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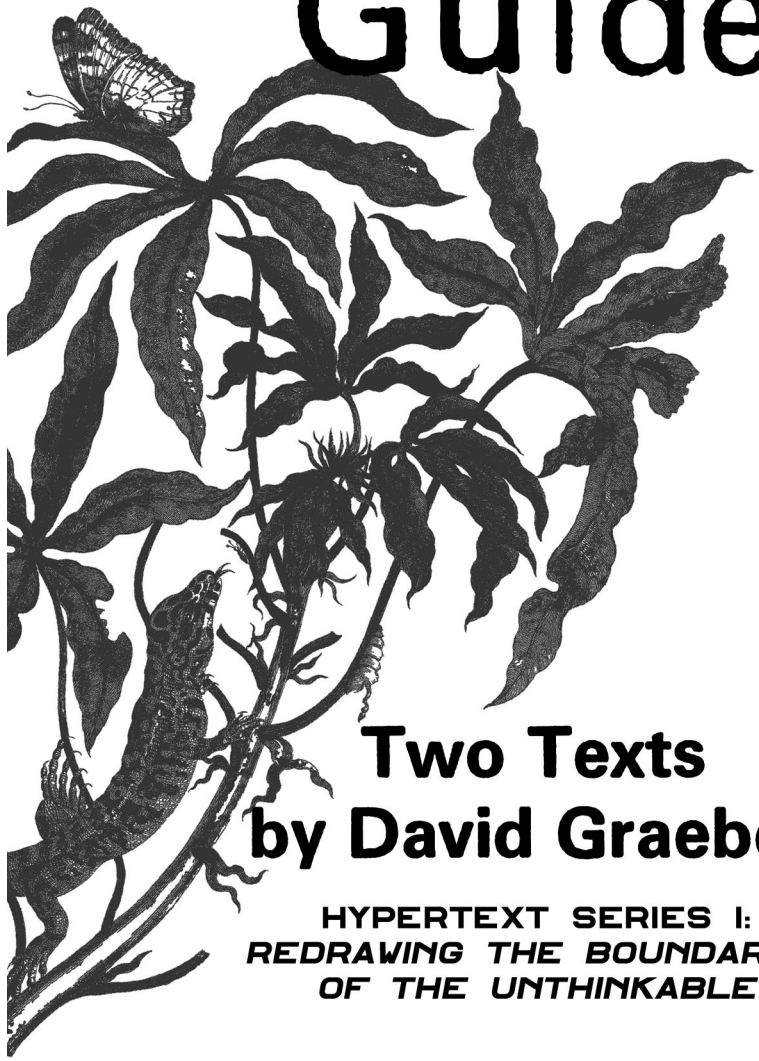
HYPERTEXT DISTRO PRESENTS

A Practical Utopian's Guide



Two Texts by David Graeber

HYPERTEXT SERIES I:
REDRAWING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE UNTHINKABLE

a collectivity, human beings are promising each other to produce an even greater volume of goods and services in the future than they are creating now. But even current levels are clearly unsustainable. They are precisely what's destroying the planet, at an ever-increasing pace.

Even those running the system are reluctantly beginning to conclude that some kind of mass debt cancellation—some kind of jubilee—is inevitable. The real political struggle is going to be over the form that it takes. Well, isn't the obvious thing to address both problems simultaneously? Why not a planetary debt cancellation, as broad as practically possible, followed by a mass reduction in working hours: a four-hour day, perhaps, or a guaranteed five-month vacation? This might not only save the planet but also (since it's not like everyone would just be sitting around in their newfound hours of freedom) begin to change our basic conceptions of what value-creating labor might actually be.

Occupy was surely right not to make demands, but if I were to have to formulate one, that would be it. After all, this would be an attack on the dominant ideology at its very strongest points. The morality of debt and the morality of work are the most powerful ideological weapons in the hands of those running the current system. That's why they cling to them even as they are effectively destroying everything else. It's also why debt cancellation would make the perfect revolutionary demand.

All this might still seem very distant. At the moment, the planet might seem poised more for a series of unprecedented catastrophes than for the kind of broad moral and political transformation that would open the way to such a world. But if we are going to have any chance of heading off those catastrophes, we're going to have to change our accustomed ways of thinking. And as the events of 2011 reveal, the age of revolutions is by no means over. The human imagination stubbornly refuses to die. And the moment any significant number of people simultaneously shake off the shackles that have been placed on that collective imagination, even our most deeply inculcated assumptions about what is and is not politically possible have been known to crumble overnight.

A Practical Utopian's Guide

Two Texts by David Graeber

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Hypertext Distro is a zine press distributing literature to help inform and inspire a practical utopian future.

Series I: Redrawing the Boundaries of the Unthinkable is a three-part release that examines our contemporary social and political reality—with all its crushing control mechanisms, mind-numbing distractions, and violent coercion—and asks the unthinkable: what here, of all places, can serve as the unexpected seeds of the utopian future to come? If there is a such thing as clear-eyed optimism, these essays channel it: every seemingly iron-clad political narrative is up for radical revision, and even the most "noxious phenomena" become fertile grounds for revolutionary utopian dreaming.

Street to begin with. What would happen if we stopped acting as if the primordial form of work is laboring at a production line, or wheat field, or iron foundry, or even in an office cubicle, and instead started from a mother, a teacher, or a caregiver? We might be forced to conclude that the real business of human life is not contributing toward something called "the economy" (a concept that didn't even exist three hundred years ago), but the fact that we are all, and have always been, projects of mutual creation. Labor, similarly, should be renegotiated. Submitting oneself to labor discipline—supervision, control, even the self-control of the ambitious self-employed—does not make one a better person. In most really important ways, it probably makes one worse. To undergo it is a misfortune that at best is sometimes necessary. Yet it's only when we reject the idea that such labor is virtuous in itself that we can start to ask what is virtuous about labor. To which the answer is obvious. Labor is virtuous if it helps others. A renegotiated definition of productivity should make it easier to reimagine the very nature of what work is, since, among other things, it will mean that technological development will be redirected less toward creating ever more consumer products and ever more disciplined labor, and more toward eliminating those forms of labor entirely.

