

Old and New Globalization

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I. WORDS, PREJUDICES AND COMPLEXITIES

A Hypnotic Word

People, scholars included, are not pure intellects. We have various feelings, interests and experiences that condition our grasp of ideas. Every word may mean much more than might be supposed from definitions given in either dictionaries or academic papers. This is particularly important to remember when confronted with a word like “globalization.” The word “globalization” itself, apart from its eventual corresponding reality, has become *a social phenomenon*. The ideas normally related to the term were already well-known realities before “globalization” became a sociological star with its own life in mass-media and every kind of scholarly circle. It is a key term to pronounce or to write in order to show that one is acquainted with current world news as well as prepared for the future, no matter how superficial one’s personal understanding of the term is. Scholars from a broad range of scientific, technological and professional backgrounds continue to produce mountains of papers and books about the term. It possesses a hypnotizing power. Not only is it a politically-correct term, but it has also become an unavoidable expression for any social, political, economic and ethical explanation of the present day.

Such frequent usage of the term does not imply a common and clear notion of “globalization,” nor of the generally-accepted appraisal of the reality that is presumed in it. The continuous usage of the word constitutes a further difficulty for its understanding, so that it becomes a buzz word rather than a term with any rationalized meaning. *The greatest hindrance to an understanding is shown in the assumption that there is an all-embracing term which can explain all possible facts.* Such is the hypnotic effect of “globalization.” In this regard, the least

reliable are those who take for granted that there is only one meaning of the term. They usually use it in the most optimistic sense, because of ideological interests or naïveté. They try to explain and justify every social, political and economic fact by mentioning "globalization," but hardly explain anything and create a marked confusion.

We must be careful when analyzing the meaning of the term lest we too accept a prejudicial meaning or too sharp a simplification of *globalization*. In doing this analysis we need a proper understanding of the conceptual issue surrounding "globalization." Its popularity surpasses that of other fashionable current terms like "end of history," "new age," "global village" or "postmodernism," all of which appear to be allies of "globalization" in the configuration of *a new world*. Besides, our catch-phrase is being used to come to the aid —or to the rescue — of some old terms like "free market," "liberalization" or "progress." *Globalization* is the melting pot of a number of terms that might be more significant in the end, but rest under the façade of the catch-phrase for their own marketing purposes.

Pride and Prejudice

The word "globalization" has been successfully introduced in the market of ideas. A part of its success lies in its *ambiguity*, which lets people easily accommodate the term to their own viewpoint. Hence the ideas people have of the term are quite different. Such diverse conceptions are based on prejudice and on a certain proud unwillingness to change our outlook. *Our previous judgments* ("pre-judices") *and pride are shaped by our ideology, interests and moral values*. It is not my aim here to give an unending list of ideologies, interests and moral values. Let us consider instead some of the most representative social systems in order to understand the influence of preconceptions in our comprehension and appraisal of globalization.

We can start with a sort of "official" definition, given by the International Monetary Fund: "the economic interdependence of all countries in the world, caused by the increase of the volume and the variety of the international transactions of goods and services, as well as of the international flows of capitals, and by the accelerated and generalized diffusion of technology."¹ This can be regarded as official not only be-

¹ Fond Monétaire International, *Les Perspectives de l'économie mondiale*, May

cause it comes from a powerful international organization, but also (and primarily) because it expresses the capitalist viewpoint. In fact, *"globalization" is not a global initiative or a kind of spontaneous convergence of the whole world, but a capitalist term for a capitalist reality.* From this basic perspective, "globalization" is not global at all. It is true that almost everyone in the world is involved, but the vast majority do so only in a passive way.

As stated in the definition, *in the capitalist view, "globalization" is mainly a matter of trade and technology.* The quick advancement of technology since the Industrial Revolution meant that capitalism and industrial or technical advances amount to one and the same thing. Capitalist investments and capitalist countries have led successive waves of technological revolutions. Probably the main technological sectors are communication and transport, precisely the key areas in which the current globalization of markets is taking place. This globalization is not a cause, but rather a consequence of technological development. In other words, we see how technology has been at the service of a form of capitalism which is vaguely termed as "globalization." And this capitalist technology, as well as its Communist counterpart, has had a principally military aim. Much major technology is just an adaptation of military machinery, as in the case of the Internet or the tractor. In any event, technology, including its armed branch, is subjected to trade, that is, to money, especially today, when finance and speculation make up the main element of trade. Therefore, from the capitalist outlook, *money is the central notion of globalization.* Any other conclusion, indeed, would have been surprising: capitalism is centered on capital, on money.

More pride and prejudice come from another ideological family: the socialist and Communist spheres. Capitalism chooses a material goal, by promising at the same time social justice as an automatic consequence of its market-mechanism, the "invisible hand." Marxism, on the other hand, as the most widespread and impacting form of contemporary socialism, heads initially for social justice, while assuming an almighty state. As capitalist globalization is centered on money, *Marxist internationalism is centered on statism.* They follow quite inverse strategies: whereas capitalism aims at material richness, expecting to

1997, quoted by J. Pérez Iriarte, "Globales, locales y perdidos", in *Claves de razón práctica*, n° 85, 1998, p. 24.

achieve human spiritual values indirectly on the way, Marxism's aim is the achievement of human spiritual values while expecting to achieve them through materialistic means and a materialistic cosmovision. Both strategies have proved to be unrealistic and even contrary to their respective targets. If we really want to achieve an appreciation of authentic human values, we should use humanistic means and aim, from the beginning to the end, to achieve those values. In the end, even Marxism is a sort of capitalism: state capitalism. In practice both are materialistic and mechanistic systems. Marxism trusts the mechanism of the state and capitalism the mechanism of the market. However, neither the overpowering "popular" state nor the unlimited "free" market produce, in the event, the justice which both models propose.

Of course there also exist interesting mixes of socialism and capitalism, often operating in combination with democratic parliamentary systems. Social-democracy and Keynesian capitalism are cases in point. After the fall of the Berlin wall these models, as representatives of the welfare state, became the main enemies of the supporters of the currently-overbearing "globalization." What should be clear is that capitalist "globalization" cannot be "sold" as another form of temperate capitalism, for example as a "responsible capitalism," in the words of G. B. Madison (*Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities*, 1998), or as a "responsible globality," motto of the 1999 World Economic Forum in Davos. *Globalization is a revival of the most strict capitalist postulates in a much more internationalized and massive dimension.* From this standpoint, "globalization" does not represent so much a postmodern era, but goes back to premodern times or to early modernity. Nevertheless, the postmodern disenchantment and lack of social militancy in rich countries provides an outstanding ally of globalization.

