

Imperial Nature. If it is true what Will Hutton says, that “if you want Wall Street money, you have to open your banks and financial institutions to ours, must peg your currency to our dollar,”¹ then it is also true that “you have to open up your regulatory and governance institutions to ours, too.” This is precisely the new agenda of the World Bank, which has stepped far beyond its fiscal austerity work of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and into the realm of “environmentally sustainable development.” After the lost decade of the 1980s for many parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the bank has conceded that a lot more institutional architecture is required in the “poorer” countries of the world in order to accommodate the insecurities of finance, investment, and speculative capital. Lately, the World Bank’s main job has been to help restructure and retool states and professional classes. Most of that which undergirds this accommodation process is quite mundane: imposing new accounting procedures, commercial arbitration mechanisms, scientific methods, legal regimes, and regulations. The effects, however, are anything but mundane: the shift of governance and sovereignty out of the hands of the nation-state and into transnationalized professional classes and institutions. Saskia Sassen and others have shown that the types of rules and regulations under which the global economy works are increasingly “American,” best serving U.S. corporations, agencies, and interests.²

Interestingly, in the case of new environmental regulations, the impetus for the World Bank’s new role in its borrowing countries has come from both transnational social movements *and* from transnational capital. Indeed, social movements — loosely tied networks of activist organizations in the North and South — have forced the Bank to address the ecological and social destruction its investments have wrought. They have monitored the planning process for large and potentially destructive Bank projects and have forced the Bank to conduct pre-

¹“Is Globalization Americanization? Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens in Conversation,” *Dissent*, Summer, 2000.

²Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control? Sovereignty in the Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

approval environmental and social impact assessments (EIAs and SIAs). But, as they focus on the most heinous infractions and largest projects, movements have been caught unaware of the effects of the mundane and routinized steps the Bank takes to “modernize” borrowing states, institutions, and professional classes. Ironically, the largest of the World Bank’s capital investments are now explicitly framed through the lens of a new *global environmental discourse*, albeit one not necessarily of the movements’ own choosing.

Extending beyond the “traditional” SAP preconditions to loans, the World Bank’s interventions now include the redrafting of property rights laws, forestry legislation, and the re/structuring of environmental protection agencies, that is, in effect exporting EPAs to borrowing countries. On the surface, this is precisely the “green” agenda of critical social movements. But upon closer inspection, it is quite a different beast. On the central state level, retooled and better-financed environmental protection agencies or U.S.-like EPAs appear to be an important first step towards more rigorous regulation and protection of the environment, except that these vast changes are being implemented by the bank. The bank mainly represents Northern investors and their expansive projects and not at all the needs of local populations (except the elites best served by these large infusions of capital). As a World Bank environmental official explained, “nothing gets done that isn’t tied directly to a loan.”³ Indeed, U.S.-trained lawyers in the Bank’s environmental legal unit told me that, in one year, they rewrote property rights laws in up to 30 borrowing countries.⁴ Each was a precondition for a major infrastructural loan such as a dam, highway, or forestry project. Whether they be for Vietnam, Nicaragua, or Botswana, these new legal regimes paper over existing property rights that typically reflect layers of complex (and usually decentralized) land tenure rights, procedures, and established norms.

Although one might think that because of the cookie-cutter nature of these reforms, they would have no teeth or substance in-country; in fact these reforms are supported by a tight web of Northern “donor” financed projects to strengthen the enforcement capacity of state agencies. Furthermore, they are backed by large-scale projects and the army of Northern professionals hired to implement them. In other words, these sweeping changes are driven by specific projects and particular “donors.”

(continued on page 157)

³Communication, August, 2000.

⁴Interviews at World Bank Headquarters, Washington, D.C., 1996-99.

(continued from page 2)

For example, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (or Laos) has been turned upside down in the past 10 years by the World Bank, Northern bilateral aid agencies (e.g., Swedes, Canadians, Japanese) and development (CARE International) and environment NGOs (IUCN, WorldWide Fund for Nature).¹ Most of these Northern agencies and NGOs have been involved in a series of hydroelectric dams (e.g., Nam Hinboun, Nam Theun 2) and major institutional reforms, which the dams are supposed to finance. Currently, 50 foreign bilateral aid agencies, multilateral banks, and "donors" contribute money annually to the Lao state. At the last donor meeting ("the Roundtable Meeting for the Lao PDR"), held not in Vientiane but Geneva, Switzerland, \$1.2 billion was pledged directly to the Lao government for 1997-2000 (UNDP 1997, GOL 1997). In 1994, fully half of Laos' domestic revenue came from foreign grants, and a remarkably high 80 percent of the state's Public Investment Program came from foreign aid (GOL 1997, UNDP 1997). That is, almost every public works project and every state agency (related to these large capital investments) is financed by foreign money. Much of the funding aimed at restructuring state agencies and "capacity building" actually goes to foreign consultants and firms who are hired to reform state institutions and to train a Lao professional class. But, the artifacts they leave behind are substantial.

