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# Turtles, Puppets and Pink Ladies: the Global Justice Movement in a Post-9/11 World

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## Turtles, Puppets and Pink Ladies: the Global Justice Movement in a Post-9/11 World

By Agnieszka Paczynska

In late November 1999 as the World Trade Organization was opening its meeting in Seattle, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets protesting neoliberal globalization. Over the next few days an estimated 50,000 to 70,000 protesters effectively derailed the WTO meeting. The protesters were members of a broad coalition that included organized labor, human rights activists, environmentalists as well as groups opposed to economic policies imposed by elites of the Global North on the peoples of the Global South. Although protests against neoliberal economic policies were not new, the scale of the demonstrations in Seattle was unprecedented. To many students of contentious politics these events suggested that transnational mobilization was entering a new, more mature phase.<sup>1</sup> Five years later, in April 2005, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund held their annual spring meeting in Washington, DC. As in years past, the umbrella organization, The Mobilization for Global Justice, applied for a permit for 3,000 to 5,000 protesters to march from the World Bank headquarters to Dupont Circle a few blocks away. But on April 16<sup>th</sup> only about 200 demonstrators came out. Most police officers assigned to protest duty were sent back to their districts to perform their regular jobs (Dvorak, 2005). As had happened regularly since the Seattle protests many in the media questioned the viability of the global justice movement. Some declared the movement dead.<sup>2</sup>

The perception in much of the mainstream media that the movement is moribund has not abated. As one blogger remarked following the G-8 summit in 2007, “Just a few years ago, protests by 10,000 demonstrators at a G-8 summit would have been front page news. But yesterday’s protests in Heiligendamm, Germany earned merely a few paragraphs on page 21 of today’s *Washington Post*. That tells you just about everything you need to know about the strength and influence of the anti-globalization movement today”(Boyer, 2007).

Both activists and observers agree that a fundamental turning point in the evolution of the global justice movement were the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. What the consequences of that turning point were, however, is controversial. Has the movement indeed faded in importance as issues of terrorism came to dominate international discourse as much of the mainstream media suggests? This paper argues that this view is incorrect and sidesteps the significant evolution of the global justice movement over the last six years. Although large scale demonstrations have faded in the United States, the global justice movement rather than disintegrating and fading into oblivion has developed a variety of other tactics and strategies to push forward its agenda. Its public demonstrations have frequently included

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Jackie Smith, “Globalizing Resistance: The Battle of Seattle and the Future of Social Movements,” *Mobilization*, 6:1, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Although the media tends to refer to this movement as anti-globalization movement, most activists do not see themselves opposing globalization and do not use the term to refer to themselves. I am therefore using the alternative and I believe more accurate term of global justice movement.

street theatre with puppets and music. It has also focused more on public education and direct lobbying of policymakers. At the same time opposition to neoliberal globalization has become increasingly varied by region, reflecting the differences in the political, social, and economic environments. Paradoxically perhaps, the shared grievances generated by economic globalization that have mobilized activists across borders have also revealed the continued local nature of protest repertoires.

## **PROTESTING NEOLIBERAL ECONOMIC POLICIES**

In the 1980s the mounting foreign debts and deepening economic crisis forced many developing countries to turn to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for assistance. This assistance was forthcoming, however, only if the recipient countries were willing to implement far-reaching structural adjustment policies. These policies, often dubbed the Washington Consensus, reflected the increasingly dominant neoliberal paradigm which identified state involvement in the economy as at the root cause of the crisis. Consequently, the policies recommended for restoring macroeconomic stability and launching sustainable economic growth included restoring fiscal discipline, reducing public expenditures, allowing the market to set interest rates, making the exchange rate competitive, liberalizing the trade regime, encouraging foreign investment and privatizing state-owned enterprises.<sup>3</sup> Although proponents of neoliberal reforms acknowledged that the process of liberalization was likely to spark social tensions and be painful in the short-term, in the long run they argued economic restructuring and the integration into the global economy was the best way to ensure improvement in the economic well-being of all social strata.

