STRATEGIZING FOR A LIVING REVOLUTION

By George Lakey[1]

Otpur ("Resistance" in Serbian) began as hundreds, then thousands, then tens of thousands of young people took to the streets to rid their country of dictator Slobadan Milosevic. Impatient with the cautious ways of many of their pro-democracy elders, the youths organized in coffee bars and schools, posted graffiti almost everywhere, and used their street actions to embarass the regime.

Milosevic counter-attacked. His police routinely beat up the protesters, in the streets and more thoroughly in the police stations. His spies were everywhere. His monopoly of the mass media meant that the Otpur was described as hoodlums and terrorists.

In October 2000 Otpur won; joined by hundreds of thousands of workers and professionals, the young people threw Milosevic out. His party was in disarray, his police in confusion, his army was split.

From the moment Otpur began it had a strategy. The young people were immensely creative in their tactics and at the same time realized that no struggle is ever won simply by a series of actions. Otpur activists knew they could only succeed by creating a strategy that guided a largely decentralized network of groups.

Cynical outsiders were skeptical when Otpur activists claimed not to have a leader, when the young people said they were all leaders and shared responsibility for their actions and their common discipline. What the skeptics overlooked was the power of strategy as a unifying force, taking its place beside the rebel energy and the lessons of recent history that the young people shared. Otpur activists didn't need an underground commander giving them their marching orders because they shared a strategy they believed in; they were happy to improvise creatively within that strategic framework.

Bojan Zarkovic, one of the Otpur trainers, told an audience at the A-Space (anarchist coffee house) in Philadelphia about the boundless creativity of the young people. They would virtually fill a wall of newsprint with their tactical ideas, he said. Then they would choose, in light of their strategy and also their preference for humor and pranks. The result was that the media's painting of them as terrorists lost credibility. True, these young people wore black jeans, black leather jackets, and black T-shirts with a clenched fist silk-screened on the front, but their actions had humor and connected with people. Passersby who saw them (and spread the word) debunked the media portrayal. "They're our kids having fun and, you know, they're right about Milosevic!" is what they said as they spread the word.

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Late '90s Serbia was different in many ways from the situation facing activists in the U.S. or other countries. Even so, Otpur's experience can stimulate our thinking. Given how many activists are tired of an endless round of protests that don't seem to add up to anything, Otpur activists' biggest gift to us might be their choice to unite around a strategy, to get creative about tactics, and to let the strategy guide which tactics make sense and which don't.[2]

Strategy = Power

The young people who started Otpur had a clear conception of how domination works. They saw their society as a pyramid, with Milosevic and his cronies at the top, in alliance with business owners, party leaders, and generals. The direction of power was typically top-down, and included both obvious repression (the army, police, secret police) and subtle repression like a monopoly of the media and school curricula. Here's where Otpur activists diverged from conventional wisdom about power.

They noticed that each layer of domination was in fact supported by the layer below; that the orders that were given were only carried out because those below were willing to carry them out.

Rather than buy into the top-down version of power that Milosevic wanted them to believe, they decided instead to picture Serbian society as organized into pillars of support holding up the dictator. If the pillars gave way, Otpur believed that Milosevic would fall.

This alternative view of power became so central to Otpur that it was taught in all the trainings of new Otpur members. (All new Otpur members were expected to go through the training so they could understand the winning strategy.)

Since the top power-holders depend on the compliance of those beneath them to stay on top, Otpur's strategy was to weaken the compliance and finally to break it. First, Otpur needed to ask: which are the pillars of support needed by the dictatorship? Then: what are the tactics that will weaken those pillars?

Activists in other countries can follow this methodology to begin to create their strategy.[3]

Here's just one example of how it worked in Serbia. One pillar of support for Milosevic was his police. Otpur systematically undermined that pillar. The young activists knew that fighting the police would strengthen police loyalty to Milosevic (and also support the mass media claim that the young people were hoodlums and terrorists). So they trained themselves to make nonviolent responses to police violence during protests. One of the slogans they learned during their trainings was: "It only hurts if you're scared." They took

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[2] My information about Otpur is mostly from interviews with Otpur activists during my training work in the Balkans. More Otpur lesssons are available in my *Clamor Magazine* article "Diversity of Tactics and Democracy," available on the web: www.TrainingforChange.org A very useful video documentary (although it has a pro-U.S. bias) is *Bringing Down a Dictator* shown by PBS in 2002, available from Video Finders, 4401 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

[3] Sociologist Gene Sharp put this theory forward clearly in his great *work The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973)

photos of their wounded. They enlarged the photos, put them on signs, and carried the signs in front of the houses of the police who hurt them. They talked to the cop's neighbors about it, took the signs to the schools of the police officers' children and talked with the children about it. After a year of this, police were plainly reluctant to beat Otpur activists even when ordered to do so, because they didn't want the negative reactions of their family, friends, neighbors.

The young people joked with the plainclothes police assigned to infiltrate them and reminded the cops that everyone would get their chance to act for democracy. Through the assertive outreach of the activists, relationships were built with the police, even into the higher ranks. When the movement ripened into a full-fledged insurgency in Belgrade, many police were sent out of the city by their commanders while other police simply watched the crowds take over the Parliament building.

It wasn't easy, as one of my Otpur friends who had been beaten repeatedly told me. It was, however, simple; the strategy guided the young activists to develop creative tactics that took away one of the key pillars of the dictator's support.

Can this alternative view of power work other places?

One reason why the Otpur activists worked so efficiently at undermining the various pillars of Milosevic' support was because many knew their view of power had already worked in other places. Consider what had happened within the lifetime of Otpur teenagers: the Philippine dictator Marcos had been overthrown by what was called "people power" in 1986; Communist dictatorships had been overthrown by people power in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland in 1989; commanders in the KGB, army, and Communist Party were prevented by people power from establishing a coup in Russia in 1991; a mass nonviolent uprising in Thailand prevented a top military general from consolidating his power in 1993; the South African whites' monopoly political rule was broken in 1994 after a decade of largely nonviolent struggle. In all these places the power-holders found their power slipping away because those they depended on refused any longer to follow the script.

When I was trying as a young man to puzzle out this alternative view of power, so different from what is usually taught in school, I encountered Bernard Lafayette, who was then a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) staffer from the deep South. He explained it to me with a metaphor. Bernard said that a society is like a house. The foundation is the cooperation or compliance of the people. The roof is the state and its repressive apparatus. He asked me what happens to the house if the foundation gives way. He went on to ask: "How will it change what happens if more weapons are put on the roof, bigger tanks, more fancy technology? What will happen to the house then, if the foundation gives way?"

I then realized why this alternative view isn't promoted in school. What power holders would want us to know that the power is in fact in our hands? That instead of being intimidated by police, military, corporate leaders, media tycoons, and politicians, the people were to find out that we give away our power through compliance, and we can take it back again through noncooperation?

