

Aborting the Revolution: Imperial Agendas, 'Civil Society' and Global Manipulation

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Democracy...under elite rule it becomes an anti-revolutionary force, assuring political stability and the maintenance of liberty...Thus society is governed for the interest of the minority by means of manipulation and violence. - Gaetano Mosca

- Introduction from *Between the Lines*

Recent editions of BTL have attempted to shed critical light upon the role and influence of NGOs and 'civil society' upon the Palestinian national movement, particularly regarding their role in resisting the Occupation and in 'state building' during the Oslo process. (See "A Critical Self-Evaluation of NGOs: Globalization, Donors & Elite Formation" August 2002, Vol II, #17. and "NGOs, Elite Formation and the Second Intifada", Sari Hanafi & Linda Tabar, October 2002, Vol II, #18.) Investigating the historical role and influence of this sector also gains significance within the context of knowing that this sector became a repository of many of the Palestinian Left's activists and intelligentsia during the Oslo years. Two years into the Intifada, their absence from the political stage and the popular movement could not be more apparent.

Until now, material published on this subject has largely dealt with the 'after effects' of the NGO phenomena, yet ignored the theoretical historical framework within which these institutions have emerged in Palestine as a function of the neo-liberal globalization process.

Mufid Qassoum, a Palestinian doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois, recently submitted the following lengthy article for publication which aims at contextualizing the 'NGO debate' within the imperialist new world order. It provides critical insights into the structural framework of the NGO phenomena, highly relevant to the current Palestinian predicament.

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The functioning of the emerging global neo-liberal mode of accumulation i.e. the current round of globalization at work since the 1970s, would be difficult if not impossible without being fused with and buttressed by the emerging global mode of manipulation. In other words, the expansion, institutionalization and the workings of economic globalization along neo-liberal principles would be inconceivable without the manipulation of the political-juridical systems (political control) and the civil societies (social control) around the world.

It is the sine qua non of the global neo-liberal mode of accumulation since the 1970s. Manipulation is an indispensable pivot for, and inextricably bound up with, capital accumulation. Wealth creation and accumulation require the production, circulation and accumulation of "truth." The sheer manufacturing of a discourse of truth to expedite the extraction of social surplus and the rationalization of its transfer from the majority into the hands of a minority across the global space has to be seen as the highest level of truth manipulation.

There is a critical, "organic" link between economic globalization, the restructuring of the global political-juridical systems and the targeting of civil societies around the world. Reshaping political institutions, apparatuses, structures, processes, and governing concepts as well as remolding civil societies through the penetration of their "private" organizations, apparatuses and structures around the world has been the quintessential prerequisite for reinventing global social and political control after its collapse during the international conjuncture of 1968-74. The process of re-engineering the "political" and "civil" societies around the world since the mid-1970s has been accompanied with some of the most sophisticated manipulative methods aiming at restoring the management and containment of tensions within the capitalist world system. Global

manipulation as a premeditated political project seeks to subordinate the “political” and “civil” societies’ domains to the exigencies and imperatives of the emerging neo-liberal mode of accumulation.

The overriding goal is to eliminate whatever impediments in the form of social forces (ideologies, institutions, agencies, and material capabilities) are actually, virtually and potentially capable of resisting and challenging the U.S. ruling class and their allies’ hegemony as well as the expansion of free market capitalism.

The manipulation of the myriad “civil” society organizations and the “political” society’s apparatuses around the world since the mid-1970s came essentially to serve a constellation of mutually generative, re-enforcing and interrelated objectives.

First, to increase the volume and facilitate the velocity of the social surplus flow (wealth,) from around the world into the U.S. in particular and the core region in general. Second, to deepen and widen, domestically and globally, though in a dialectical manner, the hegemony of the U.S. ruling class and its Western allies.

Third, to master the global space . This has been accomplished, to a large degree, by triggering the fragmentation of the geo-political and the social space of the peripheral and semi-peripheral regions of the capitalist world system, i.e. causing horizontal and vertical fragmentation. Suppressing the nation-states accompanied by the U.S. global policies of “Human Rights” and “Democracy Promotion” to provide for the free play of global capital were among the main reasons behind the fragmentation of the geo-political space of those regions and the disintegration of the social fabric within them.

Such fragmentation aimed at crippling and strangulating the nationalist, populist, protectionist and even semi-autarkic development strategies that characterized the economies of those regions and in the process to weaken their nation-states. This was in order to control their economies and eventually to deeply reintegrate them into the emerging global economy.

This global fragmentation is best described by Marcos, the Subcommandante from Chiapas, who viewed globalization as a “world of broken mirrors reflecting the useless unity of the neo-liberal puzzle” (cited in Burger 1998/99:3.)

