

# Edmonton Public Library

## Social Justice/Activist/Globalization Books

Many of these may be available at your public library or alternative or mainstream bookstores. Also, if your university has a **Public Interest Research Group (PIRG)** it may have copies available.

The books that follow deal with various aspects of neoliberalism, globalization, corporate rule, and their consequences. Also covered are American imperialism and environmental problems. All are highly recommended but I have tried to start each section with what I consider the most useful, general, or overarching books at the top of each list. Those unfamiliar with neoliberalism will probably benefit by starting with the first introductory section.

### **Quick And Easy Introductions To Globalization/Neoliberalism/Corporate Rule**

These books provide an excellent guide to those unfamiliar with the “new economy” and its effects on society with a very basic introduction to this subject.

***Culture Jam: The Uncooling of America*** by Kalle Lasn (1999)

Lively, readable account by the creator of Adbusters of the neoliberal corporate takeover of our culture and society.

***Goodbye Canada*** by Paul Hellyer (2001)

Very basic introduction into the “free trade” treaties Canada has been led into and our resulting loss of sovereignty.

***The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization*** by Wayne Ellwood (2001)

A good basic introduction to the institutions involved in corporate-led globalization.

### **Globalization/Neoliberalism/Corporate Rule**

Since the 1980's we have been subjected to an unrelenting propaganda campaign on the virtues of unrestricted freedom for big business, while being assured that the blessings of **neoliberal** “free market” capitalism will be made available to all through the magic of “trickle down” economics. In the global corporate “race to the bottom” known as **globalization** manufacturing has been relocated to sweatshops in developing countries and money has been freed to flow to wherever the highest profit margin can be pried out. In Canada these objectives have been championed by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives as well as corporate funded “think-tanks” such the Fraser and C. D. Howe Institutes. This section explores the NAFTA, WTO, IMF and other members of the “free trade” menagerie as well as the transnational corporations which relentlessly push these corporate bills of rights. The corporate control of government and continuing erosion of Canadian sovereignty are also examined.

***Too Close For Comfort: Canada's Future Within Fortress North America*** by Maude Barlow (2005)

Excellent account of the struggle to maintain Canadian independence in the face of “free trade” and the corporate push for Deep Integration with the U.S.

***Global Showdown: How the New Activists Are Fighting Global Corporate Rule*** by Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke (2000) Best single book on neoliberal globalization, NAFTA, WTO, IMF and government complicity in advancing the big business agenda as well as the worldwide citizen's fight-back

***When Corporations Rule the World*** by David C. Korten (1995) Classic work on corporate control of government in pursuit of the neoliberal agenda and “free trade”.

***The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*** by Naomi Klein (2007) Details how around the world neoliberal economic policies require disaster, deception, or dictatorship for their implementation upon and victimization of an unwilling population.

***The Collapse of Globalism and the Reinvention of the World*** by John Ralston Saul (2005) Chronology of the rise and fall of globalization and its artificial linkage to neoliberalism. Academically oriented.

***The Case Against the Global Economy and For a Turn Toward the Local*** edited by Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith (1996) Wide-ranging series of essays by some of the world's foremost critics of globalization.

***All You Can Eat: Greed, Lust, and the New Capitalism*** by Linda McQuaig (2001) Historical perspective on "free trade" and its relation to past enclosure movements.

***The Vanishing Country: Is It Too Late To Save Canada*** by Mel Hurtig (2002) Effect of NAFTA and American ownership, harmonization and privatization on Canadian independence.

***Zip Locking North America: Can Canada Survive Continental Integration?*** by Murray Dobbin (2003) The threat posed to Canadian sovereignty and our medicare and social programs by Deep Integration with the U.S.

***Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*** by Joel Bakan (2004) History of corporations, effect of deregulation and privatization, corporate control of government, corporate penetration of schools and public spaces.

***The World Trade Organization: A Citizen's Guide*** 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by Steven Shrybman (2001) Thorough look at the major institution for worldwide corporate globalization.

***Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order*** by Noam Chomsky (1999) Interview highlighting the concepts behind neoliberalism and the reality of their effect on people.