A third preconception, *communitarian personalism*, is no longer based on a material and impersonal good, like money or the state, but on the person himself and his own social constitution and vocation. The very dignity of the person rests in his pride. A long time before the present controversy among Anglo-Saxon scholars, between the communitarians and the individualists, personalist thinkers like E. Mounier, J. Maritain or M. Buber avoided both unilateral poles and conciliated individual and social aspects of the person in an active, deep and revolutionary perspective. Unlike capitalism and Marxism, personalism can be regarded as never having been put into practice. There has never been anything like a personalist state or economic system. In spite of this, there have been and there are multifarious personalist

elements and experiences in many countries, even within capitalist and Marxist systems. This is the case in social economy and workers' self-management. Communitarian personalism is not so simplistic and mechanic as capitalism and Marxism. Hence it cannot be carried out swiftly on a large scale as the direct result of concrete legislation. Personalism comes from above, not from a state elite or a managerial class.

"TINA" and Complexities

TINA, "*there is no alternative*" (or "*pensamiento único*," the "one-sided thinking" denounced by Mediterranean thinkers), is the coined acronym to express *the dogmatic fatalism strengthening capitalist globalization*. We have already warned of the widespread tendency to assume "globalization" in one exclusive sense. Many sharing this tendency are political and economic leaders. There is also a chorus of scholars supporting such a status quo.

Although the description of this thinking can be more subtly or diplomatically expressed, TINA consists basically of (1) the triumph of a sort of *alleged free world-wide market dominated by large corporations*; (2) the consequent *strong reduction of the state to a police function*; (3) the ensuing *fragmentation of political entities* and the emergence of a new *regionalism and localism*; (4) the prevalence of a *virtual and speculative economy* over productive and real economy; (5) *transnational capitalism as the regulative framework of any legitimate democracy*; (6) *the submission of social values and education to the demands of a planet-wide competition determined by technology and commercial strategies*; (7) the *dissolution of any traditional moral and religious conviction* under the arbitrary and light style of the *new age* and *postmodernism*; (8) the consumerist uniformity or the "*McDonalization*" of customs and lifestyles. "Deregulation," "privatization," "competition," "efficiency," "liberalization" or "flexibility," which seemingly justify every economic and political decision,² have become popular mantras among reform-minded officials and professional politicians. Other questions are the degree of novelty and the consequences, negative or positive, of such features, that is, the challenges, risks and opportunities involved.

² On this narrow and excluding way of thinking called TINA see A. C. Morales Gutiérrez, "Pensamiento único y sistema económico alternativo," in *Revista de Fomento Social*, 52, 1997, p. 345-368.

A real globalization ought not to be interpreted merely under a TINA mentality. But even in this quite lineal way of thinking complexity arises. First, *complexity comes up as interdisciplinarity*. Economy is much more than economy, especially in terms of a macroeconomic system. Supporters of globalization hasten to emphasize the cultural, ethical and political aspects of globalization.³ They are right. It could not be otherwise. Consequently, a series of different disciplines is necessary to obtain a complete picture of globalization: we should at least consider the phenomenon in terms of anthropology, history, ethics, politics, economy, sociology, psychology, theology, pedagogy, communications sciences,...

Theoretical as it is, *globalization entails in practice a wide problem of governance*. J.-F. Rischard, the World Bank's vice president for Europe, presents as necessary a "more profound rethinking of planetary governance in the light of the two big forces at the heart of this increasing complexity." The two forces are the demographic growth, provoking environmental and social stresses, and "the radically different world economy," in terms of technological and commercial globalization.⁴ Rischard would do well to check more accurate demographic information in order to banish his demographic dread. But he takes the right view in assuming an active role for politics in the control of economic globalization. Globalization is also political and is to be governed through the collaboration of "public, private and civil society players."

None the less, the axis of present globalization still rests on economy, particularly on money. But this expresses a situation of the heart. Money itself is always unimportant. What is meaningful is how money or any other entity is embraced interiorly. *The pillars of globalization are, in a broad sense, culture, economy and religion*. This is a deeper complexity. Respectively they embody our intelligence, our body and our heart. The three of them overlap with each other. In a way, on the grounds of a biological constitution every human-developed action is culture, a fruit of human intelligence. Likewise everything depends on economy, on the administration of the tangible goods that our body

³ See for instance G. B. Madison (*idem*) and U. Nieto De Alba, "Globalización, Regionalización y Caos," in *ABC*, 23-12-1998, p. 56.

⁴ J.-F. Rischard, "A Crisis of Complexity and Global Governance," in *International Herald Tribune*, 2-10-1998, p. 8.

needs. Most discreetly the bottom of our heart lives on the presence of an absolute. The lack of a true relationship with the real absolute brings about all kinds of idolatry. Idols do not exist outside of ourselves, but in our hearts. We have noticed the hypnotic power surrounding the notion of globalization. Indeed, *globalization encompasses, for many, the category of an idol, the idol of their ideology.*

Globalization is not of a merely ideological nature. It is a huge and complex current reality with profound historical roots. But *its current facet is ideological and partisan*, though pretending to be purely objective and scientific. The economist J. F. Martín Seco explains the ideological source of the phenomenon: globalization occurs solely in those areas intended by the economic power. Thus, while international liberalization is total in financial flows, it is very restricted for workers.⁵ As to the idolatrous connotations, *globalization bears a falsifying resemblance to the universalism of the great monotheisms.* J. García Roca analyzes how globalization does not keep its promises and constitutes the most powerful idol of our time. In fact, globalization fails to generalize the development to impoverished countries, creates an enormous mass of redundant workers, imposes superhuman sacrifices on the poor and increases the possibility of killing people off through starvation.⁶

II. COSMOLOGICAL, ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BASIS

The temptation that an over-simple conception of globalization brings about, should be, by now, overcome. But we need to deepen our awareness of the human context surrounding this recent phenomenon. Globalization is to be understood globally.

Introducing the general preconceptions as underlying beliefs helps us to improve our awareness of our peculiar understanding of current globalization. But this particular period, significant though it may be, is just another stage of a wider cosmological, anthropological and historical process. It is necessary to be wary here, but we cannot deny that there are some quite clear trends here.

⁵ Cfr. J. F. Martín Seco, "El fin del Estado," in *El Mundo*, 10-11-1998, p. 4.

⁶ Cfr. J. García Roca, "La globalización entre el ídolo y la promesa," in *Éxodo*, 39 (1989), p. 35-42.

Cosmological Unity

As for cosmology, we can endorse the intuition of scholars like Teilhard de Chardin (*Le phénomène humaine*) concerning the cosmic evolution. It is a concept which has its roots in the most genuine origins of philosophy, as made clear by the Presocratics. The world strives to attain its unity. It has an "arche," or natural ruling principle. What kind of "arche" would be consistent with a real global unity? According to Teilhard, "unity does not enlarge itself but through a growth of consciousness, and therefore the history of the living world consists in the elaboration of ever more perfect eyes."⁷ The "arche" is consciousness; in Greek terms, "nous" or "logos." We are entitled to contemplate *our contemporary globalization as a part of the universal march towards unity*. The question now is to what extent our globalization constitutes a special stage on account of its distinctive degree of consciousness.