Of course the power holders want us to believe that power is top-down, that we must be passive, that violence is the most powerful force. Don't look for them to declare a national holiday dedicated to People Power!

And they don't need to. The use of nonviolent tactics to force change has a deep track record which is reaching critical mass. For example, hundreds of thousands of people of color have used nonviolent direct action in campaigns for over a century in the U.S. alone. (In 1876 in St. Louis African Americans were doing freedom rides against discrimination on trolley cars, to take one of thousands of examples.) In any given week there are community-based organizations of people of color, all across the U.S., who are engaged in nonviolent action: marches, sit-ins, street blockades, boycotts, civil disobedience, and the like. Books could be written just about the unions of people of color, like the hospital workers, hotel workers, and janitors, who go out on strike as well as use other tactics. While names of people of color most easily leap to mind when we think of nonviolent action, like Martin Luther King and Cesar Chavez, and a higher proportion of blacks than whites participate in nonviolent struggles, it's still not just "a black thing." Whites in the U.S., especially working class whites, also have a long track record of using nonviolent tactics to struggle for their goals. The challenge is not so much encouraging diverse peoples to engage in nonviolent struggle when they are up against it; the challenge is to link short-run struggles to more far-ranging goals.[4]

Noncooperation is not enough

My friends in Otpur would be the first to admit that a mass insurgency that brings down a dictator is not enough—not enough to establish full democracy, respect for diversity, economic institutions in harmony with the earth, or other parts of their vision. It's one thing to open up a power vacuum through noncooperation (and that is a great and honorable achievement). It's another thing firmly to establish the democratic community we deserve.

For that, the strategy must go deeper. We need to go beyond what has been done plenty of times in history—to overthrow unjust governments through nonviolent struggle—and create a strategy that builds at the same time as it destroys. We need a strategy that validates alternatives, supports the experience of freedom, and expands the skills of cooperation. We need a political strategy that is at the same time a community strategy, one that says "yes" to creative innovation in the here and now and links today's creativity to the new society that lies beyond a power shift.

With the help and feedback of many activists from a number of countries I've created a strategic framework that aims to support today's activists, something like the way Otpur activists were supported by their strategy. I call it a strategy for a living revolution.[5]

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[4] For more information about the stronger inclination of people of color and of working class people to use nonviolent action, as compared with whites and middle/upper class people, see my pamphlet *The Sword that Heals: Challenging Ward Churchill's "Pacifism as Pathology",* (2001) available through Training for Change and on its website: www.TrainingforChange.org

[5] I first described this model in the book *Strategy for a Living Revolution* (NY: Grossman, 1973 and in paper by W.H. Freeman, 1973). The revision of that book *became Powerful Peacemaking* (Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 1987), which is now out of print. This article updates the argument and responds to some current movement controversies.

The strategy not only encourages creating new tactics and more boldness in using the best of the old, but it also helps activists sort out which tactics will be most effective. Finally, the strategy brings in the dimension of time. It suggests that some tactics that are ineffective at one moment will be just right at another. It offers an organic, developmental framework of stages over time.

Time matters. Activists from other countries have been heard to laugh at U.S. activists because we notoriously lack a sense of history. This strategy framework supports us to overcome our cultural limitation and learn to think like the historical beings that we actually are.[6]

The strategy framework has five stages:

- Cultural preparation
- Organization-building
- Confrontation
- Mass political and economic noncooperation
- Parallel institutions

The stages are in sequence, with lots of overlap. Like any model, this one is over-simplified in order to be more easily learned and worked with. One of my favorite ways to complexify the model is to picture society as a cluster of sub-societies that respond to these stages at different rates, which means that activists might go through the first several stages over and over. In reality we may end up more in cyclical motion than in linear progression. But that's for later. Right now, I'll present the five stages in a linear way, and be happy for readers who get from it a sense of movement over time.

STAGE ONE: CULTURAL PREPARATION

Some people call this politicization or consciousness-raising; some Latin Americans call it "conscientizacion." I put it first because for revolutionary change we need new culture. We can't get rid of hierarchies of domination "out there" if we are still playing domination games in our heads.[7] As Gandhi said, we need to be the change we want to see, and that's not just an individual process, it's a collective and cultural shift.

Culture workers of all kinds get to challenge and support us all-out as we together build a culture of resistance. It's a great time for support groups that assist us to unlearn racism, sexism, religious bigotry, and the like. Oppressed groups have enormous work to do to

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[6] I frequently call this five-stage model a "strategic framework" because it's not as specific as strategies are to be maximally useful. When I share the model with specific movement groups in various countries I find that they have the specific knowledge about their situation to "fill in the blanks" and turn the model into something more concrete for their own use.

[7] One source of clarity on this is the work of activist, writer, and witch Starhawk. Her classic book *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988) is a good place to start. Among other things she distinguishes between power-over (domination), power-from-within, and power-with.

deal with the internalized messages that limit them. As a gay man, for example, I have internalized homophobia that continues to reduce my effectiveness and my ability to connect with others.

One of the ways that U.S. activists are particularly limited as compared with activists in most parts of the world is in understanding of class. Classism is one of the most invisible oppressions in the U.S., and is therefore an area of cluelessness among many activists. How many times I've heard activists who would never use slurs in referring to transsexuals or Puerto Ricans joke about "rednecks" and "white trash!" Classism goes well beyond language, however; activists unconsciously joining the mainstream's oppression of poor and working class people influences everything from tactics to communication style to the difficulty in forming coalitions or even meeting people on the street. If the Otpur young people had carried so strong a burden of classism, Milosevic would still be in power! Getting a grip on unconscious classism will make a huge difference in the ability of U.S. activists to work for justice.[8]

The juice in this stage is vision. The primary task of every revolutionary movement is to create a vision of what activists want instead of the status quo. Vision inspires people to want to join us because they can contrast it with the consumerist hat tricks which the power holders use to distract from planetary crisis. Vision inspires us, because it not only clarifies what we want but reminds us why we want it. Vision reduces co-optation, because its integrity is a rebuke against meaningless compromise. Vision builds unity, because tactical disagreements and personality clashes are smaller in the perspective of our goals.

The container in this stage is strategy. Without a container, it's very hard to hold the juice. Many activists will refuse to create vision because of their hopelessness—if I have no strategy for making a difference, why even bother with vision? Strategy is therefore linked to vision. Otpur had a clear and limited vision that could be achieved by its strategy. When they pasted the black and white posters all over the country that proclaimed "He's finished!" everyone knew (a) who "he" was, and (b) that it was now only a matter of time.

For those of us with a vision that goes beyond removal of powerholders to fundamental transformation, a bigger strategy is needed. The more we study and participate in large-scale people power, the bigger our strategy will become and the more we will notice many of its aspects already alive in the body politic. Big strategy counters despair. Big strategy fosters vision. Vision informs strategy. We need the juice and the container.

