

After the Porto Alegre Meetings: The Challenges of Popular Movements



Texts edited by Pierre Beaudet (Intercoll)

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Introduction

He who fights can lose, but he who does not fight has already lost.

Bertolt Brecht

Last January, a *Social Forum of Resistances* took place in Porto Alegre at the instigation of Brazilian popular movements. Within the framework of this Forum, a two-day-long seminar was organised by *Ação educativa* (Brazil), in collaboration with several networks, including the *Transnational Institute*, *Systemic Alternatives*, *Intercoll*, *Alternative Information Development Center*, *People's Dialogue* and several others.

The International Council of the World Social Forum met on January 20 and 21, 2017, in Porto Alegre. Work committees were put into place beforehand to facilitate this discussion on the functioning of the Forum, its ambitions and its objectives. Reports on the structure of the Forum, the secretariat, information, and communication were discussed.

A commission on the global situation prepared two reports that were discussed. These reports were prepared by contributions from some forty people and synthesised by Pierre Beaudet (Intercoll). The first analytical report contains extracts from the contributions in their own language. The second synthesising report was present in English, Spanish and French. These two reports were discussed at the International Council¹.

During the same period, from 17 to 22 January 2017, a *Social Forum of Resistances* took place at Porto Alegre at the instigation of Brazilian popular movements. Within the framework of this Forum, a two-day-long seminar was organised by *Ação educativa* (Brazil), in collaboration with several networks, including the *Transnational Institute*, *Systemic Alternatives*, *Intercoll*, *Alternative Information Development Center*, *People's Dialogue* and several others.

This meeting is part of a panoramic vision of the current global situation through the perspectives of the popular movements of each region : South America, North America, sub-Saharan Africa, Maghreb-Mashriq, Europe, South Asia and East Asia.

The dossier presented here is a synthesis of these analyses in an attempt to identify a number of major trends. It is this particular synthesis that was discussed at Porto Alegre. The text that follows recalls the principal conclusions of the discussion, which were (and this was normal) enormously marked by the Latin-American context, taking into account the place and the participants in the meetings.

Pierre Beaudet (Intercoll)

¹ The reports are available at the following link : El mundo visto desde abajo : esquema de informe para el CI del FSM (<http://intercoll.net/> El-mundo-visto-desde-abajo-esquema-de-informe-para-el-Comite-internacional-del-FSM).

Hypotheses and Trends

Pierre Beaudet

Differentiated according to national situations, a vast reorganisation of systems of capitalist power, concerning governance, political economy, culture, and rights, is taking place. These are imposed by politicians, laws, and regulations, repressive measures. They also appear, in the cultural universe, as so many markers : symbols, values, received ideas. Today, this reorganisation occurs in the wake of the crisis triggered by the financial crash of 2007-2008.

This crisis now affects all the spaces of a globalised capitalism dominated by the most determined and most strongly armed, predatory and imperialist faction of the planet. Before this, the standards of new resistances that are taking form all over the world are being raised.



The assault

We see it every day : those in power, in order to manage this crisis, have set forth a generalised offensive against the middle and working classes: an assault on salaries and working conditions, mass unemployment, privatization of resources, deregulation, debt. This restructuring also includes the imposition of commercial treaties (so-called "free trade", totally unequal, which sees to it that the norms and imperatives of neoliberalism are imposed.) It also integrates, in the name of the accumulation of short-term profit, poor handling of the environmental crisis, which threatens the conditions of the reproduction of life on Earth. Meanwhile, these neoliberal policies, which are themselves responsible for the crisis, are being "reinvented" under a new label, which becomes, in the North, "austerity", and which is perpetuated in the South as that which we have known for a long time, "structural adjustment".

From this follows the worsening of gaps, persistent poverty, exclusion and the degradation of the environment to the point that, according to Geneviève Azam, it is the reproduction of life itself that is at stake.

An Unstable World

None of this arises “naturally”, but rather results from a strong imperialist system whose objective is to accelerate predation through a vast range of military, political, economic, environmental and cultural aggressions. This present offensive takes an aggressive face illustrated in the figure of the new president of the United States, Donald Trump. This can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that American imperialism has lost its exclusive monopoly on power. De facto, the world of 2017 has become multi-polar, despite all the United States’ current efforts to reduce the capacities of certain countries called “emergent” and, above all, of its strongest competitors, such as China and Russia.

