Getting There

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Occupy Strategy is the third volume of *Fanfare for the Future*, a trilogy that seeks to make the case for a participatory society. Volumes 1 and 2 dealt with theory and vision, and the third volume discusses strategy: how might we get there. But although the third volume assumes that the reader is interested in the appropriate strategy for achieving the participatory vision laid out in volume 2, its insights are actually useful for leftists coming from a variety of political perspectives.

One of *Occupy Strategy*'s main arguments is that we need to avoid treating different tactical or strategic assessments as if they were unbridgeable differences of principle. This doesn't lead the authors, though, to simply adopt the call for 'a diversity of tactics'—a formulation raised during the Occupy demonstrations of the past two years that many felt undermined nonviolent protests. The book's discussion of the debate over tactics at the Seattle anti-globalization demonstrations is particularly valuable.

Occupy Strategy also compellingly explains why even the most uncompromising revolutionaries ought to support reforms: "If no one was seeking reforms—and no one ever had—then virtually no one would be revolutionary.... [T]o reject reforms is not only callous and insubstantial, it is also tantamount to rejecting revolution by rejecting aspects of the processes by which revolutionary movements are born, tempered, strengthened, and educated."

At the same time, however, in fighting for reforms, we need to do so in "non-reformist" ways:

> "You not only demand the reform and raise consciousness about it, you also raise correlated issues that engender system-defying attitudes and understanding. You form organizations geared to winning the reform but also to persisting long after it is won. You work until you have generated sufficient power to win the reform, and then you fight for further gains in a trajectory leading to a whole new social structure."

The left has important things to say, But *Occupy Strategy* cautions us that if we're in this for the long haul, we need to avoid apocalyptic mode: "We have no long view. We have no patience. We are constantly urgent. We act like the world is heading for a cliff and if the person we are trying to reach, or we ourselves, don't jump in and grab it, it will go over."

A long-range view means that we should judge our successes and failures not primarily in terms of the proximate aims (for example, stopping a meeting of the global elite or getting such and such many protest votes) but on the lasting dynamics (for example, developing more activist infrastructure and support than before).

Occupy Strategy draws on examples from previous left experiences, mostly in the United States,

trying to analyze their strengths and weaknesses. The authors note that veterans of the sixties often defensively reject criticisms of the movements of those days, but, as *Occupy Strategy* wisely observes:

> "[i]f, in fact, there were no big flaws, or few, as many chroniclers like to believe, then that would be very bad news. We did not win a new world. If we did everything optimally, without problems of our own, how could anyone later do anything better?"

I put some questions to Michael Albert, one of the authors of *Occupy Strategy*.

1. **Why did you write this book? What do you hope to achieve from it?**

To get where we want to go, we need a massive, very well organized movement, that, in fact, knows where that is—at least in its main features. We need concepts and ways of thinking that will cause us to highlight and understand what is critical, and not waste time and energy on what is peripheral. And we need to be able to apply our energies, collectively, cooperatively, and in a sustained manner that takes us toward our destination, eventually arriving there. So we need concepts—or theory—vision, and strategy, not just for a few intellectuals who hang out in libraries and universities, but for most if not all those participating in social change efforts: shared theory, vision, and strategy. This is not our only need, of course, but it is one need, a very pressing and important one. And so these books—the three comprising *Fanfare for the Future*—try to provide such tools.

2. ***Occupy Theory* and *Occupy Vision* offer something akin to a pair of conceptual packages claiming to be what we need in order to think clearly about society and history, and to inspire and orient our efforts toward worthy goals. *Occupy Strategy* seems different, though. Offering insights, yes, but not really claiming any of them is a binding principle. Is that right?**

