

THE AUTONOMOUS SIGNAL.

Political identity and collective action of the autonomous spaces at the European Social Forum in London 2004.

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*Paper Presented at the Social Movements Conference Alternative Futures and
Popular Protest, Manchester Metropolitan University. Manchester, U.K., 30th March
1st April 2005.*

*Political autonomy is the desire to allow
differences to deepen at the base without
trying to synthesise them from above, to
stress similar attitudes without imposing a
“general line”, to allow parts
to co-exists side by side in their singularity*

**The return of politics in Italy:
Autonomy, Postpolitical Writings²**

Key words: social movements, collective action, global movement, spatial process, Autonomy.

Abstract: This paper will treat, politically and historically, autonomous spaces developed as a parallel alternative to the third European Social Forum edition, in London, in October 2004. We will analyse the collective action repertoires of the autonomous groups and their spatial dynamics for challenging the urban territory control. We will try to show that the autonomous way to criticise the official forum was based on collective action repertoires capable defining an autonomous collective identity. That identity is based on grassroots organisation essentials and permits an understanding of the inclusion of the autonomous British groups within a European autonomous which itself forms part of the Global movement³.

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² This reference was also reproduced in the free newspaper distributed at the Autonomous spaces during the Forum. See the bibliography at the end of this paper.

³ We think that it is necessary to give a definition or, at least, a minimum characterisation of the Global movement. We are going to propose two generic definitions; The first, relating to Economic Globalisation as the political-systemic adversary for the Global movements. The second relating to the movement's collective actions, able to explain the political success of the Global movement and to differentiate it from other social movements in the twentieth century. Regarding the first definition we like very much the proposal of the Italian students Sandro Mezzadra and Fabio Raimondi that have referred to the Global movements as the constitutive contradiction of Globalisation, as the Globalisation's spectrum, as the updating of the old radical dream of freedom and equality to the republican, democratic and communist projects in Occident and the anti-colonial struggles (Mezzadra/Raimondi, 2003: 22-26). Regarding the second definition, the most important thing is a model of confrontation able to create social mobilisation against Capitalism visible throughout the World, creating symbolic scenarios of system conflict: the anti-summit model.

1.-Introduction:

We have considered that the reference in the beginning perhaps could be pertinent in order to define a very complex and dynamic concept: Autonomy⁴.

For this occasion, we are going to use the concept “Autonomy” to speak about the autonomous spaces developed at the same time of the third European Social Forum edition, at London, in October 2004.

The relations between those spaces and the official Social Forum were very diverse. For some groups, the main critique to the Official Social Forum was the democratisation of the Forum. For them, the ESF was a space dominated by the Party structures. For the most sceptical groups, it was simply impossible to mediate with the Forum. There were too, some groups fighting against the Party’s inequitable protagonist role in several struggles. Finally, there were groups who were not interested in defining their political position in relation to the European Social Forum.

For us, this plurality of positions is evidence of the difficulties in defining Autonomy, but it is also an evidence of the importance of the Autonomy dimension.

Anyway, in our opinion, the democratic deficits in the organisation process of the forum, the presence of some NGO’s and the government party through the London Council, were absolutely central to understanding that, for some autonomous, the Second ESF was basically another attempt to consolidate a new “Reformism International”⁵.

Despite the analytical problems in speaking about a diverse reality like this, we think that our methodology has been useful to offer some interesting discussion topics. We were physically present in several discussions and actions; We interviewed activists from different countries, and we developed a lot of informal chats with activists and social movements students that we have known from the Prague experience to the present.

We believe that the common experiences are a very useful research tool. With this background we have observed political atmospheres, solidarity surroundings from the European autonomous political culture. We are going to explain that the last step of that culture began at 26th September in 2000 in Prague. (for us, this is, at least, a methodological point).

The general vision and the participant observation have allowed us to approach this sector of the European Global movement taking into consideration both their collective action repertoires and their internal dynamics of discussion. We will try to demonstrate that this sector has its European identity at least regarding the collective action repertoires.

Going beyond the examination of public documents, webs and bibliographies is absolutely necessary in order to differentiate between those who speak and do nothing and those who speak (or not) and do something (and what are they doing).