On the one hand, there has never been so much talk about something like this. Today we have technical means available to multiply the spread of any fashionable idea. On the other hand, however, such frequency of the topic and of certain words like "globalization" *does not secure the profundity and intensity of a world-wide global consciousness*. The extraordinarily big gap between the few rich and the many poor is increasing. *The gap has never been so scandalous*, precisely because of our historical surplus of production. Production has been globalized by means of the international division of labor. *Distribution has not. As things stand, a common planet-consciousness is impossible*. A consumerist mentality takes no account of the reality of a life of abject poverty.

Anthropological and Historical Universalism

The one promising aspect of this chaos is its being considered unnatural. It seems as though the tellurian forces of humanity demand an effective close union of humanity. This is a joint teaching of anthropology and history. People from very different cultures are meeting and living together on a scale never seen before the 20th century. Cultures are discovering not only their particular identities, but also their own universal values by meeting face to face with other cultures. This happens superficially on the basis of today's phase of globalization: new

⁷ P. Teilhard de Chardin, *El fenómeno humano*, 1974, p. 43.

international markets, new massive emigrations, new planet-wide media. It is a matter of degree and acceleration. But on a deeper level *the global meeting of the human race rests on a common human nature*, although many cultural anthropologists are still reluctant to use that term.

We need to review at least some of the great milestones of the historical process of globalization, unless we want to fall in a narrow perspective of the contemporary situation. A proper historical outlook is essential to distinguish what is really new or old in globalization.

The Neolithic Revolution brings agriculture and sedentary cultures together. At that time important groups of human beings were passing from the state of tribe to the state of firmly constituted *peoples*. That is, from primitive cultures to the first *civilizations*, including the acquisition of some permanent values for humanity and a rich exchange with other peoples. This is seen, e.g. in ancient Babylon and Egypt.

The *Greeks'* contribution can be synthesized in the dense term "logos." Theirs is *the definitive maturation of a wide and deep rationality* embracing philosophy, politics, sciences, art and a natural theology. *Reason is universal itself*. Reason belongs to all humankind and is the common ground for a mutual understanding. Reason is also universal in virtue of its openness to all subjects, to all dimensions of reality, even that which exceeds the natural power of our mind. And even though there had been earlier empires, like the Persian, the Hellenistic period and Alexander's empire represent an ancient paradigm of *empire*, out of simple states, and the appearance of *cosmopolitan societies*.

The introduction of a sound and profound universalism in humanity pertains to the core of Judeo-Christian novelty. But as a general human value it has been transmitted to all cultures and subsequent times. Islam has reinforced universalism ("ummah"), in spite of its internal and external divisions which are also frequent in Judaism and Christianity. *The faith in only one God who is Father of all, constitutes an incomparable foundation for universalism*. It is the foundation for fraternity, which even by the French Revolution was invoked as one of the main values for a new civilized humanity. We leave nationalist polytheism and arrive at universal monotheism.

Universalism as such is a Christian novelty. Jesus Christ embodies the definitive overcoming of Jewish nationalist spirituality. Paul is his principal collaborator in universalizing the good news of a univer-

sal love. Christian revelation is not attached to an untranslatable language or culture (like Islam in relation to classic Arabic in the Koran). Some outstanding early Christian writers knew philosophies like Stoicism which had already quite a mature sense of universality and cosmopolitanism. Those philosophies turned out to be of interest in so far as they developed and enriched Christian heritage itself in the peculiar terms of an evangelized culture. At any rate, universalism did not have much future solely through those philosophies and cults. And, for the rest, Christianity remains a summit of universalism in the sense of deepness and of extension: there is no other deep union of such magnitude among so many millions of people in so many places of the world.

A good deal of criticism about many practical deviations throughout the millenarian history of the Church is right and sensible. Since the peace of Constantine the Church has accomplished its universal vocation too often in compromise with political and economic powers and with western colonialism. However, even in the worse times the Church has served the poor and preached its universal message of love in purity, at the expense of suffering a constant persecution.⁸

Imperialism and colonialism are as old as history. They have created bridges between cultures, but with devastating consequences for the weak. In our epoch, Euro —and western— centrism have regrettably been usual under the excuse of modernization. A consequence is the crisis of modernity as a particular plan of optimistic progress. Today the sole possibility lies in *opening modernity to a plurality of different cultural projects*, interlocking as they may be. Modernity is much more than the Enlightened project. That is why F. Entrena Durán upholds “manifold modernities in an age of globalization.”⁹ That openness is not to be confused with “postmodernism,” inasmuch as pluralism is not reducible to relativism.

⁸ The theologian Giulio Girardi makes a keen criticism of those deviations, but seems to recall only the misbehavior of the Church, except for the theology of liberation, which he appraises as a paradigm of cultural alternative to the exploitation within globalization (cf. “Globalización cultural educativa y su alternativa popular,” in *Éxodo*, *idem*, p. 26-34). There has always been theology of liberation in the Church, since the Apostles and the Fathers, though in minority sometimes.

⁹ F. Entrena Durán, “La modernización: del etnocentrismo occidentalista a la globalización,” in *Revista de Fomento Social*, 53, 1998, p. 195.

The so-called Middle Ages surprisingly resemble our contemporary times in its two general trends: *globalization* and *localism*. The typical mediaeval situation combined the horizon of universal Christianity, represented by the Pope and the emperor, together with feudalism. At present we combine a global economic and communicative structure with the revival of regional and local centers.¹⁰

In virtue of its search for purity and original sources the *Renaissance* was in numerous respects even more Christian and universalistic than the former times. Its *cosmopolitanism* and its *exaltation of human dignity* are proverbial. Furthermore, many of the main capitalist and banking structures of contemporary globalization came to prominence in the Renaissance. Since then, a continuous series of *overseas travels and migrations*, whose great precedent had been Marco Polo in the 13th century, *made the world gain an awareness of its unity*.

The working-class movement in the 19th and 20th centuries brought a greater conscience of international social justice. Unfortunately this conscience has been weakened by means of consumerism. Working-class internationalism has been replaced, or nullified, by capitalist transnational interests. H.-P. Martin and H. Schumann contend the need of European labor unions in order to beat the supremacy of the managerial lobby.¹¹ But Europe is quite fortified against other less well-off areas. What even European workers need is an effective worldwide federation of labor unions. The oppression suffered by "third world" workers is an excuse for deregulation or loss of the social rights of "first world" workers.¹²

Space travel brings us now the opportunity of having a vision of the unity of our planet, of its physical globality, of its smallness in the context of the universe. All of this possesses a meaningful symbolism of our unity and common destiny.¹³

¹⁰ The emergence of the new localism is accurately surveyed by C. J. Navarro Yáñez, "Globalización y localismo: nuevas oportunidades para el desarrollo," in *Revista de Fomento Social*, 53, 1998, p. 31-46.

¹¹ Cf. H.P. Martin and H. Schumann, *La trampa de la globalización*, 1998, p. 300.

¹² See O. Blanchette, "Globalization or Humanization: A Question of Priorities in Human Development," in *Philosophical Challenges and Opportunities of Globalization*, 1998, p. 16.

¹³ See G. F. McLean, "Globalization as Diversity in Unity," in *idem*, p. 255.

REALITY AND NOVELTY OF GLOBALIZATION?

