Metadata of the chapter that will be visualized online

Chapter Title	Conclusion	
Copyright Year	2019	
Copyright Holder	The Author(s)	
Corresponding Author	Family Name	**Frère**
	Particle	
	Given Name	**Bruno**
	Suffix	
	Division	Faculty of Social Sciences
	Organization/University	University of Liège
	Address	Liège, Belgium
	Email	bfrere@ulg.ac.be
Author	Family Name	**Jacquemain**
	Particle	
	Given Name	**Marc**
	Suffix	
	Division	
	Organization/University	University of Liège
	Address	Liège, Belgium
	Email	Marc.Jacquemain@ulg.ac.be
Abstract	The historic power of the workers' movement, inspired by Marx, was to "name" its shared condition of existence, the substrate of the multitude of injustices of which wage-earners, principally, were victims: exploitation. The strength of this movement, which since the 19th century has made it possible to achieve so much in the social sphere, was precisely that it was fuelled by individuals driven by their shared experience to unite with a shared voice, beyond their neighbourhoods or their factories. Today, recognising shared reasons to struggle is not so simple in an extremely heterogeneous wage-earning society, which extends from the best-protected to the most precarious and encompasses a large part of the income spectrum. There is a great temptation to leave real political power in the hands of the (capitalist) institutions in order to content themselves with the modest and ordinary—but often more immediately effective—politics of the nearby. But this does not mean that the new precariat (Standing) all around the world is not active. It changes the world locally and is willing to be gathered in a new common imaginary, gathering working social movements and contemporary minorities' social movements.	

Conclusion

2

Bruno Frère and Marc Jacquemain

3

On looking at the different activist experiences recounted in this edited collection, one of the questions that emerges is whether we can speak of "new" forms of engagement in France. The response can only be a qualified one. It is true that the traits of some these well-known new activist collectives (in the ZAD, the civic disobedience movement, the solidarity economy, LGBT+, etc.) often belonged to older forms of engagement too—forms that operated with something like a socialist libertarian imaginary (Frère 2018). Thus, for example, the conviviality and richness of the social bond that many highlight in their justifications supposedly transcends—through the pleasure of struggling together, the dynamic of strikes and other brute obstructions—that of these old strategies, which demanded time and self-sacrifice and which barely work anymore (Porte and Cavalié 2009: 7–8; Pleyers 2010: 50–51). But while this may be true, these new activists only reactivate the desire to affirm an identity through the media in order to ensure the consolidation of a group, a necessity

4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 AU1
12
13
14
15
16
17
18

B. Frère (✉)
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Liège, Liège, Belgium
e-mail: bfrere@ulg.ac.be

M. Jacquemain
University of Liège, Liège, Belgium
e-mail: Marc.Jacquemain@ulg.ac.be

common to all repertoires of collective action to date. Besides, a value like conviviality has always been central in the history of cooperative workers' organisations, whether those concerned with consumption or production (Frère and Reinecke 2011).

Organisation in network forms through direct democracy, which is implicitly a critique of more hierarchical "traditional" forms of struggle, only revives the types of organisation already tried out by the Gay movement in the 1980s, by the post-68 feminists, and even by the associationist and libertarian socialists of the mid-19th century. The question of the self-managed organisation of work and of the coordination of local autonomous activist groups (or "councils") within a rhizome of non-unified and non-centralised federations was studied in detail by the sociaux-barbares in the 1950s, as Frère shows, by the Luxemburgists between the wars and by the Proudhoniens of the First International (Frère 2018). And all of these movements spoke out about the need to limit the very possibility of power, as far as this was possible, by putting pressure on spokespeople—who were always elected for a discrete period and liable to be dismissed and replaced in a permanent dynamic of rotation of the tasks of representation. The rejection of hierarchical submission and the rejection of the very idea of the movement's management—embodied by enlightened intellectuals or a political party, the guide to the revolution—did not emerge yesterday.

By the same token, it is not certain that, as the French specialist Jacques Ion suggests, "distanced engagement" is characteristic of contemporary forms and "total engagement" is characteristic of traditional forms. If the distinction between the two activist profiles is at all relevant, it is likely that it was already acknowledged long ago, in an era when the communist ecosystem was aware of its power. In the same spirit, if anticapitalism is not yet dead—as the young proponents of free software, of the Zone d'Autonomie à Defendre (Temporary Autonomous Zone) or of the solidarity economy seem to show—it is the pressure of the unfavourable ideological context and the demands it places on everyone that leads anticapitalist themes to be channelled into highly concrete action, here and now. But again, the famous "think global, act local" of the alterglobalists of the 1990s was largely prefigured—albeit in different ways—by the neo-rurals of the 1970s[1] and the representatives of the first cooperatives and mutuals during the mid-19th century (Pleyers 2010; Calhoun 2012; Della Porta and Mosca 2015).