⁴ Obviously more complex than the definition of Chris Harman(2004: 7-11).

⁵ To know all of this autonomous feelings, see the free newspaper that we have referenced at the bibliography.

Trying to check the relation between theory and practice is very important for the studies of social movements.

In the next section we will try to design a simple map of the autonomous groups that were in London during the ESF.

2.-Autonomous in London:

Though there were eleven Autonomous Spaces which met against the official Social Forum, we can classify them by the organizative model they chose. We distinguish then four models:

a)Conferences: in which the different speakers expound their issues, while the public just can take part in the debate by asking questions about the concrete theme. These model allows to guarantee that people know about different experiences and political analysis about campaigns. It's the model of Schneus tenth birthday conference, a contra-informative project from Brighton that's been producing a weekly paper, that's also on the net, for the last ten years. This space was in Camden Centre and it brought many groups: Anti-Coca-Cola campaign, ecologist, etc, on Saturday the 16th. All of them worked on campaigns that try to make more people aware of their problems.

b)workshops: spaces for political discussion over thematical axes previously decided, looking for the meeting of different activist's perspectives. We found, for example, Life Despite Capitalism, in the London School of Economics, with items as commons, new technologies, food, precarity, social movements, nets and democracy. The main objective was to create a political manifesto, an alternative the one in discussion in the European Social Forum. In this event took place some "notorious" activists of the movement, as Massimo D'Angelis, David Graeber, Olivier De Marcellus, Sandro Mezzadra, etc. All the workshops can be found in a web⁶.

The aim of these workshops was to bring some questions about each item to the general assembly. The methodology used was seriously questioned by some of the activists, as long as it did not allow an horizontal discussion and it reproduced the vertical methods of the official forum. The open questions and the lack of conclusions made impossible to get to any final decision. It seemed to be a space only for discussion, without the objective of looking for a synthesis for action or network. This would be one of the constants in the Autonomous Spaces.

Its the same model in the Solidarity Village and the Urban Forum, who worked on ecology, sustainable development, food and public spaces.

c)Assemblies: again, spaces for political discussion. It was the main space, and the usual, for social movements: little spaces, without famous people, where everybody can speak. They worked on concrete items or activists experiences, not aimed at direct action but to create a corpus of own demands.

⁶ <http://www.lifedespitecapitalism.org/program.html>

For example, the Radical Theory Forum, whose headquarter was a social occupied centre in Leytonstone. They worked on two main axes: the radical theory (postmarxism in the XXI century, reflections on Empire and multitude) and how theory can feed direct action (in general terms: feminist theory and social action, popular education and free universities, politics and organisation of the ESF).

As social centre that works in artistic and political experiences, there was place for poetry, music and raves (parties), in so many ways related with the experiences of Reclaim the Streets and that took part all over the Autonomous Spaces.

These lines Women's Open Today also worked along.

d) Workshops for action: the last item, in which we can classify the rest of the Autonomous Spaces. These are spaces for direct action during the ESF and next meetings, such as the global day of action of 25th of July in Scotland.

In a more expressive and symbolic way, we found spaces as the Rampart Creative Centre, a social centre occupied in may, and he headquarter of the Mobile Carnival Forum and the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination. Both groups coordinate actions against multinationals, as Starbucks or McDonalds. They work in a political-artistic code, their actions are not extremely dangerous for the activists, as long as they try to take public attention and they do not explain all the political meaning of the action (at least, they do not explain the objectives and causes of the action).

They pay attention to the role of the activist in the affinity group, trying to make him or her feel comfortable in the action context, even more than the attention paid to the action itself. That is why every action needs a workshop and activities to get the activists relaxed.

In Beyond the ESF⁷, the headquarter of the Wombles⁸, in the Middlesex University⁹, took place many assemblies to prepare the actions against the G-8 meeting in Scotland in 2005 and the activities of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army who took part in the demonstration of Sunday the 17th.

In Beyond the ESF there were also assemblies about social control, repression, zapatismo, precarity and autonomy, as we mentioned before.

Finally, the Media Center in Candem. During four days it was the main space for media-activism and assemblies about communication, Internet, rights, migrations, direct actions networks and women on the net.

