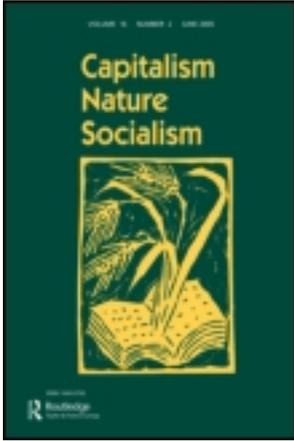


This article was downloaded by: [Ariel Salleh]

On: 14 October 2011, At: 16:41

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954  
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH,  
UK



## Capitalism Nature Socialism

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcns20>

## Citizen Movements Speaking Truth to Power

Ariel Salleh

Available online: 18 Aug 2011

To cite this article: Ariel Salleh (2011): Citizen Movements Speaking Truth to Power, Capitalism Nature Socialism, 22:3, 123-125

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10455752.2011.602524>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

too early to know the answer to that question. There is indeed a greater likelihood of redlining and categorizing who is and who is not “bankable,” as well as the potential economic fallout from such financial transactions. It is not clear yet to what degree the financialization of development will, in fact, meaningfully improve the lives of the bottom billion. And unfortunately, we may never really be able to know, because the answers to such questions are obfuscated by the ideological commitment to “democratizing” capital and the supposed economic freedom this engenders, as Roy so powerfully reveals.

## **Citizen Movements Speaking Truth to Power**

*Ariel Salleh*

**Heather Gautney, *Protest and Organization in the Alternative Globalization Era: NGOs, Social Movements, and Political Parties*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.**

Heather Gautney has written a terrific book; I say this as a university teacher and activist. Not only does she bridge living history with academic theory, the book can serve as a guide in both quarters. As I write now, April 2010, alternative globalization and climate activists, often the same people, are en route to the People’s World Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth Rights in Cochabamba. Others are gearing up for the second U.S. Social Forum to be held in Detroit, and the next World Social Forum (WSF) is in the planning. An emerging global civil society consolidates its agenda.

The author lectures in sociology at Fordham and is herself an alternative globalization activist, so political passion animates the book. It opens with a no-holds-barred account of why neoliberalism and the U.S. style of government are in disgrace and disarray. She sketches the capitalist mania for deregulation from Bretton Woods to the Washington Consensus, the trajectories of Pinochet and Thatcher, NAFTA and the Mexican collapse, and infamies from Enron to Fannie Mae. But the economic impacts of neoliberalism are one thing. The U.S. defense of “liberal democracy” is shown bleeding into the very terrorism that it would control. Gautney cites a document on “Rebuilding America’s Defenses,” which “advocates violent regime change in the developing world, including an emphasis on engaging multiple theaters of war . . . [in order to ensure] . . . the requisite flexibility to remain dominant throughout the world” (36). She is concerned that these wrongs are not getting into the mainstream political conversation, but it will be hard for a reader of this account not to concede that something has to give—and soon.

Gautney delivers an assessment of the World Social Forum phenomenon from its beginnings to the present. Each Forum—Porto Alegre 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, Mumbai 2004, Caracas, Bamako, and Karachi 2006, Nairobi 2007, Belém 2009—was colored and often constrained by its unique regional and social character, but

the Indian gathering elicited an especially positive response. The author notes that it marked “the broadening of issues to include fundamentalism, caste, and women’s concerns, the expansion of the WSF to include *dalits* and other disenfranchized groups, and the spread of the process beyond the Western hemisphere to another major region of the world” (143).

The main body of the book is given over to examining the respective roles played by NGOs, anarchist or autonomist elements, and political parties inside the alternative globalization movement. Gautney teases out the strengths and weaknesses of each political mode, and her treatment is generally a balanced one. NGOs like ATTAC,<sup>1</sup> she finds, manifest a kind of “embedded liberalism.” The WSF Charter of Principles is likewise compromised, as she puts it: “with its emphasis on personal responsibility and individual rights, [it] actually utilizes some of the same logics as neoliberalism, despite the Forum’s ostensible opposition to it” (88). Conversely, the other key WSF document, the Bamako Declaration, suffers from a rather top down Marxist line. An ongoing structural weakness of the Forum is lack of transparency concerning the activities of its International Council.