Global spatial fragmentation is fertile ground for capitalism to survive and thrive, and for Western bourgeoisie hegemony to be exercised, intensified and extended globally at multiple scales.

Finally, the neo-liberal mode of manipulation, in effect, aims at manufacturing the consent of the subaltern classes and groups around the world to the emerging neo-liberal hegemonic transnational order, and thereby integrating them into the emerging global economy.

In short, manipulation on a global scale seeks to steer global “political” and “civil” societies in a direction harmonious, compatible and consistent with the needs and exigencies of the emerging global economy. Manipulation on a global scale became the responsible mechanism in cementing the base (global forces of production, material conditions and objectivity) with the superstructure (global social relations of production and their reproduction, ideology and people’s subjectivity) of the neo-liberal mode of accumulation and its historic bloc.

Consequently, the restructuring of the “political” and “civil” societies around the world have been the two major indispensable pillars of the global neo-liberal mode of manipulation. This mode of manipulation is grounded upon the manipulation of the media, education, intellectuals, intelligentsia, public opinion, elections, governing systems, ideological concepts, “NGOs,” international institutions and organizations, political parties, trade unions, business associations, labor and many other apparatuses, organs and institutions associated with both political and civil societies. These are the key structural and behavioral manipulative, intrinsic components assigned to “organically” intertwine, weld and amalgamate the structure and the superstructure of the global neo-liberal mode of accumulation and to consolidate its emerging neo-liberal historic bloc under the hegemony of the Western bourgeoisie led by the U.S. ruling class.

Archeology of Global Manipulation

Zbigniew Brzezinski was the architect of the Trilateral Commission and its first director between (1973-76,) as well as the national security advisor to President Carter (1977-80.) In my opinion, Brzezinski has been the most

influential policy maker who succeeded remarkably in affecting U.S. foreign policy since the 1970s. Carter's "Human Rights" policy was Brzezinski's brainchild. In describing the thrust behind such policy and its objectives Brzezinski in 1978, asserted:

U.S. foreign policy depends not only on material wealth or financial power - though the importance of both should not be underestimated - but also on spiritual attraction. That attraction, unfortunately, has waned in recent years. President Carter has sought to revitalize the spiritual elements of U.S. influence in the world. His human rights policy has already contributed to overcoming the crisis of the spirit in this society and greatly enhanced the appeal of our country worldwide (Brzezinski 1988: 107-8.)

"Human Rights" policy, hence, was formulated in essence to justify U.S. intervention in the previous Soviet bloc countries and to undermine their underlying ideologies. The uniqueness of this policy stems from its mechanisms of implementation. It relied heavily on mobilizing multiple organs of Western "civil" societies to carry out the Western ruling classes' agenda. To support the undermining, destabilizing project against the "totalitarian" countries, apparatuses of Western "civil" societies had targeted and penetrated various civil society organizations in the former Soviet countries. One of the most intriguing "battles," and/or ideological clashes of the last decade of the Cold War took place on the "civil" society level.

By 1983 and 1984, the Reagan administration was vigorously moving to "promote democracy" in the developing countries and in Communist nations.

According to U.S. officials, the project was intended "to place political aid to developing countries on the same level as military and economic aid" (Gervasi 1990: 25.) Furthermore, a "democracy promotion" apparatus was created in the policymaking establishment, including new governmental and quasi-governmental agencies and bureaus, studies and conferences by policy-planning institutes, and government agencies to draft and implement "democracy promotion" programs (Robinson 1996a: 16.)

In spite of their rhetoric, and moralistic and appealing masks, Carter and Reagan's policies came essentially to defend and further the U.S. ruling classes' traditional interests of wealth accumulation, hegemony and concentration of power. To put it bluntly, U.S. foreign policies since the mid-1970s were extremely and sophisticatedly mystified to defend and promote the same traditional strategic objectives and interests of the U.S. ruling classes and their Western allies. It is in this context that we should emphasize that at the heart of this ostensible paradigmatic shift of U.S. foreign policy lies the essence of the global neo-liberal mode of manipulation.

Substantial changes, formalistic aspects aside, at the levels of human rights and democracy in global terms did not occur. This "shift" which came to signify the emergence of the new mode of manipulation since the mid-1970s, in effect, was fashioned to smoothen the functioning of the global neo-liberal mode of accumulation. "Human Rights" and "Democracy Promotion" aim at altering, remolding and subjecting the subjectivity of the global "civil" and "political" societies (i.e. the global superstructure) to the objective (the global base of production) needs, exigencies and imperatives of the neo-liberal mode of accumulation grounded upon the principles of free market economies.