In the past few years, many of Laos' property and natural resource use laws have been overhauled to reflect the prevailing ideology of its multilateral creditors (neoliberalism). Many laws were written by Northern consultants to the Bank, bilateral agencies, and even some NGOs. For example, Lao's new environmental protection law was written by North American consultants for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). A U.S. lawyer for IUCN wrote some of the country's new forestry laws, and other Northern lawyers wrote the rules and regulations that will establish 20 National Biodiversity and Conservation Areas (NBCAs), enclosing approximately 15 percent of the nation's territory. These new transnational conservation "eco-zones" do not only include the watersheds for future dams (which dam investors want protected) but also the current home for many of the nation's ethnic minorities — the more than 60 different non-Lao ethnic groups that the government has tried to forcibly resettle into the plains in its nationalist "Laoization" project. Since international conservation groups are slated to manage the NBCAs, funded by revenues generated from Nam Theun 2 dam project, dam builders and conservationists together have an interest in resettling hill tribe communities and zoning

¹Based on my field research in Laos, Thailand, and in the U.S., 1998-2000.

their rich and biodiverse forests for conservation, eco-tourism, dam building, and biodiversity prospecting. Heavily in debt to the World Bank and these Northern agencies, and highly desirous of hydroelectric dams and foreign revenue flows, the Lao government has reluctantly embraced these environmental reforms.

Paradoxically, this “American” policy does not at all reflect the history of the U.S.’s own EPA. Created after years of social movement struggle and in the midst of civil strife, the EPA was forced to respond to the myriad of claims of corporate and governmental abuse to workers, communities, and environments. These were not imported concepts, tools, or claims, but emerged as a result of strong political demands from the labor movement, and environmental and community activists.

By marked contrast, the World Bank’s EPAization of the world is unambiguously externally driven and Northern run. It is financed by large-scale investment capital (most typically from the U.S., Britain, Germany, France, and Japan) and the multilateral institutions that represent their interests.² The new rules, regulations, concepts, and classifications they embody are not derived from any semblance of “democratic” processes of “civil society.” In fact, the World Bank (and its transnational partners, from aid agencies to NGOs) have sold an Americanization package that is far more authoritarian, imperialist, and colonial than anything that could exist in the United States. —
Michael Goldman

Poverty.¹ Nobody *defends* mass poverty in the world because there is no defense. Yet mass poverty persists. Most economists believe that the cure for poverty is faster economic growth. An increasing rate of growth in the U.S. in the last half (compared with the first half) of the 1990s reduced the percentage of American families living in poverty. A century and a half of industrial capitalism in the North (neoliberal

²These five nations control approximately 45 percent of the total votes of the 170-plus member countries of the World Bank. By comparison, the 23 African nations which represent the majority of borrowers are only allowed — collectively — 1.67 percent of the vote (World Bank, *Annual Report*, 1999).

¹This is the fourth of a series of sketches on “global capital and its antimonies.” All four can be found on the CNS/CPE website: <http://gate.cruzio.com/~cns/>.

economists argue) have reduced poverty to “manageable” levels. This means, first, that the poor have become politically manageable, and, second, that poverty is no longer a scandal hence that no special programs are needed to elevate families economically beyond welfare reform.

Until the appearance of the antiglobalization movement — to some the “anti-corporate globalization” movement² — the World Bank and IMF were confident that increased economic growth in general and in the South in particular would reduce poverty in the latter, as U.S. growth has decreased poverty here. Everyone knows that they failed miserably, that conditions in the South beginning with the debt crisis and SAPs in the late 1970s/early 1980s have deteriorated badly compared with the “golden age” of nationalist, semi-socialist development during the 1950s and 1960s. Exactly how much the Bank/IMF are to blame for the disasters in Latin America in the 1980s and in Africa during the 1980s and 1990s no one can say. But the anti-globalist movement is predicated on the fact that the Bank and Fund (and U.S. foreign policy) soon became a big part of the problem, not the solution.