So if these themes, taken together, are central for the collectives mentioned in this book, their omnipresence in the literature and the press in France is due in part to the fact that they are achieving high visibility now that the totalising critique of that social-historical actor which was the proletariat has, to quite a large extent, collapsed. But they have always existed.

Beyond Words: Changing the World Through Action

Thus—and the chapters of this book would not counter this observation—if the internal economy of social movements remains similar and appeals to traditional disputes (participation vs representation, division of work vs self-management, convivial togetherness vs collective struggle, local engagement vs global engagement, etc.), one can hardly deny that the framing of struggles has changed or that this has affected their inherent nature. It seems as if the contours of engagement are being moulded today at least as much from critical as from practical demands.

As Lilian Mathieu suggests, citizen protest and the trade union strike still carry meaning; he also attests to the fact that, despite their symbolic disqualification, in 2010 they still constituted the core of contestatory practice (e.g., take the First Employment Contract, the pensions reform, etc.). Both sanction the prevalence of the political gesture in the space of contemporary struggles. They remain places where a political language is articulated in a world that would like to be able to bypass it altogether since the management logic of "good governance"—with its procession of experts and evaluators—must be entirely self-sufficient (Boltanski 2015).

But it is also known, including by the trade unions, that sticking to verbal slogans in the street can be counter-productive, since doing so does not affect the "megamachine"—to use Serge Latouche's (2004) expression—at all. Like Latouche, many contemporary activists think that the institutions of financial capitalism must also be brought to a standstill: financial centres, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, international transaction systems and so on. The accuracy of this belief can be measured by these institutions' reaction: it did not take long for the police to forcibly evacuate Wall Street of its Occupiers in New York in 2011 or in the Toulouse branch of BNP Paribas which was invaded by Nuits Debout activists in 2016. Since a protest or a strike only disturbs the average citizen, several of the collectives mentioned in this book have reflected on the more direct actions that they should add to these mechanisms to bring about emancipation.

94   The protest and the strike, from these actors' point of view, remain a
95   political thorn in a social body that—it was believed—could be treated by
96   the managerial cure alone. But these actors also consider it necessary to
97   deploy different registers of action to compensate for the weakness of
98   these tactics since they do not alter institutions at all. So we should act
99   directly against capitalism, yes, but also against the state when it is guilty
100 of injustice and allies itself with industrial consortia (we might think of the
101 Faucheurs Volontaires [Deliberate Scythers], the Casseurs de pubs,[2] the
102 collectifs de désobéissance civils and other collectives such as those anal-
103 ysed by Manuel Cervera-Marzal and Frère that for lack of space have
104 unfortunately not been featured here). These groups bring together indi-
105 viduals on a narrower basis and around more restrictive objectives than
106 those of ordinary activism. And they do so using an approach that is often
107 more moral than political: respect for the environment, protection of the
108 sans-papiers, respect for human rights, support for small-scale farmers in
109 the North or South, rejection of the invasion of public space by private
110 brands and so on.

111 Here mobilisation claims to be effective because it is carried out "blow
112 by blow". For example, creating a committee of parents to act against the
113 deportation of an undocumented family—because one of their children is
114 the classmate of their own children, and has already come to play at their
115 house and so on—can prove formidably effective. It might be a matter of
116 sheltering the children threatened with deportation so as to ensure that
117 when the police go to the parents' house, they are unable to find the chil-
118 dren there and so cannot arrest the entire family. In the constellation of
119 new militant activist movements born at the beginning of the 21st cen-
120 tury, the RESF (Réseau Éducation Sans Frontières) thus paralyses the
121 police machine and that of the administration of the politics of numbers
122 (which is often the politics of the French government)—just as some ecol-
123 ogist activists disguised as clowns paralyse the police machine at another
124 scale by filling their pockets with a multitude of crazy objects (such as
125 plastic ducks) during their "punch" actions to prevent any attempt to
126 examine the absurd.

