

GEORGE MONBIOT

G L O B A L

M U T A T I O N

An excerpt from *The Age of Consent: A Manifesto For A New World Order*

ColdType



An excerpt from

THE AGE OF CONSENT:
A MANIFESTO FOR A NEW WORLD ORDER
By **George Monbiot**

This excerpt, consisting of the Prologue and first of seven chapters, is reprinted
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Published by Flamingo, an imprint of HarperCollins, 2003

ColdType

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www.coldtype.net

August 2003

INTRODUCTION

“Our task is not to overthrow globalisation, but to capture it, and to use it as a vehicle for humanity’s first global democratic revolution.”

All over our planet, the rich get richer while the poor are overtaken by debt and disaster. The world is run not by its people but by a handful of unelected or underelected executives who make the decisions on which everyone else depends: concerning war, peace, debt, development and the balance of trade. Without democracy at the global level, the rest of us are left with no means of influencing these men but to shout abuse and hurl ourselves at the lines of police defending their gatherings and decisions. Does it have to be this way?

George Monbiot knows not only that things ought to change, but also that they can change. Drawing on decades of thinking about how the world is organized and administered politically, fiscally and commercially, Monbiot has developed an interlocking set of proposals which attempts nothing less than a revolution in the way the world is run. If these proposals become popular, never again will people be able to ask of the critics of the existing world order, ‘we know what they don’t want, but what do they want?’

Fiercely controversial and yet utterly persuasive, what Monbiot offers in *The Age of Consent* is a truly global perspective, a sense of history, a defence of democracy, and an understanding of power and how it might be captured from those unfit to retain it. The ingenious solutions he suggests for some of the planet’s most pressing problems mark him as perhaps the most realistic utopian of our time and a man whose passion is infectious and whose ideas, many will surely come to agree, are becoming irresistible.

GEORGE MONBIOT

The Author

George Monbiot is a columnist for Britain's *Guardian* newspaper and author of the best-selling *Captive State*. He has held visiting professorships or fellowships at the universities of Oxford, Bristol, Keele and East London, in subjects ranging from philosophy to environmental science. In 1995 Nelson Mandela presented him with a United Nations Global 500 Award for outstanding environmental achievement. He has also won the Lloyds National Screenwriting Prize and a Sony Award for radio production. Monbiot's essays and articles can be read at www.monbiot.com and, in pdf format, at www.coldtype.net

Other books by George Monbiot:

Captive State: The Corporate Takeover Of Britain

Amazon Watershed: The New Environmental Investigation

Poisoned Arrows: An Investigative Journey Through Indonesia

No Man's Land: An Investigative Journey Through Kenya And Tanzania

PROLOGUE

SOME REPULSIVE
PROPOSALS

Everything has been globalized except our consent. Democracy alone has been confined to the nation state. It stands at the national border, suitcase in hand, without a passport.

A handful of men in the richest nations use the global powers they have assumed to tell the rest of the world how to live. This book is an attempt to describe a world run on the principle by which those powerful men claim to govern: the principle of democracy. It is an attempt to Replace our Age of Coercion with an Age of Consent.

I present in this manifesto a series of repulsive proposals, which will horrify all right-thinking people. Many of them, at first sight or in conception, horrified me. I have sought to discover the means of introducing a new world order, in which the world's institutions are run by and for their people. Their discovery has obliged me first to re-examine the issues with which I have, for some years, been struggling. This process has forced me to recognize that some of the positions I have taken in the past have been wrong. It has brought me to see that the vast and messy coalition to which I belong, which is now widely known as the 'Global justice Movement',* has misdiagnosed some

* For several years, this movement was effectively nameless, though, for want of a better description, it was often characterized by the media and by some of its members as the 'Anti-Globalization Movement'. Most of its participants now reject this term. The name I've used has not been universally adopted: other people have called it the 'Civil Society Movement', the 'Anti-Capitalist Movement', the 'World Democracy Movement', the 'Alternative Globalization Movement' or the 'Movement of Movements'. This last term (and, for that matter, the diversity of the other terms) reflects its heterogeneous and perpetually shifting character. Some people have questioned whether it should be called a movement at all, suggesting instead that it be seen as a continuous series of incidental coalitions. The most accurate description might be 'a large number of people, dispersed among most of the nations of the world, who, in contesting the way the world is run, regard each other, most of the time, as allies'. For the sake of brevity, I'll continue to call it 'the movement'.

aspects of the disease and, as a result, offered the wrong prescriptions.