***Globalization and its Discontents*** by Joseph E. Stiglitz (2002) Former chief economist of the World Bank discusses its effect and that of the International Monetary Fund on the world's population.

***The Selling of 'Free Trade': NAFTA, Washington and the Subversion of American Democracy*** by John R. MacArthur (2000) Political manoeuvring in the U.S. behind the push for NAFTA.

## **Neoliberal Economic Myths/Fallacies**

The neoliberal project could not have been advanced without a series of myths designed to sell it to the public. Distorted and mangled economic theology masquerading as science is used to prop up corporate rule. Primary in this has been the equation of corporate dominated capitalism with "free markets". Competing independent entrepreneurs would supposedly bring to life economist Adam Smith's concept of supply and demand ruling the marketplace. In reality we have corporate monopolies and oligopolies with competition even further curtailed through the constant rounds of mergers and acquisitions, promoted as increasing business efficiency. Corporate capitalism is equated with formal democratic institutions even though it leads to an even further erosion of real power by the people. We are told there is only one inevitable model of globalization when this particular form has been deliberately chosen and pursued by a small elite for their own financial gain. David Ricardo's 19<sup>th</sup> century economic theory of comparative advantage is used to back up international free trade when it no longer even applies in an era of hyper-mobile investment capital. Increased global trade is supposed to somehow bring about an improvement in general material well-being when the reality is increased

concentration of wealth in fewer hands. International investment is applauded by the financial media even though the vast majority of it is short term speculation- “hot money” that can destabilize entire regions of the world. Foreign investment in Canada is celebrated as an unmitigated blessing when in reality it means the profit from and control of business activities as well as the top jobs flow out of the country. Mandatory regulation of business behaviour has been replaced by “smart regulations” in which companies are allowed to voluntarily police themselves. Corporations whose only reason for existence is to generate profits for shareholders by any means possible, legally or otherwise, are presented as the best hope for world prosperity. Big business leaders portray themselves as valiantly struggling to compete on their own while receiving huge subsidies and government handouts. Meanwhile the working poor are admonished to get by with less. All this is done in the name of an economic efficiency trumpeted as being for the betterment of humankind.

***The Myth of the Good Corporate Citizen: Canada and Democracy in the Age of Globalization*** 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by Murray Dobbin (2003) Exposes the myths Canadian corporate media uses to promote neoliberalism and the business groups behind the push for globalization.

***The [undeclared] war: Class Conflict in the Age of Cyber Capitalism*** by James Laxer (1999) Explores the reality of the growing class inequalities of the new economy behind the neoliberal rhetoric.

***The Cult of Impotence: Selling the Myth of Powerlessness in the Global Economy*** by Linda McQuaig (1998) Good introduction to economic concepts and post World War II economic history.

***The Divine Right of Capital: Dethroning the Corporate Aristocracy*** by Marjorie Kelly (2001) Examines the aristocracy of wealth created by shareholder demands for ever increasing corporate returns.

***Wealth By Stealth: Corporate Crime, Corporate Law, and the Perversion of Democracy*** by Harry Glasbeek (2002) Implications of Canadian corporate law, as well as detailed discussion of corporate crime, boycotts, ethical investing, and the false equation of corporate capitalism with free markets. Very academically oriented.

***False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism*** by John Gray (1999) Debunks myths of the “free market”, provides a history of English laissez-faire capitalism, and looks at alternative forms of capitalism from around the world.

***The Vampire State and Other Myths and Fallacies About the U.S. Economy*** by Fred L. Block (1996) A look at the true role of government in the economy.

***Poor-Bashing: The Politics of Exclusion*** by Jean Swanson (2001) Examines the myths used to scapegoat and marginalize the poor in Canada.

