

## **USSF - 2007 and After**

Friday 13 July 2007, by [ALBERT Michael](#) (Date first published: 12 July 2007).

**This is a ZNet Free Update. The bulk of it is an essay reviewing the recent United States Social Forum by Michael Albert. Before that, however, we have some critically important news to convey.**

At the US Social Forum 2007, in the city that hosts CNN and Coke, in hotel venues where debutantes ironically were on parade, the progressive community stood tall and steadfast, proud and capable. The forum's over 900 sessions were truly diverse in those presenting and those attending. Indeed, I cannot remember - going all the way back to an also highly diverse Black Panther Party Constitutional Convention held in Philadelphia in September 1970 - any other large leftist event in the U.S. as consistently multi-cultural as USSF 2007. More, I can remember very few that were as gender and sexuality balanced. And the USSF 2007 even had youth in abundance, a feature sorely lacking in recent activist conferences.

I spent most of my time at the conference following two main themes: SDS and Solidarity Economics. SDS, standing for Students for a Democratic Society, was re-born a bit over a year ago and has been growing rapidly since. At the USSF perhaps 75 of its members were present and they did a few sessions as well as attending many others. What I saw of them gave me great hope, and it was informed hope, I think, not Pollyanna hope. To start, they had a couple of sessions on intergenerational organizing, one of which I attended. The panel had six participants, three from today's SDS and three from SDS and the Panthers from decades ago. The latter group were quite excellent, I thought, which was quite an achievement because as they themselves wisely and comprehensively noted, when you put together a bunch of activists from back then, with all their baggage - not to mention the residues of confused allegiances born then and in many cases barely transcended since - you often get something unseemly or even downright ugly. But not with these three participants; they were eloquent, moving, and self critically humble. But even so, the other three folks on the panel, the three SDS members from today, trumped the old timers. The youth could reasonably be expected to have more buzz and jazz, more energy and militancy. But that wasn't their only advantage. They seemed also to have more sense of themselves, and especially more sense of the tasks that now need doing. They seemed intent on unrelentingly mastering whatever approaches are required to succeed. I don't know where they have accumulated the wisdom and confidence they seem to embody, and I don't want to imply there aren't problems as well, but hope is birthing anew with these young folks.

SDS also participated in a panel put on by the War Resisters League on what it would take for the anti war movement to end the war in Iraq. This had an SDS member as the moderator, asking questions. The panelists - I think there were seven - would reply to the questions asked, and would then discuss them with each other, and then field a new question. The panelists represented a range of major antiwar organizations, vets against the war, UFPJ, Witness for Peace, etc. Among them they must have had over a hundred and fifty years of left organizing experience. Nonetheless, it was both sad but also inspiring to realize that the host's questions were beyond their ken. Each question, well conceived, succinctly put, and utterly on target regarding movement problems and possibilities, was focused on developing overarching strategy in accord with both needs and assets. Questions that should have been familiar fare for highly experienced panelists elicited long pauses, often with a little chuckling before anyone would hazard a reply. Replies, when they came, often had insightful content but also repeatedly side-stepped the questions. What was going on was a new generation intent on very seriously and ruthlessly evaluating what we have done so as to find problems that can be corrected to actually win change rather than simply fight the good fight and lose, met representatives of movement organizations that for too long have narrowly attended to day to day pressures without adopting an overarching viewpoint. Further, of the panelists, the one who had the least prior political background, an Iraq war vet, seemed to be most in tune with the motives of the moderator. The hope, again, seemed to reside with the young, as it hasn't for quite a few decades now. This is very good news.

My second substantial involvement was with a group sponsoring a set of sessions around what they call Solidarity Economics or SE. SE is a large umbrella project that exists around the world, most notably in Latin America and Southern Europe. Recently, roughly a dozen folks have begun spiritedly trying to bring SE to the United States. Solidarity Economics, as defined abroad and imported here, seeks to incorporate within its broad network pretty much any project or activity that plausibly sees itself as furthering at least one of the broad values characterizing the entire SE community. These values seem, from presentations and some essays to be solidarity, sustainability, equity, participation, diversity, and democracy (or perhaps even self management). The idea seems to be that if an effort is furthering any of these values; it can become a part of SE. Thus, if even a large capitalist firm, for example The Body Shop, is making strides in one respected dimension, it can come on board. An experiment like participatory budgeting, now operative not only in Brazil but in many cities around the world, or alternative currency experiments popular in some parts of the U.S. such as upstate New York, or a company that claims to engage only in fair trade or to be ecologically concerned, can join. And obviously so too can co-ops, much less what I would call classless (or pareconish) firms that seek internal equity and self management. Finally, within this broad range of projects that can reside under the Solidarity Economics umbrella,

there is not only a degree of shared agenda but, importantly, each project is expected to urge others to do better on matters they are not yet addressing well.