127 In the same practical register, participants in the solidary economy or at
128 the ZAD, as analysed by Sylvaine Bulle, do not just verbally denounce a
129 network of large capitalist retail brands (Carrefour, Auchan, etc.) whose
130 draconian attitude towards employees and subcontractors is already
131 known. They also concretely reinvent a local cooperative and mutualist
132 economy whose growing success may one day worry the brands that have

until know had the habit of dictating the reality of consumption. In place of a verbal critique without substance, it is to a material critique of direct emancipation, sometimes an unthinking one, that cooperators in solidarity economy or "zadiste" groups devote themselves—as do those mentioned by Holloway, which embody what he calls "concrete doing" against the "abstract doing" of capitalism (2010).

What we classified in the introduction as *critical externalities* thus assumes its full meaning with the chapter of Fabrice Ripoll. Though you may go to an AMAP (Associations pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne) for very diverse reasons (a selfish desire to buy organic food untouched by harmful chemicals, a desire to save a few euros, etc.), you do not contribute any less to reinforcing an economic model where collective property, self-management and direct democracy all mix—albeit to sometimes unpredictable degrees.

The levels of engagement here are certainly variable (from the status of a simple consumer/cooperator to the project's leader who is prepared to exhaust themselves through activity), just as—as Lilian Mathieu points out—they have always been in social movements (see also Vassallo 2010; Flesher Fominaya and Cox 2013). But what characterises these recent collectives is probably that they sketch out, albeit sometimes ineptly, practices that partially escape the framing of market institutions backed by law and the state: competition, the invisible hand, free and undistorted markets, the privatisation of the means of production and investment capital. In the case of both the solidarity economy and the RESF, the threat to these market institutions is not so anodyne. Evidence of this is provided, for example, by the surveillance accrued by the secret services on some parent groups or the attempt to sue the SELs (Systèmes D'Echanges Locaux, or Local Exchange Systems).[3]

The case of the *libre* movement covered by Gaël Depoorter also illustrates a potential threat that the market world of information technology has until now succeeded in marginalising. Its origins go back to the privatisation of computer software. The taking of control by private enterprises gradually translated into bans on copying, modifying and disseminating the programs' source code, thus evolving into *proprietary* software for which only a temporary usage licence is sold. This is how Microsoft has been able to establish its quasi-monopoly. In reaction to this closing-down of software and its impacts, a community of programmers and enthusiasts formed, thanks to the increased spread of the internet, to create software whose source code remained accessible to everyone. Here too, the origin

of free software's creation was partially motivated by the relatively selfish motivations of technical experts who saw themselves being denied the opportunity to customise a number of applications. And today, a group of developers find themselves on the Linux network principally because to them free software seems a guarantee of higher quality and technical reliability—not at all because of a desire to undermine capitalism. But it is still the case that, by bringing together numerous activists around its cause, the *open source* community has developed to the point where it worries Microsoft, and must always remain on the lookout for potential legal attacks against its promoters.

As for the other activists that people our collection, the *libristes* get involved for diverse reasons and their profiles are infinitely varied (an RMI-ist [Revenu minimum d'insertion], an unemployed person, a young autodidact prematurely expelled from the school system, an exponent of simple living, a graduate who has fallen down the social hierarchy, a punk squatter, an ex-convict, a demotivated former academic, etc.). But, as Gaël Depoorter clearly shows, this has often been the case in the past and engagement remains a matter of converting a personal concern, even a frustration, into a collective issue, by radically critiquing the arrangement of the reality of the social order constituted by the information technology market. Asserting that freedom—that of copying, distributing, studying and improving a program—is valuable in itself places the question of emancipation and cooperation at the very heart of a practical activity that, a priori, has nothing to do with politics. But along this *line of least resistance*, there unfolds the opportunity to re-appropriate the tools (software, techniques, knowledge) necessary to secure both individual and collective autonomy.

The great strength of these new activist practices, from the RESF to the most recent gay movements and the free software community, is that they succeed in making tangible political messages that do not necessarily take the form of a rationalised *logos* but rather that of a *praxis* that disturbs a reality smoothed over by institutions (legal, moral or economic) responsible for saying *the whatness of what is* (Boltanski 2011 [2009]) with regard to immigration, to international commercial law, or to the accepted, tolerated or prohibited forms of sexuality.

