

WHAT IS UPPING THE ANTI?

UPPING THE ANTI is a radical journal published twice a year by a pan-Canadian collective of activists and organizers. We are dedicated to publishing radical theory and analysis about struggles against capitalism, imperialism, and all forms of oppression. We have been distributed widely across Canada and the US. People have also picked us up in Australia, Argentina, Cuba, England, France, Germany, India, Kenya, Lebanon, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Singapore, Spain, and Venezuela.

We've published articles by and interviews with renowned activists and intellectuals, including Aijaz Ahmad, Himani Bannerji, Grace Lee Boggs, Ward Churchill, Michael Hardt, John Holloway, Gary Kinsman, Sunera Thobani, and many more. We have covered topics including Palestine Solidarity activism, the strengths and weaknesses of the contemporary anti-war movement, trans politics and anti-capitalism, Indigenous solidarity, and activist burnout.

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"Upping the Anti" refers to our interest in assessing the interwoven tendencies that define the politics of today's radical left: anti-capitalism, anti-oppression, and anti-imperialism. Although inexact in their proclamations, these positions point toward a radical politics outside of the "party building" exercises of the sectarian left and the dead end of social democracy.

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Roundtable on G8 Resistance

Perspectives for the Next Phase of Global Anti-Capitalist Uprisings

Moderated by Kriss Sol (Amsterdam); with
Hanne Jobst (Germany), Sabu & Go (Japan),
Miranda (Italy), and Jaggi Singh (Canada)

UPPING THE ANTI

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on the island and listen to what they have to say. We have to choose the time and place of confrontation with the G8, especially because we are already engaged in important struggles with strong popular support. Going to La Maddalena would be an error. Finally, we must rise up in the memory of Genoa, in the memory of that collective desire, in the memory of the future.

Jaggi: In 2010, three major international events will be taking place in the Canadian state: the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, and meetings for the G8 and SPP. Groups on the West Coast have come together under the banner "No Olympics on stolen native land." They are calling on "all native warriors, anarchists, anti-capitalists, anti-poverty activists, environmentalists, and concerned individuals, to converge against the 2010 Winter Olympic Games." Importantly, the mobilization is rooted in indigenous-led organizing and campaigns for land and freedom, based on anti-capitalist and anti-colonial analysis. Along with anti-colonialism, migrant justice organizers have emphasized opposition to global apartheid. Apartheid speaks to the structural oppression of the global system, a system of minority power and rule, structured by race, gender and place. Anti-colonialism and opposition to global apartheid together are important frameworks in which to root our resistance.

Inspired by mobilizations on the West Coast, organizers affiliated with the PGA-Bloc in Ottawa, Montreal, and Québec City have begun to meet and talk about "Resistance 2010." The goal is to link organizing against the Olympics to organizing against the G8 and SPP, and the systems of power they represent. Resistance 2010 is oriented around three demands: No Olympics on stolen land; disrupt and abolish the G8 and SPP; and active support and solidarity for local struggles for self-determination, justice and dignity. The PGA-Bloc mobilized against George Bush's visit to Ottawa in 2004 and against the SPP meeting in Montebello in 2007. The PGA network is also linked to numerous groups that organized anti-capitalist resistance to the Summit of the Americas in Québec City in 2001. We have begun to make efforts to communicate and organize with everyone with shared affinities. The aim is to re-ignite previous networks – and encourage new ones – while supporting day-to-day organizing and local campaigns. At least that's the challenge. ★

growing around issues like global agriculture and climate change. One of the goals of Gipfelsoli is to deal with police ideology after September 11. Under the pretense of fighting international terrorism, laws concerning the surveillance and control of people are changing across Europe. New institutions like Frontex, a European agency for external border management, have been created to undertake “risk analysis” to control and oppose migration. Police use new software to find “suspects” in increasingly interconnected databases. Programs like EU-SEC, a European research program on security during major events, or institutions like IPO, the International Observatory on Security during Major Events, try to control protests at G8 summits. The army is more involved in the control of internal affairs and a European Gendarmerie Force (EGF) has been created for riot control after military interventions. Member troops of EGF include the Spanish Guardia Civil and the Italian Carabinieri. The same police that killed Carlo Giuliani in Genoa are controlling demonstrations in Afghanistan and hunting migrants from Northern Africa.

