercurrents. In resistance to fragmentation, it was an attempt to ensure that no single group could monopolize action to the exclusion of all others.

However, the very need to articulate such a position also shows that it was not yet taken for granted, open to contention with other understandings of activism. Following the Seattle protests the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" became a highly contentious point of debate. As Jennifer Berkshire argued, "No topic divides the global protest movement like the diversity of tactics question" (Berkshire, 2002). The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" was undertaken as a response to the attempted marginalization of a whole segment of the protest utilizing more confrontational forms of action.

A respect for a "diversity of tactics" has emerged as a particular orientation in contemporary North American activism seeking to enable plurality in action. The call for a "diversity of tactics" following Seattle helped to concretize a particular form of

organizing closely linked to these large scale mobilizations. This form of organizing can be understood as hegemonic insofar as it has elevated a particular form of solidarity as a universal, binding together the "movement" in action. Moreover, this process of generating solidarity has been contested by various groups who pose their own limitations to the "movement". Nevertheless, the call for a "diversity of tactics" must also be understood as anti-hegemonic insofar as it is articulated against the monopolization of action by any single organization.

### *(Anti)Hegemony*

The process of generating consent is not simply an ideological exercise. It is concretely manifested, actively diffused across society through social relationships. It cannot be restricted to any specific social location. As Stuart Hall argues, "it represents a degree of mastery over a whole series of different 'positions' at once" (Hall, 1986, 15). Gramsci argues that in advanced capitalist countries the mechanisms of social control have spread well beyond the walls of the State. "The State was only an outer ditch," he argues, "behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks" (Gramsci, 1971, 238). Gramsci explores how power relations are diffused beyond the juridical power of the State, running through 'civil society', or "that ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private'" (1971, 12). The historical unity of the ruling classes is established through the organic alignment of the State and civil society.

In advanced capitalism, the diffusion of power relations across civil society has only intensified. Thus, Green characterizes advanced capitalism in terms of "its

aggressive and incessant rearrangement of the social landscape 'in its own image', and the penetration of its hegemonic reach into areas of social life previously considered to fall within the ambit of informal family and community sovereignty"(Green, 1993, 181). The trenches have become deeper and more extensive. With the diffusion of power relations across the social landscape, the boundaries between the State and civil society have blurred. The neoliberal project seeks to extend and deepen the dominance of capital into areas of life that have been previously untouched, protected by the State and the community.

Overturing these complex mechanisms of control demands a long and protracted struggle through countless institutions and associations. Gramsci draws on the military metaphor of 'trench warfare'. However, these complex and variegated struggles must be tied together as a coherent revolutionary force in order to overturn the hegemony of the ruling bloc. Gramsci evokes Machiavelli in arguing for a power that would be capable of reuniting the masses in a common revolutionary project. He describes the "modern prince", not as a "real person", but rather as "an organism, a complex element of society in which a collective will, which has already been recognized and has to some extent exerted itself in action, begins to take a concrete form" (Gramsci, 1971, 129). The "modern prince" serves as a point around which subaltern groups can converge, bringing struggles together in a coherent revolutionary project.

Building counter-hegemony is an organic process. While Gramsci conflates the "modern prince" with the political party, with a sovereign representative, a spirit that

stands for the subaltern classes, the construction of counter-hegemony need not be reduced to a particular group or identity. Ultimately, the "modern prince" is actively constituted through social relationships, which Gramsci recognizes in his philosophy of *praxis*. The anti-globalization protests that swept across the world can be characterized as a sort of "concrete phantasy", a convergence of diverse groups in a common effort to break the hegemony of neoliberalism. It can also be seen as growing out of and legitimizing a particular form of struggle.

However, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" can also be interpreted anti-hegemonically, refusing to acknowledge the monopoly of any single group or organization in setting the guidelines for action. From this perspective, the concrete ways in which the movement coalesces are often lost. While the anti-globalization movement is often celebrated for its apparent diversity, it often remains unclear how this "diversity" manifests itself in practice. The ambiguous boundaries of the "movement" serve to obscure its specific social relationships. Insofar as "diversity" is treated as a thing residing beyond specific social relationships as a universal it is fetishized. In the fragmented and episodic movement of "anti-globalization", "diversity" is often treated as a universal, serving to supplant specific social practices.

The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" walks a thin line between a segregated identity and an empty universality. On the one hand, it reflects a particular standpoint. It reflects the growing power of the radical wing of the movement. It reflects the enormous success of lateral networks in organizing action since Seattle. While it reflects the call to

maintain solidarity with those engaging in more militant tactics, it can also be conflated with those militant tactics. It can be adopted in the belief that more militant tactics are more effective. The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" can implode in this particularism and while it may suggest openness and flexibility, it can fall back on a narrow identity. On the other hand, it can be posed as an empty universality in which all tactics are considered equal. It can be used to justify an "anything goes" approach. If someone's doing it, then it is legitimate. From this perspective, "diversity" in the abstract can sit in place of any attempt to coordinate action or develop a coherent strategy.

## Chapter 2: A Statement of Fact?

Sometimes without even consciously knowing it, we are shedding the baggy skin of the dinosaur Left and venturing out to create wild and unpredictable resistances: a multitude of struggles, all of them meaningful, all of them interconnected" (Curious George Brigade, 2003, 16).

### *Teamsters and Turtles, together at last*

The "anti-globalization" movement is often celebrated for its apparent diversity, bringing together people from wide-ranging social backgrounds. As the now iconic placard from Seattle proclaims, "Teamsters and turtles, together at last". Indeed, these 'new combinations', as Nick Dyer-Witheford (2002) calls them, proceed even further than the unlikely red-green alliance to include anarchist street kids, church groups, third world farmers, university students, non-status refugees. The list appears endless as these groups converge in large demonstrations around the world to oppose corporate globalization. They come for their own reasons. While some call for reforms, others seek to tear down the system as a whole. In the sea of placards, calls can be seen to 'Protect the Oceans', 'Legalize Marijuana', 'Abolish the WTO', and 'Smash Capitalism'. Certainly, the convergence of such diverse groups is an enormous accomplishment. But how did they wind up together?

The diversity of the 'movement' can be seen in wide-ranging and creative expressions of resistance. It can be seen in the sea of faces and placards. The call to respect a 'diversity of tactics' is put forward as a way of acknowledging that this diversity *already exists* and should be respected. One activist argues,

It's just sort of a statement of fact, that there is this diversity and it expresses itself in terms of a diversity of goals, diversity of members, and it's also a diversity of tactics (Interview 7).

A 'statement of fact'? Such an assertion carries ontological assumptions. The goals, members, and tactics of the movement remain simple expressions of an underlying condition. The concept of "diversity" is treated as a universal. In this chapter, I will explore the roots of "diversity" in the changing face of capitalism.

### *Valorization and Self-Valorization*

The production of capital demands the subsumption of diverse processes and practices under a unifying mechanism of command and control. These practices are actively transformed into a homogeneous 'value' that can be bought and sold on the marketplace. The production of an 'exchange value' demands the devaluation of other forms of existence. Harry Cleaver argues, "If valorisation involves a great reduction of diversity via the imposition only one relevant measure, then we must recognize that the actual historical processes of disvalorization are closely connected to *devaluation* or the absolute loss of values" (Cleaver, 1992, 120-1). In what Marx refers to as the real subsumption of labour under capital, work is actively restructured, labour is deskilled, and transformed into measurable repetitive processes. Anything that cannot be bought or sold is rendered invisible. And so capital appears to give birth to itself. Money begets money, in an endless, seemingly infinite progression.

And yet capital can never fully subsume the worker's activity. The conversion to "exchange value" always leaves something out. Other values exist; other immeasurable values are created; other values breach the exchange value vacuum that renders capital autonomous, independent, and sovereign. As Negri argues, "Value exists wherever social

locations of working cooperation are to be found and wherever accumulated and hidden labor is extracted from the turgid depths of society. This value is not reducible to a common standard. Rather, it is excessive" (Negri, 1989, 74). Workers find cunning ways to escape and reestablish their own values.

This often gets forgotten even by Marxist scholars. After all, wasn't it Marx who once argued, "The handmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steammill, society with the industrial capitalism" (Marx, 1963, 109)? This statement appears to advance a position of economic determinism, it which it is through the development of the mode of production which creates the possibility of relationships of struggle. A long line of Marxists have looked at capital's development mechanically, irrevocably leading to the revolution. "We too have worked with a concept that puts capitalist development first," Mario Tronti argued, "and workers second. This is a mistake. And now we have to turn the problem on its head, reverse the polarity, and start again from the beginning: and the beginning is the class struggle" (Tronti, 1972). Against what Michael Lebowitz (1992) calls "one-sided" Marxism, a divergent thread can be traced privileging living labour as an autonomous force driving capital's development and crisis.

Confronting capital's relentless drive to convert all things to "exchange value", social movements have constructed spaces of autonomy and resistance. The valorization of capital is defied through what Negri describes as *autovalorization* or self-valorization. Self-valorization, the creation of other values beyond the bounds of capital. Self-valorization is both negative, destructuring and destabilizing the process of subsumption,

and positive, pointing to alternative modes of social cooperation beyond the wage relationship. Withdrawing from containment under capital's homogenizing market value, the production of other values is necessarily diverse, constantly opening up new trajectories for existence. As Harry Cleaver argues,

"[T]he resistance flows not from a unified class seeking a new unified hegemony, but rather from a myriad of currents seeking the freedom of the open seas where they can re-craft their own movement and their interactions free of a single set of constraining capitalist rules" (Cleaver, 1999).

However, self-valorization is often a fleeting explosion, rapidly reappropriated through the restructuring of capital. As Negri argues, "the separateness of proletarian self-valorization itself appears as a discontinuity, as a conjoining of leaps and innovations" (Negri, 1979). Capital is constantly adapting, seeking to incorporate that which escapes its control. Hence, worker's struggles, conceived broadly, catalyze a whole 'cycle of struggle', in which capital restructures itself, 'decomposing' areas of working class autonomy, which consequently lead to the 'recomposition' of the working class struggles in new forms (Negri, 1989; Cleaver, 1993; Dyer-Witheford, 2002, 66). These struggles have become increasingly complex pushing the reach of capital into diverse areas of existence, towards a social factory (Negri, 1989). These cycles of struggle can be broken into successive stages bringing to light distinct modes of struggle. I will trace the movement from the struggles of the 'mass' worker under Fordism to the struggles of the 'multitude' under Empire.

### *Fordism and the Mass Worker*

Through the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries workers' struggles in the

advanced capitalist countries were building in strength, increasingly organized, challenging the power of the free market at the workplace, in parliament, and on the streets. They were mounting militant struggles for shorter hours, for better working conditions, for control-over their labour, and for revolution. They were fighting against enclosure under the factory walls, under the surveillance of the overseer. They were fighting against the fragmentation of their activity and the parcelization of their skills. They were organized into trade unions, communes, political parties, clandestine sects and revolutionary armies.

Through the early part of the twentieth century, many governments would increasingly shift to a position of cooption, while at the same time mounting stiff repression against radicals of all kinds. According to Negri, the 'mass' worker rose to predominance between the years 1914 and 1968 (Negri, 1989). The concentration of workers into the large cities and factories, led to the formation of solidarity, manifesting itself in "mass" forms of organization. Workers struggles were mediated through mass organizations and the the state. Workers' struggle were increasingly coopted through their integration into an new economic model. The emergence of 'Fordism', as Gramsci argued, led to the stabilization of capital, tying together wage increases and increased productivity. Through the regulation of consumption, workers became the motor for economic development. However, the Fordist compromise was increasingly stretched, as it widened to incorporate struggles of those excluded.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Taylorism represented a 'scientific' program

for the real subsumption of labour under capital. In 1911, F.W. Taylor introduced his *Principles of Scientific Management*, which became essential reading for American industrialists seeking to subordinate workers under a new discipline. Taylor argues that productivity could be increased through the breaking down of the labour process into its component parts. A rigid division of labour would separate the management, control, conception, and execution of the labour process. The worker's activity would be reduced to a closely monitored single repetitive action. Losing control over the factory floor, workers would be brought under the panoptic gaze of the factory overseers. Of course, this deskilling and subsequent massification of the working class was met with heavy resistance and bloody revolts and periodic economic crises that were only subdued through the introduction of Fordism.

Gramsci looked to Henry Ford as embodying a broader movement by American capital to achieve control over the production process through blending coercion with consent. 'Fordism' succeeded in "making the whole life of the nation revolve around production" through a "skillful combination of force (destruction of working class trade unionism on a territorial basis) and persuasion (high wages, various social benefits, extremely subtle ideological and political propaganda)" (Gramsci, 1971, 285). By tying productivity increases to increases in wages, Ford was able to effectively combine Taylor's program of quantification and deskilling on the assembly line with a virtuous cycle of mass consumption beyond the factory walls. As David Harvey argues,

What was special about Ford (and what ultimately separates Fordism from Taylorism), was his vision, his explicit recognition that mass production meant mass consumption, a new system of the reproduction of labour power, a new politics of labour control and management, a new aesthetics and psychology, in short, a new kind of rationalized,

modernist, and populist democratic society. (Harvey, 1990, 125-26).

Ford had the foresight to recognize that increased wages would create the consumer base for his products, which would, in turn, lead to increased profits. However, this assumption radically undermined the apparent 'autonomy' of the economic sphere as the working class became the motor for economic development. This virtuous cycle could only be completed if the worker reinvested his wages back into the emerging industries. The Fordist compromise demanded the regulation of consumption. In order for industry to benefit, workers had to spend their money in productive ways.

The real subsumption of labour under capital demanded the extension of social control into areas of life that were previously considered to be "private", embedded in "civil society". As Gramsci argued, "the new methods of work are inseparable from a specific mode of living and of thinking and feeling life" (Gramsci, 1971, 302). Gramsci connects the economic regulation of Fordism with a whole way of life, an Americanism, a new Puritanism. The regulation of consumption could only be accomplished in the space beyond the walls of the factory, through the web of diverse networks and associations that constituted "civil society". Conflict was increasingly mediated through the organic alignment of the state and civil society.

Through the early part of the 20th century, the labour movement in the United States, as in many other parts of the world, grew in strength. The United States government sought to pacify these struggles through establishing a State mediated process of collective bargaining, entrenching and simultaneously regulating the worker's

right to strike. The channels of mediation were massified, compacted and centralized as "civil society" came to stand in place of the immediate and everyday struggles of the working class. They drew support from the craft unions that had emerged through the nineteenth century to entrench the power of skilled workers. Trade unions served to mediate grievances and job action between contracts (Piven & Cloward, 1977; Brecher, 1972). At the same time, the government criminalized, arrested, and deported thousands of radicals through the creation of new laws and through a wave of crackdowns most spectacularly manifested in the Palmer Raids beginning in 1918.

The stock market crash of 1929 proved that Ford's strategy was inadequate if not applied on a 'mass' scale. As Gramsci argued, Fordism derives "from an inherent necessity to achieve the organization of a planned economy" (Gramsci, 1971, 279). Ultimately, this could only be accomplished through the interjection of the state. Expanding on Ford, Keynes argued that economic stability could only be ensured through the State regulation of consumption. Keynes argued that in times of economic crisis, the state should increase spending in order to reinvigorate the economy. Roosevelt's 'New Deal' would effectively institutionalize this proposition, making the working class the motor of economic development through large-scale public works programs that would generate employment, economic infrastructure, and reinvestment in private businesses.

Keynes' economic policies would be internationalized in 1944. The Bretton Woods Agreement would establish a system of fixed exchange rates between currencies, enabling the regulation of capital internationally. Through the establishment of the

World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), international loans could be provided to governments that were having difficulties paying debts. This effectively protected governments from the destabilizing effects of capital flight and restricted the movement of finance capital, creating the climate for intensive investment of capital under state regulated consumption. This also enabled the expansion of global markets for American goods and helped to entrench a free market model globally, which became known as the Washington Consensus (Barlow & Clarke, 2001, 57).

However, even in its initial 'idyllic' phase, Gramsci anticipated the inherent limits of Fordism. He argues,

In reality American high-wage industry is still exploiting a monopoly granted to it by the fact that it has the initiative with the new methods. Monopoly wages correspond to monopoly profits. But the monopoly will necessarily be first limited and then destroyed by the further diffusion of new methods both within the United States and abroad (Gramsci, 1971, 311).

If the ruling bloc wanted to maintain profit margins, only a specific sector of the economy could benefit, a labour aristocracy. This would be a delicate balancing act demanding the construction and maintenance of boundaries, granting concessions in some areas while enforcing exclusions in others. Yet the Fordist compromise depended on expanding productivity and growing consumption. In this framework, there could be no status quo; rather, the boundaries that Fordism drew for itself were constantly broken in class struggle.

Through the 1930s and 1940s, militant rank-and-file workers struggles intensified throughout the advanced capitalist countries. Negri (1979) argues, "working class

conflictuality does not respect finalized equilibria" with recognition for the compromise that was laid out under Fordism; rather, the working class has ceaselessly reasserted control on the factory floor through formal and informal modes of struggle. The increasing integration of trade unions under the State, provoked workers to take direct action. In this time a number of innovative and powerful forms of action emerged, from mass sabotage to wildcat and sit-down strikes, which serve as important reference points for the nonviolent sit-ins that would later emerge in the civil rights movement (Lynd, 1966, xxxvii). For Negri, this reflected a "very impetuous historical process which has pushed the dialectic between autonomy and institutions to the point of explosion - to the point of an irreversible break" (Negri, 1989, 146).

#### *New Social Movements and the Socialized Worker*

The Fordist regime was propped up by imperialism, white supremacy, and patriarchy, providing a cheap underclass to feed the growing labour aristocracy. It was nourished through the active devaluation of other areas of life, demarcating temporal and spatial boundaries separating the "public" from the "private", the "First World" from the "Third World", "black" from "white". It was constituted as striated space, as Hardt and Negri argue, constructing "*places* that were continually engaged in and founded on a dialectical play with their outsides" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, 190). The State attempted to regulate precarious and constantly shifting boundaries in retaining control.

The post-war period brought about intensifying struggles of the excluded. Anti-colonial movements spread like wildfire across the Third World, fueled by victories in

China (1949), Cuba (1959), and Algeria (1962). The anti-war movement "brought the war home", challenging the overt imperialism of the advanced capitalist countries. Poor people's movements demanded the extension of the Keynesian Planner State to include adequate housing, welfare benefits, and other social services. The Civil Rights movement challenged the persistence of white supremacy and segregation in the Southern United States and this movement would grow and expand into the inner cities becoming a militant cry for Black Power. The women's movement challenged the marginalization and invisibility of "women's work" at home and in the workplace.

In response to these "new social movements", social control deepened to incorporate other areas of life. As Laclau and Mouffe argue, "Today it is not only as a seller of labour-power that the individual is subordinated to capital, but also through his or her incorporation into a multitude of other social relations: culture, free time, illness, education, sex and even death" (1985, 161). While "new social movement" theorists (Melucci, 1980, 1989; Touraine, 1981; 1988) saw these movements going beyond the material demands of working class struggle, others pointed to the deepening of class struggle across society as a whole. Negri (1989) argued that the exploitation of the worker extended well beyond the factory walls, creating a 'social factory'.

The 'social factory' encompasses a myriad of diverse practices that extend across the whole circuit of capital, incorporating consumption, social reproduction, and circulation in an increasingly complex network of exploitation. As Negri argues,

The analysis of labour is deepened and its organization becomes progressively more decentralized spatially and instead it is focused on the expropriation of social knowledges, on the capitalisation of the

social labouring networks: in short, it concentrates on the exploitation of a working figure which extends well beyond the bounds of the factory (Negri, 1992, 86).

And yet as capital extends its productive relations beyond the factory floor, the valorization process itself comes into question. On the factory floor labour could be tracked, measured, and controlled. Value could be measured through the delineation of strict boundaries around the labour process. However, as capital comes to subsume diverse and immaterial practices residing beyond the factory the value relation breaks down.

As the locus of exploitation expands from the immediacy of material production to encompass the mediated channels of everyday life, the rigid division of labour outlined by Taylor breaks down (Negri, 1989; Virno, 2004). The distinctions between management, control, conception, and execution are blurred. Marx anticipated this in the *Grundrisse*, where he argues as labour is increasingly socialized, the worker "steps to the side of the production process" (Marx, 1973, 705). Labour becomes a collective process tying together a broad network of production. The socialized worker navigates this network utilizing "his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it by virtue of his presence as a social body" (Marx, 1973, 705). This is accomplished through the increasing role of science and technology in the production process. As Marx argues, "social knowledge" becomes "*a direct force of production*" (Marx, 1973, 706).