In searching for the necessary conditions for an Age of Consent, I have not sought to be original. Where effective solutions have already been devised, I have adopted them, though in most cases I have felt the need to revise and develop the argument. Some of the policies I have chosen have a heritage of three thousand years. But where all the existing proposals appear to me to be inadequate, I have had to contrive new approaches. My principal innovation, I believe, has been to discover some of their synergistic effects and to start to devise what I hope is a coherent, self-reinforcing system, each of whose elements – political and economic – defends and enhances the others.

I have sought to suggest nothing that cannot be achieved with our own resources, starting from our current circumstances. Too many of the schemes some members of this movement have put forward appear to be designed for implementation by the people of another time or another planet. This is not to suggest that any of the transformations I propose will be easy. Any change worth fighting for will be hard to achieve; indeed if the struggle in which you are engaged is not difficult, you may be confident that it is not worthwhile, for you can be assured by that measure that those from whom you need to wrest power are not threatened by your efforts. We will know that our approach is working only when it is violently opposed.

Nor do I presume to suggest anything resembling a final or definitive world order. On the contrary, I hope that other people will refine, transform, and, if necessary, overthrow my proposals in favour of better ones. I have attempted to design a system which permits, indeed encourages, its own improvement, and mobilizes the collective genius unleashed whenever freely thinking people discuss an issue without constraint. And these proposals are, of course, a means to an end. If they fail to deliver global justice, they must be torn down and trampled, like so many failed proposals before them.

I will not explain them here, as this will encourage some readers to imagine that they have understood them and have no need to read on. I think it is fair to say that they and their implications cannot be understood in essence unless they are also understood in detail. The four principal projects are these: a democratically elected world parliament; a democratized United Nations General Assembly, which captures the powers now vested in the Security Council; an International Clearing Union, which automatically discharges trade deficits and prevents the accumulation of debt; a Fair Trade Organization, which restrains the rich while emancipating the poor.

I have, I hope, made no proposal that depends for its success on the goodwill of the world's most powerful governments and institutions. Power is never surrendered voluntarily; if we want it, we must seize it. Because, for obvious reasons, the existing pow-

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ers can be expected to resist such changes, they must be either bypassed or forced to comply. I believe, as the subsequent chapters will show, that I have discovered some cruel and unusual methods of destroying their resistance.

I ask just one thing of you – that you do not reject these proposals until you have better ones with which to replace them. It has been too easy for both our movement and its critics to dismiss the prescriptions they find disagreeable without proposing workable measures of their own, thereby preventing the possibility of radical change. If you believe that slogans are a substitute for policies, or that *if we all just love each other more, there'll be a transformation of consciousness and no one will ever oppress other people again*, then I am wasting your time, and so are you.

CHAPTER ONE

THE
MUTATION

In his novel *Atomised*, Michel Houellebecq writes of the ‘metaphysical mutations’ which have changed the way the world’s people think.

Once a metaphysical mutation has arisen, it moves inexorably towards its logical conclusion. Heedlessly, it sweeps away economic and political systems, ethical considerations and social structures. No human agency can halt its progress – nothing, but another metaphysical mutation!

These events are, as Houellebecq points out, rare in history. The emergence and diffusion of Christianity and Islam was one; the Enlightenment and the ascendancy of science another. I believe we may be on the verge of a new one.

Throughout history, human beings have been the loyalists of an exclusive community. They have always known, as if by instinct, who lies within and who lies without. Those who exist beyond the border are less human than those who exist within. Remorselessly, the unit of identity has grown, from the family to the pack, to the clan, the tribe, the nation. In every case the struggle between the smaller groups has been resolved only to begin a common struggle against another new federation.

Our loyalties have made us easy to manipulate. In the First World War, a few dozen aristocrats sent eight million men to die in the name of nationhood. The interests of the opposing armies were identical. Their soldiers would have been better served by overthrowing their generals and destroying the class which had started the war than by fighting each other, but their national identity overrode their class interest. The new mutation will force us to abandon nationhood, just as, in earlier epochs, we abandoned the barony and the clan. It will compel us to recognize the irrationality of the loyalties which set us apart. For the first time in history, we will see ourselves as a species.