Given all this, it might make sense to link the Italian G8 mobilization in 2009 to militarism – which is a big issue in Italy, especially considering recent mass protests against NATO bases – but to also include new concepts of public order policing in European countries. We have to fight repression and control on a European level. Vicenza, Italy is host to an EGF headquarters. There is also an academy for training international police in riot control. Heiligendamm taught us that radical international mobilizations should start at least one year before the event. I hope that we will soon begin this networking with Italian activists. Linking anti-militarism to fighting new concepts of public order might be one point of reference.

Miranda: There are not yet any relevant anti-G8 initiatives taking place in Italy. After the national elections, which will be held in April 2008, and the protests in Japan, we will probably start a discussion. We have to avoid a “flashback” to Genoa, its spokespersons and its political and logistical frame. There should not be another Genoa Social Forum. It’s a concrete risk. And then we should start thinking about not going to the island La Maddalena, next to Sardinia Island, where the G8 meeting will take place. We must shift the protest, the blockade, and the sabotage to the capitalist and military hotspots on the Italian mainland. We must start a discussion with comrades living

Roundtable on G8 Resistance

Perspectives for the Next Phase of Global Anti-capitalist Uprisings

Next year marks the 10th anniversary of the Battle of Seattle. It will also mark the first meeting of the G8 in Italy since 2001. During the time between the WTO meeting in 1999 and the G8 meeting in Genoa in 2001 everything seemed possible. Social justice movements everywhere seemed to be on the rise. They also seemed ready to set the agenda for social conflicts, relying on an irresistible mix of horizontal networking and confrontational direct actions. For a moment, it looked as though a general systemic critique of capitalism was once again emerging.

Much was accomplished during this period: negotiations within the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been frustrated since Seattle; the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations have failed completely; since the protests in Prague in 2000, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) no longer dare to hold major meetings in Europe; the G8 continues to be confronted with massive resistance whenever it meets.

However, the year 2001 clearly marked a decisive turning point. Movements in the global North confronted relentless repression. Police shot and killed Carlo Giuliani in Genoa on July 20, making

him the first protestor killed at an anti-summit action in Europe. September 11 further changed the political landscape. Many of the newly formed anti-capitalist networks fell apart. But while the North American anti-globalization movement seemed to have died, European movements continued the tradition of summit protests in places like Evian, France in 2003 and Gleneagles, Scotland in 2005. Although these demonstrations could not revive the energy of 1999-2001, activists learned important lessons and strengthened their networks.

During last year's protests against the G8 in Heiligendamm, Germany, approximately 20,000 people blockaded roads around the conference. Delegates, journalists, and servants had to be brought in and out of the red zone by helicopter or boat. At the end of the week, activists could be heard saying "we are winning" once again. For many in attendance, the protests made it possible to imagine a new global force from below. Riding on the experience of Heiligendamm, activists across Europe have begun looking toward the 2008 G8 protests in Japan and the 2009 protests in Italy.

The G8 is more than a place where neoliberal trade agreements are authored. It is also a space where the legitimacy of global governance is reproduced. G8 meetings often address issues previously articulated by social movements. By seeking to manage social problems while reinforcing them through military and economic policy, the G8 has aimed to delegitimize its opponents. Poverty and climate change are recent targets of cooptation. In 2005, 300,000 people took to the streets in Edinburgh to ask the G8 for a solution to poverty. By 2007, antagonism and dissent prevailed once again. We are entering a period that could mark the resurgence of positive dynamics from the earlier phase of global uprisings. But have we learned from the past? Can we build our interventions on new and more stable ground?