Indeed, by slashing consumer subsidies and increasing the precariousness of employment, structural adjustment policies have tended to exacerbate social inequalities and undermine people's sense of security leading to higher levels of social conflict (Bussman and Schneider, 2007). Moreover, after more than twenty years of experience with structural adjustment there is growing evidence that these inequalities both within and between countries have not been a transitory phenomenon but rather have persisted over time (Milanovic, 2007). Critics of neoliberal reforms charge that the opening up of the local economy to international investment and markets tends to destroy the less competitive indigenous producers, and that cuts in education and health budgets make it difficult to sustain a productive and internationally competitive workforce.

Although structural adjustment programs have often brought down inflation rates and spurred GNP growth, the benefits and costs of reforms have not been uniformly distributed across social strata. Economic restructuring has tended to hit urban working and middle classes especially hard since these groups are usually more dependent on consumer subsidies as well as employment within the state sector. Frequently, international investment that came in response to reduced barriers to entry led to the expansion of sweatshops and undermined labor and human rights (Abouharb and Cingranelli, 2006).

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<sup>3</sup> See for example, John Williamson, "What Washington Means by Policy Reform," in John Williamson, editor. *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?* Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1990, 7-20.

Not surprisingly therefore as structural adjustment policies went into effect, the developing world experienced a wave of protests, demonstrations and riots. Indeed in most countries economic restructuring tended to encounter resistance from social groups whose previous socio-economic position was threatened by the changes. Urban groups in particular were at the forefront of this opposition to neoliberal policies (Walton and Ragin, 1990; Walton and Seddon, 1994).

Although related to the global justice movement demonstrations, the protests sparked by structural adjustment policies nonetheless form a distinct category. They too were a response to globally-generated and globally-promoted economic policies and were a form of resistance by those who saw these policies as harmful to their interests and values. However, unlike the wave of global justice movement demonstrations, these protests and riots were distinctly local responses to economic pressures and policies and employed different strategies and tactics and targeted different symbols of neoliberal power. Thus protests in Africa and Asia tend to focus on national governments while in Latin America banks and stock exchanges are targeted more frequently (Wood, 2004; Auyero, 2001). There is little evidence that those who organized these protests against structural adjustment policies sought to build transnational alliances as part of their strategy of resistance. As Tarrow points out,

To be sure, anti-IMF protesters were aware of protests in neighboring Countries and used similar slogans. But in contrast to the processes of transnational contention (...) no transnational networks or solidarities appear in the accounts and no unified organization grew out of the 'protests to coordinate an international movement (2005a: 68).

Localized responses to global pressures have not disappeared as a transnational movement emerged. On the contrary, contentious encounters between social groups resisting neoliberal policies and states attempting to implement them have continued and in many countries have intensified (Aubrey et al, 2004).

## **EMERGENCE OF THE GLOBAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT**

The global justice movement is distinct from these earlier protests in that participants have made explicit and concerted effort to both form transnational alliances and linkages among activists and to frame the movement's goals in transnationally meaningful ways. The movement has also benefited from the emergence of new communications technologies of the last two decades. Thanks to the internet and cheaper telephone and transportation costs activists have been able to forge and sustain relationships across national border much more easily than was previously possible. The ability to connect across borders has also meant that new forms of coordinated contention have become possible as activists are able to stage simultaneous demonstrations across the globe.

What has made the emergence of the global justice movement possible however, are not just changes in communications technologies. Globalization processes have been the source of new grievances as social groups have been displaced and marginalized economically, and threatened culturally. At the same time, globalization has also

provided the new opportunities for social groups to mobilize around their common grievances. As Tarrow points out, “Internationalization makes the threat of globalization more visible and offers resources, opportunities, and alternative targets for transnational activists and their allies to make claims against other domestic and external actors” (Tarrow, 2005a).