STAGE TWO: ORGANIZATION-BUILDING

As in the first stage of cultural preparation, revolutionary movements start out this stage with small numbers. Early on, there aren't that many people who have done enough work on their internalized oppression, gotten a handle on the way they oppress others, developed a shared vision of the new society, and won agreement on broad strategy. As such people emerge, however, they find each other! Human beings are a social species.

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[8] A clear and inspiring book by a woman who built a grassroots organization by facing honestly the class and race divisions in our society is by Linda Stout, *Bridging the Class Divide* (Boston:Beacon Press, 1996).

Nothing is more natural for people transforming themselves than to join others to build organizations.

Organization is essential for a struggle movement, because only through organization is it possible to generate enough force to make a difference. Spontaneous moments of resistance can no more accomplish substantial change than can occasional rioting—each is a witness which can be appreciated in symbolic terms but does not change structures.

The U.S. poses an amazing contradiction when it comes to organizing. On the one hand, the U.S. is famous in the world for the abundance of its "civil society," the millions of voluntary groups that show up on all levels. In my urban neighborhood alone we have different groups working on the schools, the park, safety, cultural festivals, protesting gentrification, and literally dozens of other good causes. People from other countries who come to my neighborhood for activist training are sometimes amazed by how mainstream it is in the U.S. to roll up our sleeves and create groups to achieve goals.

On the other hand, radical activists can find it tough to build organizations. Our very idealism can be an obstacle. We want our groups to reflect visionary values rather than the domination games that often plague mainstream organizations. What's tough is figuring out just how both to be visionary and to get the job done.

One of the glories of being an activist is that we see through a lot of the myths and policies of the power holders. We bring a wonderfully critical eye to the latest pronouncements from on high, and we often differentiate ourselves from the mainstream by how cleverly we can take apart the hypocrisy and confidence games that power holders present.

There's a down side to this excellence of ours. We can become attached to our ability, to our critical stance, and make it a habit to differentiate. Differentiating can become what we compulsively do. What effective groups need as much as differentiation, though, is its opposite: joining. Groups—and social movements—thrive when differentiation and joining are in balance.

When joining becomes a habit, conformity results and the group doesn't have enough creativity to thrive. When differentiating becomes a habit, the group doesn't have enough unity to accomplish anything significant. These two operations—joining and differentiating—are like breathing: we need to inhale and exhale in order to live.

Groups that are out of balance are like an individual either starved for oxygen or hyperventilating.

The good news is that habits can be changed. Activists who challenge society to change can also change ourselves! When we balance the energies of differentiation and joining, we'll find it much easier to pick up on organizational innovations in other places as well as support the innovators in our own groups.

We'll also find it easier to reach across class and race lines and make the connections which have often in the past made the difference between success and failure.

Some organizational forms seem to me to be especially promising in this stage: alternative institutions, ongoing affinity groups, transformational networks, and radical caucuses.

Alternative institutions provide a great laboratory for putting vision to work. Food co-ops, presses, worker-owned enterprises: the list is large. As we consciously practice joining—both inside the alternative and outside to the neighbors or to adjoining social circles—the alternatives can grow. We then learn to innovate systems that are both strong and democratic, highly productive and supportive of individual workers. We can support the organizational geniuses among us who, even if they aren't always warm and fuzzy, can figure out the complex connections that enable cooperation of scale and distance.

Ongoing affinity groups provide a support base for individuals to participate in a range of activities, from protesting to adding energy for digging the community garden to jumping into a conflict as a human shield to protect people from getting hurt.[9] An affinity group can choose to work in one issue campaign for a period, adding their energy and expertise to the struggle and performing an educational role, or can be more mobile in the interest of building human links to prepare eventual coalition-building.

Transformational networks assist groups more rapidly to learn from each other and do mutual aid. In social change, the groups that have the steepest learning curve are those that are most likely to make a difference. The old days of ritualistic actions and tired cliche-ridden meetings can't meet the challenge of a planet in accelerated change. My guess is that governments have already studied the Otpur experience far more closely than movement activists have; power holders want to be ahead of the curve if possible and they put resources behind their goal. Movement activists, however, have come a long way in recent decades in learning how to share critical information rapidly.[10]

Radical caucuses based on identity or politics continue to be key, in my view, especially when they hold in balance the energies of differentiation (the basic impulse of a caucus) and joining (what enables the caucus to rise above being a chorus of victims). I've been fortunate to be in gay caucuses and working class caucuses where we got the support from each other to reduce internalized oppression at the same time as we supported each other to change the larger organization we were part of. I've been blessed as a white person to be in a national organization where the people of color caucus worked so effectively that it became the agenda-setter for the organizational development of the entire organization. The only caucuses I've seen that work optimally, however, have been those which have been visible to the wider group rather than trying to work covertly.

It's hard to think of any organizational style that undermines movements as effectively as covertness. Movements can even move ahead more easily with steep hierarchies than they can with invisible elements within. The most recent manifestation of covertness as a style in the U.S. has been, among anti-globalization activists, "security culture."

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[9] The value of human shields, also called protective accompaniment, came to widespread notice in spring 2002 with International Solidarity Network and others going to Palestine to reduce the killing on the West Bank. As an ongoing organized activity, accompaniment is only about 20 years old. For more on third party intervention contrasted with other kinds of activism, see my *ZNet* article, "Pushing Our Thinking About People Power," reprinted on the web: www.TrainingforChange.org To learn about a major organization that does this work in various countries including Colombia, see the website: www.peacebrigades.org

[10] The Movement for a New Society (1971-1989) was organized specifically to be a transformational network, and even worked internationally to spur groups to learn rapidly from each other and do mutual aid. MNS activists joined campaigns, built alternative institutions, led trainings, and created New Society Publishers.

Adopting a discipline of secrecy may at some times and places be useful, but it is a choice that needs careful thought, especially when we consider that it is often not necessary even in police states.[11] In the US., which as Otpur can tell you is far from a police state, security culture hurts the movement in several ways.

One result of security culture is withholding trust. To win, movements need to expand. To expand, activists need to trust—themselves, each other, and people they reach out to. Think of the last time someone succeeded in persuading you to act. Did you pick up a vibe that they didn't trust you? You probably picked up the opposite, a vibe of optimism and confidence that, once you got the information, you'd want to participate.

I've personally seen a black man on his way out of the movement in disgust because of what he perceived as white racism. In fact, the hostile vibe he perceived might instead have been because "He might be an agent!" This example shows how secrecy complicates movement life. Secrecy breeds trustlessness. Who might be an agent, who might betray us, who cannot be relied on? People doing security culture don't tell their names, they censor their interaction, they hold back. The wariness is toxic because activists feed each other's fear. White racism does of course exist where white activists gather, because we have been socialized by a racist culture. When white activists put up other barriers to entry into the movement, like fear of strangers, the barriers can easily be perceived as racism (which is also connected with fear of strangers!).