As we have said, if there is a distinction to be made with the more "classical" forms of social critique—perhaps above all when it comes to their radical fringe—it is doubtless that these classical forms are less careful to forge different "existential" practices here and now, leaving this task for

"after" the political transformation. Contemporary engagement seeks to play action against language. At times, some critical intellectuals firmly adopt a very distanced position: how many of them, we ask ourselves, abstractly lay into neoliberalism or—declaring themselves to be from the Frankfurt School or heirs of Bourdieu—into people *alienated* by mindless mass consumption while themselves eagerly frequenting commercial centres and other classic brand names, assured of their own good conscience? How many protesters determined to unveil all contemporary forms of domination have left their wives to take care of the housework and the children? How many humanists have chosen for their progeny a school with limited social diversity "for the quality of its education"?

Asking such questions, actors from contemporary collectives struggling for a cause seem to exhibit a high threshold of reflexivity. On the one hand, they refuse to reduce the social diversity of contemporary domination to a single and unique class relation. On the other hand, they recognise that it is often difficult to resist certain schemas imposed by the world *as it is*, which makes engagement even more complex. How, for example— as Manuel Cervera-Marzal and Frère ask along with the actors he studies— is it possible to address the gender issue in a civil disobedience collective? And how is it possible to remain deaf to the sirens of the financialised liberal economy—which offers anyone the possibility of tempting and secure shareholder dividends—even while, as Éric Dacheux notes, reputable banking cooperatives such as the NEF—certainly less lucrative but better-able to create effective alternatives than any resolutely anticapitalist sermon—are increasing in number?

The question of knowing which attitudes can be adopted in order to paralyse the megamachine today doubtless has a strong presence in the latest forms of engagement. But this does not make the equation any easier to solve, particularly from a moral point of view.

A Repoliticisation of the Lived World? Strengths and Weaknesses of Citizenship in Practice

The traits that mark the distinction between "new" and "old" forms of engagement, if there is such a distinction, are thus not necessarily those one might think. And they are even less likely to be so because alongside valuable singular qualities—such as their practical efficacy or their nascent capacity to alter economic and political institutions—other traits pose genuine questions.

The specialist literature sees these multifaceted collectives as the leading actors in a repoliticisation of the everyday, in the noble Aristotelian sense of the term mentioned by Frère. They convey "a modest, ordinary citizenship" without necessarily having links with institutionalised "politics", that is, parties or trade unions (Duyvendak 1995; Pleyers 2010). According to these specialists, there is something other than a primitive strategy of survival, of resourcefulness, at play here: the management of the local public sphere where one finds oneself linked to others (Habermas 1991). What may become possible, it is said, is public engagement by dominated sectors of the population (in non-"bourgeois" autonomous public spaces) who are at least "partially autonomous from the dominant structures of representation" (strongly institutionalised parties or unions), the freeing up of belongings and established channels of expression, the inscription of politics within actions on the ground and the renewed exercise of democracy through the local exchange of public opinions (1991: XXXII–XXXIII).

This is true of the engagement of the RESF, a network for which—as Claudette Lafaye and Damien de Blic have shown—overarching discourses and traditional political and trade-unionist categories (e.g., those relating to the development of capitalism and the migration of the proletariat in the era of globalisation) were not just ineffective but also quite firmly rejected in favour of categories related to the nearby and the community (the neighbourhood, the neighbours, children's schoolfriends, etc.). It is true that, within the RESF, a form of political work aims to bring about a certain modality of the general composed of the accumulation of the situations denounced—and this does keep alive the possibility of an opening towards social movements that denounce injustices experienced by other minorities (homosexuals, etc.). But this work is nothing more than the beginnings of a liaison between particular situations that are always deeply geographically inscribed—like those found within the ZAD. And the RESF activists remain far from reviving a true work of transversal emancipation. If the dominated are to move from a state of fragmentation to that of a collective, actors must be detached from their former collective belongings and turned into autonomous individuals who can recompose groups of a new kind (Boltanski 2011 [2009]: 42). This comes down to reconstructing—starting from the ordinary and particular critiques of various actors engaged in different disputes (on the side of the sans-papiers, the homosexuals, the unemployed, etc.)—a radical critique (or metacritical theory) capable of targeting not the everyday, localised experiences of

AU5

injustice that some people suffer (e.g., discrimination, class domination) but the social order of reality itself, which is excessively fixed by the way in which the institutions mentioned earlier classify it (Boltanski 2011 [2009]: 33).