As a consequence of neoliberal policies and downsizing of the state, many services previously provided by the national governments shifted to the private sector and in particular to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). At the same time, many international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank increased their collaboration with non-governmental organizations while donor governments and private foundations expanded funding available to the NGO sector. These changes allowed groups in the developing world to more easily establish alliances with supporters in the developed world. They also increased their ability to tap into new resources and expertise and, through their new found international allies to more effectively apply pressure on their national governments in what Keck and Sikkink have referred to as the boomerang effect (1998).<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, international institutions such as the WTO provided the emerging movement with new targets which could mobilize those opposed to neoliberal globalization across borders. Finally, the development of the social justice frame facilitated connecting local grievances and local resistance to economic neoliberal policies to global processes. The development of this unifying frame thus allowed activists previously divided by national borders and traditions of contention to recast their struggle in global terms. One of the key keys to development of the global justice movement, as Ayres points out, was “the crystallization of a broadly interpretive, increasingly transnationally shared diagnostic frame that attributes a variety of social ills to the past 15-20 years span of neoliberal ascendancy (...) The record of neoliberalism has given a wealth of shared experiences from which to fashion a meaningful and increasingly transnationally shared understanding of the perceived negative effects of such policies” (2005).

Although the movement first gained international attention during the protests against the WTO in Seattle in 1999, its beginnings can be traced back to the Chiapas rebellion, which erupted in Mexico in 1994. The Zapatistas helped organize the first Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism in July and August 1996. The Gathering was attended by over 3000 activists from more than forty countries and sought to initiate a discussion on the economic, political and cultural effects of neoliberal globalization and the best strategies of resistance. The movement gathered momentum as the secret negotiations between members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on Multilateral Agreement on Investment became public in early 1997. The Agreement was to provide new, more systematic mechanisms for governing international investment but faced immediate opposition from civil society and eventually failed in 1998.

The Gathering was transformed into Global People’s Action, a grassroots coordination network of resistance against the WTO. The network held its first meeting in Bangalore, India in August 1999, only a few months prior to the November WTO meeting in Seattle.

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<sup>4</sup> However, as Clifford Bob rightly points out, forming such transnational alliances is more problematic than Keck and Sikkink suggest (2005).

This first success of the emerging global justice movement was bolstered by the 1997 Asian crisis which further undermined support for neoliberal globalization and helped to mobilize opposition. In response to the financial crisis ATTAC (the Association for Tax Financial Transactions to Aid Citizens) was created in Paris. ATTAC proposed establishing a development fund, financed by taxes on financial transactions that would assist those hit hard by economic globalization and limit stock market speculation. Few years later the group was instrumental in organizing the First World Social Forum in Porto Allegre, Brazil.<sup>5</sup>

The emerging global justice movement successfully tapped into the growing anxiety about the impact of neoliberal globalization on labor rights, human rights, the environment and traditional cultures as well as anxiety about free trade and free flow of capital. As people's sense of security and control over their destiny weakened and as grievances mounted, there was a pervasive sense that it was unclear where to channel demands since national-level institutions no longer controlled policy-making to the extent they did in the past.<sup>6</sup> Activists were thus able to tap into this increasing public anxiety about globalization.

## SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The Seattle protests were organized by a diverse coalition of activists with equally diverse agendas. These differing agendas whether between groups from the Global North or between groups from the Global North and Global South meant that the alliances were often strained. They also made it difficult to agree on common solutions to the challenge presented by neoliberal globalization. At the same time, many observers thought that the movement would have to contend with the violent, anarchist wing if it was to garner broader social support (Väyren, 2000). However, it was the September 11, 2001 attack that presented the movement with one of its greatest challenges. For many media observers and analysts the attacks spelled the end of the movement (Hawkins, 2002). Orwin summed up this view well, noting that “overnight, the anti-globalization movement is toast. Neither its good arguments nor its bad ones are going to gain it a hearing now. An affluent public at peace will fret over the wages Nike pays its workers in Honduras, but a public at war will not” (2001: 1).

Despite such assessments, however, much available evidence indicates that the global justice movement is hardly dead or moribund. To assess the strength of the movement we need to look at what activities it has engaged in as well as at the consequences of these activities. The consequences involve not just changes in policy at the national and global levels but also, as Mittelman rightly points out, changes in public

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<sup>5</sup> For a concise exploration of the emergence of the global social justice movement, see Jose Seoane and Emilio Taddei, “From Seattle to Porto Allegre: The Anti-Neoliberal Globalization Movement,” *Current Sociology*, January 2002.

