

## The Genocidal Global Politics and Neoliberalism

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**Abstract.** Neoliberalism is the precursor of the current genocidal global politics. The world should thus critically reassess neoliberal theory-as-practice. This paper will investigate the fundamentalist and closed character of neoliberalism that destroys global democracy, global governance, free trade, and collective security. It will also examine the neoliberal attacks on the working class, which have undermined the main pillar of global social structure. Finally, this paper will discuss the possible upsurge of upheavals that might lead to the creation of genocidal societies at the local and global levels.

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### 1. Introduction

Global politics refer to "*all* forms of interaction between the members of separate societies, whether government-sponsored or not" (Holsti, 1992: 10) and the decision making that gives effect to such interaction. Global politics are thus a form of global social structure that shapes or is being shaped by agents' behaviours. If genocide is defined as an act committed with *intent* to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group<sup>1</sup>, then genocidal global politics is a form of self-destructive, if not suicidal, global social structure. But is it possible to identify the genocidal intent of a neoliberal policy? The point is that if neoliberal policies cause, or are associated with, massive death or acute deprivation among the poor in particular regions, then such policies might qualify as either second or third degree genocide (Pramono, 2002). Everyone thus has the right to life, and hence to be free from such suicidal global structure.

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<sup>1</sup> See Article II of the 1948 Genocide Convention.

The main argument presented is this: neoliberalism is the precursor, and hence the prime inspirational source, of genocidal global politics. To have a non-genocidal global politics, the world should critically reassess and then decide whether or not to dismantle neoliberal theory-as-practice. As such, the purpose of this paper is threefold. First, it will investigate the fundamentalist and closed character of neoliberalism that ironically destroys the very basic tenets the liberals intend to attain, namely global democracy, good global governance, free trade, and collective security. Second, in order to reveal such genocidal nature, it will examine particularly the sustained attacks on the working class. The attacks are genocidal since they undermine the main pillar of global social structure. The collapse of the working class means the collapse of “global societies based on work”. Thus, third, this paper will discuss the possible upsurge of upheavals that might lead to the creation of genocidal societies at the local and global levels. It is now time to take the first step in the investigation of genocidal global politics by determining the linkage between neorealism and genocide.

## **2. Neoliberalism and genocide**

In global politics, neoliberalism preoccupies itself with the promotion of four basic issues: (1) global democracy, (2) free trade, (3) global governance through international organizations, and (4) collective security. Neoliberalism focuses on regime creation and institutional building. It attempts, and with great success, to expand the global agenda beyond a mere military strategy (i.e the agenda of traditional realist called the high politics); (micro)economics is now the prima donna of the show.

As such, neoliberalism, in its crudest form, is crystallised in the Ten Commandments of the 1989 Washington Consensus (policy instruments set for the world by the US and international financial institutions):

- **FISCAL DISCIPLINE:** strict criteria for limiting budget deficits;
- **PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PRIORITIES:** away from subsidies and administration towards 'neglected fields with high economic returns and the potential to improve income distribution, such as primary health and education, and infrastructure';
- **TAX REFORM:** broadening the tax base and cutting marginal tax rates;

- FINANCIAL LIBERALIZATION: interest rates should ideally be market-determined;
- EXCHANGE RATES: should be managed to induce rapid growth in non-traditional exports;
- TRADE LIBERALIZATION: tariffs not quotas, and declining tariffs to around 10 percent within 10 years;
- FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT: no barriers and 'equality' with domestic firms;
- PRIVATIZATION: state enterprises should be privatized;
- DEREGULATION: abolition of 'regulations that impede the entry of new firms or restrict competition', and establishing 'such criteria as safety, environmental protection, or prudential supervision of financial institutions' as the means to justify those which remain;
- PROPERTY RIGHTS: secure rights without excessive costs and available to the informal sector (Bretton Wood Project, 2003: 1).

But a decade after the forced implementation of the Washington Consensus, or neoliberal globalisation, Joseph Stiglitz, the former Chief Economist at the World Bank, issued the following statement:

...trade liberalization *accompanied by high interest rate* is an almost certain recipe for job destruction and unemployment creation —at the expense of the poor. Financial market liberalization *unaccompanied by an appropriate regulatory structure* is an almost certain recipe for economic instability —and may well lead to higher, not lower interest rates, making it harder for poor farmers to buy the seeds and fertilizers that can raise them above subsistence. Privatization, *unaccompanied by competition policies and oversight to ensure that monopoly powers are not abused*, can lead to higher, not lower, prices for consumers. Fiscal austerity, *pursued blindly*, in the wrong circumstances, can lead to high unemployment and shredding of the social contract (Stiglitz, 2002: 84).