The social conflict of the 1960s and 1970s was channeled through the extension of the welfare state. The trenches of "civil society" were deepened. Under pressure from

grassroots movements, the state increased funding for social services, community projects, and nonprofit organizations. With state support, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), organized to provide services on a not-for-profit basis, expanded rapidly through the 1960s and 1970s (Hardt & Negri, 2000, Barlow & Clarke, 2001; Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001). As the 1960s were proclaimed by the United Nations to be the "development" decade, support would increase internationally as well. This spending would extend the Keynesian program as surplus capital was reinvested in large scale development programs, building the infrastructure for industry through vast public projects such as dams.

Those who had previously helped organize these movements now assumed the role of "service providers", with their constituency serving as "clients" (Piven & Cloward, 1977). This effectively redirected conflict from the state to "civil society" as increasingly services were undertaken by "nongovernmental" bodies. These movements were transformed into veritable "industries" in which activists became professional lobbyists competitively pressuring the government for reform through routinized avenues of appeal (Zald & McCarthy, 1987). It's no coincidence that Resource Mobilization Theory, with its analysis of the rationally calculating professional organizer would emerge as a predominant sociological view of social movements at this time. The rise of nonprofit organizations would serve as a buffer to the state, mediating conflict in much the same way as labour unions did before them.

Initially, these struggles could be absorbed under the regulated consumption of

the Keynesian "planner" state. As productivity increased surpluses could be funneled into military spending and social spending. However, these struggles destabilized the rigid boundaries propping up Fordism behind the factory walls. Negri argues, "Where the growing socialization of labour prevented the enormous growth of productivity from being re-subjected to the rules governing interests and profit, there was no possibility of exercising control" (Negri, 1989, 142).

As the American state was stretched through the 1970s, burdened by military spending on the one side and social spending on the other, the Fordist Compromise would prove to be no longer profitable. The markets were saturated and consequently productivity no longer coincided with consumer demand. This provided the basis for increasing inflation. The resulting 'crisis' demanded flexibility which the overburdened state could not provide. In this context, the whole regime of accumulation was called into question. As an infamous report of the Trilateral Commission, *The Crisis of Democracy*, argued,

The vitality of democracy in the 1960s raised questions about the governability of democracy in the 1970s. The expansion of governmental activities produced doubts about the economic solvency of government; the decrease in governmental authority produced doubts about the political solvency of government (Crozier, Huntington & Watanuki, 1975, 64).

In short, the US government was suffering from an "excess of democracy" demanding the reassertion of political authority.

In 1971, Nixon withdrew the US dollar from the gold standard, effectively undermining the international Keynesianism established at Bretton Woods nearly three

decades earlier (Negri, 1989, 141; Cleaver, 2000, 26). This effectively deregulated international prices and destabilized monetary balances, enabling finance capital to move more freely. In the coming years the world market suffered a series of "crises" catalyzed through skyrocketing food and oil prices. With increasing unemployment and a growing 'reserve army of labour', capital was effectively able to mount an assault on labour. In response to this "stagflation" (stagnant economic output and high inflation), austerity measures were introduced, dismantling much of what had been constructed over the previous decades.

As interest rates soared, so did the debts owed by Third World countries. Many countries in the third world had fallen deep into debt through the pursuit of large scale development projects encouraged throughout the "development decade". Following the debt crisis in Mexico in 1982, austerity measures were enforced in the third world through the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programs. To continue to receiving loans from the International Monetary Fund, Third World governments were pushed to slash their social spending and deregulate their economies, opening the doors for foreign investment. Of course, this did nothing but further increase the debts owed by the so-called "underdeveloped" nations. Since 1980, debt in the Nonindustrialized World has increased by over 400 percent (Barlow and Clarke, 2001, 61). The imposition of such measures would lead to widespread revolts across the Third World through the 1980s. Indeed, the movement against capital's globalization began in the Third World.

The ideology of neoliberalism justifies these measures as not only necessary but

positive. Following Adam Smith's famous "invisible hand", it is argued that the unrestrained growth and development of the market is the best way to achieve a prosperous society. This entails the elimination of national tariffs and trade restrictions, the minimization of state spending, and the privatization of social services.

Neoliberalism is founded on the autonomy of the market. As Pierre Bourdieu argues,

Neoliberalism tends on the whole to favour severing the economy from social realities and thereby constructing, in reality, an economic system conforming to its description in pure theory, that is a sort of logical machine that presents itself as a chain of constraints regulating economic agents (Bourdieu, 1998).

The social and environmental costs of doing business, ie. everything that cannot be quantified under logic of the market, is separated and classified as an "externality". Corporations seek to externalize their costs to the greatest extent possible, thereby maximizing their profits.

Through the development of 'free trade' agreements capital was able to consolidate power beyond the regulatory mechanisms of the nation-state. The proliferation of multinational trade compacts such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) established the foundations for the free movement of capital across borders. Alongside came a myriad of other regional trade talks such as Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), pushing the boundaries of 'free' trade even further. These free trade agreements would make nation-states subordinate to a growing supranational order. For instance, under Chapter 11 of NAFTA corporations were empowered to sue national governments in secret arbitration tribunals if they feel that a regulation or government decision constitutes an unfair 'barrier to trade'.

The creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) inaugurated this epoch on a global scale. Emerging from the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations in 1995, the WTO became a supranational institution capable of enforcing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The Uruguay Round helped provoke the deepening and extension of neoliberal "free market" policies and opened the doors for intensifying "trade liberalization" in agriculture, intellectual property, and services (Barlow & Clarke, 2001, 68). The WTO is empowered to challenge the laws and regulations of a nation-state if they are deemed to be "trade restrictive" by a secretive WTO tribunal. Governments are pressured to change their laws or face international sanctions.

### *Empire*

The increasing role of the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, the proliferation of free trade agreements, and the rising power of nongovernmental organizations reflect the emergence of a supranational order. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri point to the emergence of a "new logic of structure and rule", a "decentered, deterritorializing apparatus of imperial control"(Hardt & Negri, 2000, xii). Power is no longer centered at any point. It can no longer be embodied in the transcendental power of the nation-state. Built on the foundations of a voracious world market, Empire is characterized by the absence of boundaries.

With the subsumption of all things under capital, there is no longer an outside, a privileged place to exercise control. "In Empire, no subjectivity is outside, and all places

have been subsumed in a general 'non-place'" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, 353). In this sense, Empire is to be contrasted with imperialism, as there is no center or territory which resides over and above. There is no longer any point of mediation between the 'many' and the 'one'. "Civil society", argue Hardt and Negri, is "withering away" (2000, 328). The structures and institutions that had previously constituted an "irrigation network" channeling "social and economic flows" is crumbling as social control is increasingly exercised immanently to the social field.

Against the emerging order of Empire, Hardt and Negri posit a new global subject, the 'multitude'. Through the diffusion of power across society, Empire multiplies the points of contention. The multitude is irreducibly plural, open, and heterogeneous. "The multitude is a multiplicity, a plane of singularities, an open set of relations, which is not homogeneous or identical with itself and bears an indistinct, inclusive relation to those outside of it"(Hardt & Negri, 2000, 103). With the dissolution of channels of mediation, struggles explode at singular points of conflict, directly confronting Empire at its heart. Struggles accelerate and intensify through the proliferation of differences.

The rise of the multitude appears especially salient in the wake of anti-globalization protests. The actions are not closed or restricted to any particular constituency; rather, they encompass wide-ranging and autonomous struggles that all open onto a common enemy. These struggles are increasingly linked together in a nonreductive fashion. They communicate through their differences. They retain their autonomy as they explode at singular points of conflict. Seattle, Prague, Quebec City,

Genoa, the recent protests appear as singular moments, exploding from one city to the next, leaving nothing behind.

And yet the concept of the multitudes encompasses altogether too much and too little. The multitude resides beyond any single group or organization. It resists all closure and containment in such identities. "But what it gains in fluidity and flexibility," Dyer-Witheford argues, "it sacrifices in specificity and precision" (Dyer-Witheford, 2002, 7). With the elevation of the multitudes to a universal "global" status, important divisions and contradictions within the multitude are lost. The "anti-globalization" movement reflects the intersection of struggles with distinct historical and cultural traditions, converging at distinct spatial and temporal locations across the circuit of production, reproduction, and distribution. In the advanced capitalist countries, it is important to note how the "anti-globalization" movement has remained largely a white, middle class protest movement. It has drawn significant resources from "civil society", notably trade unions and NGOs seeking to lobby the government. At the same time, it has also drawn from a burgeoning youth contingent, emerging from the anti-war and environmental struggles, focusing on direct action.

The coalescence of a 'movement of movements' has certainly led to a formidable opposition. However, all too often the diversity of the movement is looked at abstractly. The different groups involved are celebrated for their "diversity" without exploring the relationships that have developed between them. It must be remembered that the "multitude" is a particular political project that has not yet come to fruition. While the

tendency towards multiplicity has certainly become an important trajectory for the emerging struggles, this tendency is paralleled by the continuing power of "civil society" pursuing a mediating role in the emerging global order. While many groups seek to put pressure on national and supranational organizations to make reforms, others seek to reside outside of capital altogether

Whereas NGOs are increasingly filling the vacuum left by the diminishing welfare state, they have been notably absent from discussions surrounding trade and investment. While Hardt and Negri proclaim the withering away of civil society, Barlow and Clarke proclaim the emergence of the "most compelling civil society movement of modern history" (2001, 2). These divergent positions are indicative of the blurring boundaries of civil society as capital makes inroads far beyond the immediate locus of production. However, the emerging system also demands the erection of rigid boundaries establishing the autonomy of the market beyond all social and environmental costs.

Through the 1990s, NGOs and trade unions joined forces, building global networks in resistance to the emerging neoliberal order. In North America, this manifested itself most clearly in resistance to free trade. The 1988 Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Canada and the United States and later the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) bringing in Mexico provided a common target for nonprofits and trade unions. Granting capital the power to move to places with the lowest labour and environmental standards, it is argued, would prompt a 'race to the bottom', pushing advanced capitalist countries to deregulate their economies in order to compete.

Networks and coalitions formed at this time that would help provide the infrastructure for the North American anti-globalization movement -- the Council of Canadians, Jobs with Justice, Citizens Trade Campaign, and many others. Initially, these networks were largely oriented towards 'protectionism', preserving the regulations and boundaries of the nation-state (Barlow & Clarke, 2001). However, networks building solidarity with the third world were also coalescing. Initially, these groups would come together opposing IMF/World Bank policies. In 1994, the 50 Years is Enough network was established, bringing together over 200 American groups and organizations seeking to restructure the IMF and World Bank. Faith-based groups would also come together in the Jubilee 2000 campaign, pushing the IMF and World Bank to forgive third world debts by the year 2000.

While some organizations have attempted to represent the public interest, lobbying national governments and supranational institutions for reforms, others have focused on building networks with the third world, directly constructing systems of regulation and mutual aid grounded in civil society, what Starr as "globalization from below" (Starr, 2000). Through the 1990s, the "fair trade" movement has built networks connecting Third World producers with First World consumers. A grassroots certification process was established, ensuring consumers that their products were made in an 'ethical' fashion. Likewise, the anti-sweatshop movement brought to light the dismal working conditions of the third world and pressured companies to improve these conditions or face public boycott and ridicule. A strong anti-sweatshop campaign on university campuses would grow through the late 1990s, successfully pressuring many

universities to adopt ethical purchasing policies.

While some groups seek to restructure capital by establishing new forms of regulation, others seek to move outside of capital's relationship entirely, positing a strategy of refusal and radical separation, seeking to disrupt the process of restructuration, rather than looking for a seat at the table. Youth are at the forefront of struggles against flexible accumulation as their jobs are increasingly precarious, as their schools are increasingly corporatized, as their subcultures are increasingly mined for the next trendy fashion wave (Klein, 2000; Starr, 2000; Graeber, 2002). Through the 1990s, radical undercurrents were surfacing. Building strength out of youth countercultures, communities were established that sought to escape subsumption under capital. Out of the blossoming anarcho-punk scene, anarchist networks would consolidate in North America through a series of conferences, gatherings, newspapers, and websites. In Britain, ravers connected to the anti-roads movement, fighting the criminalization of public parties under the Criminal Justice Act and providing the basis for the spontaneous street parties of Reclaim the Streets which I will speak about later.

Global networks thickened through the 1990s and the Internet helped to establish an "electronic fabric of struggle" (Cleaver, 1999). On January 1, 1994, the day that NAFTA would come into effect, the EZLN, Zapatista National Liberation Army took control of a number of towns in Chiapas, Mexico. Through their skillful use of the Internet, the Zapatista's received widespread support around the world. Due to pressure coming from established international networks, the Mexican government was unable to

pursue a armed response. Chiapas would become a central point of convergence for activists around the world. In 1996, the Zapatistas organized their first Intercontinental Encuentro Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity. At the closing of the first Encuentro the EZLN issued the "Second Declaration of La Realidad", where they called for an intercontinental network of resistance:

This intercontinental network of resistance, recognising differences and acknowledging similarities, will search to find itself with other resistance's around the world. This intercontinental network of resistance will be the medium in which distinct resistance's may support one another. This intercontinental network of resistance is not an organising structure; it doesn't have a central head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who resist (EZLN, 1996).

In 1998, People's Global Action (PGA) was formed. Wide-ranging groups including Reclaim the Streets, Karnataka State Farmers Association, the Brazilian Landless Peasant's Movement, and the Canadian Postal Workers would participate, galvanizing a radical hub against the neoliberal program. The series of hallmarks adopted by PGA would include a very clear rejection 'neoliberalism' and later capitalism, a commitment to a confrontational approach, and an 'organizational philosophy based on decentralization and autonomy' (PGA, 2001). PGA would not dictate the direction of action; rather it would provide a central hub for the coordination of global movements. Beginning in May 1998, PGA would coordinate a series of Global Days of Action bringing a radical anti-capitalist perspective to the forefront of global struggles.

Meanwhile NGOs and trade unions were busy building popular support in opposition to a new round of free trade negotiations. In 1997 a broad coalition of labour, environmental groups, and other nonprofits in the US successfully mounted a campaign denying Bill Clinton 'fast track' authority (Barlow & Clarke, 2001). Fast track legislation

would have enabled the US government to push through free trade agreements without any changes.

In 1998, a copy of the draft Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) was leaked to the public. The MAI was being drafted through the secretive negotiations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) bringing together the wealthiest nations to determine the course of the global economy. It was designed to protect foreign corporations and their investments from the regulatory powers of nation-states. The document was disseminated across borders by the Council of Canadians through the Internet (Barlow & Clarke, 2001). A global campaign mounted in response would eventually pressure the French government to withdraw, putting a stop to the negotiations.

### *Convergence/Divergence*

When Seattle was designated to kick off the Millennium Round of the WTO in 1999, these global networks converged. People's Global Action declared November 30 a Global Day of Action. The Direct Action Network would bring together radical activists across the Pacific Northwest in an attempt to shutdown the meetings. Nongovernmental organizations and labour unions were also prepared for large scale mobilization. The organizing got started months in advance, heavily funded by the AFL-CIO and a series of NGOs. Public Citizen set up an office in downtown Seattle specifically to organize events. The AFL-CIO hired 28 organizers who mobilized across the Pacific Northwest.

What made the protests so notable was the convergence of the wide-ranging NGOs, trade unions, and religious organizations with a radical youth contingent. There would be substantial crossover between the radical activists and the institutional left. Nongovernmental organizations played a key role in supporting radical activists pursuing nonviolent direct action. Global Exchange, the Rainforest Action Network, and the Ruckus Society helped provide the infrastructure and training for direct action. The organizing efforts of the Direct Action Network were greatly aided through the financing of Public Citizen.

However, the convergence of these diverse groups was not unproblematic. Leading up to the protests in Seattle, the protest's steering committee would extensively debate whether to call their coalition "People for Fair Trade" or "NO2WTO". Some members of the committee felt it was important to put a 'positive' spin on the protests, pointing to clear alternatives. However, others argued for nothing less than scrapping the new wineskins of capitalist exploitation. There was a clear antagonism between those seeking to act as mediators of the public interest, seeking greater inclusion in the emerging order, and those seeking to tear it down. In the end, the group wound up calling itself "People for Fair Trade/NO2WTO", which, even then, remained contentious as it often got shortened to "People for Fair Trade". These debates reflected the divergent strategies of those seeking to reform the system and those seeking to dismantle the system. This division is only exacerbated through the control of resources by groups oriented towards reform.

While the protest movement in Canada and the United States has brought together wide-ranging groups in an unprecedented solidarity, these events remain predominantly constituted by the white, middle-class. Those who enjoy greater mobility, who can take time off for these events, who can risk arrest have formed the basis of protest. Indeed, the involvement of those outside the white middle class has been consistently problematized. In her well-known article, "Where was the Colour in Seattle?", Elizabeth Betita Martinez (2000) points to some significant obstacles preventing people of colour from participating in the protests. The spectacular nature of these protests remains profoundly disconnected from everyday life of marginalized communities. The connections between the emerging supranational regime of 'free' trade and the everyday oppressions of marginalized communities remain unclear. Moreover, a culture of white middle class activism inhibits participation from other groups.

### *Conclusion*

Propelled by worker's struggles, capital has adopted increasing flexible and diffuse modes of control. This has led to the undermining of the value relationship. As capital incorporates more and more diverse practices and processes, it is pushed to become increasingly diverse itself. As the points of mediation dissolve on the fluid landscape of Empire, the points of contention open onto one another. Environmental struggles, women's struggles, worker's struggles, they all strike at the heart of a common enemy. The fluidity of the new order has brought about unlikely alliances, and yet these alliances remain contentious.

However, the dissolution of mediators, the dissolution of clear institutional boundaries, can be exaggerated. With the emergence of the "global civil society" movement, there remains a clear orientation towards reform and inclusion, backed through the continuing power of the institutions of civil society. The presence of this strong institutional impulse effectively undermines Hardt and Negri's claims to singularity. As will be shown in the next chapter, the push for singularity, rejecting the power of a transcendent mediator remains the product of a particular movement. It should not be fetishized as a particular actor; rather, it is the product of specific and not always successful practices. Those groups seeking to serve as mediator for the "movement" often butt heads against emerging networks based on an extensive solidarity grounded in autonomy.

## Chapter 3: Dough

### *Introduction*

"[W]hat happened in Seattle was a deepening, [...] a diversification, not just of the particular interests people had as it related to trade, but also a diversity of tactics, which is part of what I think made Seattle work as well as it did. Because there were NGO programs for the think tanks, engaging in deep thinking and analysis of the problem. And there were street protests, literal, physical shutting down of the WTO. There were also inside activities going on inside the Convention Center, where there were NGO representatives and union leaders literally going around and grabbing WTO delegates and talking to them about various issues and encouraging the developing nations representatives to continue to hold back. And with all of these things combined, you see what can happen, you know?" (Alesha Daughtrey, *Global Trade Watch*, 2000).

"It is particularly important for non-anarchist participants and supporters to acknowledge that groups with different messages, tactics, and skills coexisted without attempting centralized organizing. That coexistence was the material of the blockade's success. Everyone who participated has now experienced the anarchist alternative to bureaucratic top-down systems. We saw self-organization at work and it worked" (Starr, 2000, 116).

The proliferation of a 'diversity of tactics' is not only necessary, it is argued, it is also effective. Naomi Klein (2000b) likens the movement to a 'swarm of mosquitoes' in its ability to deftly outmaneuver the swipes of a clumsy giant. Approaching from all angles, the anti-globalization movement bursts forth from a constantly shifting amalgam of strategies and tactics (Armond, 2001). These tactics intersect, opening up unanticipated spaces for resistance. The call for a diversity of tactics is a call for autonomy, empowering groups to decide the best course of action, enabling them to constantly adapt their tactics to a changing context. This orientation is grounded in the proliferation of decentralized and directly democratic forms of organization.