<sup>6</sup> See for example, World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization. A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All. ILO, 2004 (<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/wcsdg/docs/report.pdf>); Jan Aart Scholte, *Democratizing the Global Economy: The Role of Civil Society*, 2004 ([www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/csgr/research/projects/englishreport.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/csgr/research/projects/englishreport.pdf)); The Pew Research Center. *Views of a Changing World 2003* (<http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=185>)

attitudes that have come about as a result of the movement's activities (2004).<sup>7</sup> The following two sections will examine, how the movement has evolved in the post-September 11 period globally and in the United States.

### *Sustaining the Movement*

As we will see in the following section, the number of large-scale global justice demonstrations has declined in the United States. However, a similar trend has not been visible internationally. As one recent report noted, "the growth of global activities of civil society shows no sign of slowing down. In 2003 and in the first six months of 2004, 43 events took place (...and) we find an even distribution across continents" (Pianta et al., 2004-5).

The World Social Forum (WSF), first convened in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January 2001 has been particularly visible. Organized as an alternative meeting to the World Economic Forum in Davos, it brought together large number of activists, NGOs and academics primarily, though not exclusively, from the Global South. As Seoane and Taddei aptly describe it,

The first WSF was a massive democratic encounter among a large number of highly diverse social movements, labour unions, peasant organizations, indigenous people's organizations, women's movements, militant collectives, NGOs and social and youth organizations, whose points of convergence and articulation is the struggle against the neoliberal globalization underway, and its consequences (Seoane and Taddei, 2002: 99).

Rather than attempting to paper over the differences in understanding of globalization and the different solutions proposed to what participants agreed was the unjust and inequitable nature of contemporary international economic order, this and subsequent Social Forums have celebrated the diversity of voices. Indeed, as one community newsletter put it, "the WSF is a gathering to share ideas, to embolden the spirit, and to send a message to the global corporate elite and the rest of the world that another world is possible."<sup>8</sup>

The assessments of this diversity and lack of clear policy focus have varied. For some, the Forum have ceased to be an effective way of devising an alternative to the dominant neoliberal economic globalization because of their incoherence, carnival-like atmosphere and the exclusion of many grass-roots organizations which do not have the necessary resources to travel and participate in these events. For others, the Forum underscores that it is often easier to organize an international event than to construct a sustainable movement that can translate ideas into concrete policy changes (Tarrow,

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<sup>7</sup> He notes that a survey, he and his graduate students conducted in April 2002, underlines that the majority of demonstrators who came to protest IMF and World Bank policies rejected a broad anti-globalization stance. Instead it found that "the agenda has shifted to what can be done to harness globalization so that its benefits are inclusive and its processes are transparent, participatory, and democratic. The emphasis is on formulating concrete, affirmative proposals." (<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/article.print?id=4637>; accessed February 23, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.communityknowledge.net/WSF.html>. For a detailed discussion of the World Social Forum, see Marc Becker, "World Social Forum," *Peace and Change*, vol. 32, no. 2, April 2007, 203-220.

2005b: 15). For still others, the Forum is a successful venue for establishing contacts and networks between activists from different parts of the world, for sharing ideas and strategies and for imaging an alternative future as the Forum's slogan, "Another World Is Possible" highlights. Despite the diversity of assessments of the WSF effectiveness and representativeness, the growing number of participants as well as the emergence of regional meetings in addition to global gatherings indicates that the WSF has tapped into a deep dissatisfaction with the neoliberal economic order. Little indicates that this form of alternative globalization mobilizing is petering out.

The World Social Forum has been only one site of global justice movement mobilization. Europe has continued to witness large scale demonstrations that have drawn on the continent's long history of labor and student activism.<sup>9</sup> The war in Iraq in particular has added a new dimension to protests against neoliberal economic policies. With deep opposition to the war present in most European countries, the global justice activist tapped into these anti-war and anti-US policy sentiments to continue drawing large crowds at demonstrations. The newsletter of ATTAC drew a clear connection between neoliberal globalization and war in recasting the group's focus in light of the changing international climate, noting that "despite bombing, anthrax, despair and death trade must go on. In all the political tools used, war is in the forefront of further liberalization around the world"(Vinocur, 2001). Outside of Europe opposition to the US-led war on terror and neoliberal globalization also came to be linked by activists. In other words, the September 11 attacks added a new dimension of peace to the global justice movement.