3.-Collective action beyond the Forum:

⁷ <http://www.wombles.org.uk/auto>

⁸ Web site in www.wombles.org.uk. This anarchist group comes from the experience of the "hard line" of the Yellow Block in Prague, 26th of September. More information in "Movimiento Tute Bianche en Praga" in <http://www.nodo50.org/invisibles/praga.htm> (Accessed: 19/10/04) and Iglesias (2004b:17).

⁹ The space declared, in its presentation, its will of "continuing the radicalization" from demonstrations against WTO, G-8, IMF and Bird. The Call of the Autonomous Spaces can be read in <http://www.altspaces.net/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?pagename=Main.DraftCallOut>

3.1.-Collective action strategies in the Autonomous Spaces:

One of the main characteristics of the movement of movements in the evolution of the counter summit model is the “definitive” definition of the four main strategies of collective action of protest. We have to remember that the concept of civil disobedience (mainly since demonstrations of Genoa 2001) is the main axis in the definition of this collective action repertory, that includes four models:

-pacifism: quiet collective action, as demonstrations or sit-ins. Activist do not get into forbidden areas (those protected by police), though they try to show their disagreement.

-“expressive-symbolic” strategies: activist try to emphasise festive aspects of protests: performances, theatre, fancy dresses, music, etc.

-non violent active resistance : planned strikes against police in which are used protections, helmets, shields, but there are not allowed violent tools (stones, molotov cocktails) their direct action aimed to media, in a zapatist way (Tute Bianche, Disobbedienti, Wombles, Invisibles)

-direct action: selective and symbolic attacks over some of the most representative icons of the System (Black Block).

It was the counter summit of Prague, in September of 2000 the first united demonstration in which appeared this four strategies. There were four queues, the famous “Peelovska Tactic” (Routledge, 2003: 333), that allows that each file assumes its responsibilities. Anyway, the counter summit of Genoa 2001, during the G-8 meeting, was the end of these collective demonstrations cycle: security forces learnt that the existence of different spaces made it difficult for repression, so they tried to mix the files up, in order to justify general repression to all the blocks from the activities of the Black Block.

In the ESF of London we found two of these models of collective action. Though we won't analyse it –but taking into account that many people from the Autonomous Spaces took part in the demonstration against the war on Sunday- the official forum chose the first of the four strategies mentioned: a pacific demonstration. Its almost a tradition in this part of the global movement. It also can be seen as a force demonstration in a delicate moment for the British government after a british hostage was killed by some armed groups in Iraq. Finally, it showed the link between the global movement and the antiwar movement since 2002.

On the other hand, the Autonomous Spaces tried two of the collective action strategies mentioned:

a)Most of them chose the second strategies, the “expressive-symbolic” ones. The inheritance of the British Reclaim the Streets is essential to understand direct action during the ESF; for example, street parties that “reclaim the streets as a public space and meeting point, trying to recover a working-class ideological meaning of the street. Its main event took place in 1994, when 20.000 activist walked along the M-11,

motorway around London, against the destruction of outlying districts –as Claremont Road, occupied during a year- by the expansion of urban transport infrastructures.

As we have mentioned before, these spaces give much importance to previous moments of the action, just to make the activist feel comfortable in the affinity group. They try to look for emotional relaxation facing the action and so they make workshops, jokes and dances previously. They also try to guarantee that roles in the affinity group change: changeable leadership, collective ability to avoid fear, etc.

We attended to three of these kind of actions in London during the Autonomous Spaces: in the first one, against Starbucks, some activist got into a shop with a paper glass in their mouths; They had changed the logo of Starbucks and they had written “Fuck off” in the glasses, which is illegal in the UK. In the second action, the activist just drank alcohol in public spaces, that it is also illegal, while they made noise with cans of beer, singing “No borders, no nations, stop deportations”. The third one consisted in making different performances in front of security video-cameras that were in public spaces, shops, etc.

Though the actions may seem “light” for an Italian or Spanish activist, we must insist in the fact that the material action itself was less important than symbolical meaning.

b) In other terms, the action against the ESF during its last session reproduced the civil disobedience logic of the third collective action strategy mentioned. We will see it in the next paragraphs.

