

Social Activism Funded by Global Capitalism, Serves the Neoliberal World Order. The 2018 World Social Forum (WSF) in Salvador, Brazil

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)
Global Research, March 28, 2018

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)
Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

At the World Social Forum in Salvador de Bahia, thousands of people took to the streets “in the name of democracy”: the women’s movement, Black Lives Matter, Environmentalists, Indigenous People’s Organizations, the Landless Farmers Movement, Youth Organizations, Students, LGBT, among others.

As part of the 13th World Social Forum they marched to the slogan:

“Resist is to Create. Resist is to Transform”

“Resistir É Criar, Resistir É Transformar”



My question:

Resist Whom?

The leaders and organizers of the WSF in Salvador, Brazil are in persistent denial; surely by now they should acknowledge that **the WSF venue -including travel expenses- are funded by the same corporate interests which are the object of widespread political and social “RESISTANCE” and dissent.**

How convenient. The corporations are funding dissent with a view to controlling dissent and the WSF organizers are complicit.

“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 Ford, Rockefeller et al will generously fund progressive anti-capitalist networks as well as environmentalists (opposed to Wall Street and Big Oil), etc. with a view to ultimately overseeing and shaping their various activities.” (M. C, 2016)

The WSF is said to have transformed progressive movements, leading to what is described as the emergence of the “Global Left”. Nonsense. Real progressive movements have been shattered, largely as a result of the funding of dissent.

What is this Global Left, does it have a grassroots movement?

It is largely composed of “Leftist Intellectuals” and “Organizers”. They say they are fighting Neoliberalism.

But their WSF movement is largely “funded by neoliberalism”.

**People who participated in the WSF Venue
did not know that “RESIST” GLOBAL CAPITALISM
is funded by “GLOBAL CAPITALISM”.**

They have been misled by the WSF organizers.

In other words, while the WSF **Resist to Transform** logo is meaningful, in practice it is also redundant.

Colonial Reparations were contemplated at the World Social Forum 2018, meeting in Salvador, Brazil

The theme of reparations at the 2018 World Social Forum in Salvador de Bahia was treated in the workshop Repairs to Colonialism, in the World Assembly of Resistance Peoples, Movements and Territories and in the Agora of futures. In these activities participated some hundred people, many of whom representatives of other organizations. It was made a point of the situation on the reparations in recent years trying to identify actions most promising for the future.

To whom should these demands for colonial reparation be addressed?

The corporations and Western governments (“former” colonial powers) which generously funded the WSF Venue as well as the NGO participants are routinely involved in a process of neo-colonial social destruction and plunder of resources, not to mention warfare.

When the WSF was held in Mumbai in 2004, the Indian WSF host committee courageously confronted the WSF organizers and declined support from the Ford Foundation (which is linked to the CIA). This in itself did not modify the WSF’s relationship to the corporate donors. While the Ford Foundation formally withdrew, other foundations positioned

themselves together with Tony Blair's Ministry of Overseas Development.

Making the World Safe for Capitalism

In this regard, the Ford Foundation candidly recognizes its role in the "funding of resistance and dissent":

"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))

The anti-war movement at the Salvador WSF 2018 venue was notoriously absent

Under the banner "Against Militarization and Wars", the Salvador WSF published an empty declaration:

As parliamentarians and representatives of progressive and internationalist forces **We are concerned by wasting immense resources** in the recent global tide of militarization and raising military budgets of **a lot of countries** worldwide. [See the full text here](#)

YES, WARS ARE EXPENSIVE. While "wasted resources" are important, why not mention the names of "the countries" which are threatening World peace (i.e. US, NATO member states, Israel, Saudi Arabia), not to mention the millions of people that have been killed as a result of US-NATO led wars.

THERE IS NO "RESIST" in the above narrative. The text carefully fails to mention the names of the countries (aka US, NATO) which are leading these (imperial) wars of economic conquest and social destruction.

Needless to say the victims of these wars (i.e. Iraq, Syria, Yemen etc) as well as the corporate interests behind these wars are not identified.

RESIST does not apply to the US led wars in Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Yemen. In fact, it would appear from the program that [the issue of US-NATO led wars is not an object of debate and discussion in the WSF workshops.](#)

Mosaic of WSF workshops

The mechanisms of "manufacturing dissent" require a manipulative environment, a process of arm-twisting and subtle co-optation of a small number of key individuals within "progressive organizations". Many leaders of these organizations have in a sense betrayed their grassroots.

What prevails is a [mosaic of workshops](#). The social activists participating in the WSF have been misled. These workshops do not threaten the imperial world order. They constitute a ritual of dissent and resistance.

The mosaic of separate WSF workshops, the relative absence of plenary sessions, the creation of divisions within and between social movements, not to mention the absence of a cohesive and unified platform ultimately serves the interests of the Wall Street corporate elites who are generously funding the WSF venue.

The unspoken corporate agenda is to “manufacture dissent”. “The limits of dissent” are established by the foundations and governments which finance this multimillion WSF dollar venue.

The workshop mosaic is imposed by those who finance the WSF. The workshops format does not constitute a threat to global capitalism. Quite the opposite.

The Funding of the WSF

This section is largely based on an [earlier 2016 article](#) pertaining to the 12th WSF held in Montreal in 2016. The funding arrangements, however, pertaining to the WSF Salvador de Bahia venue are broadly similar, dependent on the same donor entities. .