This idea of a broad community of projects banding together and striving to improve economic life seems to me to be a good way of developing a sense of shared mission, exploration, and debate among folks trying to improve the economy - and one could imagine a similar approach on other fronts such as family, culture, and politics, or even in more narrow domains, say education, health, science, or art. But beyond the benefits, a concern I had, as I listened to this fledgling U.S. attempt at SE, was that the desire to retain those participants who have most assets, such as larger businesses, will cause a severe blunting of forward-oriented discussion regarding what a desirable economy ought to be and what steps ought to be undertaken now to move toward one. I feared that SE advocate/members would hold back on their criticisms of less progressive SE projects, causing still flawed and even horrible aspects of larger scale member projects to go uncommented for fear of alienating those members. I worried that as a byproduct this laxity would produce rationalizations and habits that would constrict even the best participants' aspirations and finally their thoughts. My own attempt to contribute to the SE discussions at USSF 2007 was to urge that participatory economic projects that reject private ownership of capital, corporate divisions of labor, remuneration for property, power, or output, hierarchical decision making, and markets, should be welcome in SE, including welcoming pareconists who respectfully point out that real solidarity requires fundamental changes, and that small positive steps are truly exemplary only insofar as they aid a continuing, diversifying, and enlarging process - rather than being end points in themselves.

My detailed involvements with SDS and SE aside, getting back to the forum at large, it was noteworthy that there were no stars at the USSF, or, to put it more accurately, that there were only stars. The forum demonstrated that the old civil rights wisdom that we are the leaders we have been waiting for is not only correct, but we are also the stars we have been waiting for. And in Atlanta the spectacle of 10,000 stars produced a lot of energy.

The component sessions of USSF 2007 were varied and insightful. Panels focused on every side of life including economy, polity, race and culture, gender and kinship, ecology, war and peace, and international relations, and then, within each broad area there were myriads of more focused sessions addressing everything from housing to taxes, income distribution to prisons, legislation to demonstrations, education to art, Iraq to Venezuela to Palestine, and much more.

It is a monumental understatement to say that the organizers deserve great thanks for the scope and quality of their efforts. Attendees also deserve praise for travelling to Atlanta, heat and all, overcoming the feeling that "this gathering won't be worth it, this is the U.S., after all, and it can't happen here." In 2007, to have hope,

faith, fire, and passion, is not the movement norm. Indeed, I am embarrassed to admit that I was almost in the camp that didn't go to Atlanta for USSF 2007, but hope prevailed, and I ultimately went - and hope was borne out.

Still, accolades for the organizers aside, in a commentary for activists what always matters most is not praising ourselves, however deserved the praise may be, but finding problems that we can correct to do better next time. And while I think the faults of USSF 2007 had little or nothing to do with the organizers' efforts, there were, nonetheless, at least a few faults for us all to work on fixing in the future.

There were 900 sessions in three days and I can only report on the relatively few sessions I could attend, look in on, or at least hear about from others. My impressions, therefore, may be artifacts of a narrow experience, and if they are wrong on that account, or any other, my apologies.

First, in nearly all the sessions I attended or heard about, those presenting were from diverse race, gender, and sometimes even class backgrounds, with wide age variance too. This was also the case for audiences, which for all but a particular subset of the sessions were often even a majority people of color. The subset of sessions that were differently composed, however, was troubling. Thus, a panel on getting beyond neoliberalism, though diverse in its speakers' backgrounds had a nearly entirely white audience. The same was true for panels I spoke at or attended on economic vision, on strategy for the anti-war movement, and on directions for alternative media. I heard as well that this was true for many panels that were explicitly and primarily on vision or even strategy including crossing bounds of specific focuses. In contrast, sessions I attended or heard reports about that addressed more pinpointed areas of concern and conflict, whether it was housing, water, income, or Katrina, were a majority and sometimes a large majority people of color. The only way to distinguish sessions from one another was by their titles. The schedule didn't tell who was presenting at each session, though it did indicate a sponsoring organization. In any case, as best I could discern, the issue wasn't the composition of panelists, which was almost universally culture- and gender-balanced. The issue was the topics the panels addressed. My impression, admittedly anecdotal, was that when the focus was overtly about longer term vision and strategy and exploring direction and methods for the left writ large, the audience became more white. In contrast, when the focus highlighted specific currently pressing economic and social problems, including their roots and implications and also how to address them right now, the people of color representation was higher.