Just as the consolidation of the Roman Empire created the necessary conditions

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for the propagation of Christianity, this mutation will be assisted by the forces which have cause to fear it. Corporate and financial globalization, designed and executed by a minority seeking to enhance its wealth and power, is compelling the people it oppresses to acknowledge their commonality. Globalization is establishing a single, planetary class interest, as the same forces and the same institutions threaten the welfare of the people of all nations. It is ripping down the cultural and linguistic barriers which have divided us. By breaking the social bonds which sustained local communities, it destroys our geographical loyalties. Already, it has forced states to begin to relinquish nationhood, by building economic units – trading blocs – at the level of the continent or hemisphere.

Simultaneously, it has placed within our hands the weapons we require to overthrow the people who have engineered it and assert our common interest. By crushing the grand ideologies which divided the world, it has evacuated the political space in which a new, global politics can grow. By forcing governments to operate in the interests of capital, it has manufactured the disenchantment upon which all new politics must feed. Through the issue of endless debt, it has handed to the poor, if they but knew it, effective control of the world's financial systems. By expanding its own empire through new communication and transport networks, it has granted the world's people the means by which they can gather and coordinate their attack.

The global dictatorship of vested interests has created the means of its own destruction. But it has done more than that; it has begun to force a transformation of the scale on which we think, obliging us to recognize the planetary issues which bear on our parochial concerns. It impels us, moreover, to act upon that recognition. It has granted us the power to change the course of history.

Globalization has established the preconditions but this mutation cannot happen by itself. It needs to be catalysed, much as the early Christians catalysed the monotheistic mutation, or the heretical scientists the Enlightenment. It requires the active engagement of a network of insurrectionists who are prepared to risk their lives to change the world. That network already exists. It forms part of the biggest global movement in history, whose members, most of whom inhabit the poor world, can now be counted in the tens of millions. The people of this sub-formation are perhaps not wholly aware of the project in which they are participating. They must seize this moment and become the catalyst for the new mutation. Like many catalysts, they risk destruction in the reaction, but if they do not strike, the opportunity created by their opponents will be lost.

The movement's defining debate is just beginning. Led by activists in the poor nations, most of its members have come to see that opposition to the existing world order is insufficient, and that its proposed alternatives will be effective only if they are global in scale. In searching for solutions to the problems it has long contested, it has raised its eyes from the national sphere, in which there is democracy but no choice, to the global sphere, in which there is choice but no democracy. It has correctly perceived that the world will not change until we seize control of global politics.

The quest for global solutions is difficult and divisive. Some members of this movement are deeply suspicious of all institutional power at the global level, fearing that it could never be held to account by the world's people. Others are concerned that a single set of universal prescriptions would threaten the diversity of dissent. A smaller faction has argued that all political programmes are oppressive: our task should not be to replace one form of power with another, but to replace all power with a magical essence called 'anti-power'.*

But most of the members of this movement are coming to recognize that if we propose solutions which can be effected only at the local or the national level, we remove ourselves from any meaningful role in solving precisely those problems which most concern us. Issues such as climate change, international debt, nuclear proliferation, war, peace and the balance of trade between nations can be addressed only globally or internationally. Without global measures and global institutions, it is impossible to see how we might distribute wealth from rich nations to poor ones, tax the mobile rich and their even more mobile money, control the shipment of toxic waste, sustain the ban on landmines, prevent the use of nuclear weapons, broker peace between nations or prevent powerful states from forcing weaker ones to trade on their terms. If we were to work only at the local level, we would leave these, the most critical of issues, for other people to tackle.

Global governance will take place whether we participate in it or not. Indeed, it must take place if the issues which concern us are not to be resolved by the brute force of the powerful. That the international institutions have been designed or captured by the dictatorship of vested interests is not an argument against the existence of international institutions, but a reason for overthrowing them and replac-

* In his book *Change the World Without Taking Power*, for example, John Holloway argues that a global revolution is dependent upon 'the realism of anti-power, or, better, the anti-realism of anti-power'. It will be achieved through 'flashes of lightning, which light up the sky and pierce the capitalist forms of social relations ...' Think of an antipolitics of events rather than a politics of organisation.

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ing them with our own. It is an argument for a global political system which holds power to account.