High unemployment and the shredding of the social contract will be the focus of a later discussion in this paper. But, at present, the point is that Stiglitz does not question the truism of neoliberalism (for he does not

contend any of the ten principles of the Washington Consensus), but the dogmatic implementation of the consensus. Stiglitz rejects the "one size fits all" principle in the implementation of the consensus. Local varieties matter. However, while criticising the malpractice of capitalism, and while acknowledging various versions of the market model, and while encouraging some roles of the states in the case of market failures, for Stiglitz (2002), the market is *the only* way of post-Cold War global governance. With such a position at hand, this winner of the Nobel Prize for economics 2001 can only enhance the nuances of market fundamentalism.

As such, the genocidal nature of neoliberalism is rooted in the closure (or fundamentalist) character of this paradigm. The closure was amplified in Fukuyama's claim that, by the end of the Cold War, human societies have reached "...the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the *final* form of human government" (1989: 4, italic added). For him, *final* means *the end of history*. But what is it that actually comes to an end?

It is the very liberalism that comes to an end. With the end of the Cold War, multilateral decisions in the global political economy are increasingly taken over by the autocracy of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. On the World Bank (which is also the case with the IMF), George and Sabelli (1994: 5) comment that "this supranational, non-democratic institution functions very much like the Church, in fact the medieval Church. It has a doctrine, a rigidly structured hierarchy preaching and imposing this doctrine and a quasi-religious mode of self-justification." Their decisions, which are at present largely unchallenged, and worse, must be implemented as a matter of faith, affect more than 80 percent of human beings on the planet. And their fundamentalist decisions that resulted in the dislocation of entire communities, displacement of peoples, destruction of environment, and concentration of wealth in the hand of few rich entrepreneurs, must be accepted by the poor majority as a necessary suffering for salvation of future lives (George and Sabelli, 1994; Stiglitz, 2002). Consequently, the good global governance, which the liberals initially want to attain by promoting international organizations, is undermined by neoclassical fundamentalism.

Such fundamentalism, too, undermines democracy, which is a basic tenet of liberalism. Thus, it is contrary to Fukuyama's claim that "the state that emerges at the end of history is...democratic insofar as it exists only with the consent of the governed" (1989: 5). The fact is that Fukuyama's

common marketization of the world is not a democratic choice, but an imposed truism that neither (developing) states or those governed by them have power or courage to refuse. It is not democratic because the World Bank and the IMF, which by custom or tacit agreement have always been headed by an American and a European respectively, represent the former colonisers of the developing world (i.e. the US for its policy in Latin America; and Europe for its past practices in Asia and Africa). It is not democratic because these global institutions' policies reflect the industrial and financial interests of the former colonisers. And these global institutions are anti-democracy, since the decision making process has always operated behind closed doors (Stiglitz, 2002). Democracy is thus a moribund concept.

With the death of democracy, *free* market as one of the liberal tools to promote peace fails to ensure *fair* market. Most developed countries, particularly the US, seized the benefit of the free market at the expense of the developing world. A study by the World Bank showed that the income of peoples in Sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region in the world, shrank by more than 2 percent as a consequence of the free market (Stiglitz, 2002). The imposition of a free but unfair market has resulted in global discontent that led to (“new”) post-Cold War global conflicts. After all, the worst scenario is foreseen by Fukuyama: namely, the possible conflicts between “states still in history [eg, developing countries]... and those at the end of history [eg, developed countries]” (1989: 18). What he fails to foresee is the ongoing —increasingly violent— conflicts between the few, who are already at the end of history, and the majority of the poor, who are still in history, within developed (or developing) countries and without. The security failure thus clouds the liberal world.