In the previous chapter, I traced the emergence of multiple points of resistance as

capital's command has extended beyond the immediate locus of production. As the world market breaks through national boundaries, the rise of the anti-globalization movement has brought together diverse struggles. However, it is important to distinguish between the convergence of diverse forms of organization and organizational processes and practices that actively constitute 'diversity'. While some groups strive to maintain an internal discipline through rigid hierarchical structures, others assemble through decentralized, directly democratic processes. The bulky mass organizations of the Fordist era appear unable to contain these more flexible forms of organization. The call for a "diversity of tactics" reflects the push towards more mobile, decentralized organizational structures in struggle. The emergent struggles blur the boundaries between organization and action, tactics and strategy. They become singular, irreducible, leaving nothing behind. They refuse to be overarched by any transcendent outside.

### *Mass*

The birth of modernity has been closely associated with the "mass" -- not just mass production, mass communication, and mass transit, but also mass meetings, mass demonstrations, and mass movements. Derived from the Latin *massa*, which means "that which adheres together like dough", the 'mass' has occupied an ambiguous place between solid and liquid. Raymond Williams traces its etymology to a double meaning, suggesting both "something amorphous and indistinguishable" and "a dense aggregate" (1988, 193). These divergent meanings characterize the contentious place that the masses have assumed on the fragmented landscape of modern capitalism.

Negri (1989) has pointed to cycles of struggle, shifting from the *composition* of a

class solidarity, effectively destabilizing and deconstructing the capitalist value relationship to the active attempts of capital to *decompose* that class solidity, provoking the impulse to *recomposition*. Similarly, Sidney Tarrow points to this dynamic as it plays itself out protest:

When disruptive forms are first employed, they frighten antagonists with their potential cost, shock onlookers and worry elites concerned with public order. But newspapers gradually begin to give less and less space to protests that would have merited banner headlines when they first appeared on the streets. Repeating the same form of collective action over and over reduces uncertainty and is greeted with a smile or a yawn. Participants, at first enthused and invigorated by their solidarity and ability to challenge authorities, become jaded or disillusioned. Authorities, instead of calling out the troops or allowing the police to wade into the crowd, infiltrate dissenting groups and separate leaders from followers. Routinisation follows hard upon disruption (Tarrow, 1994, 112).

Indeed, the legacy left by *mass* movements across the twentieth century is exemplified in this oscillation between the solidification of a "dense aggregate" and the dissolution into "something amorphous and indistinguishable". Through this period the cycles of struggle have become more pronounced. The movement towards singularity has intensified, resisting containment in any transcendent organization, seeking an escape velocity capable of overcoming this oppressive orbit.

Between the one and the many, the budding movements of the 20th century were fractured, split between state-centered organizations and the rank-and-file they purportedly represented. The masses had not yet been subsumed as a 'mass', orchestrated through the channels of 'civil society'. They broke away, constantly undermining the process of mediation. The split was only resolved through appealing to a mythic outside. The general strike and the revolutionary vanguard served as mirror images of the same basic fallacy. While Lenin argued that this could only be accomplished by bringing the

masses *in* to the revolutionary organization, Luxemburg argued that revolutionary organization could only be achieved by the masses themselves spontaneously over the course of struggle. And yet the constitution of such an outside space remained problematic, on the one side ensured through the dense aggregate of the vanguard party, on the other, through the amorphous promised land of the revolution.

Lenin saw the masses begin with a small assemblage of workers which would gradually expand through the course of struggle to represent the 'majority'. In a 1921 speech defending the tactics of the Communist International, he argued that the concept of the masses,

is one that changes in accordance with the changes in the nature of the struggle. At the beginning of the struggle it took only a few thousand genuinely revolutionary workers to warrant talk of the masses.... In the history of our movement, and of our struggle against the Mensheviks, you will find many examples where several thousand workers in a town were enough to give a clearly mass character to the movement.... When the revolution has been sufficiently prepared, the concept 'masses' becomes different: several thousand workers no longer constitute the masses.... The concept of 'masses' undergoes a change so that it implies the majority, and not simply a majority of the workers alone, but a majority of all the exploited. (Lenin, 1960, 475-6).

Through a series of displacements, Lenin points to the transformation of the 'masses' from several thousand workers to become something greater than the sum of its parts. The masses superseded their particular standpoint, no longer acting as a specific segment of the population, but rather acting as a *vanguard* representing the majority, expanding from even the particular standpoint of the proletariat, to include all those oppressed. This forms the basis of Lenin's formulation of "hegemony" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, 55). Under a revolutionary leadership, the 'masses' would effectively overarch their concrete manifestation in a broad symbolic unity.

Lenin attempts to constitute an overarching revolutionary power that would be capable of moving beyond the fragmented spontaneity of existing struggles. He is critical of the 'spontaneity' that was widely accepted by other Social Democrats as the basis for revolutionary activity. Revolutionary theory and practice are fragmented through their piecemeal application and adaptation to the confines of the situation at hand. In the immediate course of struggle, the worker is confined to 'trade union consciousness', simply looking out for his own best interest (Lenin, 1988). For Lenin, revolutionary agency cannot arise spontaneously out of any particular struggle. On the contrary, a revolutionary program must be actively articulated beyond the narrow confines of a particular situation. But how could the revolutionary party overcome its own particularity?

Lenin argues that 'revolutionary consciousness' can only be brought to the masses "from without". The fragmented struggles of the working class must be unified through the external intervention of the party. What differentiated the vanguard party from other mass organizations, Lenin argued, was its unity in revolutionary theory. "Without revolutionary theory," Lenin argues, "there can be no revolutionary movement" (Lenin, 1988, 91). The economic conditions faced by the working class cannot precipitate in a revolutionary situation on their own. The revolution comes as an autonomous moment, transcending the particular conditions of struggle. A revolutionary perspective must be actively articulated beyond the specific conditions of oppression, ultimately residing as a transcendent power. The privileged knowledge of the vanguard party is able to tie

diverse struggles together in a common revolutionary project.

The constitution of an outside "vanguard" party demands the incorporation and subordination of other 'fragmentary' struggles. The vanguard sucks everything into its orbit. Speaking as a body, it presupposes discipline, the enforced adherence to a unifying program. The vanguard refuses to be recognized as just another group. It must exist over and above these existing struggles as *the* revolutionary actor. This cannot be accomplished by simply bringing together particular struggles. The vanguard party must anticipate and somehow envelop all future struggles as well. It must be constituted as universal, abstracted, split from its own particular circumstances.

The revolutionary power of the vanguard party is ultimately consummated through the seizure of state power. In a Hegelian fashion, the state provides the universal standpoint where the revolutionary program can reside over the whole of society. The state becomes an object, a fetish, a thing rather than a product of social relationships. It is an empty vessel, capitalist only insofar as capitalists are able to assume power through it. Through the seizure of state power by the revolutionary party, the state magically assumes a revolutionary role.

Writing in August 1906, Rosa Luxemburg questions deeply held assumptions about the ability and authority of the party to direct and regulate collective action. Looking to a decade of mass strikes that had rocked Russia to the point of revolution, she does not see a finely oiled machine assembled under the diligent supervision of a central

committee; she sees a living, breathing organism connected by countless shifting relationships. In Russia, the mass strike had pushed beyond all ideology and planning. Here, the mass strike "displays such a multiplicity of the most varied forms of action that it is altogether impossible to speak of 'the' mass strike, of an abstract schematic mass strike" (Luxemburg, 1986, 23). The events that took place could not adequately be captured by any theoretical schema. They could not be blandly regurgitated at the whim of any organization. Rather, the mass strike came together organically out of everyday life, opening up possibilities that no one had anticipated.

Luxemburg contrasts the 'fighting' spirit of the mass strikes in Russia with the sterile demonstrations in Germany. While Russia continued to be ruled under the absolutism of a Tsarist government, effectively making the organization of workers illegal, Germany had enjoyed a long tradition of social democracy and trade unions. This had led to the fragmentation of 'economic' and 'political' struggles under the epoch of bourgeois parliamentarianism. On the one hand, struggles in the factory were taken up by trade unions, and on the other parliamentary struggles were pursued by the Social Democratic Party. In Germany, struggle had become largely institutionalized. Under the apparent stability of the bourgeois regime, Luxemburg's colleagues argued that workers must be first organized under trade unions and the party before engaging in any mass action. For Luxemburg, however, this was putting the cart before the horse. "The rigid, mechanical-bureaucratic conception," she argues, "cannot conceive of the struggle save as the product of organization at a certain stage of its strength. On the contrary the living, dialectical explanation makes the organization arise as a product of the struggle" (1986,

65). By presuming that struggle is a product of organization, the pure 'political' strike of the social democrats had become a 'mere lifeless theoretical plan' (63). Subsuming struggle under the orchestration of a centralized organization had made the mass demonstration in Germany a repetitive fruitless exercise.

The mass strike cannot be looked upon instrumentally as merely a means to an end. "The mass strike is not artificially 'made', not 'decided' at random, not 'propagated'," Luxemburg argues, but "is a historical phenomenon which, at a given moment, results from social conditions with historical inevitability" (1986, 20). The mass strike cannot be planned by any single organization. In contrast to the rational calculating schemas of the organization, the most explosive actions often arise spontaneously out of day-to-day oppression. By exploring the mass strike as nothing more than the phenomenal form of the revolution, Luxemburg attempts to tie the apparent spontaneity of collective action to the historical necessity of the economic infrastructure. In some sense, it is argued that the mass strike could be no other way. The explosion of spontaneity arises from these pervasive relations of production as a historical inevitability.

In contrast to the centripetal movement of the vanguard party, sucking all things into its orbit, Rosa Luxemburg argues for centrifugal force of the party, pushing diverse struggles even further outward. Luxemburg argues that the party should not dictate mass action but rather follow mass action and seek to elevate it to a higher level. She argues that "the task of social democracy does not consist in technical preparation and direction of mass strikes, but, first and foremost, in the *political leadership* of the whole

movement" (1986, 69). Organization must emerge spontaneously out of struggle. For Luxemburg, workers cannot become aware of their own power through traditional methods of education and communication. The inner social forces driving the mass strike cannot be made clear in any newspaper or pamphlet. On the contrary, the social democrats can only become the 'class conscious vanguard of the proletariat' by constituting a 'living political school' whose organization remains immanent to the field of conflict. Yet Luxemburg remains unclear at this point. How can organization be immanent to the field of conflict? How can struggle dictate organization?

While Lenin asserts the autonomy of the revolutionary moment under the organization of a vanguard party, Luxemburg argues for the inevitability of the revolution and consequently cannot find a place for organization. While the mass strike is the result of specific social and economic conditions, Luxemburg cannot adequately explain how the mass strike can emerge in Germany without homogenizing its specific social and economic origins, denying differences as illusory or 'artificial', and falling back on her economistic teleology. Thus, the primary task of the social democrats becomes simply foretelling 'the inevitable advent of this revolutionary period' (1986, 69). The mass strike appears as a mere manifestation, the expression of some deeper predestination. Revolution becomes the inevitable advent of purity, the ultimate referent that escapes any definition and interpretation.

#### *Coalition Politics*

The debates of the Second International were indicative of a deepening crisis in Marxism. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue the economic determinism of the Second

International was increasingly stretched between the antithetical logics of necessity and spontaneity. These two logics run parallel to each other. On the one hand, the mass strike is a spontaneous political intervention. It operates through the 'disruption of every literal meaning', breaking out of the mode of production and opening up new possibilities. On the other hand, the mass strike is itself a historical inevitability; it is a 'logic of the literal' which denies any apparent contingency. The revolution is the *necessary* outcome of the mode of production.

For Laclau and Mouffe, there is no necessary correspondence between practices and the meanings that are attributed to them. The articulated meaning is contingent, separated from the immediate context of action. As they argue,

[I]n a revolutionary situation the *meaning* of every mobilization appears, so to speak, as split: aside from its specific literal demands, each mobilization represents the revolutionary process as a whole; and these totalizing effects are visible in the overdetermination of some struggles by others. This is, however, nothing other than the defining characteristic of the symbol: the overflowing of the signifier by the signified. *The unity of the class is therefore a symbolic unity* (1985, 11).

Hence, Laclau and Mouffe argue that it is necessary to tie together particular antagonisms under a broad symbolic unity. They must be re-presented as equivalent, tied together in a broad symbolic unity based on autonomy.

The call to "respect a diversity of tactics" finds its roots in the development of "New Social Movements" (NSMs) through the 1960s and 1970s (Melucci, 1980; 1989, Touraine, 1981, 1988). The explosion of the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the student movement, and a myriad of other struggles called into question the Marxist presumption of "working class" centrality in struggle. Drawing on theories

of Post-Fordism, NSM theorists pointed to the decline of industrial struggles and the rise of struggles over the control of information (Touraine, 1981, 1988; Melucci, 1989). In the emerging "post-industrial" or "programmed" society, diverse actors struggle over the power to define themselves. As Alberto Melucci argues,

In a structure in which ownership of the means of production is becoming more and more socialized, while at the same time remaining under the control of particular groups, what individuals are claiming collectively is their right to realize their own identity. Personal identity . . . is the property which is now being claimed and defended; this is the ground in which individual and collective resistance is taking root. (Melucci, 1980, 218).

The New Social Movements fought the concentration of power in the hands of privileged minority, founded in the exclusion and marginalization of people based on their gender, race, age, sexuality and class. They fought against the subsumption of diverse groups under a homogenizing value. Thus, the emerging struggles appeared as plural, pushing from all directions, fighting for "diversity".

Through the 1980s, the apparent fragmentation of the left was posed as a pressing dilemma. Broken into separate struggles, the Left seemed powerless to challenge the ascendancy of the "New Right", as exemplified by Reaganomics and Thatcherism. The "neoliberal" project of austerity, deregulation, and privatization was steamrolling across the political landscape, enabling the free movement of capital beyond the regulatory confines of the Welfare State, creating the basis for a project that would later be described as "globalization".

In this context, the progressive left looked to new models of solidarity grounded in a politics of difference, recognizing and respecting the unique standpoint of diverse

groups in struggle. "Diversity" became an ascendant concept in defining the emerging alliances. In his speech at the 1984 Democratic National Convention, Reverend Jesse Jackson summarized the situation: "Even in our fractured state, all of us count and fit somewhere. We have proven that we can survive without each other. But we have not proven that we can win and make progress without each other. We must come together" (Jackson, 1984). Jackson went on to spearhead the formation of a "Rainbow Coalition", attempting to bring together the New Social Movements and progressive labour in a common front to build a strong unified movement oriented towards State reforms. As the name suggests, the "Rainbow Coalition" attempted to build unity in a manner that respected the diverse standpoints of the different groups involved. However, the Rainbow Coalition was simply one of the most notable examples of a politics of coalition that was growing in Canada and the United States.

Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, written in 1985, reflects the push to establish a theoretical foundation for a "radical pluralism" uniting the Left through this period. They argue that no single identity is capable of overcoding the social landscape. In fact, struggles emerge out of the inability of any single discourse to establish such closure. Laclau and Mouffe seek to build the basis for solidarity out of the absence of an all-encompassing discursive identity. They seek to establish a space for the co-existence of multiple standpoints through their notion of "radical democracy". There can be no unification of standpoints in any positive foundation.

Hence, the project for a radical and plural democracy, *in a primary sense*, is nothing other than the struggle for a maximum autonomization of spheres on the basis of the generalization of the equivalential-egalitarian logic (167).

Laclau and Mouffe argue that a basis for solidarity can only be constructed through

acknowledging the struggle for autonomy, the autonomous struggles in different spheres of life. Acknowledging the equivalence of antagonisms across the social field and refusing to subordinate these struggles to any single positive identity, a radical pluralism can only be established through a negative relationship based on autonomy.

The coalition politics emerging through the 1980s were grounded in the representation of diverse groups in a broad organizational unity. While the different coalition partners remain separate identities, coalitions seek *inclusion* bringing groups together in common programs or campaigns. The construction of coalitions demands the construction of boundaries. Coalitions attempt to construct some sort of *equivalence*, building a common basis for unity. Unity is grounded in a split between particular struggles and their articulation in a broad symbolic unity. Autonomy is defined in relations to distinct "spheres", to use Laclau and Mouffe's terminology. But who demarcates these spheres? Who speaks on their behalf?

The call to respect a 'diversity of tactics' appears to exemplify the radical pluralism called for by Laclau and Mouffe. Respecting a 'diversity of tactics' provides a basis for solidarity in a negative space beyond any particular practice. It entails a respect for the autonomy of different groups to decide on the best course of action themselves. In the common struggle against the homogenizing forces of global capital, diverse tactics become equivalent. While some groups may pursue actions that others disagree with, it is argued, the equivalence of struggle should be acknowledged. The 'movement' must not be defined through exclusions or marginalization; rather, the negative space of autonomy

provides the glue that binds it together.

The mass dissolves into a postmodern plurality in which all struggles are created equal. The heady dough of solidarity is diluted, becoming absolutely amorphous and indistinguishable, an empty vacuum. Privileging the moment of equivalence, Laclau and Mouffe look to the moment when the element, the event, the mass strike is split from the body and comes to represent something else. The mass strike becomes an empty signifier to be entirely filled as it is incorporated under a structured totality. All contextual specificities are erased; all particularities are rendered invisible as the symbolic is split from the body, from lived experience, from social space. These particularities disintegrate in a discourse that apparently emerges out of thin air.

#### *Events belie forecasts*

The abstract, empty space constituted by Laclau and Mouffe neglects the way that different groups come together through particular modes of organization. Certainly, the antiglobalization movement has shown that solidarity is not constituted through an abstract chain of equivalence. The call for a 'diversity of tactics' has gained strength through the development of lateral modes of organization whose power was exhibited in the successful shutdown of the WTO meetings in Seattle. Autonomy became a positive force on the streets of Seattle, a power that could not be controlled or regulated by any top-down structure. The call for a diversity of tactics has been established through the power of mass convergence, through action which overflows all discursive articulations.

The power of mass action lies precisely in its irreducibility to discourse. Henri Lefebvre argues, "Events belie forecasts; to the extent that events are historic, they upset calculations" (Lefebvre, 1968, 7). Collective action cannot be separated from the bodies that constitute it; rather it is connected as a 'bit of pulsating life of flesh and blood, which cannot be cut out of the large frame of the revolution but is connected with all parts of the revolution by a thousand veins' (Luxemburg, 1986, 46). These events opened possibilities that could not be anticipated in the partially closed space of discourse. They constituted new ways of being.

Describing the student revolts that exploded across France in 1968, Lefebvre argues, "They are not only enthusiastic and courageous, and even reckless--they are *anti-reductive*. They are intolerant of the reduced-reductive character of specialized activities, including specialized political organisms. They reject any perspective based on reductive views, whatever its claim to validity" (1968, 68). Guy Debord describes a "class totally opposed to all congealed externalization and all specialization of power. It carries the *revolution which cannot let anything remain outside itself*, the demand for the permanent domination of the present over the past, and the total critique of separation" (Debord, 1983, 114).

Slowly the dough of mass struggles has congealed, softening the lumpy nuggets of vanguardism and thickening the watery promises of revolution. The emerging struggles traverse the old dichotomies of strategy and tactics, organization and action. Between the one and the many, they explode as singular struggles which cannot be

elevated to any transcendent position. The 'anti-reductive' spirit of the 1960s has been carried deep into the heart of the "new radicalism". Rather than lamenting the loss of an external space binding together fragmented struggles, Hardt and Negri argue,

Perhaps the incommunicability of struggles, the lack of well-structured, communicating tunnels, is in fact a strength rather than a weakness--a strength because all of the movements are immediately subversive in themselves and do not wait on any sort of external or extension to guarantee their effectiveness (2000, 58).

Emerging struggles cannot be limited to any single "sphere" of life; rather they explode deep in the heart of Empire, breaking new ground for alternative forms of existence. These struggles target the system as a whole, rejecting the separation between politics and everyday life.

The winds of revolution blowing through the 1960s, it is often argued, quickly dissipated through the 1970s, pushing once vibrant movements into sectarianism, fragmentation, demoralization and dejection. However, communities of resistance grew from these movements, planting vital seeds that would grow into the budding movements that can be seen today. These communities moved well beyond single issue politics, building the basis for living beyond the bounds of capital. They remained profoundly anti-reductive, seeking the transformation of society as a whole, prefiguratively pointing to new forms of social organization. While I can not hope to capture the breadth of this movement in such a limited space, I will briefly explore the influence of three tendencies in pushing antiglobalization protests to blur the boundaries between action and organization.