It should by now be clear that we face an ambiguous, seducing, ideological and complex use of a word. The nature and the main features of the facts meant by "globalization" as well as its historical basis have been described. It is time to specify *to what extent the current manifestation of the doubtless historical trend of globalization is real and new.*

A sound starting point is found in the comparison between the given eight traits of contemporary capitalistic globalization and the historical landmarks of universalism.

New Dimensions of Old Practices

The idea of a "free market" of supply and demand where a sort of "invisible hand," a substitute of Providence, has each individual seek his own interest while producing the common good, is as old as capitalist theory. It is pure capitalist theory. And *the same insurmountable gap of classic capitalism between theory and real practice is fully reproduced in current globalization.*

The novelty lies in the increasing domination of an oligopolistic network of world-wide corporations. Globalization rests today on "global" corporations. Like the prevailing contemporary economy, many of those firms are for the most part *financial and speculative rather than productive*.¹⁴ Only two per cent of the world economy is properly linked to real economy. Virtual economy exists in a world fond of virtual realities, and, thus, *this globalization turns out to be not much more than a virtual reality*. This globalized economy is particularly feeble in the face of financial crises in whatever part of the world,¹⁵ as evidenced by the recent crises of the "Asian dragons." The spread of damages is usually more effective than the spread of benefits, which clashes with our dramatic deficit in distribution. When will we build a globalization in distribution? That would be real globalization, an authentic peak in universalism, and a real novelty.

¹⁴ See O. Blanchette, *idem*, p. 19 and G. B. Madison, *idem*, p. 28.

¹⁵ See a more accurate explanation in Guillermo de la Dehesa, "La globalización económica y el futuro del estado," in *Claves de razón práctica*, 1998, n° 87, p. 26.

Although technological and work systems are not independent from the economic system, they have their own historical roots and autonomy. The merit of the huge growth of production pertains to scientific progress and its technological application, including more rational work organization. The modern technological revolution, indebted to earlier advances, came before the rise of modern capitalism, which took advantage of that revolution. *Science and technology have provided wealth, while capitalism has conferred the majority of technical advantages on a minority.* One of the clearest manifestations of this process of exclusion is the overpowering dominion of a disproportionate speculative economy.

The present-day global capitalism, the so-called "neoliberalism,"¹⁶ does not prepare for the annihilation of the nation state, but its much-desired reduction to a police task. It may be quite true that the nation-state is too big for meeting the needs of individuals and local communities and too small for solving the problems of a planet-wide age. The alternative, however, is not to have the state reduced to a mere servant of outsize capitalist interests. This is an old and gross mistake. Are we to keep submitting to a sort of "*politica ancilla oeconomiae*"? The problem does not lie in the subjection of politics to economy in generic terms, but in the kind of *disruptive economy stemming from this political docility*. The whole of public activity, in which people decide about their own power to seek the common good, is not to be limited to the dictates of the particular economic interests of a group, no matter how much this group and its chorus of scholars may promise to the community. Not even can the excuse of "scientific" justify any longer a practical dictatorship or an excluding one-way mentality. The title "scientific" was used by Marxists in order to canonize their doctrine. The prophets of capitalism today use the same mantra.

But a worse reductionism is an earlier one, that consecrated by Machiavelli. His reductionism lay in the subjection of ethics to politics, to a peculiar understanding of politics expressed in the time-honored phrase "reasons of state." *The surrender of politics to economy has fol-*

¹⁶ As a result of our analysis, we may well have reservations about the substantial innovation of this stage of capitalism: it is not really new ("neo-"). The oft repeated term "liberalism" depends on the idea of free market, but the capitalist market is not free, today less than ever, but oligopolistic. *Capitalism is neither liberal nor neoliberal.* This is just propagandist terminology for capitalism.

lowed the capitulation of ethics to politics. This is a way of speaking, because some particular ethics and politics always remain. What is at stake is the eclipse of the proper wide and humanistic outlook of ethical reason, under the pragmatic version of politics and economy, having a scant regard for the weak.

Supporters of capitalist globalization equate economic progress with political and ethical progress. G. B. Madison announces "world peace," "genuine solidarity" and even a "spiritual civilization." In his estimation, "the market economy operating under the rule of law is itself a form of institutionalized ethics," and capitalist globalization "constitutes the greatest force yet witnessed in the history of the world for promoting democracy" (see Madison, 1998). We may begin to wonder whether the arms race is insignificant to capitalism and its globalization, whether the growing global gap between the rich and the poor is a sign of solidarity, and, overall, *whether there can be a "spirituality of money."*

The democracy, or "liberal democracy," intended by the globalist intelligentsia of capitalism is far from being real democracy. The line of the capitalist argument consists, as usual, in creating a forced dilemma whose only sound alternative is, precisely, capitalism. Thus, Madison confronts us with "direct democracy" as the type to be overcome if we want to avoid the "tyranny of the majority." Where in the world does direct democracy exist? Not even in Switzerland. Should we be baptized as "direct democrats" just for not accepting to become plain marionettes of non-democratic institutions? Of course, we all have to work to stave off the danger of demagoguery and the coarsening of public attitude. But we must also be careful today not to fall into the clutches of *the tyranny of a minority*. At present, the most threatening minority in the world is the top management of large corporations and financial agents, such as the former Trilateral Commission and the current International Chamber of Commerce, whose chairman is the Nestlé head, Helmut O. Maucher.¹⁷ And by no means is it tenable to accept Madison's identification of his supposed "liberal democracies" with a respect for human rights, which, moreover, are not to be interpreted only in individualistic terms. Whatever happens in the worse situations of other

¹⁷ See Christian De Brie, "Cómo se hizo añicos el AMI," in *Le Monde diplomatique*, 14-12-1998, p. 14. Maucher also takes the chair of the European Round Table of Industrialists and of the World Economic Forum of Davos.

regimes, nothing can justify the countless and constant crimes against human rights committed by "liberal democracies."

Critics of capitalist globalization usually propose the recovery either of the union of politics and economy or, from another standpoint, of the primacy for politics.¹⁸ They need to go beyond politics in their general proposals, just as they do in many other individual spheres. *We need to state most definitely the primacy of ethics*, of humanistic, pluralist and solid ethics, based on dialogue, freedom and justice for all.

A further reduction needs to be pointed out. According to what has been said, the heart is the home of whatever absolute value we have, the source of our dearest desires, intentions and convictions. Similarly to the reductions of politics to economy, and of ethics to politics, religion has been reduced to merely immanentist ethics since Spinoza. Some secularization was a necessary purification for religious experience, but a one-sided secularism has brought about fundamentalist or integrist reactions and eroded the roots of moral convictions. The consequence is not only *the loss or the manipulation of the main monotheistic identities in many countries*, but also *the estrangement from the principal lines of our rational Greek heritage*, i. e., Plato and Aristotle. As a result of the whole chain of reductions (religion to ethics, ethics to politics, politics to economy, economy to accumulation of capital) we have come to perceive *money as today's global religion in rich countries*. This contemporary reality is not new at all, but its dimensions are.

