

# “Manufacturing Dissent”: The Anti-globalization Movement is Funded by the Corporate Elites

The People's Movement has been Hijacked

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

Global Research, June 01, 2019

[Global Research](#) 20 September 2010

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [History](#), [Poverty](#)  
& [Social Inequality](#)

This article was first published in 2010.

The author's introductory quote was first formulated in 2001 in the context of the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City which was held a few months before 9/11

*“Everything the [Ford] Foundation did could be regarded as “making the World safe for capitalism”, reducing social tensions by helping to comfort the afflicted, provide safety valves for the angry, and improve the functioning of government (McGeorge Bundy, National Security Advisor to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson (1961-1966), President of the Ford Foundation, (1966-1979))*

*“By providing the funding and the policy framework to many concerned and dedicated people working within the non-profit sector, the ruling class is able to co-opt leadership from grassroots communities, ... and is able to make the funding, accounting, and evaluation components of the work so time consuming and onerous that social justice work is virtually impossible under these conditions” (Paul Kivel, You Call this Democracy, Who Benefits, Who Pays and Who Really Decides, 2004, p. 122 )*

\*\*\*

*“Under the New World Order, the ritual of inviting “civil society” leaders into the inner circles of power -while simultaneously repressing the rank and file- serves several important functions. First, it says to the World that the critics of globalization “must make concessions” to earn the right to mingle. Second, it conveys the illusion that while the global elites should -under what is euphemistically called democracy- be subject to criticism, they nonetheless rule legitimately. And third, it says “there is no alternative” to globalization: fundamental change is not possible and the most we can hope is to engage with these rulers in an ineffective “give and take”.*

*While the “Globalizers” may adopt a few progressive phrases to demonstrate they have good intentions, their fundamental goals are not challenged. And what this “civil society mingling” does is to reinforce the clutch of the corporate establishment while weakening and dividing the protest movement. An understanding of this process of co-optation is important, because tens of thousands of the most principled young people in Seattle, Prague and Quebec City [1999-2001] are involved in the anti-globalization protests because they reject the notion that money is everything, because they reject the impoverishment of millions and the destruction of fragile Earth so that a few may*

get richer.

*This rank and file and some of their leaders as well, are to be applauded. But we need to go further. We need to challenge the right of the "Globalizers" to rule. This requires that we rethink the strategy of protest. Can we move to a higher plane, by launching mass movements in our respective countries, movements that bring the message of what globalization is doing, to ordinary people? For they are the force that must be mobilized to challenge those who plunder the Globe." (Michel Chossudovsky, [The Quebec Wall](#), April 2001)*

"Manufactured Consent" vs. "Manufactured Dissent"

The term "manufacturing consent" was initially coined by Edward S Herman and Noam Chomsky.

"Manufacturing consent" describes a propaganda model used by the corporate media to sway public opinion and "inculcate individuals with values and beliefs...":

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda. ([Manufacturing Consent by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky](#))

"Manufacturing consent" implies manipulating and shaping public opinion. It establishes conformity and acceptance to authority and social hierarchy. It seeks compliance to an established social order. "Manufacturing consent" describes the submission of public opinion to the mainstream media narrative, to its lies and fabrications.

*In this article, we focus on a related concept, namely the subtle process of "manufacturing dissent" (rather than "consent"), which plays a decisive role in serving the interests of the ruling class.*

Under contemporary capitalism, the illusion of democracy must prevail. It is in the interest of the corporate elites to accept dissent and protest as a feature of the system inasmuch as they do not threaten the established social order. The purpose is not to repress dissent, but, on the contrary, to shape and mould the protest movement, to set the outer limits of dissent.

To maintain their legitimacy, the economic elites favor limited and controlled forms of opposition, with a view to preventing the development of radical forms of protest, which might shake the very foundations and institutions of global capitalism. In other words, "manufacturing dissent" acts as a "safety valve", which protects and sustains the New World Order.