The WSF is supported by a consortium of corporate foundations under the advisory umbrella of **Engaged Donors for Global Equity (EDGE)**. [For further details see Michel Chossudovsky 2016](#)

This organization, which previously went under the name of **The Funders Network on Trade and Globalization (FTNG)**, has played a central role in the funding of successive WSF venues. From the outset in 2001, it had an observer status on the WSF International Council.



In 2013, the Rockefeller Brothers representative **Tom Kruse** co-chaired EDGE’s program committee.

At the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Kruse was responsible for “Global Governance” under the “Democratic Practice” program. Rockefeller Brothers grants to NGOs are approved under the “Strengthening Democracy in Global Governance” program, which is broadly similar to that put forth by the US State Department.

A representative of the Open Society Initiative for Europe currently (2016) sits on EDGE’s Board of directors. The Wallace Global Fund is also on its Board of Directors. The Wallace Global Fund is specialized in providing support to “mainstream” NGOs and “alternative media”, including Amnesty International, Democracy Now (which supports Hillary Clinton’s candidacy for president of the US). [Michel Chossudovsky 2016](#)



In one of its key documents (2012), entitled [*Funders Network Alliance In Support of Grassroots Organizing and Movement-Building*](#) (link no longer available) EDGE acknowledged its support of social movements which challenge “neoliberal market fundamentalism.” including the World Social Forum, established in 2001:

“From the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas (1994) to the Battle in Seattle (1999) to the creation of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (2001), the TINA years of Reagan and Thatcher (There Is No Alternative) have been replaced with the growing conviction that “another world is possible.” Counter-summits, global campaigns and social forums have been crucial spaces to articulate local struggles, share experiences and analyses, develop expertise, and build concrete forms of international solidarity among progressive movements for social, economic and ecological justice.”

But at the same time, there is an obvious contradiction: another world is not possible when the campaign against neoliberalism is financed by an alliance of corporate donors firmly committed to neoliberalism and the US-NATO military agenda.

The limits of social dissent are thereby determined by the “governance structure” of the WSF, which was tacitly agreed upon with the funding agencies at the outset in 2001.

“No Leaders”

The WSF has no leaders. All the events are “self-organized”. The structure of debate and activism is part of an an “open space” (See y Francine Mestrum, *The World Social Forum and its governance: a multi-headed monster*, CADTM, 27 April 2013, <http://cadtm.org/The-World-Social-Forum-and-its>).

This compartmentalized structure is an obstacle to the development of a meaningful and articulate mass movement.

How best to control grassroots dissent against global capitalism?

Make sure that their leaders can be easily co-opted and that the rank and file will **not** develop “**forms of international solidarity among progressive movements**” (to use EDGE’s own words), which in any meaningful way might undermine the interests of corporate capital.

The mosaic of separate WSF workshops, the relative absence of plenary sessions, the creation of divisions within and between social movements, not to mention the absence of a cohesive and unified platform against the Wall Street corporate elites, against the fake US sponsored “global war on terrorism”, which has been used to justify and US-NATO’s “humanitarian R2P interventions (Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Ukraine, etc).

What ultimately prevails is a ritual of dissent which does not threaten the New World Order. Those who attend the WSF from the grassroots are often misled by their leaders. Activists who do not share the WSF consensus will ultimately be excluded:

“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)

“Another World is Possible” is nonetheless an important concept, which characterizes the struggle of the peoples movements against global capitalism as well as the commitment of thousands of committed activists who are currently participated in the Montreal 2016 WSF.

Activism is being manipulated: “Another World is Possible” cannot, however, be achieved under the auspices of the WSF which from the outset was funded by global capitalism and organized in close liaison with its corporate and government donors.

[EDGE Board of Directors](#) (2018)

The Edge Board of Directors includes representatives from major foundations and corporate charities including the Charles Leopold Mayer foundation, the Ford Foundation, the American Jewish World Service, the Open Society Foundation, et al. (see below)

EDGE Board of Directors

Co-Chairs

- › Cuong P. Hoang, Director of Programs, Chorus Foundation
- › Nicolas Krausz, Program Officer, Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation

Treasurer

- › Nikhil Aziz, Program Director, American Jewish World Service

Secretary

- › Rose Longhurst, Facilitating Member, Edge Fund UK

Members

- › Amanda Mercedes Gigler, Director of Philanthropic Partnerships and Communications, Mama Cash Fund for Women
- › Chung-Wha Hong, Executive Director, Grassroots International
- › Donal Mac Fhearraigh, Program Officer, Open Society Initiative for Europe
- › Laine Romero-Alston, Program Officer, Ford Foundation
- › Matthias Fiedler, Managing Director of Bewegungsstiftung
- › Sanjay Bavikatte, Executive Director of The Christensen Fund
- › Shalini Nataraj, Vice President, Programs, Ing Foundation
- › Tanya Dawkins, Trustee, CarEth Foundation
- › Tatiana Cordero, Executive Director, Urgent Action Fund Latin America
- › Terry Odendahl, Executive Director, Global Greengrants Fund
- › Vivian Paulissen, Knowledge and Programme Manager, European Cultural Foundation

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#), Global Research, 2018

[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 undertaken field research in Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific and has written extensively on the economies of developing countries with a focus on poverty and social inequality. He has also undertaken research in Health Economics (UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UNFPA, CIDA, WHO, Government of Venezuela, John Hopkins International Journal of Health Services (1979, 1983) He is the author of 13 books including *The Globalization of Poverty and The New World Order* (2003), *America's "War on Terrorism"* (2005), *The Globalization of War, America's Long War against Humanity* (2015). 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

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

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