Drifting

In an earlier period, Keynesian policies in the North and a semi-decolonisation in the South were, under the pressure of the people, a response to the preceding great crisis. Today, certain (minoritarian) voices propose to return to a “neo-Keynesianism” that would be, at the same time, a “green capitalism”. In fact, the dominant majority are confident that they have a favorable balance of power. This confidence of the dominant majority in their own power is sometimes shaken, as we note, more and more, the latent and even open crisis of capitalist and imperialist governance². At the end of the line, in any case for the moment, those in power estimate that the upheavals of the system do not benefit popular movements—all the more so as they metamorphosise into a “neo-authoritarian” powers, marginalising traditional institutions of liberal democracy.

Neo-Authoritarianism in Brazil and Argentina

The new government resulting from the “constitutional coup” in Brazil in 2016 marks the return to the neoliberal years of the 1990s, in a cascade of privatisations and of cuts in the social domain—the whole, without the legitimacy of the ballot box, with a government overwhelmed by scandals of corruption, and, as a bonus, with worrying signs that this government wants to return to earlier practices of criminalisation of popular movements and social struggles. In Argentina, the new right-wing government presides over a country in full economic and social decline, with a million more people unemployed, the augmentation of cuts to social services, 40 % inflation, etc. The government’s response is to accuse immigrants from Brazil and Paraguay of “stealing jobs”, as Trump is doing in the United States. This could allow the situation to evolve towards a sort of “social fascism”, to use an expression by Boaventura Sousa Santos.

Thus, new personalised executive plans loom, plans that, often, are not afraid to use a language and practices that were in the past confined to the extreme right. In some extreme cases, those in power do not hesitate for a second to revert to gunboat diplomacy, to invade, massacre, destroy societies and states, and experiment on peoples with weapons of mass destruction over which they attempt to maintain a monopoly. This is what we note, tragically, in that vast “arc of crisis” that traverses a large part of Asia and Africa with, as the epicentre of this programmed orgy of destruction, the Middle East.

Right and Extreme Right

²As US and NATO military setbacks in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria reveal.

In addition, the political space is being restructured in fact between a made-over traditional right and a “new” inhibited extreme right that surfs on the ideology of all-against-all, via xenophobia, hatred of others, the most “crude” imperialism, and racism³, which reflects important cultural changes that transcend, to an extent, political and economic splits. A politics of “identities” inscribes in populations’ psyches a “right” to dominate that derives from a civilisational superiority is relayed by an omnipresent, hyper-centralised media apparatus⁴. Which makes our present world, as Pablo Solon explains, a strange hybrid animal living at once off of an unbridled globalisation and an identitarian, reactionary nationalism. At the same time, we are witnessing the decline of multilateral institutions put in place after 1945, to the profit of unilateralism, through dangerous “right” wars whose goal is the appropriation of resources and regions⁵.

Chaos in the “Arc of Crisis”

In this vast region, which traverses Asia and Africa via the Middle East, forces of destruction feed off of imperialist aggressions and a reactionary jihadist movement that catches out the people and their democratic aspirations. Through the disintegration of states (in the imperialist strategy launched in 2002-2003), regions sink into tribalism, ethnicism, regional divides, and the denial of rights, when there are not massacres ensuing from terrorist movements and/or weapons of mass destruction used by those in power. The jihadist force that combat external aggression practice a sectarian politics, all in all defending the neoliberal economic status quo (“halal” capitalism) that is at the root of the present dislocation.

Confrontation

This restructuring would not have taken its present forms if the forces that fight for justice, democracy and peace had been in a position, in the recent period, to develop a counter-hegemonic project. Today, it is necessary to carry out a constant self-criticism, as suggested to us in Porto Alegre by Olivier Dutra, one of the personalities most linked to the Brazilian Left.

Transformations

Under the neoliberal and militaristic pressure of the 1980s, the traditional political forces of the Left were weakened on a long-term basis. A large part of social-democracy has put aside struggles for social reforms that brought it into being. In large part, social-democracy, according to Francine Mestrum, has thought to do well in distributing the fruits of capitalist growth in lieu

³One part of the extreme right presents itself as anti-system, even revolutionary. Otherwise, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu “fundamentalists” attempt to present their reactionary projects in a favourable light. They are sometimes feared, sometimes used, by the dominant majority, as was the case during the preceding great crisis during the years 1920-30.

⁴This politics, which rests on quasi-permanent states of exception, also extends elsewhere (in India, in Turkey, in the Philippines, in Brazil, in Russia, etc.).