These are the questions that guide the following roundtable discussion in which five activists from four different countries draw upon diverse experiences. The participants highlight the necessity of rooting global insurgency in everyday struggles, where activists engage with communities on the frontline. While each contributor emphasizes the importance of building connections between networks of resistance, they express disagreements about whether the global circulation of struggles is enabled by continuous networks or events like summit protests. This disagreement leads to diverse proposals for future organizing. – (*Kriss Sol, April 2008*)

about global financial and economic issues – began to distance themselves from militant actions by emphasizing their commitment to "peaceful protest." By then, NGOs were quite dependent on radical left infrastructure. After a month of heavy discussion and criticism, ATTAC made a public declaration indicating that they respected all forms of actions but only called for peaceful ones. This was a big step forward, if you know ATTAC politics in Germany. In the end, the police helped us to make the NGOs shut up. The massive raids against suspected "militants" five weeks before the summit resulted in a huge wave of support from broad sections of German civil society. Proactive press work by activists helped to build this support.

What are the next steps in your country for resistance to the G8 and capitalist globalization? Are there any networks that might be starting points for broader mobilization? Are there any lessons to be learned from organizational failures during previous mobilizations?

Sabu & Go: The G8 mobilization in Okinawa didn't become a global movement. Even though the anti-capitalist, alternative globalization movement was growing, we remained marginal. This was because Japanese anarchists and anti-authoritarians willing to do direct action were excluded from coalitions. We have learned from this experience: now it is not them but us who open our arms to various groups and motivate the coalition. Our objective for the coming G8 is to build a radical mass movement. In the past, we failed to become global because we failed to grasp Japanese capitalism in the global context. To become truly global, we need to situate Japanese capitalism within global capitalism. For this, we need to develop an analysis of Japanese society today – as a society of high consumerism and high control – and understand it as an ideal form for the preservation of contemporary capitalism and the state. We also have to develop a new form of struggle, which will involve an assembly of all sorts of fronts, and involve all sorts of tactics and expressions. We hope that these efforts contribute to the global struggle against capitalism and to the creation of new practice and theory.

Hanne: Left movements in Germany are split into various campaigns. Heiligendamm was a chance to have a common project. Most groups continue with their daily struggle, but some new networks are

An important aim of the “diversity of tactics” model is to create complementary spaces for mass protests. For example, “Take the Capital” involved an important “child-friendly” migrant justice protest, inspired by a similar demonstration in Genoa during the G8 in 2001. These efforts, organized by anti-capitalists, help to broaden the support for direct action. It seems obvious: ultimately, summit protests are doomed to be a spectacle if our movements are just about – or are mainly about – summit protests. They need grounding in and responsibility to day-to-day anti-capitalist organizing and campaigns.

Hanne: A few words about “militant actions”: 20 months before the Heiligendamm summit, a direct action group burned down a governmental “guest house” for foreign politicians. They described it as the starting point of a “militant campaign against G8 2007.” After that, other groups carried out dozens of similar actions – burning police and military cars, painting the houses of politicians and managers, and smashing windows of agencies. This shocked the German bourgeoisie and put a lot of pressure on the police. Although the international press was asking questions, German Federal Police had no clue what was going on. Hamburg’s police authorities “recommended” that the media cease to report on the attacks. The “militant campaign” did a great deal to broaden acceptance for different strategies of fighting capitalism. As was mentioned before, one of the outcomes of Heiligendamm and Rostock was an increase in the visibility of radical criticism and resistance.

The protests were planned and carried out with the aim of creating images that would resonate: everyone will remember the smashed police car in Rostock and the image of thousands of protestors heading through the fields of Heiligendamm. Several alternative press groups have tried to expand media coverage of radical actions. Our project with Gipfelsoli was to disseminate radical ideas by creating media about police preparations and repression. We tried to build acceptance for militant actions. In two years of preparation, there was never a debate about “violence” amongst the different participants in the mobilization. This helped us to see and express ourselves as a movement of “partners” rooted in solidarity.

When things began to heat up in the spring before the summit, several NGOs and ATTAC – a network committed to raising awareness

Hanne Jobst was involved in the autonomous anti-capitalist Dissent Network during last year’s protests against the G8 in Germany and is active in Gipfelsoli, which monitors and disseminates information about police repression.