Absolute Relativism: "Moneytheism," "New Age," Postmodernism

"Moneytheism" is of the utmost importance in order to understand the profound intensity of general relativism as a normal one-way thinking in which we live and move and have our being. The essence of money is its paradoxical *absolute relativity*, its ever-changing value, which makes it *totally untrustworthy*. By following George Simmel, Gary B. Madison (1998) describes it properly: "money is not something 'objective' or 'material'; it is in fact a purely '*geistig*' entity whose 'value' is constituted solely by the (subjective) 'evaluations' of acting human be-

¹⁸ See J. Pérez Iriarte, *idem*, p. 28; H.-P. Martin and H. Schumann, *idem*, p. 19.; G. Salvini, "Globalizzazione e Paesi in via di sviluppo," in *Civiltà Cattolica*, n° 3550, 1998, p. 353.

ings. (...) the 'essence' (value) of money is totally relative (...)." Consequently, what kind of general mentality is to be expected among "moneytheists"? The answer lies in *an easy and arbitrary total relativism, disguised as tolerance*. All religions are equally valid. Almost all moral systems too, saved for a few politically-correct customs and capitalist interests. Those who dare criticize such relativistic dogmas are simply "fanatics." Obviously this is the well-known Enlightened charge against historical religions and moral traditions.

We are under no illusion that money worship is new. For instance, Washington Irving wrote early in the last century of "the almighty dollar, that great object of universal devotion." *One or another form of mammonism is as old as human economic activity, but again the dimensions are new*. Economy has never been as speculative as it is today. Money has never been so relative and, accordingly, the dominant morality in wealthy countries never so relativistic. As we appreciate mammonism's step forward, we are careful not to fall into a simplistic iconoclastic attitude. Money itself is not the problem. We can generalize what the Yale law professor Stephen Carter stated in 1998 about the United States: "The problem in America today is not that we have a market economy; the problem is, we have let that market economy and its values dominate too much of our lives."¹⁹ The idolatrous approach does not start in the legion of consumerists, but in their ideologists and policymakers. At this point Dani Rodrik, a professor at Harvard's Kennedy School, is accurate. He questions the dominant religion of increasing economic integration in developing countries, of ever-expanding trade and capital flows. Openness is not necessary to economic development and is likely to widen inequality within countries.²⁰

In this relativistic scene the so-called "new age" has its place within consumerist countries. The pseudo-religious "new age" movement is extremely heterogeneous, its main elements being eastern religious beliefs (Hindu and Buddhist) as well as western gnostic, esoteric and spiritualist tenets. The choice of combination or cocktail is up to the consumer, or to the particular leader on whom the consumer may rely. Based on the hope of the new "age of Aquarius," instead of the past Christian "age of Pisces," there is a vague common idea of the

¹⁹ Cf. G. Overholster, "Champions of Reckoning Ought to Stop and Think", in *International Herald Tribune*, 21st- Jan.-1999, p. 9.

²⁰ Cf. Fred Hiatt, "Too Much Blind Faith in Openness", in *idem*, p. 8.

arrival of a holistic human consciousness rich in global harmony. Universal convergence, relativistic ecumenism, global definitive self-understanding of humanity: does the “new age” not suit capitalist globalization nicely? Neither this globalization nor this “new age” are *essentially new*, though they pretend to be *absolutely new*. In any event, they are well suited to each other. In fact, *the “new age” is an excellent paralyzing instrument of the critical conscience.*

During this “globalizing” and “new” age, postmodernism is regarded as the new and most representative philosophical tendency of our times in consumerist cultures. Is there no relationship between global capitalism, western gnostic esoterism and a philosophical trend like postmodernism? While referring to capitalist globalization, Madison speaks of “the new postmodern global age” (1998). Postmodernism mistrusts the great justifying stories (“grands récits”) and the nation-state is one of its most vulnerable modern targets. In other respects, postmodernism does not fit in with the model of capitalist globalization, which remains a typically modern and great story confident in progress and intending to be fully objective. Nevertheless, just like the “new age” does, *postmodernism fosters capitalist globalization by dispelling critical conscience and promoting the fragmentation of the social network.* The social inclination to a regionalist and localist fragmentation is favored by the postmodern fragmentary mentality. And of course, postmodernism embodies a criticism and a denial of “modern” ideals (mainly Enlightened, Hegelian and Marxist ones). This criticism can illuminate some aspects of social emancipation. But postmodernism is rather a refusal than a proposal. It merges with capitalist fundamentals into a radical individualism. The dismantling of objectivity and the retreat to an ironic, detached and aesthetic view make an eventual feeling of solidarity arbitrary and weak in the face of the overwhelming objectivity with which transnational capitalism is apparently spreading. The postmodern fragmentary and relativistic mentality is most opposed to true globalization, which is contrary to capitalist globalization insofar as it creates social fragmentation and a bigger gap between the rich and the poor. Postmodernism declares the definitive dismissal of any great ideal. Transnational capitalism proclaims to be the only alternative.

Indeed, global capitalism teaches us TINA, i. e., “there is no alternative.” This is one of the attributes most repeated by enthusiasts of capitalist globalization: “it is not a matter of human choosing” (Madison, 1998). But for those who really believe in human freedom and are

not Hegelians or Stoics *the way we can guide our human trend to globalization or universalism is open*. Not only is the possibility of taking more advantage of global economic opportunities available, but also within reach are all the essentials for humanizing our ever-increasing global coexistence. The single civilization with a new spirituality and ethos which we have at hand, as voiced by Václav Havel, is contrary to the exploitation conducted by multinational large corporations and speculative capitalism.

Cultural Asymmetry, "Tittytainment" and Neomalthusianism

A world deemed to have no alternative other than capitalism can only move towards a culture with a strongly capitalist homogenization: that is to say, a consumerist uniformity (among those who can afford to consume). Like the growth of economic capitalist homogenization, which is led by the European Union, Japan and above all the United States, cultural and spiritual uniformity (even more significant than the economic capitalist model) is largely *Eurocentric* (i. e., British, German and French) and especially prone to becoming *Americanized*. This uniformity is not to be mistaken for "western" culture any longer by typically Islamic and anti-colonialist criticisms. Genuine and historical "western" culture is rooted in a Graeco-Roman and Christian heritage, which, it must be remembered, have quite oriental origins. This vigorous heritage has little to do with relativistic "moneytheism," a variegated "new age" and disenchanted postmodernism. Let us be clear that this is not the type of western culture which should be leading the world. What does "McDonald's" have in common with Plato, Cicero or St. Paul, with Erasmus or Newton? We should never confuse a global mass culture with a single world-wide civilization.

The most influential culture today is the Anglo-Saxon one, and, on a lesser scale, the German, French and Japanese speaking nations. We mean some intellectual and commercial élites from these cultural areas. *Cultural exchange between all different countries in the world is overwhelmingly asymmetric*. It does not follow a model of dialogue and harmonization, but of absorption. *Instead of promoting a real globalization it aggravates the distrust and the split between cultures*. The Islamic distrust towards "the West" is an eloquent example.