The movement has increasingly protested IMF and World Bank policies that movement leaders rightly believe increase, not decrease, world poverty. This movement is well-organized and tenacious and has good leadership; the movement is also growing in numbers and militancy and has become global in scope. In the U.S., politically, it is a populist movement, not a class-based movement, which is probably a plus at the moment.³ The movement, finally, has become influential

²The “anti-corporate globalization” movement because U.S. movement leaders (theorists? spokespeople?) seek an alliance between organized labor and the big environmental organizations. Neither organized labor nor mainstream environmentalists are “anti-corporate,” the first because labor needs corporations for jobs, good wages and benefits, and so on, the second because so many enviro leaders are connected to the big corporations as well as depend on big money for project grants, etc. Both, however, are anti-corporate *globalization*, labor because corporate globalization policies mean job losses and lower pay, and the enviros because they oppose many types of corporate investments and production systems in the South as harmful to the environment.

³How do you know a populist declaration or document when you see one? My own method is to look for key words. Most if not all documents originating within the populist antiglobalist movement use expressions such as “global corporations,” “undemocratic and elitist” (applied to the IMF, et al.), “peoples of the world,” “non-governmental organizations,” and “people-centered alternatives.” These same documents don’t use words

enough to force the World Bank to change its theory of poverty and its alleviation. The Bank today still regards economic growth as indispensable to “poverty reduction” and still rejects the radical idea that poverty can be reduced by redistributing wealth and income. Their new idea is that a larger share of the increments to growth (the extra capital that growth produces) should be allocated to targeted anti-poverty projects. Most movement leaders would reject this theory or policy as too timid. They are rightly convinced that any significant reduction of poverty presupposes a redistribution of wealth and income, from the North to the South, from local corrupt elites to local workers, small farmers and unemployed, and from global corporations to the hundreds of millions of people living in poverty today.

Movement leaders are quite clear that the redistribution of wealth and income presupposes a redistribution of political power, which, of course, is where the Bank, IMF and WTO draw the line. Thus the ongoing struggle against global political elites, global corporations, and global institutions such as the Bank. This struggle is bound to continue until the movement has achieved a national and international power shift in its favor.

At this point movement folk whose stock in trade are ideas have different visions for the future. Some stress bulking up the UN to give it real power over the global corporations and elites. Some want to reform the IMF et al., while others want to abolish the international economic agencies. Some want “people-centered alternatives” while many in the South want better terms of trade, market opening in the North, technology transfer, and so on. Some imagine a global Keynesianism while others stress international labor solidarity. Whatever the envisioned future, movement spokespeople seem to agree on one thing — they won’t quit until wealth and income have been redistributed to the point at which world poverty is abolished or nearly so. In *CNS*-talk, they are “reds” because they demand that wealth be redistributed but not yet “green” because they don’t also demand that at

such as “capitalism” and “capital” and “finance capital” and “capital markets” (that discipline the corporations). The word “exploitation” (e.g., of labor) is used to apply to the South but not the North. “U.S. imperialism” is taboo outside of sectarian party circles, as is “imperialism” of any type. In movement analyses and declarations from the South, “nationalism” is used, not so in statements from the North. Finally, movement publicists fail to distinguish between NGOs and social movements. The above is, of course, a personal reading. I’m working on a chapter in a book provisionally titled *Global Capital*, called “Against Populism, For Populists,” which I hope will see the light of day at some point.

the same time wealth be systematically *redefined* — from commodity wealth to ecological production, distribution and consumption.

Meanwhile the global corporations (and financial markets and other basic features of capitalism about which populists say little) and the U.S. imperialist state which stands behind the corporations and markets, and the IMF et al., which serve this state — all these forces will fight the movement tooth and nail. If history is any guide, popular power comes after World Wars and during economic crises and hard times — and nobody wants either war or depression. But just because something has never happened before doesn't mean that it can't happen, or be made to happen in the future.

Populism and Globalization. The antiglobalization movement wears many political and ideological masks, so many that “movements” might be more accurate than “movement.” In the South the movement is often nationalist, often radically so. At home U.S. nationalism is another name for U.S. imperialism, which the antiglobalist movement in North America does not yet explicitly acknowledge. Yet while the slogan “end U.S. imperialism” has been conspicuously absent at protest demonstrations, most in the U.S. movement oppose the U.S.-dominated IMF, WTO, and World Bank and also support market opening, improve terms of trade, technology transfer and more radical demands (such as the decommodification of water and other basics) placed on the North by the movement (and by many governments) in the South.