Consequently, the very core liberal concept of collective security is undermined. After all, such a security system is not prepared to address deprivation or poverty related upheaval. Efficacy, instead of relative transparency, aside the UN collective security system, nonetheless, remains the best among the worst schemes existing today. Based on the UN Charter design, it is the Security Council that has the power to determine whether a deprivation related crisis (eg, aggression, terror, and crime) is a threat to global peace and security, and hence can activate UN mechanisms of individual and collective self-defense to protect humanity. While democratisation within the Security Council (particularly the possible enlargement of the existing permanent members) is yet to be attained, the recent developments indicate the new political fragmentation, the prospect of

which remains unclear. The new fragmentation reflects the increasingly irritative relations among the major powers. Anglo-American axis remains strong. Russia, at present, is not sure which West it should align with. France is containing the Anglo-American influence in Francophonie Africa, and with Germany, in Western Europe. And China is becoming more assertive due to the increase of its economic strength. Whether this new fragmentation within the Security Council is good (or bad) for global democracy is uncertain. What is certain is the growing tendency of the major powers, particularly the US and its Anglo-American axis, to resort to militarist unilateralism. A recent case in point is the commencement of US-led aggression of Iraq (regime change project) without the consent of the UN Security Council. Unilateralism is shaking the foundation of the liberal collective security.

As such, it is an irony that, "the end of history" could mean the end of the very core concepts of liberalism itself: (1) democracy, (2) sustainable free trade, (3) democratic global governance through international organisations, and (4) effective collective security (multilateralism). What then should one call liberalism in the absence of these four tools of liberal peace? Perhaps, one might call it "genocidal neoliberalism".

The genocidal character of neoliberalism has been self-evidence. As more than 45 percent of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day (Stiglitz, 2002), "[w]hat can, and frequently does, emerge then are incubator states, regions, or systems, and a world of contagion, as has happened and continues to happen,..." (McKinley, 2001: 11). Here, one is observing alarming poverty, hunger, diseases, deaths. One, too, is witnessing environmental degradations, with much of the damage beyond repair, and dehumanisation of human societies. The daunting task is thus how to uncover the genocidal mentality that embedded in neoliberalism? Or, precisely, how to determine the genocidal intent of a particular neoliberal policy?

The mental element of crime, either intent or knowledge, is nevertheless a legal desideratum which is hard to demonstrate. Greenawalt (1999) suggests an end-oriented alternative in which genocidal intent should be inferred from the *knowledge* of the expected outcome of actual acts. For instance, if an entity (individual, company, state, etc) acts with knowledge that the aim or actual effect of the action will cause destruction of particular human group, then this entity is liable for a genocidal act. This paper believes that such human groups should include political and socio-cultural

groups as well (Pramono, 2002). Churchill (1986) then proposes a multi-layered gradient of criminality based on the clarity of genocidal *intent* to loose the stringency of the 1948 Genocide Convention mental element. A better approach would be to combine Churchill and Greenawalt's proposals (and thus to combine intent and knowledge) to attain a broader approach of the genocidal mental element (Pramono, 2002).

As such, first, if the genocidal mental element —either intent or knowledge— is evidently clear, the furtherance of genocidal acts (such as killing, causing injury, degrading condition of life, imposing measures to prevent birth<sup>2</sup>) qualifies as first-degree genocide. Second, if the genocidal mental element *per se* is unclear, while the genocidal acts are evident, the crime qualifies as second-degree genocide. Third, if the genocidal mental element and genocidal acts are lacking, but due to recklessness and negligence, a human group or more is inevitably destroyed —in whole or in part— the corresponding acts qualify as third-degree genocide. Table 1 hopefully helps clarify the gradient of genocidal criminality. The gradient of genocidal criminality helps assess genocidal impact of any neoliberal policy. A close look at the dying working class (as a socio-cultural group) might help further understanding of the genocidal character of neoliberalism.

### 3. Attacks on the working class

If genocide relates to policy that gives effect to the destruction of particular group(s), leading to the collapse of the whole societies, then a discussion focusing on how neoliberalism destroys the working class might help reveal its genocidal mentality. Neoliberalism is by nature genocidal (and suicidal) because in order to survive, it has to eat its own tail. In other words, by 'killing' the working class, capitalism is digging its own grave. When the working class is dying, society is dying, which at the end will lead to the death of capitalism itself. But what or who is the working class?

The working class, which is condemned to extinction by neoliberalism, should be viewed as socio-cultural, rather than solely an economic institution (Polanyi, 1944; see also Block and Somers, 1984). The working class, therefore, is a socio-cultural institution of workers —blue and white collars— for whom "employment is far more than a measure of income: ... it is the essential measure of self-worth" of individuals in a

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<sup>2</sup> See Article II of the 1948 Genocide Convention.

society based on work (Rifkin, 1995: 195). The emphasis on class is nevertheless significant because this working class represents an important segment of human society that is threatened by the integrated mode of global production.