One possible explanation for this is that the people of color constituencies were correct in staying away from the broader sessions because attention to broader matters of goals and strategies for large movements have typically been hot air largely or even wholly unrelated

to actual conditions and possibilities that people can act on, and therefore not worth one's time. But another possibility is that such explorations aren't, or shouldn't be, hot air. Due to being centrally important, they should be centrally insightful and relevant both to the long and to the short term. If so, we are left with the problem of improving vision and strategy discussions including expanding their range of sponsorship and participants. If, as I believe is the case, vision and strategy are essential, then we should respond to poor past efforts in those directions with more and better new efforts, not less. Additionally, potential participants who bring to the table diverse comprehension both of what we now endure and also of what better relations we desire, need to be involved at every level - whether we are talking about working people, women, gays, people of color, or young people. For activists repelled by irrelevance and academic posturing to avoid overarching vision and strategy reminds me a bit of activists repelled by authoritarianism leaving overarching vision and strategy to Leninists on grounds that vision and strategy writ large can be hot air, un-rooted, sectarian, authoritarian, and so on - thereby increasing rather than diminishing the likelihood that vision and strategy will have all those flaws.

Another pattern, also familiar from other social forums and also in part correct and sensible, but at the same time also in part self defeating, was the extent to which people coming to share experiences were overwhelmingly interested mostly or even only in their own priority concerns. Housing activists frequented, at least in my anecdotal polling and querying, housing panels. Women doing feminist work frequented feminist panels. Young SDSers frequented SDS panels. Coming from New Orleans tended to cause one to spend more time on Katrina sessions. With a background of years spent working on ending the war, one attended mostly or even only anti war panels.

On the one hand, what could be more sensible than this kind of specialization? All social forums are massive gatherings of folks often separated by great distance, or even just by lack of connection within a shared city. Attendees go to the forum largely to get information, ideas, and connections that will aid the work they do. Attendees thus focus their energies on the sessions related to the work they do, feeling that these are the sessions where they can meet others with related ideas, learn of possible new ways to tackle problems they face, find help, etc. On the other hand, however, if a main problem for the left as a whole is a mammoth fragmentation and unrelenting insularity of contending components, then this pattern of being most interested in one's own focused area of involvement reproduces our distance from one another, rather than helping to overcome it.

Third and last in my little list of hurdles to overcome next time, there is the matter of what we want and how we expect to get it. Under the surface of USSF-2007's discussions, debates, and celebrations, I think it was clear that very nearly everyone attending would be

ecstatic to become part of a growing, militant movement that not only had very clearly green, anti racist, anti sexist, anti heterosexist, anti authoritarian, anti imperialist, and anti capitalist politics, but that also had very explicitly positive aims on each of those axes - a revolutionary movement seeking immediate gains also aimed toward transcendent transformation in the future. Yet despite this subterranean desire, this sentiment, at least in its most unequivocal form, was rarely voiced. It was as if everyone was afraid of the R-word: Revolution. How many revolutionaries have to get together, congenially, mutually supportively, before we will openly admit what we are? At any rate, I would have very much liked to have heard a talk, perhaps at the final plenary session, more or less like what I offer below, to intellectually and emotively “spin” the event in a way that was otherwise, I think, implicit, but not explicit.

So, imagine a speaker at the closing session of a social forum taking the microphone and with unrestrained passion addressing the audience more or less as follows. On reading it, consider if you agree that putting out in the most prominent and aggressive fashion this type of sentiment would be a big step forward. If so, let's make it happen, repeatedly, at forum after forum, though more eloquently, more passionately, and with more insight than the hypothetical words below convey.