North and South the movement today is fundamentally populist (as noted). This means among other things that it is not (yet?) based on the interests and demands of any one economic class or alliance of classes. While global capital plays the “class card” at every turn, antiglobalization sentiment is divided into (among other ways) left populist and right populist casts. In the U.S., left populism (secular and internationalist) is organized within the movement itself while right-wing populism (anti-secular and nationalist) is not internationally organized. In the South right populism, fundamentalism, and nationalism (i.e., anti-U.S. imperialism) are much better organized. This is particularly true in Saharan Africa and the Middle East, on the edges of prosperous Europe, and in South Asia, on the border of the Southeast Asian “emerging market economies.” Right-wing populism in the South seems to be weakest in Brazil and South Africa — big industrial countries distant from the North and also from regions where fundamentalism is strong — where class-based antiglobalism (which for obvious reasons is also powerfully anti-racist North imperialism) is relatively well-organized. European right populism — anti-immigrant

nativist workers, tradespeople, truckers, open racists, and political extremists, et al. — is better organized than in the States but not as well as in the countries and regions in the South where right populism is a factor. The South, of course, has tens of millions of left populist villagers, fisherfolk, landless movements, workers' movements, women's movements in towns and countryside, indigenous peoples, scientists, intellectuals and others under attack on two fronts: first, by the forces of neoliberal globalism, second, by local right-wing populist parties and movements. My own opinion is that at some point most everybody will be taking sides on globalization (for or against, reform or revolution) hence that antiglobalist politics North and South (and East) are likely to be difficult (to put it mildly) for some time to come.

One important fact of life in antiglobalist politics is that right populists in the South are anti-imperialist while their opposite numbers in the North are pro-imperialist. Of equal importance right populists in the South are people of color and anti-racist while their counterparts in the North are (often proudly) racist. In most countries I would guess that right populists regard themselves as patriotic. This all means that the likelihood of a right-wing global populist movement is zero while the odds are much better for an international populism of the left. This is important because the political terrain of both capital and antiglobalist movements is itself global.

One globalist (imperialist) project is to create a strong globalist comprador bourgeoisie in as many countries in the South as possible; thus one reason for the urgency often expressed by the globalizing elites. The means of implementing this project are many and varied. Tying a country's currency to the dollar is one way. SAPs are another, as they change not only economic structures in the South but also the class composition and political alignments in SAPed countries. A successful SAP project helps transform a local business class into a globalist comprador class, which is best able to rule or govern a country the way that the U.S. wants the country to be ruled (without the need for obvious or dramatic interventionism on the part of the U.S. government and military). Neoimperialist political rule I think involves above all destroying all traces of older models of nationalist economic and social development in the South and also opposing new regionalist models based on political economic polycentrism (Samir Amin's term). It should be clear to everyone at this point that the purpose of U.S. policy as outlined by neoliberal globalists is to replace any and all national projects with the single globalist development model organized by Washington and Wall Street (see "House Organ," *CNS*, September, 2000).

Unfortunately for the latter there is no way that the U.S. imperial state (or national security state) can expand and evolve in ways that will allow it to keep up with (much less regulate) the expansion of global capital, on the one hand, and the growing antiglobalist movement, on the other. This is indicated by the short life of the Washington Consensus (unrevised version); the attacks on neoliberal thinking from outside and inside the major international institutions; the inability of the World Bank and IMF to hold their hardline stances when confronted with major economic crises (e.g., 1997-1998) and the loss of legitimacy they suffered when their crisis-management policies were exposed as recession-producing policies; the confession that free markets alone aren't able to do away with mass poverty in the South; and the pathetic yet dangerous attempts on the part of big corporations to make money off global warming and ozone depletion (and the rest) instead of confronting the environmental (social) crisis head on. Recall it took a landed gentry, the stewards and trustees of yore, FDR being the best-known, to confront the Great Depression on a broad front — and only near the end of FDR's first term at that.

The fact that neoliberal practice has slipped away from neoliberal theory shouldn't be underestimated. This and other failures of empire create good chances for left antiglobalism since they put into question the legitimacy of the hegemonic or ruling ideas of our time, as well as the real intentions of the globalists (make money and more money into infinity). As I wrote a couple of issues back, neoliberalism is a castle in the air. Harmless economic nonsense on paper, neoliberal economics becomes a psychotic enterprise when the globalists try to occupy the castle and make it home. This is what Emma Bovary did, in her own way, which ended in her painful suicide. This will also be neoliberal globalism's fate absent some very (unlikely?) deep reforms of the system. As noted, some put forth the idea of a global New Deal, which for me is harder to imagine than systemic crisis and collapse.

Yet the failures create openings for left antiglobalist forces. Perhaps most important is to heed the call of the nationalist, left populists in the South: continue to attack the Washington consensus and neoliberal model of global development; help breathe new life into older models of nationalist development and newer models of regional polycentric development; support trade and investment rules, technology transfers and other South demands that will help restore or reinvent nationalist socio-economic, ecological development; demand that ecological rationality, equity, and social justice come before efficiency and profit. Abolish the WTO and radically reform the IMF

and World Bank, possibly via UN General Assembly control of these and other global institutions.