"Human Rights" policy came to signify a shift in U.S. foreign policy, a shift from U.S. global domination to U.S. global hegemony in the strict Gramscian sense. It is a shift from American external control of states around the world based on influencing their political behavior and choice through rewards and punishments to internal control (manipulation) of global civil societies grounded upon the adoption and internalization of American ideals as new conventional norms for their practical behavior. As Brzezinski asserts "U.S. foreign policy depends not only on material wealth or financial power-though the importance of both should not be underestimated - but also on spiritual attraction."

Civil Society – The Arena of Colonizing the Mind

Civil society, as we mentioned before, is the only site where ruling class' hegemony can be exercised. The myriad organizations of civil society including their leaders and intellectuals are the informal institutions and officials assigned to manage, organize and maintain such hegemony. Also, they are the critical, organic and mediating link between society, the political system (legislative and juridical structures) and market forces. Economic globalization will face formidable hindrances during the course of de-regulation, privatization, direct foreign

investment, environment, labor laws and other enactment of neo-liberal laws without the support of political systems, legislative bodies and juridical structures in every nation-state. Yet, to impart legitimacy to the actions and activities of national political systems, their affiliated juridical structures and legislative bodies and to extract peoples' consent towards the neo-liberal free market ideology, the targeting and incorporation of "civil" society's organizations, leaders and intellectuals becomes imperative.

The role of "civil" society organizations is crucial for the ruling class's hegemony, legitimacy and the operation of the economic structures. Civil society's organizations such as mass political parties, trade unions, business associations, universities, think tanks, intelligentsia, local leadership, cultural institutions, women's and youth organizations as well as mass media have been highly appreciated and valued by the ruling classes for the essential roles they perform. In addition to such roles, "civil" society organizations perform the role of societal self-regulation and the integration of subordinate classes and groups into the capitalist society on behalf of the "political" society's apparatuses. In the course of constructing, maintaining and securing the ruling class' hegemony, civil society organs become the organizers, managers and officials of such hegemony to the point where they embark on coercing those non-conformists who come under their particular jurisdictions. As ruling class' hegemony reaches maturity within its society i.e. wide and deep consent, the coercive tasks of the state apparatuses (police, army, laws, bureaucracy etc..) which legally assure the discipline of those groups which do not consent, would be assumed henceforward by the civil society apparatuses. The more the ruling class' hegemony is accepted, extended and internalized by its society, the more society's self-regulation, self-control and self-manipulation is growing, spreading and permeating.

On the other hand, "civil" society's organizations also are crucial in the de-legitimization process of any ruling class and the undermining of their hegemony. Therefore, civil society's organizations are major players in societal integration as well as fragmentation. Since the mid-1970s, U.S. foreign policy makers and strategic planners grasped the tremendous significance of civil societies' apparatuses around the world in the achievement of the strategic objectives of the U.S ruling classes.

Interestingly enough, the strategy which has been practically and effectively used to accomplish the strategic objectives of the U.S. ruling classes and their Western allies since the mid-1970s, is the Gramscian strategy of "war of position."

With the benefit of hindsight and the available empirical evidence by now, such policies did not come only to rescue capitalism and restore the plagued, undermined and eroded hegemony of the U.S ruling class and their Western bourgeoisie allies. Rather, such policies were designed to move both (capitalism and U.S. ruling class hegemony) to the offensive, to the global level with a long term-vision. Capitalism as a social system to be on the offensive, required strategic, long-term planning for its global expansion and its long-term stability. Similarly, the exercise of U.S. ruling class' hegemony on a global scale entailed its deepening within civil societies (to be accepted and internalized by the peoples of the world) and its horizontal expansion between nations around the world.

Bourgeoisie Organic Intellectuals And The Production Of Global Manipulation

In 1969, amidst the organic crisis when the post-World War II order loomed extremely precarious, ambiguous and without direction, Brzezinski was engrossed in researching and writing a comprehensive grand vision for free market capitalism and the U.S. ruling class and their Western allies' hegemony. His major concern was not only to salvage capitalism and U.S. ruling class domestic hegemony and external domination, rather his intellectual efforts were focused on how to move them to the offensive plane i.e. to expand and deepen them globally and domestically.

Brzezinski remarks that a "serious crisis threatens both the advanced world and the Third World," subtly implying that the "threat" from the Third World should be met by unifying forces behind the solidification of the Western ruling classes ranks and the consolidation of the developed countries. Taking into considerations the Third World revolutionary and nationalist surge of the liberation movements against colonialism and neo-colonialism of the 1960s, Brzezinski, during those years, viewed the Third World as a significant factor behind the organic crisis of capitalism and the erosion of Western ruling classes' hegemony.