### **A (Hypothetical) Closing Talk for a Social Forum**

Welcome to this incredible final plenary gathering of so many fired up people committed to social change. What an incredible sea of consciousness and courage. What incredible inspiration we can take from our exciting time together. What incredible potential we can see here in our allies all around this great hall.

We must be vigorous, self critical, and steadfast, together - but where are we going?

We must work together, with assertive force - but how do we reach our destination?

We must together advance to our destination - but why?

At this great forum these past few days, I found as I am sure you all found too, that there exists an emerging set of shared views on where we are going, how we will get there, and why we will make the effort. Can we together solidify these emerging shared views into lasting unity? Can we solidify these emerging shared views into mutually supportive activism that we all commit to? The shared views that can unite us, at least as I have heard them shaping up in my travels through this forum, might sound something like this, once we all together say them aloud:

We are trying to create a new and vastly better world for ourselves

and for our offspring to inhabit.

We are seeking that new world by struggling in every venue that we can find and with every ounce of strength we can muster, directing all our efforts not only to winning improvements in people lives today but also to winning a better world tomorrow.

We are doing it for the memory of those who have gone before, and for the well being of those who will come after.

Okay, we can all agree, I suspect, that those are nice sentiments. They sound appealing to me and I bet to you too - but wouldn't you agree that they are also quite vague? To flexibly assure our unity, we need more substance, don't you think?

Maybe when we further unearth our shared agreements, further substance will sound more less like this:

We are trying to win a new economy, a new realm of daily life and love, a new culture, a new polity, a new ecology, a new internationalism, all without hierarchies that condemn some people to subordination. We reject roles unsuited for humanity - the role of the owner, boss, manager; the role of the patriarch, misogynist, homophobe; the role of the racist, religious bigot, fundamentalist; the role of the denier, decrier, decider, dictator; the role of polluter of air, sea, and land; the role of bombardier, cultural commissar, empire expander. Gone with all of that.

We are pursuing this better world that will leave behind these horribly oppressive aspects by seeking improvements in people's lives right now, from the washed out streets in New Orleans to the porn strewn back alleys in Chicago, from the black lunged mines in West Virginia to the dignity destroying commercialism of billboards and TV, from rural poverty to urban blight, from self-imposed diets seeking false beauty to society-imposed diets imposing criminal starvation, from the flesh houses of Los Angeles and its glam and glitter to the cardboard homes under bridges in Philadelphia, from the miles of AA meetings to the miles of local bars, from the capacity crushing horrors imposed on eighty percent of our school's students to the elite Ivy farms spewing out scholars who lack sense and humanity, from the modern slave houses called prisons to the court houses that function like auction houses, from elections that are bought and sold by rich corporate executives investing in their preferred paths of domination to acres and acres of misguided commodity production remorselessly destroying our weather and water, from the endless skyways of half empty hotels to the endless alley ways of homeless children, mothers, and fathers.

We seek more income for the poor, more power for the weak, more status for the forlorn, more social ties for the lonely, more responsibility for all our crying souls. We seek equitable material well being, self managing influence, and mutual fulfillment of all kinds. We seek, as

well, to ensure that our demands today not only partly redress the suffering caused by the world we now inhabit but also move us toward a better future in which worldly and spiritual benefits of society reach a high level and then persist due to the intrinsic logic of our new institutions rather than only when we win against harsh opposition.

And why we are doing all this? We are doing it tirelessly, steadfastly, and vigorously, for the memory of revolutionaries and visionaries and humanists from history past, for people all around us now, and for history's and humanity's future.

Well, okay, that version would be a little better. It certainly has some spunk, but I think perhaps we can also agree that beyond its passion, it is still mostly sentiment - very nice sentiment, for sure, but lacking institutional substance.

Maybe that's just the way it is with speeches, or maybe as we collectively address what we share as our vision, strategy, and motives, our words will gain some additional depth, some additional tissue and fabric, and then maybe our answers to what we are doing, how we are doing it, and why we are doing it, might go something like this:

We are trying to win a new economy in which there are no classes. No one in the better world we seek will own workplaces, resources, or other people's ability to do work. There will be no owners of Walmarts or Microsofts. There will be no private profits. There will be no wage slaves, working under the dictates of others. Further, no one will monopolize empowering conditions at work, as doctors, lawyers, engineers, and managers so typically do now, and on that account rule over those left only menial and obedient tasks. No one will earn inequitably whether from property, power, or output. No one will have more say over decisions than the fair share that we all are entitled to in accord with how much we are affected. There will be no top and no bottom of who decides what for whom. There will be no order giver and no order taker about production, allocation, or consumption. There will be no class responsible for decisions while another class is suppressed and responsible only to obey. We will all be elevated to use our fullest capacities and express our fullest desires, rather than most of us learning only to endure boredom and to obey orders showered down on us by the anointed masters of all that occurs. Our new economy will be classless, at last. Out with the old boss - and out with any new boss, too. We will enjoy a participatory economy, operating as one part of a participatory society.