At the moment, probably the most pressing need is simply to slow down the engines of productivity. This might seem a strange thing to say—our knee-jerk reaction to every crisis is to assume the solution is for everyone to work even more, though of course, this kind of reaction is really precisely the problem—but if you consider the overall state of the world, the conclusion becomes obvious. We seem to be facing two insoluble problems. On the one hand, we have witnessed an endless series of global debt crises, which have grown only more and more severe since the seventies, to the point where the overall burden of debt—sovereign, municipal, corporate, personal—is obviously unsustainable. On the other, we have an ecological crisis, a galloping process of climate change that is threatening to throw the entire planet into drought, floods, chaos, starvation, and war. The two might seem unrelated. But ultimately they are the same. What is debt, after all, but the promise of future productivity? Saying that global debt levels keep rising is simply another way of saying that, as

This is not to say there's anything wrong with utopian visions. Or even blueprints. They just need to be kept in their place. The theorist Michael Albert has worked out a detailed plan for how a modern economy could run without money on a democratic, participatory basis. I think this is an important achievement—not because I think that exact model could ever be instituted, in exactly the form in which he describes it, but because it makes it impossible to say that such a thing is inconceivable. Still, such models can be only thought experiments. We cannot really conceive of the problems that will arise when we start trying to build a free society. What now seem likely to be the thorniest problems might not be problems at all; others that never even occurred to us might prove devilishly difficult. There are innumerable X-factors.

The most obvious is technology. This is the reason it's so absurd to imagine activists in Renaissance Italy coming up with a model for a stock exchange and factories—what happened was based on all sorts of technologies that they couldn't have anticipated, but which in part only emerged because society began to move in the direction that it did. This might explain, for instance, why so many of the more compelling visions of an anarchist society have been produced by science fiction writers (Ursula K. Le Guin, Starhawk, Kim Stanley Robinson). In fiction, you are at least admitting the technological aspect is guesswork.

Myself, I am less interested in deciding what sort of economic system we should have in a free society than in creating the means by which people can make such decisions for themselves. What might a revolution in common sense actually look like? I don't know, but I can think of any number of pieces of conventional wisdom that surely need challenging if we are to create any sort of viable free society. I've already explored one—the nature of money and debt—in some detail in a recent book. I even suggested a debt jubilee, a general cancellation, in part just to bring home that money is really just a human product, a set of promises, that by its nature can always be renegotiated.

What would remain is the kind of work only human beings will ever be able to do: those forms of caring and helping labor that are at the very center of the crisis that brought about Occupy Wall

Contents

said of endlessly increasing working hours. No one has much time for political activity if they're working sixty-hour weeks.

It does often seem that, whenever there is a choice between one option that makes capitalism seem the only possible economic system, and another that would actually make capitalism a more viable economic system, neoliberalism means always choosing the former. The combined result is a relentless campaign against the human imagination. Or, to be more precise: imagination, desire, individual creativity, all those things that were to be liberated in the last great world revolution, were to be contained strictly in the domain of consumerism, or perhaps in the virtual realities of the Internet. In all other realms they were to be strictly banished. We are talking about the murdering of dreams, the imposition of an apparatus of hopelessness, designed to squelch any sense of an alternative future. Yet as a result of putting virtually all their efforts in one political basket, we are left in the bizarre situation of watching the capitalist system crumbling before our very eyes, at just the moment everyone had finally concluded no other system would be possible.

Work It Out, Slow It Down

Normally, when you challenge the conventional wisdom—that the current economic and political system is the only possible one—the first reaction you are likely to get is a demand for a detailed architectural blueprint of how an alternative system would work, down to the nature of its financial instruments, energy supplies, and policies of sewer maintenance. Next, you are likely to be asked for a detailed program of how this system will be brought into existence. Historically, this is ridiculous. When has social change ever happened according to someone's blueprint? It's not as if a small circle of visionaries in Renaissance Florence conceived of something they called "capitalism," figured out the details of how the stock exchange and factories would someday work, and then put in place a program to bring their visions into reality. In fact, the idea is so absurd we might well ask ourselves how it ever occurred to us to imagine this is how change happens to begin.

its own standards, then, the project was already a colossal failure even before the 2008 collapse.

If, on the other hand, we stop taking world leaders at their word and instead think of neoliberalism as a political project, it suddenly looks spectacularly effective. The politicians, CEOs, trade bureaucrats, and so forth who regularly meet at summits like Davos or the G20 may have done a miserable job in creating a world capitalist economy that meets the needs of a majority of the world's inhabitants (let alone produces hope, happiness, security, or meaning), but they have succeeded magnificently in convincing the world that capitalism—and not just capitalism, but exactly the financialized, semifeudal capitalism we happen to have right now—is the only viable economic system. If you think about it, this is a remarkable accomplishment.

How did they pull it off? The preemptive attitude toward social movements is clearly a part of it; under no conditions can alternatives, or anyone proposing alternatives, be seen to experience success. This helps explain the almost unimaginable investment in "security systems" of one sort or another: the fact that the United States, which lacks any major rival, spends more on its military and intelligence than it did during the Cold War, along with the almost dazzling accumulation of private security agencies, intelligence agencies, militarized police, guards, and mercenaries. Then there are the propaganda organs, including a massive media industry that did not even exist before the sixties, celebrating police. Mostly these systems do not so much attack dissidents directly as contribute to a pervasive climate of fear, jingoistic conformity, life insecurity, and simple despair that makes any thought of changing the world seem an idle fantasy. Yet these security systems are also extremely expensive. Some economists estimate that a quarter of the American population is now engaged in "guard labor" of one sort or another—defending property, supervising work, or otherwise keeping their fellow Americans in line. Economically, most of this disciplinary apparatus is pure deadweight.

In fact, most of the economic innovations of the last thirty years make more sense politically than economically. Eliminating guaranteed life employment for precarious contracts doesn't really create a more effective workforce, but it is extraordinarily effective in destroying unions and otherwise depoliticizing labor. The same can be

Introduction

Did the movement to "Stop Cop City" win?

An absurd question to ask, maybe, considering that the mayor of Atlanta has announced that the police facility in question is, at the time of this writing, operational and in use. Yet, even as the movement in Atlanta is winding down, with participants facing unprecedented terrorism charges and profound levels of police harassment, if we look closer we see similar projects to build repressive training facilities in Michigan and South Carolina being abandoned at even the slightest signs of local resistance, while elsewhere, plans to expand policing infrastructure are embroiled in legal challenges, targeted by public pressure campaigns, and subject to costly acts of sabotage, vandalism, and even arson. What's going on?

The essays presented here, *The Shock of Victory* and *A Practical Utopians Guide to the Coming Collapse*, can't answer this question for us directly—they were written in 2008 and 2013, respectively—but applying their approach to the social movements of the intervening years invites such strange and potentially fruitful questions as this.

And if it feels naively optimistic to ask a question like whether Stop Cop City won—well, David Graeber always seemed to maintain a rather positive outlook. His major works include a book about how modern capitalism has created countless "bullshit jobs"—essentially busywork to waste people's lives in order to impose unquestionable labor discipline; another about the soul-crushing proliferation of bureaucracy that seems to ensure that an ever greater number of people spend a significant portion of their lives filling out forms; and a five thousand year history of the very concept of debt that seems

to include a line every hundred pages or so that says something like, "and then the debt burden became so large that this or that entire class of people had to sell their children into slavery." Yet, somehow, on the other side of reading these works I've always felt surprisingly light, even—in spite of it all—hopeful.