The anti-poverty activists described by Frédéric Viguier also seem to keep themselves at a distance from this recomposition. As the author writes, they stick principally to staging—in their stories about engagement—the moral shock both of discovery and of the urgency created by situations of poverty, rather than denouncing the political and social logic that produces these situations. They insist on the limited, specific and pragmatic character of their engagement: the poor are no longer all workers and exploited people. They do not use the classical vocabulary of partisan politics and make poverty into a national moral emergency that supposedly transcends social conflicts and requires the support of "national solidarity".

But their protest is doubly limited by the need not to harm the immediate interests of the impoverished people who they look after every day and by the need to secure sufficient financial means from the state. Criticising the public institutions that are supposed to deal with social inequality is to risk seeing oneself denied the funds necessary for action. Several solidarity economy schemes are similarly trapped: the state, which has seen in these associations ideal structures capable of replacing it in dealing with unemployment, makes its subsidies conditional on a strict politics of numbers: how many people without work have returned to work thanks to this solidarity economy cluster or that community service? Have these ventures properly played their role of a bridge to business thanks to the mechanism whereby posts within them are partially subsidised? It is thus the ambiguity of the ever closer links between these new forms of engagement and the public authorities that all the chapters we have surveyed emphasise. Faced with their imperative to intervene, they no longer constantly pose themselves the question of the nature of their relationship (one of dependence?) with the state or that of the contiguity of their problematics with those of other associations or networks.

Frédéric Viguier emphasises this, for example, when he writes about Agir Tous pour la Dignité Quart Monde (ATD Fourth World). Employees "helped"[4] by a plethora of public schemes rarely return to ordinary stable employment. The fight against poverty and exclusion—an important way of controlling the working classes in the era of endemic mass unemployment—functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy: far from re-embedding the

"excluded" at the heart of the productive sphere, it frees this sphere from the weight of those it deems to be outsiders who can be used and disposed of at will—and whose salary is, as a bonus, partially taken care of by the collective. Some actors, thus, begin to recognise the impasse into which they have been driven: it is absurd to want to "reintegrate" the "excluded" in a labour market that only exists as such because it is able precisely to avail itself of an inexpensive (because subsidised) and flexible underclass of workers that is big enough to serve as supplementary labour available on demand. But what significance should be attributed to this observation since it cannot rest on any external metacritical scheme also capable of encompassing the denunciations of tests undergone by other dominated people suffering forms of exclusions distinct from that concerning the employment market (sexual and racial discrimination, etc.)[5]?

[AU6]

On this topic, the critical power of the "old" homosexual movements also questions the demands of their contemporary counterparts, who do not insist on the revision of a set of institutions, such as marriage, but on the contrary insist that these institutions open their doors to them. As Marta Roca i Escoda suggests, the advent of AIDS—which coincided with a powerful rapprochement between various organisations and the state to support preventative action and healthcare—was also the pivotal moment after which the associations concerned became decreasingly interested in building bridges with other emancipation movements. Until then, it had primarily been organisations defending the *rights of homos* that had made themselves heard in the public sphere. These groups presented their sexual preference as an almost political choice that was always subversive, showing their refusal to submit themselves to the diktats and the discipline of a bourgeois, capitalist and patriarchal society. The rejection of marriage was an integral part of this refusal since it had always been the key instrument used by this society to ensure the domination of men over the other half of humanity. To take up Boltanski's categories, used earlier, the stakes were both metacritical and radical. Where contemporary associations are agitating for legal critique (or tests, as Boltanski would say) related to making the right to marry fairer, the gay associations of the past wanted to undermine the institution of marriage itself. But under the pressure of necessity (AIDS), the tussle with a state still made up of patriarchal institutions was transformed into progressive social policy.

As with the other movements mentioned, it is the pressure of necessity that has driven a number of homosexual organisations—partly in spite of themselves—to turn away from the question of political transversality,

even though these organisations had begun to take an interest in the struggles of other minorities. AIDS was there and they had to act, just as ATD Fourth World, the solidarity economy and the RESF had to intervene on behalf of the most impoverished.

Must they for that reason be viewed with suspicion, as the degrowth theorist Serge Latouche sometimes seems to do, for example, when he discusses *paysan* agriculture, solidarity banks, AMAPs or the SELs? According to him, all "these enterprises are sooner or later condemned to disappear or to blend into the dominant system. They thus literally lose their soul and end up being 'instrumentalised' by the public authorities, by their users […] and even by their volunteers. For lack of a deep decolonisation of the imaginary […], they fall back into the rut of the commercial world" (Latouche 2006: 199; 2009: 57). Serge Latouche's position, which on this point comes close to that of the "zadistes", is odd in that—alongside the very reasonable critique he formulates with regard to past Marxist movements, which were irremediably productivist and industrialist—it seems to find salvation only in the entirely theoretical stance of an absolutely pure spirit that does not attempt any kind of practice. Because acting is to almost irremediably risk seeing yourself polluted by the impure: the economy, the market, money, the state.

