http://divergences.be/spip.php?article667

Revue libertaire internationale en ligne
DIVERGENCES
Nous sommes définis par les lignes que nous décidons de traverser ou d'accepter comme frontières

Move into the light? Postscript to a turbulent 2007

- Archives - Archives Générales 2006 - 2022 - 2008 - NÂ°11. Janvier/January/Januar 2008. - Théorie / Pratique/ Critique -

Date de mise en ligne : Tuesday 15 January 2008

It's night time and a man is crawling around on his hands and knees, looking for his car keys underneath a lamp post. A woman comes along and starts to help him. After they've been searching together for a while the woman asks the man: "Are you sure this is where you dropped them?"

The man replies: "No, I think I dropped them somewhere else."

"Then why are we looking here?" she enquires.

"Because this is where the light is."

At the beginning of 2007, the *Turbulence* collective commissioned 14 articles from around the global 'movement of movements', asking authors: "What would it mean to win?" We edited their responses into a newspaper and printed 7,000 copies, most of which were distributed at the mobilisation against the G8 summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, in June. A few months later, we want to return to the question of winning.

As we resume our search it's no surprise that we keep coming across the problem of *visibility*. When we think about winning, our eyes are drawn to things that are highly visible or easy-to-measure, such as institutional or legislative change, the opening of a social centre or an increase in membership. That's where the light is. But we also need to assess victories in the less tangible though just as real realm of possibilities. Winning in this realm may involve increased potential, changes in perception or patterns of behaviour. Yet these seem to exist at the very edge of the luminous zone.

This problem leads into another: our experiences create their own luminosity and consequently their own areas of darkness. When we think about winning we are drawn to movements, people and events that are familiar to us; and we have expectations about how things should turn out if they are to constitute a victory.

So how can we overcome our night-blindness once we move beyond the familiar? In a sense this ability to look outside ourselves was key to Heiligendamm.

Heiligendamm: A different repetition?

In many ways, this year's G8 summit on Germany's Baltic coast was much as we had expected it to be: a repetition of previous counter-summit mobilisations from at least Seattle onwards (Prague, Gothenburg, Genoa, Evian, Cancun, Gleneagles…). Each of these events saw a broad constellation of actors brought together in productive cooperation. Each opened up a space and set in motion processes of contamination (often behind people's backs) that were key to the politicisation of a generation of militants. On the one hand, people launched practical challenges to the legitimacy of global command (the rejection of dialogue, the blocking of roads into the summit); on the other, commonalities and mutations were produced, in the camps and convergence centres, during debates and actions.

However, previous summit mobilisations had already shown us the limits of such events. After Seattle, in 1999, it became clear that the affect produced in mass street actions would not translate automatically into everyday practices of transformation. Two years later Gothenburg and Genoa showed the price that would be paid by a

movement for entering into a logic of near-symmetrical conflict (imprisonment, injuries and death). And Gleneagles 2005 showed the extent to which the desires of a movement could be captured and turned against itself, with 300,000 marching for the G8. So if many had already seen the limits of summit mobilisations, and Heiligendamm had always promised to be a repetition, surely the last thing it was going to be was *different*?

Sometimes, however, what appears like mere repetition is not really a repetition at all; at least not in the sense that it is simply the same thing taking place over and over again. So rather than return to a particular point in a cycle ('Bringing Seattle to Germany', for example), the point at Heiligendamm was to start anew with an unforeseeable process of becoming – one that would hopefully go beyond the achievements and limits of the past. Less a repetition that sought to mimic, more a new experiment in the production of politics; overcoming rather than reaffirming existing identities.

In the run-up to the summit, the groups involved in the organisation of the protest underwent something of a reconfiguration. They took some significant steps towards becoming a more genuine 'movement of movements'. A common 'choreography of resistance' was built and designed by a wide spectrum of groups – from the autonomous radical left through to people organising inter-confessional prayer sessions against poverty. While more radical elements attempted to set the terms of the coalition (a rejection of the G8's legitimacy alongside a toleration of diverse forms of action), there was a willingness to compromise and come to common agreements as to which forms of action were appropriate where and when. In this way Heiligendamm moved beyond the principle of 'diversity of tactics' that had become commonplace, and returned to the earlier process of cross-pollination. Instead of different political currents engaging in different forms of action – in a spirit of solidarity but without jeopardising their own identities – the work developed in Germany was in the direction of a 'becoming-other, together'. This meant collectively devising and carrying out forms of action new to all, actions and alliances that took people beyond their comfort zones towards the practical constitution of new commons, and therefore new common potentials.