Therefore, Brzezinski did not envision the Third World people as a potential partner towards a global solution i.e. the redistribution of wealth and power at a global scale. But, he meant by the "threat to the Third World," those

very real popular elements who are able to threaten the rulers and elites in the Third World countries still co-opted by the West at that time. The fervor of Third World liberation movements inspired by various universal ideological concepts and centered upon the masses posed a real threat not only to the local co-opted rulers, their cronies and elites, but to the intrinsic interests and privileges of the Western ruling classes, domestically and globally.

Under the prescriptions of the Brzezinskian school, which evolved into the glocal policies of “Human Rights” and especially “Democracy Promotion”, the role of the “political” society in “controlling the masses in accordance with the mode of production,” was shifted, “devolved” and “delegated” to the global “civil” society apparatuses. “Human Rights” and “Democracy Promotion” could not be conceived, nor deployed, nor implemented under any circumstance without the crucial role of the “civil” societies’ organizations including the transnational (global) “civil” society’s net works and the local “civil” society’s organizations scattered across the global space .

Crozier’s direct recommendation to “experiment with more flexible modes that could produce more social control with less coercive pressure” is a graphic example that comes to mark the new division of labor between “political” and “civil” societies’ apparatuses. This new division of labor centers upon the delegation and devolution of social and political control from the responsibility of “political” society’s apparatuses to the “civil” society’s organizations. It has been a shift from social and political control from above to control from below.

Although Gramsci did not distinguish between “political” and “civil” societies in the advanced capitalist countries, he did acknowledge the latter’s role in performing and imposing self-regulation. He also conceived the proper relations between the “political” and the “civil” society apparatuses in the advanced capitalist countries in which the latter formed a “sturdy structure of fortresses and earthworks” in defending the former. In other words, Gramsci understood Western “civil” society’s organizations as the outposts, the organizers of the Western ruling classes’ hegemony within the Western societies. Despite his insights, perceptive accounts and his brilliant historical materialist analysis, Gramsci, however, did not predict that Western “civil” societies’ organizations would be transformed into the spearhead of the offensive neo-liberal “war of position” on the global level, i.e. the penetration and from therein the manipulation of global civil societies. Nonetheless, he provided us with sharp analytical tools to try to interpret the current global socio-political and economic phenomena.

Penetration of global civil societies (the new sites of power and control) seeks to manage change and reform at the grassroots level (from below,) and from therein to assure control over popular democratization, mobilization and mass movements in order to preclude any fundamental challenge to the emerging neo-liberal order. To achieve this, it requires among other things that local organic intellectuals and intelligentsia have to be divorced from the masses. Thus, manipulation of global civil societies is believed to freeze, from below, the frangibility of humankind history and to declare joyfully the “end of history.”

“NGOs” have become the glocal spatial domain where such conflict found its mitigation, resolution and has been defused. The “emergence” of the third sector (the conventional wisdom is that such sector mediates between governments and markets while, in fact, it cements them) in its unprecedented intellectual and financial resources, is the organic process of the trasformismo of the world’s intellectuals and intelligentsia. The domain of NGOs, non-profit and/or third sector is one of the most prominent global social structural features peculiar to the current neo-liberal epoch of globalization. While this sector by itself has been a structural product of the radical restructuring of the global social relations of the neo-liberal political project, it also becomes a major global agency in reshaping the terrain and parameters of the class, mass and spatial struggles around the world. Third sector, NGOs or Non- Profit organizations, in effect, became a significant and effective mechanism in obfuscating and hence mitigating the class conflict, diluting class identities and culture, blurring the class borders and blunting the class struggle within nations and between them. Efforts to dissolve the hard core of the triad affinity between action-oriented values, intelligentsia and the masses succeeded through the glocal policies of “Human Rights” and “Democracy Promotion” and their associated structures of “NGOs” in isolating large portions of the world’s intelligentsia from their progressive ideologies and the masses. Thus, large segments of the world’s intelligentsia since the early 1980s and especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union start acquiring a bourgeoisie outlook and increasingly inclined to identify more closely with the upper classes than with those left behind. In describing such growing trend among the intelligentsia, Sivanandan puts it succinctly. “The state belongs to the rich, the rich belongs to international capital, the intelligentsia aspire to both”(Sivanandan, 1998/9:14.) This recent social “development” resulting from the social restructuring at the global scale signifies the co-optation of one of the most promising forces that together with other social forces could challenge the global neo-liberal project.

