

Inverted tale – from the end to the beginning

(imagine is possible)

Chico Whitaker, December 2011

People of the “Occupy Wall Street” movement – who created the expression “we are 99%, you are 1%”- invited the Canadian-North-American writer Naomi Klein to speak to them, some weeks ago. Not surprisingly, her support was clear: “we have to see this beautiful moment as the most important thing in the world”. Remembering the first major meeting of that kind she had participated, the “movement of movements” that blocked the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999, she said that her favorite poster, in the Occupy Wall Street camp, was the one saying “I care about you”: “you feed on each other, you warm up each other, you share information freely and provide medical assistance, meditation classes and training in militancy”. For her, all those who were there, in the “horizontal” of an “open space”, “meeting each other”, following the “nonviolence” option, wanted a “a better world”.

Reading her speech I was expecting – but I was frustrated - that she would refer also to the World Social Forum, of which second edition, in 2002, she had participated. In fact, the Forum Charter of Principles assumes, in the struggle to overcome neoliberalism and to build a globalization at the service of human beings and not of the capital, the same perspective of the “indignants” that are camping around the world: the Forum is defined as an “open space”, in which the basic rule is the respect for diversity and the horizontality in its organization, adopting also the non-violence option for political action. As in the camps, it does not have “leaders” or “spokespersons”, and in it there is no place for “struggles for power” nor for “final” statements intending to systematize, from top to bottom, positions that would be adopted by all. Its characterization as an specific space for civil society resulted from the same findings of the “indignants” about the limits of the parties as the only way to participate in politics, as well as about the distance that today separates the different types of leaders – of governments, trade unions or parties – of the base of the society. In its events people try to build, in practice, a new political culture, founded on mutual learning and collective reflection, which stimulates cooperation and not competition among its participants, with decisions taken by consensus and not by vote that withdraw or exclude minorities. Making it possible to discover convergences that allow building, in the political fight, an union deeper than simple tactical alliances.

It would therefore be very good if people with the prestige and the credibility of Naomi Klein called the attention of the “indignant” also to the World Social Forum process, that spreads itself through the world in the last ten years, and now tends to lead, through the Local Social Forums, its logic and its dynamics to the base of the society. Given the similarities of the intuitions of those who promote Social Forums and of the “indignants”, these could very well, when multiplying their camps around the world, appropriate the methodology and the experience of these forums.

[In fact the need for such dialogue already entered into the concerns of facilitators of Social Forums, such as those who are programming a first meeting with camp participants on the occasion of the Maghreb Social Forum, next March.

But on imagining all this, I began to dream, I don't know if asleep or awake. And I began to see many things happening.

I saw "indignants" of many places closing their camps. Not to give up what they were doing but to change their strategy. They considered that they were entering in a process of isolation from the rest of the society. People outside their camps had some difficulty to understand them. The mass communication means, serving the dominant power, were spreading doubts, everywhere, about what they would be really intending to do, presenting them as unable to give answers to the problems they raised, as if they were utopian young people without engagement with the reality. It was easy then to begin to accuse them of being unoccupied and not serious people. And of being rioters and junkies. People outside the camps were beginning to see those in the camps as extraneous and unwanted in the heart of their cities. There were even people pushing into the camps many other unwanted, the "homeless" living in the streets. So, the society began to accept the repression trying to expel them, even with violence.

On the other hand, building proposals and alternatives - as in any process that defines itself upwards - as well as the formulation of new initiatives and actions, was lengthy. Many of those who had come to the squares were beginning to be tired, even physically, as well as new difficulties arose, like the cold and the rain. The lectures and discussions taking place could be interesting, likewise the discoveries that were doing, learning self-management, with a growing solidarity, but they saw how difficult it was to keep indefinitely or for a long time their camps, when the repression was not pushing them outside the squares.

They decided then to begin a new stage of their struggle, which they called "civic guerrilla".

Passed the mark a general meeting every fifteen days, on weekends, in different places of the city. One group took the task of choosing the place of the next Assembly. He then warned all of which would be this place through different social networks, on the afternoon immediately prior to the event, to impede the mobilisation of repression. When arrived to the site and the forces of repression were already waiting, spreading word of mouth a second, alternative, set previously in secret.

These general meetings lasted an entire morning or a whole afternoon. They raised firstly an opportunity to rediscover themselves festively. But the main one was the exchange of ideas and information about the squares on which, at the end of next week, everyone would develop, at the same time but in a decentralised manner, activities that until then occurred in the camp.

At the end of next week, so they got running through the city, each "outraged" or group of "outraged" choosing freely, the square in which would. Thus, they spread their presence in the city, in different squares as possible, in their central and peripheral neighbourhoods, including hindered the action of repression.

These squares were then something like the Local social forums: lectures, workshops, debates, theatrical performances, music, dances, viewing movies, each activity prepared by "outraged" that the proposed, and that led to the site the equipment needed to perform them. In many places there were those who sat on day-care centers to care for children and occupying them with educational activities.

To prepare these activities they contact previously intellectuals and activists who could better explain a good number of things, as well as movements, associations and Ngos to tell what they were doing and the new ideas that were proposing and experimenting, as to how to organize the economy, politics, democracy. Also invited people who could give testimony of life and struggle, as well as authors of films, plays and songs to come present them and discuss them in the square.

Many gave the job to go in the week preceding the neighborhood where they would develop activities and visited its residents. Explained why they did it, because if autodenominavam "indignant", which had usefulness for these villagers what would happen in the square. Talked with them about everything they thought it wasn't going well in your neighborhood, in the country, in the world. Showing that it could change things, sought to spark in them the light of hope that "another world is possible, and even necessary and urgent". And invited to attend the day in the square, to know and think that there are exits for the problems that lived.