What's the score?

While Heiligendamm wasn't a quantitative high-point in the history of the counter-globalisation movement (in terms of numbers, Genoa and Gleneagles were both around four times the size), in other respects it did seem that a new *qualitative* high was reached. It was a 'victory' because it was a reconstitutive moment, not least for the German left. But something was missing from this affect of victory: the sense of having *defeated* the other side. Sure, we scored some successes against the police and summit organisers with our mass blockades. But German chancellor Merkel won legitimacy by appearing to force 'the recalcitrant Americans' into an agreement on climate change. And the G8? It is celebrating the Heiligendamm summit as one of its most successful ever. It managed to create the impression that the leaders of the world are tackling the 'global challenge' of climate change.

When the G8 first became the target of massive protests towards the end of the 1980s, it was relatively easy to point to the in-built illegitimacy of its activities. At the 1999 Cologne summit, when it clumsily responded to actions by social movements in the global South (and some Northern NGOs) by passing debt-relief programmes, hardly anyone took them seriously. But the G8 reinvented itself. It stopped being just a place for the major capitalist powers to hammer out differences and became a media-circus that presents itself as the only forum that can deal with global concerns. In other words, as the G8 came under attack, its very purpose became the re-legitimation of its global authority. And it learnt its lessons well. At Gleneagles, a big NGO operation sponsored by the UK government saw 300,000 people turn out, not to demonstrate against the G8, but to welcome and 'lobby' it in favour of debt relief and aid for Africa.

The initiative lost in Scotland – where the protests were hijacked by an efficient PR offensive – was successfully regained in Heiligendamm: the explicit goal of all major actions was the delegitimation of the G8. The problem however was that the G8 had once again moved on, now seeking to draw legitimacy by seeming to respond to widespread concern about climate change. And this is where we (got) lost. The actions carried out in Germany failed

to convey a political challenge to the G8's relegitimation on the issue of climate change, which had become a new key terrain of struggle.

How did this happen? One reason is that there isn't yet an overarching 'alternative' narrative to the newly greened global capitalist agenda: however bad their story may be, there is nothing else on offer. But the problem runs deeper than that. The G8's narrative on climate change solutions is a fiction, just as it was on making poverty history. But we can't counter this with a fiction of our own: at the moment we don't know how to 'solve' climate change. None of us can see far enough or clearly enough. All we can do is move from one puddle of light to another.

What's in a limit? Capital, crisis and climate change

It's no coincidence that talking about the G8 should lead directly to talking about climate change. For movements, it represents the possible emergence of a new focus, as shown by the buzz in public opinion and events such as this year's climate camp in the UK which, it seems, will be repeated in Germany, the US, Sweden and elsewhere in 2008. From the perspective of governance and capital, it is becoming a key element in the management of the global system, both at the level of decision-making and of political legitimation, not to mention new market niches. In the space between movements and governance, it exemplifies the ambiguity and complexity of the question of 'winning'. If the whole emphasis of environmental activism over the last few years has been on raising awareness about the threat of climate change, then 2007 must be seen as the year when 'we won'. The issue is now everywhere, and everyone, politicians and big companies included, talk about it.

Yet it is precisely this victory that could prove to be a defeat. Global concern about climate change must be given a new form if it is to actually affect the state of things (that is, radically reduce carbon dioxide emissions in a short time-frame). In part this means constructing a new story, one that can stop the issue being turned into a huge profit-making opportunity for capital. Without this, it's easy to see climate change being used to unleash a new regime of austerity on the governed, and to excuse measures like increased 'security' and border controls as geopolitical tensions rise. But if the fight is to be more than a public opinion dispute – one where we're always on the back foot – then it has to also take place at the level of production and social reproduction.

It's common to think of climate change as a technical-environmental problem that calls for a technical-environmental solution: the problem is too much carbon dioxide going into the atmosphere, so the solution is to reduce these emissions to 'acceptable' levels via technological innovation, government legislation and the public 'doing their bit'. The difficulty with this is twofold. First, almost everything we do is bound-up with fossil fuel use and the resulting CO2 emissions: from travelling to work to phoning-in sick so we can watch DVDs. Second, the cuts required (some 60–90% before 2050) are so large they require sweeping changes, and cannot be solved simply by the world's environment ministries getting together.