Thus, the incorporation of large segments of the world’s intelligentsia in the emerging neo-liberal power structures

gives a carte blanche to the transnational capitalist class to pursue accumulation for the sake of accumulation and to wallow in their self-indulgence without challenge or resistance from well-organized global social mass movements. This has been done at the expense of the majority of the world's population and the degradation of the world's environment. The world's intelligentsia's new upward outlook, has directly and indirectly been a major source of support to the transnational capitalist class and the solidification of the emerging global neo-liberal historical bloc. On the other hand, the incorporation of the intellectuals and intelligentsia in the neo-liberal power structures left the masses including the super-exploited labor, women and children and many other oppressed and excluded groups around the world, without ideology, strategies, plans of actions and without directions. Without a cohesive, progressive socio-economic and political project capable of challenging the neo-liberal one locally and globally, all protests and the cries of pain will end up by replacing the same governments but with different names.

To fathom the relationships between the neo-liberal project and the domain of the third sector, students of critical social theory should raise the following academic and research questions, which unfortunately have been absent from the development literature and debate. Did the third sector emerge as a natural, organic phenomenon that came to express a natural development stage in the social evolution of the global "civil" societies? As students of globalization, are we shackled by our epistemological proclivities to accept global social phenomena as a given? Or, are there other forces behind such dramatic, radical and fundamental social structural change at the global level? Can the so-called third sector and/or the domain of "NGOs" survive without being financed by Western governments and corporate foundations? What is the essence of such relations? Why did the unprecedented phenomenon of NGO proliferation take place specifically in the 1980s? Why did Western governments shift their Official Development Assistance from direct support of the southern "political" societies to the southern "civil" societies' organizations? Why did northern governments multiply, triple and quadruple such support to northern "NGOs" in order to channel it to the southern "NGOs"? Who is working in this domain? What are their educational backgrounds, professional qualifications and class affiliations? Why did this global phenomenon of third sector and NGOs emerge immediately after Reagan's speech before the British Parliament on June 8, 1982 in which he emphasized the role of Eastern European and Southern "civil" societies' organizations in promoting "democracy"? Are NGOs truly non-governmental, or does terminology have an ideological function in the service of the ruling classes' interests and in capital accumulation via linguistic mystification? Are NGOs truly more open, flexible, transparent, accountable, democratic, responsive, innovative, effective, efficient and empowering than governments, as many want us to believe? What is the real function and role of the "NGOs" in the era of globalization? What is the linkage between economic globalization and "NGOs"? Why has the World Bank tripled its support of projects involving NGOs (see Hodgkinson and McCarthy 1992; Gibbon 1993; Nelson 1995,) in the "developing countries" since 1988? Did such support come only to mitigate the adverse social costs of the Structural Adjustment Programs in the south and to cope with the effects of the contraction of the Welfare State in the north? Or, did it come to absorb the quantitative surplus and to defuse the qualitative threat (the revolutionary drift and action-oriented values) of the world intelligentsia and intellectuals? Are the NGOs an instrument to distance the world intelligentsia and intellectuals from the masses, labor, peasants as well as to distract them from the growing injustices, inequalities, exploitation and super-exploitation characteristic of the current round of globalization and embedded in the asymmetrical relationships of the world system? What is the cost-benefit formula of this "phenomenon"? How much financial resources were channeled from the north through northern "NGOs" (in the process creating lucrative jobs for the northern intelligentsia i.e. their co-optation) to southern "NGOs" for "development" in comparison to the hemorrhage of social surplus, which has been incessantly flowing from south to north? What has been the ratio between outward surplus flow and the inward "development aid" through the NGOs for the last three decades? Finally, did NGOs close the developmental gap between the north and the south, or did they contribute to the perpetuation of such divide?

For comparative purposes, and to highlight the global dimension of the phenomenon of NGOs, the number of Arab NGOs has grown from 20,000 in the mid-1960s to 70,000 in the late 1980s (Ismael and Ismael 1998: 442.) Some examples from various Arab countries illustrate the phenomenal growth of the "NGOs."

According to Mohsen Marzouk, a Tunisian sociologist and a specialist in Arab social and political movements. There were 272 NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1987 while in 1992 the number increased to 444 . In Jordan there were 221 NGOs in 1980 whereas in 1992 the number reached 587. In Egypt there were 11471 NGOs in 1985 and 13239 in 1991. Finally in Tunisia he shows that in 1988 there were 1866 NGOs and within three years the number reached 5186 (Marsouk 1997:197.)

Equally significant, are the recent attempts and experimentations with "civil" society organizations as advocacy and pressures groups mobilized to support their national governments to effectuate "Washington Consensus" neo-

liberal economic policies. This emerging trend is a neo-liberal signpost in the reshaping process of the terrain and parameters of class struggle and the radical restructuring of social relations around the world in which “civil” society’s apparatuses have been “encouraged” by foreign “aid” to shift from mass mobilization into advocacy.

