
ALTERGLOBALISM: SEARCHING FOR THE POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE TO A NEW EMPIRE

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...So who are they, the 'antiglobalists'? Whose money do they spend when holding their grand forums and manifestations? What do they want? What do they stand for and against? Against globalization? So these are the questions that many people ask themselves today, but it is more precise to use a different term – 'alterglobalism' denoting that one should not stand against globalization but support a different, alternative and neoliberal globalization. In this respect the alterglobalist movement is of special interest and it is important to define why it has appeared, what has become the objective and subjective basis of its genesis and development. The answers to these questions should be sought in the process called globalization.

Globalization is often characterized as (1) a non-linear, non-regular and contradictory process (it is opposed by localization) within which (2) the world transforms from a system of national states into an arena of global players' struggle and (3) their relations become more important than the national ones. At the same time, it seems obvious to many people that globalization is an objective process, the synonym of progress in the new conditions. That is why there is no alternative and there can be no alternatives to the power of MNC and IMF, NATO and WTO, and everyone who challenges this is an enemy of progress.

Alterglobalists agree that the process of world integration is objective. But they strongly object that the only possible form of this process is the absolute power of global players. Behind the semblance of the renaissance of the market at the end of the 20th century there is hidden the system of relations which A. Gramsci could have called a total hegemony of capital. The paradox is that the market of the 21st century (outwardly oriented at the atomization of producers) has become a powerful totalitarian system, thoroughly suppressing people not as a hierarchical pyramid but as a many-sided and on the surface almost invisible field. A cover-up for such a system is the restoration of market relations. Only in the surroundings which outwardly look as a market one the corporations can use their opportunities to manipulate and subject the economic agents, consumers and workers. At the same time the corporate capitals can escape the state regulation as well as the control on the part of public organizations. In the former system the state, trade unions, ecological and other public structures created barriers for them. The illusion of absolute power of market relations lets off the leash to the global players for whom the limits of state regulation turn out ineffective. However, at present this model is approaching its decline and will be substituted with a new system inheriting all totalities of the former one and raising them 'to a new height'.

The appearance of more and more powerful global players is striking. The turn of the centuries was marked by the fact that transnational corporations were transformed into a power comparable with that of a state and started to get free from the control of the latter in the economical sphere. A paradoxical alternative to the weakening of economic role of the state has become an unprecedented growth of geopolitical and military power of a single, particular state – the United States of America. We have already witnessed the wars against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq which the USA started at their own wish together with their satellites from NATO. That is a new phenomenon – the entrance into the arena of a protoempire, the USA which aspire to the role of a kind of an ‘elder brother of the world community’.

The events of the new century have shown that (1) the deeper is the poverty and national-cultural suppression of the third world countries (and where as a consequence the reaction-fundamentalistic tendencies develop) the higher is at the same time (2) the level of monopolization of systems of legitimate coercion and spiritual subjection of the third and second world by the subjects of global hegemony of capital as well as (3) the power of shady transnational capital and also the greater is, on the one hand, the danger of usage of terrorism by the forces opposing this power and, on the other hand, the aggressiveness of the subjects of hegemony, of the ‘protoempire’.

Thus, the world is moving from the illusion of the restoration of free market, private property and open society, from the illusion of great ideologies going away into the past, to the recognition of the power of the protoempire, to the open formation of the global players’ supremacy. This signifies the beginning of the transition to a new system where the old idea about ‘ultraimperialism’ (the re-colonization) is probably realized.

Neoliberalism has brought up postmodernism and quite a few postmodernists voted against the ruling parties at the elections and disapproved the ‘humanitarian missions’ of the USA in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq. This tendency vividly expresses itself in the appeals to justify the expansion of any kind of violence, suppression of the dissent and of antidemocratic and inhuman actions up to the unleashing war under the mask of defending values of civilization, under the banner of struggle with terrorism.

This tendency is nowadays resisted by quite a broad range of opposing forces. As an alternative to the advance of global power of capital, total political and ideological manipulation and justification of violence there has developed the movement that was initially called ‘antiglobalist’ and which later obtained its present name ‘the alterglobalism’.