⁵Other imperialist powers seek to emerge—for example, China and Russia. They profit from a relative decline in American imperialism that is still very powerful, both by “traditional” methods (war) and non-traditional ones (economics, technology, etc.).

of encouraging a framework permitting the satisfaction of needs, keeping in mind respect for people and the environment.

Later, in countries with “real socialism”, the implosion of the Soviet Union and China’s liberal about-turn undermined the project of a socialism that did not know how to work out a project of societal and economic transformation at the height of the utopia of emancipation. These declines closed a historical epoch of social transformation that we could trace back to the French Revolution and the great emancipation movements of the twentieth century.

And yet, since the end of this century, new waves of struggles have relaunched the resistance. From the revolt of Mexican aboriginal people to “anti-globalisation” demonstrations (Seattle, Genoa, Buenos Aires, etc.), a vast movement, diversified and militant, has succeeded in coalescing “old” forms (like trade unions) and new popular expressions marked by feminism, ecology and anti-globalism. Up to the 2010s, the mobilisations of the Arab and African Springs, of Occupy, of Indignados and mass movements everywhere have renewed the repertoire of struggles, pushed aside the old parties of the Left and created new political articulations as we have noted in many countries, such as Bolivia, Spain, and others. At the heart of the empire, the unprecedented phenomenon of a wind from the left around the candidature of Bernard Sanders and powerful mobilisations in course against the politics of President Trump belong equally to this new momentum that is far from being smothered.

Wind of Change in South America

In this part of the hemisphere, large popular movements have confronted and isolated reactionary forces, giving birth to those unprecedented political and social coalitions sometimes called the “pink wave” (Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, El Salvador, etc.). New governments have launched ambitious programs to fight poverty and improve the working class’s access to health and education services. They have attempted to renegotiate the terms of their insertion in the global capitalist system, demanding changes in the architecture of neoliberalism imposed by the IMF and the WTO. Undeniable successes in favour of the working class have been noted ; on the other hand, the power structure has not permitted a real appropriation by the people. What is more, “progressive” governments, as Edgardo Lander explains, have not escaped the extractivist shackles that confine their economies to the exploitation of natural resources at the expense of their populations and of the environment. This leads to more and more numerous confrontations between “modernisation”, promoted by governments, and popular aspirations, notably amongst farmers and aboriginal people. For some time, the traditional right’s return to power has illustrated the helplessness of the Left when faced with its own impasses and in the context of an international capitalist system that does not accept any reform. The projects inspired by the “pink wave” in Latin America, notably in Europe, are weakened by this reversal, as we have noted in Greece.

It should be noted that, according to sometimes contradictory schemas, these anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist processes are mutually reinforced in the wake of new internationalist initiatives (ALBA at the state level) and citizen initiatives, such as the WSF, Via Campesina, the Global Women’s March, the network No-Vox and many other networks.

A New Sociology

With a critical mass implanted amongst unemployed, diploma-holding young people, women, aoriginal people, inhabitants of the suburbs, and poor farmers, these movements have defined an extradordinarily creative agenda of battles. On the other hand, in spite of the fact that many movements have left their own “territory” of protests to become propositional powers, most of them have not developed an agenda of transformation. Also, apart from a few exceptions, the edifice of power has resisted. In those places where changes in governance have effectively taken place, globalised capitalism, both in its anti-democratic practices and through its transnational and multilateral institutions, has frozen the hopes created by progressive governments, as we have seen above all in South America. Serious damage has been done to these governments, as in Brazil, in Argentina, in Greece, when regressions have taken place in the social, political, and ecological domains, as if capitulation was necessary in order to continue to exist within the framework of the imperialist, capitalist structure of the global economy. Have we thus arrived, in the expression of neo-conservatives, at the “end of history”? Even so, hard and persistant fights hinder, when they don’t succeed in blocking, anti-popular and anti-ecological restructurings. Here and there, electoral consultations express populations’ attachment in political forms that claim to be in line with their protests. And at base, movements experience mutations that suggest that the Arab and African Springs, for example, are still in their first steps. We return to the prespective expressed by Gramsci, in his time, of the necessity of an exhaustive “war of position”.