But our project is not just about economics - we are not economic. We realize that life is not working and consuming alone. For example, we are trying to win a new polity too, that will incorporate the will of all citizens in legislation, that will adjudicate disputes to produce justice, that will respond to violations to attain rehabilitation and liberation rather than vengeance and retribution. Our new polity will have citizens of diverse age, belief, experience,



and knowledge, but will not have rulers and ruled. We are not merely seeking new Presidents and Senators because we understand that our political problem is government by a few - not simply the oddities of any particular few who happen to be prowling around the White House and Senate at any particular moment. We won't have political choices mediated by dollar bills but by the will of informed citizens, each with equal rights and comparable means. We will have in our new society's new polity, participatory democracy and self management. We won't have information conveyed by agents of corporate power. We will have education, communication, and popular participation that together prepare all citizens to be full participants in social life and decision making. We will build and responsibly contribute to assemblies that express our informed desires for legislation allowing us to self manage our political and social life. We will build media that conveys expert information so we can function wisely. We will adopt decision methods that apportion influence over outcomes to those affected in proportion as they are affected so that we collectively self manage our conditions and projects. We might well call all this participatory politics, one more part of our new participatory society.

Beyond economy and polity, however, we are trying as well to win a new realm of sexuality, nurturance, socialization, and daily life. Do the roots of sexism reside in nuclear marriage as we know it? Do they stem from a gender division of labor that is women mothering and men fathering rather than both parenting? Is sexism born in a disparity in who does caretaking work and who doesn't? Are there other roots of sexism, other structures that continually toss misogyny up into our lives, reproducing its contours year in and year out, and thereby subverting our potentials for sharing and caring? Whatever the roots of patriarchy are, whatever produces and reproduces sexism, it will all be transcended in a new world. Sexism will be only a memory in the new world we will win and celebrate. Will we need communal living arrangements, new modes of parenting, new ways of apportioning the labors of life, all even beyond the obvious need for fair and free access for women to all positions in society? If we do, then that's the feminism we must and will achieve in our new participatory society. If something more or other is needed, then that too will be done. We will have participatory kinship, participatory living, in our new participatory society, nothing less is acceptable.

We are trying to win a new culture, as well, that celebrates cultural diversity while defending each community's every participant. Our preferred new society will include social structures and relations that welcome spirituality and religious sentiment even as our new approaches escape the strictures of fundamentalism of all kinds and respect atheism as well. In our new society, we will all still celebrate, communicate, identify, and forge ways of seeing and understanding ourselves and our communities - but we will do it with mutual respect, taking pleasure not only in our own solutions but in admiring, learning from, and enjoying the rich variety of other

people's solutions too. We will choose our cultural communities freely, move among them as we choose, and refine and enrich our ties to them over the course of our lives. Racism, religious bigotry, ethnocentrism, and all kinds of self identification based on or presupposing the inferiority and subordination of others will have become a thing of the past, and our ways of constructing our communities and the institutions we adopt in our new cultural relations will have to respect, abide, and propel that outcome. New cultural institutions, that is, will guard the rights and norms of all communities, but particularly of the smaller in disputes with the larger. The name for all this might be multiculturalism or perhaps intercommunalism, another leg for our new participatory society to stand on.

We seek a greener world too, but not just sustainability. We are not content with the idea that the best we can do is to avoid suicide, which is what sustainability literally mandates. Rather, in our participatory society not only will our culture and daily life respect our natural environment, but our legislation will freely and effectively protect it and our economy will properly discern its interconnections and their value. Likewise, even beyond our own shores, we seek a community of countries that goes beyond being at peace to attain a condition of mutual benefit. We will have war no more - of course - but we will not dispense with global ties. On the contrary, we will enrich and extend global ties so that countries freely share their lessons and virtues, protect one another from harm, and exchange not according to competitive norms that ensure that trade benefits accrue mostly to whoever is richer and more powerful, but instead exchange in a way that always reduces disparities in wealth and power. In the time-honored tradition of our predecessors, we can call this internationalism, but it is ultimately just participatory societies participating in cooperative solidarity with one another.