## **Corporate Social/Cultural Hijacking/Commodification**

More and more of our daily lives revolve around and are dominated by economic exchange. Public spaces are replaced with privately owned malls whose only function is to promote commercial interaction. Small neighbourhood businesses are replaced by cloned chain stores. Our mental landscape itself is colonized by advertising. “Fashion” turns people into walking billboards. Authentic real life experiences are obliterated by media-driven shallow and frenetic sensation seeking. Mindless “entertainment” and celebrity worship function as Weapons of Mass Distraction. The purpose of education has been perverted to the creation of a pliable, compliant workforce. Culture has no meaning unless it can be used as a marketing vehicle with all the artistic integrity of an advertising jingle. Even our youngest children are targeted by the marketers. The world’s rich tapestry of diversity is homogenized to better generate McProfits. Nothing is of value unless it can be bought and sold. Marketplace democracy is reduced to one dollar/one vote. People are no longer citizens but only consumers whose value to society is determined by what they can afford to purchase. I shop, therefore I am.

*No Logo: Taking Aim At the Brand Bullies* by Naomi Klein (2000) The classic work on globalization and its effect on people's lives.

*Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood* by Susan Linn (2004) Exposes the insidious techniques used by advertisers targeting children and the damage they cause.

*Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture* by Juliet Schor (2004) Examines the effect of our ubiquitous advertising onslaught on the young. Academically oriented.

*We Know What You Want: How They Change Your Mind* by Martin Howard (2005) Quick and easy and frightening survey of deceptive advertising and public relations techniques.

*Not Buying it: My Year Without Shopping* by Judith Levine (2006) One couple's year of voluntary simplicity.

*Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers* by Alissa Quart (2003) The exploitation of young people by corporate advertisers and the commodification of their everyday environment.

*Can't Buy Me Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel* by Jean Kilbourne (1999) Effect of advertising on our perception of ourselves and our world.

## **Privatization/Commodification/Corporate Ownership**

A major objective of neoliberalism is to bring everything from medicare to education to the right to clean water to the genetic heritage of life itself into the marketplace for the exclusive use of those who can afford them. Governments have systematically underfunded our healthcare, education and social programs and when quality declines and waiting times increase we are told by the corporate leaders that the only viable solution is to privatize. In fact this leads to higher prices due to higher administrative costs, marketing costs, and the need for investor profits. In addition poorer training, pay, and working conditions for those providing the services usually result, but all this is presented as a "reform" of the system. The latest incarnation of the privatization maneuver is the **Public-Private Partnership (P3)** in which governments lease facilities from corporations for extended periods with guaranteed profit margins to investors, while the public is left to pick up the extra cost and suffers decreased quality of service.

*You Don't Always Get What You Pay For: The Economics of Privatization* by Elliott D. Sclar (2000) Reveals the true cost we pay for privatizing services to the corporate sector.

*Profit Is Not The Cure: A Citizen's Guide To Saving Medicare* by Maude Barlow (2002) Deconstructs the arguments for medicare privatization and looks at the corporate forces behind the privatization push.

*The Bottom Line: The Truth Behind Private Health Insurance in Canada* by Diana Gibson and Colleen Fuller (2006) Demolishes myths around medicare privatization and exposes the private insurance companies pushing the privatization agenda.

*Blue Covenant* by Maude Barlow (2007) The fight against the corporate takeover of the world's water resources.

## **Food Commodification/Genetic Modification**

Perhaps no other area of the corporate control of our daily lives has as an immediate impact on us as the corporate takeover of our food supply. Rather than relying on the traditional family farm to provide our dinner, we have come increasingly to depend on **factory farms** and intensive agricultural practices. The results of this are nutrient poor and bland produce, contaminated meat, and high herbicide and pesticide residues. Transnational corporations engage in **biopiracy** by stealing and patenting traditional seed varieties bred for

generations by farmers in the developing world. Since the 1990's the public has faced a new potential threat: **genetically modified organisms (GMOs)**. These life forms have been altered by the introduction of genes from other plants, animals, or bacteria with little if any health or environmental testing and no mandatory food labeling in North America. The **precautionary principle**, which would err on the side of safety rather than risk for potentially dangerous new technologies, is constantly disparaged by big business.

***The End of Food*** by Thomas Pawlick (2006) Lively account of the deterioration of our food supply, the realities of factory farming, and an exploration of the alternatives.

***Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*** by Eric Schlosser (2001) Chronicles the rise of fast food, factory farms, and the corporate takeover and commodification of our food. Also available on cd and cassette.