### *Prefigurative Communities*

In the wake of the 1960s, explosive movements would grow in opposition to the 'Nuclear State'. These actions not only challenged the proliferation of a nuclear arsenal, they also 'prefigured' alternative forms of existence. In the United States, the anti-nuclear movement blossomed in rural areas, particularly in New England and California, fed by a growing population of intellectual workers. Following the back-to-the-land movement, New Left activists sought a simpler life, building self-sufficient communities that holistically tied together intellectual and manual labour (Epstein, 1991; Midnight Notes Collective, 1992). These radical migrations set the stage for a new generation of mobilizations. In late April, 1977, nearly 24,000 people converged on the future site of the Seabrook nuclear power plant, occupying the land, temporarily preventing its construction. Utilizing nonviolent direct action, protesters organized through directly democratic methods.

Borrowing from the nonhierarchical traditions of anarchism, the Quakers, and the women's movement, large mobilizations in North America utilized directly democratic practices and processes. Small affinity groups of no more than twenty people provided the building blocks for action. Members of affinity groups formed strong cultural bonds growing out of everyday relationships. They were able to build relationships of trust, talking issues through, rather than bowing to an imposed political line. Decisions were transmitted from the bottom up as affinity groups assembled first in clusters, which then sent delegates or 'spokes' acting on their behalf to larger spokescouncils. Decisions were made by consensus, giving all those present the power to 'block' decisions if they could

not be tolerated. In principle, this prevented the control of the group by a despotic majority.

Alongside decentralized organizations, emerged a strong commitment to nonviolence. Opposing the absolute violence of the state, whose brinkmanship threatened nuclear annihilation, the movement built a basis for community in nonviolence. Activists sought to build a new society in the husk of the old. "The direct action movement", Epstein argues, "has been about cultural revolution, its aim not only to transform political and economic structures but to bring to social relations as a whole the values of egalitarianism and nonviolence" (Epstein, 1992, 16). Their actions served as exemplary examples of what such a society would look like. In their 'prefiguration' of alternative modes of living, the holistic vision of the direct action movement cut across single issues, tying together diverse campaigns in a broader vision of the future directly manifested in the present.

However, the seemingly 'flat' organizational model adopted by the direct action movement often masked what Tim Jordan describes as 'hills' and 'troughs' (Jordan, 2002, 70). The prefigurative communities sought after by the movement remained limited by the structural barriers of the existing system (Midnight Notes Collective, 1992). The often lengthy consensus-based meetings privileged those who were able to devote time to them. A culture of nonviolence was often maintained through the marginalization and exclusion of those seeking more confrontational tactics (Bookchin, 1994). Moreover, organizing and decision-making outside of the consensus process was often dominated by

a small core group of activists, serving as an 'informal leadership'.

As the mobilizations grew to include diverse participants, this model would be stretched (Epstein, 1991, 85). In some cases, formal consensus could not be achieved and decision-making moved to a voting process calling for 2/3 or 3/4 majority. Further, the maintenance of a nonviolent orthodoxy did not curtail the divergence of strategic and tactical orientations. In fact, the blurry boundaries between violence and nonviolence would result in significant disagreements. A clear division emerged between activists seeking to halt the construction of nuclear power plants through direct action, and those who feared that this would alienate the rural communities, instead pushing for peaceful demonstrations.

### *Black Blocs*

Autonomous communities also blossomed in Europe, providing an important source of inspiration for North American activists. The German Autonomen were a motley groups of anarchists, anti-fascists and anti-imperialists living outside of the boundaries of conventional politics. They were 'autonomous' insofar as they distanced themselves from institutionalized avenues such as political parties and trade unions. Rather, they sought to establish a community outside of the boundaries of capital. They practiced what Katsiaficas calls a 'politics of the first person', refusing to represent some imaginary constituency (Katsiaficas, 1997, 7). The movement was based around a highly organized network of squatted housing projects in the metropolises of continental Europe. The Autonomen would be instrumental in mobilizing large scale resistance to nuclear power, militarism, and a whole range of other issues. They served as important

precursors to the anti-globalization movement, helping mobilize over 75,000 people to protest against the 1988 IMF/World Bank meetings in Germany.

In contrast to the prevailing pacifism in North America, the Autonomen emphasized 'spontaneous forms of militant resistance' (Katsiaficas, 1997, 8). Actions such as Black Blocs dissolved any privileged point of decision making, bringing together activists in a loose unity based on militant direct action. Black Blocs typically converged at the tail end of large demonstrations, leaving a wake of destruction. Dressing in black provided a degree of anonymity for those pursuing these illegal actions. Organizing as a bloc, activists were able to effectively prevent arrests and breach police lines. In the aftermath, the bloc would dissipate as quickly as it came together.

While Black Blocs are often conflated with anarchism, they reside outside of any ideological nucleus. As is frequently emphasized, the Black Bloc is not a group or organization; it is looked upon simply as a tactic. As one activist argues,

The Black Bloc is an event, a force which congeals and dissipates according to the consensus of those involved. It is important to keep this revolutionary elasticity in mind when approaching the subject. The multiplicity of the people making up the Bloc cannot be understated, even when coupled with their ostensibly singular purpose as a rebel apparatus. It's not an elite club, it's an invitation to all and any who wish to participate in the destruction of an unfair and unnecessary world system (X, 2002, 1).

Those participating in Black Blocs generally eschew representative structures. No one 'speaks' for the Black Bloc. Any reports on Black Bloc actions are generally followed by a disclaimer denying the role of spokesperson. The tactical orientation of the Black Bloc varies depending on who is participating. Black Blocs can serve as a means to destroy property and fight the police, but they can also serve as a buffer standing between the

police and other protesters.

Radical activists in North America were strongly influenced by their European cousins. Black Blocs made their way to North America in protests against the first Gulf War, signifying the move towards more confrontational forms of direct action in the North American activist scene. They popped up in North American protests throughout the 1990s (Albertani, 2002, 583). However, they only gained widespread attention in the Seattle protests where they targeted a series of corporate facades. These spectacular actions would fall under the spotlight of corporate media who were quick to dismiss them as menacing undesirables. Out of the Seattle protests, Black Blocs quickly became a common sight in North American protests.

#### *Reclaim the Streets*

Reclaim the Streets builds on the radical networks that grew from the direct action movements of the 1980s and 1990s. It came together at the intersection of a number of budding movements in Great Britain. It built on the momentum of the anti-roads movement, which fought road expansion throughout the 1990s, culminating in the well-known resistance to the M11 expansion, cutting its way through North East London in 1994 (Aufheben, 1995; Klein, 2000; Jordan, 2002). Resistance to the M11 was notable for the wide range of creative tactics utilized. Activists constructed elaborate tunnels connecting squatted houses that stood in the way of construction. They occupied construction sites, destroyed construction equipment, and created significant obstacles. These activists joined forces with the budding rave subculture to fight the 1994 Criminal Justice Act. The Criminal Justice Act would impose stiff penalties on ravers, squatters,

and others occupying public spaces.

A car crash was engineered to spark the first major Reclaim the Streets action in May, 1995. As the drivers got out of their cars and began bickering, thousands swarmed the streets transforming a busy London motorway into a spontaneous street party. Banners were unfurled proclaiming 'kill the car', an ad hoc sound system was set up, and people danced the afternoon away. Infusing political action with pleasure and play, Reclaim the Streets is described as a "magical collision of carnival and rebellion" (Notes From Nowhere, 2003, 61). These actions sparked a broader movement, leading to similar actions in over thirty cities around the world.

Reclaim the Streets is a self-avowed 'disorganization'. Organizers describe it as a "nonhierarchical, leaderless, openly organized, public group" (RTS London, 2000). Anyone who wants to participate can do so. Activists do not try to set the parameters of action, rather, they seek to create an 'temporary autonomous zone' where participants are free to spontaneously and creatively define the action themselves. The disorganization dissolves any privileged point of decision making, enabling the free interpretation and adaptation of action.

Reclaim the Streets provided considerable impetus to the radical wing of the antiglobalization movement. They were instrumental in organizing the first Global Day of Action, a 'Global Street Party', in May of 1998. Actions were organized in dozens of cities around the world (Klein, 2000; Notes from Nowhere, 2003). The hub of these

actions was Birmingham, where the G8 leaders were meeting to discuss the further extension of global trade. The Birmingham protests culminated in a raucous street party occasionally move towards more direct confrontations with the police. Through the flat organization of action the boundaries between political protest, carnival, and riot blur (Jordan, 2002; Klein, 2000, 319).

### *Anti-globalization*

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. (Marx, 1994, 188).

The direct action movement has effectively coalesced in the recent wave of protests, blossoming out of the radical networks that were nurtured from the 1960s. It was the effective use of direct action, in a manner such that it could not be contained by hierarchical institutions that opened up a space for "diversity". This space is not the simple product of a metaphysical vacuum, as Laclau and Mouffe assert. Rather, "diversity" is the product of decentralized power. The singularity of the multitudes is actively constructed in collective action. In this way, the direct action movement has effectively surpassed coalitions, as relations of solidarity are constructed through collective action, rather than through a narrow organizational unity. The revolution is connected by a "thousand veins" as Luxemburg (1986) suggests.

It is important to distinguish between the "diverse" groups and organizations involved in the anti-globalization movement and the active constitution of "diversity" in

practice. The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" is precariously balanced between these two perspectives. On the one hand, it is an attempt to ensure the coexistence of multiple forms of organization and action. On the other, it reflects the spread of decentralized organizing practices. One activist argues, "It's a rhetorical gesture, yet is a tactic in itself. 'Diversity of tactics' the term and the use of that term is a tactic as well to try to fortify a particular form of activism" (Interview 7). In fact, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" is reflective of the changing power relations within the movement.

Since the 1980s, the direct action movement has moved towards more lateral forms of organization. Action is coordinated through direct avenues of communication. Action is organized openly and everyone is free to participate. Decision-making is decentralized linking together small autonomous groups. Moreover, decision-making is diffused across the whole course of action. Rather than dictating the course of action, activists seek to construct temporary autonomous zones where people are free to pursue their own actions. Political actions are infused with a spirit of carnival and play. There is a shift towards the immanent organization of action, eliminated a privileged point of decision-making.

The protests in Seattle introduced these organizing methods to a broader community. The successful shutdown of the WTO meetings through direct action, pushed other segments of the movement to acknowledge the contributions of the radical wing. As Amory Starr argues, "The 1999 Seattle WTO Ministerial protests were the first indication of anarchist youth being valued by these other sectors, although they have been

active in anti-FTA protests in Europe for some time" (Starr, 2000, 163). These actions spearheaded the radicalization of the broader movement. The "new radicalism" does not build coherence through the appeal to a vanguard party or the inevitable advent of the revolution. Rather, it builds coherence through the singularity of its action, through its ability to immediately destabilize and destructure capital, while at the same time creating alternative ways of living. If only for a fleeting moment, the actions in Seattle, Prague, Quebec City and Genoa created autonomous communities, while dethroning the supposed 'world leaders'.

Moreover, the movement on the streets defied any top-down control or regulation. When 5,000 trade unionists broke away from the officially sanctioned AFL-CIO march in Seattle, there was no way to stop them. Through the organization of action in lateral networks, rigid boundaries could not be drawn around the "movement". In adopting a network model, actions are organized autonomously in a manner that defied such identities. As Michael Hardt argues,

How do you argue with a network? The movements organized within them do exert their power, but they do not proceed by oppositions. One of the basic characteristics of the network form is that no two nodes face each other in contradiction; rather, they are always triangulated by a third, and then a fourth, and then by an indefinite number of others in the web ... They displace contradictions and operate instead a kind of alchemy, or rather a sea change, the flow of the movements transforming the traditional fixed positions; networks imposing their force through a kind of irresistible undertow (Hardt, 1999, 117).

But Hardt and Negri (2000) do not recognize the achievement of these decentralized networks is an achievement of a very particular struggle. The call for a "diversity of tactics" as a "non-negotiable" basis of unity is a very real expression of this struggle in the movement.

Struggles move in cycles. Ruptures are created and the ruling bloc attempts to adapt. As Tarrow argues, "Routinisation follows hard upon disruption" (1994, 112). Self-valorization is collective action that manages to destabilize and destructure the value relationship while directly constituting alternatives (Negri, 1979). Self-valorization demands the construction of singularities, anti-reductive motions that directly undermine the specialization of power in the hands of a centralized representative. With intensifying communication, the effective disruption of the relations of ruling is transmitted and emulated in other places, with varying degrees of success. As Charles Tilly argues, collective action becomes *modular*; it explodes in a series of equivalence (Tilly, 1978). These series of explosions are constituted as an identity. And yet the moment of rupture has already passed.

The explosive impact of the protests in Seattle enabled the widespread diffusion of radical organizing practices. The protests in Seattle translated into a model which was eagerly applied in actions all over the world. The open space for innovation was tempered by the production of an effective repertoire. All over the world, activists promised to organize the 'next Seattle'. However, the power of the 'new radicalism' was contingent on its continuing success in practice.

The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" reflected the growing strength of a particular way of organizing, a particular strategy for collective action. It was able to grow strength through its perceived success in action. However, its continuing success

led to the foreclosure of other forms of action. The very success of Seattle led to its stabilization, diffusion, and subsequent containment. The breach is always temporary; limitless possibilities spark in the blink of an eye, and then fizzle out. The ruling bloc adapts and seeks to contain the rupture, fragmented what was once singularity. As Gramsci argues, "The history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic" (Gramsci, 1971, 54). Under the shock waves of the world market, the construction of singular movement has a limited shelf life, something that can be forgotten in treating the "multitudes" as an actor rather than a particular set of social relationships.

## **Chapter 4: For Life**

In September, 2001, People's Global Action (PGA) convened for its third international conference in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Much had changed since PGA first came together in February, 1998. The movement against neoliberalism had gained momentum, building steam through a series of spectacular actions bringing together hundreds of thousands of people around the world. The state had responded with increasing repression. Live ammunition was used at EU protests in Gothenburg and amidst widespread police brutality in Genoa one protester was killed. Things were getting more serious. Delegates were meeting just days after the shocking attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. The backlash was already mounting. The Bolivian government attempted to put a stop to the meeting of "potential terrorists", preventing thousands from crossing the border, threatening deportations, and denying visas (Notes from Nowhere, 2003, 377).

In this context, the question of violence was no doubt a contentious issue. Previously, the call for "nonviolent civil disobedience" had been a central PGA hallmark. However, standing at the intersection of diverse cultural and historical experiences, it remained unclear what this meant. Nonviolence, it was argued, means very different things in different parts of the world. While in places like India nonviolence was clearly oriented towards a respect for living things, in the United States and Canada many condemned property destruction as unnecessarily violent.

Latin American delegates argued that such a narrow interpretation of non-violence

"seemed to imply a rejection of huge parts of the history of resistance" (PGA, 2001). This appeared particularly salient in the wake of events in Bolivia where activists were regularly persecuted, brutalized, and executed by the police in their fight against water privatization. While protesters may "throw some rocks", it was argued, the army "kills with bullets". Compared with Latin America's oppressive legacy of dictators, death squads, and mass graves, a few broken windows seemed trivial.

Since the broken windows in Seattle, the question of violence had become a central topic of discussion for activists in the United States and Canada. Many took a narrow view of "nonviolence", seeing property destruction as an illegitimate way to express dissent. Others argued for the need to maintain solidarity, and resist the impulse to marginalize other protesters. At Cochabamba, North American delegates raised the concern that the principle of nonviolence "could be understood to not allow for a diversity of tactics or even contribute to the criminalisation of part of the movement" (PGA, 2001). The PGA hallmarks should not be used to justify such exclusions, it was argued, rather, PGA should seek to build the basis for solidarity in a manner that recognizes and respects the common aims of those utilizing more confrontational tactics.

Consequently, PGA changed its hallmarks to reflect diverse locations of struggle. Nonviolence, it was argued, "must always be understood relative to the particular political and cultural situation. Actions which are perfectly legitimate in one context can be unnecessarily violent (contributing to brutalise social relations) in another" (PGA, 2001). Hence, "nonviolence" should not be looked upon as an absolute. It is always

relative, tied to a specific context. The hallmarks were changed to allow for greater flexibility, clearly acknowledging a potential place for property destruction, by calling for "forms of resistance which maximize respect for life and oppressed peoples' rights".

### *The Logic of Separation*

The rearticulation of PGA's hallmarks reflected an attempt to maintain solidarity in a climate of growing fragmentation. With intensifying police repression, the blurring lines between "terrorism" and disruptive forms of protest, the "movement" was widely split. As one activist argues,

Because as soon as Carlos was shot, the gulf became wider than the Grand Canyon as to the directions the movements could go into. We were faced with, on one side, people who were arguing that we needed to maintain the movement's accessibility to everybody ... and then there were other people talking about the right to protest and finding targets that we could actually win ... you know, demonstration for your right to demonstrate and using Red, Green, Yellow zones and other mechanisms to try to accommodate that (Interview 4).

This reflected a division that had been growing the movement since the calls by nonviolent activists to arrest their disruptive counterparts. In the face of intensifying repression and escalating action, PGA clearly refused to justify these divisions.

"The history of subaltern social groups," as Gramsci argues, "is necessarily fragmented and episodic" (Gramsci, 1971, 54). The 'movement' is broken up by police batons and news cameras, cash incentives and balaclavas. It is cut apart by promises of seats at the table and threats of broken bones. To most people it resides as a flat image on the TV screen, a few short minutes of shattered images flaring in the background. Under advanced capitalism, social movements have been confronted with these fragmentary pressures, pushing them apart into lobby groups and clandestine sects.

In the previous chapter, I explored how the anti-globalization protests have been infused with 'anti-reductive' practices. Through these practices, the 'movement' resists fragmentation; it cannot be embodied in some transcendent entity, some executive branch serving as sovereign representative. Organization and action are fused together, exploding in singular moments, leaving nothing behind. And yet these moments are not immune to fragmentation. In advanced capitalist countries, the 'movement' has been largely restricted to the 'episodic' fits and starts of mass action. Many activists have been critical of such "summit hopping" tactics, which they argue remains largely detached from day-to-day struggles. The 'movement' remains limited insofar as it resides in these exceptional moments, a passing vision of alterity.

Collective action is broken under the logic of separation. As it is detached from its living, breathing existence, it becomes something to be consumed rather than participated in, a passive spectacle, a "concrete inversion of life" (Debord, 1983, 2). Laclau and Mouffe (1985) look to these scattered moments for liberatory possibilities. They look for new solidarities, a veritable chain of *equivalence*, made possible through the separation of the signifier from the signified. They do not recognize how this split comes about through an active process of fragmentation. "The social practice which the autonomous spectacle confronts," Debord argues, "is also the real totality which contains the spectacle". (1983, 7). What is apparently split, constructed as an autonomous moment of articulation, is derived from specific social practices. Collective action is *actively* fragmented. A disjuncture, an outside transcendent position, an autonomous

spectacle is actively produced. While collective action may be organized in a manner that resists such fragmentation, this does not necessarily prevent the interjection of such an outside. The struggle against separation is an ongoing battle.

The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" is a push to prevent drawing boundary lines around the movement, bombastically stipulating what is and isn't "legitimate". While this suggests a move towards a more flexible basis of solidarity, it should also be recognized as a response to growing fragmentation. The very fact that this discourse was deemed necessary is mirrored by the impulse to condemnation, an impulse to draw lines around the movement, an impulse to exclude and marginalize. The impulse runs deep. It is weened on state intervention and good PR. It is absorbed in the tactics, in the very identity of the 'movement'.

The unity of the 'movement' has always been an open question for many activists. Incorporating diverse struggles under a common umbrella is often problematized. It is more accurately described, activists argue, as a 'movement of movements'. Ironically, the unity of the 'movement' has been the most unquestioned by the very forces that seek to contain it. "Anti-globalization", as most activists will tell you, is a pejorative label concocted by the media, lumping protesters into an apparently regressive and hopelessly naive agenda. A well-known Canadian intelligence report, "Anti-Globalization - A Spreading Phenomenon" (CSIS, 2000), argues that the protests should not be seen as "one-off events", rather the 'movement' should be viewed as a unified threat demanding a coordinated response by the State. As Aufheben argues, "[T]he continuity - indeed the

escalation - in the state response to the mobilizations shows that they are treating them as an entity: that is, as a movement which is in some sense a threat" (Aufheben, 2001). The crowd is treated as a single entity as the police indiscriminately target violent and nonviolent protesters, alike. The 'movement' is unified in its representation, containment and repression.