Yes, roughly. *Occupy Theory* claims its rather straightforward concepts—which correspond to what left activists have been formulating for a long time, with one additional key feature—can be used, flexibly and with additional insights, of course, to reveal critical truths about society and history. It argues we ought to all have them in our mental toolbox, so to speak. *Occupy Vision* says something similar: that its formulations about social institutions that can liberate humanity are minimalist in not going beyond what we can know, but maximalist in providing a necessary basis for that liberation, in all aspects of life. *Occupy Strategy* is dealing with something different in kind. The world changes, but doesn't change its rules. The tools we use to understand it, and the goals we have for it, don't have to change each time implacable opponents, or our own efforts, lead us to recast our position. But strategy does depend on just that. It is time-bound and place-bound; what makes sense in one time and place, may not in another, or may even be disastrous in another. So in this case the key is very flexible insights into the broadest aspects of trying to win change, and various rules of thumb, we might call them, for how to organize, evaluate tactics, choose focuses, and so on.

3. **I want to talk mostly about parts of *Occupy Strategy* in this interview, but first, more in the theory realm—though obviously with strategic implications—you define social changes that do not alter the basic features of society as "social evolution" and**

changes that fundamentally alter the basic features of one or more spheres of social life as "social revolution." So revolution, you say, is not a matter of violence, or of rapid change, or even of massive volume of change—it is a matter of a particular type of change. So does the changed status of women in U.S. society over the past century constitute a revolution? It would seem that basic features have changed, though of course there's still much more to do. Ditto for race relations since Plessey v. Ferguson.

Should we say that the undeniably major changes in levels of racial and gender injustice in the past century mean that we have had a revolution? Should we define the term that way?

Consider an easier economic example. Suppose a social democratic project makes huge gains regarding income distribution. There is much less poverty, more equality, and so on. Should we call what happened a revolution?

If the fundamental defining feature of an economy is income differentials, then, yes. But if certain institutional relations breed economic injustices so that those institutions are the markers of fundamental change—then social democratic gains indicate a change in the balance of power of contending classes, but not a revolution.

The structures that create economic injustice, including private ownership, markets, and corporate divisions of labor, are still present in the social democratic instance. Their previously most harsh implications have been offset, but the causes are still present. In contrast, when feudalism changed to capitalism a new system with a new logic was in place, not just the old system with a different balance of power among contending actors.

Analogously, what are the institutions that have to change for us to confidently believe that the points of origin and axes of a structural pressure that re-imposes racist and sexist dynamics in society are overcome?

I would say that for gender they are probably elements of the nuclear family and marriage, and perhaps even more so of the dynamics of parenting. Of course gender-biased economic norms, laws, cultural patterns, etc., were (and often still are) producing and reproducing sexist hierarchy, but I think beneath all that there is something that is much more directly rooted in the dynamics that determine the development of each new generation—just as under the typical and obvious factors creating economic injustice are property relations, divisions of labor, etc.

Thinking that way, there has been some very massive change around gender and sexuality, but we suspect nothing so fundamental, at least as yet, that we can say we have achieved a revolution in gender relations. For race, I suspect the basic structures at root of racism and cultural repression of communities are matters of cultural community formation and definition, security and identity, options for celebration, communication, and participation, and the structures enforcing these. Here too, I am no expert and even less confident of my view. But I think one could make a strong case that overcoming the disenfranchisement of Blacks in the U.S. since 1896 and Jim Crow, etc. are fundamental changes in the sense of overcoming underlying structures of racism. There is more to do, but perhaps this could sensibly be called a revolution even with our definition. On the other hand, one might also argue that the divisions of circumstances and options are still so wide, that perhaps there are other structural bases, still in place, maybe even more fundamental. If so, then despite truly inspiring and valuable advances, one would deny there has been a replacing of one set of defining cultural relations with another that no longer creates or even permits racist dynamics writ large.

When feudalism becomes capitalism, habits persist for a long time but the underlying structures that cause each new generation to develop the perspectives of lords and serfs are gone. When slavery was abolished, similarly, the underlying structures generating slave behavior were gone. But when Jim Crow was undone, or when women got the vote? It depends on what you decide were the defining institutions creating and recreating racism and sexism.