3.2.-Beyond the space. Challenging the spatial control

We have explained in other occasions (Iglesias, 2004a) the spatial construction of conflict or contention¹⁰ as one of the keys to understand the modular (Tarrow meter) collective action repertoires which define Global movements.

Maybe someone could object that if we privilege those tools we are only talking about the most radical faction inside Global movements. We think we are able to clear this question.

In the first place, if we accept the Seattle demonstrations as starting-point of the global media visibility of a new movement in the World (and this is, in our opinion, an unquestionable point between the global movement students) we have to recognise the contention dynamics as hegemonic in the Global movement development at least until the Genoa demonstrations against G8 at July 2003 and the assassination of Carlo Giuliani.

In the second place, if Global movement has some interest as an object of study by the Collective action and Social movement theory, we also have to recognise that the modular and contentious collective action repertoires gave it international

¹⁰ We use the category contention with the Charles Tilly’s meaning (Tilly: 1986:3-4).

visibility and permitted to differentiate it from other social movements (particularly of the called New Social movements¹¹).

Thus, our propose in analysing the spatial conflict dynamics in order to understand this movement is not a keen desire or a way to privilege a certain movement sector but, simply, a methodological attitude.

In the Third ESF case, the autonomous political making can generally be defined as a challenge to the political control of the certain spaces at London. At the same time, we think this spatial analysis is the most useful in order to explain the British police's repressive action arresting several activists, concentrated against the autonomous sector.

The concept of "Beyond ESF" which designed the space organised by Wombles found inspiration in the slogan used by the Italians "Disobbedienti" at the first European Social Forum in Florence in 2002 "*attraversare il foro sociale*". In our point of view, those slogans pointed the wish of challenger the spatial control at the Forum. Obviously, it had to imply practices consequences.

We can not analyse all the actions that, in London, challenged the control of urban space. Anyway, some examples of these were the critical mass on Friday 15th with some 100's of bikes (and a very big police "bodyguard") occupying the centre of London; the street parade the same day, the actions in Hackney claiming against the borders, the actions against commercial centres, ecc.

However, we are going to speak just about the most spectacular action: the taking of the ESF stage by 300 European autonomous activists from the "Beyond ESF" space in the evening on Saturday 16th.

The action was politically and technically perpetrated in an assembly in the morning at the Middlesex University. The action's political target was to protest against the ESF contradictions as the price for enter (20 pounds, too expensive for some people); the sponsorship by "too systemic" organisations like the London Council, the main trade unions; the newspaper The Guardian; the big presence of the European social democracy (sometimes war's supporters); the commercial running inside the Forum (private and expensive restaurants and bar), etc.

At the same time, the action did not seek to engage in conflict of the Forum participants but rather to engage in an act of direct communication.

When the autonomous activists entered Alexandra Palace, there were some moments of tension during the taking of the stage and the microphone but most of the people received the action pleasantly¹². From the occupied stage, the delegates could listen to interventions in English, French, Italian, Greek and Castillian protesting against the contradictions that we have mentioned.

¹¹ See Melucci, Touraine, Habermas, Offe, Klandermans...

¹² The interpreters salute was particularly emotive.

Coming out of Alexandra Palace, the autonomous block was going to return to Middlesex University. A few meters away, the police tried to stop the block pushing it to the sidewalk. In those moments, there was some confrontation between police and activist (some hits and digs). Finally, the police arrested a few militants but the block stayed united and was able to arrive at the Middlesex University. The next day some Beyond ESF activists were arrested when they went to the big demonstration in the centre of London.

We think that the key to comprehending the action's political meaning and the police's repression¹³ is in the spatial dimension.

The "beyond ESF", alternative proposes and the general criticism to the Forum obtained real meaning when the autonomous, physically, entered inside the Forum. This challenger was useful to place in doubt the Forum political running. That was possible just with a forcibly action.

The same force was essential in order to confront the London police outside Alexandra Palace and to sustain the block united.

In conclusion, we can say:

Firstly: practical expressions of radical thought at the space are the key to understand the political identity of an important sector of European Global movement.