The struggle against separation has taken a concrete form in the protracted street battles that have exploded around the world. Vivid images of black-clad figures breaking down fences, bursting through police lines, swiftly dismantling any barriers that stand in their way serve as concrete expressions of the demand to "Reclaim the Commons". On the other side, the police are barely visible behind the thick clouds of gas, the steel and concrete stockades, the body armor and plastic shields. But they are there-- the concrete manifestation of the state precariously upholding its fragile boundaries.

Maintaining a monopoly over the legitimate use of force the State seeks to enforce absolute separation. At all costs, it seeks to maintain the distinction between governors and governed which enables the preservation of its sovereignty. As Benjamin (1996) argues, the State is characterized by its "law-making" and "law-preserving" power. The State acts as legislator and despot. It endeavors to map out the playing field, channeling dissent through official avenues. Protests demand permits, clearly delineated march routes, marshals and liaisons. The State seeks to bind all actors to this field through the threat of violence. The State, as Gramsci argues, is "hegemony protected by the armour of coercion" (Gramsci, 1971, 263). The police presence borders the outer perimeter of

collective action, ensuring the juridical segmentation of space.

Those who follow the rules of the game are considered 'respectable' and worthy of dialogue. Those who do not are labeled criminals, bandits, "haters of freedom", and other nasty words. Speaking to WTO delegates in Seattle, Bill Clinton argued "we must deal with the legitimate concerns of legitimate protesters...[but] we need to make a clear distinction between that which we condemn and that which we welcome." ("Countdown to Chaos", 1999). This distinction is manipulated in order to divide social movements, incorporating those who play fair under the ruling apparatus, while criminalizing those who do not. As Conway argues, "the label violent is used somewhat indiscriminately, both within and beyond the movement, to refer to anyone acting outside the bounds of legitimate, that is routinized, legalized, and bureaucratized, forms of dissent" (Conway, 515).

While the police violence in Seattle is often portrayed as a direct reaction to the violence of the protesters, the police began using tear gas and cracking down on nonviolent protesters well before windows started breaking (Armond, 2001). The police were provoked, not by violent protesters, but by the disruptive power of nonviolent action. When actions go beyond the control of the state, it unleashes a power that necessarily transcends its ready-made juridical battlefield. "[T]he 'law' of the police," Walter Benjamin argues, "really marks the point at which the state, whether from impotence or because of the immanent connections within any legal system, can no longer guarantee through the legal system the empirical ends that it desires at any price to

attain" (Benjamin, 1996, 243). "Essentially the only violence down here," DAN activist Nadine Bloch argued, "was the violence of the police" (Nadine Bloch, 2000a). As the police lost control of the streets in Seattle, a state of emergency was declared. Countless observers describe the ensuing conflict as nothing short of a 'police riot'. Seattle police officers blindly lashed out at local residents, protesters, press, and government officials, alike. Condemning his maltreatment at the hands of the police, Seattle City Councilman Richard McIver argued,

I don't want to aid the hooligans who are raising hell and I don't want to take on specific officers . . . But there are huge flaws with the officers when it comes to people of color. I'm 58 years old. I had on a \$400 suit, but last night, I was just another nigger (cited in Wilson, 1999).

The anti-globalization protests are often portrayed in the media as opportunities for wild-eyed anarchists and other undesirables to run amok trashing everything in sight demanding police intervention to restore order. Activists argue the 'violence' of the 'anti-globalization' protesters has been negligible when compared with the violence of the State. Despite all the media attention, David Graeber argues, "after two years of increasingly militant direct action, it is still impossible to produce a single example of anyone to whom a U.S. activist has caused physical injury" (Graeber, 2002, 66). The militancy of the "anti-globalization" movement in the United States and Canada has been oriented towards property rather than living things. As Panitch argues,

For what precisely characterizes this generation and this movement in contrast with earlier ones on the European and North American left is the explicit eschewal, even among its most militant elements, of either armed revolutionary struggle or terrorism (along the lines of the Red Brigades or Weathermen just a generation ago) as a means of effecting change in the advanced capitalist countries (Panitch, 2002, 13).

In spite of the relative lack of violence on the part of protesters, the corporate

media is quick to jump on any infraction and generalize this to envelop the entire 'movement'. Todd Gitlin's analysis of the corporate media's coverage of the 1960s anti-war movement remains pertinent in understanding contemporary social movements. Gitlin argues that the media "tended first to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate forms of protest, then to show that the latter was penetrating and contaminating the former" (Gitlin, 1980, 109). The media draws on whatever is immediately visible, privileging tactics over the aims or goals of collective action. It jumps on spectacular images, which activists are often quick to take advantage of in order to dramatize their struggles. Broken windows and police brutality are flattened on the TV screen, actively transformed into a spectacular violence, "violence decontextualized, violence aestheticized, violence the camera revealed in, violence that did not even need to plead its reasons" (Gitlin, 1987, 197). Some activists describe it as 'protest porn', suggesting its arousing and erotic appeal for activists (Keefer, 2002). As violence is generalized, seen to be the product of a single entity, even nonviolent protesters are implicated, guilty by association. As Panitch argues,

The image of generalized violence among those who watch the protests on television or read the sensationalized accounts in the paper has also led many people inside the anti-globalization movement to question the diversity of tactics approach and to demand a serious discussion of which tactics are in fact most productive of building greater popular support for the movement against globalization" (Panitch, 2002, 27).

The treatment of the 'movement' as a unified entity by both the State and the media enables its fragmentation. The taint of violence polarizes the movement. The use of violence, Sidney Tarrow argues, transforms "relations between challengers and authorities from a confused, many-sided game into a bipolar one in which people are

forced to choose sides, allies defect, bystanders retreat and the state's repressive apparatus swings into action" (1994, 104). But how is this *bipolar* dynamic constituted?

In order to gain credibility, 'respectable' protesters often seek to cleanse themselves of all 'violent' elements. This impulse to differentiation has largely provoked the condemnation of those engaging in property destruction. Cockburn and St. Clair describe how this bipolar dynamic was played out following the Seattle actions, by protesters seeking to maintain a veneer of "respectability". "The way they spun it, the collapse of the WTO talks in Seattle was a glorious triumph for respectable demonstrators, achieved despite the pernicious rabble smashing windows, harassing the police and bringing peaceful mainstream protest into disrepute" (Cockburn & St. Clair, 2000, 59).

The fragmentation of social movements in this way can provoke a downward spiral. Increasing state repression leads to more confrontational forms of resistance, which in turn justify further repression. More militant groups are systematically targeted and marginalized from both within and outside the 'movement'. They are seen as the catalysts of violence. They are criminalized, driven underground, isolated, cut off from the more "respectable" segments of the movement. They are systematically targeted, imprisoned, exiled, and executed. As became evident in the 1960s, intensifying state repression can lead to desperate measures, bombings, shootings, kidnappings. On the other hand, peaceful protests are carefully self-policed, regularized, and regimented in order to keep out the rabble. Collective action comes to be defined by its fragmentation.

## *Purity*

Collective action has revolved around this disjuncture, this logic of separation. It has revealed in its own autonomous reflection. It has grown a conviction of its own righteousness in the reflected image of state repression. It has assumed strength in mediation. It has gained meaning in transmission. The split, the separation of action from its context, is often internalized, leading to the conviction of purity in tactics. The choice of tactics is removed from the immediate context of action and elevated to a universal status. In this manner, tactics are fetishized, treated as things rather than active social relationships.

The New Left was powerfully influenced by what John Sanbonmatsu calls a romantic expressivism (Sanbonmatsu, 2004, 23). It was an existential outcry, counterposing a "holistic, spiritual conception of life" to the alienating instrumental logic of technocracy. Protest became an "emotive aesthetic expression of an inner, 'radical' nature" (23). It became a "moral revolt" against the violence, corruption, and inequities of modern society. For Sanbonmatsu, the New Left encompasses a whole "structure of feeling" tying together speech, subjective inner truth, and action. "Purity of action, and the demonstration or exteriorization of one's faith" he argues, are "privileged over the achievement of consequences in the world" (Sanbonmatsu, 2004, 33). This can be seen in the wild theatrics of Yippies, the armed insurrections of the Weather Underground, and the limp bodies of the radical pacifists.

As the 1960s wore on and the United States government proved unrelenting in its

bloody war in Vietnam, as the repressive violence of the State was unleashed at home, and as the movement appeared to be building towards the "revolution", many activists looked towards more militant forms of action. While initially pushing for the withdrawal of US troops, many activists increasingly became enamored with the struggles of their Third World comrades, calling for 'Victory to the NLF' and chanting 'Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Min' (Gitlin, 1987). The struggle could not remain limited to the routinized channels of 'respectable' protest, it was argued; rather, the anti-war movement should endeavor to "bring the war home", as the Weathermen argued.

In the growing fragmentation of the 'movement', militancy appeared as the expression of deeper identity. Describing the rising tide of militancy in the anti-war movement, Todd Gitlin argues, "Fighting back could be defended, arguably, as part of a strategy for ending the war, since neither civil disobedience nor Establishment grumbling seemed sufficient by itself. But the militant surge was more than strategic: it was at least as much the expression of an identity, a romance, an existential *raison d'etre*" (1987, 256). The spectacular implosion of the anti-war movement in the 1970s would fall back on the pure identity of militant action. The call to organize outside the political context would then translate to eschewing the context all together. "If it is a worldwide struggle," argued Bill Ayers of the Weathermen, "then it is the case that nothing we could do in the mother country could be adventurist . . . because there is a war going on already" (Ayers, 1970). Thus, the revolution was generalized under the all-accommodating slogan, "by any means necessary".

Influenced by the armed guerrillas in Latin America and Southeast Asia, clandestine groups such as the Weather Underground in the United States, the Red Army Faction in Germany, and the Red Brigades in Italy sought to galvanize revolution through armed struggle. They targeted property and figureheads symbolic of the state, capital, and imperialism. They were organized as small, tightly knit groups or *foci*. The term was popularized by Debray who analyzed the revolutionary struggles in Cuba (Debray, 1967). Debray argued that a potent revolutionary movement could only grow from outside, completely independent from established political avenues. In order to galvanize armed revolution in the Third World, militants in the advanced capitalist concluded it was necessary to go "underground".

This revolutionary isolation was often romanticized, echoing the individual outcries manifested in the wave of bombings and assassinations, the impulse to "propaganda by deed" that spread around the world in the early part of the twentieth century. For instance, in 1969 the Berkeley chapter of the Black Panther Party reissued a pamphlet from 1869, *Catechism of a Revolutionary*, written by the Nihilist Sergei Nechaev (Avrich, 1988, 13). Nechaev describes the revolutionary as "a doomed man. He has no personal interests, no affairs, no sentiments, attachments, property, not even a name of his own. Everything is absorbed by one exclusive interest, one thought, one passion--the revolution" (Avrich, 1988, 38). The Catechism apparently had quite an effect on Black Panther leader, Eldridge Cleaver who admits in his autobiography *Soul on Ice* that he "fell in love" with it and attempted to integrate into his own activity, employing "tactics of ruthlessness in my dealings with everyone with whom I came into

contact" (Avrich, 1988, 13).

Following the anarchist legacy of 'propaganda by deed', it was argued that spectacular actions would provoke the masses. However, the gap between the self-proclaimed vanguard and the masses left the message unclear. The clandestine army was isolated, cut off from family and friends. Discipline was maintained through carefully policed boundaries. In isolation, in the midst of a confused and largely hostile population, there was no way for such actions to grow. It was simply presumed that since the time was ripe for revolution, the masses would get the "message". In fact, these symbolic actions depended on an external mediator in order to speak to a broader community.

This can be compared to the radical pacifism that would bloom in later years forming the basis of the direct action movement through the 1970s and 1980s. In response to the sectarianism and vanguardism of the 1960s, activists in the United States and Canada attempted to develop an inclusive community based on a holistic vision of "nonviolence" (Epstein, 1991). In this manner, they attempted to escape the cycle of violence that led to the fragmentation of social movements through the 1960s. However, the eschewal of violence could fall back into a pure position which largely neglected how "violence" is not necessarily a choice. In fact, the power of a "nonviolent" position could only be exhibited in stark contrast to State "violence". The "nonviolent" position continues to depend on mediation, demanding a third party, a witness to the injustice of the State.

Radical pacifism drew strength from Quaker traditions in the United States, Gandhi's concept of *satyagraha*, the early civil rights movement, and the feminist movement growing through the 1970s (Lynd, 1966; Epstein, 1991). It was grounded in the belief of the moral superiority of nonviolent action in the face of the immorality of state violence. It was maintained that by emulating the violence of the state, action would become self-defeating, perpetuating the immorality that it fought. The Quaker tradition of 'bearing witness' came out of a perceived duty to 'speak truth to power'. By calling attention to the evils of the world, it was argued, the perpetrator would stand accused. Nonviolence remained focused on sending a message through an noble act of self-sacrifice. Nonviolence attained a purity that transcended the immediate context of immorality. It became an absolute. Gandhi saw it as "truth force", a "perfect state".

The prefigurative communities budding from the direct action movement in the 1970s and 1980s were tied together through nonviolence. By 1986, Ward Churchill was able to say, "Pacifism, the ideology of nonviolent political action, has become axiomatic and all but universal among more progressive elements of contemporary mainstream North America"(Churchill, 1998, 29). Through the 1980s, nonviolent direct action (NVDA) grew and developed, transformed into a relatively standard model. Precautions were taken to ensure that the action went smoothly and with minimal risk to those involved. Actions were often coordinated with the police and arrangements were made for arrest and detention prior to the action.

Radical pacifism was able to thrive in a particular context, where it was able to maintain discipline. It grew out of a largely middle class movement opposing militarism, structured through regional coalitions and organizations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the foundation of these coalitions were affinity groups, bringing together small groups in order to make decisions based on trust and mutual respect. Affinity groups were brought together in large assemblies through a consensus process. These coalitions often remained uncontested in their articulation of guidelines for action. They served as the central organizing hub and consequently maintained a degree of control in the coordination of action.

A nonviolent position was established and maintained through a variety of mechanisms. Grounded in a specific region, these organizations were constituted by a relatively stable core community of activists. Discipline was largely maintained through networks of affinity groups which formalized communication between all those involved in action because "everyone knows if no one knows you" (Midnight Notes Collective, 1992). Activists were required to participate in nonviolent training and in some cases sign agreements promising to restrain from violence. Those who did not adhere to nonviolent guidelines were socially ostracized and excluded, or they simply did not get involved in the first place (Bookchin, 1994). In this context, a nonviolent puritanism was able to develop.

Emerging out of the fragmentation of the 1960s, both the radical pacifism of the anti-nuclear movement and militant tactics of groups like the Weather Underground were

steeped in a belief that their tactics somehow spoke the language of revolution, that their actions were pure, untainted by their origins. In this manner, these actions were separated from their context, made applicable at all times and places. This limited their ability to break out of the existing system. Terrorism and civil disobedience have been tied together in their dependence on outside mediator in order to convey their symbolic message.

### *Diversity of Tactics*

Through the 1990s, the direct action movement shifted its focus. As Tim Jordan argues, "the focus of direct action shifted from demonstrating a morally superior position to taking action with others to create a better world" (Jordan, 2002, 65). Nonviolence ceased to be an end in itself. It increasingly became a tactical decision rather than an ethical one. By the time of the Seattle protests, the "nonviolence" of the Direct Action Network in Seattle was based on pragmatic grounds. "The guidelines were not statements of philosophical or ideological commitment," Conway argues, "instead, they were meant to reassure groups with whom DAN wanted to collaborate in this specific action" (Conway, 2003, 512). Nonviolence became a standard set of guidelines, and yet with the move to increasingly lateral forms of action and organization, these guidelines would lose their strength.

Through its 'disorganized' approach, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Reclaim the Streets moves towards the dissolution of privileged points of decision-making. This made it difficult to enforce a nonviolent position. "At the best of times,"

Naomi Klein argues, "Reclaim the Streets walks a delicate line, flirting openly with the urge to riot but attempting to flip it into more constructive protest" (Klein, 2000, 319). On June 18, 1999, Reclaim the Streets helped spearhead a global 'Carnival Against Capitalism'. Protests and street parties were organized in dozens of cities around the world. However, London would serve as the epicenter of action. Over 10,000 protesters converged for the day. In the midst of the carnival, hundreds of activists attempted to occupy the London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange (LIFFE). This led to a protracted confrontation with the police. J18 provided a direct inspiration for the protests in Seattle.

The divisions emerging in Reclaim the Streets were mirrored in Canada and the United States. In Montreal, the rift manifested itself most clearly in Operation SalAMI, a coalition of activists who came together in opposition to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). "SalAMI" is a play on words meaning "dirty friend" or "dirty MAI" in French. SalAMI was organized as a nonhierarchical collective based on the principles of training, transparency, and nonviolent action. In May, 1998, this group would gain the spotlight in its nonviolent blockade of an MAI meeting in Montreal.

However, many activists became frustrated with SalAMI's informal leadership criticizing "SalAMI for its gap between theory and practice, its inability to self-criticize, and, most significantly, its 'dogmatism on nonviolence'" (Conway, 2003, 519). While the group officially defined itself as transparent and nonhierarchical, criticisms of a informal leadership were raised. This was exacerbated, when "unofficial" SalAMI leader Phil

Duhamel publicly criticized rock throwing and vandalism. Many activists left SalAMI, seeking more flexible forms of organization.

Many of these activists would come together again in the Convergence des Luttes Anti-Capitaliste (CLAC) to organize action against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) meeting in Quebec City in April 2001. CLAC brought together a broad network of activists committed to anti-capitalism. Organized through affinity groups, CLAC adopted a basis for unity that included a "respect for a diversity of tactics" ranging from "popular education to direct action". It was here that a "diversity of tactics" was first adopted as an organizational principle, sparking widespread discussion throughout the movement. These discussions would culminate in the decision of PGA to change its hallmarks.

### *Divine Violence*

The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" is often conflated with an "anything goes" approach. Moving away from the boundaries drawn around what is or isn't legitimate seems to suggest that all tactics should be considered equally legitimate. "[T]here are those who have totally fetishized the term 'respect for a diversity of tactics'," one activist argues, "to make it meaningless, you know, whereby the only judge of whether something is radical or not is a tactic that is used at any given point in time" (Interview 1). Independent of any context, all tactics are considered equal. If someone is doing it, then it is legitimate.

Some argued that the call for a "diversity of tactics" did not enable a "diversity" at all. Under a "tyranny of structurelessness", it was argued, more militant tactics would inevitably predominate, endangering all those seeking to engage in other forms of action.

Labor people had always taken issue with the anarchist wing of the anti-globalization movement over "diversity of tactics." They argued that it allowed demonstrations to be hijacked by those most committed to violent or inappropriate tactics. If the principal goals of the movement are to win over and mobilize large numbers of working people, then the most militant tactics aren't necessarily those that will have the most profound effects. (Rosenfeld, 2002)

Insofar as more militant tactics are given free reign under a "diversity of tactics", this actually inhibits diversity in protests insofar as a privileged few can pursue such confrontational tactics. Thus, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics", it was argued, enables a small unaccountable minority to hijack the actions.

At the extreme, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" suggested "anything goes". It appears as an 'empty signifier', the meaning of which is so all-encompassing that it remains undefined. The question is, where does it stop? This question would become especially salient following the terrorist attacks of September 11 when many groups and organizations distanced themselves from actions calling for a "diversity of tactics". The question was posed, is terrorism just another part of a "diversity of tactics"? However, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" acquired meaning in a very distinct context. As one activist argues,

A lot of people have said, "Well, where does that stop: 'respect for a diversity of tactics'?" Well, it certainly does stop somewhere. But people have argued, you know, "maybe you should say you're against guns; you should say you're against terrorism". Well, I think it's obvious that we're against terrorism. It's obvious that this is not a movement that uses weaponry. The context that we're dealing with are people who engage in civil disobedience, direct action, at times have defended themselves, but is not about offensively attacking or engaging

in any sort of battle (Interview 1).

As tactics are detached from a particular context, they gain a purity in and of themselves. Discussions of what may or may not be effective become moot as a tactic is incorporated into underlying identity. As the Notes from Nowhere Collective argues, "Identifying primarily with our tactics (I am a nonviolent activist), or costumes (I'm with the Black Bloc), rather than with our goals, ideas, and dreams makes us rigid and inflexible, completely predictable, unable to evolve" (Notes from Nowhere, 2003, 315).

