

A NEW CHALLENGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE MOVEMENT: THE NEW WORLD ORDER OF PRESIDENT BUSH

Having just visited the United States for two weeks, speaking at several peace and justice conferences, I am astounded at how often I came across President George Bush's new catchphrase of the "NEW WORLD ORDER." Or is it not really the "OLD WORLD ORDER?"

I had the "New World Order" in my pocket all the time because it appears on the reverse of every dollar bill (*Novus Ordo Seclorum*)! And the slogan of Yale University, the alma mater of President Bush, is the same! A special issue of *Fortune Magazine* (Summer 1991) has just simply put on the cover: "A New American Century." This is to make clear to its readers that the American nation and all the rest of us on Planet Earth are moving toward a century dominated by the United States, whether we like it or not

Fifty years ago, Henry Luce of *Life Magazine* also titled an essay "The American Century" and demanded that the United States strive for world leadership. Now, after the breakup of the military Warsaw Pact to be finalized on July 1, 1991, after the breakdown of Communism and State Socialism in the Eastern part of Europe, and after Panama and the Gulf War, President

Written in June-July, 1991.

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Bush is taking up this theme once again. In his past speech to the Joint Session of Congress, he stated: "At this very moment, Americans serve together with Arabs, Europeans, Asians and Africans in defense of the principles and the dream of a New World Order. This is why they sweat and toil in the sand and the heat of the sun." Now we know--I am speaking ironically--why so many people involved in the horrible Gulf War sweated and toiled in the sun. It was all for the building of Bush's New World Order!

I became very sensitive and upset over this terminology, as it reminds me of other "grand designs" that have little or nothing to do with authentic democracy or social and economic justice. Being here in Berlin I am reminded of Hitler's call for a "Neue Ordnung" [A New Order].

Christopher Hitchens in *The European* (June 14, 1991) wrote that the concept of Bush's New World Order did not surface until mid-August 1990. The time was just after President Saddam Hussein's annexation of Kuwait and had to do with Bush's search for a way to globalise his response to the Iraqi aggression. Thus the "New World Order" was born, even if it also meant inclusion of members listed in "Who's Who Among Tyrants of the World" in the alliance against Saddam Hussein. Here I mean countries like Syria, China, and others, who have leaders quite comparable to Saddam Hussein.

Building up a New World Order means for President Bush also making exceptions to the rule, for example, for China! No matter how ruthless or how barbaric the Chinese leadership has been towards its own people, towards the Democracy Movement, and towards Tibet, Bush still campaigns vigorously to give "most favoured nation" status to Beijing. "We live," said the President defensively, "in a world of lesser evils." He went on to say that the world has very few absolutes. Thus China is a case of being a lesser evil. The same goes for Syria or for that matter for Pol Pot of Cambodia, who up to a few months ago had

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been indirectly supported by the pro-Chinese U.S. government as well as European governments.

That is what the New World Order is all about--Realpolitik a la Bush and his allies. It is not about moral forces or about nonviolent politics or about indivisible, universal human rights policies. The questions I have heard from U.S. policy-makers in the past months have been along the line "Will the next century be a new American Century or will Japan or a United Western Europe (the East is being kept out) command the stage?" All of these questions have little or nothing to do with the real situation as we know it: the terrible greed of the Western industrialized nations and Japan for Third World resources and the continued subordination of the Third World to Western interests in the economic, political, and military-strategic areas.

This can best be seen in the statement President Bush made in September 1990 at the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. He spoke once again about the New World Order and then stated: "In a world where ideology no longer confronts and big power blocs no longer divide, the Bank and the Fund have become paradigms of international cooperation." If not for the global consortia of NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) that have been trying to stir things up at the World Bank and IMF meetings, one would become utterly hopeless about what is ahead of us all if Bush and his New World Order get their way. Here are just a few examples of the New World Order of the World Bank. In 1989 alone, the World Bank took 724 million dollars more out of the Brazilian economy than it put back in. Is this how the World Bank is dedicated to sustainable growth and poverty reduction? Other countries like Ghana, whose debt burden has doubled from 1.5 billion dollars to an estimated 3 billion dollars since 1983, are actually worse off after taking the World Bank's medicine. The net flow of capital from South to North, in the form of profits and interest payments, has turned into a virtual torrent. This annual torrent has now topped fifty billion dollars! And the

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antidemocratic nature of decision making on project funding at the World Bank must also be at the center of our concerns. Most of the time, local communities are ignored and forgotten in the funding process. It is time that we, together with our friends in the Third World, expose how harmful development projects are when they are dropped in the laps of local communities without any consultation whatsoever.

As my good friend, the former Environment Minister of India, Maneka Gandhi, has stated:

Everything had to be big. Big dams, big factories, big steel mills, big power houses, huge spraying by pesticides, big cities, big cutting of forests by big contractors, big nuclear plants, big missile sites, big politicians who decided ad hoc industrial sites at one big stroke of the pen.