***Genetically Altered Foods and Your Health*** by Ken Roseboro (2004) Quick and easy introduction to genetically engineered foods, their potential dangers, and the organic alternative.

***Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*** by Vandana Shiva (2000) Examines genetically modified foods, the World Trade Organization, and the biopiracy committed against countries of the developing world.

## **Deteriorating Jobs/Work Life**

Worker's real wages in the Western world have been largely stagnating or declining since the 1970's. People are either underemployed or working longer and harder (often at multiple McJobs) for less. Simultaneously, unions have been subjected to an unrelenting assault by neoliberal governments. Even lower and middle management jobs have been deteriorating as upper management and corporate shareholders reap more of the rewards in a globalized economy. Employees are exhorted to be ever more dedicated to their jobs even as those jobs provide fewer benefits or less financial security.

***Nickel and Dimed*** by Barbara Ehrenreich (2001) Undercover look at the absurdity of trying to survive in America while working poverty-waged jobs. Also cd and eResource

***White-Collar Sweatshop: The Deterioration of Work and its Rewards in Corporate America*** by Jill Andresky Fraser (2001) Fascinating account of how under neoliberalism even formerly coveted white collar jobs are becoming less and less desirable.

***Take Back Your Time: Fighting Overwork and Time Poverty in America*** edited by John De Graaf (2003) Wide-ranging series of essays on the philosophical basis of work, the economy, capitalism, and inequality.

***The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*** by Jeremy Rifkin (2004) Excellent history of the origins and development of the American dream and the new European alternative. Academically oriented.

## **Corporate Media Control/Spin**

The mass media presents itself as an objective, neutral, if occasionally somewhat sensationalistic, chronicler of the news of the day. Right-wing critics charge it with a social or cultural liberal bias but this obscures the true nature of media spin. Mass media is overwhelmingly corporate, embracing and expounding the values of corporate leaders. The major media outlets are links in huge media chains with many of these conglomerates themselves owned by transnational corporations. Corporate control is further solidified by the advertising dollars other corporations spend on the media. Thus it comes as no surprise that mass media consistently

supports globalization, neoliberalism, and the politicians that push these corporate agendas along with American military aggression. Editors serve as the day-to-day gatekeepers for corporate media, deciding which stories will be covered and what their spin will be. They may occasionally report ongoing social problems but rarely examine the underlying economic cause. Stories that may be unflattering to corporations or harm the bottom line tend largely to be either ignored or have a business friendly spin placed on them. Capitalism itself is not to be criticized when reporting on the misdeeds of a “few bad apples”. Much of what is presented as “news” actually originates from a public relations firm's press or video release.

Rather than providing in-depth journalism the mass media serve as stenographers to the rich and powerful. “News” consists of context-free sound bites with all the analysis of an infotainment program. Corporate media has been instrumental in propagating the myth that what’s good for big business is good for the rest of us. Canadian mass media, while not as extreme as the American, follows the same general trend.

PBS and CBC television may be considered quasi-corporate since they both derive some of their income from advertising or corporate sponsorship. Broadly, the corporate media may be considered as falling into two general groups. The old-style establishment media is overwhelmingly pro business but maintains some basic journalistic standards. They have been pulled ever more rightward by the rise in recent decades of the more extremist, rabidly neoliberal media, such as the *National Post*, Fox News, and right-wing talk shows.

Corporate media is a major contributor to the **democratic deficit** in our society. By reporting on politics as if they were handicapping a horse race, mass media helps to create elections devoid of any real issues. The emphasis is placed on a candidate’s image, charisma, polling numbers, and presentation, resulting in a meaningless beauty contest. Any contender threatening the status quo of entrenched business interests is ignored, marginalized, ridiculed, or demonized. What we are left with is an increasingly narrow spectrum of allowable political discourse, a debate between the right and the far right.

Ultimately the corporate media may be seen as the chief instrument for the advancement of **hegemony**. In a modern society with democratic trappings rule by an economic elite requires co-opting the support of the exploited majority who must be convinced to vote against their own interests. Gaining their participation in their own exploitation requires selling them an ideology that this is for their own benefit, is the right thing to do, or is unavoidable. Today this is the ideology of neoliberal globalization and corporate media plays its role in disseminating these ideological myths as if they were the natural order of life.