Even within a boundary of color, trustlessness reduces the movement's growth. A woman of color cried as she told me about the refusal of a meeting of people of color to proceed until each new person, including her, had been vouched for by two others—an institutionalization of trustlessness. When trustlessness is institutionalized, a movement is very easy for the powerholders to contain because the movement can't recruit well outside their own circles.

Security culture also reduces the ability of direct actionists to develop and sustain alliances. Successful direct action movements learn to attract allies. The role of ally is different from the role of campaigner. The job of campaigners is to take the initiative and get the ball rolling; the job of allies is to come in and help push once the ball's rolling. In most U.S. cities and towns we find a lot of activists who simultaneously are campaigning on one issue and are allies to other campaigns around other issues. This flexibility works well, and helps to generate a climate among activists that stays open to radical perspectives.

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[11] An example comes from Poland, where after many years of Communist dictatorship a radical group of workers and intellectuals decided to break with their security culture and create an open, above-ground organization for human rights. The move was a breakthrough which supported the growth of the mass Solidarity movement, resulting by the end of the '80s in the nonviolent overthrow of the dictatorship. This is one of a long list of dictatorships that have been overthrown by nonviolent "people power," despite the state's using military repression to defend itself. Just in the past few decades mass nonviolent action has played a decisive role in ousting one-party states and dictatorships in: Bolivia, Haiti, Argentina, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, the Philippines, the Baltic States, Mali, Malawi, Madagascar, and Benin, and prevented military-backed coups in Thailand and Russia. See Stephen Zunes, Lester R. Kurtz, and Sarah Beth Asher (eds.), *Nonviolent Social Movements: A Geographical Perspective* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

However, because security culture generates trustlessness, protesters have a hard time trusting allies. They sometimes enter a confrontation with authority politically isolated, having failed to reach out and open up the communication channels with people busy on other projects. Where all this comes crashing down is at the moment of state repression, which is when allies are often most needed and also when there is most confusion in the air. That's when some radicals, who refused to reach out and trust their potential allies, say to the allies: "Trust us and do X, Y, and Z!" When the allies don't immediately come to attention and salute, the beleaguered protesters become disappointed and even angry!

If doing security culture reduces the internal morale of the movement, reduces its growth potential, and hurts relationships with allies, what's the point? For one thing, secrecy makes possible certain direct action tactics that rely on surprise. We may be reluctant to give up those tactics. Personally, I enjoy the emotions that go with plotting and scheming, and I may not be alone on that! Secrecy and stealth may also appear in our movement because they strengthen the boundary between Insider and Outsider, they exaggerate differentiation.[12]

Unfortunately, the security agencies also know the negative impact of secrecy on the movement, and work it to their own advantage.[13] They start out with abundant resources to put into spies and electronic surveillance, and the more covert we are, the more resources they can demand (thereby increasing the already obscene size of the security state). Not only is it an advantage to them in terms of increasing the power and affluence of their apparatus, but it also justifies their putting more people in our ranks, who help make decisions and sometimes exercise leadership. And the more aware we are of this, the more scared we become and the less we can trust each other, which is wonderful from the state's point of view. The power holders want to strengthen their own pillars of support and weaken ours!

Fortunately, we can make other choices. We can draw inspiration from the choice of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1963-64 to organize openly in Mississippi, perhaps the most violently racist state in the U.S. at the time. The largely-black SNCC workers dealt with men who were police by day and KKK by night; SNCC often lived in Freedom Houses that were unprotected in the countryside; they had no guns and everyone knew it; the federal agents refused to protect them; the Mississippi media were against them as were most clergy. SNCC knew they would be hurt, jailed, tortured, and some would die; they were not naive in choosing their attitude toward repression.

At the very beginning of 1964 Freedom Summer, three SNCC workers were murdered—James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman—to scare away others who had volunteered. SNCC refused to go underground; they had a better

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[12] Fortunately we can create many, many tactics that do not rely on surprise. One resource to jump-start our creativity is Gene Sharp's book *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, where he describes 198 tactics that have been used historically (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973).

[13] During the movement against the Vietnam War F.B.I. documents included a discussion of the importance of making activists believe there was "an F.B.I. man behind every mailbox." During a spokescouncil meeting preparing for the protests at the Republican National Convention, an activist took a break to call an anarchist house in West Philadelphia and learned from activists there that, when they randomly took their phone off the hook, they heard the spokescouncil meeting!

strategy. SNCC's choice expanded the movement dramatically both in Mississippi and nationally, won powerful allies, and broke the political stranglehold of racism in that state. I would challenge anyone in today's movement to study SNCC's attitude toward repression in Mississippi in the summer of 1964 and then explain why our movement should do security culture. The more powerful choice is openness.

STAGE THREE: CONFRONTATION

Cultural preparation and organization-building are periods of some revolutionary movement expansion, depending a lot on historical factors we don't control, but those two stages are not yet about mass action with revolutionary content. The mass protests that do occur from time to time usually contain little vision of a fundamentally new society; their keynote is saying "no" to, for example, the World Trade Organization, with a lot of vagueness about the big picture.

The purpose of the third stage is rapid growth of the revolutionary movement itself, to the point where enough people become involved so it's possible to enter stage four and seriously weaken the powerholders' pillars of support.

Stage three is a giant and prolonged drama. The audience is composed of the as-yet uncommitted public. The actors are the "good guys" (us) vs. the "bad guys" (police, military, corporate chiefs, vigilantes). Previous outreach to the public by the movement becomes more vivid now because it is fueled by open conflict. The public is more motivated to pay attention, chew over the issues, decide how to commit.

Although there has not yet been a social movement that has moved itself through these five stages in a fully conscious way, there are plenty of examples of movements that used a smaller-scale confrontation stage to move into mass noncooperation—in our terms, from stage three to four.[14]

Otpur knew that the mass media were against them and they organized their confrontations with that in mind. Instead of concentrating on a few large-scale protests at symbolic places, which would have inevitably become media events (with them losing!), they staged countless small and brief protests. They specialized in light-hearted, mischievous actions, which usually made fun of the regime, and they held them where a maximum number of passersby would see them. The passersby would also see the police beat up the youngsters, and by the next day the word-of-mouth communication had spread far and wide. Otpur over and over made the same point: we are not terrorists; it's the police who are violent; we want democracy. Even in a city as large as Belgrade the combination of creativity and nonviolence motivated eyewitnesses to spread the word, and as the public began to swing over to Otpur's side the grafitti and posters reinforced the shift.