Sabu & Go are from No! G8 Action, an autonomous anti-capitalist network mobilizing against this year’s G8 meeting in Japan. They are currently involved in an extensive info-tour throughout East Asia, Europe, and North America.

Miranda is an active participant in the autonomous social centres in Italy. Since 1998 she has been involved in the struggles against neoliberalism and war from Europe to Mexico. She is currently active in grassroots anti-racist and housing organizing in Italy.

Jaggi Singh is a no borders, anti-capitalist, and migrant and indigenous solidarity organizer based in Montreal. He is active with No One Is Illegal, Solidarity Across Borders, and other groups. Jaggi helped to initiate la Convergence des luttes anti-capitalistes (CLAC) and is now an organizer with the People’s Global Action Bloc (PGA-Bloc).

In Germany, activists continue to debate the effectiveness of the protests against the G8 last year. Nevertheless, there is one point upon which people seem to agree: the protest could help to revitalize the global dynamics experienced at the end of the last millennium. People have begun to refer to the “Seattle - Genoa - Heiligendamm” generation. How do you conceive of this potential? Is there any reason to believe that the dynamics in Rostock and Heiligendamm will spread?

Hanne: This movement has never been static. During the 2007 mobilization, we were surprised by how many activists were quite young. There were thousands of them and it was obviously their first experience of mass protest. I think this is always the biggest opportunity to broaden resistance. One of our issues was to link Heiligendamm to the history of former G8 protests. On our website, we provided lots of films, texts, and tools that could help future mobilizations. We wanted to facilitate the continuity between a “Heiligendamm generation” and the struggles of Seattle, Prague, or Genoa.

Summit protests are always laboratories for different cultures of resistance. Every year, new “interventions” are tried out: Indymedia

in Seattle and J18 in London, different coloured blocs in Prague, the Info Centre in Gothenburg, attempts to enter the red zone in Genoa, the Rebel Clown Army in Gleneagles, alternative press work in St. Petersburg, the info-tour and the five-finger tactic for crossing police lines in Heiligendamm. Some of these interventions have been taken up and developed. Others only worked in the context of a particular protest. What will strengthen the movement is the experience of being powerful. It's worth exploring new tactics that help us shed the fear of police repression and allow us to cope with governmental cooptation.

Sabu & Go: It's understandable that many activists are critical of so-called "summit hopping" and the seemingly ritualistic character of elite gatherings. But we believe that the G8 is more than a ritual; it plays an important role. Although the WTO is not functioning well, free trade agreements (FTAs) have become more common and more expansive. The G8 offers the stage for bi-national, tri-national, and multi-national negotiations. The Korean Confederation of Labour Unions is coming to the G8 protest in Japan to oppose the FTA between Korea and Japan. The G8 marshals beautiful slogans and objectives but remains an institutionalization of the violence of global capitalism. Whenever a big international conference takes place in Japan, the urban space of our big cities is cleansed. Under the pretext of "preventing terrorism," homeless people are forcibly removed from parks, riverbanks, and other public spaces. The Japanese anti-G8 movement involves the movements of homeless people and precarious workers. By witnessing how global power networks affect the lives of people at the local level, we can imagine how to begin connecting local movements globally.

Eight members of No! G8 Action went to Heiligendamm to take part in the protest. We learned a great deal about organizing methods, coalition building through differences, building infrastructure, tactics, and so on. Although we had heard about these things before, they were very new to us. At the G8 protests in Okinawa a year after Seattle, the focus was on the US military base. Considering the history, this decision was significant, but it also prevented the protests from turning into a global event. The protests allowed direct action against the G8, the WTO, and global capitalism itself, to come into existence. However, stylistic limitations, which ended by inviting an extremely harsh crackdown, created distance from the masses.

be encouraged. But we also need to reflect on when it is useful and when it is not. That will only be possible to the extent that comrades succeed in linking the meaning of protests against the G8 to local and migrant histories of struggle.