In the absence of an effective global politics, moreover, local solutions will always be undermined by communities of interest which do not share our vision. We might, for example, manage to persuade the people of the street in which we live to give up their cars in the hope of preventing climate change, but unless everyone, in all communities, either shares our politics or is bound by the same rules, we simply open new road space into which the neighbouring communities can expand. We might declare our neighbourhood nuclear-free, but unless we are simultaneously working, at the international level, for the abandonment of nuclear weapons, we can do nothing to prevent ourselves and everyone else from being threatened by people who are not as nice as we are. We would deprive ourselves, in other words, of the power of restraint.

By first rebuilding the global politics, we establish the political space in which our local alternatives can flourish. If, by contrast, we were to leave the governance of the necessary global institutions to others, then those institutions will pick off our local, even our national, solutions one by one. There is little point in devising an alternative economic policy for your nation, as Luis Inácio 'Lula' da Silva, now president of Brazil, once advocated, if the International Monetary Fund and the financial speculators have not first been overthrown. There is little point in fighting to protect a coral reef from local pollution, if nothing has been done to prevent climate change from destroying the conditions it requires for its survival.

While it is easy to unite a movement in opposition, it is just as easy to divide one in proposition. This movement, in which Marxists, anarchists, statisticians, liberals, libertarians, greens, conservatives, revolutionaries, reactionaries, animists, Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims have found a home, has buried its differences to fight its common enemies. Those differences will re-emerge as it seeks to coalesce around a common set of solutions. We have, so far, avoided this conflict by permitting ourselves to believe that we can pursue, simultaneously, hundreds of global proposals without dispersing our power. We have allowed ourselves to imagine that we can confront the consolidated power of our opponents with a jumble of contradictory ideas. While there is plainly a conflict between the coherence of the movement and the coherence of its proposals, and while the pursuit of a cogent political programme will alienate some of its participants, it is surely also true that once we have begun to present a mortal threat to the existing world order, we will attract supporters in far greater numbers even than those we have drawn so far.

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The notion that power can be dissolved and replaced by something called 'anti-power' has some currency among anarchists in the rich world, but it is recognized as fabulous nonsense by most campaigners in the poor world, where the realities of power are keenly felt. Just because we do not flex our muscles does not mean that other people will not flex theirs. Power emerges wherever conflicting interests with unequal access to resources – whether material, political or psychological – clash. Within homogeneous groups of well-meaning people, especially those whose interests have not been plainly represented, it can be suppressed. But as any anarchist who has lived in a communal house knows, power relations begin to develop as soon as one member clearly delineates a need at variance with those of the others. The potential conflict is quelled only when one of the antagonists either buckles to the dominant will or leaves the community. Power, in other words, however subtly expressed, either forces the weaker person down or forces him out. Power is as intrinsic to human society as greed or fear: a world without power is a world without people. The question is not how we rid the world of power, but how the weak first reclaim that power and then hold it to account.

We must harness the power of globalization, and, pursuing its inexorable development, overthrow its institutions and replace them with our own. In doing so, we will, whether or not this is the intended outcome, bring forward the era in which humankind ceases to be bound by the irrational loyalties of nationhood.*

While we have hesitated to explain what we want, we have not been so shy in defining our complaints. The problem is simply formulated: there is, at the global level, no effective restraint of the ability of the rich and powerful to control the lives of the poor and weak. The United Nations, for example, which is meant to deliver peace, human rights and international justice, is controlled by the five principal victors of the Second World War: the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, France and China. These nations exercise the power of veto not only over the business of the UN Security Council, but also over substantial change within the entire organization. This means that no constitutional measure which helps the weak will be adopted unless it also helps the strong.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which are supposed to assist impoverished nations to build and defend their economies, are run on the principle of one dollar, one vote. To pass a substantial resolution or to amend the way they operate requires an eighty-five per cent majority. The United States alone,

* I should point out that I see the 'Age of Consent' (my term for a world order which is responsive to the will of the world's people) as a precondition for the 'metaphysical mutation', not the mutation itself.

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which possesses more than fifteen per cent of the stock in both organizations, can block a resolution supported by every other member state. This means, in practice, that these two bodies will pursue only those policies in the developing world which are of benefit to the economy of the United States and the interests of its financial speculators, even when these conflict directly with the needs of the poor.