The largest of the new anti-war and global justice protests were demonstrations staged on February 15, 2003 across the continent as well as outside of Europe. Protests took place in approximately 800 cities across the globe and attracted an estimated 10 to 12 million participants. The largest of these in Rome drew an estimated 3 million people. Other large scale events included 300,000 demonstrators protesting neoliberal policies at the March 2002 European Unit Summit in Barcelona, Spain; an estimated million protesting US foreign policy, globalization and war in November 2002 in Florence, Italy; and 250,000 demonstrators supporting the militant French farmer Jose Bove after his release from prison for attacking a fast-food restaurant in Larzac, France.

While the US-led "war on terror" and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq by the US-led "coalition of the willing" refocused the global justice movement to more explicitly include issues of violence and peace in its agenda, the regular meetings of international organizations associated with promoting the neoliberal agenda continued to bring protesters out onto the streets. And although the number of demonstrators protesting the International Financial Institutions in the United States declined, many G8 summits continued to draw large numbers of activists.

At the same time, the decline in the number of protesters at WTO meetings as well as some World Bank and IMF, and G8 meetings can be explained by the response of these international organizations to the WTO Seattle protests in 1999 and G8 protests in Genoa in 2001 where clashes between demonstrators and police turned deadly. What is striking about these later meetings is their location. WTO in particular took care to hold

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<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the European global justice movement, see Donatella della Porta, Massimiliano Andretta, Lorenzo Mosca and Herbert Reiter. *Globalization from Below: Transnational Activists and Protest Networks*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

its gatherings in places that would limit protesters access either because of the city's geographic features, as in Cancun, or because of the political difficulty in accessing the site, as in Doha, or finally because of the legal restrictions on demonstrations, as in Hong Kong. Similarly, after a large demonstration in Washington in 2002, the World Bank and the IMF moved some of their meetings to less accessible locales such as Dubai and later Singapore. Finally, the G8 was able to limit the number of protesters during its meetings outside of Savannah and in Calgary thanks to their remote locations and in St. Petersburg courtesy of the Russian legal system.

Where legal restrictions and geographic location did not restrict demonstrators' access as happened during Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) summit in Quebec City in 2001, organizers erected fences to keep protesters at bay. As Graeber noted, the clashes as well as authorities responses to them provided the movement with powerful symbols they could employ in future demonstrations:

At the FTAA summit in Quebec City, invisible lines that had previously been treated as if they didn't exist (at least for white people) were converted overnight into fortifications against the movement of would be global-citizens, demanding the right to petition their rulers. The three kilometre 'wall' junketing inside became the perfect symbol for what neoliberalism actually means on human terms. The spectacle of Black Block, armed with wire cutters and grappling hooks, joined by everyone from Steelworkers to Mohawk warriors to tear down the wall, became—for that very reason—one of the most powerful moments in the movement's history (2003: 206-7).

Despite authorities' attempts to limit and restrict demonstrations, the global justice movement has continued to stage public events. The tables below provide the numbers of participants at some of the major protests. It is important to remember, however, that the global justice movement has been equally active in staging smaller events as well as continuing to bringing activists together through transnational networks.

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**PROTESTS AT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS<sup>10</sup>**
**Table 1: World Trade Organization Meetings**

Year	Location	Number of Protesters
1998	Geneva, Switzerland	2,000-3,000
1999	Seattle, USA	50,000-70,000
2001	Doha Qatar	1,000
2003	Cancun Mexico	2,000-3,000
2005	Hong Kong, China	5,000-10,000 <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Data drawn from newspaper accounts and from Bruce Podobnik, “Resistance to Globalization: Cycles and Trends in the Globalization Protest Movement,” in by Bruce Podobnik and Thomas Reifer, editors. *Transforming Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities in the Post 9/11 Era*. Leiden: Brill, 51 – 68.

<sup>11</sup> The WTO’s negotiating committee met in Geneva in a last ditch effort to save the Doha Round of negotiations but to no avail. In July 2006, WTO’s General Secretary, Pascal Lamy announced that the Doha Round was suspended indefinitely. An informal WTO meeting in Potsdam, Germany did not succeed in reviving the talks. These meetings drew smaller number of demonstrators, although in Geneva the La Via Campesina, the International Peasant Movement, staged a boat demonstration on lake Geneva and organized performances by a Swiss-Algerian and Philippines bands.