An alternative way to understand climate change is in terms of metabolism. The Earth's metabolism, its ability to process carbon, runs at a slower speed than the metabolism of contemporary capitalism. The economy is on a collision course with the biosphere. Here we are talking about a limit to the expansion of capital and a possible crisis of accumulation.

For capital, limits are peculiar. Capital has an internal dynamic of expansion which must be satisfied, so limits must be ignored, subverted, side-stepped, or otherwise overcome. And the secret of capital's longevity lies precisely in its ability to use limits and the crises they engender as a launch-pad for a new round of accumulation and expansion. A good example of this dynamism is the emergence of the so-called Keynesian/Fordist phase of capitalism. The high levels of organisation of the industrial working class in the first half of the 20th century – not only the Russian Revolution but intense struggle worldwide – appeared as a limit to the expansion of capitalism, threatening not only to halt accumulation but to destroy the system once and for all. The welfare state was a direct result of these

struggles, but it was also a way of neutralising this threat. And capital's greatest feat was to strike a productivity deal which actually transformed this limit into the engine of a new phase of capitalist growth.

What does an analysis of the generic response of capitalism to limit-crises tell us about likely responses to climate change? There's no doubt that climate change is a limit which presents as many opportunities as dangers to capital. Many are jumping at the chance to take this new limit, this potential crisis, and turn it into a new motor for accumulation. Look at the clamour for buying and selling rights to emit carbon: carbon credits, carbon offsets, Tradable Emissions Quotas, carbon futures. And then there's green consumerism: green cars, solar panels, green home make-overs. Could climate change inject new dynamism into the global economy? Are we looking at a new, 'green' phase of capitalism, where the atmosphere is opened up like cyberspace was in the '90s? It's possible. And it's also obvious that it's unlikely to cut carbon emissions radically!

A capitalist solution will look, well, like capitalism. Just as the effects of climate change are uneven, having a far more devastating effect on the poor – look at the impact of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, or the east Asian tsunami on Aceh – so almost all the current crop of solutions will also work to reinforce existing hierarchies. Most 'green' taxes will increase the price of basic goods and services, limiting mobility and access to food and heating. Access to travel, food and comfort all tied in to possession of money? No news there, of course: just the rules of the game as we know it. Except now they will be justified on the grounds that they're necessary in order to save the planet. Expect 'green capitalism' to be a new regime of austerity and discipline, imposed on the poor more than on the rich in the name of the 'greater good'.

The eye of the storm

But capitalism is neither all-conquering nor invincible. If climate change might open up a moment of crisis, it's worth trying to understand what its dynamics might be.

One key aspect is the variable of time, understood in two different ways. First, there is a problem of time lag. The outcomes of different decisions, in climate change terms, are felt decades later. Due to the thermal inertia of the climate system there is a huge temporal mismatch between cause and effect. This means that if the impacts of climate change become 'out of control', they may stay that way for several decades. Second, all the scientific evidence points to the urgency of the problem. If we are to avoid the 'tipping points' – points at which climate change becomes potentially irreversible and catastrophic for the majority of the Earth's population (the death of the Amazon rainforest being one example) – emissions have to be drastically reduced within the next decade.

There's a positive side to this sense of urgency. A lot of the 'awareness-raising' activism of the last ten years worked with no time variable whatsoever; it addressed 'the public', a general 'other' who needed to be 'informed' of what is going on. Because of that, there were no general deadlines, no overall calendar, no sense of escalation, no particular goals; when everything is always happening 'right now', there is no time as such. The urgency of climate change raises important questions which only exist because of the time variable; they are questions of strategy and tactics.

And here we return to the question of winning. For instance, some suggest that nothing this big can be done with such little time, and the best that can be done is start preparing now for the worst. We may as well extinguish the lights and blithely head off into the darkness. Others have said that the problem is so massive and so pressing that only a centralised body is capable of tackling it. Faced with the abyss of the unknown it's tempting to turn back to the comforting light of the state. But this harsh glare blinds as well as illuminates.