The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" is often conflated with militant action. "Now, when you say 'diversity of tactics'", one activist argues, "people think it's fighting with the police, that's what it's become in the shorthand" (Interview 3). With the broadening horizon of collective action, the use of violence takes on a mystical power. While activists have attempted to move beyond the simple binary of violence and nonviolence, more disruptive and confrontational tactics are often treated as the most effective.

The purity of a militant approach is reflected in militant propaganda. A poster promoting the Black Bloc depicts a police motorcycle driving over Mahatma Gandhi. It reads, "Gandhi is dead because he did not strike back. Support your local Black Bloc". While showing an ignorance of the resistance movement in India (Gandhi did not die because he did not strike back; he was assassinated), this poster also derisively contrasts the apparent powerlessness of nonviolent direct action to the mythic power of militant action. This further reinforces the violent/nonviolent dichotomy. This poster is reflective

of a broader sensibility that was predominant in the radical left in North America and Canada.

Property destruction is often elevated as an absolute, a romantic expression of refusal. It 'breaks spells', demystifying the mystic aura that private property has taken on under capitalism. Following the Black Bloc actions in Seattle, a group of anarchists issued a communiqué defending their actions.

When we smash a window, we aim to destroy the thin veneer of legitimacy that surrounds private property rights. At the same time, we exorcise that set of violent and destructive social relationships which has been imbued in almost everything around us (acme Collective, 1999).

The language of 'exorcism' speaks to the religious power that property destruction can often take on. While Black Blocs are proclaimed to be strictly a tactic, their clear separation from other protesters often belies a deeper identity. One activist asks,

"If the Black Blocs continue at summit protests, will it be because people have weighed out their pros and cons and decided they are the most effective tactic, or because people like to dress up in gas masks and bandanas?" (Cunningham, 2002, 37).

However, a "respect for a diversity of tactics", many activists argue, should not be simply reduced to an invitation of "anything goes". Rejecting the absolute distinction between violence and nonviolence does not necessarily mean that tactics are exempt from criticism. Respecting a diversity of tactics, one activist argues, means having "the maturity to not play into the dynamics of marginalization, the dynamics of 'good protester' versus 'bad protester'" (Interview 1). Carving out absolute lines of legitimacy and seeking to exclude all that is illegitimate simply feeds the polarizing dynamic of State repression. Rather than publicly condemning protesters utilizing disagreeable tactics, it is

argued, activists should respect their common aims and seek to develop a basis for analysis and criticism within the movement. Hence, it is an attempt to open up a space for solidarity between acceptance and the outright condemnation.

The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" is a refusal to rule any tactic out beforehand. It reflects an attempt to move beyond the dichotomy of violence and nonviolence, refusing to fall into the purity of either approach. In the wake of the 911 terrorist attacks, critics have contended that this could be used to justify terrorism or assassinations; however, proponents argue that it deepens the connection of action to its context. In the context of the anti-globalization movement, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" finds roots in open and transparent organization. Through open organizing, activists can freely debate the merits of particular tactics over others without falling back on the purity of a tactical identity.

In his *Critique of Violence*, Walter Benjamin attempts to address the question of if and when violence is justified. Benjamin contrasts "divine violence" to "mythic violence". "Mythic violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake; divine violence is pure power over all life for the sake of the living" (1996, 250). While mythic violence elevates itself over and above, seeking to dominate life, divine violence is characterized by the absence of absolutes. It directly refutes transcendent categories of justice residing over and above life. Divine violence is always relative, never absolute. It cannot be known in advance. It is characterized by the "absence of all lawmaking". If mythic violence "sets boundaries", divine violence "boundlessly destroys them" (249).

Divine violence is immanent, emerging directly out of the context of action.

The call to respect a diversity of tactics stands at the precipice between romantic expressivism and divine violence. On the one side, the call for a "diversity of tactics" is fetishized in the principle of "anything goes". Through the fragmentation of the 'movement', through the translation of tactics into an absolute identity residing above and beyond any particular context, the call for a diversity of tactics is absolved of any historical or ethical foundation. On the other hand, it suggests a divine violence, a refusal to fall into the juridical distinctions between what is legitimate and illegitimate. Indeed, Benjamin's description of a "pure power over life for the sake of the living" resonates with the PGA's call for forms of action that "maximize respect for life". It seeks to build a basis for solidarity that cannot be reduced to simple binaries. The cohesion of the movement, it is argued, cannot be brought about through the appeal to tactical purity. The line is often ambiguous.

Ultimately, this is only determined through a broader cohesion brought to the movement through community and strategy. As the Notes from Nowhere Collective argues, "Until we can recognize this and develop new forms of communication and outreach, we will continue in the endless Mobius strip of debating violence versus nonviolence, diversity of tactics versus clear action guidelines" (2003, 312). The argument that a "diversity of tactics" means, "I can do whatever the hell I want", one activists asserts, is not often articulated by groups "because when groups are organized, they have a process of debate around it where that kind of sentiment tends to get argued

away," rather it most commonly articulated by "individuals", those who have not been actively included in a broader decision-making process (Interview 1).

The coherence of the movement is asserted through its connection to a context. Action is always relative to the place it finds itself in. Anti-reductive action, action that resists separation, can only be asserted as a deep connection to that context. The anti-globalization protests were so successful insofar as they resonated with that context. And yet their success has been translated into an absolute. Militant direct action has been elevated to a pure identity, often deemed effective in all times and places. The apparent flexibility of a "diversity of tactics" is dampened through such presumptions. Real flexibility can only be accomplished through a careful analysis of the context of action through a collective process of decision-making that resists imploding into such absolutes.

## **Chapter 5: The Rise (and Fall?) of a "Diversity of Tactics"**

In this chapter, I will explore the growth and development of a "diversity of tactics" since the Seattle protests in November, 1999. In the wake of these protests, the "question of tactics" became central. While many activists condemned the property destruction arguing that the "message" of the protests got lost in the broken windows, others argued for the need to maintain solidarity, respecting the autonomy of the different groups involved. And while this claim was hotly contested, the call for a diversity of tactics gained strength building up to the protests in Quebec City in April 2001. For a few years, a new form of protest, raucous and confrontational, took the spotlight in Canada and the United States. However, this was not to last. The inspirational model presented by Seattle was unraveling at the seams before it even took hold. As the heavy hand of State repression intensified, culminating in the anti-terror legislation following September 11, 2001, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" became increasingly divisive, losing its strength as a basis for solidarity.

The widespread articulation of a "diversity of tactics" reflected the growing strength of lateral networks in organizing collective action following the successful disruption of WTO meetings in Seattle. Networks of decentralized and autonomous groups were coming together, and rather than appealing to the WTO for reforms, prevented it from functioning for a fleeting moment. The success of direct action is based on the disruption of mediation. A space of autonomy is constructed where decisions can be made directly without appealing to an outside mediator. The call to "respect a diversity of tactics" is an assertion of the autonomy of these networks. It

reinforces a basis for organization that does not fall back on any externally imposed boundaries; rather, it seeks to constitute a basis of solidarity directly through coordination and communication.

As this model for action proliferated in the years that followed, the call to "respect a diversity of tactics" was widely articulated as a basis for solidarity. While this term was frequently contested, with the explosion of lateral networks, as thousands converged in autonomous groups for direct action, there was no other basis for unity. Solidarity could not be constituted through exclusion or mediation. Some frustrated activists fell back on public condemnation and appealed to the police to reassert order. Others argued for the need to maintain solidarity. While groups endorsing a "diversity of tactics" were excluded from broad coalition meetings, they maintained a presence on the streets that could not be contained. The powers of mediation manifested through "civil society" were limited.

The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" has been closely associated with the rise of the anti-capitalist movement in North America. An explicitly "anti-capitalist" movement burst forth from Seattle with the strength and confidence to autonomously organize large scale direct action. Building to the Genoa protests in July, 2001, "anti-capitalism" grew in strength. Thousands of people poured into cities around the world prepared for large scale militant direct action. The growth of anti-capitalism reflected the radicalization of the "movement" in action, beyond single issues, beyond lobbying and reform, and towards the transformation of society as a whole. And yet it remained

unclear what was meant by "anti-capitalism". All too often, "anti-capitalism" failed to surpass the militant direct action in which it was apparently embodied. There was a danger of tactics supplanting deeper analysis.

*A16: The Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc*

In the wake of the Seattle protests, actions were organized all over the world in hopes of carrying on the momentum, expanding the locus of opposition and building a more sustained movement against neoliberalism as a whole. On April 16 (A16), 2000, over 20,000 people came together to protest the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank meetings in Washington DC. Organizing for these protests, the question of a "diversity of tactics" came to the forefront. While some attempted to reinforce a commitment to nonviolence through consensus decision-making, others refused to acknowledge the power of any single organization to set the guidelines for protest. Nevertheless, potential divisions were effectively defused through increased communication and coordination between groups.

Washington DC, or the 'beltway' as it is often referred to, serves as the hub for "civil society" organizations in the United States. The head offices of many large NGOs and trade unions are located here, where they can lobby at the highest levels of government and meet regularly with government officials. It also provides a central location where the leadership of these groups can come together to coordinate their activities. Through the 1990s, networks were solidifying on the 'beltway' around issues of free trade and structural adjustment.

The 50 Years is Enough network was founded in 1994, bringing together over 200 different US groups seeking reforms to the IMF/World Bank, including debt cancellation, an end to Structural Adjustment Programs, and greater transparency. It had come about as the result of discussions between six major NGOs -- International Rivers Network, Development Group for Alternative Policies, Friends of the Earth, Environmental Defense Fund, Global Exchange, and Oxfam America. The 50 Years is Enough network had organized protests at the annual meetings of the IMF/World Bank in Washington DC in the preceding years, however, they had never been very large or widely noted. Following the protests in Seattle, the 50 Years is Enough network helped to sponsor a series of meetings with DC activists in hopes of carrying on the momentum. These meetings would eventually culminate in the formation of a broad coalition, the Mobilization for Global Justice (Mob4glob). Inspired by the Seattle protests, many activists came together with the intent of shutting down the meetings using nonviolent direct action. Others attempted to organize a permitted rally a safe distance from the security perimeter.

Largely emulating the structure of the Direct Action Network, the group utilized a consensus model in which decisions were made by affinity groups coordinated through spokescouncil assemblies. The first general meeting was organized on January 11, 2000, and was attended by nearly 100 people. Here, Mob4glob adopted a set guidelines for action reinforcing a commitment to nonviolence and specifically "no property destruction". However, as Mob4Glob expanded leading up to the action, this would

become a contentious issue and would frequently reemerge in meeting discussions.

In response to the attempts by Mob4glob to set guidelines for action, a number of anarchist and libertarian socialist groups issued a call for a "Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc" in which they asserted their autonomy.

We believe that the most effective protest is each group autonomously taking action and using tactics that they feel work best for their situation. We do not advocate one particular tactic but believe that the greatest diversity of tactics is the most effective use of tactics. We are critical of ideologically motivated arguments that oppose this. This is why we do not believe that it is organizationally principled for any one group to set the guidelines for the protests or claim ownership of the movement (A16 Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc, 2000).

The call for a "diversity of tactics" was part of a broader push for the autonomous organization of "revolutionary anti-capitalists" in North America. It put to rest the pretension that any single group could set parameters for action while at the same time declaring the presence of another distinctly "anti-capitalist" formation that would exist outside these parameters. On the one hand the "bloc" appeared as a hub for militant direct action, on the other hand it espoused the idea that the "greatest diversity of tactics is the most effective use of tactics", that the presence of diversity is effective in itself. Thus, it was precariously balanced between the fetishism of a particular tactic and the empty universality of "diversity" for diversity's sake. Where would this open door lead? The strategic focus of the Revolutionary Anti-Capitalists remained unclear.

It should not be presumed that the push for an autonomous anti-capitalist bloc entailed a complete split from Mob4glob and the broader coalition of activists. In fact, while the Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc proclaimed its autonomy in organizing beyond the scope of the broad coalition, the relationship between these different groups

was more coordinated than ever before. There was considerable cross-over between groups and many activists participated in both autonomous anti-capitalist organizing and Mob4glob. Activists promoted a position of mutual respect in both groups. This effectively broke down many of the divisions that had been building since Seattle.

While Mob4glob did not openly condone property destruction, there was a degree of tacit solidarity and respect for those utilizing more confrontational tactics. Although "nonviolence" served as a basis of unity in Mob4Glob actions, a strong argument was made that Mob4Glob should avoid "marginalizing" groups utilizing more confrontational tactics. There was a desire not to get bogged down in divisive arguments over tactics in order to keep up the momentum of the "movement". At a press conference leading up to the action Mob4glob organizer Nadine Bloch asserted:

[W]e want to focus on the issues of structural violence against people by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, rather than get mired down in discussions about tactics, because we know that everybody who's going to be out on the street is going to be there because they're motivated by the same great feeling of anger and frustration about the ability to set their future direction in this world and stand up for environmental rights and human dignity (Bloch, 2000b).

This reflected a relatively common position, acknowledging the common aims of the protesters under the overwhelming structural violence of the State. Coming to a common agreement on tactics seemed to be a futile, time consuming, and unnecessary task. Rather than debating the legitimacy of different tactics, many activists focused on communication and coordination, ensuring that these different levels of engagement could coexist together.

At the last minute, the AFL-CIO decided to participate, initially organizing a rally

on April 12, largely oriented towards what Mike Dolan from Public Citizen referred to as the next "big issue" following Seattle, the role of China as a trading partner. From here, the AFL-CIO could carefully orchestrate the action and ensure that its "message" was loud and clear. The AFL-CIO leadership remained wary of involvement in the larger protests on A16. In the past, they had supported the US government's position on the IMF. Moreover, the actions promised to be disruptive and difficult to manage.

Nevertheless, there was an enormous amount of pressure put on the AFL-CIO to participate in the "next Seattle". The AFL-CIO leadership did not want to risk burning any bridges. Just three weeks prior to the event, through pressure coming from the community-labour wing of the AFL-CIO, Jobs With Justice (JWJ), it was decided to participate in the events of A16 itself. The ambivalence of the AFL-CIO seemed clear-- on the one hand, pushing for a separate, safely cordoned off event; on the other, pressured to join the broader mass of protesters. The AFL-CIO had been partially reassured through deepening avenues of communication. While in Seattle there had been scant communication between direct action activists and the labour movement, in preparation for A16, the AFL-CIO and the direct action movement actively coordinated their activities together. However, the AFL-CIO mobilization efforts would remain ambivalent and never match the presence that had been established in Seattle.

A16 showed that Seattle was not just a glitch. Over 20,000 people from wide ranging backgrounds came together in protest. The locus of opposition moved beyond the WTO, and connections were made to a broader supranational order, running through

the IMF and the World Bank. Diverse groups came together with an expanded sense of solidarity. Thousands of people came to Washington DC prepared for direct action. Within this action a visible autonomous and widely supported "anti-capitalist" formation solidified.

Activists involved in more militant direct action, respected and supported the actions of nonviolent protesters and many nonviolent protesters came to acknowledge the role of more militant direct action. Michael Albert, who had been critical of the role of Black Blocs in Seattle, argued,

The Black Blocs brought to the actions tactical energy, creativity, and courage, as in Seattle, but now also considerable willingness to blend these attributes into the larger venue respecting the desires of other constituencies and repeatedly actively defending their less prepared fellow participants (Albert, 2000).

The Black Bloc played an important role in protecting the protesters from the police. It helped prevent arrests, serving as a buffer between the police and nonviolent protesters, and it maintained pressure on the security perimeter ensuring that the nonviolent blockades of the surrounding intersections were maintained. It helped to construct an autonomous space, where activists could move freely. While the call for "nonmarginalization" of more militant protesters remained a divisive topic in organizing for action, in the context of the action itself, it received more widespread support.

Yet the effectiveness of direct action in DC remained limited. The police had learned from Seattle. They began preemptively arresting the organizers long before the protests ever got started. Over 600 people were arrested. On the day before the protest, the convergence center, serving as the hub for coordinating direct action, was raided and

shut down. Anticipating the attempted shutdown of the meetings, arrangements were made to get delegates to the IMF/World Bank meetings early. The entire area surrounding the meeting was shut down and militarized. Government offices were closed and nearby stores were boarded up.

When the activists' plans to block intersections were thwarted, it became unclear how to proceed. Some activists decided to join the large rally that was taking place at the Ellipse well away from the security perimeter, while others attempted to maintain a lockdown on various intersections trying to prevent delegates from leaving the meeting. Naomi Klein (2000b) points to the strategic absurdity of this position, as delegates could simply leave through those intersections abandoned by protesters. With a lack of a strategic focus or coordinated plan for action, activists simply focused on defending an autonomous space.

While the protests failed in their immediate objective of shutting down the meetings, they were successful in thickening networks of coordination and communication. The Mobilization for Global Justice presented a model for organization that was adopted in a number of cities across Canada and the United States. These groups would build a basis for mobilizing on a local level. They would also reassert a commitment to nonviolence. Likewise, anarchist and anti-capitalist networks solidified across the Northeast, building the basis for more sustained anti-capitalist action in Quebec City in April 2001.

*S26: Blue, Yellow, Pink & Silver*

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, the IMF/World Bank would meet again on September 26 (S26), 2000 in Prague, Czech Republic, with the protection of over 11,000 police and security forces. In response, actions were organized in 110 cities around the world. The focal point of the action was Prague. The protesters, numbering approximately 10,000, were predominantly young and oriented towards direct action. But what they lacked in numbers, they made up for in tactical innovations. The protests were broken into three distinct blocs-- the pink and silver, yellow, and blue blocs. The segmentation of the protests in this manner was intended to enable protesters to decide on their own level of engagement. As one UK activist argues,

Our movement is highly diverse, with people from across the social spectrum getting involved. So, therefore, should our events be organised in a way that accommodates and respects this diversity. Let the "fluffies" be fluffy, let the "spikeys" be spikey, and let's make room for everything else in between, physically as well as tactically (WOMBLES, 2000).

Each bloc entailed a distinct strategy which blurred the boundaries of conventional protest.

The "Pink and Silver" bloc was organized on a basis of "tactical frivolity". As the British group, Rhythms of Resistance argues,

Tactical Frivolity is a space that exists in the gap between total compliance and violent confrontation. It is not driven by absolutes but by stretching the limits of understanding, to include all humans in a productive constructive course towards a joyous celebration of life (Rhythms of Resistance, 2004).

Largely inspired by Reclaim the Streets, the Pink and Silver bloc was organized around the spirit of carnival and celebration. Protesters were garbed in elaborate costumes and

masks, extravagant gowns and pink feather boas -- certainly not the kind of attire for fleeing from police truncheons, but that was not the point. The point was to de-escalate conflict, while at the same time refusing to accept conventional parameters of protest. They danced down the streets, pushing back bewildered police lines to the beat of a Samba band. They fought the police with feather dusters. They came within 200 meters of the conference centre before they were pushed back with rubber bullets, tear gas and concussion grenades.

The "yellow" bloc was led by nearly 1,000 heavily padded Ya Basta! activists. These Italian activists, largely coming out of Italy's autonomous Social Centers, were greatly influenced by the Zapatista uprising. Like the Zapatistas, they pursued a confrontational approach while attempting to minimize violence. Known as the Tute Bianche for their uniformed white overalls, they constructed makeshift armor out of cardboard boxes and old life-jackets. They were equipped with plastic shields and enormous inner-tube barricades. While this group did not reject more confrontational tactics, they maintained strict nonviolent principles governing conflict. Tute Bianche spokesperson, Mariani argued,

With peaceful methods of direct action, the language of violence stays on the side of the police, of governments. Classic demonstrations no longer bother them. On the other hand, now we are disobeying as citizens, and they suppress, but we are defending ourselves. That attracts society's attention, which echoes our protest. (cited in Cuevas, 2000)

Inner tubes, heavy padding, and plastic shields were used to push back the police. The confrontations with the police were largely symbolic, as the Yellow Bloc made a show of confronting police lines at their strongest point, protecting a four-lane bridge leading

directly to the conference centre with ATVs and thousands of police forces. The confrontation at this point was not intended to breach the police lines. Rather, it was intended to make a spectacular image of confrontation.

The "blue" bloc was organized along the lines of a "black bloc", adopting a more militant approach. The "blue bloc" was organized around less symbolic and more pragmatic lines, with the intent of disrupting the meetings using militant direct action, finding the weakest point in the police lines. The Blue Bloc fought with cobblestones, bottles, and barricades in pitched battles through the day.