To be effective, however, the process of "manufacturing dissent" must be carefully regulated and monitored by those who are the object of the protest movement.

"Funding Dissent"

How is the process of manufacturing dissent achieved?

Essentially by “funding dissent”, namely by channeling financial resources from those who are the object of the protest movement to those who are involved in organizing the protest movement.

Co-optation is not limited to buying the favors of politicians. The economic elites –which control major foundations– also oversee the funding of numerous NGOs and civil society organizations, which historically have been involved in the protest movement against the established economic and social order. The programs of many NGOs and people’s movements rely heavily on funding from both public as well as private foundations including the Ford, Rockefeller, McCarthy foundations, among others.

The anti-globalization movement is opposed to Wall Street and the Texas oil giants controlled by Rockefeller, *et al.* Yet the foundations and charities of Rockefeller *et al* will generously fund progressive anti-capitalist networks as well as environmentalists (opposed to Big Oil) with a view to ultimately overseeing and shaping their various activities.

The mechanisms of “manufacturing dissent” require a manipulative environment, a process of arm-twisting and subtle cooptation of individuals within progressive organizations, including anti-war coalitions, environmentalists and the anti-globalization movement.

Whereas the mainstream media “manufactures consent”, the complex network of NGOs (including segments of the alternative media) are used by the corporate elites to mould and manipulate the protest movement.

Following the deregulation of the global financial system in the 1990s and the rapid enrichment of the financial establishment, funding through foundations and charities has skyrocketed.

In a bitter irony, part of the fraudulent financial gains on Wall Street in recent years have been recycled to the elites’ tax exempt foundations and charities. These windfall financial gains have not only been used to buy out politicians, they have also been channelled to NGOs, research institutes, community centres, church groups, environmentalists, alternative media, human rights groups, etc. “Manufactured dissent” also applies to the “corporate left” and “progressive” media, funded by NGOs or directly by the foundations.

The inner objective is to “manufacture dissent” and establish the boundaries of a “politically correct” opposition. In turn, many NGOs are infiltrated by informants often acting on behalf of western intelligence agencies. Moreover, an increasingly large segment of the progressive alternative news media on the internet has become dependent on funding from corporate foundations and charities.

### Piecemeal Activism

The objective of the corporate elites has been to fragment the people’s movement into a vast “do it yourself” mosaic. War and globalization are no longer in the forefront of civil society activism. Activism tends to be piecemeal. There is no integrated anti-globalization anti-war movement. The economic crisis is not seen as having a relationship to the US led war.

Dissent has been compartmentalized. Separate “issue oriented” protest movements (e.g.

environment, anti-globalization, peace, women's rights, climate change) are encouraged and generously funded as opposed to a cohesive mass movement. This mosaic was already prevalent in the counter G7 summits and People's Summits of the 1990s.

### The Anti-Globalization Movement

The Seattle 1999 counter-summit is invariably upheld as a triumph for the anti-globalization movement: "a historic coalition of activists shut down the World Trade Organization summit in Seattle, the spark that ignited a global anti-corporate movement." (See Naomi Klein, [Copenhagen: Seattle Grows Up, The Nation](#), November 13, 2009).

Seattle was an indeed an important crossroads in the history of the mass movement. Over 50,000 people from diverse backgrounds, civil society organizations, human rights, labor unions, environmentalists had come together in a common pursuit. Their goal was to forcefully dismantle the neoliberal agenda including its institutional base.

But Seattle also marked a major reversal. With mounting dissent from all sectors of society, the official WTO Summit desperately needed the token participation of civil society leaders "on the inside", to give the appearance of being "democratic" "on the outside".