So it is only in activity pertaining exclusively to the intellect and to the gift and counter-gift,[6] far from the materialist perversion of capitalism, that Latouche seems to seek the new agent of emancipation—in the activity through which humans, confronted by extreme misery, organise themselves in order to survive far from any market activity and reconstitute a kind of perfect stratum of humanity reconciled with itself. The very activity that the Marxists foresaw emerging in post-revolutionary society.

The question that these activist collectives of the last 30 years (which have become more reformist than revolutionary) have asked their own activist constellation is not which of them is capable of being the "superman" who has managed to avoid being afflicted by any of the perversions of capitalism because they know very well that the market is often unavoidable if ever one wishes to abandon the lonely strategy of bare survival. Besides, these activists know they are all consumers and so none of them can claim purity. The question is rather that of how (or in what form) to get involved in the market and, above all, if it is possible to find denominators common to their respective causes in order to evolve into an effective collective organisation.

As has been made clear, the question that these collectives pose today is the question of *politics*—this time in the most general sense of the term: that which refers to the organisation of power. Because it is probably somewhat idealistic to content oneself with glorifying this democratic force and this "political essence" that all these collectives will supposedly possess in the near future. As Habermas writes, they are certainly "political". But where is the large-scale organisational form that allows them to open a dialogue with European and national institutions—one with ends other than those of developing public policy concerning their more functional and operational specific objectives (homosexuals, the poor, etc.)? Sooner or later, the question of power must be asked, that is, the question of a meta-association of existing associations. This is because it is by no means certain, contrary to what Habermas seems to think, that associations specialising in problems of a general nature—in the question of sociability and transversality—will naturally emerge (Habermas 1985). Because these small-scale collectives have acted as if *practised* emancipation sufficed, we have hardly seen the emergence of any common vocabulary capable of providing a collective schema—such as trade-unionism did in its time—in which diverse hopes could invest. Without political recomposition and embodiment in a place (one that all are able to take over democratically and in turn), power is, so to speak, squandered between diverse denominations that are sometimes opposed to one another.

For precisely this reason, it is surely wrong to think that these "new social movements" have understood everything whereas the unions, for example, are completely out of their depth. Far from it. The latter very probably acquired a political experience and a lucidity with regard to power long ago while the former persists in portraying a kind of ingenuous moral virginity (Fantasia and Stephan-Norris 2007: 555–575).

Even the idea of structuration scares them. It evokes loss of control, verticality, silencing and the obligatory allegiance to a fixed ideological line. The struggles of the civic disobedients, of homosexual groups, of the zadistes, of No Vox, of free software and so on, bring together an increasing number of activists and volunteers who want to be effective here and now without any longer believing in some promised future. But beyond the moral indignation that prompts them to get involved, so to speak, in a politics of the act, what are the modes of expression, the metacritical relays? Significant social progress has never come about through moral goodwill but rather through reconciling the properly-understood interests of social groups in a declared political struggle. If there exists such a rift

between political representatives and civil society today, this is also because the latter's indignant protests have struggled to pass from the social diversity and moral *pathos* that characterise them to the formalisation of a fight and of a common political *logos*.

Daring to face the question of organisation and power while retaining its popular essence: there, perhaps, lies the future challenge for these "new social movements" if they are to wield real political influence—influence that does not fail to concern itself with democracy, as the radical left has often neglected to do when aiming for a proletarian revolution unencumbered by the voice of the proletarian himself.

Marx?

The historic power of the workers' movement, inspired by Marx, was to "name" its shared condition of existence, the substrate of the multitude of injustices of which wage-earners, principally, were victims: exploitation. The strength of this movement, which since the 19th century has made it possible to achieve so much in the social sphere, was precisely that it was fuelled by individuals driven by their shared experience to unite with a shared voice, beyond their neighbourhoods or their factories. Today, recognising shared reasons to struggle is not so simple in an extremely heterogeneous wage-earning society, which extends from the best-protected to the most precarious and encompasses a large part of the income spectrum.