We are now into the 1990s, when the EARTH has decided that she has had enough! As Maneka Gandhi states, it is the time "when the inhabitants of her womb should be made to pay for kicking her and punching her and trying to eat their way out with acid." The World Bank and the IMF themselves desperately need a policy of glasnost--so that an informed public debate can take place. And the lamentable record of the World Bank on the environment must be disclosed! As *The New Internationalist* wrote in December 1990, "the World Bank has turned out to be an ecological Frankenstein, armed with a chain saw!" In September 1989, a hearing of the Human Rights Caucus in the U.S. Congress found that more than 1.5 million people are currently being displaced by World Bank projects! When Bush and company praise the World Bank and the IMF, they completely ignore the disruption caused by its projects, the forced resettlements of populations, and the threats to the livelihood and survival of indigenous and tribal peoples. Forgotten also are the refugees--the millions of refugees who are a by-product of this century's environmental and social

dislocation, a by-product of military and economic violence!
But then--these people are not part of the New World Order.

The Green Parties and Green Movements across the globe, together with movements in the Third World, have called for the creation of a South Bank. This would provide an alternative credit system to the IMF and the World Bank, and would be set up by Third World countries and indigenous movements of the South. Some of us are calling this a form of "counter (or ecological) development." It would be, as Jeremy Seabrook states, disengaging, where possible, from a single, damaging world-system--disengaging from the New World Order! This is, in fact, one of the most difficult challenges ahead of us.

The Gulf War has revealed that the U.S. is relying more and more on military and ideological forces to expand its global influence, especially in the absence of a Soviet counterthreat and counterweight. High-tech, so-called limited air wars are in store for those refusing to toe the line. Noam Chomsky spells it out even more directly. The central message from the White House in these days is: "We are the masters and you shine our shoes." He states rightly, "A truism about the New World Order is that it is economically tripolar, and militarily unipolar." The United States and Western Europe will support the most murderous tyrant as long as he plays along, and will labour to overthrow Third World democrats if they depart from their service functions (*Third World Resurgence* No. 9-90).

In the discussion about a New World Order we must not forget that the recent Gulf War has heralded the dawn of a new era of high-tech warfare, sending Third World countries scrambling to arm themselves with missile capability. Iran, for example, will soon start mass production of long range, surface-to-surface missiles with high destructive power. Aside from the Soviet Union, both China and North Korea manufacture SCUD missiles, making them one of the more readily available medium-range missiles. The Gulf War has prodded India into accelerating its plans to develop an indigenous missile

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capability. China has vastly benefited from imported U.S. aerospace technology and is selling deadly rockets to raise cash and win friends in the Third World. And let us not forget that Egypt previously cooperated with Iraq in developing Argentina's Condor II rocket, using German technology.

Also, we cannot forget how President Bush opened the post-Cold War era with the invasion of Panama, imposing the rule of the 10 percent white minority and guaranteeing U.S. control over the Canal and its bases. Since 1971 the U.S. has been in the lead in vetoing UN Security Council resolutions and blocking United Nations peacekeeping functions, followed by Great Britain. Noam Chomsky reminds us that Bush began to head the CIA in 1975, just in time to support near-genocide in East Timor. While Bush philosophizes about the New World Order, we are to forget his new friend President Hafez al-Assad of Syria, who occupied and still occupies a part of Lebanon. We are to forget how he has stood side by side with Turkey, while the Turks have intensified their repression of the Kurds!

The hypocrisy and prejudice contained in the Old New World Order is simply disgusting and must be exposed by the international, independent peace and ecological movements. Western racism is quite evident when one looks at how the West dealt with South Africa and with Iraq and the differences inherent in Western policies towards them.

For people in the Third World, the New World Order looks grim. Up to now, the West could hide and disguise its practices of hypocrisy behind the veil of "defending against the Soviet threat." But that time is now finished and the veils are gone. Perhaps we now have a better chance than ever before to expose these lies, these prejudices, and the double standards of Western governments.

The nineties and the coming new century bring environmental, economic, and social catastrophes home here in the West and the same problems to an even greater extent to the

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rest of the world. The uniting of Europe, I believe, will slowly be "Germanised" and will carry out the task of "Latin-Americanising," as Noam Chomsky states, most of the domains of the collapsing East European-Soviet economy. Japan will do its very best to compete with Germany and the U.S.A. They will all compete for who will exploit the most. Branch offices of Western and Japanese corporations will be set up all over the globe, controlling the Third World by economic pressure or, if necessary, by force. That is more or less the New World Order ahead of us, as it is coming into view for me. We must reject a Pax Americana. We must work for complete demilitarisation to counter the new military discipline as imposed by the West and a global NATO. We must work towards "counter-development" at the grass-roots level, to counter GATT and the multinational-company-controlled world economy. And we must become radical in changing our own consuming habits and lifestyle if we are to have any hope at all in changing and transforming the present production and consumption habits of the West. I am rather pessimistic, I admit, but I have not yet given up!