Take the example of air travel. The growth in aviation is clearly a massive environmental problem, so it's easy to get lured into supporting new taxes on flying, say, or even seeing people who fly as part of the problem. But focusing on

this issue might make it harder to see some of the other dynamics at work. By restraining our autonomy or strengthening capitalist and state institutions, some climate change solutions may hinder other struggles and make it harder to tackle the larger causes of climate change. What is needed is a lens – an approach or ethic – that allows us to pose the question of how climate change politics can resonate with other struggles. Not because movements need an explicit, *conscious* connection in order to resonate with one another; they don't. But we do need to bring to light resonances and dissonances. Once we can see the paths, they're easier to follow.

While we have to be wary of being blinded by the glare of the state, we can't just close our eyes to it. So how can we relate to institutional forms? Perhaps recent events in Latin America can provide some clues.

Changing the world by taking power?

The last few years have seen the rise and establishment of governments in different shades of red across Latin America. Chavez's Venezuela, Morales' Bolivia and Lula's Brazil have generated the most international discussion. But there's also Rafael Correa's Ecuador, Tabaré Vasquez in Uruguay, the return of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua and, more contentiously, Michelle Bachelet in Chile and the Kirchners in Argentina. These national processes are not independent, but share two related themes: first, the neoliberal model has run out of steam in the region; and second, the movement of movements has managed to make its mark at an institutional level.

But what are we to make of this institutional success? Some people see these electoral victories as the only concrete result of those post-Seattle years. In this sense, 'winning' would also be the defeat of the 'movementism' of that period: confirmation that it is impossible to 'change the world without taking power'. By this logic, all that is left to do is to ensure that, once in power, the parties and groups that rode on that wave of resistance are able to produce change within institutional constraints. Further, these parties and groups that have ascended to power must also be forced where possible to transform institutions in ways that make them more permeable to this 'pressure from below'. It is taken for granted that such pressure can only fulfil its role if it is capable of being translated into institutional forms.

While we shouldn't underestimate the advances taking place across so much of Latin America, it's worth pausing to consider the implications of this view of social change.

First of all, it's important not to gloss over some important differences among these countries. It is only the case of Morales that directly corresponds to the picture of a growing wave of resistance leading to electoral victory. The history of Bolivia in the last ten years has been punctuated by moments of radicalisation that were always recuperated into the existing political system, only to be denied resolution again. As the episodes of resistance became more frequent and powerful, they forced the systemic rearrangement that carried Morales' MAS (*Movimiento al Socialismo*) to power. In Brazil's case, a similar wave took place in the 1980s, and was beaten at the polls three times until Lula was elected. By then, the Workers' Party (PT) had become the translation into party politics of a movement on the wane (with the possible exception of the landless workers movement, the MST). In Venezuela, despite a diffuse anger at the impermeability of the institutions and at the policies implemented in the 1980s and '90s, there was no movement as such. Chavez has acted as a catalyst for an intensification of mobilisation and participation which is unheard of in Venezuelan history. It remains to be seen whether he was only the catalyst, or whether he has now become the pillar without which it could all come crumbling down.

More importantly, the idea that these electoral victories are the only practical result of the last decade is flawed on two related counts. First, it assumes that 'politics' only takes place in the institutional places where we normally look for it. This discounts a whole series of networks, infrastructures, knowledge, cultures and so on – a diffuse web of collective intelligence and memory that is always active in one way or another, always producing change, and crystallising as an antagonistic force at crucial points. The escalation of resistance in Bolivia before the MAS victory

is a good example of this. What ‘disappeared’ after each flashpoint would ‘return’ bigger and stronger. And it could only do so because it had never gone away.

Second, it ignores that fact that movements, as long as they keep moving, have ways of effecting and producing change that do not need to pass through, or even be recognised by, institutional politics. They can do this by, to give a few examples, transforming public discourse, by making legislation unenforceable, or simply through their power of self-management and autonomous self-constitution.

What if there were a new cycle of struggles and we weren’t invited?

This question of the power of movements brings us back to where we started. As the Turbulence newspaper explained, we had three main reasons to produce a publication for the G8 summit in Heiligendamm. The first, very pragmatic, was that it would be relatively easy to distribute to a wide readership. The second was that in our experience summit mobilisations are spaces where people are more open to other ideas.

The third includes a more complex wager. Since Seattle, summit mobilisations have been the most visible face of the movement of movements, the way its role as a global force is most explicitly manifested, and also the times when its strength and orientations can be gauged. But by the same token it’s at summit mobilisations that all the movement’s potential limitations have been most apparent.