But how do we win all this, that's the question, isn't it? We know we must. We know we will. But how? Of course, we only know some things about this massive question - the rest will be revealed only in the clash and jangle of struggles and constructions as we pursue the road forward. But, even now, there are some insights we can commit to, as we develop and share more.

In our future there will be participatory self management via worker and consumer councils in the economy, via people's assemblies in the polity, and via new personal and collective arrangements in culture and in kinship as well. We can't grow that kind of future participation using movements that are harshly hierarchical. No more of that. We can't attain equitable remuneration, self management, classlessness, women and men in partnership, sexual liberation, political participation, wide dispersal of information, cultural intercommunalism, a wise relation to nature, and internationalism, if we use movement vehicles that incorporate the ills of the present. No more of that. We can't have racism, sexism, or classism in our

movements. No more, no more.

We will win a better world by winning sequences of improvements in people's lives within existing society which also win our movements ever more consciousness, ever more commitment, and ever more infrastructure of struggle, until they are powerful and wise enough to win not solely modest elixirs for pain, but also the infrastructure of full freedom and liberation.

We can't create a society of sharing souls by having fragmented, alienated movements. We can't generate responsibility and initiative with movements that denigrate and debilitate. We can't sustain participation with movements that are as oppressive as society at large - indeed we can't win with these flaw in our movements since winning entails a movement of perhaps a hundred million involved participant leaders. Without movements that give their participants better lives than they would have outside, more friends, more love, more dignity, more empowerment, more knowledge, more confidence, we can't win. So we must create such movements.

We can't use anti democratic means to produce democratic results. We can't use anti egalitarian norms to produce equitable distribution. We can't use authoritarian culture and conceptions to produce participation. We can't maintain soul wrecking values much less elitist and egocentric behaviors to produce intercommunalism.

We need to have our eyes on the real prize which is to enlarge membership, enlarge consciousness, enlarge commitment, and enlarge infrastructure, all consistent with our long term aims and not solely our short run priorities and tactics.

And finally, as we close out this social forum together, and as we further refine and enrich our shared views in coming months and years, for whom do we commit to this mammoth task, this revolutionary pursuit?

We do it for workers on the line, bored, tired, impoverished, and robbed of their creative days. No more Maggie's Farm for us, insteadcslessness.

We do it for women door-opened, pinched, decultured, feminized, impoverished, beaten, raped, advertised, psychologized, ball and chained. No more hustle and no more Hustler for us, instead Feminism.

We do it for Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, Asians.nameless, robbed of dignity and means, legally lynched, harassed, low paid, running, jailed. No more plantations in the midst of plenty for us, instead Intercommunalism.

We do it for the drunks and addicts, the worn out and the never lively, for the old and ill who should be long lived and wise, for the forgotten, the dispossessed, the lonely.

For the young, schooled and unschooled, enduring boredom, sniffing glue, stealing sex and losing love, trying to escape or trying to find a way in, whether they exist under a massive thumb or are trying to grow a massive thumb with which to hold down others.

We do it for those on welfare or off it, looking into the mall or looking out from it, employed or unemployed, alone or crowded beyond sanity, hiding their sex or flaunting it, angry, sad, or mad.

We do it for all those who feel less than they could feel, for all those who have been made less than they could be in this rich land, the United States - and -

We do it for the Colombian, Paraguayan, Guatemalan, Haitian, South African, Congolese, Liberian, Sudanese, Iraqi, Iranian, Palestinian, Pakistani, Indian, Thai, Malaysian, and Chinese exploited, robbed, starved, cheated, tortured, ambushed, kidnapped, and death-squadded.

We do it for all the world's citizens suffering the brutality and indignity of electric shocks and murdered relatives, suffering secret or public bombs, suffering Guantanamos and Abu Ghriabs, suffering poverty and even starvation, suffering the military boot and the cultural stamp.