Sabu & Go: In the Japanese situation, we need to empower the people. We need to make people believe that they can express themselves through direct action and that they have an absolute right to do so. During the 1970s, militarization and violent internal strife took their toll on the revolutionary movement, which had previously been much more influential. Since then, many people have lost their faith in radicalism. The coming global anti-G8 protest is an opportunity to shift this tendency. The Japanese groups taking charge of the anti-capitalist and alternative globalization movements are descendents of the radical movements of the 1970s. Despite significant ideological and organizational transformations, they possess the same will to change the world. What is necessary in Japan is to nurture the radical will to fight against capitalism and – at the same time – to build a massive swell in the movement. For this purpose, though it might be a *déjà-vu* to Western activists, "diversity of tactics" needs to be introduced in a proper manner. And asserting that "another world is possible" is indispensable.

Jaggi: In 2002, the G8 took place in a relatively isolated tourist village in the Canadian Rockies, more than 3,000 km away from Toronto and Montréal. Organizers based in southern Ontario and Québec responded by targeting the institutions and agencies that implement the G8 agenda daily in Ottawa. We dubbed the effort "Take the Capital!" During the G8 in 2007, "Plan B" – which saw hundreds of protestors converging in Berlin – seems to have been based on a similar strategic consideration. The "Take the Capital" or "Plan B" model is worth considering when summits take place at isolated sites away from urban areas. It allows us to choose the time and place of our mobilization and engage the politics of direct confrontation, but more strategically, and to some tactical advantage. Nevertheless, if one of these summits does dare to meet in a major urban center and to create a security fortress – as with the recent "Fortress Sydney" at the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2007 in Australia – it does provide a clear focal point for direct actions and mass protests.

Sabu & Go: This is very much related to one of our goals for the coming anti-G8 project. We have always been isolated. As we have already pointed out, the Cold War is still going on here. Due to geopolitical conditions, peoples' unrestricted travel and exchange are not yet possible. For us, the alternative globalization movement has not yet begun in the full sense. But it is high time for us to begin. We have an uncontrollable urge to come out to the global scene. We hope that many foreign activists come to Japan and meet local activists – such an exchange is itself significant to us. We are trying to make Japan a meeting place for Western and Asian activists. We are planning conferences and workshops, so that exchanges of various types and scales can happen in order to create affinities across the ocean. We have learned the idea of the info-tour from the German Dissent network and are practicing it at this moment. Traveling to different parts of the world and meeting activists is indispensable. It's part of people's globalization.

During the previous wave of global resistance, summit protest created visibility, enabled us to develop our conceptions of revolt and revolution, and allowed us to extend anti-capitalist sentiments through a politics of confrontation. In part, this was enabled through the strategic acceptance of a “diversity of tactics.” Are we in a position to go beyond the intensity of the Seattle-Genoa phase of struggle? Can we broaden practices of confrontation and disobedience, or are summit protests doomed to remain spectacles?

Miranda: Intensifying and broadening confrontation and disobedience depends on intensifying and broadening the refusal and the struggle against this class society. It depends on the decision of a wide class of people to break with normal rule. That is not a matter of technique but of social and political strength. On the other hand, I think we should totally put aside the idea of building a “positive” means of presenting opposition to the public. The spectacular machine is now totally integrated even into our own mediascape and alternative media. Instead of focusing on representation, we can build effective actions linked to effective social support and sharing. I hope that through confrontation we can seriously confront and attack the summits and their security systems. Militant action has to

At the same time, confrontation without compromise allowed the counter-hegemonic movement in Japan to regain its stride in a context where unconditional legalism has long been the political norm. The G8 summit in 2008 is our first opportunity to organize a global event. What we need now is a kind of dual stance: keeping an uncompromising will to fight the G8 and building the widest possible coalition. We are in the Far East, where the Cold War is still going on – between North and South Korea, and China and Taiwan – and a smooth exchange among people is not yet possible. We have a certain lag from the experiences of the activists in Europe and North America. At the same time, we are hopeful that these differences will allow us to bring new dimensions to the global justice movement, from Japan and from the networks growing across East Asia.