A growing body of literature reinforces my findings and observations in the Palestinian areas in which glocal, hybrid NGOs have been shifting recently from their previous roles of political mobilization, empowerment and participatory community development into service delivery (clientelism,) relief, advocacy and pressure groups. The shift from mobilization to advocacy, I had been informed by various Palestinian development practitioners, has been triggered by northern NGOs. The general aim of this new trend of advocacy at the global level, according to the literature, is to influence legislation towards economic reform and political liberalization in consistency with the ten “commandments” of the “Washington Consensus”(Pearce 1993; Vacs 1994; Moughrabi 1998; Nazer 1999; Shifter 2000; Brouwer 2000; Al-Sayyid 2000; Petresco 2000.) In addition to such views, I argue, that inserting the approach of advocacy, which is originally an American invention, at the global scale came to put an end to mass social movements, dismantle the “triad affinity” between intellectual, the masses and the progressive and revolutionary ideas. In other words, exporting and applying advocacy at the global scale aims at demobilization, de-radicalization, de-politicization in order to maintain the emerging global neo-liberal status quo. It is a means of global socio-political control from below aiming at abrogating the few remaining public spheres and/or spaces for peoples’ actions.

Deterring Democracy

Undoubtedly, flow of cheap oil, recycling petrodollars, protecting Israel and maintaining Arab dictatorships go together. Yet, they do not go with dictamocracies , let alone with real popular democratization. For the time being and in this respect, the West is moving in a slow, cautious process to achieve two major objectives in that region. First, to prepare secular, highly educated, “moderate,” and Western-oriented elites in the incubators of the Arab “civil” societies, which are financed by the West, as a future “democratic” leadership to replace the existing authoritarian regimes only when the time is ripe . If this objective proved to be unpractical, futile and unattainable (which is the case), then the West can console itself in achieving the second and most important objective: the maintenance of the status quo of these regimes by relieving them from the pressures of the intelligentsia and the subordinate classes and groups who want to see fundamental political, social and economic change. In other words, engaging or entrapping the Arab intelligentsia in a myriad of “NGOs” and in the, seemingly, endless debate of “civil” society is the best method to demobilize, de-politicize, pacify, placate, de-radicalize, distract and distance them from the masses and to mystify the glocal class conflict. Hence, this has been a great service and “favor” delivered by the U.S. and the Western ruling classes to the authoritarian Arab regimes, ruling classes and elites. It has been the best way to dissolve the triad affinity between the Arab intelligentsia, the masses and the progressive ideas of fundamental social change. Brzezinski’s dream, in the Arab context as in many other places around the world, came through. Generally speaking, “NGOs” and other “civil” society organizations can harness the energies of opposition groups from the middle class, which might have been channeled into more radically political or even revolutionary alternatives. Such organizations can help placate subordinate classes and inject in their mental spaces and scribble on their mental maps some sense of hope that the existing system is flexible, accommodating, malleable and responsive to their demands, needs, and wants. In a macro global perspective, “NGOs” and “civil” society’s apparatuses not only have been helping to obfuscate the glocal class conflict, nor just taking a part in reshaping the terrain and parameters of class struggle, but they have been, consciously or unconsciously, tranquilizing and numbing the subordinate classes. Thus, NGOs and other “civil” society organizations should be seen as the best spatial site where Western bourgeoisie hegemony, can be exercised, perpetuated and eternalized.

The co-opted intelligentsia, their “NGOs” and their growing bent of academic hallucination, quackery and obsession with the imported “civil” society fad, consciously or unconsciously, have been undermining the political parties, diminishing the prospects for mass social movements and as a result have been deeply disrupting the national social-political fabric.

“NGOs” and “civil” society’s organizations through their primary focus on microscopic projects, though unproductive, and under the motto of promoting diversity and pluralism have subverted national social cohesion and crippled the scopes of collective action in their societies. The microscopic projects have blinded their development vision and shattered the development discourse. The lack of coordination and cooperation among them, their fierce vying for external funds, the growing suspicion from the general public about their role and their sudden richness, and the growing gap between them and their target populations has contributed to the atomization of the sociopolitical space in their countries. With “generous” external funding aimed at encouraging

their individual consumption proclivities, and not their society's development requirements, they have abandoned their previous development discourse rooted in the contextual, historical analysis of the world system and forgot the real macro, global structural causes underlying the underdevelopment process of their societies. Therefore, they have become the effective instruments for political and social atomization in the peripheral and semi-peripheral regions, no matter their claims, albeit controversial and untested, for some micro local developmental improvements and/or achievements. They have proved to be the best practical method to preclude the emergence of mass social movements and serious revolutionary oppositions who could subject the frangibility of history for radical, progressive social change.