Finally, nowadays, regrettably I think there are signs that the way of thinking that says those institutions persist and weren't revolutionized points us toward what matters. Despite the incredibly profound gains of women and gays, lesbians, and bi- and transsexuals—something out there in society's organizational structure is still pushing hard for a gender hierarchy. And similarly for the profoundly important gains of minority racial communities—despite those gains, the structural pressure for racist outcomes and beliefs remains in force. The tenaciousness of sexism and racism and of their continual reproduction, and the fear that each could quickly revert to horrendous levels, remains with us. I would suggest we are right to have that fear, not because of some flaw in human nature, but because underlying flawed institutions of kinship and culture persist. The gains from the sixties and earlier and that enlarged in the years since, are in a kind of constant battle against the implications of still operating underlying institutions of family and cultural life that tend to undo the gains and bring back racism and sexism. Is this an accurate view of the world? Folks who think so will have the insights guide their strategic thinking. Those who don't, won't.

4. **Regarding relations between communities, you write:**

> **"And while those outside a community should be free to criticize cultural practices that in their opinion violate humane norms, external intervention that goes beyond criticism should not be permitted, except to guarantee that all members of every community have the right of dissent and to leave incurring no material or broader social loss. Most important, until a lengthy history of autonomy and solidarity has overcome suspicion and fear between communities, the choice of which community should give ground in disputes between two communities should be determined according to which of the two is the more powerful and least threatened."**

> **The principles stated may seem to some both too stringent and too permissive. On the one hand, resolving every dispute in favor of the less powerful community seems like it surrenders all independent political judgment—whether we're talking about movements or societies. (In a political organization, should members of the more powerful community follow a course of action that they believe to be suicidal just because it is urged by members of the less powerful community? Would we favor a law in a multiethnic society giving dominance to the smaller, less powerful group?) On the other hand, external intervention where dissent is not permitted means the marines will soon be landing (or at least the drones will be striking targets) in China and lots of other countries.**

The quote of course refers to community relations in a good society where the basic reality is not that of a barbaric war zone. So the first reply is, if people are rabidly violent or racist, no truly desirable description will work until life is far better than that. Second, and even more so, no rule or even broad guideline is, as *Occupy Strategy* is at pains to make clear, always applicable. So of course there are cases where it won't apply.

If a small community says we want to behave in some way, and a larger community says we want to instead behave differently—each talking about behavior in their own community, there is no cause for the large one to behave as the small one says, or vice versa. One says a holiday occurs on day x, the other on day y. One says we should eat x, the other y. One might criticize the other as having a backward of ignorant or ill-conceived approach—but there is no grounds for intervening except to ensure free access and exit. And saying society can intervene to permit someone who wishes to leave a community to do so is far from advocating drone strikes, even now, much less in a better social system.

But suppose one community says that this land is ours—no, it is ours, says another community. Or we want our work holidays on so and so day, says one community—no, we want you to have it another time, says another community—and so on. In these cases, the advisory that the large and powerful ought to try to accommodate the weaker, comes into play. So, the idea of the stronger tending to give way to the weaker comes into play when worries about community practices are warranted, and tries to reduce the worries. It means if there is a tough dispute that we must resolve with a compromise, the process of doing so should pay special attention to the weaker party's interests.

There is an interesting version of this in current Venezuelan law. There, in a legal dispute between an owner and employees there are asymmetries in how the two sides are viewed in the eyes of the law. For example, if the owner signs some document with implications no longer to his liking, too bad. The document is binding. But if the workers sign and come to not like it, it is not necessarily binding at all... the assumption being they may have signed due to their subordinate position. So the issue is justice, not just formal law. The cultural advisory is similar. On top of reason and evidence, in a dispute between communities instead of the stronger one having the means to impose its will and doing so, the processes in a good society strongly protect the weaker one.