Secondly: this sector of European Global movement has been able to carry out transnational collective actions taking Europe as the juridical and political frame of intervention. This is very important in order to differentiate this sector in relation to the Official forum groups. This last sector (political parties, trade unions etc.) maybe are too worried about national-domestic questions without being as concerned with the European movement building. In our opinion, that dimension will be fundamental in the future anticapitalist struggles.

Why were the most repressive actions against the autonomous sector? The answer is not the radical discourse of this sector, the answer is not the "autonomous danger", the answer is not the "delinquent behaviour" (the majority of the arrests had a preventive character). The answer is the challenge to the political control of several spaces (some streets in London and the Forum area).

And this is, in our opinion, the key to explain collective action as contention and antisystemic practice of the Global movement is the disobedience dimension at the space. Theoretically, we can not define the antisystemic character just with a "program". We have to check the practice. We need to analyse the meaning building inside the collective action.

Who was making movement at London? If we understand that the ontological dimension is only measurable at the level of praxis, we think we have answered the question.

¹³ Perhaps one of the most "civilised" police in the World at least regarding its behaviour in relation to the demonstrators..

4.-Beyond Social Forum. Autonomous European identity

4.1.-Characteristics of this sector:

In a large cycle of demonstrations and international meetings, we can find in British activists very similar profiles to those in rest Europe activists.

They are young (18-30 years old) and precarious (it is an important information, specially if we take into account that London is a so expensive city: transport and housing are almost unachievable for a normal salary).

The context also determine the activities of this groups:

-Politics: UK has a two party system, thanks to its majority electoral law. A third party, The Liberal party is really far from the other two. Actually, there are very little possibilities of intervention when two big parties decide together; as in the Iraqi war. It has some consequences in leftist political positions, but does not usually find support in the political system.

-Economy: government of Margaret Thatcher in the 80's privatized much of public services and regulated big companies management; it generated high levels of unemployment and a big crisis in trade unions; all this process has been continued by the "Third Way" of Tony Blair, with the slogan "Capitalism with human face". That's why in big cities, like London, nearly 20% of the population lives under the threshold of misery. It all makes really difficult for young activists to take part in political activities, as long as they have to survive.

We also have to consider the legal context, the British legal system (sometimes, with laws of three centuries of age), in which judges can create new laws (it is different, for example, in Spain, where judges can only apply laws created by legislative power).

There are many ideological traditions in British activism. We must point out the old politicised punk of the 80's, though we have to reach the firsts 90's to find antimilitarism (camps and blockages to military headquarters), groups in defence of rights of the animals, civil rights groups, feminist and anarco-ecologist or just ecologist groups, the protested against nuclear power stations and urban transport infrastructures. We must emphasise in the last category Reclaim the Streets, mentioned before, one of the most famous groups of the first movement of movements as long as they made the call for the first global action day during the G-8 summit in 1998, with protests in nearly thirty countries, under the slogan "Our resistance will be as global as capitalism".

There is also a strong anarchist tradition, related to punk and ecologist groups, and finally related to German, but not Italian Autonomy. The first squatter movement has also a long tradition, not necessarily politicised (the price of housing gives importance to survival; a legislation that does not allow police to enter a building once it has been occupied also helps); but in the last few years the situation has changed: there have been many occupied social centers and now there's in London a Squatter Co-ordinating Committee.

If we analyse the characteristics of Autonomous Spaces in London we'll point out, in a first place, the importance given to liberation of spaces for collective and public aims, by occupying centres and by reclaiming the streets as meeting points. British policy for immigrants facilitates their installation in certain areas, by ethnic or religious reasons: it creates ghettos, but it also draws a scenery in which the contrast between middle class districts and others, with different conceptions of the space. The second ones, plenty of people, shops and open areas in which people talk and meet, open an area for political work very similar to autonomous perception of public sphere.

There is also a careful respect for horizontal organisation models, one of the identity marks of the Autonomous Spaces, in opposition to the ESF. That is why they call themselves "the horizontals" and it means a continuous criticism not only to organisational models but also to decision making systems, to contents which are continuously checking as long as they do not fix requirements of assemblies, horizontally and consensus.