While thousands of people had converged on Seattle, what occurred behind the scenes was a de facto victory for neoliberalism. A handful of civil society organizations, formally opposed to the WTO had contributed to legitimizing the WTO's global trading architecture. Instead of challenging the WTO as an an illegal intergovernmental body, they agreed to a pre-summit dialogue with the WTO and Western governments. "Accredited NGO participants were invited to mingle in a friendly environment with ambassadors, trade ministers and Wall Street tycoons at several of the official events including the numerous cocktail parties and receptions." (Michel Chossudovsky, *Seattle and Beyond: Disarming the New World Order*, Covert Action Quarterly, November 1999, See [Ten Years Ago: "Manufacturing Dissent" in Seattle](#)).

The hidden agenda was to weaken and divide the protest movement and orient the anti-globalization movement into areas that would not directly threaten the interests of the business establishment.

Funded by private foundations (including Ford, Rockefeller, Rockefeller Brothers, Charles Stewart Mott, The Foundation for Deep Ecology), these "accredited" civil society organizations had positioned themselves as lobby groups, acting formally on behalf of the people's movement. Led by prominent and committed activists, their hands were tied. They ultimately contributed (unwittingly) to weakening the anti-globalization movement by accepting the legitimacy of what was essentially an illegal organization. (The 1994 Marrakech Summit agreement which led to the creation of the WTO on January 1, 1995). (Ibid)

The NGO leaders were fully aware as to where the money was coming from. Yet within the US and European NGO community, the foundations and charities are considered to be independent philanthropic bodies, separate from the corporations; namely the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, for instance, is considered to be separate and distinct from the Rockefeller family empire of banks and oil companies.

With salaries and operating expenses depending on private foundations, it became an

accepted routine: In a twisted logic, the battle against corporate capitalism was to be fought using the funds from the tax exempt foundations owned by corporate capitalism.

The NGOs were caught in a straightjacket; their very existence depended on the foundations. Their activities were closely monitored. In a twisted logic, the very nature of anti-capitalist activism was indirectly controlled by the capitalists through their independent foundations.

### “Progressive Watchdogs”

In this evolving saga, the corporate elites –whose interests are duly served by the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO– will readily fund (through their various foundations and charities) organizations which are at the forefront of the protest movement against the WTO and the Washington based international financial institutions.

Supported by foundation money, various “watchdogs” were set up by the NGOs to monitor the implementation of neoliberal policies, without however raising the broader issue of how the Bretton Woods twins and the WTO, through their policies, had contributed to the impoverishment of millions of people.

The Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Network (SAPRIN) was established by Development Gap, a USAID and World Bank funded NGO based in Washington DC.

Amply documented, the imposition of the IMF-World Bank Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) on developing countries constitutes a blatant form of interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states on behalf of creditor institutions.

Instead of challenging the legitimacy of the IMF-World Bank’s “deadly economic medicine”, SAPRIN’s core organization sought to establish a participatory role for the NGOs, working hand in glove with USAID and the World Bank. The objective was to give a “human face” to the neoliberal policy agenda, rather than reject the IMF-World Bank policy framework outright:

“SAPRIN is the global civil-society network that took its name from the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative (SAPRI), which it launched with the World Bank and its president, Jim Wolfensohn, in 1997.

SAPRI is designed as a tripartite exercise to bring together organizations of civil society, their governments and the World Bank in a joint review of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) and an exploration of new policy options. It is legitimizing an active role for civil society in economic decision-making, as it is designed to indicate areas in which changes in economic policies and in the economic-policymaking process are required. (<http://www.saprin.org/overview.htm> SAPRIN website, emphasis added)

Similarly, The Trade Observatory (formerly WTO Watch), operating out of Geneva, is a project of the Minneapolis based Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), which is generously funded by Ford, Rockefeller, Charles Stewart Mott among others. (see Table 1 below).

The Trade Observatory has a mandate to monitor the World Trade Organization (WTO), the

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). ([IATP, About Trade Observatory](#), accessed September 2010).

The Trade Observatory is also to develop data and information as well as foster “governance” and “accountability”. Accountability to the victims of WTO policies or accountability to the protagonists of neoliberal reforms?