On one level, the wager was what everybody asked themselves on the way to Heiligendamm: how socially relevant, big, transformative is this event really going to be? Will this be a last gasp, a new beginning, or neither? And, equally important, whatever it is, how will we recognise it?

But if we criticise those who only recognise change on the institutional level, are ‘movementists’ not similarly guilty of looking for answers in the usual places? Here we are again writing of summit protests and counter-summits. Perhaps the impasse of the last few years has arisen precisely because people have failed to see answers in the places they searched, and did not start looking elsewhere. However hazy our image in the mirror has always been, have we not become too enamoured of it to actually have a look around? What if there were a ‘new cycle of struggles’, and we were not invited?

Think about what happened in the French *banlieues* in autumn 2005 (and appears to be re-emerging as we write). Anyone on the ‘established’ left – parties, trade unions, ‘activists’; if you know who we are talking about, you belong in this category! – who claims that those who revolted are ‘with us’ in any strong sense would be guilty of appropriating someone else’s struggle by misrepresenting it. Sure, they fight against many things that we oppose. But let’s look at the established left’s reaction to them, along its three general lines. Either the *banlieues* are brought into a ready-made framework, and become the ‘proof’ of some ‘new stage of capitalism’. Or they signify the terror of a social dissolution that requires state intervention to redistribute wealth and access to opportunities in the long term (but possibly also to police them in the short term, so as to prevent civil war). Or they represent a romantic, abstract ‘other’ whose tough, uncompromising radicality – the poster image of revolution – is paid back with equally abstract solidarity.

If this is all ‘we’ – parties, unions, ‘movementists’ – have to offer, let’s recognise that we are part of the problem. Even the most ‘radical’ members of the established left could only interpret the *banlieues* as an eruption of pure negativity, a ‘force of nature’ rather than the work of real people. For the mainstream politician, it is the face of fear: we’re on the verge of civil war! For others, it’s in itself nothing, but as an unknown quantity it can fit anywhere in the theory: ‘See, it confirms our predictions!’ The latter simply eliminates the event; whatever else happened would mean just the same. The first two recognise an event, but see it as something so beyond any explanation that it can only be a harbinger of

the end of the world (something to celebrate or lament, depending on your taste).

All three positions ignore the fact that, if the *banlieues* pose a problem, it is a problem made of flesh and bones. The *banlieues* reveal a gap in our knowledge: for as long as that gap is not filled by *banlieusards* – met on their terms, introduced by their own voices – 'we' feed into the game that excludes 'them'. Worse, by posing as interpreters of those to whom we don't speak, 'we' actively reproduce this game. And there is political currency to be gained, even for the most marginal leftwing groupuscules, by pretending to speak on behalf of those outside the gates. The real challenge, then, lies in effectively opening the gates to those outside. Or better, in tearing down the wall altogether. But this kind of coordination can only take place through actually working with actual people. There is little to be gained by flattering ourselves that abstract feelings of 'solidarity' matter in any real way.

Another example: for over a year now, different cities in Spain have seen a unique movement coalesce around people's frustration with the impossibility of getting 'dignified housing' in the face of rampant property speculation. The movement began when, at the height of the anti-CPE protests in France, an anonymous individual sent out an email calling for a day of protest for 'dignified housing'. The email did the rounds, and on the arranged day hundreds of people – from cab drivers to hairdressers, as well as 'activists' – took to the streets. By the second self-convoked day of protests there were thousands involved. Since then a number of local assemblies have been created, many of which are still going.

The reactions of 'activists' to this housing struggle have been interesting. They ranged from confusion ('How come there is a protest and I don't know who called it?'), to a desire to fade into the background ('In the assembly everyone is equal, people shouldn't expect us to have anything special to say'), to a recognition of how their specific knowledges could be useful ('Well, I organised a protest once, and I realise it works better if we do it like this…'). People with less of a history in politics, on the other hand, sometimes seemed to go in the opposite direction: famously, the Madrid assembly at one point discussed whether it should subscribe to a protest it had not called – 'Now we're the space in which the movement is organised, so we should be the only ones to decide these things'; 'But didn't this all begin with a spontaneous demonstration in the first place? Didn't you attend that?'; 'I did, but that was before there was the assembly!…'

All of this underlines the point that, no matter what meaning we give to the label 'movement of movements', it offers no guarantees. 'Seattle' or 'Cancun' or 'Heiligendamm' don't mean 'we' are the be-all, end-all of social change. In fact, they don't even mean 'we' exist. And to pretend we do, and that history is exclusively ours to make, can only make us blind to where we fit. (And if we *fit* somewhere, it means logically we are not the *whole*.)