What the *McDonalization* and the whole mass entertainment culture represent can be more accurately expressed with the formula coined by a former national security adviser of Jimmy Carter and ide-

ologist of the Trilateral Commission, Zbigniew Brzezinski: "tittytainment." Such a word results from a combination of "entertainment" and an image of the nourishing milk of a nursing mother. Thus, *"tittytainment" envelops a large-scale project aimed at contenting a frustrated unemployed majority of the world population by means of glaring entertainment, sustained by enough feeding.* This is the "bread and circus" of the Romans. Such a strategy is designed to meet the foreseen situation of the 21st century when just 20% of the world active population will supposedly be sufficient to keep the world economy in motion.

An interesting manifestation of that ideology took place in a 1995 meeting held in the luxury "Fairmont" hotel, in San Francisco, organized by the American Gorbachov Foundation. Five hundred top-ranking political, economic and scientific leaders from the five continents met for three days and discussed and planned with unanimous results the future of humanity. People like George Bush, George Shultz and Margaret Thatcher shared their forecasts and solutions with leaders of transnational corporations, the high priests of economics (Stanford, Harvard and Oxford), the global players of the computer and financial business and delegates coming from Singapore and Beijing. The former leader of the Soviet Communist Party called it the new "Global Brain trust." These brainy pragmatists at Fairmont established the formula "20%-80%": 20% of the world's active population will be useful, while the rest will just be fed and entertained. Thereupon, as the Sun journalist Scott McNealy declared, the question will be *"to have lunch or to be lunch."* Even rich countries will lack a significant middle-class. The unanswerable reason is centered on nothing but the pressure of global competition (cf. H.-P. Martin & H. Schuman, *idem*, p. 7-25). Labor will no longer be a central way of self-realization, but merely a mode of the most competitive production.

The above analysis must not be disregarded or underrated by the usual triumphalist advocates of capitalist globalization, who accept as given that the capitalist model is the only possible form of globalization. It is untenable and uncritical to neglect the huge world-wide problem of starvation, abject poverty and constant violations of human rights all over the world. The only true capitalist response is to blame every sort of "socialism," including state-directed capitalism. Whatever problem may be raised, the invariable cause is said to be a lack of capitalism. According to such "orthodoxy," capitalism cannot be but pure capitalism. At this point, capitalist globalism fails to differ itself from 19th century "Manchester" capitalism altogether. Capitalist globalism claims

to be the only and irreversible successful system for economy and politics. *It is ironic that it assumes no responsibility for the scandalous and ongoing injustices in the economic and political fields.*

Something to be acknowledged about the leaders of global business is their clarity of ideas, which is no longer witnessed in *many national governments, fluctuating as they do between an enthusiastic "economic liberalism" and a threatening protectionism.* For instance, president Clinton is now proposing global trade talks within the next meeting of the powerful World Trade Organization (established as a result of the Uruguay Round) in order to promote the export of US agricultural products. At the same time he is threatening Japan with a trade fight over steel exports. While large corporations aim solely at their own private economic interests and can do it wherever they like in the world (wherever they find the weakest governments and labor unions), national governments, especially if they have to represent their communities, waver between the real interest of the public and the pressure of these insatiable corporations.

Those supposedly in charge of the common good weaken in the face of the overwhelming private economic interests of large corporations that provide financial support for electoral campaigns. Political regulation tends to affect smaller corporations more than the dominant ones, which impose on the world the lowest wages and the worst working conditions (cf Blanchette, *idem*, p. 25). Many political leaders wish to welcome as many multinational firms as possible, without realizing that they are only welcoming a Trojan horse. In the long term, it is untrue that large corporations benefit a country. They simply have too different interests from those of a country. The mirage consists in the fact that "the economic well-being of every nation has been reduced to the survival of its oligopolistic system" (*ibid.*, p. 23) of large corporations.

Purely economic as it is, *the interest of capitalist globalism and its transnational agents, with their impressive strategies, are extremely wide and far-reaching.* These agents know that their dominion of the world economy will not be total and unquestioned until they control all strata of culture and the human spirit. That is why the support of the "new age" and postmodernism, through the fostering of a radical relativism, is so important for their cause.

"Moneytheism" has as its main dogma that *everything can be bought and sold, money being the measure of everything.* That is, pure

relativity is the measure of everything. Instead of overcoming the old dichotomy between the individual and the society, the relativism of global "moneytheism" implies *a mass individualism*. Almost everything is left for the individual to decide. Each of us can make his own cocktail of religions, of investments, of aesthetics, of politics, of purchases.... But do we not live in the midst of constant perplexity, recurrent weariness and world-wide mass fashions? Of course there is a great wealth of constructive and helpful novelties in our contemporary world, but this despite capitalist globalism, where there is only room for the "strongest." Nietzsche comes to mind.

In its attempt to dominate everything and to eliminate the weak, *the basic policy of global capitalism and its magnates is an unscrupulous control over the world population*. This is the *Neomalthusian ideology*. Malthus' prediction about the global incapability of producing enough commodities has proved to be totally groundless. Technology, new work systems and real scientific economy have once again refuted capitalist predictions. This is what capitalism does not want to recognize: the problem is not production, but distribution; the center of economy is not the capital, but the person whom the capital has to serve. Stubborn as nobody else, capitalist leaders and scholars try to justify their policies by creating an enemy. The Soviet enemy is knocked out. Islamic integrism is under control. Hence, the enemy is now proclaimed to be the growth of population in poor countries. The problem is not thought of as how to finish off poverty, but the poor. The last world conferences in Cairo and Beijing showed the paramount interest of rich countries and many powerful international organizations and corporations in changing the mentality of the people. They attempted to justify a drastic demographic control in poor countries by whatever means, including abortion, on a massive scale, wholesale sterilization and other (virtually genocidal) means.

The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) reported in 1999 that demographic growth was lower than expected and the feared demographic explosion would not take place. Nevertheless, a large number of *wealthy multinational organizations keep working to make abortion and sterilization common methods of population control all over the world, especially in impoverished countries/areas*. Global abortionism and Neomalthusianism are represented by organizations like Planned Parenthood, The Alan Guttmacher Institute, Family Health International, The Ford Foundation, The Pathfinder Fund, The Population Council (John Rockefeller III) and The Rockefeller Founda-

tion.²¹ *Millionaires of different types* seem to have a common intense interest concerning the control of population. Instead of helping the poor to look at ways to overcome their destitution, they are devoted to financing programs euphemistically termed as “reproductive health.” Some of these Neomalthusian magnates giving millions of dollars to those organizations are, for instance: Ted Turner, founder of CNN and one of the participants in The Fairmont meeting; Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft; George Soros, a successful financial speculator and founder of the Open Society Fund, paradoxically critical of capitalism; Warren Buffet, the second wealthiest man in the US; David Packard, founder of Hewlett-Packard and another participant at the Fairmont meeting.