An Emergency: To Freeze the Drift

In brief, popular movements know now that they face a period that announces itself as difficult and dangerous. Trade unions, for example, have been destabilised by the fragmentation of workers’ collectives and the transformation of the proletariat into a precariat. Other movements resist better—ecologists, for example—and progress in the immense battle of ideas, although, on the concrete plane, most necessary reforms are blocked or postponed. First nations hold up, partly through the new subjectivity that unifies them in spite of the vast aggressions that threaten them. Elsewhere, faced with extreme repression and with war, movements are forced to focus on emergencies, to defend fundamental rights and stop abuses. In the foreground is the necessity to destabilise the Right, which, in many cases, has a mass base. The constitution of vast alliances thus proves indispensable, which forces movements to overcome divisions and sectarianisms, to identify points of convergence and of rallying, which means—of compromise. To do this, it a capacity for openness and respect is needed, which contrasts sharply with periods where segments of a movement attempted, in vain, to appropriate for themselves a monopoly over “revolutionary truth”. Movements that advance make an effort to reconcile diverse subjectivities, accommodating, so to speak, different and sometimes troubling visions, often spurred by women, youths, immigrants, and aboriginal people. The challenge is to assemble a critical mass around justice and the defense of the people, equality between men and women, a democracy that is respectful of peoples and oriented towards the resolute defense of the environment. These are in part strategic considerations, in part ethical principals, that rework the capacity to resist.

To Construct Alternatives

Through struggles taking place amidst a great adversity, one observes the multiplication of new social and political practices, the emergence of a new culture of transformation, carried forward

above all by the young generations, and which attempts to delimit the outlines of mobilisations in a new, non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical, manner. Research in and with popular movements is in course, to find new strategic courses. This is not disembodied research, confined to the university, but work within the struggles themselves, through the efforts of “organic intellectuals” of the people (à la Gramsci) who resist, organise, and reflect. While using the knowledge and competence handed down by their “ancestors”, the movements create new knowledges, new strategies, at the crossroads of practice and theory (“praxis”). At the same time, numerous laboratories that prefigure the world to come are articulated. Most movements, in contrast with an old, linear conception of history, now understand that there is no “great night” where, suddenly and in a decisive manner, the systems of power will be captured and transformed.

“Incubators”

Powerful “incubators” are in progress, notably in the cities and shanty towns of the world where a new urban creativity expresses itself, while rural communities confront the powerful apparatuses of global capitalism and reappropriate to themselves the resources of the pachamama. This is what is observed in Barcelona, Montreal, Detroit, Casablanca, Bangkok, La Paz/El Alto, Buenos Aires, in the Brazilian Amazon and the African Sahel. In many sites, “declassed” middle classes (professionals, teachers, civil servants, technicians) rally the popular classes in a sudden fit of dignity, anger, and self-organisation. These layers contribute enormously to the reinforcement of popular movements, notably through their technical competency, and as far as they wish to break with the hierarchical tradition where knowledge and competency are the monopoly. From these “small” battles, which are never so “small” as this, we observe the appearance of new coalitions, notably between ecologists and aboriginal peoples, as we saw recently in Dakota (United States). “Small” struggles become “small” victories, and indicate the path for resistances to come : Indian students against the assault of Hindu fundamentalists in universities, Polish people against the measures to abolish their rights, the working class for housing and water in Barcelona, Cochabamba, Johannesburg, Athens, and elsewhere.

A new “us”

In this powerful and often invisible “war of position”, movements transform their modes of doing and thinking, including their own, in a vast process of self-definition, to imagine together an “alter-world”, in institutions, cities and villages, and even, to a certain extent, in the antechambers of power. These are everyday battles to maintain and democratise public services, recuperate the cultural heritages devastated by globalisation and reinvent equitable relations between humans, non-human life forms and the environment. To have even more of an impact, these “small” battles must attempt to gamble on internationalism, as certain trade unions and rural movements have begun to do. On the other hand, in these strategic articulations that seek to reconcile resistances with the construction of alternatives ask themselves again the question of organization. This comes from far, across the very rich experience of popular movements of the past, but is raised again now under new terms that demand an enormous aspiration to democracy, including that which is supposed to give popular movements their framework. On the other hand, these terms come out of the past paradigm of productivism, of economism and of a certain anthropocentric conception of progress, as if the world belonged to “man”.

Fighting the Right on its Own Territory

A certain Right that calls itself “modernistic” has passed off all of the people’s protests against neoliberal globalisation as vestiges of reactionary ideologies from the past fed by a sensitive nationalism—that is, an aggressive ethnicism. It claims to adhere to an “imaginary” globalisation, which feeds the 1 % to the detriment of the 99 % in imposing a reduction from the bottom of culture and an atrophying of political structures. In reality, the peoples are right to refuse this false line. They are right to reclaim their right to exist, as well as their right to decide, within the framework of political structures of which they are the masters. It is not a fatality if the Brexit has been captured by a right-wing nationalism. It is not because the French National Front opposes the European Union that we must defend this anti-democratic structure and devoted to the defense of neoliberalism. On the same register, the peoples who reclaim their right to self-determination, whether they are in the South (the Western Sahara, Palestine, Kurds) or on the North (Scotland, Catalonia, the Netherlands, Québec) join in a democratic struggle, or, in reality, national emancipation is combined with social emancipation. Popular movements, for the most part, have evidently understood that these rights and those that come with them in terms of dignity and self-determination bring with them additional resistance, within the framework of a vast struggle for popular sovereignty.