5. **You write: "The fact that many leftists adopt daily preferences that are not only different from but that routinely disparage working people, with nary a nod toward comprehension of other peoples' choices, is no accident." This criticism of routinely disparaging working people is a valuable observation. But are you going even further and criticizing many leftists for adopting daily preferences different from those of working people? Is this a call for leftists to pretend that they share a culture that they don't in fact share?**

If the reason leftists—or anyone—systematically opt for tastes and preferences contrary to and even disparaging those of another group is to appear superior or otherwise separate from that other group, and not because of a natural outgrowth of their own needs and desires, or if the reason is that perverse needs and desires rooted in elite options are at play, then in those cases there is cause for criticism.

If someone doesn't like auto racing or football or McDonalds or sports or religion, due to experience with them, and truly having no taste for them, okay. But if someone doesn't like them because working people *do* like them—whether the choice on these grounds is conscious or not—that is not okay.

Typically, sadly, when the left has a set of tastes systematically and ubiquitously different from some other constituency in society—say working people—the left often disparages the other group's tastes, calling them manipulated, or ignorant, not getting into their shoes to understand the preferences. So we agree that when that happens, it is wrong and it needs to be corrected. We are

adding that we think the problem goes a bit further, sometimes, to the point that what we on the left wind up liking is what remains after we reject what others—who we don't identify with—like. We favor x to be different, not due to truly liking x. To belabor a metaphor, if the shoe doesn't fit, okay, don't wear it. But if it does fit, well, it might be a good idea to get a better pair of shoes.

6. **You write: "the sincere reformist who believes fundamental change is not on the agenda but who would certainly celebrate if it were achieved, should of course not be scared that others pursue such change and should not pray for their failure." But sometimes those who pursue fundamental change when it is not on the agenda do so in a way that causes massive harm. If someone were to start a campaign of armed struggle in major U.S. cities today, there would likely be horrific consequences. Sure if the revolution had my goals and it won, I would be glad (and wouldn't pray for its failure), but wouldn't it be reasonable for me to be scared if others started pursuing a campaign that I believed was doomed to failure and likely to have awful consequences?**

Your questions demonstrate, as the book continually emphasizes, that any strategic norm or guideline is contextual. Some norm is stiff, but virtually none is absolutely rigid. So of course it is reasonable for you to be scared or concerned about certain pursuits that others might undertake. But, at the same time, for the most part, the thing to do in that case is to pursue what you believe in, and not spend time bemoaning that others believe in something else.

At the extremes, you are right you may have to take active issue. In the U.S. a group calling for armed struggle in the cities would be utterly idiotic. There are other times and places, however, where such calls have had a certain logic and arguably been right, or could be right. The point is, most often all parties are very far from being at such extremes as calling for such actions in the U.S. today, yet often we treat each other as if those we disagree with have views that entail surefire catastrophe so that to hold them is despicable or stupid—and as if our own views entail surefire success so that to hold them is intelligent and admirable.

7. **Your book makes a strong case against sectarianism and for how different approaches can exist in the same broad movement. Real differences in ultimate visions may prove intractable, you say, but those with different approaches should be mutually respectful. You use the example of differences of opinion on the degree to which interim authoritarian structures may be necessary for achieving a new world:**

> **"If both sides are being honest, both should hope that an approach which avoids the use of authoritarian structures will prove viable and effective. After all, both views want a society without such structures. If both sides are honest, both should agree that if a new world can't be attained without using interim authoritarian structures, at least to a degree, then such structures will have to be utilized—with their ills carefully guarded against."**

But I wonder if this doesn't make things seem too easy? Often, groups that downplay the importance of internal democracy also downplay the need to act democratically vis-à-vis other left groups. Those of us who have been the victims of anti-democratic

behavior by a left sect—even if they share long term vision with us—find it difficult to treat them respectfully.

As you say, the discussion of disputes about decision structures was in context of more general claims. Still, we have been in the position you describe, frustrated or even outraged by what we took to be sectarian and anti-democratic behavior, and our own experience is that of course when dealing with real lunatics—literally delusional and utterly irrational people—what you are implying can be true. But honestly, not very often. So we would say it is much better to put a high onus on deciding that that is who one is dealing with. It is better to assume the possibility of communicating civilly, rationally, and to try to do it.