Every country has the right to develop its resources, human and ecological, in accordance with its own needs and desires. No country should be forced into the monocultural model of globalist development, as designed by Wall Street and the U.S. Treasury. Not even our own country. That should be basic. As history has shown, self-determination is a very imperfect solution; but it's a better solution than neoliberal imperialism and its castles in the air.

Potted History The anti-globalization movement has a short and as yet unrecorded history. Some say that the movement began in the late 1970s, at the birth of neoliberalism, in the first stage of the Third World debt crisis, IMF Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), and the IMF riots in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The word "globalization," however, wasn't commonly used until the late 1980s and early 1990s. Others seem to date the origins of the movement to the alternative summit in Rio 1992, but this was a meeting of NGOs not a protest demonstration by social movements.⁴ The genesis of the movement might be dated to any one (or all) of a dozen major protests at IMF, World Bank, G7 and other international meetings during the 1990s, the Madrid "Fifty Years are Enough" demonstrations arguably the most successful. In almost all accounts, however, Seattle 1999 appears time and again as a real turning point, the first movement victory in the streets.⁵

This reading of the 1990s risks missing the movement's two significant victories against MAI internationally and "fast track" at home (the latter being anti-globalist, if not anti-corporate),⁶ which were achieved by a combination of NGO lobbying, pressure group politics, internetworking, and street protests, together with some inside deal-making between organized labor and the Clinton administration with

⁴For the differences between NGOs and social movements, see Alex Demirovic, "NGOs and Social Movements: A Study in Contrasts," *CNS*, 9, 3, September, 1980, reprinted in this issue.

⁵More precisely, the conflicts within the WTO (U.S. versus Europe, South versus North) combined with the street protests (which older participants say they hadn't seen the likes of since the anti-Vietnam war movement in the late 1960s) to produce a stalemate in WTO member negotiations. Stymied on the agricultural and some other fronts, the WTO is at present cooking up even more outrageous trade rules in Geneva, in secret, pertaining to global trade in services and intellectual property rights.

⁶Much of organized labor in the U.S., for example, is definitely anti-globalist but hardly anti-corporate, as noted above.

respect to “fast track.” Historians may see these victories as the real precursors of the anti-globalization movement, first, because they were victories, second because they were accomplished by the vanguard of the movement, those who could see further into the future than anyone else at the time.

Yet my own favorite origins story is Seattle (where *CNS* Managing Editor Barbara Laurence was on the front lines), if only because the media still systematically lies about what actually happened on the streets and in the jails of that fabled city late last year. Most Americans doubtless believe that the Seattle demonstrators fomented a “riot,” when in fact most confined their participation to a peaceful march. The “rioters” were police beating up militants engaged in nonviolent resistance (a few dozen self-described anarchists could not be said to be “rioting” when they broke a few windows). Shades of the early civil rights movement, when non-violent sit-ins, marches, and demonstrations were met by spontaneous and organized police brutality, which time and again came back to haunt the forces of racism during the later stage of the movement culminating in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Since Seattle, anti-globalist (and anti-corporate) demonstrations have multiplied in number and also with respect the targets demonstrators choose to protest. In Washington, DC, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Bangkok, Formosa, Melbourne, and Prague (among other places) there was a kind of wedding (if not wedding, an engagement) between anti-globalist forces, on the one hand, and civil rights, welfare rights, anti-police brutality, feminist, environmentalist and other domestically-oriented movements, on the other hand — ad hoc as these were. For example, organized groups from the nominally domestic environmental justice movement protested in Seattle and anti-globalist forces showed up in Philadelphia and Los Angeles, where environmental justice issues were among the most paramount (“nominally domestic” because the movement — called by some the movement for environmental and economic justice and by others the movement for environmental and social justice — has been working with EJ groups in other countries for some time). The alternative media centers, established in dozens of cities, exemplified what a truly democratic, yet organized and professional, media could look like. More than making up for the absence of big labor and mainstream environmental organizations in Philly and LA were living wage, welfare rights, and other local groups and movements (noted above).

The result has been that more people doubtless understand in various ways the linkages or internal relationships between the big corporations and globalization, and between global and local issues,

American foreign and domestic policy, and economics and politics, generally. The drum beat faster in Seattle and half a million or more demonstrators around the world have picked up the beat since Seattle.