*The end of history* in fact has led the world to *the end of work*: the alienation of the concept of work from its socio-cultural environment. As the world is now entering the Third Industrial Revolution —the era of the information super highway— technology has caused productivity to be uncoupled from mass labour (Rifkin, 1995). Economic neoliberal creed, then, dictates rationalisation and efficiency in all lines of production through job killing methods like downsizing, out sourcing, and re-engineering production (Martin and Schumann, 1997). The result is an alarming massive unemployment that has already led to global upheavals as symbolically expressed in various protests in Seattle in 1999, Washington DC in 2000, Quebec and Genoa in 2001. Thus, the end of work, in the sense described above, means a ‘requiem for the working class’ (Rifkin, 1995).

The point is that the neoliberal perception of values of society and the free market, especially the ones related to the concept of work, is such that globalisation will soon become the global trap that undermines not only the global economy but also, and most importantly, the human society. Neoliberal perception of values of society and the free market has "created the delusion of economic determinism as a general law for all human society" (Polanyi, 1968: 70). Thus, human society is transformed into a market society (Gill, 1993), a society based on laissez-faire capitalism. The immediate result is the corrosion of the value of work and worker as an integral part of social structure.

Market society, according to the neoliberal creed, demands the commodification of money, land, and *labour*. While labourers are real people, the workers are no longer considered as humans but commodities and therefore are subject to the law of supply and demand. Work is merely an economic of subsistence; a labour sold at market price. For the capitalist who hires the worker, labour is associated with the *cost* of production. To maximise profit, this *cost* must be ‘rationalised’ at the lowest level. The market society in effect has relegated the economic and social role of work (the role of which will be dealt with later in this paper) to merely a factor of production.



The commodification of workers is nonetheless detrimental to the society for two reasons. Firstly, as argued by Polanyi (1944:133), that the capitalist "had no organ to sense the danger involved in the exploitation of the physical strength of the worker". Thus, as had been foreseen by Marx and Engel (1997) in their *Communist Manifesto*, capitalism develops with increasing exploitation of the working class. Secondly, since workers are commodities, it will be at the disposal of the capitalist to put them to work or to dismiss them.

But work is one of the important pillars of the orderly society. The individual self-interest, which is not limited to the economic one, brings woman and man to take part in organisations such as markets and factories (Homans, 1971). These organisations, then, function as external systems that impose social control upon the individual member. The cessation of this relationship, in the case of unemployment, leads toward the condition Durkheim called *anomie*: the loss of contact, and therefore control, of the social organisation over the individual (cited in Homans, 1971: 69). High mass-unemployment thus causes social disorganisation. The industrious working class is turned into a potentially violent mob or law-breakers. If this happens, normally the authority resorts to a pragmatic solution: reinforces security and builds more prisons. Britain, for instance, allocated 870 million Pound Sterling, which was considered the largest expansion of penal institutions this century, to built twenty-six new prisons between 1983 and 1995. Similar policies have been followed in the US, France, Germany and most other Western industrialised countries (Teeple, 1995). As "the social fabric is tearing apart" (Martin and Schumann, 1997: 103), the demise of the working class is incurring tremendous social cost to societies.

The commodification of workers, and the social cost associated with this, is rooted in the liberal perception of *laissez-faire* capitalism. *Laissez-faire* capitalism, which is considered "natural" by the liberals, has been adopted in Western economic and political culture (Burchill, 1996). Western individualism is in this way reduced to *homo economicus* (George and Sabelli, 1994: 8) based on the belief that the pursuit of material self-gain is the 'natural' drive of human beings. Market society, too, is "natural" since such society is created by the economic drive of its members.