As an example, one group wants a single issue anti-war movement claiming that only that can really win peace. Another group wants multi issue activism so that anti-war efforts will incorporate other dimensions, both to in its view enhance the likelihood of winning peace, and to contribute to on-going broader efforts as well. The book suggests that each ought to respect the other and root for the other to do really well at ending the war even while they pursue their own efforts and approaches. If the two camps take that stance, sometimes they may be able to work together, other times not. But if they each or even just one, decides its way is so utterly obviously correct, and the other way is so utterly obviously harmful, that a feeling of disdain and dismissal and even hostility reigns, so that one tries to manipulate the other, routinely lies to the others, attacks the other, etc., then not only won't they ever be able to work together, their separate efforts will likely suffer as well

It takes two to tango. So if one party to a disagreement is intent upon destructive and manipulative behavior, while the other is trying to be civil and respectful, of course overtures of civility will likely break down. To say we should be mutually respectful across our differences doesn't imply we should have movements that combine absurdly opposed issues or conflicting commitments, or that manipulative and anti-democratic elements deserve unstinting, permanent, respect.

But if you look at the broad left, we think you don't find lots of people being too respectful, too patient, and too attentive to what others mean and intend, much less find that such efforts at civility lead to damage. You more often find a cacophony of mutual criticism where the escalating hostility often leads to real damage though much later it turns out that what was dividing people was far less substantial than it appeared. The book suggests this is because many disputes revolve not around carefully addressed substantive difference arising from carefully communicated disagreements—but instead revolve around clashing identities stemming from ideological allegiances that are reflexively defended.

8. **In your chapter on different strategies, you discuss the electoral approach. You say that there are no ironclad rules that will always apply: sometimes electoral participation makes sense, sometimes not. You state, however, that "there is a considerable burden of proof on taking up electoral participation—or participation in government itself." Could you clarify what you mean by "participation in government itself"? Also, do you see any difference whether we are talking about the local level or the national level? That is, should leftists be more or less inclined to seek a seat on the town council than in the U.S. Congress? Or is there nothing general that can be stated beyond "each situation is different"?**

Participation in government itself meant not only running in an election, or voting or working in one, but actually occupying positions in a sitting government. The former can be done largely for

education, consciousness raising, etc. The latter typically involves policy making in difficult circumstances.

We would say that holding local office or other position is often far easier to do in a constructive manner beholden to movements and constituencies, than trying to be in government nationally. But there are exceptions, as with any such observation. To use another example from Venezuela, it has often been true that some of the most left and rooted people in Venezuelan government have been in national office and nationally-appointed positions—while some of the most corrupt and vile folks have been local. So there is no one formulation that fits all cases—whether we are looking from country to country, but also even within one country.

What you can do beyond saying "each situation is different," in this and other strategic and tactical matters, is to try to clarify how to judge situations. For example, regarding participation in government or elections—will doing so increase or diminish allegiance of current members of left movements and organizations, their energy and commitment, and their understanding? Will it increase or diminish the flow of new members into left movements and organizations, and positively or negatively affect their views and commitments? Will it lead to new structures of the left, viable and worthy? Will it change the balance of power for winning gains over time?

9. **You state: "Our movements should not slavishly reproduce the features of a class divided economy, any more than they should of racist, sexist, or authoritarian structures, but should instead patiently and carefully adopt the features of classlessness." This formulation seems to treat these various characteristics—classism, racism, sexism, and authoritarianism—as equivalent. Obviously all are bad. But isn't our ability to rectify class divides within our organizations and movements much more challenging than the others? Take hiring. It's relatively easy to find women with the requisite skills; it's more difficult to find various minority group members with the requisite skills. But it's almost definitionally impossible to find people with the wrong class status (note: not 'class background' but current class status) who have the requisite skills for many jobs, since your definition of the coordinator class is those with particular skills.**

There are two broad issues connected with not slavishly reproducing the repressive and oppressive features of society, we think, and they are actually quite different.