It's not that Graeber has some kind of detached academic tone that fails to drive home what's really at stake. Quite the opposite, really. In the opening chapter of *Debt* he writes about seeing the on-the-ground impacts of IMF structural adjustment programs in Madagascar—how he met grieving mothers whose children were among the ten thousand people who died after the country's anti-malaria program was axed so that "Citibank wouldn't have to cut its losses on one irresponsible loan that wasn't particularly important to its balance sheet anyway."

And it's not that he was an armchair anarchist without the experience of taking risks in moments of social upheaval. In 2020, after his untimely death at 59, stories came pouring in from around the world about his participation in revolutionary movements in far flung corners of the world. Evidently he smuggled drones into Rojava for resistance fighters there to use for reconnaissance, and others reported running into him on the tear gas-filled streets of Paris at the start of the Yellow Vest Movement, noting that he had a nice gas mask and seemed in good spirits.

At some level, David Graeber's positivity was likely his natural disposition—he has always struck me as a playful, even joyful writer, and by all accounts this was reflected also in his personality. But more saliently, his positivity also came from the fact that, at some level, it wasn't just that he *believed* the world could be different, it was that, informed by a lifetime of anthropological research, he *knew*.

> "I was drawn to [anthropology] because it opens windows on other possible forms of human social existence; because it served as a constant reminder that most of what we assume to be immutable has been, in other times and places, arranged quite differently, and therefore, that human possibilities are in almost every way greater than we ordinarily imagine."

The following essays are, of course, not anthropological texts.

movements, the designing of wars and trade summits in such a way that preventing effective opposition is considered more of a priority than the success of the war or summit itself, really reflects a more general principle? What if those currently running the system, most of whom witnessed the unrest of the sixties firsthand as impressionable youngsters, are—consciously or unconsciously (and I suspect it's more conscious than not)—obsessed by the prospect of revolutionary social movements once again challenging prevailing common sense? The thought first occurred to me when participating in the IMF actions in Washington, D.C., in 2002. Coming on the heels of 9/11, we were relatively few and ineffective, the number of police overwhelming. There was no sense that we could succeed in shutting down the meetings. Most of us left feeling vaguely depressed. It was only a few days later, when I talked to someone who had friends attending the meetings, that I learned we had in fact shut them down: the police had introduced such stringent security measures, canceling half the events, that most of the actual meetings had been carried out online. In other words, the government had decided it was more important for protesters to walk away feeling like failures than for the IMF meetings to take place. If you think about it, they afforded protesters extraordinary importance.

It would explain a lot. In most of the world, the last thirty years has come to be known as the age of neoliberalism—one dominated by a revival of the long-since-abandoned nineteenth-century creed that held that free markets and human freedom in general were ultimately the same thing. Neoliberalism has always been wracked by a central paradox. It declares that economic imperatives are to take priority over all others. Politics itself is just a matter of creating the conditions for growing the economy by allowing the magic of the marketplace to do its work. All other hopes and dreams—of equality, of security—are to be sacrificed for the primary goal of economic productivity. But global economic performance over the last thirty years has been decidedly mediocre. With one or two spectacular exceptions (notably China, which significantly ignored most neoliberal prescriptions), growth rates have been far below what they were in the days of the old-fashioned, state-directed, welfare-state-oriented capitalism of the fifties, sixties, and even seventies. By

and that the triumph of capitalist markets and their various planetary administrators and enforcers—which seemed so epochal and permanent in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991—was, in fact, far shallower.

I'll take an obvious example. One often hears that antiwar protests in the late sixties and early seventies were ultimately failures, since they did not appreciably speed up the U.S. withdrawal from Indochina. But afterward, those controlling U.S. foreign policy were so anxious about being met with similar popular unrest—and even more, with unrest within the military itself, which was genuinely falling apart by the early seventies—that they refused to commit U.S. forces to any major ground conflict for almost thirty years. It took 9/11, an attack that led to thousands of civilian deaths on U.S. soil, to fully overcome the notorious "Vietnam syndrome"—and even then, the war planners made an almost obsessive effort to ensure the wars were effectively protest-proof. Propaganda was incessant, the media was brought on board, experts provided exact calculations on body bag counts (how many U.S. casualties it would take to stir mass opposition), and the rules of engagement were carefully written to keep the count below that.

The problem was that since those rules of engagement ensured that thousands of women, children, and old people would end up "collateral damage" in order to minimize deaths and injuries to U.S. soldiers, this meant that in Iraq and Afghanistan, intense hatred for the occupying forces would pretty much guarantee that the United States couldn't obtain its military objectives. And remarkably, the war planners seemed to be aware of this. It didn't matter. They considered it far more important to prevent effective opposition at home than to actually win the war. It's as if American forces in Iraq were ultimately defeated by the ghost of Abbie Hoffman.

Clearly, an antiwar movement in the sixties that is still tying the hands of U.S. military planners in 2012 can hardly be considered a failure. But it raises an intriguing question: What happens when the creation of that sense of failure, of the complete ineffectiveness of political action against the system, becomes the chief objective of those in power?

Is it possible that this preemptive attitude toward social

They are the reflections of a social movement participant in the waning era of a wave of struggle—*The Shock of Victory* was written after the anti-globalization protests of the late 90s/early 00s, and *A Practical Utopian's Guide to the Coming Collapse* after Occupy Wall Street. But they, like all of David Graeber's writing, are suffused with the anthropologist's sense of possibility: social movements *do* experience meaningful victories, even our fringe ideas can suddenly become political common sense, and, in the words of the anti-globalization era slogan, "another world is possible."

imagination, a project for the revolutionizing of not just political or economic life, but every aspect of human existence. As a result, in most cases, the rebels didn't even try to take over the apparatus of state; they saw that apparatus as itself the problem.

It's fashionable nowadays to view the social movements of the late sixties as an embarrassing failure. A case can be made for that view. It's certainly true that in the political sphere, the immediate beneficiary of any widespread change in political common sense—a prioritizing of ideals of individual liberty, imagination, and desire; a hatred of bureaucracy; and suspicions about the role of government—was the political Right. Above all, the movements of the sixties allowed for the mass revival of free market doctrines that had largely been abandoned since the nineteenth century. It's no coincidence that the same generation who, as teenagers, made the Cultural Revolution in China was the one who, as forty-year-olds, presided over the introduction of capitalism. Since the eighties, "freedom" has come to mean "the market," and "the market" has come to be seen as identical with capitalism—even, ironically, in places like China, which had known sophisticated markets for thousands of years, but rarely anything that could be described as capitalism.