Anti-globalization protests have paid dividends, at least a down payment on a long overdue debt by global corporations and elites to the world's poor, small farmers and tradespeople, sweatshop workers, unemployed, village women, countless others. Or if not a down payment, the promise of one. As noted above, World Bank and IMF chiefs and others who constitute the global elite are acting as if the movement has caused them to see the light and undergo a change of heart. Suddenly, "poverty reduction," "living wages," "an end to sweatshops," "better health care and education," and a World Bank one billion dollar AIDS relief project for Africa and other movement causes are proposed by the elites as their very own aims or goals ("House Organ," *CNS*, June, 2000). As also noted, neoliberal economists in power are finding more exceptions to the policy implications of monetarist/neoclassical economic theory than Alfred Marshall ever dreamt of, while second-tier global officials whisper about the need to reintroduce capital controls to prevent another financial crisis of the 1997-98 type. Sometimes it seems that half of the entire French establishment is wondering if globalization is worth the candle.

In practice, there has been more pleasing rhetoric than plausible policy changes: this despite the facts that two billion people live on less than two dollars a day world-wide and the elite's discrete admission that the rising tide lifts all boats theory of development has badly designed rigging and leaky logic. In practice, also: more militarized police trampling more boldly on the civil liberties of protest demonstrators here and abroad have mocked the basic tenets of liberal democracy.

For their part, the individuals and groups and NGOs who have organized a decade or more of protests, and the ideologies which movement rhetoric is based upon — all speak to one central point: world economy and politics as we know them are much too important to be left to the economists and politicians —unecological, inequitable, unjust, and undemocratic as these economics and politics are. More people here and elsewhere increasingly regard the world that global capital is making as a hopelessly alienated and reified place unfit for real human beings. The economists' language of efficiency, profits and "consumer choice" is no match for the best ideals and practices of the antiglobalist movement. And more women and oppressed minorities are especially adamant in their opposition to the world that ideologues of global capital imagine as some kind of New Jerusalem.

For their part, despite stated good intentions, sincere or not, global corporations and financial groups and institutions and political elites will do everything and anything they think is necessary to preserve the “global way of life,” the totalitarianism of the single globalist development model, which most in the ruling class and political elite probably regard as the culmination of the idea of Progress, invented hundreds of years ago by their real and imagined North European forerunners. Not merely their profits but their whole way of life is at stake. They believe that this way of life is the best possible way of life hence regard anyone who opposes it not only as a political enemy but also as suffering a mental or moral disorder. This is a dangerous group of people: unable to grasp neoliberal globalization as a castle in the air which will drive more people mad, they label “insane” those who refuse to live in their dream-world.

Politics and Populism Revisited. I think that we can expect (and should encourage) the anti-globalist movement to become more political, not only with respect to (as at present) political *means* to ecological, economic, and social goals, but also with regard to political *ends*. Since Seattle, in less than a year, movement issues and demands are becoming more multi-dimensional and all-inclusive, presented as ensembles of problems and solutions interrelated in various ways, unable to be resolved at any other level than the political (which, dialectically, makes local experiments in alternative working and living all the more important). This is especially so given that domestic issues of racism and political brutality are connected in more people’s minds with global issues arising from corporate rule, the rule of international finance markets, and the subordination of use value by exchange value. The difference between what corporate and political elites say they will do (“reduce poverty”) and what they actually do (increase poverty), will also help to politicize the movement (in the sense of developing political goals). The fact that anti-globalization protests of traditional and new types engender more police violence and suspension of civil liberties, is also a politicizing factor. Because many mainstream North NGOs seem to want to believe elite promises and also seem to downplay police brutality, there might possibly occur a split between NGOs (especially government-sponsored, corporate-funded NGOs) and movement organizers and activists who are less credulous and more intellectually sophisticated (in the critical thinking sense) than the typical NGO official. I think this can be regarded as a good not a bad thing, a positive development, because NGOs are by definition already compromised in various ways while the movement itself may be likened to a flow of creative and critical human energy, thinking and

doing, directed at what most see as an oppressive and exploitative system of corporate/U.S. Treasury/central bank/ IMF, et al., rule. I don't believe that the elites see the NGOs as the real threat to their world capitalist project, but rather the unpredictable, centerless movement. Alex Demirovic's theory of NGOs and social movements, reprinted in this issue of *CNS*, is important precisely because of the kinds of distinctions he finds between the two. Years ago, Alex denoted theoretically what today is working itself out in different variations in practical terms, for everyone who cares to see.