The first is having a movement which doesn't have structural relationships internally that reproduce the oppressions we reject at large—whoever winds up occupying the roles those relationships define. About this, dealing with matters of gender, race, and class are similar. We have to alter the way we structure the actual organizational roles within our movements to not produce or reproduce the oppressive features. This is better understood, and done, regarding race and gender, than class, the last of which is barely even attempted.

The second issue that you are highlighting is actually filling roles within movements with people from diverse backgrounds—and particularly with people who come from oppressed constituencies. There are many obstacles to doing this successfully—but without minimizing, we tend to doubt that the obstacles have mainly to do with the lack of training that oppressed people bring to their pursuits.

Yes, folks fulfilling certain roles in movements need to have certain associated skills, information, etc. For example, if we eliminate internal class hierarchy by having what we call balanced job

complexes and self-management, so that everyone has empowering responsibilities and participates in choices, then of course people must be ready to do so. Class background, including current levels of knowledge and training can be an obstacle in two senses. One, which you have in mind, lack of training in some domains and lack of confidence quite generally for those with, for example, working class background, can impede their successful participation. And two, excessive arrogance and confidence plus lack of training in some domains (like listening to other people, compromising, etc.) for those with coordinator class background can impede their successful participation. Regrettably, most typically, neither group wants to admit to having shortcomings or inadequacies that need correction. We suspect if both admitted the problems, then the on-the-job training of working class folks for movement jobs would be quite a lot easier—not harder—than on-the-job training of coordinator class folks—as long as we are talking about training for worthy and desirable movement jobs. Of course, if movements have jobs and roles that elevate and respect coordinator class attitudes and preferences, then preparing coordinator class background applicants to fulfill those roles will take five minutes and preparing working class background applicants to fulfill them will take forever. And you can pretty much make the same observations around race and gender.

So the bottom line is that the first step regarding your concern is being sure that the movement and its needs reflect the interests and aspirations of overcoming class, race, and gender oppressions and have roles and jobs defined in accord, rather than structurally reflecting the oppressive hierarchies in society. Then, with worthy jobs and tasks for people to be doing, the second step is ensuring that applicants get whatever on-the-job training they may need, whether it is learning some new skill and developing confidence or unlearning some harmful habits and developing humility.

10. **In discussing political strategies and tactics you argue that it is "virtually always ill-conceived" to declare a particular strategy or tactic always right or always wrong. Instead we should employ 'burden of proof' formulations: one needs a high burden of proof in order to employ strategy or tactic X or to refrain from strategy or tactic Y. But mightn't this approach lead to an excessive consequentialism? That is, do we really want political activists saying to themselves each day, "Well, I wonder whether I should torture babies today" (or "engage in terrorism" or "lie to the public" etc.)? "No, it doesn't seem to be worth it today." Might not the mere act of considering these to be legitimate have a corrupting influence on us over time? Wouldn't it be better to rule them out entirely, while still acknowledging that there might be rare hypothetical cases where one would make an exception?**

Taking any advisory to an extreme will most often be disastrous. If people are idiotic, then we would agree that using a burden of proof approach could lead to idiotic and endless nonsense. But if we say using violence has a very high burden of proof, and explain why it does—our doing so indicates not that one has to get up each morning and evaluate whether today is the day to get a gun, but precisely the opposite. Since one has done the background analysis and decided that violence has a very high burden of proof, there is no need to constantly consider it, but only in very unusual circumstances. If you say violence is ruled out—but then add the caveat, except when we make an exception—it amounts to the same thing.

The mistake that people on the left typically make is not that we too often assess idiot tactics for more time than warranted in ways that reduce our humanity, but that we often latch on to some tactic or other as if any deviation from using it would be suicidal because we just don't really get that such matters are not solely about principle, but largely about context. Since this type of mistake is far more common than people needlessly continually reevaluating ugly tactics, we prefer the formulation to guard against sectarian attachment to tactics. If someone prefers a formulation that

guards against continually reassessing lying or being a terrorist, and a derivative corrupting influence, okay, I can respect that and still have dinner with that person, even though I think it misses the pressing problem.