The ironies are endless. While the new free market ideology has framed itself above all as a rejection of bureaucracy, it has, in fact, been responsible for the first administrative system that has operated on a planetary scale, with its endless layering of public and private bureaucracies: the IMF, World Bank, WTO, trade organizations, financial institutions, transnational corporations, NGOs. This is precisely the system that has imposed free market orthodoxy, and opened the world to financial pillage, under the watchful aegis of American arms. It only made sense that the first attempt to recreate a global revolutionary movement, the Global Justice Movement that peaked between 1998 and 2003, was effectively a rebellion against the rule of that very planetary bureaucracy.

Future Stop

In retrospect, though, I think that later historians will conclude that the legacy of the sixties revolution was deeper than we now imagine,

1848," which saw revolutions break out almost simultaneously in fifty countries, from Wallachia to Brazil. In no case did the revolutionaries succeed in taking power, but afterward, institutions inspired by the French Revolution—notably, universal systems of primary education—were put in place pretty much everywhere. Similarly, the Russian Revolution of 1917 was a world revolution ultimately responsible for the New Deal and European welfare states as much as for Soviet communism. The last in the series was the world revolution of 1968—which, much like 1848, broke out almost everywhere, from China to Mexico, seized power nowhere, but nonetheless changed everything. This was a revolution against state bureaucracies, and for the inseparability of personal and political liberation, whose most lasting legacy will likely be the birth of modern feminism.

Revolutions are thus planetary phenomena. But there is more. What they really do is transform basic assumptions about what politics is ultimately about. In the wake of a revolution, ideas that had been considered veritably lunatic fringe quickly become the accepted currency of debate. Before the French Revolution, the ideas that change is good, that government policy is the proper way to manage it, and that governments derive their authority from an entity called "the people" were considered the sorts of things one might hear from crackpots and demagogues, or at best a handful of freethinking intellectuals who spend their time debating in cafés. A generation later, even the stuffiest magistrates, priests, and headmasters had to at least pay lip service to these ideas. Before long, we had reached the situation we are in today: that it's necessary to lay out the terms for anyone to even notice they are there. They've become common sense, the very grounds of political discussion.

Until 1968, most world revolutions really just introduced practical refinements: an expanded franchise, universal primary education, the welfare state. The world revolution of 1968, in contrast—whether it took the form it did in China, of a revolt by students and young cadres supporting Mao's call for a Cultural Revolution; or in Berkeley and New York, where it marked an alliance of students, dropouts, and cultural rebels; or even in Paris, where it was an alliance of students and workers—was a rebellion against bureaucracy, conformity, or anything that fettered the human

The Shock of Victory

What is a revolution? We used to think we knew. Revolutions were seizures of power by popular forces aiming to transform the very nature of the political, social, and economic system in the country in which the revolution took place, usually according to some visionary dream of a just society. Nowadays, we live in an age when, if rebel armies do come sweeping into a city, or mass uprisings overthrow a dictator, it's unlikely to have any such implications; when profound social transformation does occur—as with, say, the rise of feminism—it's likely to take an entirely different form. It's not that revolutionary dreams aren't out there. But contemporary revolutionaries rarely think they can bring them into being by some modern-day equivalent of storming the Bastille.

At moments like this, it generally pays to go back to the history one already knows and ask: Were revolutions ever really what we thought them to be? For me, the person who has asked this most effectively is the great world historian Immanuel Wallerstein. He argues that for the last quarter millennium or so, revolutions have consisted above all of planetwide transformations of political common sense.

Already by the time of the French Revolution, Wallerstein notes, there was a single world market, and increasingly a single world political system as well, dominated by the huge colonial empires. As a result, the storming of the Bastille in Paris could well end up having effects on Denmark, or even Egypt, just as profound as on France itself—in some cases, even more so. Hence he speaks of the "world revolution of 1789," followed by the "world revolution of

The biggest problem facing direct action movements is that we don't know how to handle victory.

This might seem an odd thing to say because a lot of us haven't been feeling particularly victorious of late. Most anarchists today feel the global justice movement was kind of a blip: inspiring, certainly, while it lasted, but not a movement that succeeded either in putting down lasting organizational roots or transforming the contours of power in the world. The antiwar movement was even more frustrating, since anarchists and anarchist tactics were largely marginalized. The war will end, of course, but that's just because wars always do. No one is feeling they contributed much to it.

I want to suggest an alternative interpretation. Let me lay out three initial propositions here:

1. Odd though it may seem, the ruling classes live in fear of us. They appear to still be haunted by the possibility that, if average Americans really get wind of what they're up to, they might all end up hanging from trees. I know it seems implausible, but it's hard to come up with any other explanation for the way they go into panic mode the moment there is any sign of mass mobilization, and especially mass direct action, and usually try to start some kind of war to distract attention.

2. In a way, though, this panic is justified. Mass direct action—especially when organized on democratic lines—is incredibly effective. Over the last thirty years in America, there have been only two instances of mass action of this sort: the anti-nuclear movement in the late '70s, and the so called "anti-globalization" movement from

roughly 1999 to 2001. In each case, the movement's main political goals were reached far more quickly than almost anyone involved imagined possible.

3. The real problem such movements face is that they always get taken by surprise by the speed of their initial success. We are never prepared for victory. It throws us into confusion. We start fighting each other. The ratcheting up of repression and appeals to nationalism that inevitably accompany some new war mobilization then play into the hands of authoritarians on every side of the political spectrum. As a result, by the time the full impact of our initial victory becomes clear, we're usually too busy feeling like failures to even notice it.

Let me take the two most prominent examples case by case:

I: The Anti-Nuclear Movement

The anti-nuclear movement of the late '70s marked the first appearance in North America of what we now consider standard anarchist tactics and forms of organization: mass actions, affinity groups, spokes-councils, consensus process, jail solidarity, the very principle of decentralized direct democracy… It was all somewhat primitive, compared to now, and there were significant differences—notably much stricter, Gandhian-style conceptions of non-violence—but all the elements were there and it was the first time they had come together as a package. For two years, the movement grew with amazing speed and showed every sign of becoming a nation-wide phenomenon. Then almost as quickly, it disintegrated.

It all began when, in 1974, some veteran-peaceniks-turned-organic farmers in New England successfully blocked construction of a proposed nuclear power plant in Montague, Massachusetts. In 1976, they joined with other New England activists, inspired by the success of a year-long plant occupation in Germany, to create the Clamshell Alliance. Clamshell's immediate goal was to stop construction of a proposed nuclear power plant in Seabrook, New Hampshire. While the alliance never ended up managing an occupation so much as a series of dramatic mass-arrests, combined with jail solidarity, their actions—involving, at peak, tens of thousands of people organized on directly democratic lines—

A Practical Utopian's Guide to the Coming Collapse

moments of cooptation, endless victorious campaigns, endless little insurrectionary moments or moments of flight and covert autonomy. I hesitate to even speculate as to what it might really be like. But to start in that direction, the first thing we need to do is to recognize that we do, in fact, win some.