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[14] In *Why We Can't Wait*, Martin Luther King, Jr., shares a good deal of strategy thinking in the successful Birmingham campaign. He realized that, to induce Birmingham's black community to boycott the big down-town department stores (mass noncooperation), the campaign first had to create the drama of protest marches against dogs and fire hoses (confrontation). This worked so well that the store owners, fearful of losing profits from the big upcoming Easter shopping season, swung to the side of meeting the civil rights movement's demands.

The confrontation stage is tricky—many movements have lost the game in this stage. We can learn from both failures and successes of movements in the U.S. and around the world. The following lessons can save us a lot of grief:

- Create "dilemma demonstrations"
- Decide specifically whom we're trying to influence
- Use campaigns as our major tool, to move from reactive to proactive
- Heighten the contrast between protesters and police behavior
- Take a powerful attitude toward the prospect of state repression

Create "dilemma demonstrations"

This form of direct action puts the power holders in a dilemma: if they allow us to go ahead and do what we intend to do, we accomplish something worthwhile related to our issue. If they repress us, they put themselves in a bad light, and the public is educated about our message.

Many examples can inspire our creativity. Some campaigns to save old-growth trees have set up these dilemmas. If, for example, the protesters are allowed to sit in the trees, the trees are saved. If the protesters are stopped violently, the public is educated and new allies can be won.

During the 1992 power holder celebration of the anniversary of the Columbus horror, an informal group of us decided to take advantage of a visit of replica ships Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria. We paddled canoes into the middle of the harbor crowded with sailboats and media and raised our banners against racism and slavery. Police boats pursued us immediately, which turned the attention of the crowd to the drama of watery arrests of us and our signs. The corporate media coverage turned out to be centrally about our message rather than reverence for Columbus. For the power holders, whether to arrest was a dilemma: if they let us protest, we spoiled the party, but arresting us got the message out to even more people!

African American students in the South were very creative with such tactics, for example sitting at the lunch counter asking for coffee. If they were served, racism took a hit. If they were either attacked by civilians or arrested, racism also took a hit. The sit-inners didn't even need the signs they brought in order to make their point. The power holders were repeatedly put in a dilemma: whatever they did resulted in lost ground for the status quo.[15]

One place to look for dilemma demonstration ideas is the community work that activists are already doing. Community gardens, for example, might be planted in places which need reclaiming. In the midst of the Battle of Seattle some activists did guerrilla gardening in the median strips of downtown streets and avenues along the wharf.

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[15] A new and powerful documentary look at black student strategy is *in A Force More Powerful* which was shown by PBS in 2000; see the website www.films.com

Decide specifically whom we're trying to influence

Using a term like "the public" is too simple a way to think about strategy (even though I just referred to the public in the previous section). "The public" includes many subgroups, some of whom are very important to the success of a campaign, some less important, and some unimportant in the short run. If we create a map of the political territory and decide who we most need to influence in what ways, we will create tactics that more frequently have the force that's needed.

For example, a small group in the Movement for a New Society once threw a monkey wrench into a U.S. foreign policy objective by correctly figuring out who to influence through direct action. The U.S. was supporting, as it often does, a military dictatorship that was killing thousands of people. In fact, in Pakistani dictator Yayah Khan was killing hundreds of thousands of people in East Bengal who wanted independence. The U.S. government lied about its support, but the activists learned that Pakistani ships were on their way to U.S. ports to pick up military supplies for the continuing massacre. The group also realized that if longshoremen refused to load the ships, the U.S. government would be foiled.

The problem was, the East Coast longshoremen were, if anything, politically inclined to support the government, and wanted to feed their families. The activists repeatedly tried to persuade the longshoremen to act in solidarity with the East Bengalis, without success. It was time for direct action. The group announced a blockade of the port which was expecting the next Pakistani freighter, and began practicing "naval maneuvers" with sailboats, rowboats and the rest of its motley fleet. The media gave ongoing coverage, and longshoremen witnessed on television as well as in person the strange antics of protesters who seemed to believe they could stop a big freighter with tiny boats. The tactic raised the longshoremen's motivation to listen and discuss, and they agreed that, if the activists created a picket line, the longshoremen would refuse to cross it!

When the campaign succeeded in that city, the activists took it to other port cities and finally the International Longshoremen's union agreed workers would not load Pakistan-bound weapons anywhere in the U.S.! The blockade, initiated by a small group, succeeded because the group crafted direct action tactics specifically geared not toward the general public and certainly not toward President Nixon, but toward the part of the public that most needed to be influenced to meet the strategic objective.[16]

As we design campaigns focused on the World Trade Organization or capital punishment or the sex trade we need to create a political/cultural/economic map of "the public" and decide who we want to influence in what ways. Part of our power is in fact through making such strategic choices.

Use campaigns more often, to become proactive rather than reactive

Sometimes a strong reaction to a move of the power holders can be very powerful, as it was in Seattle. By mobilizing around the WTO meeting and disrupting it, tremendous gains were made. The negative side of globalization was put on the public agenda for the

[16] This campaign, which has more to teach us about direct action than there's room to go into here, is described blow-by-blow by Richard K. Taylor, *Blockade* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1977). This campaign in solidarity with Bangladesh happened in 1971-72.

first time, something which all the organizing against the North American Free Trade Agreement failed to do. New ongoing alliances became tantalizing possibilities. The very unleashing of rebel energy itself was positive.

Occasionally reacting is one thing; staying in a posture of reaction is something else. A good word for continuous reaction is "disempowerment." Mohandas K. Gandhi's first principle of strategy was to stay on the offensive. Having our action agenda dictated by where and when the power holders want to have their meetings is not staying on the offensive.

Campaigns put us on the offensive *. A campaign is a focused mobilization of energy with a clear objective, over a time period that can realistically be sustained by those who identify with the cause.* Often the objective is in the form of a demand which a targeted entity can make a decision about.

The United Students Against Sweatshops movement has mostly worked through campaigns, which is one reason why it has met with so much success. When these students choose their objective and identify the power holder whose position needs to change, a lot else starts to become clear. Who is going to oppose them most strongly? And who are their greatest potential allies? In the early part of the campaign they can open communication with the allies and have them already half on board by the time the campaigners start direct action.

This is not a new idea. The victories of the civil rights movement that are now part of our activist lore were won through campaigns—the Montgomery bus boycott, for example, or the Birmingham struggle of 1963 in which a major industrial city was dislocated in order to force the federal government to pass an equal accommodations bill.[17] I sometimes think that, if it weren't for racism and the power holders' discrediting of the 'sixties, today's young activists would be studying all available books and videos to benefit from the brilliance of SNCC, CORE, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Running a campaign is like taking a magnifying glass and holding it between the sun and a piece of paper. By focusing the energy of the sun, the glass ignites the paper. Successful campaigns focus on their target over time—nine months, two years, even more if they have the people resources—with a specific demand that seems achievable.