The multitude of injustices suffered seems more radically diverse, and injustice at work is no longer perceived as the central substrate that connects them all. This deficit of unity resulting from the increasing invisibility of shared reasons for struggle translates into associative engagement. To this day, whether it is a question of solidarity economy activists, of the RESF parents or of the ATD Fourth World volunteers, altruism or the pleasure of the social bond prevails among motives for engagement. There is a great temptation to leave real political power in the hands of the (capitalist) institutions in order to content themselves with the modest and ordinary—but often more immediately effective—*politics of the nearby*.

Again, the world has only been able to be truly transformed when well-understood and collectivised interests succeed in violently breaking through established power relations. If something like a working class has managed to combine into a front and force states to regulate the economy, to legislate on the labour market, to create social security systems, this is because it has been able to develop, under the pressure of immediate

necessity, powerful institutions (parties and unions) capable of transforming a potential force into a force "in actuality". In reality, there was neither a total utopia, nor excessive conviviality, nor charitable good feeling, nor idyllic solidarity. Just a mass of experiences of exploitation belonging to people who only had political struggle as a means of achieving disalienation in the long term and the consumers' cooperative or mutual as a means of achieving emancipation in the short term.

At the same time, the pragmatic approach again shows us—if there was any need to do so—that there is *also* a moral or, more precisely, an existential dimension to activism: without this awareness of "making community" within a project, the social actor is constantly threatened by individual defections and collective action is weak. It is probably the difficulty of balancing these two dimensions of protest activity that is experienced in the activist collectives of the 21st century. Only the future will tell us if they have managed to transcend this difficulty like their illustrious predecessors.

NOTES

1. After May '68, during the 70s and the early 80s, various young activists decided to leave their lives in cities to go and create new communities in the countryside. Several of these took root in the Cévennes in Ardèche. In most cases their idea was to create self-managed and ecological cooperatives, as analysed by Léger and Hervieu (1979, *Au fond de la fôret l'Etat*, Paris Seuil). Most of them collapsed but some still survive today, such as Ambiance Bois (a joinery workshop) and Ardelaine (a wool workshop). See, for example, Rouvière (2015) and the publications of their cooperative network REPAS: http://editionsrepas.free.fr

2. The *Casseurs de pub* collective (the French equivalent of anglophone *Adbusters* groups) deface advertising posters in the streets by graffitiing them (or drawing over them) in order to condemn them using humour. Others remove billboards. Some of these collectives, thus, move into the realms of illegality by destroying the physical advertising infrastructure itself, which is protected by property rights. Others choose the path of legality and warn the local authorities (and the press) before attacking an advertisement. See Dubuisson-Quellier and Barrier (2007); also Cervera-Marzal (2016).

3. For example, the sensational suit of the SEL in Ariège where a SEList was condemned for unfair competition when renovating his roof (see *Le Monde*, 18 and 20 November 1997; *Libération*, 7 January 1998; *Le Figaro*, 8 January 1998, etc.).

4. In France, the state "helps" businesses employ "vulnerable" or "socially excluded" workers by providing part of the cost of their salaries.

5. At the same time, they increasingly refuse to use even the notion of exclusion itself, which holds individuals responsible for their own marginality, for their "difference", because they are neither sufficiently good "entrepreneurs of themselves", nor "leaders of their own life", nor sufficiently "mobile" to speak in a managerial lexicon that has become widespread. Once these presuppositions are subsumed under the concept of exclusion, it becomes easy to claim that there does not exist any "social class" of the precarious and to claim to be able to sort out social inequality by imposing individualised and particularised "integration" schemes. Since there is no "class" but only "individuals", the solutions must be "individualised" (on this point see Standing 2011). And besides, authors such as Robert Castel in France ask integration in what? Because one can reasonably ask whether there remains a middle class into which anything can be reintegrated. If this class has existed, it is gradually falling apart, as the sociologist has been showing for some time (1995). The barriers that separate it from the precariat are fading little by little: a lengthening of the working day (whose shortening had the precise effect of lengthening life expectancy), a lowering of salaries or of the minimum wage threshold, multiple-job restrictions, a growing shortage of CDIs in favour of a more and more sophisticated range of CDDs and a questioning of the right to work (which puts a strain on productivity).