The Trade Observatory watchdog functions does not in any way threaten the WTO. Quite the opposite: the legitimacy of the trade organizations and agreements are never questioned.

---

Table 1 Minneapolis Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) largest donors  
([for complete list click here](#))

Ford Foundation  
\$2,612,500.00  
1994 - 2006

Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
\$2,320,000.00  
1995 - 2005

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
\$1,391,000.00  
1994 - 2005

McKnight Foundation  
\$1,056,600.00  
1995 - 2005

Joyce Foundation  
\$748,000.00  
1996 - 2004

Bush Foundation  
\$610,000.00  
2001 - 2006

Bauman Family Foundation  
\$600,000.00  
1994 - 2006

Great Lakes Protection Fund  
\$580,000.00  
1995 - 2000

John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
\$554,100.00  
1991 - 2003

John Merck Fund

\$490,000.00  
1992 - 2003

Harold K. Hochschild Foundation  
\$486,600.00  
1997 - 2005

Foundation for Deep Ecology  
\$417,500.00  
1991 - 2001

Jennifer Altman Foundation  
\$366,500.00  
1992 - 2001

Rockefeller Foundation  
\$344,134.00  
2000 - 2004

Source:

[http://activistcash.com/organization\\_financials.cfm/o/16-institute-for-agriculture-and-trade-policy](http://activistcash.com/organization_financials.cfm/o/16-institute-for-agriculture-and-trade-policy)

---

The World Economic Forum. "All Roads Lead to Davos"

The people's movement has been hijacked. Selected intellectuals, trade union executives, and the leaders of civil society organizations (including Oxfam, Amnesty International, Greenpeace) are routinely invited to the [Davos World Economic Forum](#), where they mingle with the World's most powerful economic and political actors. This mingling of the World's corporate elites with hand-picked "progressives" is part of the ritual underlying the process of "manufacturing dissent".

The ploy is to selectively handpick civil society leaders "whom we can trust" and integrate them into a "dialogue", cut them off from their rank and file, make them feel that they are "global citizens" acting on behalf of their fellow workers but make them act in a way which serves the interests of the corporate establishment:

"The participation of NGOs in the Annual Meeting in Davos is evidence of the fact that [we] purposely seek to integrate a broad spectrum of the major stakeholders in society in ... defining and advancing the global agenda ... We believe the [Davos] World Economic Forum provides the business community with the ideal framework for engaging in collaborative efforts with the other principal stakeholders [NGOs] of the global economy to "improve the state of the world," which is the Forum's mission. (World Economic Forum, Press Release 5 January 2001)

The WEF does not represent the broader business community. It is an elitist gathering: Its members are giant global corporations (with a minimum \$5 billion annual turnover). The selected non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are viewed as partner "stakeholders" as well as a convenient "mouthpiece for the voiceless who are often left out of decision-making processes." ([World Economic Forum - Non-Governmental Organizations](#), 2010)

“They [the NGOs] play a variety of roles in partnering with the Forum to improve the state of the world, including serving as a bridge between business, government and civil society, connecting the policy makers to the grassroots, bringing practical solutions to the table...” (Ibid)

Civil society “partnering” with global corporations on behalf of “the voiceless”, who are “left out”?



Trade union executives are also co-opted to the detriment of workers’ rights. The leaders of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), the AFL-CIO, the European Trade Union Confederation, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), among others, are routinely invited to attend both the annual WEF meetings in Davos, Switzerland as well as to the regional summits. They also participate in the WEF’s Labour Leaders Community which focuses on mutually acceptable patterns of behavior for the labor movement. The WEF “believes that the voice of Labour is important to dynamic dialogue on issues of globalisation, economic justice, transparency and accountability, and ensuring a healthy global financial system.”

“Ensuring a healthy global financial system” wrought by fraud and corruption? The issue of workers’ rights is not mentioned. ([World Economic Forum – Labour Leaders](#), 2010).