Actually, recently, we've been winning quite a lot. The question is how to break the cycle of exaltation and despair and come up with some strategic visions (the more the merrier) about how these victories can build on each other, to create a cumulative movement towards a new society.

succeeded in throwing the very idea of nuclear power into question in a way it had never been before. Similar coalitions began springing up across the country: the Palmetto Alliance in South Carolina, Oystershell in Maryland, Sunflower in Kansas, and most famous of all, the Abalone Alliance in California, reacting originally to a completely insane plan to build a nuclear power plant at Diablo Canyon, almost directly on top of a major geographic fault line.

Clamshell's first three mass actions, in 1976 and 1977, were wildly successful. But it soon fell into crisis over questions of democratic process. In May 1978, a newly created Coordinating Committee violated process to accept a last-minute government offer for a three-day legal rally at Seabrook instead of a planned fourth occupation (the excuse was reluctance to alienate the surrounding community). Acrimonious debates began about consensus and community relations, which then expanded to the role of non-violence (even cutting through fences, or defensive measures like gas masks, had originally been forbidden), gender bias, and so on. By 1979 the alliance split into two contending, and increasingly ineffective, factions, and after many delays, the Seabrook plant (or half of it anyway) did go into operation. The Abalone Alliance lasted longer, until 1985, in part because its strong core of anarcha-feminists, but in the end, Diablo Canyon too got its license and went into operation in December 1988.

On the surface this doesn't sound too inspiring. But what was the movement really trying to achieve? It might be helpful here to map out its full range of goals:

1. Short-Term Goals: to block construction of the particular nuclear plant in question (Seabrook, Diablo Canyon…).

2. Medium-Term Goals: to block construction of all new nuclear plants, delegitimize the very idea of nuclear power and begin moving towards conservation and green power, and legitimate new forms of non-violent resistance and feminist-inspired direct democracy.

3. Long-Term Goals: (at least for the more radical elements) smash the state and destroy capitalism.

If so, the results are clear. Short-term goals were almost never reached. Despite numerous tactical victories (delays, utility company

bankruptcies, legal injunctions), the plants that became the focus of mass action all ultimately went on line. Governments simply cannot allow themselves to be seen to lose such a battle. Long-term goals were also obviously not obtained. But one reason they weren't is that the medium-term goals were all reached almost immediately. The actions did delegitimize the very idea of nuclear power—raising public awareness to the point that when Three Mile Island melted down in 1979, it doomed the industry forever. While plans for Seabrook and Diablo Canyon might not have been cancelled, just about every other then-pending plan to build a nuclear reactor was, and no new ones have been proposed for a quarter century. There was indeed a move towards conservation, green power, and a legitimizing of new democratic organizing techniques. All this happened much more quickly than anyone had really anticipated.

In retrospect, it's easy to see most of the subsequent problems emerged directly from the very speed of the movement's success. Radicals had hoped to make links between the nuclear industry and the very nature of the capitalist system that created it. As it turns out, the capitalist system proved more than willing to jettison the nuclear industry the moment it became a liability. Once giant utility companies began claiming they too wanted to promote green energy, effectively inviting what we'd now call the NGO types to a space at the table, there was an enormous temptation to jump ship. Especially because many of them only allied with more radical groups so as to win themselves a place at the table to begin with.

The inevitable result was a series of heated strategic debates. But it's impossible to understand this without first understanding that strategic debates, within directly democratic movements, are rarely conducted as such. They almost always take the form of debates about something else. Take for instance the question of capitalism. Anti-capitalists are usually more than happy to discuss their position on the subject. Liberals, on the other hand, really don't like to have to say, "actually, I am in favor of maintaining capitalism," so whenever possible, they try to change the subject. Thus, debates that are actually about whether to directly challenge capitalism usually end up getting argued out as if they were short-term debates about tactics and non-violence. Authoritarian socialists or others who are suspicious

authorities in charge; socialist or communist municipalities would put socialist or communist party bureaucrats in charge. Right and Left statists would then each form rival confederations that, even though they controlled only a fraction of the former Spanish territory, would each declare themselves the legitimate government of Spain. Foreign governments would recognize one or the other—since none would be willing to exchange ambassadors with a non-government like the FAI, even assuming the FAI wished to exchange ambassadors with them, which it wouldn't.

In other words, the actual shooting war might end, but the political struggle would continue—and large parts of Spain would presumably end up looking like contemporary Chiapas, with each district or community divided between anarchist and anti-anarchist factions. Ultimate victory would have to be a long and arduous process. The only way to really win over the statist enclaves would be to win over their children, which could be accomplished by creating an obviously freer, more pleasurable, more beautiful, secure, relaxed, fulfilling life in the stateless sections. Foreign capitalist powers, on the other hand, even if they did not intervene militarily, would do everything possible to head off the notorious "threat of a good example" by economic boycotts and subversion, and by pouring resources into the statist zones. In the end, everything would probably depend on the degree to which anarchist victories in Spain inspired similar insurrections elsewhere.

The real point of this imaginative exercise is to point out that there are no clean breaks in history. The implication of the old idea of the clean break, the one moment when the state falls and capitalism is defeated, is that anything short of that is not really a victory at all. If capitalism is left standing, if it begins to market your once-subversive ideas, it shows that the capitalists really won. You've lost; you've been coopted. To me this is absurd. Can we say that feminism lost, that it achieved nothing, just because corporate culture felt obliged to pay lip service to condemning sexism and capitalist firms began marketing feminist books, movies, and other products? Of course not: unless you've managed to destroy capitalism and patriarchy in one fell blow, this is one of the clearest signs that you've gotten somewhere. Presumably any effective road to revolution will involve endless

municipality in the territory of what had formerly been Spain? How exactly?

We have to bear in mind here that there were many villages, towns, and even whole regions of Spain where anarchists were almost non-existent. In some, just about the entire population was made up of conservative Catholics or monarchists; in others (say, the Basque country), there was a militant and well-organized working class, but one that was overwhelmingly socialist or communist. Even at the height of revolutionary fervor, most of these would stay true to their old values and ideas. If the victorious FAI attempted to exterminate them all—a task which would have required killing millions of people—or chase them out of the country, or forcibly relocate them into anarchist communities, or send them off to reeducation camps—they would not only have been guilty of world-class atrocities, they would have had to give up on being anarchists. Democratic organizations simply cannot commit atrocities on that systematic scale: for that, you'd need Communist or Fascist-style top-down organization, since you can't actually get thousands of human beings to systematically massacre helpless women and children and old people, destroy communities, or chase families from their ancestral homes unless they can at least say they were only following orders. There appear to have been only two possible solutions to the problem.

1. Let the Republic continue as the de facto government, controlled by the socialists; let them impose government control on the right-wing majority areas, while getting some kind of deal out of them that they would leave the anarchist-majority cities, towns, and villages alone to organize themselves as they wish… and hope that the government kept the deal.