Miranda: The discussion about the next anti-G8 mobilization in Italy has not really started yet. Although there was a significant effort to rethink the strategy of counter-summit action last year, and although many Italian comrades participated in the protests in Heiligendamm, we are in a different time and frame. I don't think we can continue on the same level as Seattle, Genoa, and the protests in Heiligendamm. But we did feel a strong energy in Germany. There was considerable solidarity and communication between different parts of the radical left, often beyond identities and differences. In my view, a new radical youth movement has arisen and has begun to struggle across Europe. This is having a positive influence on the activist and militant milieu.

From France to Denmark, and then to Germany, we have recently seen acts of resistance, of disobedience, and of rage. A lot of work has been put into building alternatives in a present that seems doomed by crisis and catastrophe. We need to make links to radical youth and to speak the language of everyday conflicts. With respect to a new global cycle of anti-capitalist struggles: I think we have to remember that we have not yet succeeded in breaking the binds of the terrorism-war-repression matrix. Anti-militarism cannot advance on political or ethical grounds alone. It must also involve class struggle and environmental struggles. It must strengthen links with people actually resisting invasion and occupation.

Jaggi: In the North American context, while Seattle was undoubtedly a noteworthy moment in the fight against global capitalism, it still remains a contested reference point. The indigenous Zapatista uprising of 1994 – launched on the same day that the North American Free Trade Agreement took effect – directly inspired much of the subsequent resistance to neoliberal globalization in North America. The Zapatista’s ongoing “Other Campaign,” and the on-the-ground organizing inspired by it, underlines their enduring relevance to anti-capitalist movements.

Seattle was preceded seven years earlier by the 1992 Rodney King riots. These were not just limited to a few cities in Southern California, or a day or two of protest. They spread across the USA, and even into some Canadian cities. The riots were a generalized rebellion against poverty, police brutality, and racism. In the aftermath of Rodney King, and one year before Seattle, thousands gathered for the historic Critical Resistance convergence in Berkeley, California. They made the “prison industrial complex” and prison abolition part of the discourse against global capitalism.

These are just a few of the indigenous, people-of-colour, and poor peoples’ movements that are essential parts of organizing against capitalism in North America. They put the “Seattle moment” in context. Many anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist, and anti-racist organizers and groups have tried to root the resistance to global capitalism in day-to-day community struggles on the “frontlines.” This is not a rejection of the “Seattle-Genoa-Heiligendamm” model but a re-framing of how we confront global capital, mount effective challenges, and envision strategic actions.

Confronting the manifestations of global capitalism at their summits and meetings is no doubt a part of the tactical arsenal of anti-capitalists. As such, acts of resistance on the streets of Rostock and in the fields of Heiligendamm are useful reference points. However, the enduring challenge of the post-Seattle moment remains to link mass mobilizations and direct action against global capitalism to the on-the-ground day-to-day struggles against colonialism, poverty, racism, and police brutality – to root them in long-standing struggles for dignity and survival. We need, at the very least, to conceive of “the movement” against global capitalism in such a way that those who are on the frontlines of resistance can actually recognize it.

Hanne: Was there really a community of solidarity? I think our attempts to network and integrate local struggles into global protests have been quite weak. Most efforts to build global structures failed – like PGA – or were dominated by left parties like the World Social Forum. Although an annual mass protest is a nice and inspiring experience that allows us to build personal or political contacts in other countries and create lots of mailing lists, it cannot create strong networks. I would like to focus on the info-tour that we started 18 months before the G8 summit in 2007. In the end, we gave about 300 talks about the mobilization, half of them in foreign countries. We visited nearly every European country, as well as the USA, Canada, Mexico, Israel, and Palestine.