There are reasons why the idea of debating, developing and adopting political goals will be regarded by all kinds of people as unrealistic, falsely utopian, and possibly harmful or dangerous. There are many differences between the anti-globalization movements in the South and the North in terms of what they want, how they organize themselves, and the language and goals of resistance. There are the different relationships that different parts of the movement have with the existing political systems world-wide, including different assessments of the possible scope and limits of liberal democracy, and different definitions of the word "democracy" itself. There is the awful deadening effect of bourgeois politics as usual in today's world of neoliberal globalization. Above all, there is the terrible fear of any action or organization that proposes any "totalizing" solutions to the problem of globalization. To say that the movement's political aims will be democratic, pluralistic, anti-sexist, pro-oppressed minorities, ecological, ad infinitum would be (and is) seen in many circles as a bad joke. Yet I think that the movement itself will be forced to adopt a project with definite political ends, an international and internationalist project as the only viable way to oppose globalization successfully, including defining and implementing as much as possible independent alternatives.

The last problem I'll mention seems to be more intractable than it really is. This is the division, noted above, between right-wing populism and the populism of the left in the U.S. I have often read that on the subject of foreign trade and investment right and left populism speak the same language, that both are anti-globalist in the sense that both reject "free trade" and liberalized foreign investment. Superficially, the fit between right populists and U.S. organized labor seems even tighter: American workers tend to support the regulation of international business and also to be socially conservative. This is Pat

Buchanan's political formula and on the surface not so distant from Ralph Nader's political positions in 1996.⁷

In fact the similarity between right and left populists begins and ends with the slogans "stop the export of jobs" and "fair trade not free trade" (although most right populists seem to be self-defined protectionists while left populists are not, or if they are they keep it to themselves). Right populists around the world including in the U.S. are cultural reactionaries and, unlike many if not most populist small farmers a century ago, left populists today are mainly cultural liberals. For right populists, cultural conservatism fits nicely with their uncritical nationalism, while left populists tend to be internationalists and multi-cultural. Right populists are often small business people being squeezed by big corporations and left populists (exceptions are noted above) are militantly anti-corporate but the former ally themselves with the latter only when the labor or trade union issue is tabled. Right populist businesspeople are as anti-union as left populists are pro-union (thus the only question of interest in any coalition of the two in relation to a particular issue, say, "free trade," is, which side has the power to dump the other side from the coalition when the stakes change and the issue of unionism and worker power comes up, as it always does?). Right populists hate the WTO and IMF because they appear to represent a shift of power from the American nation-state to international bodies; left populists feel the same way not because the WTO and IMF are international bodies but because they make U.S. foreign policy more undemocratic than it already is and because they exploit and oppress the South. In sum, there are *not* a lot of things that right-wing nationalists and left-wing internationalists and democrats

⁷Black and feminist groups put Nader on the carpet for ignoring civil right issues and women's issues such as abortion rights four years ago. Nader's standard response to civil rights questions has been, "ask my running mate." When last September he was attacked by the National Organization of Women (NOW) for neglecting women's issues (obviously a Gore-inspired move to stop women from voting for Nader in 2000), Nader reminded everyone of his political support of women, including abortion rights. As two major campaign speeches in Santa Cruz made clear, Nader is obviously no social conservative and just as obviously plays up his main theme of corporate greed and corruption and the role of the "public citizen" in fighting same. Nader is thus a left populist with nothing in common with the likes of Buchanan, yet his machine will seek votes among small businesspeople in the Heartland who seem to agree with him on economics, even though they no doubt disagree with him on most social issues. The question is, do they really agree on economics or does it just seem that they do? (see above).

(small “d”) can or do agree on. This is partly because of differences in ideology and political sensibility and partly because their constituencies are very different: the right speaks to small business under attack from big business (for example, small farmers in the U.S. today who have to sell their crops to one of a handful of giant food companies) while the left speaks more to the poor, unemployed, workers getting less than a living wage, and some trade unionists, for example, public sector unions under attack by top elected officials who are paid to organize work-force downsizing or to prepare a public utility or social service for privatization. Populism of all kinds appeals to the little guy against the big guy but today the little guy has many names, including (as noted) public sector workers. In sum, left populism and right populism are very different with respect to the issues of nationalism vs. internationalism, cultural conservatism vs. social liberalism, and business vs. labor. Right populism isn’t a terribly big danger in the U.S. for the simple reason that the U.S. *is* the imperial hegemon, that is, nationalism equals imperialism under the stars and stripes.