By trasformisonizing (the practice of incorporating) a large segment of the Arab intelligentsia and intellectuals through the new sites of "civil" society and into the transnational elite networks the Western ruling classes not only brought about the formation of a broader global ruling class. Because of global trasformismo, the popular masses whether in the Arab world or other peripheral and semi-peripheral regions have been decapitated via the super-exploitation of the new international division of labor and through the very political exclusion of dictamocracies. They have no leadership any more. They have no organic intelligentsia to organize, guide and to sustain their struggle in regaining their social surplus and wresting their material and cultural share from the global pie of power and wealth. They have been, as usual, the major forces in the production of world wealth of the neo-liberal global economy; yet they have been alienated, excluded, impoverished and tantalized. They can see the fruit of their hard work but they cannot enjoy it because it has been appropriated and expropriated by the broadening global ruling classes including the co-opted intelligentsia as a new-comer to the realm of wealth and power accumulation. The world masses with the promises of multiple freedoms by "Democracy Promotion" and "Human Rights," and the promises of prosperity by "free markets economy" became like the legendary king of Lydia, Tantalus.

Arab "think tanks" including their staffs of "organic intellectuals" should not be seen only as the organizers of Western bourgeoisie hegemony in the Arab World. Neither, as local "technical" social engineers assigned to reengineer the Arab societies along the lines of the Western "ideal type" including its mental model, institutions, culture and goals. Rather, we must see them as the concrete articulators of the emerging neo-liberal ideology who provide cohesion and help to integrate a neo-liberal historic bloc and the consolidation of the transnational capitalist class.

As a matter of fact, what the Arab "organic intellectuals" have been doing for the last decade through "think tanks" and via other manipulative venues, is the cementing of the neo-liberal base with its superstructure. In other words, they have been subjecting the Arab masses' subjectivity, altering their frames of thought and worldviews, mobilizing their emotional and spiritual resources to be attuned with the imperatives and exigencies of the neo-liberal mode of accumulation. It is a way not only to obfuscate and mystify the class exploitation and super exploitation taking place in the Arab World as in other parts of the periphery and semi-periphery, but also to extract the Arab masses' consent for their own exploitation and super exploitation. Arab masses have not just been asked to accept, adopt, adapt, adjust, love and be content with their exploitation, hardship, marginalization, impoverishment, oppression and misery. Rather, they have been relentlessly urged by the Arab organic intellectuals, to confirm their socioeconomic oppression and to legitimize, once and for all, the deformation of their development trajectory by voting and electing their own dictamocracies and by adopting the Western "ideal type" as the panacea to all their problems. Voting and "free and fair elections" became the recent magic, manipulative formula to mask the unjust global structures, asymmetries, injustices, exploitation and super exploitation and exclusion underlying the emerging neo-liberal mode of accumulation. As Sivanandan observes "the free market destroys workers' rights, suppresses civil liberties and neuters democracy till all that is left is the vote (Sivanandan 1998/99: 14.) Dictamocracies also become a sophisticated instrument to deny peoples around the world the right to self-determination including the right to autonomous, organic model of socioeconomic development compatible with their history, culture, society and geography under which they want and prefer to live. Arab "organic intellectuals" have acquired their junior status in the global hierarchy of the neo-liberal historic bloc by demonstrating and rationalizing that the aspirations and interests of the Western ruling classes and the transnational capitalist class coincide with the interests of Arab societies and the interests of the Arab masses.

Through their total dependency on external funding they became highly receptive to the development diktat and agenda of the Western ruling classes and thereby contributing directly and indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, to the new North-South "dialogue" which has been transformed essentially into a North-North dialogue. It is a North-North monologue with one-way communication from North to South and with unprecedented power and more real impact than any mobilized bias in history.

On September 1991, Allen Weinstein, who served as NED's (the National Endowment for Democracy) first acting president until February 1984, told Washington Post foreign editor David Ignatius "A lot of what we do today (through NED) was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA." Weinstein's description prompted Ignatius to call NED, the central U.S. quasi-governmental agency to "promote" democracy around the world, as the "sugar daddy of overt operations" (cited in Sklar and Berlet 1991/92: 12.)

NGOs as Global Intelligentsia Receptacles

Western civil societies' apparatuses "allured" to defend "human rights," to "promote democracy" and to strengthen global "civil societies," with all due respect to those who have good, sincere intentions and humanitarian impulses have been distracted, deceived, misled and diverted from the real problem of challenging the unjust global spatial order. The proliferation of the myriad "NGOs" in the north as well as the south became an absorbing receptacle to innumerable numbers of the discontented members of enlightened, progressive, leftist and radical intelligentsia. And this is another facet of the neo-liberal project of manipulation.