Before you start the neighborhood meetings that there were spent a little time setting up the program of the day, which was posted instead accessivel to everyone. When does not fit all in time and space available, they quietly transferring activities to the next meeting, to be held 15 days later. And in these, these activities were given priority in programming.

In my dream vi then these neighborhood meetings multiply, by city, with a huge variety of themes and issues raised. There were lectures and workshops on the functioning of a globalized economy and perverse about using today makes robots to decide where to invest in the stock exchanges, destroying national economies irresponsibly. There were plays denouncing as speculation makes it impossible to solve the housing problem of all. There were debates about how the capitalist system seeks to resolve their crises, always making the poorest pay and how, in the logic of this system, everything-even the life, body, diseases of persons-was transformed into means of gaining money. There were debates about the need, in elections, always endeavour to elect the best candidate, and about how to get together with others to know what was the best. And on the need, once elected the candidate chosen, continue monitoring its activities and even help you, rather than abandon it in the midst of wolves to be eaten by wolves or becomes it also in lobo. Displayed-if didactic films showing how consumerism and its exacerbation do turn increasingly faster industrial machine production of stuff each time less durable, encouraging waste, consuming ever more natural resources, requiring increasingly energy and polluting increasingly the planet. And how conscious consumers and organized can stop this infernal machine. Discussed-because we must respect nature and live in harmony with mother earth and with the other human beings. Explained what are the common property of mankind and because they can't be privatized. Showed that it is possible to have alternative currencies as medium of Exchange, we release from bondage in which the money and the pursuit of money in play. There were demonstrations of alternative means of locomotion, and presentation of the enormous amount of public resources that are buried in great works to facilitate the transit of cars, to the detriment of collective transport, while, conversely, if increasingly plays for cars within cities. It showed documentaries about the struggles that had occurred against injustice and inequality, on the living conditions in poor countries while speculates with food prices and in rich countries playing away large quantities of food, or about the reasons of poor countries are increasingly poor, about the tragedies experienced by immigrants, about the dangers experienced by seeking to

reach rich countries us and about the number of deaths among those who try to do so. Explained how it was possible to react to the absurdities of the dominant economic system, challenging them by civil disobedience or other types of resistance action. And because the nuclear reactors with energy generation is the most dangerous of warm water and produce steam that makes turbines spin. Or what kind of risk we are bequeathing to generations with atomic waste. Discussing why and how corruption is increasing, there at the top of the structures of power and wealth, as well as the voracity and the ambition of the powerful. And had that fights were underway in the city, necessitating solidarity, and what the goals of social movements that existed in the country and the world. Featured-if existing alternatives so that they no longer measure the wealth of a country by GDP, as well as the pitfalls in which countries enter when posing as purely economic growth national goal, and what can be effectively considered as wealth. These and many other topics of interest to local, national or world were brought and discussed in these meetings.

Everything that happened to people transiting, as occurs in Social Forums, posters, exhibitions and projections with photos, drawings, texts and testimonies about what we need to know to be subjects of our destinations. While smaller groups gathered to combine the launching of initiatives and mobilizations in the neighborhood and in the city, and to reflect on ways of action that can quickly improve day to day problems of people.

Was such a wealth of information transmitted that the news of these meetings began to spread and the residents of different neighborhoods began to participate in meetings in neighborhoods, and ask "outraged" that promote meetings of that kind in their neighborhoods. And began to admit that they were going, offering them what to eat, home and spaces to meet hygiene needs, or opening their garages to smaller activities. Gradually also the associations, local and national movements and Ngos also began to look for the "indignant", asking them an opportunity to present the more people who were experiencing and the innovations that were seeking to introduce into city life to improve people's lives.

In a short time saw almost all of the squares of cities mutate every 15 days, in open universities where all who wanted could come to learn and teach, and to seek to understand what was happening in the world and in their cities, and rediscover the sense of their lives. It was like a strong wave that would cover every nook and cranny, in an atmosphere of great joy. And vi begin happening a rapprochement between "militants" and residents in General, passing over prejudices and undermined institutions and making disappear the separation between political activity and everyday life.

But I started to feel that I wasn't dreaming but delirious when I saw militants of parties and trade unions began to attend these meetings, without wishing to instrumentalizá them to their own goals or use them to entice new members to their organizations, but to take your solidarity to which ali met and also to learn and broaden their perspectives of action And more still mistrusted the neighbor to be raving right when I saw that these meetings had begun to reverse the trends of the results of elections that occurred. . The right-wing and conservative parties that, despite the crises and difficulties experienced by the people, by then almost always won, began to get increasingly less votes, while the extreme right appeared to be on the way to be completely banned from the electoral spectrum. But not so the "indignant" passed to believe they had achieved their goals. Were more than aware of a lot to do to effectively

change the world, beyond the simple seizure of political power, and that the social control over those who administer public resources have to be permanent. And knew that will always be necessary to challenge and resist the decisions of Government and private companies that are harmful to the public interest, as well as continue, as civil society, the "do" things like subject politico, autonomously on the Governments.

But when I was almost hovering in the air of happiness with which pathway happen in my dream, someone woke me up. Was a young man who wanted to tell me, excited, what they were doing the "indignant" of Barcelona, Spain. And what started me report was much of what I was dreaming ...

Obviously the road is long. But it is beautiful. And many people already are traversing. Let, then, dreaming and awake.