**Table 2: IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Protesters</b>
1998	Washington, USA	200-300
1999	Washington, USA	1,000
2000	Washington, USA	7,000-10,000
2000	Prague, Czech Republic	10,000-15,000
2001	Washington, USA	Canceled
2002	Washington, USA	40,000-50,000
2003	Dubai, UAE	Law bans outdoor protests and demonstrations
2004	Washington, USA	2,000-3,000
2005	Washington, USA	200
2006	Singapore	Law bans outdoor protests and demonstrations
2007	Washington, USA	300

**Table 3: G8 Summits**

Year	Location	Number of Protesters
1999	Berlin, Germany	800-1,000
2000	Okinawa, Japan	70,000
2001	Genoa, Italy	100,000-250,000
2002	Calgary, Canada	2,000-3,000
2003	Evian, France	50,000-100,000
2004	Savannah, USA	1,000-2,000
2005	Edinburgh, Scotland	225,000
2006	St. Petersburg, Russia	150-300 <sup>12</sup>
2007	Heiligendamm, Germany	25,000-80,000

<sup>12</sup> Local activists decided not to stage public demonstrations. Instead they held Russian Social Forum to coincide with the G8 summit.

**Table 4: World Social Forum**

Year	Location	Number of Participants
2001	Porto Alegre, Brazil	20,000-30,000
2002	Porto Alegre, Brazil	40,000-60,000
2002	Florence, Italy (European Social Forum)	40,000-60,000
2003	Porto Alegre, Brazil	70,000-75,000
2003	Paris, France (European Social Forum)	100,000
2004	Bombay, India	80,000-90,000
2005	Porto Alegre, Brazil	155,000-200,000
2006	Caracas, Venezuela	80,000
	Bamako, Mali	11,000
	Karachi, Pakistan	20,000
2007	Nairobi, Kenya	66,000 <sup>13</sup>

### *Response in the United States*

September 11 attacks had an immediate impact on the global justice movement in the United States. In late September 2001 activists were preparing to stage demonstrations in Washington, DC during the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Many organizers dubbed these protests Seattle II and anticipated about 100,000 demonstrators to descend on the city. A heated discussion among activists followed the 9/11 attacks and eventually the organizers decided that the demonstrations would be cancelled. The 9/11 attacks also forced the American wing of the global justice movement to examine its strategies and tactics and to confront a very different domestic political environment that at least initially made opposing the policies pursued by the Bush White House more challenging.

The immediate effect of the 9/11 attacks was the splintering of the American global justice movement. Most significantly, organized labor represented by the AFL-CIO withdrew from the coalition. As John Sweeny, president of the AFL-CIO noted at the time, “we [organized labor] stand fully behind the President and the leadership of our nation in this time of national crisis.” The war became a deeply divisive issue within the movement and forced its leadership to reframe how they presented the cause of global

<sup>13</sup> In many places, local Social Fora were held, such as the India Social Forum, 2006.

justice in this new political environment. As Russ Davis, director of the Massachusetts chapter of Jobs with Justice pointed out, prior to the attacks,

A growing frame in people's consciousness was global inequality, the global economy, corporate globalization. And within that frame we were gaining on them. September 11<sup>th</sup> just wrenched that frame, pulled the rug out from under the movement, and now the dominant frame is war, foreign policy. You can fairly say that the globalization movement is divided on the issue of war (Kirchhoff et al., 2001).

The departure of organized labor from the coalition meant that the staging of massive demonstrations became more difficult. Although various non-governmental organizers had been instrumental in organizing demonstrations, they did not have sufficient membership to fill the streets. For that, the NGOs needed organized labor.<sup>14</sup> In Seattle for example, an estimated two thirds of the demonstrators belonged to trade unions (Lichbach and Vries, 2004).