2. Declare that everyone was to form their own local popular assemblies, and let them decide on their own mode of self-organization.

The latter seems the more fitting with anarchist principles, but the results wouldn't have likely been much different. After all, if the inhabitants of, say, Bilbao collectively decided to create a local government, how exactly would one have stopped them? Municipalities where most people were still loyal to the church or local landlords would presumably put the same old right-wing

of democracy itself don't like to make that an issue either, and prefer to discuss the need to create the broadest possible coalitions. Those who do like democracy but feel a group is taking the wrong strategic direction often find it much more effective to challenge its decision-making process than to challenge its actual decisions.

There is another factor here that is even less remarked on, but I think equally important. Everyone knows that faced with a broad and potentially revolutionary coalition, any government's first move will be to try to split it. Making concessions to placate the moderates while selectively criminalizing the radicals—this is Art of Governance 101. In addition, the US government is in possession of a global empire constantly mobilized for war, and this gives it another option that most governments don't have. Those running it can ratchet up the level of violence overseas pretty much any time they like; this has proved a remarkably effective way to defuse social movements founded around domestic concerns. It seems no coincidence that the civil rights movement was followed by major political concessions and a rapid escalation of the war in Vietnam; that the anti-nuclear movement was followed by the abandonment of nuclear power and a ramping up of the Cold War, with Star Wars programs and proxy wars in Afghanistan and Central America; that the Global Justice Movement was followed by the collapse of the Washington Consensus and the War on Terror. As a result early SDS had to put aside its early emphasis on participatory democracy to become a mere anti-war movement; the anti-nuclear movement morphed into a nuclear freeze movement; the horizontal structures of DAN and PGA gave way to top-down mass organizations like ANSWER and UFPJ.

From the point of view of government, the military solution does have its risks. The whole thing can blow up in one's face, as it did in Vietnam (hence the obsession, at least since the first Gulf War, with designing a war that is effectively protest-proof.) There is also always a small risk some miscalculation will accidentally trigger a nuclear Armageddon and destroy the planet. But these are risks politicians faced with civil unrest appear to have been more than willing to take—if only because directly democratic movements genuinely scare them, while anti-war movements are their preferred adversary. After all, states are ultimately forms of violence—it's their

native tongue. As soon as the argument shifts to violence versus non-violence, they're back on their home turf, where they're best equipped to justify and enforce themselves. Organizations designed either to wage or to oppose wars will always tend to be more hierarchically organized than those designed with almost anything else in mind. This is certainly what happened in the case of the anti-nuclear movement.

While the anti-war mobilizations of the '80s turned out far larger numbers than Clamshell or Abalone ever had, they also marked a return to marching with signs, permitted rallies, and abandoning experiments with new forms of direct democracy.

II: The Global Justice Movement

I'll assume our gentle reader is broadly familiar with the actions at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, the IMF-World Bank blockades six months later in Washington at A16, and so on.

In the US, the movement flared up so quickly and dramatically that even the media could not completely dismiss it. It also quickly started eating itself. Direct Action Networks were founded in almost every major city in America. While some of these (notably Seattle and Los Angeles DAN) were reformist, anti-corporate, and fans of strict non-violence codes, most (like New York and Chicago DAN) were overwhelmingly anarchist and anti-capitalist, and dedicated to diversity of tactics. Other cities (Montreal, Washington, D.C.) created even more explicitly anarchist Anti-Capitalist Convergences. The anti-corporate DANs dissolved almost immediately, but very few lasted more than a couple years. There were endless and bitter debates: about nonviolence, about summit-hopping, about racism and privilege issues, about the viability of the network model.

Then there was 9/11, followed by a huge increase of the level of repression and resultant paranoia, and the panicked flight of almost all our former allies among unions and NGOs. By Miami, in 2003, it seemed like we'd been put to rout, and a paralysis swept over the movement from which we've only recently started to recover.

September 11 was such a weird event, such a catastrophe, that it makes it almost impossible for us to perceive anything else around

movement was to begin in America, it would have to start with people like these: people who don't need to be convinced that the system is rotten, only that there's something they can do about it. And at any rate, even if it were possible to have an anti-capitalist revolution without gun-battles in the streets—which most of us are hoping it is, since let's face it, if we come up against the US army, we will lose—there's no possible way we could have an anti-capitalist revolution while at the same time scrupulously respecting property rights.

The latter actually leads to an interesting question. What would it mean to win, not just our medium-term goals, but our long-term ones? At the moment no one is even clear how that would come about, for the very reason that none of us have much faith left in "the" revolution in the old 19th or 20th century sense of the term. After all, the total view of revolution, that there will be a single mass insurrection or general strike and then all walls will come tumbling down, is entirely premised on the old fantasy of capturing the state. That's the only way victory could possibly be that absolute and complete—at least, if we are speaking of a whole country or meaningful territory.

In way of illustration, consider this: what would it have actually meant for the Spanish anarchists to have actually "won" in 1937? It's amazing how rarely we ask ourselves such questions. We just imagine it would have been something like the Russian Revolution, which began in a similar way, with the melting away of the old army, the spontaneous creation of workers' soviets. But that was in the major cities. The Russian Revolution was followed by years of civil war in which the Red Army gradually imposed the new state's control on every part of the old Russian Empire, whether the communities in question wanted it or not. Let us imagine that anarchist militias in Spain had routed the fascist army, which then completely dissolved, and kicked the socialist Republican Government out of its offices in Barcelona and Madrid. That would certainly have been victory by anybody's standards. But what would have happened next? Would they have established Spain as a non-Republic, an anti-state existing within the exact same international borders? Would they have imposed a regime of popular councils in every single village and

home than for the sake of military effectiveness. This, anyway, would help explain why the most powerful army in the world has ended up being tied down and even defeated by an almost unimaginably ragtag group of guerillas with negligible access to outside safe-areas, funding, or military support. As in the trade summits, they are so obsessed with ensuring that the forces of civil resistance cannot be seen to win the battle at home that they would prefer to lose the actual war.

Perspectives (with a brief return to 1930s Spain)

How, then, to cope with the perils of victory? I can't claim to have any simple answers. Really I wrote this essay more to start a conversation, to put the problem on the table—to inspire a strategic debate.

Still, some implications are pretty obvious. The next time we plan a major action campaign, I think we would do well to at least take into account the possibility that we might obtain our mid-range strategic goals very quickly, and that when that happens, many of our allies will fall away. We have to recognize strategic debates for what they are, even when they seem to be about something else. Take one famous example: arguments about property destruction after Seattle. Most of these, I think, were really arguments about capitalism. Those who decried window-breaking did so mainly because they wished to appeal to middle-class consumers to move towards global-exchange style green consumerism, to ally with labor bureaucracies and social democrats abroad. This was not a path designed to create a direct confrontation with capitalism, and most of those who urged us to take this route were at least skeptical about the possibility that capitalism could ever really be defeated at all.