The conflict of political styles and WSF ideologies is usually summed up as a tension between “verticals versus laterals.” And if the laterals, led by Chico Whitaker, are keen to preserve the WSF as an “open space” for the exchange of ideas and networking, the verticals would prefer a tighter structure, a clearly articulated political position, and a capacity for making strategic interventions in the global order. Verticals such as Walden Bello want to mount a direct challenge to neoliberal institutions like the IMF (Bello 2002). The WSF Charter of Principles rules out participation by formally constituted vertical groupings like political parties, but this has never been adhered to. In fact, the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) was instrumental in founding the WSF, and others have made substantial contributions without co-opting it. Moreover, President Lula may have been subject to catcalls at some events, but his \$50 million check towards the 2009 forum in Belém was gratefully received.

Gautney’s book, with its crash course in Economics 101, handy Glossary and Appendices, will be especially useful to teachers of political science and sociology, particularly since the analysis of movement organization is studded with vignettes from relevant social theory. Thus the reader is treated to Arendt on violence, Gramsci on civil institutions, Habermas on discourse ethics, Bookchin on the pitfalls of consensus, Hardt and Negri on the multitude, and Lenin versus Luxemburg on the role of the party. Habermas’ argument for deliberative process seems to support WSF laterals and advocates of “open space,” but his emphasis on decision-making and renewal of the public sphere is closer to the verticals’ perception of a proactive Forum. In an ideal world, however, the two “approaches” might surely function alongside each other as distinct “phases” of the WSF.

<sup>1</sup>ATTAC stands for *Association pour la Taxation des Transactions pour l’Aide aux Citoyens*.

Not all of Gautney's material is new. She relies quite heavily on David Harvey's analysis of neoliberalism early in the book. Later chapters rehearse an outline of WSF events and themes that is already treated in part by earlier authors such as Tom Mertes in *The Movement of Movements*; Jackie Smith, et al. in *Global Democracy and the World Social Forums*; or Judith Blau and Marina Karides in *The World and U.S. Social Forums*. But Gautney's radical contexting is fresh, and its juxtaposition with theoretical constructs gives depth to the text. One caveat, rather than criticism, is that while the book is sympathetic to feminist or indigenous claims, it offers a fairly mainstream left reading of the forum, rather than one informed by, say, an ecofeminist, or indigenous, analysis of globalization (Bennholdt-Thomsen, et al. 2001; Shiva 2006; Mujeres Manifesto 2009). My one reservation is that the final chapter on States and Movements seems a little disconnected from the rest of the book, and less developed. But hopefully, this brevity prefigures the fact that new work from the author is on its way.

### References

- Bello, W. 2002. *Deglobalization: Ideas for a new world economy*. London: Zed.
- Bennholdt-Thomsen, V., et al., eds. 2001. *There is an alternative: Subsistence and worldwide resistance to corporate globalization*. London: Zed Books.
- Blau, J. and M. Karides. 2009. *The world and U.S. social forums*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Mertes, T., ed. 2004. *The movement of movements*. London: Verso.
- Mujeres Manifesto. 2009. First continental summit of indigenous women. *Lucha Indigena* 34.
- Salleh, A. 2004. Globalization and the meta-industrial alternative. In *New socialisms: Futures beyond globalization*, R. Albritton, et al., eds. London: Routledge.
- Sen, J., et al., eds. 2004. *World social forum: Challenging empires*. New Delhi: Viveka Foundation.
- Shiva, V. 2006. *Earth democracy*. London: Zed Books.
- Smith, J., et al., eds. 2008. *Global democracy and the world social forums*. Boulder: Paradigm.