Neomalthusianism rests on Social Darwinism, as presented by Herbert Spencer in “The Man versus the State,” where he coins the principle of “survival of the fittest.” Spencer had a remarkable influence on magnates of his times, like John Rockefeller, Sr. Other scholars followed Spencer’s track: W. G. Sumner; F. Galton, founder of eugenics; K. Pearson. Generally speaking, Social Darwinism possesses an *eugenic perspective*, being ultimately racist and marginalizing. In 1912 the First International Conference on Eugenics took place at London University. Among its vice-presidents were Winston Churchill and the presidents of Harvard and Stanford Universities.

Perhaps an analysis of current globalization which associates this phenomenon to other contemporary social phenomena like the “new age,” postmodernism and Neomalthusianism, does not seem to some stereotyped thinkers to be focused on this idea. Hence, a section on Neomalthusianism, in an article like this, may seem to disrupt, rather than evolve, the thought process. But, firstly, *Neomalthusianism is a world-wide implemented policy* and thus cannot remain apart from capitalist globalization. Secondly, *the rulers of capitalist globalization and of Neomalthusianism are for the most part the same*. Thirdly, *the sources and the contribution of Neomalthusianism are also couched in relativist terms*, for they see human life as having a totally relative value.

The problem is far more serious than is usually thought. Every year there are at least fifty million abortions the world over.²² Is this

²¹ Cf *The War against Population* (1988, Ignatius Press, San Francisco), by Jacqueline Kasun.

²² Cf B. Manier, “Terra terá seis bilhões de pessoas,” in *A Tarde*, 9 July 1998, p.13.

not a “global event”? Unfortunately there have always been abortions. But in the last decades, as a result of that global policy, the number of abortions has escalated. Such action may be regretted by the followers of Social Darwinism, but it is coldly still defended by the TINA principle, “there is no alternative.” This is as if abortion were a natural phenomenon that nobody has strategically promoted or imposed and nobody can stop. There are some scholars who accept abortion even in the last months of pregnancy, even on this massive scale. What is most striking is the silence of many scholars who recognize abortion as the killing of innocent and defenseless human beings. We should not descend into apocalypticism, but in order to be honest in the face of massive starvation and massive abortion we have to say that *current capitalist globalization involves global killing*. This is not new, but the dimensions certainly are.

IV. FIRST STEPS OF A HUMANISTIC AND NEW UNIVERSALISM

A Real Globalization against Capitalist Globalism

The term “globalization” has spread from the dominating Anglo-Saxon culture that serves today as the main center of capitalism. Many Mediterranean and other Latin scholars prefer to speak of “*mundialización*” (“mondialisation,” “mondializzazione”). Some authors like Alain Touraine distinguish between “globalization,” meaning the pernicious aspects of the current international relations, and “mondialisation,” indicating the historical trend which is to be accomplished. The dispute between the editorialists of “Financial Times” and “Le Monde diplomatique” (London, 1997) was illustrative of respective positions regarding “globalization”: enthusiastic and critical.

From the outset of our study we have been wary so as to reflect more acutely on the different ways of understanding and fostering that event recently called “globalization” and “mondialisation.”²³ Whatever term we use, we have to contemplate *the convergence of humanity to-*

²⁴ Until now we have used “globalization,” as we are writing in English. While using an adapted form of “globalization” (with a Latin root) is very easy in Latin languages, English has not assumed something like “*mondialization*.” It should not be that difficult. Another word we use and available both to English and Latin languages is “*universalism*.” There is no point in insisting here about the convenience of the term “universalism,” but let us remember that it is independent of the controversy between “globalization” and “mondialisation,” especially in its rich etymology: “uni-verse” i. e. turned into one, combined into one whole.

wards an ever closer living together which involves more justice and humanism throughout the world. Such a profound convergence, simultaneously a heritage and a challenge, cannot be reduced to the expansion of capitalist international trade. Ultimately, *the current mode of capitalism, as it recovers its capitalist "purity," is quite harmful for true globalization.* Likewise and paradoxically, *capitalism has a noxious effect on a truly free market.* Real freedom in capitalism is a privilege of the large capitalists. Hence, we can distinguish between the transnational expansion of capitalism and a real and deep globalization or universalism; and between what we have been calling "capitalist globalization" or "globalism" and an authentic free market. Freedom, in every field and particularly in markets, is not so straightforward as to be able to work in accordance with a simple mechanism. What is still working in our markets are remnants of some elements of a free market, despite the oligopolistic tendency of capitalism. As things stand, *a genuine and new globalization is a real possibility rather than a well-established reality.*²⁴ In order to make real such a possibility, some steps should be taken. Without any claim to being exhaustive let us consider them briefly.

Steps, Hopes and Achievements centered on the Person

According to J. M. Keynes, talking about the crisis of 1929, when the financial capital obtained so predominant a position, the only way to save economic and political democracy was the eradication of financial capital. So radical a solution may never be possible, but at the very least, *a political and ethical control of finances should be deemed necessary.* We simply need freedom from the withering financial speculation orchestrated by a few international agents. It is unwise to sign a blank check to central banks pretending to embody a scientific economic orthodoxy which is non-polluted by politics. This is the worrying scenario surrounding certain activity of the European Central Bank. In any case, central banks themselves are feeble in the face of stock-market flows or "casino capitalism." The Quantum Fund, led by G. Soros, made the pound sterling remain outside the European Monetary System in 1992. The crash of long-term capital management in the US brought to the public eye the clandestine maneuvers of privileged hedge-funds. A concrete measure which is planned is *the Tobin Tax*, i. e., a moderate tax

²⁵ See Adela Cortina, "Entrevista sobre la globalización", in *Éxodo*, *idem*, p. 13.

on all financial transactions. Just 0.1% would be double what is needed in one year for eradicating extreme poverty in the world.²⁵

But taxes like this one or the well-known 0.7% are not the definitive and fundamental solution. *An entire new system centered on the person and not on capital has to be built.* That is why generic proposals like “participative capitalism” (e.g., J. Pérez Iriarte, *idem*, p. 31) or “responsible capitalism” (G.B. Madison), *though attractive, are contradictory in their own terms.* Participation and responsibility cannot be found in money, but in the person as the main author of development. Anyway, let us be clear: What an expression like “participative capitalism” may mean is *the synthesis of the ideas of free market and of popular participation or democracy.* But this is not capitalism. Capitalism has been partly corrected in its symptoms, but not cured; it is incurable.

Beside Keynes’ surgical solution and other initiatives already mentioned, many scholars are asking for *a new world social contract.*²⁶ These proposals are still completely generic. They do not appear to imply the academic opposition between contractarian and natural law theories. As we can envisage them, they just aim at *the need of a world-wide egalitarian dialogue leading to a universal agreement to assure and to generalize social conquests of the welfare state.* Presumably not on a traditional state-basis. In fact, all those who face both the dangers and the opportunities of the new international situation, unanimously agree about the incapacity of any single nation to cope with the new global order on its own. One by one every isolated nation is going to be the “lunch” of capitalist globalism. On the contrary, grouped together in a sincere close collaboration, nations may have a better “lunch” than ever.