But, according to Polanyi (1944), nothing is natural. Both the individual preference (e.g. economic drive) and market society is engineered and facilitated by the state. States pave the way for a free market economy by enforcing deregulation and liberalisation as obliged by the Ten

Commandments of the Washington Consensus. In 1947, half a century before the Consensus, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) had only 23 member countries. In 1994, GATT's membership vastly expanded to include 128 countries. The World Trade Organisation has a potential membership of 152 countries and territories (WTO, 1995: 4,9). Thus, states are the loyal marketeers of *laissez-faire* capitalism

This "artificial" process (rather than "natural") described above has become ironic. As the world is entering the Third Industrial Revolution, of which technology is the driving force, *laissez-faire* capitalism dictates efficiency for the maximisation of material gain. Machines can potentially replace about 75 per cent of jobs in the industrial nations. If one takes the US as a particular example, the machine proletariat can replace more than 90 million jobs of its 124 million human labour force (Rifkin, 1995: 5). Thus, the so-called efficiency for profit maximisation poses threats to the very existence of the working class and human society as a whole.

What happened in the West has now transferred itself to the Rest. In Huntington's (1998) thesis, the West's success in material gain, the hard-culture, paved the way to the acceptance by the Rest of the Western *laissez-faire* capitalism, the soft-culture. This *laissez-faire* soft-culture has transferred itself to the developing world through economic "reformism". And the main engine of such reform is the powerful international financial institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank (Bierstekker, 1992) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) (Gill, 1993).

*Laissez-faire* capitalism induces a consumptive lifestyle and this consumptive live style has been and is still being structurally installed in the developing world, mostly by local intellectuals who were educated in the West. During the Cold War, Rostow's development theory appealed to many leaders of developing countries. According to Rostow (cited in Todaro, 1985:63), *all* countries must proceed in steps of development —stages of growth— the process of which is started with traditional society and completed with the attainment of the age of high mass consumption. This latest stage of development serves at best the interest of global capitalists because it induces rampant consumerism. It is in this context that Fukuyama (1989: 18) calls upon the "common marketisation of the world". Thus, the Western fallacy is now the global fallacy, permeated by the capitalist regime.

The existing capitalist regime is not sustainable because, despite its capability to tremendously increase productivity, it induces increasing mass

unemployment (McKinley) and the worsening of the social security net of the working class: a process Schumpeter called 'creative destruction' (cited in Gill, 1993: 81). Thus, the common marketisation of the world has neglected the alarming social cost: the demise of the working class.

The foundation of the capitalist regime was laid shortly after World War II, but the development of the regime was intensified in the 1970s. The political setting was chaotic: America's defeat in Vietnam, economic recession and the oil crises. This relative decline of US power, then, triggered the development of hegemonic stability and regime theories in American universities (Knutson, 1997). The US, argues Little (1997), should maintain its hegemonic status, otherwise there will be a shift in the balance of power to the detriment of neoliberal economic principles governing the existing capitalist regime.

If one employs Keohane and Nye's (1987) perspective of Complex Interdependence, an early contribution to regime theory, she or he could detect that the existing capitalist regime, in fact, enhances the increasingly unbalanced interplay among the actors who represent the factors of production. These actors include the Multinational Corporations (MNCs), which represent capital; the states, which represent the diminishing-national power over what Polanyi (1944) called fictitious commodities: money, land and labour; and trade unions which represent workers.

These actors are now facing the reality of the global order: the shifting economic structure of production and consumption and the changing political structure of sovereignty (Gill, 1993). Thus, the core issue of political economy is to find a 'link and match' between the prevailing state centric system and the economic system that is becoming non-territorial and globalised (Tooze, 1997). As labour forces are relatively immobile or localised (McKinley), notwithstanding the recent trend of the increasing number of migrant workers, the economy is moving toward integrated production of goods and services (Tooze, 1997). This will affect the balance of power in the relationship between the MNCs, the states, and the unions.

The MNCs are becoming the dominant actors of the globalised economy; they undertake 65 per cent of international trade, about 50 per cent of which is carried out within their own networks (Martin and Schumann, 1997). In the early 1980s, the size of annual production of Exxon was larger than the GDP of New Zealand, Hungary, Portugal, and Ireland combined. By

the same token, General Motor's size of annual production was larger than Austria's GDP (Kegley *et al.*, 1988).