Circling back to the subject of political goals for the anti-globalist movement: the Green Party? the U.S. Labor or Socialist parties? a fifth international of red-green organizations and parties? a movement to split the U.S. Democrats into center left and center right components? an IMF-LEFT, established by South countries organized regionally or in polycentric forms, financially backed perhaps by...? a World Forum for Capital Controls, which repoliticizes international capital movements? a World Collective of farmer-to-consumer networks, explicitly seeking to reduce and eliminate the power of the U.S.-based global food companies? a Global Counsel on Immigration that politically eliminates the super-exploitation of immigrant workers employing the immigrants’ own organized political power? a reconstituted UN, in which the Security Counsel is confined to administrative tasks, politics the monopoly of the General Assembly?

So many political goals have been cited, trial ballooned, mentioned in passing, received scholarly attention, etcetera. I don’t know what they will be, but I think I know what they in fact are today, whether the participants are aware of it or not: this is the idea that capital today is politicized, that the WTO, for example, is a political form of capital (and a big capitalist mistake, as Nader said years ago, since it makes what is fundamentally a private relationship — capitalist free trade — into a public and political relationship which needs to legitimize itself to the global public, and thus presents itself as a political target). It’s clear that all movement struggles pertaining to the conditions of production (health and education, the use of place and space,

environment, community, etc.) are by definition political struggles. This is so because the state either produces or regulates the conditions of production (because these conditions are not produced as commodities, only treated as if they are commodities). This is the idea, in short, of struggles within and against the state, to democratize the state, an idea shared by some theory-minded radicals, while ridiculed as an oxymoron by more traditional leftists. I'm not sure that the anti-globalist movement will acknowledge that much of its activity aims to democratize (or abolish) the state, e.g., the WTO, and I'm even less sure that the movement will some day choose other, perhaps more politically potent or interesting, political goals. I am pretty sure that without such goals, there will be lots more corporate and state greenwashing, today compounded by World Bank "redwashing," or the make-believe that this eminently capitalist institution either wants or is able to abolish poverty world-wide.

This is not such a difficult task as the World Bank and IMF make it out to be. What's difficult is to prioritize "economic growth" — capitalist accumulation — as the indispensable condition for "poverty reduction," as the WB and IMF do and will continue to do. Translated this means that "there will be no redistribution of wealth, monetary, physical, ecological, or any other kind; the best we can do is to increase growth rates then target the poor for a goodly share of the increments to growth." How? Of course, by turning the poor into human capital! (see "House Organ," June, 2000). However, if you think about it, poverty can be abolished in a few months, assuming the political will and the economic and ecological resources. First step, make poverty abolition the basic goal of international politics. Second step, allocate some billions of dollars of World Bank, IMF, regional development bank, and other monies to the task at hand. Third step, employ these monies, not for human capital or any other kind of capital, but to use local biomass for building homes, schools, and the rest; paying (well) public health and medical technicians, teachers of the "pedagogy of the oppressed" variety, psychologists of the Fanon-type, planners of the Kerala or Gaviota variety, and organizers of the type presently engaged in the anti-globalist movement (including NGO people of course). And more, but you get the idea. *Then*, choose investment projects, not in terms of EIRs that seek to minimize damage to local or regional ecologies but rather to *maximize* ecological values, community values, cultural values, public health values, and so on: a simple reversal of existing capitalist values and investment criteria. Not "safe food" but "nourishing food." Not "adequate housing" but "excellent housing." Not "mass transport" but "public transit of different types that are a pleasure

to utilize.” Obviously, not “chemical-laced” agriculture but “pesticide-free agronomy.” Not “food monopolies” but “farm-to-market global distribution.” The tragedy is that so many people *know* “what is to be done,” based on tens of thousands of local and regional experiments and practices, from the allocation of water to the production and allocation of steel (in the U.S. during WWII, for example), yet we can do little to make a world in which use value subordinates exchange value (and concrete labor subordinates abstract labor) given the present-day monopoly of power by capital, capital markets, the capitalist state, and capitalist international agencies. Just suppose the IMF, WB, et al., were reduced to the status of the IHO, ILO, and other branches of the “international peoples’ state,” while the latter’s power was expanded to the level of the present-day WB and IMF. That would be something, wouldn’t it? The problem of course is not a technical one, a practical problem, but a political problem, the problem of capitalist power, in and outside the markets, and no movement can challenge capitalist power with success without adopting its own political aims and socio-economic alternatives.

There is every need for an internationalist political terrain, an anti-imperialist terrain (which in our world means an anti-white rule terrain, as the North Europeans here and overseas still rule the world). World War I broke up their continental empires, Russia’s excepted, and WW II broke up their overseas empires, the U.S.’s excepted in both cases. But not yet has domination by European whites, and the white settler capitalist powers, been overthrown by the “lesser” ethnicities and people of color. — October 15, 2000 — **Jim O’Connor**