We do it for the empire's citizens, proud but beleaguered, and also for the empire's enemies, our forebears:

We do it for the strikers, the saboteurs, the feminists and anarchists, the Marxists and nationalists, for those with no ideology but liberty, and for those who had too much ideology as well.

We do it for the memory of Che and the Cuban freedom fighters - we will be "guided by great feelings of love."

We do it for the memory of Amilcar Cabral and the liberation of Africa - we will "tell no lies and claim no easy victories."

We do it for the memory of Rosa Luxembourg and the revolutionaries of Europe - we will move, and therein we will notice and break our chains.

We do it for the memory of Alexandra Kollantai and Russians in revolt - we will not only create direct means of popular rule, we will preserve, revere, and utilize them.

We do it for Emma Goldman and the anarchists in struggle - we will dance on our way to, on our arrival at, and in celebration of our new world.

We do it for Simone de Beauvoir and feminists everywhere - we will accept no biological, psychological, or economic fate deterring women in our future.

We do it for Ho and the Vietnamese, the Vietnamese who yesterday taught us all, and who will have their day too, around the corner, over the hill, when we win the world we all desire.

We do it for r Martin Luther King Jr. - his mountain is our mountain, his vision looking into uncharted mists will become our daily pleasure, surrounding us during each breath of our lives. We will win for Martin too.

We do it for Fannie Lou Hamer and the Civil Righters, for Dave Dellinger and the new leftists, for Fred Hampton and the Panthers, for Cesar Chavez and the farmworkers, for Lolita Lebrón and the Puerto Rican nationalists, for Leonard Peltier and the fighters in AIM, and for all the fine souls who resisted and died in the past and who nonetheless live on.

We do it for the young who dodged the draft. For the young who went to war and disrupted. For the young who went and died - or lived. For the Vietnam Veterans against war, and especially for the Iraq Veterans against war.

We do it for the French in the streets of May and the Italians in Autumn, for the Mexicans in the summer, and the Czechs and Chinese, for the Nicaraguans, the El Salvadorans, the Haitians, the Bolivians, and the Venezuelans. For the ANC and landless peasants movement. For the anti globalization veterans of Seattle and Prague. For the camepasinos in Brazil and the piqueteros in Argentina, for the Zapatistas in Mexico and for movements all over Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas - for the millions who opposed the Iraq War before it began and the many millions more who oppose it now.

We do it for everyone who has fought, fights, or will fight for a better wage, a better home, more dignity, more respect, a better life, a better world than they were, are, or are going to be bequeathed.

And at the same time, necessarily:

We do it against the Rockefellers, the Waltons and Buffets, the Somozas and Pinochets, the CIAs and FBIs, and the Bushs, Clintons, and Kissengers all.

We do it against the doctors coerced by their positions to deal in dollars but not in dignity, against the landlords, the corporate lawyers, and the politicians with their eyes closed to injustice or wallowing in its waste.

We do it against the owners, administrators, bosses, rapists and racists, those on top and those who aspire only to be on top, against all the dealers of bad hands, against the stacked decks.

We do it against the social ties and unties that breed the pain and all who grow ugly by benefiting from its continuance, one step above those suffering below.

We do it against the intellectuals who keep information as if it were their little toy, who enshrine their ignorance under false halos and who hide it behind big words, who justify barbarism or technically dissect it as their interests require, never shedding a tear, never raising a fist.

We do it against the media liars, the news pimps, the career thinkers with brains the size of cornflakes, the academics - left and right - who propagate propaganda to preserve this system or some other, and yes, we do it against the academics who call themselves socialists and always do nothing, the ones who succeed but don't stay angry, the ones who don't really care.

And finally, we will make this new world for our parents, our friends, our children, our children's children, and for ourselves too.

To succeed, we must all soon agree on at least the essential core aspects of what a better world can and will embody.

To succeed, we must flexibly agree on what it will require to make it so, what skills must be learned, what tasks accomplished, what obstacles overcome, and to succeed, we must act, and act, and act, and refine our awareness as we learn from our actions.

Let us not mince words. Let us not call ourselves less than we are. The name for all this is revolution.

The name for those who believe in it, who aspire to it, who devote themselves to it, is revolutionary.

Till when there will be fewer acquaintances and many more friends and lovers, we must be revolutionary, we must be revolutionary, we must be revolutionary - to win our new world.

**Remember this Forum, and bring it home!**

Embrace Revolution, and bring it home too!