For this purpose one of the logical first steps is *integration within international cultural families.* If cultures are to integrate themselves

²⁵ Cf about hedge-funds and the Tobin Tax: F. A. Garza, “El final de la historia’. Es necesario un control sobre los mercados de capitales,” in *Acontecimiento*, n° 49, 1998, p. 14-15. Even at the 1999 Davos conference, capitalist leaders from Japan, Germany, France and Britain were pressing ahead quickly with measures that would toughen regulation, monitoring and oversight of international flows of money through vehicles such as hedge funds. But American officials kept the “orthodoxy,” being its first beneficiaries, and refuted the creation of new regulatory structures (cf. *International Herald Tribune*, 30th-31st-Jan-1999, p. 1).

²⁶ See, e. g., J. Pérez Iriarte, *idem*, p. 31; G. Salvini, *idem*, p. 353; I. Ramonet, “Nuevo siglo,” in *Le Monde diplomatique*, n° 39, Jan. 1999, p. 1.

with each other, they need to start cultivating a sense of great community within their cultural families. Until now, the only successful cultural family, as proposed here, is the Anglo-Saxon one. This partnership is one of the reasons behind British-American predominance in the world. Other communities are trying to share their historical ties more consciously, for example, the Iberoamerican (better known in English as "Latin-American," but including Portugal and Spain), and the Arabic communities. But now they have a hard time overcoming their differences.

Some interesting proposals have been put forward by O. Blanchette (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 25-26). He finds some resistance to the cultural invasion of large corporations in the US on the side of *consumer advocates* like Ralph Nader. They set us free from the goods quality imposed by those huge firms of their own accord. *Environmentalists* are also carrying a nucleus of resistance against the destruction of nature carried out by the same corporations. The efforts of *the labor movement* around the world have to become unified. Finally, Blanchette appraises *all sorts of activists*, individuals as well as the famous *non-governmental organizations* (NGOs).

Much hope is being placed on the ambiguously termed "non-governmental organizations."²⁷ Their valuation cannot be uniform. They are too different from each other. But, generally speaking, *the recent movement of NGOs represents the official recognition of the figure of the volunteer as the established ethical conscience within consumerist societies*. The typical figure of the volunteer is to be understood in contrast to that of the militant. While *the volunteer* is predominantly orientated to assistance and to a quite definite problematic area, *the militant* gives radical transformation of unjust structures in a wide outlook first priority. To assist people in need is a duty. But a mere palliative aid (let us say "palliativism," "asistencialismo" in Spanish) reinforces unjust structures by mitigating and massaging a number of their symptoms or aftermaths. Volunteering can be a preliminary way of social commitment, but *what we need is to be militants*. Our generosity should make us offer not only some free time, but all our heart and genuine effort.

²⁷ E. g., J. Joblin considers the NGOs to be "the laboratories where the future is being prepared" ("Chiesa e mondializzazione," in *Civiltà Cattolica*, n° 3542, Jan. 1998, p. 137).

Some of these organizations are experiencing important renewal in their areas and adopt a certain form of critical approach. Many others are not even financially independent from government or lobbies. By and large, *NGOs are well integrated into the capitalist system*. Though they may be critical of some aspects of capitalism, they willingly accept the basic rules of the game. What is more, *they have absorbed and domesticated almost all militant and revolutionary energies in consumerist societies*. To be honest, we have to admit that a particular use of terms like "revolution" has increased a demagogical culture. In a way, capitalist globalization is being proclaimed as the new and definitive revolution. Rather, it embodies an extinction of the revolutionary spirit and, for this purpose, most NGOs are its support.

Nonetheless, *some achievements give us encouragement*. The end of the negotiations on the Multilateral Agreement on Investments shows the efficacy of new strategies of social commitment. *The coordinated mobilization of numerous groups of different associations and skillful usage of the Internet* have proved to work on this occasion (cf. C. de Brie, *ibid.*).

Economic freedom does not merely lie in trade freedom or the free market. It comprises the entire economic life, production, distribution and consumption. In this regard *the successful and consolidated experiences of employee-shared ownership are a sign of hope*.²⁸ Here we can recall the general principle that "the poor have to be the main agents of their own emancipation."

In the international arena this principle is a key for a real relief of the implacable external debt of impoverished countries. We cannot expect any relief from international agencies like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank or the World Trade Organization. They operate under such criteria as "Relief will remain linked to good policy and performance" ("Relieving debt," in *Financial Times*, 22nd-Jan., 1999, p. 23). These capitalist organizations attempt to impose what they con-

²⁸ A present-day example is reported by R. Donkin ("La dolce cooperativa," in *Financial Times*, 22nd-Jan.-1999, p. 9). David Erdal did a careful comparative analysis of a large number of cooperative ventures, many of which were over 100 years old, in Imola, Italy. His conclusion is that *"egalitarian communities are better than others in important ways."* Interesting aspects are that Imola makes no great divide between rich and poor, and promotes greater voluntary work and more employee training. Life in general is of a higher standard. Erdal's finding was well received by delegates at the annual *International Employee Ownership Conference*.

sider to be an "orthodox" policy in exchange for some loan which will increase indebtedness.²⁹ The only viable and right solution for so many millions of people rests on *the cancellation of the debt, like the campaign "Jubilee 2000" is proposing*. Sometimes the primary help is just to let them live.

Employee ownership as well as liberation from an oppressing debt point to *social economy as the fulfillment of economic democracy*. A. C. Morales Gutiérrez (*ibid.*, p. 363-366) chooses six principles of an alternative system to the unilateral dominion of the state or of the market: (1) *a modified, but not eliminated or cut down welfare state*, intended to free us from economic arbitrariness and insecurity; (2) *less state in return for more participation and more market in return for more opportunities*; (3) *a complete juridical frame-work* regulating limits and conditions of the market; (4) *exemplariness of the state in observing the law*; (5) *the importance of beliefs, values and costumes with the constant reference to human rights and to civic solidarity*; (6) *the efficacy of economic democracy*, of hybrid and alternative ways. J. Rifkin focuses economic and even political democracy on social economy. Economy can no longer be reduced to market and state. *Market, state and social economy are to be in perfect balance, social economy being the oldest and most important. A new political force will be required as the support of social economy*. Such a force is designed to demand proper investments of a part of the benefits from the market and the public sector and is expected to consist of the millions of people volunteering for social service.³⁰

We have on our horizon steps to be taken, hopes encouraging us and achievements as practical examples in order to learn from historical globalization and to creatively build a new humanistic universalism. □

²⁹ All the same, organizations like the IMF pretend to be very *charitable*, as we read the self-apology of its vice-president S. Fisher at the 1999 Conference of Business Leaders in Davos. Being optimistically fixated on their capitalist interests, in this meeting senator John Kerry and the former vice-governor of the Bank of England Howard Davis have presented their conclusion that "globalization" is irreversible and most beneficial for humanity. They just see some financial problems. Massive starvation is a taboo.

³⁰ Cf. J. Rifkin, *The end of work. The decline of the global labor force and the dawn of the post-market era*, 1994, p. 337-338 in the Spanish edition.