***What Liberal Media?: The Truth About Bias and the News*** by Eric Alterman (2003) Deconstructs right-wing “liberal bias” claims, reveals effect of “think-tanks”, and exposes pro-corporate news slant. Also eResource.

***Trust Us, We’re Experts: How Industry Manipulates Science and Gambles With Your Future*** by John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton (2001) Exposes “neutral third party” techniques and front groups corporations use to manipulate public opinion. Lively and readable account.

***Toxic Sludge Is Good For You! Lies, Damn Lies, and the Public Relations Industry*** by John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton (1995) Details corporate front groups, spying/infiltration of activist groups by public relations firms, “green washing”/co-opting environmental groups, etc. Also a lively and readable account.

***Our Media, Not Theirs: The Democratic Struggle Against Corporate Media*** by Robert McChesney and John Nichols (2002) Brief but insightful look at corporate media concentration in the U.S. and around the world, its deleterious effects on democracy, and the citizen’s movement resisting it.

***PR! A Social History of Spin*** by Stuart Ewen (1996) Comprehensive look at a century of corporate public relations propaganda and its role in setting the public agenda. Academically oriented.

***Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*** by Robert McChesney (1999) U.S. broadcast history, conglomerates, and media myths.

***The Media Monopoly*** 6<sup>th</sup> edition by Ben Bagdikian (2000) Classic work of U.S. mass media concentration in a few corporate hands and its effects on democracy.

***The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media: Decoding Spin and Lies in Mainstream News*** by Norman Solomon (1999) A look at the techniques corporate media uses to ensure a business-friendly news spin.

***Blinded By the Right: The Conscience of an Ex-Conservative*** by David Brock (2002) A former insider's behind-the-scenes look at the American right-wing propaganda machine and its political ramifications.

## **Corporate Corruption/Monopolies**

These books highlight some of the most egregious examples of unmitigated corporate greed and monopolistic practices. They represent what happens when the unrelenting "free enterprise" pursuit of profit is allowed to run to its natural conclusion.

***It's the Crude, Dude: War, Big Oil, and the Fight For the Planet*** by Linda McQuaig (2004) Comprehensive but lively history of the oil industry, its monopolies, price-fixing, and industry collusion with the U.S. government.

***Pigs at the Trough: How Corporate Greed and Political Corruption Are Undermining America*** by Arianna Huffington (2003) Details the corporate control of government, corruption, lobbying, and corporate interest vs. the public good.

***The Best Democracy Money Can Buy: An Investigative Reporter Exposes the Truth About Globalization, Corporate Cons, and High Finance Fraudsters*** by Greg Palast (2002) From Bush's 2000 U.S. election theft to energy deregulation to Wal-Mart this book is a wide-ranging look at corporate corruption and control of the U.S. government. Also on cd.

***Slam-Dunking Wal-Mart: How You Can Stop Superstore Sprawl in Your Hometown*** by Al Norman (1999) Explores Wal-Mart's predatory tactics and their effects on workers and communities as well as how citizen coalitions can fight back.

***The United States of Wal-Mart*** by John Dicker (2005) Lively description of Wal-Mart's union busting, overseas sweatshops, and how its impoverished "associates" rely on public assistance to survive.

***The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What To Do About It*** by Marcia Angell, M.D. (2004) A former editor of The New England Journal of Medicine exposes the phony research and development costs drug companies claim to justify inflated monopoly prices, their shoddy drug testing procedures, and influence on the U.S. government.

***The Microsoft File: The Secret Case Against Bill Gates*** by Wendy Goldman Rohm (1998) The real story of Microsoft's rise as a corporate giant through the use of monopolistic bundling techniques.

***Power Failure: The Inside Story of the Collapse of Enron*** by Mimi Swartz (2003) Details Enron's creative accounting practices to inflate its share prices and its use of political influence to push deregulation and engineer artificial energy shortages.