To self-organise

On another level, the new subjectivities brought by popular movements these past few years seek to redefine the equation between the social and the political. Based on the eminently important and positive principal that is that of the necessary autonomy of movements, many have chosen to intervene, without intervening, on the terrain of politics, more like pressure groups than like foregrounded protagonists. Relationships with governments and progressive parties, notably in South America, are constructed on this prudent distance, which has led in most cases to leaving the initiative to political parties and perpetuating the rupture between political and social struggles. Another position in accordance with an anarchist tradition is that of refusing to assert oneself in the political space, defined at once as a trap and an impasse. In this view, one must remain “far” from power. At the same time, one observes a certain fascination with formalist aspects (extreme “horizontalism”, the rejection of theoretical work, fascination with an “imaginary” people considered to be a homogeneous entity rather than stakes of social contradictions, etc.), a cult of spontaneity (in a way, the mirror of the cult of the enlightened avant-garde, which has been rampant for many years) leads sometimes to cults-de-sac, to isolation, paralysis and to depoliticisation, where struggles remain fragmented and where they succeed in producing new convergences.

Certainly, the recomposition of the Left cannot remain closed off in nostalgia for a mystified past. New movements, despite certain conceptual overflowings, are the principal laboratories of transformation. The importance of the democratization movements, of the struggle against dogmatism and sectarianism, the opening towards new paradigms put forward notably by feminism and ecology, constitute so many bases for new dialogues and experimentations.

Moving Forward

It is thus necessary to go further, which means getting off the beaten path. There is no longer any question, at least in the majority of movements, of rebuilding so-called avant-garde structures, with the resulting authoritarian relations. At the same time, movements consider it necessary to overcome fragmentation, dissipation and the tendency, in the name of the struggle against the hierarchisation of struggles, to avoid the difficult labour of convergence. This is a strategic construction; it does not appear either spontaneously or “naturally”. It must overcome divisions (without either overshadowing or denying them), promote intersectionality of struggles and of movements, which implies a creative original process that we could, in the noble sense of the term, qualify as intellectual. It is then that new and ample coalitions between movements, parties, and “organic” intellectuals from the people are expressed. Here and there, popular movements decided to invest in the political field, not as an auxiliary force, but as a nodal point of a strategy of transformation of the state. It is ultimately as feminist activist Lilian Celiberti explains, “to decolonize our imagination”.

The World Social Forum 2.0

For several years now, movements have profited from internationalist exchanges that have been produced in large coalitions like Via Campesina, the Global Women’s March and many others, not counting semi-statist processes like ALBA, under Venezuelan initiative. At levels differing according to moment and place, the WSF has been the mirror, and sometimes the incubator, of these coalitions. It has also been a place to further reflection, come to know diverse experiences and even escape beaten paths. Despite the persistence of bureaucratic reflexes and of questionable acquaintanceships with politicians and financiers, the WSF has remained close to movements and struggles, thanks, notably, to the indefatigable work of a handful of personalities such as Chico Whitaker.

15 years later, the question is raised again as movements find themselves before another political configuration. At the end of the day, the WSM’s *raison d’être* was to define and to elaborate, intellectually speaking, an international dimension of movements’ strategies. This necessity remains, taking into account the international dimension of capitalist globalisation. But the content and the forms of this international and/or global dimension must evolve in order to take into account the evolution of context. New intellectual challenges confront the intellect: for example, the origin and impact of neo-authoritarianisms and of their “monsters” (in the movements of the extreme right under diverse banners). The decline and even the fall of progressive governments make it necessary to think about the relationship to power and the alliances necessary to block the drift. The mechanisms of elaboration of transnational strategies must be renewed.