Our priority was not only to mobilize people to come to Germany, but to give people an overview of the history of G8 protests, critiques of capitalism, police strategies in other countries, radical protest tactics and cultures, etc. This marked a huge difference from former mobilizations: if you wanted to participate in preparations against the Italian summit in 2001, you had to travel to the delegates meetings. The info-tour did things the other way around by visiting activists in their context and showing that we were interested in their struggles. Unfortunately, coming back from the info-tour, there was little interest among the German anti-G8 movements in hearing about struggles and discussions taking place in other countries.

Miranda: I agree with Hanne. There has never been such a community. There was only a good resonance and a good general criticism of neoliberalism. The network model is not enough. We have to go beyond that, but we are still trying to figure out how. We need more common places and spaces to stay together after – or in absence of – protests and counter-summits. It’s also necessary to build trans-national initiatives, friendships, and alliances that can give us real operative strength in terms of resources, information, and infrastructure. An obstacle to that process, in Europe at least, is that there has been too much fragmentation – and sometimes sectarianism – on the radical left, and a reflex toward thinking in national terms. We need to work more on our agenda of responding to capitalists, bosses, and policies, but also on defining our own actions and projects, and building and defending this agenda.

Currently, it looks like movements in different parts of the world are disconnected and isolated. What can we learn from this point of organizational failure? How can we enable struggles to circulate beyond national or regional boundaries? How can we build networks that are able to confront global power structures simultaneously from various points?

Jaggi: “This momentum was taken away”; that truism needs to be contested, or at least discussed. I don’t naïvely believe that nothing changed, or cling to the idea that sheer collective will or “super-activism” could overcome the dynamics of demobilization and repression after September 11. Nevertheless, many anti-capitalist organizers chose to engage the post-September 11 reality by adjusting rather than demobilizing. Anti-capitalists in New York City organized mobilizations against the World Economic Forum in January of 2002. They refused to allow the civilian victims of September 11 to be co-opted by global elites. For their part, many anti-capitalists were already critical of the limits of summit protest. Many had strategically moved into local organizing linked to global struggles, a decision that flowed from movement debates that pre-dated September 11. A term I recall being used was “rooting our resistance.”

In terms of networking, allied efforts can already be quite disconnected and isolated within a given city, so it’s that much more of a challenge to communicate and network regionally, continentally, and internationally. I would stress the importance of local and regional networking, which can be face-to-face. Also, there’s the practice of “direct solidarity.” Locally, models of long-term direct solidarity have been applied with communities in Colombia, Mexico, Palestine, Lebanon, and India, as well as with indigenous allies. Because of global apartheid, we need to emphasize breaking down the walls against the South in the North and the invisible walls within our communities and nation-states.

For global communication, I still feel that – despite its ups and downs – People’s Global Action (PGA) remains a meaningful space. It’s a useful network for communication, coordination, and collaboration, with strong principles and a shared history of resistance not based solely in the summit spectacles of the global North. We could re-invent the wheel but I think PGA provides a solid template for global coordination and communication while respecting local autonomy.

Unlike in Gleneagles, there was broad agreement in Germany that the G8 could not be part of the solution. There was no chance for a German Tony Blair to pretend that he represented the people’s wish to end poverty. Nevertheless, G8 member states have become increasingly refined at finding new means of legitimating themselves. Last year, German Chancellor Merkel presented herself as an ally in the climate change debate. It looks like the Japanese government is going to do the same. How can movements avoid being neutralized by being cast as systemic supplements to the G8? Do we need to develop a radical critique of the climate discourse?

Sabu & Go: This is a serious challenge. We are aware that the Japanese government is seeking to use an environmental discourse to “greenwash” their summit. A number of environmental NGOs are likely to work with the government. At the same time, the Japanese anti-capitalist movement has not yet succeeded in making environmental issues part of its critique. In Japan, like elsewhere, industrial capitalism has caused a number of terrible environmental problems – mineral poisoning, river and ocean pollution, and nuclear disasters. This has triggered many struggles, some of which have been quite intense. Nevertheless, these struggles have so far remained local in character.