## **U.S. History/Politics/Militarism/Hegemony**

For decades throughout Latin America, the Middle East, and around the world the U.S has covertly or

through direct military invasion destabilized and overthrown governments, often democratically elected, to institute “regime change” while simultaneously propping up corrupt right-wing military despots. The American government claims to have done this in its role of “fighting communism”, “fighting the drug lords” or “fighting the war on terrorism”. In fact the motivation has invariably been to advance U.S. strategic interests and/or to benefit its corporations by creating investor-friendly governments. Corporate profits are enhanced by securing scarce resources as cheaply as possible and new markets for their products. Meanwhile U.S. backed dictators clamp down on any dissent in the countries being victimized. In many ways America's foreign wars may be viewed as a more direct method of economic globalization. A constant war footing is also necessary to justify ever upwardly spiraling military spending and profits for the military-industrial complex. Canada’s reputation, earned over several decades as a peacekeeper, is being shredded by the misuse of our military forces as auxiliaries in America’s farcical “war on terror”. For decades Americans have ascribed their economic prowess to unrestrained capitalism or the blessing of divine providence, but in reality the high standard of living enjoyed by many in the U.S. has been built upon the ruthless exploitation of the resources and labour of other countries at far below their fair value.

American corporate media are complicit in this by spinning a fantasy world far removed from real-world information and context. “American exceptionalism” is used to excuse hypocritical conduct by that country. Anyone attempting to hold U.S. actions to the same standards that it claims apply to the rest of the world can expect to be accused of “moral relativism” by U.S. apologists. Right-wing critics can be counted on for an immediate knee-jerk dismissal of this as “anti-American” but in reality it is a description of the American Empire at work.

***Why Do People Hate America?*** by Ziauddin Sadar and Merryl Wyn Davies (2002) Details U.S. invasions/coups, cultural imperialism, and the myths that sustain the American Empire.

***Hegemony or Survival: America’s Quest For Global Dominance*** by Noam Chomsky (2003) Reveals U.S. human rights hypocrisy, marginalization of the U.N., American invasions and coups around the world and control of the media. Also on cd.

***Overthrow: America’s Century of Regime Change From Hawaii to Iraq*** by Stephen K (2006) Chronicles past U.S. regime changes and the commercial interests behind them.

***Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*** by John Perkins (2004) A former insider describes how developing world countries become entrapped by debt and then fall victim to pressure by the U.S. government and are preyed on by its corporations. Also on cd.

***Killing Hope: U.S. Military and C.I.A. Interventions Since World War II*** updated edition by William Blum (2004) Comprehensive blow-by-blow history American invasions, coups, electoral interference, and support for terrorists in the post-war era.

***Holding the Bully’s Coat: Canada and the U.S. Empire*** by Linda McQuaig (2007) Details Canada’s descent from international peacekeeper to America’s accomplice in its foreign wars and occupations. Also provides an excellent summary of Canadian military policy since World War II and our role in Afghanistan.

***Static: Government Liars, Media Cheerleaders, and the People Who Fight Back*** by Amy Goodman and David Goodman (2006) Chronicles the lies and deceptions of the Bush White House and media complicity.

***The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*** by Chalmers Johnson (2004) Describes how U.S. military bases form the physical infrastructure of its empire, the rise to supremacy of the military-industrial complex, and provides a detailed analysis of American military/espionage institutions.

***Rogue Nation: The America the Rest of the World Knows*** by Peter Scowen (2002) U.S. aggression against and

overthrow of governments of various countries from the end of World War II onward. Also looks at the American religious right and 2000 election.

***Rushing to Armageddon: Canada and America's Star Wars*** by Mel Hurtig (2004) Exposes U.S. efforts to coerce Canada into joining its offensive military project masquerading as a "defensive shield" as part of its plan to weaponize space.

***An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire*** by Arundhati Roy (2004) A series of essays mainly concentrating on the American Empire and its effects on the world.

***A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present*** by Howard Zinn (2003) The classic work on American history from the perspective of the common people and their struggle.

***The Bush Dyslexicon: Observations on a National Disorder*** by Mark Crispin Miller (2001) A look at the right-wing in America and its political influence.

***Dude, Where's My Country?*** by Michael Moore (2003) Raises unanswered 9/11 questions and examines White House lies about the Iraq war as well as looking at the Wall Street financial casino. Also on cd and cassette tape.