The Necessary Intellectual “Rearmament” of the Forum, of Movements, of the Left

It is necessary, according to Edgardo Lander, Gustave Massiah, Geneviève Azam, Brian Ashley, Daniel Chavez, Jennifer Cox, Francine Mestrum, Maher Hanine and many comrades, to work on multiple questions simultaneously:

- To rethink the present crisis as a question of “civilisation” that establishes connections between social, economic, ecological, political and cultural realities and the concepts with which these realities have been approached in modernity.
- To better understand the economic reorganisation taking place via the destruction of

the workers' collective, automation and the passing of a "biopolitical" framing structure.

- To make a rigorous assessment of transformational experiences of the past, from European socialist movements to struggles for national liberation in the South.
- To better understand the rise of the Right and to see what the Left has not done and not said to impose a paradigm other than that of "everyone against everyone". To better analyse the Right's "cultural" work, in the dense network of interventions and institutions that open in all folds of society and to further understand the functionings of a certain "populism" of the right that appeals to fears and to the "values" of every-man-for-himself.
- To dissect and dissemble the mechanisms of idetitarian, authoritarian and violent ideologies inspired by reactionary forms expressing themselves in diverse manners, including under the cover of religion (not just Islam).
- To inquire on the subjects of the transformation taking place, in the context of new class compositions, of the decline of traditional actors (the worker's movement) and of the emergence of new social and ecological resistances.
- To work more on the mechanisms to reinforce direct democracy, joint worker-management control, collective appropriation and other mechanisms drafted by the popular movements of the past few years.
- To develop critique of the extractivist "model" and to think of a democratic and popular tradition to escape it.
- To rethink the articulation between popular movements, Leftist parties and the state; to "de-state" emancipation.
- To further integrate the experimentations of the South into our research, also confronting the Eurocentricism of critical thought.
- To replace at the centre of the reflection an internationalist perspective that escapes all instrumentation.
- To work to translate creative projects at the local level into perspectives of transformation on a larger scale.
- To construct counter-hegemonic means of communication, as well as public and democratic spaces. To develop, with intellectuals, new methodologies working from a sociology of emergencies (following the expression of Boaventura Sousa Santos).

Finished with False Solutions

It is not a matter, in contrast to a belief shared by certain comrades, of transforming the WSF into a new "Internationale", but to permit it to help movements to develop the numerous tools they need in order to face present challenges. In brief, the Forum is an eternal process, an incubator of means and debates that, while remaining pluralistic and open, fights against the fragmentation of movements and struggles. The starting formula of the Forum, formulated by Chico Whitaker, remains, in its basic outline, adequate : "an open space, at the global level, that facilitates as well as possible reflection and the horizontal articulation of social movements and organisations of civil society engaged in the combat for 'another possible world' and that stimulates a growing number of citizens to participate in this struggle".

Evidently the WSF is not there to define the "correct line", but it can work in such a manner that several strategic elaborations are produced. As Kamal Lahbib affirms, the Forum, via its

members, can articulate stances, on the condition that they be followed by actions of pressure, by campaigns. According to Raphael Canet, the Forum must work from a communal comprehension that affirms that there is no unique strategy of social change, but are rather strategies at multiple levels that stem from the creative diversity of different initiatives : “What becomes fundamental in the present context is to give a communal sense to the multiplicity of struggles in course. It thus becomes imperative to not become sunk into dogmatism. It is necessary to multiply spaces of exchange to enter into dialogue with these movements in order to firmly fix the analysis of the struggles taking place, the protests that stem from these mobilisations, and not the theoretical frameworks put in place a priori”.

From Politics of Fear to Politics of Hope

To advance in this way, much concentration is needed. One can think, for example, of :

- The establishment of nuclei of permanent transnational strategic debates, to feed debates during and between Forums. These nuclei can “decolonise knowledge”, to take up Boaventura Sousa Santos’s expression, and produce new knowledge and new hypotheses on alternatives to capitalism, which come from struggles and which return to the struggles.
- The definition of axes of priority, around questions that interpellate popular movements and that must be tackled during Forums in a systematic manner, to encourage (and not impose) convergences. These axes must also be the object of permanent work.
- The elaboration of a user-friendly platform for citizen movements that wish to use the Forum as an opportunity for and a means of popular mobilization.
- The revitalisation of the Forum’s tools (the secretariat, the international council, communication platforms [I will not develop this further as it is the object of other comrades’ work]).

In the end, we could have less scattered, better prepared and better articulated forums, with adequate technical media, notably at the level of communication and information. An emphasis could be placed on regional and sector-based Forums, while thinking, every 2-3 years, to organize a global gathering. The WSF will never be anything other than a tool, a useful place to favour the construction of alternatives and to build convergence, a moment of intense debates.