

„States“, describes David Chandler one of the new left's main arguments, „are the central barrier to emancipatory political practice“. If this reflects a common belief among followers of new social movements, do these movements represent a threat to statism?

Obviously, they ought to, and according to followers of new social movements, for a reason. The challenges of the modern age have arisen from the logic of the nation state. As in a world of nation-states power is identified with a state's capacity to maneuver in a world of other, competing states, the ensuing threats to humanity question the state's legitimacy. At least from the perspective of united humanity or those suffering from representative governments working hand in hand with economical elites. Many problems, such as the nuclear arms races, the global economic race to the bottom, the abuse of human rights in the name of national security, widespread ruthless behaviour towards humankind's environment driven by short-term interests and many more, are consequences of the world's make-up into artificial nation states. Such a world often offers no identifiable, challengeable centre, as globalization constantly weakens the nation-state and thus results in even fuzzier targets and richer elites. Therefore, the nation-state system centring on „exclusion and war“ has to be abandoned from the bottom-up, or bypassed during the formulation of a critique.

Radical bottom-up social movements, the „new left“, prioritize the ethical individual over the political collective. The individual dissident, a figure arisen from state opposition in post-1968 Eastern Europe, is the movement's ideal. The dignity of the individual thrones above mass politics, and the anti-political stance of those who „don't want to be politicians and don't want to share power“ formed the core idea of the dissident movement, a movement of political refusal, not political participation. The new social movement.

As parliamentary democracies are unable to mount any fundamental opposition to the „automatism of technological civilization and the industrial-consumer society“ and manipulate individuals in subtle ways, the state as the site of power and control has to be condemned. Democratic liberalism is thus not much more than imprisonment of the individual, imprisoned in a state-made world of inclusion and exclusion (Chandler).

Of course, states would be threatened by movements proclaiming such ideologies if those movements were strong enough to capture the masses. A state would stop being a state if all individuals were to stop acting their state-given roles from one minute to the next. If all New Zealander's would agree, New Zealand could cease to exist within minutes, even though it would take a while to remove all signs of the former imprisonment. All-Blacks flags just sold too well. The completely fabricated state is nothing but an artificial construction, only existing as long as people believe in it. However, people do. New Zealand is actively trying to create a national identity and arguably succeeding. A year ahead of the 2006 World Cup of Soccer, Germany is gearing up for the largest love-fest of nationalism humanity knows, besides the more universal Olympics, which largely lack the World Cup's enthusiasm. South Africa is treating its 2010 World Cup as the official return to the world after two decades of harsh post-apartheid transformation. London celebrated its 2012 Olympics for a day, before continuing with a celebration of being British and the spirit of the Blitz the day after. Secondary school-students from uncountable tribes in Mzombe, Tanzania, begin each morning with a united singing of the national anthem, aimed at creating the much needed national pride. Americans are more patriotic than ever. All this is wrong, new social movements claim, but without question very strong.

But are new social movements really a threat to statism and all connected features of realism, thus mercantilism and nationalism? All state-leaders are realists and economic nationalists, to varying degrees, as few fit neatly into the corresponding boxes, but if the collective population were part of a new social movement, a state-leader would find himself with nothing to lead.

If all individuals would self-empower themselves in their daily lives, the prevailing image of power and revolution-opportunities would be shattered to pieces, as each individual's refusal to treat politics as something „out there“ would bring along the „grand revolution“ without a perceived grand revolution; a period of heroism, violence and upheaval. Past social movements, such as Mahatma Ghandi's civil disobedience-movement in India, have proven that social bottom-up movements can indeed threaten a state, or a colony in this case. New social movements present a different threat towards the nation state. They try to resist the incorporation into the statist framework and reject any attempt to reconstitute traditional understandings of the political make-up of the world, based on representational rights. The movement is not about turning the current state into a different kind of state or even global state. The movement is disillusioned with mass politics per se, and just as the pre-modernistic demonstrators in 1999 Seattle aimed at the destruction of the corrupt and rotten system, the new social movements want to do away with the artificial state-made world.

Some critics argue that governance without government, the high aim of the One World / Many Worlds ideology, would be difficult to accomplish without the enabling role of, paradoxically, the state, and transnational problems would proof difficult to treat without even more governing capacities, thus some kind of world government (Etzioni). It is also argued that the global movement of movements is more imaginary than real, as the claim towards its existence merely ought to overplay the single movements' neglectable domestic influence.

It could be argued that the missing empowering key towards a world of self-empowerment lies in the challenge of connection, as people would not feel as powerless as they are made to feel by the manipulative status quo. According to this logic, the potential for collective self-empowerment exists, but is overshadowed by the fragmentation of humanity. Universal connectedness would turn the grand structures of a world turning a blind eye towards poverty and famine, among other pressing issues, less distant and immovable (Walker, 1988). Surprisingly, the obstacle of connection is declining rapidly, with one billion people using the internet in 2005 and a rapid, global increase projected for the short-term future. Every movement thus has a theoretical opportunity to be heard, read and seen by the masses and maintain its autonomy outside the political process. Strangely, so far little danger for the nation-state has arisen, and a majority of global users appears more interested in self-inflicted cultural imperialism, as illegal downloads of predominately western entertainment products has spun out of control.

If there is no true „movement of movements“ and if governance without government, a world made up out of numerous informal, communal bodies, all united in their dissidence to the state-made status quo, appears unable to achieve anything without the helping hand of some kind of state-structure, it appears safe to conclude that new social movements are hardly a threat towards statism. Social movements are mapped better than ever before, largely due to the rapid spread of modern technologies, but the world is drifting clearly towards „Two Worlds“ instead „One World / Many Worlds“. Despite all this, social movements, whether traditional or new movements, are not completely neglectable, as their presence is occasionally influential in the sphere of mass politics. If they were as much of a mass phenomena as terms such as the „movement of movements“ appear to indicate, statism would be at immediate risk. So far the ongoing efforts of state-making and common identity-construction by nation-states are successfully drowning out the new left's isolated radical cries for the universal recognition of differences and autonomy in a stateless world.