"Third sector," "non-profit" and/or "NGOs" became a glocal site where liberal, progressive, enlightened and radical members of the northern intelligentsia community (usually drawn from the middle classes) meet their peers from the south. Since the early 1980s and especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, "NGOs" became a safe intellectual, ideological, moral and ethical sanctuary for a large part of the northern and the southern intelligentsia. "NGOs" represent a fluctuated, conflicted psychological moment taking place on the inner space of the individual level. On such a level, the calculation of reconciliation between the individual's subjectivity and objectivity takes place. "NGOs," also, could be seen as the locus where the dilemma of compromise between the individual's actions (practices) and his/ her inner beliefs and values (philosophy of worldview,) is mediated and/or contradicted. On such a level, the collision between the individual's normative perspectives (what ought to be?) and the empirical state of the world, encounters and conflicts.

"NGOs" turned into a domain, which is believed to mediate, though unevenly, between the victimizers (the global capitalist forces) and the victims (all the people who are negatively affected by neo-liberalism,) i.e. between the neo-liberal global system and its abuses, substantial inequalities, negative effects, injustices, and repugnancies. By the sheer conviction they hold as being mediators between the victimizers and the victims, NGOs practitioners reach the personal compromise and reconciliation between the satisfaction of their class interests on one hand and the satisfaction of their moral, human, liberal, progressive, radical beliefs and values on the other hand. Planners, development professionals, practitioners and activists with personal progressive agendas, though still working with or for "NGOs," most likely, live in a dilemma. They live within the gray area between the pessimism of their alert intelligence and the optimism of their self-oppressed will. They secretly struggle (at the personal subjective level) against a global system they despise but cannot reject entirely because of their self-class interests, and they cannot accept it entirely because of its malignant and lethal effects and impacts on the majority of the world population. They are satisfied materially and dissatisfied morally, normatively and philosophically. Their global spatial consciousness and human conscience have been suppressed by the benefits they derive from the very overwhelming forces of the system they averse. This is what David Harvey meant by schizophrenia, as one of the most behavioral characteristic of the era of post-modernism. Such behavior on the part of the progressive northern and the southern intellectuals and intelligentsia, no matter how strong their aversion and dissatisfaction of the global system, contributes directly and indirectly to the glaciation of the frangibility of history. It perpetuates the neo-liberal emerging status quo.

The global "third sector," "non-for-profit organizations," "NGOs" and many other formations of global civil societies are among the novel structural and behavioral features of neo-liberalism. They have been performing a crucial role in widening and deepening the Western bourgeoisie hegemony as well as in the expansion, success and thriving of free market economy on the global level. Through their various activities they have been mystifying the glocal class conflict, struggle, exploitation and super-exploitation. They have also been the new sturdy trenches at the global civil society level in establishing, organizing, articulating, marketing, circulating, maintaining and defending the Western bourgeoisie hegemony, consciously or unconsciously, notwithstanding. At the level of these glocal sites of global manipulation, the global produces and provides ideology, sends directions and imposes instructions, provides technical assistance, gives political and military protection, media support and coverage, and finances the local. On the other hand, the co-opted and incorporated local "civil" society's apparatuses perform the following crucial roles. They give detailed information (raw material) and reports about their societies to the transnational networks that will pass to the core's information processing factories and will turn them into new glocal policies for further exploitation, super-exploitation, manipulation and super-

manipulation. They extract masses' consent, altering their frames of thoughts, mobilizing their emotional resources and meanings and subjecting them benignly to capital exploitation. In other words they are manufacturing a neo-liberal, conformist man loyal to an ideology that contradicts his existential interests. Furthermore, they are engaged in propagating the social, economic, ideological and cultural ideas of neo-liberalism, maintaining social self-regulation, producing political self-control and conformity, mitigating and obfuscating class conflicts, enhancing the discourse of blaming the victim instead of the global system and locally articulating and organizing the Western bourgeoisie hegemony.

Global homogenization of the Western "ideal type" model of "market democracy" society in order to advance the U.S./Western ruling classes' interests, privileges and to perpetuate their global hegemony based only on some economic compromises to the Third World intelligentsia, is inadequate in maintaining and sustaining such global project. Without a tangible re-distribution of power and wealth at the global scale, the very principles of the Western bourgeoisie project, sooner or later, will come under the masses' attacks as they recognize that neither "democracy" nor "free markets" improved their existential situation.

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