## **Religion/Values in American Politics**

Since the Reagan years a new dynamic has been growing in the United States. The ruling neoliberal corporate elite, together with the neoconservatives with their socially regressive policies, have co-opted the radical Christian right. The constitutionally mandated separation of church and state is being eroded as the government downloads more of its social responsibilities on religious organizations. Right-wing politicians and their fundamentalist televangelist allies cynically manipulate the faithful for the benefit of wealthy corporate backers. Under the guise of protecting "family values" and fighting the culture war fundamentalists have been mobilized in a business-friendly jihad that often undermines their own economic interests and brings poverty and war to the rest of the world. Implications for Alberta politics?

***Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism*** by Michelle Goldberg (2006) Frightening look at the political influence of right-wing Christian fundamentalists in alliance with neoliberal Republicans in American politics and their pursuit of a theocratic state.

***Talking Right*** by Geoffrey Nunberg (2006) How the wealthy American elite and the media obscure real economic differences between classes and use contrived cultural divides to perpetuate their political control.

***American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America*** by Chris Hedges (2006) Details the hypocrisy and dangers posed by the political agenda of the right-wing American Fundamentalists.

***What's the Matter With Kansas: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*** by Thomas Frank (2004) Terrific analysis of how the anger of the Christian right/"family values"/culture war backlash was mobilized by the wealthy to advance their corporate interests at the expense of ordinary Americans by separating class from economics.

***Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*** by George Lakoff (2004) How the American right-wing uses deceptive issue framing to push its neoliberal agenda and how it can be overcome. Also cd

## **Environment/Energy**

Our environment is under assault as never before in human history, with its ability to sustain our civilization no longer by any means assured. The dominant force propelling this ravaging is the lust for ever-larger corporate profits. The planet and its wildlife face clearcutting and deforestation, unsustainable mining, chemical pollution, and global warming. In Alberta the tar sands have become a national sacrifice zone while the industrial heartland northeast of Edmonton is subjected to unlimited development regardless of the ecological cost. While overpopulation is a danger, the world's real threat is over consumption. The hundreds of billions of dollars spent on advertising yearly around the globe are designed to create wants where they don't exist and then turn those wants into needs that must be met. The result of this runaway consumerism is a waste of our natural resources and huge mountains of garbage. The **ecological footprint**, the area of land needed to support each person, keeps relentlessly expanding. Rather than living off the interest the biosphere generates, since the 1980's the human race has been squandering its principal. One of many false claims of neoliberal globalization, that everyone in the world can consume at the same level as North Americans, would require the resources of several earths. Ultimately, to maintain the constant profits capitalism requires, the economy must keep expanding without limit on a finite planet.

When corporations are confronted with evidence of how their activities are damaging the planet and human health, the first line of defence is stonewalling: unrelenting denial of the problem or any contribution from their operations. When this becomes too absurd in the face of mounting evidence, they embark on a long drawn out stalling campaign, calling for ever more studies before anything is done. In this they are supported by "experts" for sale as well as government and corporate media allies who together sow doubt and confusion among the public. They are frequently aided by artificial "grass roots" **Astroturf groups** created by public relations firms to back the corporate position. Meaningless intensity targets for each industrial site are proposed while ignoring total cumulative impact. When all else fails jobs are held hostage. P.R. campaigns seek to **greenwash** the corporate image with bogus claims of **sustainability** while they carry on with business as usual. Even the backers of nuclear power are peddling it as "green". Industries may also use **strategic lawsuits against public participation (slapp suits)**, frivolous lawsuits designed to intimidate activists. Governmental "smart regulations" allow corporations to police themselves, while "free trade" treaties harmonize environmental regulations to the lowest common denominator. Independent peer-reviewed academic research critical of corporate environmental or health impacts is dismissed as "**junk science**". Government scientists, attempting to do their job of protecting the public, face interference and intimidation from their bureaucratic overseers if their findings possibly threaten corporate profits.

***Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism*** rev. ed. by Sharon Beder (2002) Details corporate use of front groups, phony Astroturf "grass roots" citizen's groups, lawsuits against activists, corporate funded "think-tanks" and public relations firms.