The World Trade Organization appears, at first sight, to be more democratic: every member nation has one vote. In reality, its principal decisions have been made during the 'Green Room' negotiations, which are convened and controlled by the European Union, the United States, Canada and Japan. Developing nations can enter these talks only at their behest, and even then they are threatened if they offend the interests of the major powers. The result is that, despite their promises to the contrary, the nations and corporations of the rich world have been able to devise ever more elaborate trade protections, while the nations of the poor world have been forced to open their economies.

If you consider this distribution of power acceptable, that is your choice, but please do not call yourself a democrat. If you consider yourself a democrat, you must surely acknowledge the need for radical change.

Partly as a result of this dictatorship of vested interests, partly through corruption and misrule, and the inequality and destructiveness of an economic system which depends for its survival on the issue of endless debt, the prosperity perpetually promised by the rich world to the poor perpetually fails to materialize. Almost half the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day; one fifth on less than one. Despite a global surplus of food, 840 million people are officially classified as malnourished, as they lack the money required to buy it.

One hundred million children are denied primary education. One third of the people of the poor world die of preventable conditions such as infectious disease, complications in giving birth and malnutrition. The same proportion has insufficient access to fresh water, as a result of underinvestment, pollution and over-abstraction by commercial farms. Much of the farming in the poor world has been diverted from producing food for local people to feeding the livestock required to supply richer people with meat.* As a result of nutrient depletion, our continued survival depends upon increasing applications of fertilizer. The world's reserves of phosphate, without which most of the crops requiring artificial fertilizer cannot be grown, are likely to be exhausted before the end of the century.

* The number of farm animals on earth has risen fivefold since 1950. They now outnumber humans by three to one.

Climate change caused by emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases is further reducing the earth's capacity to feed itself, through the expansion of drought zones, rising sea levels and the shrinkage of glacier-fed rivers. Partly because of the influence of the oil industry, the rich world's governments have refused to agree to a reduction in the use of fossil fuels sufficient to arrest it.

The institutions founded 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war' have failed. Since the end of World War Two, some thirty million people have been killed in armed conflict. Most of them were civilians.

The world order designed by the rich and powerful has, unsurprisingly, been kind to them. The ten richest people on earth possessed in 2002 a combined wealth of \$266 billion. This is five times the annual flow of aid from rich nations to poor ones, and roughly sufficient to pay for all the United Nations' millennium health goals (such as halting and reversing the spread of AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases, reducing infant mortality by two-thirds and maternal deaths in childbirth by three-quarters) between now and 2015.*

It would, of course, be wrong to blame only the states, corporations and institutions of the rich world for these injustices. There are plenty of brutal and repressive governments in the poor world – those of North Korea, Burma, Uzbekistan, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Sudan, Algeria, Zimbabwe and Colombia for example – which have impoverished and threatened their people and destroyed their natural resources. But just as population growth is often incorrectly named as the leading cause of the world's environmental problems, for the obvious reason that it is the only environmental impact for which the poor can be blamed and the rich excused,** so the corruption and oppression of some of the governments of the poor world have been incorrectly identified as leading causes of its impoverishment. Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe, is a brutal autocrat who has cheated his country of democracy, murdered political opponents and starved the people of regions controlled by the opposition. But the damage he has done to Africans is minor by comparison to that inflicted by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, whose 'structural adjustment programmes' have been among the foremost impediments to the

* Net Official Development Assistance to developing countries by members of the Development Assistance Committee is \$53.7 billion. Estimates for the annual cost of meeting the millennium health goals vary from one agency to another, across a range of \$20-25 billion.

** This is not to deny that population growth exerts a major impact on the environment; but it is far surpassed by the rich world's consumption. A citizen of the United States, for example, consumes, on average, eighty-eight times as much energy as a citizen of Bangladesh.

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continent's development over the past twenty years.