The protests in Prague displayed a remarkable degree of creativity and flexibility, providing an important source of inspiration for activists in North America. These protests were important experiments in transgression. As David Graeber argues,

The efforts to destroy existing paradigms is usually quite self-conscious. Where once it seemed that the only alternatives to marching along with signs were either Gandhian nonviolent civil disobedience or outright insurrection, groups like the Direct Action Network, Reclaim the Streets, Black Blocs, or Tute Bianche have all, in their own ways, been trying to map out a completely new territory in between (Graeber, 2002, 67).

The protests were considered to be a success insofar diverse forms of action were accommodated and no single action dominated the spectrum. They successfully employed a "diversity of tactics" without falling into deep divisions. In part because of a long tradition of "property destruction" in European protests, the question of "violence" did not become a contentious issue.

*Quebec City: Anti-Capitalist Ascendancy*

Quebec has experienced a strong tradition of radical activism. In 1996, a province-wide student strike was organized, shutting down many universities and CEGEPs (similar to colleges) in response to the provincial government's attempts to cut funding. Amidst the wave of radicalism, a network of activists came together in the Collectifs d'Action Non-Violentes Autonomes (CANEVAS) to organize nonviolent direct action against corporate globalization (Conway, 518). In 1998, this group took on the name 'Operation SalAMI' with the dedicated purpose of shutting down the MAI meetings at a Montreal hotel utilizing nonviolent direct action. These actions helped to develop a quite experienced activist base which provided a solid foundation for organizing direct action in Quebec City. However, as I discussed in the previous chapter, splits were growing in these groups as activists became critical of SalAMI's "dogmatic nonviolence" and informal leadership (Conway, 2003).

Following Seattle, activists in Quebec began organizing protests against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) talks to be held in Quebec City in April 2001. The FTAA would effectively extend NAFTA across the whole Western Hemisphere. The Anti-Capitalist Convergence (CLAC in French) in Montreal and the Summit of the America's Welcoming Committee (CASA) in Quebec City began organizing for the FTAA protests months in advance. In January, 2001, a large "Consulta" brought together over 300 people to discuss the coming action. While the Consulta provided a forum for discussion, all decisions were made through "general assemblies" of the respective organizations. The general assemblies brought together a network of collectives and

individuals who agreed with the basis of unity. In their initial general assemblies, CLAC and CASA adopted a similar basis of unity committed to anti-capitalism, autonomy, and a "respect for a diversity of tactics". As translated from French, the CLAC basis of unity reads as follows:

1. The Anti-Capitalist Convergence (CLAC in French) is opposed to capitalism. We fundamentally reject a social and economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production and exchange. We reject a system driven by an exploitative logic that sees human beings as human capital, ecosystems as natural resources, and culture as simply a commodity. We reject the idea that the world is only valuable in terms of profit, competition and efficiency.
2. The CLAC also rejects the ideology of neo-liberalism, whereby corporations and investors are exempt from all political and social measures that interfere with their so-called "success".
3. The CLAC is anti-imperialist, opposed to patriarchy, and denounces all forms of exploitation and oppression. We assert a worldview based on the respect of our differences and the autonomy of groups, individuals and peoples. Our objective is to globalize our networks of resistance to corporate rule.
4. Respecting a diversity of tactics, the CLAC supports the use of a variety of creative initiatives, ranging between public education campaigns to direct action.
5. The CLAC is autonomous, decentralized and non-hierarchical. We encourage the involvement of anyone who accepts this statement of principles. We also encourage the participation of all individuals in working groups, in accord with their respective political affiliations.
6. With regards to the Summit of the Americas (April 2001) and the negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the CLAC adopts a confrontational attitude and rejects reformist alternatives such as lobbying which cannot have a major impact on anti-democratic processes. We intend to shut down the Summit of the Americas and to turn the FTAA negotiations into a non-event.

Here, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" moves beyond the demand for an autonomously organized anti-capitalist "bloc". The call for a "diversity of tactics" is established in a broader organizational unity.

A respect for a "diversity of tactics" is internalized in anti-capitalist organizing,

dissociating "anti-capitalism" from the "bloc" formation in protest. "Radicalism" is distinguished from "militancy" as a whole range of tactics including "popular education" can be considered "anti-capitalist" (Milstein, 2001). CLAC and CASA incorporated collectives working on a number of different levels. Building for the Quebec City protests, these groups engaged in a considerable amount of community outreach and popular education. In Quebec City, activists went door-to-door distributing leaflets, talking with local residents about the issues. A convergence centre was organized in Quebec City's working class district and a housing network extended across the city. A medical centre was set up, maintained by dozens of trained medics. Free food was provided. Organization spread through autonomous collectives extensively across the city. The Anti-Capitalist Convergence actively organized the infrastructure for protest utilizing a diversity of tactics, providing for multiple levels of engagement, beyond simply militant action.

Because CLAC advocated a respect for a "diversity of tactics" it was excluded from the broader coalition organizing action against the FTAA. The *Table de Convergence* brought together labour unions, NGOs, and nonviolent activists to organize the large mass demonstration on April 21 and the People's Summit. Following the precedent set in Seattle, the trade unions organized a large march of over 25,000 people to an empty parking lot. The People's Summit brought together various NGOs and social movement organizations in a 5 day long conference, preceding and during the official Summit of the Americas, to discuss alternatives to the FTAA agenda.

Despite the exclusion of groups advocating a respect for a "diversity of tactics" from the broader organizing coalitions, an agreement was reached establishing "protest zones" for different levels of action. A common argument against a diversity of tactics was that those utilizing more militant tactics could implicate nonviolent protesters in actions that they were unprepared to pursue. By segmenting the space of action, people could, in theory, decide on their own level of engagement. Drawing on a model that had been used in earlier protests in Montreal, the space for action was loosely segmented into three zones -- a "Green" zone, a "Yellow" zone, and a "Red" zone. These boundaries articulated a conventional spectrum of action -- "red" being a space for more militant confrontation, "yellow" being a space for nonviolent civil disobedience, and "green" being a safe space.

In contrast with Prague, the delineation of "zones" laid out a geography for action that was dissociated from clear strategies. The distinct zones in Quebec City did not proceed beyond a loose tactical identity. The call for "a diversity of tactics" was territorialized; it was disembodied from active relationships; it was laid out on a map in a photocopied pamphlet that was provided to protesters. Indeed, following the Quebec City protests, many people conflated the call for a "diversity of tactics" with the constitution of such territories.

These boundaries did not hold up. The topography of conflict could not be clearly referenced because the protesters did not have the privilege of setting the stage for action. Spaces of violence and nonviolence were determined in shifting relationships with the

police. Describing his experience with zones in Quebec City, one activist argues,

People had basically no idea which one was which. Everybody went to the Yellow, because everybody was going to the Yellow. Some individuals went up to red, threw some stuff, and got arrested very quickly ... People at the Green got attacked just as much as anyone else. So the police didn't respect a diversity of tactics. They had one tactic. And the wall was to fall down at the Yellow because that's where the masses of people were. The people instinctively worked as a mass and that's where the most effective action happened, at that point where people worked as a mass. And that was completely accidental. So, we can have a diversity of tactics; that's very nice, but the police don't (Interview 3).

Of course, more militant action was anticipated in the "red zone" and that's probably why a breach was carved out at the "yellow" zone. It was unanticipated. As confrontations at the fence grew more heated, the red zone expanded rapidly. The police frequently targeted activists in the Green Zone, generously covering a good portion of the city in a thick layer of tear gas. They used over 5,000 cans of tear gas over the course of two days. They targeted the street medics and closed down the medical center.

While the fence proved to be quite effective in keeping protesters out, it also provided a symbolic target that brought people together. A shared hatred of the fence encircling the conference centre and a large portion of the city incited thousands of activists to wade onto the tear gas saturated streets in attempts to disrupt the meetings. Activists were united in facing this looming target. In the midst of action, the question of a "diversity of tactics" suddenly seemed less pertinent. As one activist argues, "The events themselves overflowed the whole debate of 'diversity of tactics' and like nobody was talking about diversity of tactics when we were actually in Quebec City and having tear gas thrown at us, or what have you" (Interview 7).

Attempts to breach the fence received widespread support, even from those who had previously been critical of "property destruction" as a tactic. Notably, Maude Barlow from the Council of Canadians, who had previously condemned the use of property destruction<sup>6</sup>, acknowledged a space for these tactics in her speech in Quebec City. Rather than calling for the arrest of more militant demonstrators as she did in Seattle, Barlow acknowledged that it was not for her to try to control or regulate protesters. "There was some vandalism yesterday, yes," she argued, "But where was the first vandalism? The first vandalism was in that scar of a wall they put up in our beautiful city. That wall was the first vandalism"(Barlow, 2001). Those who came together to tear down this "public disgrace" were consequently portrayed as doing a "public service". Local residents came out of their houses to provide activists with water and a place to hide; no doubt, all the community organizing undertaken by CLAC and CASA had paid off. In this case, "property destruction" was often looked upon in a more favorable or sympathetic light.

"Anti-capitalism" played a central role in Quebec City, laying the groundwork for mass-based support through deepening organizing efforts. Cindy Milstein argues,

[B]y working locally and globally, by nurturing diversity in the arms of an explicitly anti-authoritarian politics, CLAC/CASA, with the help of a flimsy fence that became a mighty symbol, motivated thousands who came to and live in Quebec City to hoist the anti-capitalist banner onto center stage. Something *did* start in Quebec -- a distinctly radical movement in North America (Milstein, 2001)

Nevertheless, the centrality of anti-capitalism in Quebec City remained tied to the specific circumstances of the action. "Anti-capitalism" grew out of the symbolic power of the fence. "Anti-capitalism" continued to be conflated with "militancy". Following

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<sup>6</sup>Reflecting on the Seattle protests, Barlow and Clarke argued, "To the distress of local residents and peaceful demonstrators, the police did not arrest these people, but they used the media's property-damage images to justify their brutal crackdown against the peaceful majority" (Barlow & Clarke, 2001, 13).

the protests in Quebec City, LA Kauffman warned of a "growing mystique of insurrection" (Kauffman, 2001). The call for more militant action became predominant, but it was increasingly detached from a clear strategy.

### *Changing contexts*

The limits of this model of action were becoming evident. "With every summit, with every escalation of security," activist Ray Cunningham argued, "the conditions that made Seattle possible are getting further away" (Cunningham, 2002, 36). The "summit hopping" strategy was increasingly criticized in the movement. Activists pointed to the inherent privilege involved in traveling from meeting to meeting, protest to protest. Few could afford to take the time off, travel the long distances, or cross the heavily patrolled border. Moreover, "summit hopping" had diverted important resources that could be used in local organizing. The actions remained spectacular, shifting from one city to the next without laying down roots in local struggles. It was time, many activists argued, to intensify organizing on a local level.

Even prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the borders were closing, as activists were turned away from Prague, Quebec City, and Genoa. Tony Blair and other world leaders expressed frustration at the continuing disruption of their meetings by an "anarchists' traveling circus". Police forces were increasingly coordinated and there was talk by the EU of creating laws that would prevent "known troublemakers" from crossing borders.

The police came to anticipate the protesters' tactics. The area surrounding

meetings became increasingly militarized. Large barricades were defended by thousands of police officers, military, and secret police. Police repression intensified. Organizing centres were shut down and hundreds of activists were preemptively arrested. In the protests against the EU in Gothenberg, Sweden, the police used live ammunition.

### *Genoa*

This would culminate in the widespread violence that was exhibited in Genoa during the G8 protests in July 2001, where the Italian police became notorious for their brutality. A huge fence cut across the city surrounding the meeting area and a significant part of the city in a heavily militarized "Red Zone" guarded by over 20,000 police officers, soldiers, and Carabinieri. Residents required special ID in order to get in and out of the city; however, they were advised to simply "go on vacation".

The protests were organized by a broad coalition of trade unions, NGOs, and activists through the Genoa Social Forum (GSF). Accommodations for the protesters were provided by the city of Genoa. Drawing on the experiences in DC, Prague, and Quebec City, the GSF divided into four separate quadrants surrounding the Red Zone. A place for militant direct action was notably absent as the GSF attempted to maintain nonviolent guidelines for protest. A Black Bloc would only come together at the last minute.

The protests were also segmented, with different protests occurring on different days. The first day of protests was organized in support of the rights of illegal

immigrants. However, few illegal immigrants turned out, intimidated by the police. In these protests, a Black Bloc played an important role in serving as a buffer between the police and the other protesters, actively deescalating conflicts.

The following day, July 21, large protests, bringing together nearly 100,000 people, crossed through the city from four separate directions. The police attacked without warning, indiscriminately lashing out at the crowd with tear gas, rubber bullets, water cannons, and batons. There were accounts of *cabieneri* driving armored cars at high speeds into crowds of nonviolent protesters. There were accounts of torture in the prisons. Later that evening, there was the notorious incident at Diaz School. The police raided the media centre and the temporary residence that had been provided by the city for nonviolent protesters. They brutally assaulted sleeping protesters, leaving behind broken teeth and blood streaked stains on the walls. At the end of it all, there were over 300 arrested and 600 wounded.

In response to the rampant police violence, the city exploded in widespread riots. Action moved from symbolic targets to generalized violence. Banks, cars, bus stops, telephones were all targeted. While some of this can be attributed to the Black Bloc, in the face of widespread police repression, people were brought together. In fact, the protests on Friday have been described as more of a "riot".

These riots were not made by either the black block or the Tute Bianche. Instead, a wide variety of people took part in these--some were Tute Bianche who got fucked off with their usual staged-confrontation and abandoned their formations, others were people who left the black bloc because vandalism became too ritualistic, others were members of reformist organizations and parties who got outraged

by the police violence and chose to respond in the best possible etc etc (K, 2001, 35).

As one young activist ran at a police car with a fire extinguisher, he was shot in the head. The police car then drove over his body twice to ensure that he was dead. The death of Carlo Giuliani reverberated widely across the movement. Some treated him as a martyr. Others portrayed him as an tragic victim who lost his life as a result of the provocation of a violent minority. "Are you happy that you provoked police brutality?", exclaimed Susan George from the French organization ATTAC, "Are you happy that you finally have a martyr?" (Albertani, 586). Things were getting more polarized. With intensifying police repression, people were becoming wary about the use of more disruptive tactics.

### *Post-911*

The ruling bloc held meetings in increasingly remote and inaccessible locations. The next G8 meetings were organized Kananaskis which was transformed into a temporary mountain fortress, in the conservative heartland of the country. The next WTO meetings were to take place in the Middle Eastern dictatorship of Qatar, where demonstrations were not permitted. With meetings taking place in such remote locations, activists emphasized the importance of organizing actions in other places. Of course, the "Global" Days of Action had been organized before. However, it is also notable to what extent action was centered on a particular location -- Seattle, DC, Prague, Quebec City, Genoa. Actions were organized for the upcoming G8 meeting in both Kananaskis and Ottawa.

In this changing context, the strategic aims of action became increasingly unclear. The call for a "diversity of tactics" became an 'empty signifier'. One CLAC organizer argues, that the concept of a "diversity of tactics" "has taken on a lot more meaning, post-our-use than it ever meant to have taken" (Interview 1). On the one hand, it was increasingly conflated with militant direct action. As one activist argues, "Now, when you say "diversity of tactics", people think it's fighting with the police, that's what it's become in the shorthand" (Interview 3). On the other hand, the strategic aim of action became unclear -- diversity for diversity's sake.

The events of September 11, 2001 took the wind out of the sails of the anti-globalization movement. Prior to September 11, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" had tied together a wide range of activists in a broad movement against capitalism. But in an emerging context of police repression and patriotism, the same call rang hollow. With the looming threat of terrorism, legislation was passed in Canada and the United States granting the police and security agencies extensive new powers. The line between direct action and terrorism became blurry. Many groups backed away from mass mobilizations altogether. The next large scale mobilizations, scheduled to take place in Washington DC at the end of September against the IMF/World Bank were canceled. Many NGOs and trade unions remained leery of protesting and civil disobedience in this climate.

The mountain fortress of Kananaskis, ringed by an interminable array of security checkpoints, provided a daunting target for those seeking to disrupt the meeting. The

surrounding area was sparsely populated, and extremely conservative. In Alberta, activists could expect little support from the local population. In fact, the City of Calgary, where action would be organized, even denied simple requests for space in the parks. They denied the trade unions a permit for a "family friendly" event. Moreover, civil liberties were being rampantly curtailed under the looming threat of terrorism. Snipers were given orders to shoot on sight.

In this context, the model for action derived from Seattle no longer proved to be effective. As Starhawk argues,

The recent protests in Alberta against the G8, the heads of the eight most industrialized countries, are an example of what happens when we apply organizing models that don't actually fit the situation we're in. When we cook for a hotter fire than we actually have, we end up with porridge that is colder than it needs to be (Starhawk, 2002).

In organizing for this action, Alberta activists came together in an "Anti-Capitalist Caucus" calling for a "respect for a diversity of tactics". Yet what "anti-capitalism" or "diversity of tactics" meant in this context remained unclear. As one participant argues,

The political orientation of Calgary based organizers group could be largely summed up by two political concepts which for them underlined the best way to confront the G8: commitment to "anti-capitalism" and to a "diversity of tactics". However, there was never any clear political elaboration or discussion of what these terms actually meant, rather, these terms came to be treated as fetishized commandments which had fallen from the skies of Quebec City (Keefer, 2002).

Unable to effectively disrupt the G8 meetings, activists instead attempted to organize a 'snake march' aiming at 'economic disruption' in downtown Calgary.

They borrowed the "snake march" from a October 16 (O16) protest in Toronto, organized by the radical Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP). The "snake march"

was organized as a way of disrupting the flow of everyday business through a quick moving and highly organized march, weaving its way through the streets of Toronto's financial district. The 'snake march' proved to be quite influential for activists in Canada and the United States, although the degree of organization that went into the October actions was often overlooked by activists in other areas, who looked to the "snake march" as a more spontaneous form of march. The "snake march" in Calgary proved to be fairly small and relatively disorganized, easily dominated by the large police presence.

In Kananaskis, the call for a "diversity of tactics" was detached from a coherent strategy. While in Quebec City, the call for a "diversity of tactics" entailed a clear strategic target for militant direct action, in Calgary there was no clear connection between direct action and an articulated strategic aim. Hence, the push to direct action imploded in a series of shocking spectacles. "Disruption" was fetishized, serving as a means of personal catharsis that was deemed effective in and for itself. Some activists chose to strip naked in front of The Gap (Keefer, 2002). Others covered themselves in mud and screamed. A game of anarchist soccer was organized in the streets. While the expression of militant direct action in other contexts was able to draw support from other activists, the local population, and the general public, in this case, the fetishization of "disruption" served to marginalize activists from the communities that they were trying to reach.

The "Take the Capital!" actions in Ottawa appeared more promising. Ottawa provided a hub for action which remained relatively accessible to many activists on the

east coast. The significant distance separating the actions in Ottawa from the meetings in Kananaskis made a strategy of disruption impossible. However, it potentially opened the doors for other strategies which were not so dependent on being in the same general vicinity as world leaders. The "Take the Capital" action drew inspiration and support from CLAC in Montreal. "Consultas" were organized to prepare for the event in an open forum.

In their call to action, activists reinforced a commitment to a "diversity of tactics", arguing,

We are organizing on the basis of a respect for a diversity of tactics, meaning manifold forms of resistance in mutual solidarity and respect, while aiming to ensure the safety and defense of all participants. (Take the Capital Call to Action, 2002).

Here, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" was extended to include a commitment to "safety and defense". This coincided with a call for forms of action that "maximized respect for life and oppressed people's rights" which had recently emerged from the PGA conference in September. It was no longer presumed that the segmentation of space, the abstract delineation of a "green zone" necessarily ensured the safety of protesters. Safety was something that had to be actively constructed. The protests were organized to take place on different days.

Nevertheless, in this context, the call for a "diversity of tactics" remained highly controversial. The Ottawa protests brought together approximately 4,000 people in a "snake march" through downtown Ottawa. While the Ottawa actions were described in the corporate media as a "largely orderly", "peaceful" march, many groups refused to

participate in the actions (Sevitt & Burgess, 2002). In the rapidly changing context, the call for "diversity of tactics" had faded. It could no longer serve as a basis of solidarity that groups would accept, however unwillingly, in seeking to be part of a broader action.