***The Republican War On Science*** by Chris Mooney (2005) U.S. governmental interference in global warming research and environmental regulation as well as creationism and stem cell research.

***Boiling Point: How Politicians, Big Oil and Coal, Journalists, and Activists Have Fueled the Climate Crisis- And What We Can Do to Avert Disaster*** by Ross Gelbspan (2004) Details corporate and government collaboration in their effort to block action on global warming.

***The Weather Makers: How We Are Changing the Climate and What It Means For Life on Earth*** by Tim Flannery (2005) Detailed look at the causes and effects of global warming, corporate and government responsibility, and possible solutions. Also cd and eResource

***An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*** by Al Gore (2006) Quick but comprehensive introduction to the dangers of global warming and industry and government denial.

***Big Coal: The Dirty Secret Behind America's Energy Future*** by Jeff Goodell (2006) Details coal's environmental impact, contribution to global warming, and U.S. political influence of its corporations.

***Nuclear Power is Not the Answer*** by Helen Caldicott (2006) Exposes the true costs and dangers of nuclear power and weapons proliferation, and explores the renewable alternatives.

***Genetically Altered Foods and Your Health*** by Ken Roseboro (2004) Quick and easy introduction to genetically engineered foods, their potential dangers, and the organic alternative.

***Oil Sands Fever: The Environmental Implications of Canada's Oil Sands Rush*** by Dan Woynillowicz (2005) Pembina Institute's brief overview of Alberta's tar sands development, its environmental cost, and the province's low royalty rates.

## **Alternatives To Corporate Globalization/Free Trade**

Since the collapse of Soviet communism neoliberals have proclaimed the unregulated global marketplace supreme. Their rallying cry has been Margaret Thatcher's infamous "TINA" (there is no alternative). To this activists around the world have replied "TATA" (there are thousands of alternatives). These books provide the answer to that perennial taunt of globalization's boosters: "we know what you're against, but what are you for?"

***Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World is Possible*** by John Cavanagh (2002) Great summary of neoliberal globalization and its institutions and systematic analysis of the possible alternatives. Academically oriented.

***Deglobalization: Ideas For a New World Economy*** by Walden Bello (2002) History and activities of the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, etc and the alternatives.

***The No-Nonsense Guide to Fair Trade*** by David Ransom (2001) Presents the alternative to corporate "free trade" globalization.

***Good News For a Change: Hope For a Troubled Planet*** by David Suzuki and Holly Dressel (2002) Describes how people have begun to change the way they do business to create a more sustainable lifestyle. out of our present dysfunctional economic system

## **Activism**

Resistance is futile? Hardly! From Mexico's Zapatistas rising up against NAFTA to Argentine workers taking over abandoned factories to the WTO "Battle of Seattle" to local Edmonton activists finding everyday ways to subvert the system, the struggle against neoliberalism, war, and corporate-style globalization is growing. Explore the diverse ways people around the world are empowering themselves and learn a few tips for your own fight-back.

***Global Uprising: Confronting the Tyrannies of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*** by Neva Welton and Linda Wolf (2001) Essays from around the world on citizen's resistance to corporate rule.

***The Global Activist's Manual: Local Ways to Change the World*** edited by Mike Prokosch and Laura Raymond (2002) A wide-ranging series of essays on coalition building, direct action, consumer mobilization, and other practical aspects of activism.

***An Action a Day: Keeps Global Capitalism Away*** by Mike Hudema (2004) A how-to manual on resisting neoliberalism by a legendary Edmonton activist.

*We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism* edited by Notes From Nowhere (2003)  
Comprehensive overview of a decade of anti-corporate globalization protests from around the world.

*Fences and Windows: Dispatchs From the Front Lines of the Globalization Debate* by Naomi Klein (2002)  
On-the-scene reports from the battle against neoliberal globalization.

*The Legacy of Luna: The Story of a Tree, a Woman, and the Struggle to Save the Redwoods* by Julia  
Butterfly Hill (2000) One woman's account of her two year tree-sit to save the California redwoods.

**FEEL FREE TO COPY AND DISTRIBUTE**