Both conditions are oriented not only to the analyse the ESF but also to the global movement, for instance to Socialist Workers, that monopolises the spaces for protest and debate.

4.2. An European autonomous identity inside the European Global movement?. From Seattle to London. The anti-summit model.

Speaking about the "Potere Operaio" experience in Italy, Toni Negri said that this group built appliances and matrix that we can see nowadays in the European Global movement (Negri, 2003:234). This is not the moment to speak about this problem but, anyway it is a very interesting starting-point.

The Demonstrations against the World Trade Organisation in Seattle in November and December of 1999 constitute the 'founding myth' in the Global movement's genealogy. We do not have the time here to go into detail on this event, but we want to note some key aspects of the Seattle experience.

In the first place, in Seattle the anti-summit model, as a modulate form of collective action, (a form realisable in different contexts and spaces) got an unexpected potency and suggests the beginning of the first period of struggles against neoliberal Globalization in the World. The revolt of Seattle stands as a symbol of victory, which is essential in the Global movement's political discourses and practices.

Why can we speak of victory in Seattle? Why do we think that the key in this victory is a new form of collective action? We are going to highlight the following reasons:

In the first place, there is a "physical" or "material" reason. In Seattle, the majority of the WTO's delegates could not arrive at the Sheraton Hotel for the inaugural session (finally suspended) of the WTO summit (C.A.,2000: 73). This proved the capacity of the movement, which took control of the city centre of Seattle during hours. Today, nobody denies that the blockade actions had a very

great significance in the summit failure.

In the second place, the communicative potency of the Seattle's actions, had an unbelievable attention by the mass media. Despite the manipulation, the activist's arguments could thus be listened to by millions of people in the world (and particularly by other anti-capitalist groups from Europe, Asia, Latin America etc.). This unexpected success led the WTO to acknowledge the reason of some activist's claims. Bill Clinton made comprehensive pronouncements about the demonstrations. Hence, this conflictive collective action model was proving an interesting strategy to connect the movement's claims with wider society and proved an important lesson to the traditional Left, immersed in its communication crisis.

The police repression, the activist's detentions and the curfew ordered by the federal government, emphasised the dark face of the democratic administration in the United States and put in front of the eyes of millions an interesting metaphor: between the people and the international organisations must be a cops barrier.

Regarding the black block's direct actions, very criticised by other groups but really interesting and useful in my point of view, we think that the public and organised destruction of large corporations' shops (without hurting people) implied a form of grassroots legality as a sanction against corporations responsible for the inhuman working conditions in periphery countries, to environmental degradation, to children's exploitation (for example in the Nike factories). If we remember the features of each antagonist or revolutionary movement, the anticipation of the new law even through the violence (not in this case) is an essential acting of the constituent power. The social antagonist must design the new society, also symbolic, in the control of the space, where this new order can be applied. The control of space is the most important difference between the anti-summit model and the conventional (and normally legal) demonstrations.

Moreover, only the conflict imagines are able to touch the multitude (spectators in this case)The broken showcases and the lacrimogene gases are a symbol able to open the Pandora's box of the first planetary movement in the XXI century. Prague and Genoa could not be possible without the communicative potency of Seattle.

On the other hand, Seattle constituted an alliance of a multiplicity of social groups, such as indigenous people, trade unions, pacifists, anarchists, NGO's and others building together an important feature of the Global movement: heterogeneity.

The anti-summit model began its development.

Before Seattle, the mobilisations in Prague, in September 2000, opened the development of the anti-summit model in Europe until the events of Genoa.

The paths of the European Global movements began in Prague. And again with the anti-summit model and the collisions between activists and police in the control of the streets accompanying all kinds of international meetings (European

Union summits, Economic World Forum, IMF and WB...etc.), had a very important media potency.

This is the period of the first regular relations between grassroots movements in Europe, the period of the Prague Peleovska tactic, as different forms of street actions compatible and almost complementary. To the Namesti Miru square three different activist columns departed to besiege the meeting centre of IMF and WB. The blue column applying the classic urban guerrilla, the yellow column applying the civil disobedience tactic with a head of 500 tute bianche and the pink column using forms of street parade. In the columns it was possible to listen to English, Spanish, Italian, Poland, Check, German...(Iglesias 2004: 16-18).