One of the biggest victories of 1980s U.S. grassroots campaign organizing has been kept a secret from most younger activists. In fact, the collusion of the media and the schooling system has been so successful that I've rarely met a young activist in the current movement who knows about the largely successful fight against nuclear power in this country.

The anti-nuclear struggle of grassroots groups was against an amazing array of power: the federal government (both civilian and military), the banks which were making major profits from loans to utilities, the utilities themselves, the huge companies like General

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[17] *Why We Can't Wait* gives the behind-the scenes story of Birmingham and Dr. King describes the Montgomery campaign initiated by Rosa Parks in *Stride Toward Freedom* . (Books available in various editions.) Readers interested in strategy will salivate while reading Taylor Branch's Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years*, 1954-63 (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1988). Some useful coverage of SNCC is in the documentary *Eyes on the Prize*, available in many local libraries.

Electric and Westinghouse which made the nuclear plants, the construction companies, and the building trades unions. The struggle was also against "conventional wisdom in the U.S.," which believed, in the beginning of the '70s, that nuclear energy was safe and cheap.

Grassroots activists beat the combined power holders! There's not room here to describe the struggle, which often used mass direct action in brilliant ways to stop U.S. utilities from ordering any new nuclear power plants by the late '70s. The grassroots groups used a variety of tactics, from testifying at official hearings to civil disobedience. A favorite tactic was mass occupation of the site where the plant was to be built. The movement remained decentralized, yet each local area expanded through designing and implementing campaigns. It's a dream campaign to study for anarchists and others who don't want centralized leadership to run social movements.[18]

Heighten the contrast between protesters and police behavior

The power of the confrontation stage is in the drama. Drama in the streets is, however, different from an off-Broadway play. A sophisticated theater audience might prefer characters to be multifaceted, without a clearly-defined "good guy" and "bad guy." The social change drama of the streets cannot be so subtle: it really does come down emotionally to "the goodies" vs. "the baddies"—in our case, those who stand with oppressed people vs. those who stand with greed, privilege, and domination.

The fence-sitters in the mainstream watching the drama in the streets are surprisingly open-minded about who are the goodies and who are the baddies. In their eyes maybe the goodies will turn out to be the protesters, and then again, maybe the police will be the goodies. Since drama motivates, some in the audience are curious to see who will turn out to be who.

The protests at the 2000 Republican National Convention in Philadelphia provide a clear example of this. Some widely-publicized police violence prior to the convention damaged the police image. Those of us organizing the Convergence training in the week just before the Convention did effective media outreach, receiving highly favorable publicity from the big media. The result was, going into the Convention, that the burden of proof was on the police to re-establish their credentials as responsible and controlled, and the protesters occupied the moral high ground. A succession of three clearly peaceable marches in three days sustained this, even though the marchers on the third day had been promised arrest. The group organizing that third march, the Kensington Welfare Rights Organization, took care not to be politically isolated, so that their civil disobedience would bring allies out in support. The police felt they had to back off the arrest threat on the third day, lest they confirm the fence-sitters suspicion that the police really are "the baddies."

The second phase of the Convention actions, beginning August 1, reversed roles. The police did not have to be lambs; in the context of public fears and expectations, they only needed to show restraint, flexibility, and control. This they did, avoiding tear gas, major pepper spray, rubber bullets, charges with or without horses. Protesters were caught

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[18] Behind-the-scenes strategy insights on that movement are revealed by a key participant, activist Bill Moyer, in his book *Doing Democracy* (Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 2002). In his book Bill also shares his campaign design methodology which has assisted a variety of movements.

without a style that would put them in stark contrast with the public behavior of the police. The blockading protesters looked … well … disruptive. (Which we'd said over and over was our goal!) *And the police were helping the public by getting traffic moving again*. The police chief, who had on national television been on the defensive, became a folk hero. The Philly mainstream could breathe a sigh of relief that "our hometown police are much better than those brutal, out-of-control Seattle police, and where did these protesters come from, anyway?"

The great lesson to be learned here is that the drama of the streets cannot carry a complex analysis that requires long dissection and persuasion. The drama in street confrontations needs *the simplicity of contrast* between the protesters' behavior and that of the police.

The symbols used to heighten contrast depend on the situation. Black student sit-inners wore dresses and coats and ties, and remained calmly seated at the counters while hysterical white racists hit them. Gandhi designed a raid on a salt works in which demonstrators calmly walked across the boundary where they were beaten down by soldiers.[19] Vietnamese monks sat in meditative positions in the streets of Hue, in front of tanks, to help bring down the dictatorship in 1963. Philippine participants in "people power" mass action overthrew a government partly with flower necklaces for the dictator's soldiers.

A few years before young Serb activists started Otpur, some of them had tangled with the state by launching student protests. That earlier wave of activity died out, and one reason was that young cops adopted student dress and joined the protests in order to smash windows and fight uniformed police. The plainclothes police provocateurs were highly effective in changing the public focus from the dictatorship to the "student violence." Learning from that experience, Otpur decided from the beginning, as a matter of policy, that anyone who looked like an Otpur member but was caught fighting the police would be assumed to be a police spy and would no longer be considered an Otpur member. Otpur felt the stakes were so high (both success in overthrowing Milosevic and the safety of their members) that the group needed to draw a line.

Again, our power lies in *our* choices. We can choose to design our confrontations using appropriate symbology so that the part of the public we most want to influence will see us as the people standing up for justice. It's our choice.[20]

Take a powerful attitude toward the prospect of state repression

Obviously, the purpose of repression is to induce fear, so people will give up fighting injustice. The power holders have a range of tactics up their sleeves: one example is

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[19] The historically accurate version in the film *Gandhi* is worth watching repeatedly.

[20] Police are sometimes sophisticated enough to be quite intentional in reducing the contrast. The Albany, Georgia, police chief defeated the African American 1962 civil rights campaign led by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Martin Luther King by carefully restraining his police and reducing the contrast. He astutely used his police to prevent Ku Klux Klan and other forces from beating up demonstrators, again to hinder black people from gaining the moral high ground. Dr. King applied the learning from this lesson in the following year's Birmingham, Alabama, campaign, and SNCC's most dramatic use of this lesson was in 1964 in Mississippi.

setting a million dollar bail on Philadelphia Republican Convention protesters charged only with misdemeanors. Power holders are counting on the feeling inside us—our fear—to change our behavior so as to make us less effective.

That's why one of the most fundamental choices any social movement makes is what kind of attitude to have toward repression.[21] It's natural for us to fear punishment, deprivation of liberty, losing our jobs—we're only human, after all. It is so natural to be fearful in the face of repression that we may not know that movements make choices about how to handle the threats of the state. In the workshops for the Republican Convention protests, many participants didn't know that there *was* a choice. *They believed that all movements have the same attitude toward repression, which is far from true.* Some movements notice that power holders invite them to play what I call "the Fear Game": authorities punish and threaten so that activists will respond fearfully. These movements which see through the game choose a different strategy.