11. **You argue against single-issue organizing, noting that while "multi-issue organizing is difficult to do well," it "averts fragmentation, attracts wider support, and sends a more powerful message." You suggest, for example, as a way to combine anti-war and feminist messages holding demonstrations "at day care centers, demanding an end to war and massive funding for day care and affirmative action programs for women." But this implies that the tough questions between anti-war and feminist activists are just a lack of clever framing, rather than more substantial. Supporting day care is easy—who's against that? But supporting abortion rights came up against Catholics in the 1980s Central America solidarity movement. More recently, there have been sharp disagreements between those anti-war feminists who think that in working against drone warfare one should organize demonstrations with a Pakistani misogynist anti-drone politician while others reject cooperation with him.**

We think groups with different priority agendas can benefit tremendously from sharing strategy and resources and insights even under one umbrella, and that, in contrast, if everyone adopts one or another single issue approach it puts limits on all their efforts. But this doesn't say it will always be easy to work compatibly—of course not. It says we need to find ways to do it, and do it well...which the book explores.

So let's consider your hard cases. What is a reasonable approach?

Suppose we ask the question about society itself? Would a good society permit people who are for and against abortion rights? We hope we agree it would. This doesn't mean they don't disagree, it means they are part of something larger that has them working compatibly (for society) albeit with differences. And yet, this doesn't mean everyone with every view should be a partner even in a good society—not Hannibal Lector, for example. Not those whose views and actions literally deny and obstruct the good society's most basic tenets. This is hard to make precise, but we know what we mean and we get the idea.

Instead of "society," suppose we are talking about a big movement. The same kind of reasoning should apply. We who accept the broad and defining tenets of the movement should be all in—even with important and strong disagreements among us.

Okay, take the cases you raise. Does being against abortion imply that one must be anti-woman and anti the defining movement commitments to ending sexism, to attaining a liberated kinship realm, etc.? If the answer is yes, then even with lots of other agreement, folks differing on this matter could not be in the same organization. They could act in concert at times—of course. But not in one organization. But, if we think a person could be steadfastly and unambiguously feminist, yet could also oppose abortion (for reasons having zero to do with trying to maintain sex gender hierarchies) then even with great disagreement, they could perhaps be in one organization.

By definition of the terms a misogynist politician can't be in an organization one of whose key defining aspects is feminism. Does one have to denounce the politician at every opportunity? Could one find oneself agreeing with him on some things and not on others? That politics makes strange allies at times is true whether one likes it or not, but it doesn't mean it makes us organization or movement buddies.

More generally, to say we should have multi issue movements in no way suggests we should have movements that combine absurdly opposed issues.

12. **You write that movements ought to incorporate multiple strategies in part because we cannot be sure that our favored strategy (or the strategy favored by the majority) will work. Pursuing multiple strategies "is a hedge against the majority being wrong in its estimates. It is a means of learning. It keeps all movement members respectfully and passionately involved, and so on." But aren't there sometimes incompatibilities among strategies? When an electoral party has an armed wing ("just hedging our bets in case we lose the election") the electoral effort is likely to be discredited. A largely extraparliamentary movement will sometimes be discredited in the eyes of its potential base if some of its members take positions in the government and support repressive or exploitative policies.**

Once again, yes, the general norm or guide is not always applicable. However most of the time, we believe it is. Even when strategies are incompatible, it may be possible to experiment with and keep alive both and doing so may make far more sense than crushing the advocacy of one, and putting all one's hopes behind the other.

Most of the time, even when two strategies are at odds, it makes sense to not rule one out entirely while instead enacting the other entirely. We should instead try to mainly implement that which is preferred, but, as much as possible, and as conditions permit, to keep the other alive as well, and to even try it. Can you always do this? Probably not, but that is not a reason to always do the opposite.

Should disagreeing parties fight it out, with one having to drop from all consideration what they thought very important? Or should we say okay, let's try, as we are able, both approaches, at least to the extent of trying to get more evidence about their relative merits—even if one has more support and so gets most energy now?