Those who did break windows didn't care if they were offending suburban homeowners, because they didn't see them as a potential element in a revolutionary anti-capitalist coalition. They were trying, in effect, to hijack the media to send a message that the system was vulnerable—hoping to inspire similar insurrectionary acts on the parts of those who might consider entering a genuinely revolutionary alliance: alienated teenagers, oppressed people of color, rank-and-file laborers impatient with union bureaucrats, the homeless, the criminalized, the radically discontent. If a militant anti-capitalist

it. In its immediate aftermath, almost all of the structures created in the globalization movement collapsed. But one reason it was so easy for them to collapse was—not just that war seemed such an immediately more pressing concern—but that once again, in most of our immediate objectives, we'd already, unexpectedly, won.

Myself, I joined NYC DAN right around the time of A16. At the time DAN as a whole saw itself as a group with two major objectives. One was to help coordinate the North American wing of a vast global movement against neoliberalism, and what was then called the Washington Consensus, to destroy the hegemony of neoliberal ideas, stop all the new big trade agreements (WTO, FTAA), and to discredit and eventually destroy organizations like the IMF. The other was to replace old-fashioned activist organizing styles with their steering committees and ideological squabbles, to disseminate a (very much anarchist-inspired) model of direct democracy: decentralized, affinity-group structures, consensus process. At the time we sometimes called it "contaminationism," the idea that all people really needed was to be exposed to the experience of direct action and direct democracy and they would want to start imitating it all by themselves. There was a general feeling that we weren't trying to build a permanent structure; DAN was just a means to this end. When it had served its purpose, several founding members explained to me, there would be no further need for it. On the other hand these were pretty ambitious goals, so we also assumed even if we did attain them, it would probably take at least a decade.

As it turned out, it took about a year and a half.

Obviously we failed to spark a social revolution. But one reason we never got to the point of inspiring hundreds of thousands of people to rise up was, again, that we achieved our other goals so quickly. Take the question of organization. While the anti-war coalitions still operate, as anti-war coalitions always do, as top-down popular front groups, almost every small-scale radical group that isn't dominated by Marxist sectarians of some sort or another—and this includes anything from organizations of Syrian immigrants in Montreal to community gardens in Detroit—now operates on largely anarchist principles—though they might not know it. Contaminationism worked. Alternately, take the domain of ideas.

The Washington Consensus lies in ruins. So much so it's hard now to remember what public discourse in this country was even like before Seattle.

Rarely have the media and political classes been so completely unanimous about anything—that "free trade," "free markets," and no-holds-barred supercharged capitalism were the only possible direction for human history; the only possible solution for any problem was so completely assumed that anyone who cast doubt on the proposition was treated as literally insane. Global justice activists, when they first forced themselves into the attention of CNN or Newsweek, were immediately written off as reactionary lunatics. A year or two later, CNN and Newsweek were saying we'd won the argument.

Usually when I make this point in front of anarchist crowds someone immediately objects: "well, sure, the rhetoric has changed, but the policies remain the same." This is true in a manner of speaking. That is to say, it's true that we didn't destroy capitalism. But we (taking the "we" here as the horizontalist, direct-action oriented wing of the planetary movement against neoliberalism) did arguably deal it a bigger blow in just two years than anyone since, say, the Russian Revolution.

Let me take this point by point:

Free Trade Agreeements. All the ambitious free trade treaties planned since 1998 have failed. The MAI was routed; the FTAA, focus of the actions in Quebec City and Miami, stopped dead in its tracks. Most of us remember the 2003 FTAA summit mainly for introducing the "Miami model" of extreme police repression even against obviously non-violent civil resistance. It was that. But we forget this was more than anything the enraged flailings of a pack of extremely sore losers—Miami was the meeting where the FTAA was definitively killed. Now no one is even talking about broad, ambitious treaties on that scale. The US is reduced to pushing for minor country-to-country trade pacts with traditional allies like South Korea and Peru, or at best deals like CAFTA, uniting its remaining client states in Central America, and it's not even clear it will manage to pull that off.

The World Trade Organization. After the catastrophe (for them) in Seattle, organizers moved the next meeting to the Persian Gulf island of Doha, apparently deciding they would rather run the risk

3. Long-Term Goals: (at least for the more radical elements) smash the state and destroy capitalism.

Here again, we find the same pattern. After the miracle of Seattle, short-term— tactical—goals were rarely achieved. But this was mainly because faced with such a movement, governments tend to dig in their heels and make it a matter of principle that they shouldn't be visibly defeated. This was usually considered much more important, in fact, than the success of the summit in question. Most activists do not seem to be aware that in a lot of cases—the 2001 and 2002 IMF and World Bank meetings for example—police ended up enforcing security arrangements so elaborate that they came very close to shutting down the meetings themselves; ensuring that many events were cancelled, the ceremonies were ruined, and nobody really had a chance to talk to each other. But the point was not whether trade officials got to meet or not. The point was that the protestors could not be seen to win.

Here, too, the medium-term goals were achieved so quickly that it actually made the longer-term goals more difficult. NGOs, labor unions, authoritarian Marxists, and similar allies jumped ship almost immediately; strategic debates ensued, but they were carried out, as always, indirectly, as arguments about race, privilege, tactics, as almost anything but actual strategic debates. Here, too, everything was made infinitely more difficult by the state's recourse to war.

It is hard, as I mentioned, for anarchists to take much direct responsibility for the inevitable end of the war in Iraq, or even for the very bloody nose the empire has already acquired there. But a case could well be made for indirect responsibility. Since the '60s and the catastrophe of Vietnam, the US government has not abandoned its policy of answering any threat of democratic mass mobilizing by a return to war. But it has to be much more careful. Essentially, they have to design wars to be protest-proof. There is very good reason to believe that the first Gulf War was explicitly designed with this in mind. The approach taken to the invasion of Iraq—the insistence on a smaller, high-tech army, the extreme reliance on indiscriminate firepower, even against civilians, to protect against any Vietnam-like levels of American casualties—appears to have been developed, again, more with a mind to heading off any potential peace movement at

own countries, European social protections are under attack, and most of Africa, despite much hypocritical posturing on the part of the Bonos and rich countries of the world, is still locked in debt, and now also facing a new colonization by China. The US, its economic power retreating in most of the world, is frantically trying to redouble its grip over Mexico and Central America. We're not living in utopia. But we already knew that. The question is why we never noticed our victories.