At the same time, many global justice activists shifted their attention to what they saw as the more immediate problem of the war in Afghanistan and then Iraq. Given the limited resources of activists and the necessity of acting immediately to address the war meant that the long-term agenda of poverty-reduction, environmental protection, labor and human rights as well as equitable and sustainable development were temporarily pushed onto the back burner. The "war on terror" presented the global justice movement with another challenge. The attacks of 9/11 were not aimed at random targets. Rather the planes hit the symbols of American military and economic power. The Twin Towers in New York City in particular were a globally recognized icon of capitalism. Since the global justice movement also stood in opposition to economic status quo, some critics of the movement sought to delegitimize it by equating its agenda with that of the 9/11 hijackers. Shortly after the attacks, the *National Post*, a Canadian daily argued that "Like terrorists, the anti-globalization movement is disdainful of democratic institutions (...) Terrorism, if not so heinous as what we have witnessed last week, has always been part of the protesters' plan" (Lukas, 2001).<sup>15</sup>

The changed political landscape following the attacks and the new emphasis on security pushed the American global justice movement to explore new ways of promoting their cause. As Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch pointed out, "after 9/11 the U.S. movement obviously re-evaluated its tactics and tone. But even before 9/11 there was a strategy judgment that we needed to diversity the ways in which we organized and mobilized" (Vieth, 2002). Many activists saw large-scale demonstrations as both unsustainable and ineffective as a long-term strategy in the absence of other forms of protest.<sup>16</sup> Although public, large-scale events would not be abandoned since they were a useful way of bringing a particular issue to the national and international attention, more emphasis would now be placed on well-targeted, witty

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<sup>14</sup> Author interview with a World Bank official, Washington, DC, January 20, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> A similar sentiment was expressed by Peter Beinart, the editor of the *New Republic*, who argued "the anti-globalization movement... is, in part, a movement motivated by the hatred of the United States"

<sup>16</sup> As Tarrow notes, such international protest events, "depend on particular domestic and international opportunities and resources as is difficult to sustain" (2001).

actions, voter education, letter writing campaigns to congressional delegations, and direct lobbying of policy-makers.<sup>17</sup>

Although much media coverage of the Seattle protests focused on the young men, bandannas covering their faces, who smashed store windows and violently clashed with police, other protesters engaged in very different type of action and it was these theatrical tactics that became more important following 9/11. In Seattle, environmental activists marched with green sea turtle puppets to protest commercial fishing practices (Tampio, 2004). In 2002 in Washington demonstrators banged buckets, metal pots and pans, and did cartwheels. During the 2004 protests during the World Bank and International Monetary Fund spring meetings, activists performed street theatre during which “10 performers representing poor countries lined up on the sidewalk. The Grim Reaper, wearing a skull mask and with the words IMF and World Bank written in white on her black cloak – charged toward the other performers. ‘Look at all the poor countries,’ she cackled, swinging a scythe, ‘I’m going to destroy you all.’ The countries played dead and fell to the ground” (Lively, Drebes, 2004). And at many demonstrations the Pink Bloc of women’s activists brought dance routines and pop music to the demonstrations (Bisticas-Cocoves, 2003). Other groups, like Jubilee USA Network, rather than demonstrating in 2004 sent 11,000 “Unhappy Birthday” Cards to the IMF and the World Bank asking the institutions to cancel poor countries’ debts (MacInnis, 2004). Finally, activists have also sought to make the United States less unique by bringing the Social Forum to North America. First global justice activists organized various regional forums. Finally in the summer of 2007, the first United States Social Forum took place in Atlanta Georgia with the goal of building a stronger grass-roots movement.<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, the World Bank and to a lesser extent the International Monetary Fund began responding to some of the protesters’ demands. Although not all groups supported directly engaging them in a dialogue, many non-governmental organizations established such direct lines of communication with the two institutions. In other words, as the World Bank in particular began opening its doors to civil society organizations for some NGOs and activists staging of protests came to be seen as a less appealing and effective strategy. After 2002, dialogues and consultations between the World Bank and civil society organizations became more frequent. They took place both at the World Bank’s headquarters in Washington, DC as well as at the local and national level. The issues around which such consultations and dialogues took place in Washington included structural adjustment, environment, globalization and human rights. The organizations that began regularly participating in these meetings and became members of the World Bank-Civil Society Joint Facilitation Committee included some of the largest NGOs.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, Bank officials began holding regular consultations with

<sup>17</sup> Author Interview with Neil Watkins, National Coordinator, Jubilee USA, Washington, DC, January 6, 2006; and with Margrete Strand Rangnes, Senior Representative of Sierra Club’s Responsible Trade Program, Washington, DC, February 15, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> For more information about this Forum and the groups that helped to organize it, see <https://www.ussf2007.org/nationalplanningcommittee>