Indeed, many of the countries we chastise for incompetent economic management are effectively controlled by the IMF. They are trapped by this body in a cycle of underinvestment. Because they do not possess good schools, hospitals and transport networks, their economic position continues to deteriorate, which in turn leaves them without the means of generating the money to supply these services. Yet they are prevented by the International Monetary Fund from increasing public spending, and forced instead to use their money to repay their debts. These are, as most financial analysts now concede, unpayable: despite a net transfer of natural wealth from the poor world to the rich world over the past 500 years, the poor are now deemed to owe the rich \$2.5 trillion. The IMF, working closely with the US Treasury and the commercial banks, uses the leverage provided by these debts to force the poor nations to remove their defences against the most predatory activities of financial speculators and foreign corporations. As Chapters 5 and 6 will show, there appears to be an inverse relationship between the extent to which nations have done as the international institutions have instructed and their economic welfare.

The effective control of many of the poor nations' economies by the IMF and the speculators, moreover, has dampened public faith in democracy: people know that there is little point in changing the government if you can't change its policies. The rich world, with a few exceptions, gets the poor world governments it deserves.

All these problems have been blamed on 'globalization', a term which has become so loose as to be almost meaningless; I have heard it used to describe everything from global terrorism to world music. But most people tend to refer to a number of simultaneous and connected processes. One is the removal of controls on the movement of capital, permitting investors and speculators to shift their assets into and out of economies as they please. Another is the removal of trade barriers, and the 'harmonization' of the rules which different nations imposed on the companies trading within their borders. A third, which both arose from and contributed to these other processes, is the growth of multinational corporations and their displacement of local and national businesses. There is no question that these processes have contributed to the power of capital and the corresponding loss of citizens' ability to shape their own lives. There is no question too that some of these processes have generated international debt, inequality and environmental destruction and precipitated the collapse of several previously healthy economies.

But, like many others, I have in the past lazily used 'globalization' as shorthand for

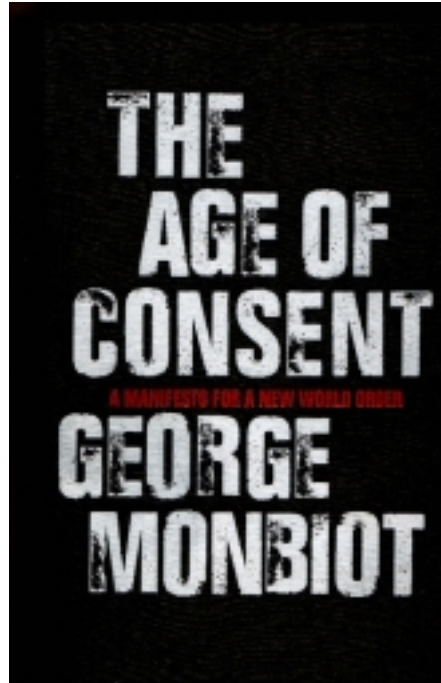
the problems we contest, and 'internationalism' as shorthand for the way in which we need to contest them. Over the course of generations, both terms have acquired their own currency among dissident movements. While globalization has come to mean capital's escape from national controls, internationalism has come to mean unified action by citizens whose class interests transcend national borders. But perhaps it is time we rescued these terms from their friends. In some respects the world is suffering from a deficit of globalization, and a surfeit of internationalism.

Internationalism, if it means anything, surely implies interaction between *nations*. Globalization denotes interaction beyond nations, unmediated by the state. The powers of the United Nations General Assembly, for example, are delegated by nation states, so the only citizens' concerns it considers are those the nation states – however repressive, unaccountable or unrepresentative they may be – are prepared to discuss. The nation state acts as a barrier between us and the body charged with resolving many of the problems affecting us. The UN's problem is that *global* politics have been captured by nation states; that globalization, in other words, has been forced to give way to internationalism.

The World Trade Organization deals with an issue which is more obviously international in character -the rules governing trade between nations – and so its international structure is arguably more appropriate than that of the UN. But that issue is affected by forces, such as the circulation of capital and the strategies of transnational corporations, which are plainly global in character. Internationalism alone appears to be an inadequate mechanism, if one were sought, for restraining the destructive power of these forces. The global citizen, whose class interests extend beyond the state (and are seldom represented by the state), is left without influence over the way the global economy develops.

Globalization is not the problem. The problem is in fact the *release* from globalization which both economic agents and nation states have been able to negotiate. They have been able to operate so freely because the people of the world have no global means of restraining them. Our task is surely not to overthrow globalization, but to capture it, and to use it as a vehicle for humanity's first global democratic revolution.