The World Social Forum: “Another World Is Possible”

The 1999 Seattle counter-summit in many regards laid the foundations for the development of the World Social Forum.

The first gathering of the World Social Forum took place in January 2001, in Porto Alegre, Brazil. This international gathering involved the participation of tens of thousands of activists from grass-roots organizations and NGOs.

The WSF gathering of NGOs and progressive organizations is held simultaneously with the Davos World Economic Forum (WEF). It was intended to voice opposition and dissent to the World Economic Forum of corporate leaders and finance ministers.

The WSF at the outset was an initiative of France’s ATTAC and several Brazilian NGOs’:

“... In February 2000, Bernard Cassen, the head of a French NGO platform ATTAC, Oded Grajew, head of a Brazilian employers’ organisation, and Francisco Whitaker, head of an association of Brazilian NGOs, met to discuss a proposal for a “world civil society event”; by March 2000, they formally



secured the support of the municipal government of Porto Alegre and the state government of Rio Grande do Sul, both controlled at the time by the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT)... A group of French NGOs, including ATTAC, Friends of L'Humanité, and Friends of Le Monde Diplomatique, sponsored an Alternative Social Forum in Paris titled "One Year after Seattle", in order to prepare an agenda for the protests to be staged at the upcoming European Union summit at Nice. The speakers called for "reorienting certain international institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, WTO... so as to create a globalization from below" and "building an international citizens' movement, not to destroy the IMF but to reorient its missions." (Research Unit For Political Economy, [The Economics and Politics of the World Social Forum](#), Global Research, January 20, 2004)

From the outset in 2001, the WSF was supported by core funding from the Ford Foundation, which is known to have ties to the CIA going back to the 1950s: "The CIA uses philanthropic foundations as the most effective conduit to channel large sums of money to Agency projects without alerting the recipients to their source." (James Petras, [The Ford Foundation and the CIA](#), Global Research, September 18, 2002)

The same procedure of donor funded counter-summits or people's summits which characterized the 1990s People's Summits was embodied in the World Social Forum (WSF):

"... other WSF funders (or 'partners', as they are referred to in WSF terminology) included the Ford Foundation, — suffice it to say here that it has always operated in the closest collaboration with the US Central Intelligence Agency and US overall strategic interests; the Heinrich Boll Foundation, which is controlled by the German Greens party, a partner in the present [2003] German government and a supporter of the wars on Yugoslavia and Afghanistan (its leader Joschka Fischer is the [former] German foreign minister); and major funding agencies such as Oxfam (UK), Novib (Netherlands), ActionAid (UK), and so on.

Remarkably, an International Council member of the WSF reports that the "considerable funds" received from these agencies have "not hitherto awakened any significant debates [in the WSF bodies] on the possible relations of dependence it could generate." Yet he admits that "in order to get funding from the Ford Foundation, the organisers had to convince the foundation that the Workers Party was not involved in the process." Two points are worth noting here. First, this establishes that the funders were able to twist arms and determine the role of different forces in the WSF — they needed to be 'convinced' of the credentials of those who would be involved. Secondly, if the funders objected to the participation of the thoroughly domesticated Workers Party, they would all the more strenuously object to prominence being given to genuinely anti-imperialist forces. That they did so object will be become clear as we describe who was included and who excluded from the second and third meets of the WSF....

... The question of funding [of the WSF] does not even figure in the charter of principles of the WSF, adopted in June 2001. Marxists, being materialists, would point out that one should look at the material base of the forum to grasp its nature. (One indeed does not have to be a Marxist to understand that "he who pays the piper calls the tune".) But the WSF does not agree. It can draw funds from imperialist institutions like Ford Foundation while fighting "domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism" (Research Unit For Political Economy, [The Economics and Politics of the World Social Forum](#), Global Research, January 20, 2004)

The Ford Foundation provided core support to the WSF, with indirect contributions to participating “partner organizations” from the McArthur Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the W. Alton Jones Foundation, the European Commission, several European governments (including the Labour government of Tony Blair), the Canadian government, as well as a number of UN bodies (including UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO and the FAO) .(Ibid).