## **Conclusion**

For a few years there was a tremendous shift towards directly democratic and decentralized modes of protest in the United States and Canada. Lateral networks solidified and expanded constructing temporary spaces of autonomy in a wave of spectacular actions. In this context, it became quite difficult for any single group to maintain control or claim represent the "movement". This was manifested in a very concrete form on the streets. While some groups attempted to draw clear boundaries around the "movement", others responded by defending the autonomous decision making power of the different groups involved. However, the tremendous success of these actions could only go on for so long before the mechanisms of control and mediation were restructured and adapted to the situation. The failure of radical groups to extend direct action beyond protest in any clear strategic vision led to the resurgence of collective action largely oriented towards representative modes of struggle.

### *Anti-Globalization*

Building from the mid-1990s, radical undercurrents have bubbled to the surface in the advanced capitalist countries, providing a spectacular challenge to the once apparently inevitable process of "globalization". The protest movement brought together wide-ranging groups employing a diversity of tactics. In these large-scale actions, no organizational unity could be achieved. Rather, these groups became a force through their convergence in a shared time and space, building lateral forms of organization enabling the coordination and communication of autonomous actions. Direct action posed a powerful example, as thousands converged to directly challenge the emergence

of a undemocratic supranational order, while at the same time constructing directly democratic alternatives. However, these actions remained profoundly limited, fragmented and episodic, unable to connect with everyday struggles.

The distinct shape that these protests have taken reflects broader historical developments. The rise of neoliberalism has entailed the privatization of social services, the restriction of State spending, and the deregulation of the economy, removing tariffs and other "trade barriers". Through institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, the neoliberal program is administered on an international scale. A broader supranational order emerges, which Hardt and Negri refer to as "Empire". The organization and institutions from past struggles, such as trade unions and NGOs, providing avenues for the mediation of conflict, directly appealing to the State as representatives of public interest, have largely been excluded from the emerging supranational institutions and agreements.

With diminishing powers of mediation, there has been a shift towards more contentious politics. The organizations and institutions that have been responsible for the mediation of conflict have increasingly come together to organize collective action in opposition to the neoliberal project from below while at the same time continuing to lobby the government from above. These groups have helped to provide the infrastructure for large scale actions in the advanced capitalist countries. The collapse of the Keynesian State and the subsequent declining power of mediation have also created the foundations for a strong direct action movement, organizing alternatives immediately

without appealing to an external mediator such as the State. Lateral networks were strengthened and developed through the 1990s, establishing a loose global network of resistance. By the late 1990s, a series of Global Days of Action were organized, actively employing more confrontational tactics. With the increasingly flat organization of action, focusing on creating spaces of autonomy, the boundaries between violence and nonviolence blurred.

The meetings of the World Trade Organization in Seattle in November 1999 provided a spectacular convergence point for these diverse networks, effectively stealing the global spotlight, presenting a model for collective action that would be widely emulated in future protests in the advanced capitalist countries. These protests effectively called into question the universality of the neoliberal program of "globalization", in part, through the effective use of "direct action", disrupting the meetings of world leaders and directly constituting the infrastructure for collective action through decentralized networks. Through these protests a radical "anti-capitalist" movement was able to grow and develop.

Through the proliferation of autonomous groups, no organizational unity could be achieved in protest. In this context, the call for a "diversity of tactics" became a "non-negotiable" basis for unity (Conway, 2003, 505). The call for a "diversity of tactics" gained acceptance in light of the success of direct action tactics, tactics which could not be managed through top-down hierarchies or transcendent organization. These tactics were successful through the coordination of action via lateral networks in a manner that

effectively disrupted and helped to destabilize the apparently universal project of "globalization". Thus, there was a push to maintain momentum and these diverse groups organized and came together again in more well coordinated actions. In this context, the call to respect for a "diversity of tactics" was an appeal not to fall back on marginalization and exclusion, creating divisions in the "movement"; rather, it reflected the push to enable autonomous groups to pursue their own lines of action through increasing communication and coordination.

The call to "respect a diversity of tactics" reflected a key moment, when the power of lateral networks effectively broke through, converging in collective action, and providing a model that would be widely emulated. It reflected an extensive model for action that could grow rapidly on a global scale, a way of moving that did not collapse under national, parochial or institutional boundaries. And yet it was not the power of these lateral networks in themselves that proved to be effective. It was the effective use of direct action that created space for the solidarity and support of autonomous groups. The protests opened up a space where radical networks could flourish.

Yet the call to "respect a diversity of tactics" had limits. It reflected the manifestation of power, which remained fragmented and episodic. In the United States and Canada, "direct action" remained a largely spectacular display. These actions often remained profoundly detached from everyday struggles. "The problem with the anti-globalization movement," Leo Panitch argues, "is not really its alleged orientation to violence, but rather its difficulty in figuring out how to go beyond protest" (2002, 29).

The call for a "diversity of tactics" primarily referred to the use of diverse tactics in organizing protests. The growth and development of a "diversity of tactics" remained dependent on the continuing power of a particular model of action. While the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" opened up a flexible tactical repertoire, rejecting the power of absolutes, its very flexibility imploded in the immediate context of action. Very often the efficacy of a strategy of disruption was taken for granted. The call for a "diversity of tactics" was often conflated with the call for militant direct action.

Insofar as a particular model of collective action was taken for granted, the call for a "diversity of tactics" could take on the impression that "anything goes". Distinct tactical orientations could be conflated with movement identities, leading to the assumption of rigid and inflexible forms of action, detached from the specific context. If every group knows what tactics work best for them, then there is no need for communication or coordination; there is no need to build a broader strategy. Strategy risks being reduced to the simple facilitation of autonomous groups. It should be remembered that the direct action in Seattle was tightly coordinated, bringing together autonomous groups in a clearly laid out plan, ensuring that every intersection was locked down, reinforcing weak points in constant communication. In the protests that followed a clear strategy gave way to more spontaneous forms of confrontation. The power of militant direct action became largely taken for granted.

### *Empire to Imperialism?*

The explosive power of these protests was quickly contained by the ruling bloc

through intensifying repression, closing borders, and moving meetings to increasingly inaccessible locations. The State tried to adapt, ensuring that there would not be another "Seattle". In this changing context, the strategy of "summit hopping" could not be sustained. The call for a "diversity of tactics" was increasingly separated from a clear strategy and direct action fell in on itself, manifesting itself in the expression of tactical purity, what Sanbonmatsu describes as a "romantic expressivism" (Sanbonmatsu, 2004). With the repressive climate emerging following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the call for a "diversity of tactics" was no longer widely echoed.

The concept of "globalization", once appearing as inevitable, imploded in a resurgence of unilateralism, nationalism, and protectionism. In Cancun, 2003, the World Trade Organization meetings reached an impasse as a broad coalition of "developing" countries came together, forming the G20, in resistance to the agenda imposed by the advanced capitalist countries. In many parts of the world, resistance to these initiatives was galvanized through powerful movements. Strong resistance movements were building in Latin America. Governments were ousted by popular movements in Argentina and Bolivia, fighting the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programs and the privatization of State services. Social democratic governments were voted into power in Brazil and Venezuela, actively challenging US imperialism. As such, talks around the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) collapsed, leading the US and Canada to pursue bilateral trade agreements while considering less binding agreements such as what became known as "FTAA lite", and working towards a Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the Empire envisioned by Hardt and Negri seems somehow misplaced. They fail to adequately take into account the cracks that continue to fracture the apparently supranational order. They underestimate the continuing power of the advanced capitalist "centres", fighting for control over a exploitable "periphery". This was most clearly exemplified in the unilateral decision of the United States government to invade Iraq despite its failure to gain the support of the United Nations. It could be seen in the American flags pinned to collars and the yellow "support our troops" bumper stickers that can be seen in abundance in US parking lots, but it could also be seen in the rising tide of "anti-Americanism" around the world. The focus of the global movement became fighting US imperialism.

### *Popular Fronts*

In the emerging context, movements in the United States and Canada have shifted away from a "diversity of tactics" and towards a broad unity, a popular front oriented towards broad representative structures. The strategic focus has shifted towards building a popular front grounded in recognition and demonstration mediated by external organizational structures. This is reflected both in the aspirations to global recognition under the World Social Forum and in the massive protests that emerged in opposition to the US invasion of Iraq. The World Social Forum envisages "another world" by aspiring to constitute an over-arching umbrella from where neoliberalism can be effectively challenged; where diverse struggles can be recognized and diverse knowledges can be valorized. Likewise, the massive protests against the war have taken on the more

conventional form of "demonstration", appealing to the State through sheer numbers rather than directly destabilizing the basis for sovereignty at its root. With the influx of millions of people around the world into the "anti-war" movement, the focus of protests rapidly shifted, especially in the United States, from a call for a "diversity of tactics" to a broad popular front opposing the war. Direct action has appeared as less prominent in these protests. A clear and popular strategy of disruption and destabilization has been lacking in Canada and the United States.

One of the most prominent products of the whole anti-globalization period has been the World Social Forum (WSF). Scheduled to coincide with the meetings of the World Economic Forum (WEF), the WSF has come together every January, beginning in 2001, to discuss alternatives to the neoliberal project. The WSF was initially spearheaded by a number of large organizations including the French Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens (ATTAC) and the Brazilian Worker's Party (PT). The PT controlled the local government in Porto Alegre, where it had become recognized for its innovative use of participatory budgets, and would later take control of the national government with the election of PT presidential candidate Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva in 2002.

The WSF was organized as a response to criticisms that the "anti-globalization" movement did not pose any positive alternatives to capitalist globalization. Under the slogan, 'Another World is Possible', the WSF organizing committee sought to provide a forum where various movements can come together, network, and build the basis for

such alternatives. Sousa Santos argues that the WSF valorizes other forms of knowledge, consequently fighting the "closed horizon", the "anti-utopian utopia", the "monoculture" of neoliberalism (Sousa Santos, 2003). It provides a forum for the *recognition* of other ways of living.

The first WSF was organized in January 2001 in Porto Alegre, bringing together over 12,000 people from around the world. In 2002, the numbers would swell to over 60,000. The WSF strives for inclusion, attempting to bring all struggles together in a bottom-up and anti-reductive fashion. The WSF Charter of Principles adopted in June, 2001 read,

9) The World Social Forum will always be a forum open to pluralism and to the diversity of activities and ways of engaging of the organisations and movements that decide to participate in it, as well as the diversity of genders, ethnicities, cultures, generations and physical capacities, providing they abide by this Charter of Principles. Neither party representations nor military organisations shall participate in the Forum. Government leaders and members of legislatures who accept the commitments of this Charter may be invited to participate in a personal capacity (WSF Charter of Principles).

The WSF was organized through a series of popular assemblies and workshops; however, critics of the WSF often point out that the structure and major proposals have largely been dominated by the self-appointed WSF organizing committee (Albert, 2003).

The barriers to participation have been frequently problematized and the WSF has been working to make meetings more participatory. The next WSF meetings are scheduled to take place in a number of different cities around the world, enabling greater participation. Social forums have also been organized on a smaller scale, continentally (Asia, Africa, Europe), regionally (Northwestern Social Forum) and municipally (Boston

Social Forum). Notably absent is a North America Social Forum. The social forum movement has never really taken hold in North America, where the separation of groups by great distances, the absence of strong popular movements beyond the protests, and ongoing divisions have prevented groups from coming together.

The focus on the *inclusion* and *recognition* of diverse struggles and knowledge in a broader forum remains limited insofar as these movements remain isolated, disconnected from a strategy that can effectively bring them together on a more organic level. While the World Social Forum has sought the inclusion of diverse struggles, the process of inclusion remains contentious. While the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" reflected the convergence of diverse groups, on their own terms, the WSF has been criticized for its incorporation of diverse groups under a large social democratic umbrella. In fact, many more radical groups have boycotted the WSF altogether, posing the need for an explicitly "anti-capitalist" forum or network (Albert, 2003; Sundaram, 2003). This would later inspire the formation of the "Life After Capitalism" conference, held in conjunction with the massive protests against the Republican National Convention in New York in August, 2004.

From "anti-globalization" and "anti-capitalism" to "anti-war" and "anti-imperialism", the locus of opposition has expanded, incorporating millions of people. And yet the radical spirit that was so pervasive in Seattle, the internationalism, the feeling of changing the world, has largely been absent. While opposition to "globalization" brought into focus a broader system of economic exploitation leading to a growing "anti-

capitalist" perspective, the opposition to "war" has often been restricted to "war" as a specific, conjunctural decision made by President George W. Bush. By focusing on "imperialism", some have attempted to point to a deeper roots of the war; however, this position has often been restricted to US imperialism. A strategy of direct action, destabilizing the relations of ruling while directly constructing alternatives has been limited. The numbers of people protesting against the war have been unprecedented in world history. The protests on February 15, 2003 were noted by the 2004 Guinness Book of World Records to be the largest in history, bringing together over ten million people in 800 cities around the world... and yet the war still went ahead.

There has been a shift from a respect for a "diversity of tactics", constructing an expansive solidarity based in autonomy, to a politics of inclusion, incorporating diverse groups under a broad umbrella. In the United States the large anti-war marches have been organized by coalitions such as Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (ANSWER)<sup>7</sup>. The radical impetus of direct action, destabilizing while directly constituting alternatives has given way to a more conventional electoralism. In the United States, the left has united in a sort of popular front in opposition to George W. Bush, Anybody But Bush (ABB), giving ascendancy to the Democratic Party as the only power that is capable of unseating him. The large groups and organizations that had previously provided resources for more confrontational actions shifted their focus to "rocking the vote". With the reelection of George W. Bush in November 2004, opposition in the United States has largely deflated. In Canada, social movements have

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<sup>7</sup>Initiated by the International Action Center/World Worker's Party.

largely limited themselves to provincial struggles.

The call for a "diversity of tactics" has remained influential in areas with more radical traditions, most notably in San Francisco and Montreal. On March 20, 2003 anti-war protesters in San Francisco attempted to shut down the business district, leading to over 1,600 arrests. In Montreal, the Anti-Capitalist Convergence (CLAC) has continued to organize more confrontational actions against the provincial government and has recently played an important role in the recent large scale student strikes that shutdown the province's post-secondary institutions.

In many other areas, more radical groups have attempted to challenge the hegemony of large coalitions, by organizing protests and direct action separately. One popular tactic has been "feeder marches", organizing separate marches that then feed into the broader demonstrations, creating a sense of autonomy while at the same time remaining a part of the broader protest (Williams, 2004). However, the very fact that these were "feeder" marches, marches predicated on the formation of a separate and radical identity, *feeding* into a broader demonstration, often seems to validate the marginality of these more radical demonstrations.

### *Trajectories*

The call for a "diversity of tactics" no longer rings as loudly as it did only a few years ago. However, it should not be presumed that the problems it has attempted to address have disappeared. Through this paper, I have sought to ground the emergence of this discourse in a broader historical context. I have shown its roots in the resistance to a

broad neoliberal project seeking to enable the free movement of capital. This has brought about the convergence of diverse groups in common struggle. These forces came together at a particular conjuncture and effectively challenged the neoliberal project through the intersection of diverse strategies. While this point of convergence has been largely displaced through the aggressive unilateralism of an imperial State, the deeper antagonisms remain.

The anti-globalization movement inspired thousands of people in the United States and Canada to pursue a politics of direct action. Extensive networks have grown and developed. Dozens of listservs, newspapers, and theoretical journals have grown from the protest movement. Infoshops, Independent Media Centers, and other alternative communication networks have formed. Many more permanent organizations and networks solidified, some along explicitly "anti-capitalist" lines, modeling CLAC. Others have organized around anarchist lines such as the NorthWestern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC), the Federation of Revolutionary Anarchist Collectives of the Great Lakes Region (FRAC) and Bring the Ruckus. And many groups such as No One is Illegal have formed around specific issues popularized in the "anti-globalization" struggles.

However, all too often the network form of the movement is fetishized, treated as an object, deemed to be effective in and for itself. Certainly, the presence of strong networks of resistance are critical in establishing a basis for any sort of direct action; but it is not enough. The formation of networks can provide the nonhierarchical

infrastructure for action; however, a broader solidarity, a solidarity that is connected by a "thousand veins" must be actively constructed through effective action. Similarly, a position of recognition and inclusion remains limited insofar as it remains focused on valorizing what already exists rather than building new forms of action that are capable of constructing an alternative power that directly challenges the relations of ruling, as if simply bringing diverse groups together in itself is capable of changing the world.

Despite the criticisms of "summit-hopping", it is often forgotten that the "anti-globalization" movement took the global spotlight through the *convergence* of large numbers of people in a shared time and space, achieving a presence that could not be accomplished through the actions of any single group on its own. One activist describes these protests as a "shortcut", a way of bringing together large numbers of people without needing to do as much groundwork on a local level (Interview 4). Even in the apparently shattered field of postmodern simulacra, "mass" action remains a powerful force.

### *Propaganda by Deed*

Propaganda by the deed is a mighty means of rousing the popular consciousness . . . Prior to the Paris Commune, who in France was conversant with the principle of communal autonomy? No one. Yet Proudhon had written magnificent books. Who read those books? A handful of literati. But once the idea was brought into open air, in the heart of the capital, onto the steps of the City Hall, when it took on flesh and life, it shook the peasant in his cottage, the worker at his fire side, and peasants and workers alike had to reflect on this huge question mark posted in the public square. Now the idea made inroads. In France, right around the world, for or against, everybody has picked his side... (Paul Brousse, 2005 [1877], 151)

The anarchist notion of "propaganda by deed" did not always mean blowing things up and assassinating high government officials. In fact, the short lived Paris

Commune of 1871 served as the initial prototype for "propaganda by deed", providing a model for revolutionaries around the world, immediately in action (Avrich, 1988, 243). Emerging out of the distasteful Franco-Prussian War, the workers armed themselves and took control of Paris, organizing workshops, free schools, reducing working hours and experimenting with forms of workers' control. The Paris Commune inspired thousands of revolutionaries in the decades that followed, crossing national and ideological boundaries, from Karl Marx to Bakunin, from the Spanish Civil War to the events in Paris in May, 1968.

The Paris Commune provided a potent example, a model to be emulated by the world, invigorating radical movements around the world. It made anarchists out of the Russian scientist Petr Kropotkin and the Italian Errico Malatesta (Avrich, 1988, 233). French and Italian anarchists initially referred to "propaganda by deed" in a collective sense, developing models that could be directly appropriated by others. "Propaganda by deed" emphasizes what Charles Tilly (1978) describes as *modular* forms of action, actions that could be taken and emulated in other parts of the world. Rather than seeking total inclusion, "propaganda by deed" leads by example. A space for convergence is constructed beyond ideological boundaries directly constructing a "collective will", what Gramsci looks to as the basis for counter-hegemony. Only later would "propaganda by deed" be conflated with "revolutionary" violence as it was predominantly adopted by individualist anarchists. As if "revolutionary" violence in itself, destabilized the system and inspired thousands to take arms.

Collective action moves in cycles, as Sidney Tarrow (1998) notes, in which innovative tactics are popularized and diffused across the populace. To the extent that action is able to effectively destabilize the existing regime while building alternatives, it grows; it is taken and applied in other places. Spaces of autonomy are established through acts of transgression. However, these acts only extend so far. Authorities adapt and attempt to contain this resistance. Movements face intensifying repression, cooption, and routinization.

The explosion of protests that swept around the world at the cusp of a new millennium resounded as a faint echo to "the explosion" of the 1960s looked upon with hope by Henri Lefebvre (1969), as a faint echo of the mass strikes which inspired Rosa Luxemburg (1906), as a faint echo of the Paris Commune (1871) which inspired so many before. The mass protests were experiments in 'propaganda by deed', presenting a model of "communal autonomy" to the world, showing alternatives directly in action. These actions temporarily cracked through the apparently limitless horizon of neoliberalism. And yet these networks did not extend deeply into everyday life.

The call to respect a "diversity of tactics" remains limited insofar as it fails to recognize the need for a point of popular convergence in which a "collective will" can manifest itself, a basis from where relations of resistance can be extended deep into everyday life. Similar assumptions have been made in the World Social Forum and the antiwar protests, where it is simply assumed that the mere presence of diverse groups and networks, provides a basis for effective struggle. The call for a "diversity of tactics"

temporarily opened up new possibilities for action, however, it remained dependent on the continued efficacy of direct action in a constantly changing climate. Without ceaseless experimentation and analysis, identifying key points of rupture and seeking to extend them, the call to respect a "diversity of tactics" remains meaningless.

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