<sup>19</sup> The groups that have been members of World Bank-Civil Society Joint Facilitation Committee are: ActionAid International, Amnesty International, Association for Women’s Rights in Development, Caribbean Policy Development Centre, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Europe and Central Asia NGO Working Group, Global Movement for Children, InterAction, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Transparency International, world confederation of Labour, World

local NGOs, labor unions, donor agencies and research centers to discuss local project implementation.<sup>20</sup> Although many NGOs who have participated in these consultations and dialogues remained critical of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and thought the institutions were insufficiently responsive to civil society voices, others saw significant changes in World Bank policies emerging out of these processes and out of NGO public campaigns. As one World Bank official notes, “Jubilee 2000 had a tremendous impact in mobilizing focus and political support for decisions that were eventually made. The result is a very radical debt relief program that is being implemented country by country” (Vieth, 2002). A recent study evaluating the impact of NGOs on Bank and IMF policies comes to a similar conclusion (Kelly, 2005).

## CONCLUSION

The global justice movement has changed considerably since its early days in the latter part of the 1990s. Despite the regular obituaries of the movement that have appeared in the mainstream press, this article has argued the movement, far from disintegrating and vanishing from the political scene, has continued to bring social justice issues to international attention. The World Social Forum has been held annually and has grown significantly since 2001 bringing new groups and new activists into the movement. Although it has not proposed one alternative program to neoliberalism, it has provided a space where alternative ideas can be developed and activist networks nurtured. In Europe Social Forums have been accompanied by continuing large scale demonstrations that have benefited from the historically important role of organized labor in continental politics. And in the United States, activists have turned to more theatrical protests, expanded educational and lobbying efforts and have brought the Social Forum to North American in 2007.

It is true that neoliberalism continues to hold sway over policies of the World Bank, the IMF and the G8. But it would be a mistake to therefore call the global justice movement a failure. The movement has succeeded in changing policies of the IFIs and major donor governments toward developing countries’ foreign debt and in private business signing onto codes of conduct which govern labor conditions in firms to which multinational corporations subcontract work. It is now standard to include labor rights and environmental clauses in international trade agreements and to include civil society groups in program design and implementation. This is not to say that sweatshop conditions are no longer a problem or that civil society participation is always effective and meaningful. Nonetheless, there is more public scrutiny of business practices than there was fifteen years ago. The global justice movement also succeeded in making previously hidden exploitation and inequalities publicly visible.

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Conference of Religions for Peace, World Council of Churches, WWF: the International Conservation Organization, World Young Women’s Christian Association, Worldwide Initiative for Grantmaker Support.

<sup>20</sup> See for example *World Bank-Civil Society Engagement, Review of Fiscal Years 2002-2004*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005; and *Issues and Options for Improving Engagement Between the World Bank and Civil Society Organizations*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005.

What is perhaps most remarkable about the movement is that it has engaged in its work peacefully. Despite the often violent image of the global justice movement presented in the mainstream media, what is striking about the movement is the lack of violence. The movement has constructed a new form of civil disobedience. As Leo Panitch rightly notes, “where once it seemed that the only alternative to marching along with signs were either Gandhian non-violent civil disobedience or outright insurrection, [global justice activists] have been trying to map out a completely new territory in between” (2002: 14). This new form of civil disobedience is raucous, musical and theatrical. It is also committed to respecting human rights and human beings. Even when a Starbucks or a Gap window is defaced, a Starbucks or Gap employee never needs to fear for his or her safety.

One of the main challenges that the global justice movement has faced has been the increased focus on security and increased surveillance of politically contentious activities following September 11 attacks. The decline in the number of demonstrators that have come out onto the streets during WTO, IMF and World Bank, and G8 meetings is not surprising given the frequently politically and geographically inaccessible locations of these gatherings. However, as recent surveys of global public opinion indicate, the unease and anxiety about neoliberal globalization is pervasive. Although most are not interested in abandoning globalization they do want a globalization that is fairer, more equitable and more accountable to the public. “Another World is Possible” continues to resonate.

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