In addition to initial core support from the Ford Foundation, many of the participating civil society organizations receive funding from major foundations and charities. In turn, the US and European based NGOs often operate as secondary funding agencies channelling Ford and Rockefeller money towards partner organizations in developing countries, including grassroots peasant and human rights movements.

The International Council (IC) of the WSF is made up of representatives from NGOs, trade unions, alternative media organizations, research institutes, many of which are heavily funded by foundations as well as governments. (See [Fórum Social Mundial](#)). The same trade unions, which are routinely invited to mingle with Wall Street CEOs at the Davos World Economic Forum (WSF) including the AFL-CIO, the European Trade Union Confederation and the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC) also sit on the WSF’s International Council (IC). Among NGOs funded by major foundations sitting on the WSF’s IC is the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) (see our analysis above) which oversees the Geneva based Trade Observatory.

The Funders Network on Trade and Globalization (FTNG), which has observer status on the WSF International Council plays a key role. While channelling financial support to the WSF, it acts as a clearing house for major foundations. The FTNG describes itself as “an alliance of grant makers committed to building just and sustainable communities around the world”. Members of this alliance are Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers, Heinrich Boell, C. S. Mott, Merck Family Foundation, Open Society Institute, Tides, among others. (For a complete list of FTNG funding agencies see [FNTG: Funders](#)). FTNG acts as a fund raising entity on behalf of the WSF.

#### Western Governments Fund the Counter-Summits and Repress the Protest Movement

In a bitter irony, governments including the European Union grant money to fund progressive groups (including the WSF) involved in organizing protests against the very same governments which finance their activities:

“Governments, too, have been significant financiers of protest groups. The European Commission, for example, funded two groups who mobilised large numbers of people to protest at EU summits at Gothenburg and Nice. Britain’s national lottery, which is overseen by the government, helped fund a group at the heart of the British contingent at both protests.” (James Harding, [Counter-capitalism](#), FT.com, October 15 2001)

We are dealing with a diabolical process: The host government finances the official summit as well as the NGOs actively involved in the Counter-Summit. It also funds the multimillion dollar anti-riot police operation which has a mandate to repress the grassroots participants of the Counter-Summit, including members of NGOs directly funded by the government. .

The purpose of these combined operations, including violent actions of vandalism

committed by undercover cops (Toronto G20, 2010) dressed up as activists, is to discredit the protest movement and intimidate its participants. The broader objective is to transform the counter-summit into a ritual of dissent, which serves to uphold the interests of the official summit and the host government. This logic has prevailed in numerous counter summits since the 1990s.

At the 2001 Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, funding from the Canadian federal government to mainstream NGOs and trade unions was granted under certain conditions. A large segment of the protest movement was de facto excluded from the People's Summit. This in itself led to the formation of a second parallel People's venue, which some observers described as a "a counter-People's Summit. In turn, in an agreement with both the provincial and federal authorities, the organizers directed the protest march towards a remote location some 10 km out of town, rather than towards the historical downtown area where the official FTAA summit was being held behind a heavily guarded "security perimeter".

"Rather than marching toward the perimeter fence and the Summit of the Americas meetings, march organizers chose a route that marched from the People's Summit away from the fence, through largely empty residential areas to the parking lot of a stadium in a vacant area several miles away. Henri Masse, the president of the Federation des travailleurs et travailleuses du Quebec (FTQ), explained, "I deplore that we are so far from the center-city.... But it was a question of security." One thousand marshals from the FTQ kept very tight control over the march. When the march came to the point where some activists planned to split off and go up the hill to the fence, FTQ marshals signalled the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) contingent walking behind CUPE to sit down and stop the march so that FTQ marshals could lock arms and prevent others from leaving the official march route." (Katherine Dwyer, [Lessons of Quebec City](#), International Socialist Review, June/July 2001)

The Summit of the Americas was held inside a four kilometer "bunker" made of concrete and galvanized steel fencing. The 10 feet high "Quebec Wall" encircled part of the historic city center including the parliamentary compound of the National Assembly, hotels and shopping areas.