When environmental issues are placed in the global context and spoken about in an abstract way – as inevitably happens due to the scale of the problems – they tend to get taken over by governments and NGOs. In this situation, what needs to happen in order to make environmental struggles revolutionary? First of all, we need to reconsider the concept of the environment itself. As Félix Guattari has emphasized, there are three types of ecologies – natural, social, and spiritual. The institutional object of ecology is always limited to the natural environment, which is easily subsumed by capital. Consequently, our ecological movement should involve other ecologies: the labour movement against the neoliberal degradation of the social environment and the anti-capitalist movement against the impoverishment of the spiritual environment. Finally, we should create a powerful network of local environmental struggles that can remain concrete in the face of capitalist abstraction.

Jaggi: In Canada, there is an entire NGO “non-profit industrial complex.” Certainly, some in the NGO sector can be allies, offering a basic critique of some of the worst and obvious abuses of global capitalism; but there are elements of so-called “civil society” that actively marginalize and sideline the anti-capitalist, direct action movement. It still remains a persistent struggle to articulate non-co-opted, radical, and meaningful discourses against capitalist globalization. Anti-capitalist mobilizing in North America is as much about engaging and debating the broader progressive left as it is about disrupting and confronting global and local elites.

There have been some tangible openings and victories over the years. During the August 2007 mobilization against the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) Summit in Montebello, Québec, all protesting groups refused to enter into the protest cages set up by the police to provide a state-sponsored safety valve for dissent. It was a modest but meaningful gesture. Many other groups signed “solidarity statements” refusing to publicly denounce other protestors. A clear lesson from previous mobilizations is the importance of openly and publicly engaging in debates about direct action, anti-capitalism, and anti-colonialism within the broader progressive left, and not to marginalize ourselves by refusing to take on this particular form of struggle. That almost always means initiating the debate and being prepared to defend our positions beyond our rhetorical comfort zones.

Developing a “radical critique of the climate discourse” means actively supporting the ongoing organizing and actions for ecological and environmental justice. There are an overwhelming number of campaigns – against clear-cuts, mining, development projects, highway expansions, and more – that can help us develop a grounded critique. In the Canadian state, the frontline of this opposition is in indigenous communities, from Grassy Narrows, site of the longest forest blockade in Canadian history, to Sun Peaks, where the Native Youth Movement is opposing a tourist ski development. The Alberta Tar Sands – the second-largest oil deposit in the world, exceeded only by Saudi Arabia – is another site that will continue to be a flashpoint for radical ecological and anti-capitalist struggles in the Canadian state.

Hanne: Two years before the Heiligendamm summit, organizers started discussing “our” topics of mobilization. The result was a focus on anti-militarism, migration, and global agriculture. I think it was the right decision to not mobilize around climate change, because it would have strengthened the big NGOs that were invited to help legitimize the summit. In Germany, there was no radical movement against climate change. However, connecting with international activists at the protests led to amazing discussions and meetings on radical critiques of the climate issue. There are many reasons we should focus more on the climate change debate. The most important is to show that there can be no real solution without abolishing capitalism. Sadly, it looks like the growing climate change movement in Germany is already splitting on the question of whether to change the climate or the social climate.

Miranda: In Italy, because of the heavy experiences we had in 2001 and because of the death of Carlo Giuliani, but also because of the injustice of recent trials in which 25 activists have received sentences of up to 11 years, it would be very hard for the institutions to force us into the role of “systemic supplement.” One problem we have is that the former communist and green parties – now running in the general elections – have become increasingly moderate and weakened in terms of their militant base. We should strengthen the links between territorial and local struggles outside the political parties and try to express them in terms of a clear anti-capitalist perspective. We are currently involved in difficult environmental struggles, especially in the South of Italy with the garbage crisis, where the people of Naples were living amidst their trash because there was no place for it to go, and in the North where a network of local community associations have mobilized opposition to an environmentally unsound high-speed train project and the US military base in Vicenza. However, climate discourse has not yet become an important issue in general movement discussions. We need to develop it, but we couldn’t yet start a general mobilization on those questions.

The rapid circulation of struggles from Seattle to Genoa sustained a community of solidarity through organizational processes. This momentum was taken away, especially in North America, by developments after September 11.