For example, during the Montgomery bus boycott the power holders decided to play the Fear Game by leaking the word that they had a list of black leaders who were going to be arrested. The leaders decided to take a powerful, proactive attitude; they went to City Hall as a group and demanded to be arrested at once. They carefully expanded their numbers so that, more than likely, some individuals would not be on the list and could indignantly demand to be arrested rather than be insulted by not being considered a leader! More recently labor unions in Decatur, Illinois, made a similar move: hundreds of workers filled City Hall and refused to leave until the intended arrests were actually made.

Consider the difficulty this puts the power holders in. If the people refuse to fear them, the power holders have lost one of their most powerful weapons! Gandhi used to say that the British were not ruling India because the British were stronger, but rather because the Indians feared them. As soon as the Indians gave up their fear, he said, British rule would crumble. And it was so.

STAGE FOUR: MASS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC NONCOOPERATION

As I write this (Spring 2002) Argentina is in the throes of mass noncooperation—strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience of many kinds. In December the social turbulence resulted in five presidents in less than two weeks! The massive demonstrations include the Latino tradition of banging empty pots and pans and continue especially on Fridays in the historic Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires and elsewhere.[22]

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[21] To read about one choice, called security culture, go to the website: security.tao.ca OR nocompromise.org The article "Security Culture" states its basic assumption at the beginning: "To minimize the destructiveness of this government harassment, it is imperative that we create a 'security culture' within our movement." Some movements, operating in much more dangerous situations than the U.S., Canada, or Western Europe, have found that security culture maximizes rather than minimizes the destructiveness of government harassment.

[22] The information about Argentina in this and following paragraphs comes from reportage in *Z Magazine* , the issues of April and May 2002: "The Argentine Rebellion" by Roger Burbach and "Rebellion in Argentina" by Ana Nogueira, Josh Breitbart, and Chris Strohm.

Popular assemblies in the barrios not only mobilize the demonstrations but also take on local issues and concerns, for example preventing authorities from closing down a baker who couldn't afford to pay his rent. Local assemblies urge people who own their homes not to pay property taxes but instead turn the revenue over to hospitals in their area that need medical supplies. Poorly paid workers have been striking for months, often blockading bridges and highways as well. In February they temporarily shut down the city's oil supply by blockading the entrance to the local refinery.

The steep decline in the Argentinian economy—another "triumph" of neo-liberalism and the International Monetary Fund—has precipitated this insurgency, so Argentina, like other examples, has limits as a model for us. We don't want to wait until poverty stares most people in the face (and the environment is a basket case) before mass noncooperation can be organized. All the more reason to be pursuing the first three stages as strongly as we can.

The advantage of doing significant cultural preparation is that the organizations we build can be stronger, more cooperative and egalitarian, and more creative. The stronger our organizations are, the better shape we'll be in to do confrontation.

When Iranian students and others protested against the rule of the Shah of Iran in the late '70s they experienced extreme repression. The secret police used torture and the army shot down nonviolent demonstrators. Faced with police-state conditions, the movement used funerals as means of protest, so the army killed funeral attenders. Outraged by the repression, masses of people attended the funerals, each of which became another massacre. On one occasion a public square full of nonviolent demonstrators was bathed in blood as helicoptor gunships slowly circled firing into the crowd. Immediately after, President Jimmy Carter (our human rights president) publically telegraphed the Shah assuring him of U.S. support.

The Iranians did their work well, continually asserting solidarity as the movement—and repression—increased. Finally the Shah faced his military chiefs, who told him that the game was over. They said that the entire country was on strike, that the army could not get either the economy or the political institutions moving again. All the army could do at that point was to continue to kill, and within the military there was rising noncooperation even with that. The next day the Shah left the country.

People can stand up to an amazing level of repression, nonviolently, when they believe they can win, are angry enough, and can feel each others' support. This is the reason why I argue for stages one and two before three—cultural preparation and organization increase the chances that confrontation will grow into mass noncooperation.

Clearly, the purpose of mass noncooperation (dissolving the pillars of support) is to bring down the regime. There may be property destruction involved (in Argentina middle class people in suits have been breaking the windows of banks), although in some contexts it is strategically unwise. (Otpur used grafitti and defaced property by changing Milosevic billboards, but decided that smashing things would play into Milosevic' hands around the image of "terrorists.")[23]

[23] Larger-scale property destruction may accompany stage four and even violence against people, even though the movement chose a nonviolent strategy. In the turbulence and chaos that brings new elements of

Since mass noncooperation can open a power vacuum, why plan a fifth stage? The recent heartbreaking story of the Burmese students gives an answer.

When I was smuggled across the border into the jungle guerrilla encampment of the Burmese pro-democracy troops in 1990, I had a chance to learn deeply from the students who participated in the 1988 uprising. They had an amazing story to tell, one that had been largely kept from activists around the world because of the extreme isolation policy of the Burmese dictator Ne Win.[24]

The students did a series of small-scale nonviolent protests in 1987, getting beaten up, arrested, and some were killed. The movement grew and the grapevine carried the message: "Rise up on 8/8/88!" The date came and with it a social volcano erupted; hundreds of thousands and then millions took to the streets. Students occupied government offices; peasants joined workers in striking, boycotting, occupying buildings and factories. The pillars of support for Ne Win tottered and the repression failed to stop the movement. with even his army beginning to go over to the students after their shootings failed to stop the movement. One student tactic was, when confronting soldiers with guns pointed at them, for the bravest to step in front of the soldiers, tear off his shirt, and demand, "If you're going to shoot, shoot me first!" The soldiers could resist only so much courage like that.

With his army beginning to go over to the student side, Ne Win dictator chose a very clever move on his chessboard. He retreated and pulled his army and senior ministers out of the capitol city. To the immense surprise of the students, Rangoon (and Mandalay and other cities) were suddenly theirs! Jubilation was mixed with confusion: what now? To add to the confusion, Ne Win had left military intelligence in plain clothes in the cities with orders to foment disorder, and he also unlocked the prisons to let everyone out.

Disorder grew in Rangoon although Buddhist monks in Mandalay found themselves doing everything including traffic policing to restore order. Then came the announcement: the government "got the message from the people" and agreed to free elections and in the meantime would come back into the cities with a reformed heart, a new name, and a new mission: to restore law and order.

The dictatorship returned (killing thousands of students along the way) and re-filled the power vacuum.

When the Burmese student soldiers I was teaching learned the five-stage model in this article they immediately saw what had happened: because they had not done stage one (no vision of a democratic Burma) or stage two (alternative institutions and cohesive organization which could move into the power vacuum opened in a brilliant stage four),

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the population into play, a nonviolent movement can only do the best it can. For example, on October 6, when huge crowds surrounded Parliament, Otpur couldn't prevent right-wing soccer fans from torching the government building even though Otpur thought the right-wingers' tactics were as senseless as their politics.