Move into the light?

This 'thought travelogue' that we have tried to establish – from Heiligendamm to Latin America, from the politics of climate change to the banlieues, to the movement of movements and back again – saw us start with a question and a few thousand papers to distribute, and come across a few themes and problems that just won't go away.

We've started with the theme of visibility because it highlights the relation between movements and their dynamic of self-reproduction. It's relatively easy to think of movements grappling with institutional politics, like the electoral experiments in Latin America, or the social forum process, or recent attempts to realign social centres across Europe. Depending on your perspective, these are examples of movements 'selling out' or 'growing up' or 'being recuperated'. But all three positions make the mistake of seeing institutional forms as somehow *separate* from movements. Or put another way, all three see movements as discrete bodies, with an 'inside' and an 'outside', rather than as an endless moving of social relations.

As movements move, they constantly throw up new forms of organisation and practice which are constantly settling and consolidating. Of course this can be problematic: once established, identities and rituals can become huge obstacles to change. But this doesn't mean that movements die as soon as they begin to take root, or as soon as they move into the light of exposure. This process is also a way in which movements cast *their own* light. The 'movement of movements', for example, is an institutionalisation of a certain moment of struggles, with Seattle as one of its highlights. It has also helped to generate a whole series of other institutions, which have developed their own dynamics. Summit protests, for example, took place around the world, each building on the other with subtle and not-so-subtle modifications. As that cycle of protest seemed to wane, the social forum process took off, constructing a different kind of experiment. After the 2007 World Social Forum in Kenya, heavily sponsored and controlled by NGOs, many felt that this process itself had come to an end. But a few months later the US Social Forum showed that it's possible to organise something that would not last just a few days but would produce effects in cross-pollinating and coordinating different struggles.

In fact the recent encuentros hosted by the Zapatistas brought this point home forcefully. They offered an encounter between, on the one hand, 'movement' visions of autonomy, horizontalism and non-hierarchical practice and, on the other, a real attempt to make these visions work on the ground – under threat of attack by paramilitaries and surrounded by hostile forces. Many 'movementists' got an insight into the functioning of the 'Juntas of Good Governance', a long-term experiment in self-government by the Zapatista autonomous municipalities. A startling aspect of this was the experience of being in a space where men with guns – the EZLN – are on your side. But if we're serious about producing change in visible and tangible ways, how is that possible without creating institutions of one kind or another? How else are we *really* going to create other worlds?

But there's a second theme of light and luminosity. When we asked the question 'what would it mean to win?', we were deliberately not asking for a ten-point programme. We didn't want 'illumination'. Instead we wanted to assert a politics that recognises that no one has the solution, that changing the world is, at least in part, a process of 'shared investigation', and that as a first step we can begin to ask the same questions. This is a world apart from the old-school politics of certainty, which is dominated by polemical confrontations, where differing political identities and approaches are pitted against each other, recreating identitarian or ideological niches.

Of course the idea of total illumination is a fantasy. But it's a very tempting delusion, one tied up with the myth of total knowledge. If you stare at the sun for long enough, an after-image will be etched into the back of your eyelids. After the G8 seized the issue of climate change, some concluded that we just need the *right* narrative, one that shows only we have 'the answer'. Rather than adopt this approach, with all its overtones of dual power and counter-hegemony, it seems more productive to take another lesson from Heiligendamm. As people prepared to block the roads leading into the summit, a final piece of advice was circulated: "As you approach the police lines, don't look at the cops – look at the gaps between them."

Finally, there's a third thread that ties together the idea of light and visibility. Throughout this text we've used the idea of 'moving into the light' in the sense of making yourself visible, 'coming out' and occupying space. Yet it has a different sense in so-called near-death experiences: you see a light, and a voice invites you to move into the light. To a certain extent, change means dying. It means abandoning the comfort zone, giving up part of yourself, abandoning habits and certainties. And in a wider sense, movements need to flirt with their own death, with the possibility that they need to cease to be so that something else can be born. Dare we lay this wager? Dare we make this leap of faith? Dare we leap through those gaps, into the unknown, into the light?

December 2007