Paul Routledge has brought a useful geographical concept to understand the Prague dynamics: the convergence space (2003). The notion of convergence space permits to speak about a transnational collective action in Prague where almost the majority of the activists weren't from the Cheek Republic. This notion permits also to understand the siege strategy (no blockade as in Seattle) again challenging the control of the city centre that coordinated different European groups.

Indeed, in Prague was developed an interesting fight to the control of the protest's spaces in the city. The concept of red zone, famous then in Genoa, as urban space armoured against the demonstrations and militarised, began to configure itself in Prague.

As I have said before, the challenge of space in Prague was not exactly the same as in Seattle. The target, as in Melbourne one week before, was to obstruct the exit of the delegates inflicting a hard street pressure able to discourage delegates from attending the summit.

With this aim the tree blocks from Namesti Miru departed together to then separate and begin the siege to the meeting center.

The IMF and WB decision to prematurely suspend their 55 meeting is a clear element to speak about a victory in the first challenge of the Global movement in Europe.

Prague was an important success to the radical left. Only after Prague, did other groups as Parties, trade Unions interested themselves in this movement and its collective action forms (Iglesias 2004; 19).

The fact that the most important delegates were evacuated in metro or by helicopter and the struggles in the streets were fundamental in the premature ending of the meeting.

On the other hand, after Prague the relations between different European groups began to be continuos. The consolidation of the PGA net in Europe, especially before the meeting in Milan in March of 2001 was very important. The net resistance defined the organisational form of this movement as really different to the Parties or trade unions.

After Prague, the anti-summit model offered a lot of possibilities for this movement.

The principal efficacy of the anti-summit model was to make visible a new movement against international economic organisations. A movement active in the cities where the authorities used thousands policemen making red zones where freedom and rights disappeared.

In Goteborg this period began to be closed. The police shouted against the demonstrators. Three demonstrators were shot. One month before in Barcelona repression and heavy handed police behaviour were also used against demonstrators. In Genoa, the police killed an activist. These events confirmed the crisis of the anti-summit model.

We have not time to develop this very well but I think that we have speak about geographies of terror (Oslender 2004) to define this repressive strategy.

In the first place, they wanted to neutralise the movement mobilisation capacity. It is very difficult to participate in demonstrations where police could shoot. In the second place, this strategy wanted to neutralise all the new forms of conflict and the challenger in the urban space control.

Obviously, this repression strategy was incrementally increased after the 11 September attacks against the USA. Since this moment, a new period has begun for the Global movement.

But after Genoa the relations between the groups continued accumulating political experiences like the “Marcha Zapatista” in 2001, the European Union summit in Sevilla in 2002.

The second European social Forum at Florence in November 2002 was very important. There, some European radicals groups develop the first experience going “beyond the ESF”.

Out of Florence come the call for the global demonstrations against war 15th February 2003. But also in a meeting of disobedience sector (with militants from Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Denmark, Swede...) the autonomous activists spoke about radicalising the actions if war began.

As the Italian “Disobbediente” spokesman Luca Casarini said, opening the CNN daytime television news, it was not the moment to do demonstrations against the war. It was the moment to go beyond the demonstrations, the moment to do something harder.

The war train’s blockade (trains with military materials for the Iraq invasion) or the anti-war movement in Madrid in 2003 March and its hard confronting against the Aznar’s Government on the streets, were examples of this kind of actions.

It was possible to speak about a European movement different of the official social forums groups.

The majority of those groups were at the autonomous spaces at London. The “Intermittents” from France, “Global” and “Action” from Italy, ACT¹⁴ from Germany, divers groups from Spain, the Greeks of “Antiauthoritarian Movement¹⁵”, people from Denmark, from Sweden and the British people were there. They spoke about social centers, borders, zapatismo, precarity and about the G8 in Scotland building the European Autonomy identity.

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank Cristina. Without her help, this paper would not have been possible.

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¹⁴ See <http://act.so36.net>

¹⁵ See <http://www.resistance2003.gr/>

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