[24] Even though it's a Hollywood film, *Beyond Rangoon* has an amazing degree of accuracy in depicting the uprising and the courage of Aung San Suu Kyi, the brilliant young woman who became the hero of the rebellion and won a Nobel Peace Prize. She has spent most of the time since the collapse of the insurrection under house arrest. A detailed account of the 1988 uprising is by the journalist Bertil Lintner, *Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy* (White Lotus, 1990)

they were shoved aside by the regime. They learned in the hardest possible way that insurrection is not enough.

STAGE FIVE: PARALLEL INSTITUTIONS

After working through the overlapping stages of cultural preparation, organization-building, confrontation, and noncooperation, people with shared vision have the chance to root new institutions and values firmly in the soil of the new society. The institutions will have grown from the seeds of the organizing stage: the alternative institutions, the networks, radical caucuses, and affinity groups.

During the confrontation stage these organizations need to grow, which is easier to do when the power holders are busy discrediting themselves by responding violently to movement campaigns.

Probably the period of fastest growth for the organizations, though, will be in the period of mass noncooperation. An atmosphere of turbulence encourages mainstream as well as radical people to seek alternative ways of getting things done. In Argentina as I write, for example, workers are taking over some factories and operating them. "Of everything we sell," a ceramics factory worker said, "we divide the profits equally among all the people who work here."[25]

Neighborhood assemblies in Argentina have typically been meeting weekly to agree on a list of demands and proposals for change, then bringing the proposals to inter-neighborhood assemblies for agreement. Markets for barter have sprung up, where people trade everything from old video games to food to skilled services. No government money is allowed. Credit slips are used as a kind of micro-currency. And of course there's been an explosion of Indymedia to supply the need for reliable information.[26]

In the fifth stage these organizations come fully into their own, because they become part of the infra-structure of the new society. In contrast to the old Leninist model in which the party seizes the state and then re-organizes society from the top down, this strategic model proposes a bottom-up re-structuring, supported by the radicals who all along have been innovating organizational forms that reflect a radically democratic vision.

Picture this, then: the power holders, whose legitimacy has already been eroding because of their inability/unwillingness to deal with the crises of ecology, poverty, injustice, and war, are now finding that their pillars of support are wobbly. They try to restore their power through a combination of co-optation and violence bur it's too late for that now. Massive noncooperation leaves them, like Marcos, Milosevic, and the Shah before them, flailing at the wind.

This is the moment of opportunity for the visionary movement with its infra-structure of experienced organizers and facilitators to step into the vacuum and create, step by step, a new society, an society that supports freedom and democracy rather than domination.

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[25] Ana Nogueira, Josh Breitbart, and Chris Strohm, "Rebellion in Argentina," *Z Magazine* (May 2002), p. 19.

[26] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

The new society is co-created with mainstream people who have realized that the old way is no longer tenable. The radicals are not strangers to the mainstream, because the mainstream has seen them over and over in the form of caucuses within their unions and professions, alternative institutions in their neighborhoods, and affinity groups who love to serve as well as protest. The euphoric hope which accompanies such historic moments is also an opportunity for the most dynamic joining energy the radicals have yet displayed.

Many of the interventionary tactics in this stage can be carried out by matching the alternative institutions to the institutions. An occupation might sometimes be a temporary measure leading to the orderly dismantling of the institution itself; an inter-tribal revolutionary league of native Americans would probably want to dissolve the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. In other cases the occupiers would immediately start to work in the new way they had planned for when the state crumbled.

The affinity groups will have been growing phenomenally in number. They will have been playing major roles in the noncooperation stage and have gained valuable "battlefield " experience which leads to an ability to make decisions quickly when conditions change in stage five.

While many people will spontaneously form affinity groups in the course of this final phase, there could be a conscious effort to reproduce the groups as rapidly as possible, to pass along valuable knowledge and experience to those who join the revolution late. (Otpur created a norm that all new members needed first to take a training. Toward the end the group had mushroomed to an estimated 80,000 members.)

The affinity groups, because of their training and solidarity, could take on many of the more dangerous tasks of this final stage. They could play the lightning-rod role regarding reactionary groups, confronting right-wing militias and others with discipline and courage. They could help the radical caucuses occupy difficult sites, and could themselves occupy government offices of a repressive nature like the FBI and the military.

The transformational networks which have been developing their technologies all along will come into their own in this last stage. While it's true that this strategic model avoids the top-down controlling function so dear to the hearts of the Leninists, it does not throw out the need for coordination. Essential services must be provided, communication must be maintained and judgements made about the best use of limited resources in a turbulent situation. Unity requires shared information and negotiated agreements among the forces for change.

In the advanced stages of struggle, coordinating councils will be needed on local, regional, national, and transnational levels. If the transformational networks do their work creatively, these councils will grow organically from the struggle, as have spokescouncils in the anti-globalization confrontations where many affinity groups come together. At least since the '70s movement against nuclear power, activists have been experimenting with non-authoritarian forms of coordination through councils. The job of those who sustain transformational networks will be to retain the lessons learned from these experiments, put attention to cultural differences in communication style, and assist the newly formed councils to be able to their job on all levels.

The councils are the bodies which form, in the last stage, the parallel "governments." (I put "government" in quotes because these bodies may not look at all like the

governments we know.) In this fifth stage the people pay their taxes to the councils instead of to the governments of the oppressive order. The councils organize essential services such as traffic regulation, garbage collection, and the like. In my personal vision, the national council works with the other councils to dismantle the national government by distributing its legitimate functions to local, regional, and transnational levels. The councils can also work with the workers' caucuses, cooperatives, and affinity groups to dismantle in an orderly way those corporations which are worth decentralizing.

Transformation takes time

Even on my most romantic days, I know that fundamental change will take time. Shifting the power from those whose greed would destroy the planet to those whose humanity would heal it gives us the *chance* to create anew; the power shift doesn't itself *make* it happen.

The power shift will at least give a chance to support the growth and well-being of both people and planet. A movement using the strategic framework proposed here will, however, have an additional advantage: it will bring to the task hundreds of thousands of skilled people and years of practical experience in better ways of providing for the common weal. This strategy means that a movement won't be asking the fence-sitters to gamble on a bunch of hopes and half-baked ideas. It will get the credibility it deserves, through its courage, its creativity, its ability to be in dialogue with the people.

Most of all, a movement using this approach to strategy will be in a similar place to Otpur. The young activists when developing their strategy agreed to frame the Serbian choice quite simply. The dictatorship is about death, they said. Otpur is about life.

This article was written for the upcoming book Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World*, edited by David Solnit, published by City Lights and due out in June 2003.*

6/02