Organizations exert great effort trying to get everyone to back one approach. Most often it is a fool's errand. Most often it is better to preserve and test alternatives. This doesn't mean you, yourself, personally do contrary things, or any individuals personally do; it means the movement or organization tries, to the extent possible, to make room for pursuing contrary sensible approaches, sometimes even incompatible ones, rather than betting the future on having guessed right as to which approach is better so that all efforts are put behind only that option.

Of course this doesn't mean that when some undercover cop or raving lunatic in an organization proposes some idiotic course of action, the whole organization or movement need pursue it, even somewhat, because it is committed, broadly, to trying to explore rather than squash differences. What it means is that when there is real and serious dispute, among serious people, rather than trying to entirely submerge one perspective and solely elevate another, it typically makes much more sense to pursue one predominately, perhaps, but to also preserve and test the other as well.

13. **You give an example of a campaign that might be waged in a single workplace, demanding the cutting of work hours (say from 40 hours to 35 hours a week) without cutting wages. This seems like a pretty advanced demand, one which would only be possible when the left was already incredibly strong. But then you go further and suggest that—because we ultimately want everyone to be compensated based only on**

effort and sacrifice—the 20 percent of workers who make up the coordinator class should have their incomes reduced. Not just that wage differentials should be reduced, but that the absolute income of 20% of the workforce should be reduced. It's one thing to organize around overpaid CEOs and top management. But 20% of the workforce? Can this really be a winning strategy for the left?

Suppose we say, let's have a campaign for full employment. The left generally believes that makes sense. Okay, but then we have to realize that if you have not enough demand for everyone to be working—especially as we cut military spending, eliminate waste, pay attention to ecological limits, etc.—having everyone working implies lowering the number of hours each individual person works. So we might demand, say, a 30 hour work week—maximum—plus full employment.

But now what happens to incomes? If you were working 40 hours and you were just getting by, and now you will be working 30 hours, at the same hourly rate, you will have only three quarters of the income you had before, and it was already too low before. Okay, we demand 30 hours work for 40 hours pay, plus full employment.

Good, but now there is another problem. Although the full employment program will be funded mainly by redistributing corporate profits, companies may not have enough revenue to do that for everyone and remain in business. In that case, we say for those earning above, let's say $100,000 a year, the people drop to 30 hours of work, but they keep their old hourly pay rate, so now they get, if they were working 40 hours before, one quarter less total pay than before. It isn't that such people are losing income per hour. They are just working shorter hours for less total income. Those earning less than $100,000 before, however, are getting shorter hours, but also the same total pay they were earning before. They are getting an hourly pay raise of 33%. And if the wage bills and expenditures more generally need to be further reduced, that is also no problem. Those who earned $200,000 or more per year, will not only work 25% less hours, they will receive 30% less income, or perhaps 40%, or whatever. There are lots of ways to do the financial adjusting—such as raising taxes on higher incomes and lowering them on lower incomes. Will high income folks support the campaign that redistributes away some—and eventually all their material advantage? Not all will, of course, but perhaps more than first seems likely. Will whites support an end to racism and therefore a loss of their related privileges—not all did and will, but, similarly, more than at first seems likely.

There is another issue that comes up. If the highly trained and skilled folks are working 25% less, then even if we reduce output and reallocate from junk to worthy production, still, there will likely need to be folks getting new and significant training so they are able to fill in for the lower total work of those who were doing the highly skilled tasks, before. But this is just another benefit of the whole campaign—perhaps even leading to discussions about the nature of the division of labor—as well as lots of new education.

So that's possible reasoning for a broad social demand. We doubt it would emerge in a single workplace without it existing more broadly, but if it did, the logic would be similar. And yes, we agree with you that to win such gains would require a very advanced movement. And yes, we do think this kind of approach could over an extended period grow to attract massive support including winning interim lesser gains along the way, even as it would also free up people's schedules for future further struggles. But, if not, if our belief about that is ill informed—in some or all countries—okay, then one comes up with a better program, of course.