#### NGO Leaders versus their Grassroots

The establishment of the World Social Forum (WSF) in 2001 was unquestionably a historical landmark, bringing together tens of thousands of committed activists. It was an important venue which allowed for the exchange of ideas and the establishment of ties of solidarity.

What is at stake is the ambivalent role of the leaders of progressive organizations. Their cozy and polite relationship to the inner circles of power, to corporate and government funding, aid agencies, the World Bank, etc, undermines their relationship and responsibilities to their rank and file. The objective of manufactured dissent is precisely that: to distance the leaders from their rank and file as a means to effectively silencing and weakening grassroots actions.

Funding dissent is also a means of infiltrating the NGOs as well as acquiring inside information on strategies of protest and resistance of grass-roots movements.

Most of the grassroots participating organizations in the World Social Forum including peasant, workers' and student organizations, firmly committed to combating neoliberalism were unaware of the WSF International Council's relationship to corporate funding, negotiated behind their backs by a handful of NGO leaders with ties to both official and private funding agencies.

Funding to progressive organizations is not unconditional. Its purpose is to "pacify" and manipulate the protest movement. Precise conditionalities are set by the funding agencies. If they are not met, the disbursements are discontinued and the recipient NGO is driven into de facto bankruptcy due to lack of funds.

The WSF defines itself as "an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and inter-linking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neo-liberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a society centred on the human person". (See [Fórum Social Mundial](#), accessed 2010).

The WSF is a mosaic of individual initiatives which does not directly threaten or challenge the legitimacy of global capitalism and its institutions. It meets annually. It is characterised by a multitude of sessions and workshops. In this regard, one of the features of the WSF was to retain the "do-it-yourself" framework, characteristic of the donor funded counter G7 People's Summits of the 1990s.

This apparent disorganized structure is deliberate. While favoring debate on a number of individual topics, the WSF framework is not conducive to the articulation of a cohesive common platform and plan of action directed against global capitalism. Moreover, the US led war in the Middle East and Central Asia, which broke out a few months after the inaugural WSF venue in Porto Alegre in January 2001, has not been a central issue in forum discussions.

What prevails is a vast and intricate network of organizations. The recipient grassroots organizations in developing countries are invariably unaware that their partner NGOs in the United States or the European Union, which are providing them with financial support, are themselves funded by major foundations. The money trickles down, setting constraints on grassroots actions. Many of these NGO leaders are committed and well meaning individuals acting within a framework which sets the boundaries of dissent. The leaders of these movements are often co-opted, without even realizing that as a result of corporate funding their hands are tied.

Global capitalism finances anti-capitalism: an absurd and contradictory relationship.

"Another World is Possible", but it cannot be meaningfully achieved under the present arrangement.

A shake-up of the World Social Forum, of its organizational structure, its funding arrangements and leadership is required.

There can be no meaningful mass movement when dissent is generously funded by those same corporate interests which are the target of the protest movement. In the words of McGeorge Bundy, president of the Ford Foundation (1966-1979), "Everything the [Ford]

Foundation did could be regarded as 'making the World safe for capitalism'".

The original source of this article is [Global Research](#)

Copyright © [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#), [Global Research](#), 2019

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

#### About the author:

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Editor of Global Research. He has taught as visiting professor in Western Europe, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. He has served as economic adviser to governments of developing countries and has acted as a consultant for several international organizations. He is the author of 13 books. He is a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His writings have been published in more than twenty languages. In 2014, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit of the Republic of Serbia for his writings on NATO's war of aggression against Yugoslavia. He can be reached at [crgeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:crgeditor@yahoo.com)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)