Olivier de Marcellus, a PGA activist from Switzerland, points to one reason: whenever some element of the capitalist system takes a hit, whether it's the nuclear industry or the IMF, some leftist journal will start explaining to us that really, this is all part of their plan—or maybe, an effect of the inexorable working out of the internal contradictions of capital, but certainly, nothing for which we ourselves are in any way responsible. Even more important, perhaps, is our reluctance to even say the word "we." The Argentine default, wasn't that really engineered by Nestor Kirchner? What does he have to do with the globalization movement? I mean, it's not as if his hands were forced by thousands of citizens rising up, smashing banks, and replacing the government with popular assemblies coordinated by the IMC. Or, well, okay, maybe it was. Well, in that case, those citizens were People of Color in the Global South. How can "we" take responsibility for their actions? Never mind that they mostly saw themselves as part of the same global justice movement as us, espoused similar ideas, wore similar clothes, used similar tactics, in many cases even belonged to the same confederacies or organizations. Saying "we" here would imply the primal sin of speaking for others.

Myself, I think it's reasonable for a global movement to consider its accomplishments in global terms. These are not inconsiderable. Yet just as with the anti-nuclear movement, they were almost all focused on the middle term. Let me map out a similar hierarchy of goals:

1. Short-Term Goals: blockade and shut down particular summit meetings (IMF, WTO, G8, etc.).

2. Medium-Term Goals: destroy the "Washington Consensus" around neoliberalism, block all new trade pacts, delegitimize and ultimately shut down institutions like the WTO, IMF, and World Bank; disseminate new models of direct democracy.

of being blown up by Osama bin Laden than having to face another DAN blockade. For six years they hammered away at the "Doha round." The problem was that, emboldened by the protest movement, Southern governments began insisting they would no longer agree to open their borders to agricultural imports from rich countries unless those rich countries at least stopped pouring billions of dollars of subsidies into their own agricultural industries to ensure Southern farmers couldn't possibly compete. Since the US in particular had no intention of making any of the sort of sacrifices it demanded of the rest of the world, all deals were off. In July 2006, Pierre Lamy, head of the WTO, declared the Doha round dead and at this point no one is even talking about another WTO negotiation for at least two years—at which point the organization might very possibly not exist.

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank. This is the most amazing story of all. The IMF is rapidly approaching bankruptcy, and it is a direct result of the worldwide mobilization against them. To put the matter bluntly: we destroyed it. The World Bank is not doing all that much better. But by the time the full effects were felt, we weren't even paying attention.

This last story is worth telling in some detail.

The IMF was always the arch-villain of the struggle. It is the most powerful, most arrogant, most pitiless instrument through which neoliberal policies have, for the last twenty-five years, been imposed on the poorer countries of the global South, basically by manipulating debt. In exchange for emergency refinancing, the IMF would demand "structural adjustment programs" that forced massive cuts in health and education, price supports on food, and endless privatization schemes that allowed foreign capitalists to buy up local resources at fire sale prices. Structural adjustment somehow never worked to get countries back on their feet economically, but that just meant they remained in crisis, and the solution was always to insist on yet another round of structural adjustment.

The IMF also had another, less celebrated, role: global enforcer. It was their job to ensure that no country (no matter how poor) could ever be allowed to default on loans to Western bankers (no matter how foolish). Even if a banker were to offer a corrupt dictator a billion dollar loan, and that dictator placed it directly in his

Swiss bank account and fled the country, the IMF would ensure a billion dollars (plus generous interest) would be extracted from his former victims. If a country did default, for any reason, the IMF could impose a credit boycott whose economic effects were roughly comparable to that of a nuclear bomb. (All this flies in the face of even elementary economic theory, whereby those lending money are supposed to be accepting a certain degree of risk; but in the world of international politics, economic laws are only held to be binding on the poor.) This role was their downfall.

What happened was that Argentina defaulted and got away with it. In the '90s, Argentina had been the IMF's star pupil in Latin America—they had literally privatized every public facility except the customs bureau. Then in 2002, the economy crashed. The immediate results we all know: battles in the streets, popular assemblies, the overthrow of three governments in one month, road blockades, occupied factories. "Horizontalism"— broadly anarchist principles—was at the core of popular resistance. The political class was so completely discredited that politicians were obliged to put on wigs and phony mustaches to be able to eat in restaurants without being physically attacked. When Nestor Kirchner, a moderate social democrat, took power in 2003, he knew he had to do something dramatic in order to get most of the population to accept even the idea of having a government, let alone his own. So he did. He did, in fact, the one thing no one in that position is ever supposed to do. He defaulted on Argentina's foreign debt.

Actually Kirchner was quite clever about it. He did not default on his IMF loans. He defaulted on Argentina's private debt, announcing that for all outstanding loans, he would only pay 25 cents on the dollar. Citibank and Chase of course went to the IMF, their accustomed enforcer, to demand punishment. But for the first time in its history, the IMF balked. First of all, with Argentina's economy already in ruins, even the economic equivalent of a nuclear bomb would do little more than make the rubble bounce. Second of all, just about everyone was aware it was the IMF's disastrous advice that set the stage for Argentina's crash in the first place. Third and most decisively, this was at the very height of the impact of the global justice movement: the IMF was already the most hated institution

on the planet, and willfully destroying what little remained of the Argentine middle class would have been pushing things just a little bit too far.

So Argentina was allowed to get away with it. After that, everything changed. Brazil and Argentina together arranged to pay back their outstanding debt to the IMF itself. With a little help from Chavez, so did the rest of the continent. In 2003, Latin American IMF debt stood at $49 billion. Now it's $694 million. To put that in perspective: that's a decline of 98.6%. For every thousand dollars owed four years ago, Latin America now owes fourteen bucks. Asia followed. China and India now both have no outstanding debt to the IMF and refuse to take out new loans. The boycott now includes Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and pretty much every other significant regional economy. Also Russia. The Fund is reduced to lording it over the economies of Africa, and maybe some parts of the Middle East and former Soviet sphere (basically those without oil). As a result its revenues have plummeted by 80% in four years. In the irony of all possible ironies, it's increasingly looking like the IMF will go bankrupt if they can't find someone willing to bail them out, but it isn't clear that anyone particularly wants to. With its reputation as fiscal enforcer in tatters, the IMF no longer serves any obvious purpose even for capitalists. There's been a number of proposals at recent G8 meetings to make up a new mission for the organization—a kind of international bankruptcy court, perhaps—but all have ended up getting torpedoed for one reason or another. Even if the IMF does survive, it has already been reduced to a cardboard cut-out of its former self.

The World Bank, which early on took on the role of good cop, is in somewhat better shape. But emphasis here must be placed on the word "somewhat"—as in, its revenue has only fallen by 60%, not 80%, and there are few actual boycotts. On the other hand the Bank is currently being kept alive largely by the fact that India and China are still willing to deal with it, and both sides know that, so it is no longer in much of a position to dictate terms.

Obviously, all of this does not mean all the monsters have been slain. In Latin America, neoliberalism might be on the run, but China and India are carrying out devastating "reforms" within their