6. Though one must side with most of Serge Latouche's arguments about degrowth, it is surprising to see a form of naivety when he refers to non-Western situations. Here it is supposed that the Navajo Indians (Latouche 2006: 217), the Papuans of New Guinea (2006: 94) and the African markets (2009: 59) provide reference images of societies that—being neither industrial, nor capitalist, nor wage-earning—develop in a kind of idyllic climate within which one cannot help but flourish fully outside market exchanges. One might ask why only activities relating to the intelligence/resourcefulness [Do you have a view on which word is better?] and bartering of certain self-organised groups in Africa would exhibit these characteristics and find favour in his eyes (especially when there is so much work, like that of Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999) that invites a more critical view of the informal sector) even though their equivalents in the North would be subject to more caution because they are very quickly "contaminated by the market". Thus, neither cooperatives (concerned with microcredit, with production, or—like the AMAPs—with consumption, etc.) nor associations with an economic purpose would be able to produce real vehicles for emancipation since they are almost always in the position of having to work with conventional money.

References

AU7

Boltanski, L. (2011) [2009]. *On Critique, A Sociology of Emancipation* (G. Elliott, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Boltanski, L. (2015). Situation de la critique. In B. Frère (Ed.), *Le tournant de la théorie critique* (pp. 189–218). Paris: Desclée de Brouwer.

Bourdieu, B. (2014) [2012]. *On the State*. London: Polity Press.

Calhoun, C. (2012). *The Roots of Radicalism: Tradition, the Public Sphere and Early Nineteenth-Century Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cervera-Marzal, M. (2016). *Les nouveaux désobéissants: citoyens ou hors-la-loi?* Lormont: Le Bord de l'eau.

Chabal, P., & Daloz, J. P. (1999). *Africa Works, Disorder as Political Instrument*. Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer.

Della Porta, D., & Mosca, L. (2015). Build Locally, Link Globally: The Social Forum Process in Italy. *Journal of World-Systems Research, 16/1*, 63–81.

Dubuisson-Quellier, S., & Barrier, J. (2007). Protester contre le marché: du geste individuel à l'action collective. *Revue française de sciences politiques, 57*(2), 209–237.

Duyvendak, J. W. (1995). *The Power of Politics: New Social Movements in France*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Fantasia, R., & Stephan-Norris, J. (2007). The Labor Movement in Motion. In D. Snow et al. (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (pp. 555–575). Oxford: Blackwell.

Flesher Fominaya, C., & Cox, L. (2013). *Understanding European Movements*. London: Routledge.

Frère, B. (2018). Back to Materialism. Reflections on Marx's Representation of Labour, Praxis, Cooperative and Libertarian Socialism in the 19th Century. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society, 31*(1), 69–94.

Frère, B., & Reinecke, J. (2011). Libertarian Socialism and Solidarity Economy. *Dialogues in Critical Management Studies, 1/1*, 117–127.

Habermas, J. (1985). *Die Neue Unübersichtlichkeit: Kleine Politische Schriften V*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Habermas, J. (1991). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Holloway, J. (2010). *Crack Capitalism*. London: Pluto Press.

Latouche, S. (2004). *La mégamachine*. Paris: La Découverte.

Latouche, S. (2006). *Le pari de la décroissance*. Paris: Fayard.

Latouche, S. (2009). *Farewell to Growth*. London: Polity press.

Léger, B., & Hervieu, B. (1979). *Au fond de la forêt l'Etat*. Paris: Seuil.

Pleyers, G. (2010). *Alter-Globalization: Becoming Actors in the Global Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Porte, S., & Cavalié, C. (2009). *Un nouvel art de militer*. Paris: Éditions alternatives.

Rouvière, C. (2015). *Retourner à la terre. L'utopie néo-rurale en Ardèche depuis les années 1960*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

Standing, G. (2011). *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury.

Vassallo, F. (2010). *France, Social Capital and Political Activism*. London: Palgrave.

Author Queries

Queries	Details Required	Author's Response
AU1	The citation Frère (2017) has been changed to Frère (2018) to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine.	
AU2	In note1, the citation Hervieu and Léger (1979) has been changed to Léger and Hervieu (1979) to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine.	
AU3	Please check if the sentence "On the other hand, they recognise…" is ok as edited.	
AU4	Please provide expansion for 'NEF', if required.	
AU5	The citation Duyvendak (1994) has been changed to Duyvendak (1995) to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine.	
AU6	Please provide expansion for 'CDI' and 'CDD' in endnote v, if required.	
AU7	Reference "Bourdieu (2014)" was not cited anywhere in the text. Please provide in text citation or delete the reference from the reference list.	