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A MANIFESTO FOR A NEW WORLD ORDER

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GEORGE MONBIOT

Some reviews for The Age of Consent

"At last, the global justice movement has found a vision as expansive and planet-wide as that of the American neoconservatives. Let the battle of ideas commence." – *Johann Hari, Independent on Sunday.*

"This is an extremely important book. George Monbiot offers a searchingly rigorous analysis of the sources of American power and presents a package of proposals that would radically redraw the present world order. It is breathtaking in its radicalism, but for anyone who is serious about tackling the current US hegemony, it is difficult to fault the logic. ... if it is far too radical for some tastes, can they suggest any lesser options that will produce the same vast improvement in world justice and prosperity? The floor is theirs." – *Michael Meacher, The Guardian.*

"The Age of Consent is powerful stuff. Monbiot is to be congratulated on an elegant and sustained feat of rhetoric. ... an admirable attempt to open our minds to new possibilities and spheres of debate." – *Martin Vander Weyer, Daily Telegraph*

"It is the sense of revolutionary enthusiasm that shines through this book. In the end it is all about engagement – about igniting radical action and creating new possibilities. 'It is,' he concludes, 'the exultation, which Christians call "joy", but which, in the dry discourse of secular politics, has no recognised equivalent. It is the drug for which, once sampled, you will pay the price.' I'm not sure what Monbiot's on, but can I have some too?" – *Iain McWhirter, Sunday Herald*

"His proposals are appealing, provocative and idealistic ... his attempt to think the unthinkable makes Monbiot seem, in a good way, like a licensed jester whose value lies in showing that alternatives are possible." – *Sunday Times*

"George Monbiot's *The Age of Consent* is a bracing challenge to the complacency of all varieties of establishment thinking. his book is an arresting contribution to new thinking." – *John Gray, Independent*

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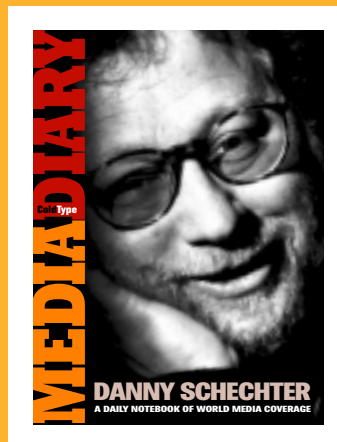
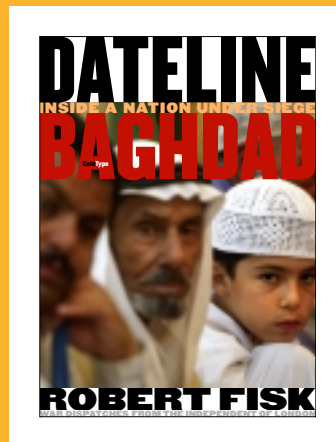
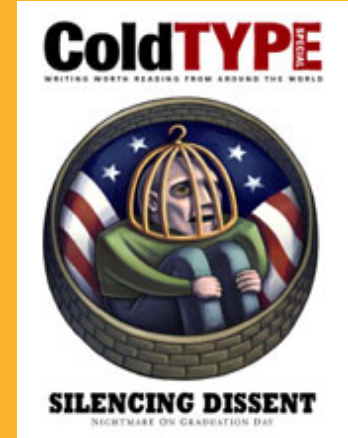
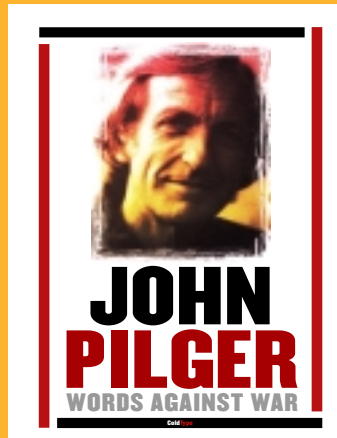
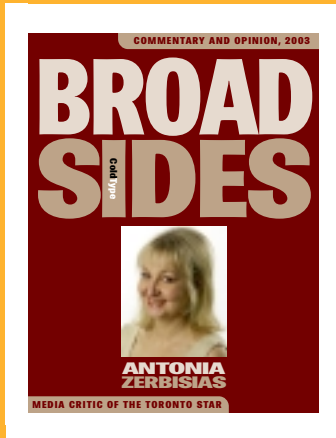
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