As powers of capital encroach on political realms, MNCs have considerable power to succeed in state-firm diplomacy for the following reasons. Firstly, MNCs successfully employ the strategy of divide –to play states and unions off against each other— and rule. Secondly, this divide and rule strategy can be pursued because the operations of MNCs are no longer based on comparative advantages but absolute advantages through integrated production (Martin and Schumann, 1997). Thirdly, MNCs have seized the power of sophisticated technology, which enables them to create 'jobless growth' that has fundamentally changed the correlation between (mobile) capital and (immobile) labour (Martin and Schumann, 1997). Last but not least, MNCs have successfully influenced the development of international law (eg, GATT Rounds and WTO) and municipal laws to the benefit of their operations (see the increasing legal barriers against workers and unions depicted in Table 2), and hence, challenge attempts to establish international law and regulations that might help strengthen the political leverage of the working class.

States' economic power has been diminished by the MNCs' integrated production. It is an irony that in their efforts to seize a handful of benefits from the world market, states tend to act as repressive agents of these global capitalists. The International Confederation of Free Trade Union reported in 1996, as follows:

Workers' most basic right to organise in trade unions is still blatantly denied, *often by law*, in a number of countries: Burma, Saudi Arabia, Equatorial Guinea, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. In others, such as Cuba, Vietnam, Iran, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, North Korea and China, so-called trade unions exist but serve merely to transmit the orders of the state to the workers (*italic added*) (ICFTU, 1996: 7).

Thus, rather than protecting the unions, states have promoted the interest of global capitalism by violating the unions' rights. Table 2 depicts the increasing violations of trade union rights at the global level from 1992 to 1994. It also shows that while the numbers of arrest and dismissal decreased the numbers of murders, injuries, government interference, and legal barriers against unions increased. Thus, from the perspective of Galtung's structural

theory of imperialism (1987) one can see a degree of the harmony of interests among the political elites and the capitalists. The states in many cases colluded with the MNCs to exploit the economic sources at the expense of the working class (Teepie, 1995).

The trade unions, the main purpose of which is to control the supply of labour that the corporations can use (Fischer and Dornbusch, 1983), are the losing party. New technology and global policies of the MNCs, which are micro-economic in nature, undermine the global labour market. The situation is always that supply of labour severely exceeds demand. It is speculated that the world is shaping into a 20:80 society which means, 20 per cent of the global population will suffice to keep the world economy going, with 80 per cent left unemployed (Martin and Schumann, 1997). The unions, too, are losing their members: "in 1980 more than 20 per cent of all employees and workers still belonged to a union, whereas today the figure is 10 per cent" (Martin and Schumann, 1997: 120). The trade unions will lose their power *vis a vis* the MNCs. If this happens, it would be the end of the working class. And the "killing" of the working class is by nature genocidal, since this will lead to the collapse of the entire society. A case study of the US global politics might help revealing such a possible global collapse.

#### **4. American neoliberal global politics**

The long history of US imperialism provides the best example of the practical politics of neoliberalism. Major General Smedley Butler of the US Marine Corps, who were twice awarded the Medal of Honor, and who were acknowledged by General Douglas MacArthur as one of the great generals in American history, testified in 1933 about the US imperialism in Latin America:

There isn't a trick in the racketeering bag that the military gang is blind to. It has its 'finger-men' to point out enemies, its 'muscle-men' to destroy enemies, its 'brain men' to plan war preparation and a 'Big Boss' Super-Nationalistic-Capitalism.

It may seem odd for me, a military man, to adopt such a comparison. Truthfulness compels me to. I spent thirty-three years and four months in active military service as a member of this country's most agile military force, the Marine Corps. I served in all commissioned ranks from

Second Lieutenant to Major General. And during that period, I spent most of my time being a high class muscleman for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism.

I suspected I was just part of a racket at the time. Now I am sure of it.

I helped make Honduras 'right' for American fruit companies in 1903. I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.

During those years, I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. Looking back on it, I feel that I could have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents (cited in Ali, 2002: 259-260).

As such, for the genocidal global politics of the US, military establishment and neoliberalism are like bow and arrow. In other words, as argued by Friedman, a columnist of the *New York Times* (28 March 1999): "The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist. McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell-Douglas, the designer of the F-15, and the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technology is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps." An "axis of evil" was then drawn between the World Trade Center and Pentagon, and hence between neoliberalism and military establishment, in the pursuance of genocidal global politics. Scepticism is thus a way to view the current neoliberal global politics.

The danger is present and imminent. The bulk of humans on earth are deprived, economically and hence, socially, by the neoliberal market fundamentalists. Most individuals, borrowing the words of Staub (1989:35), experience "attack on or threat to life, material well-being, or self-concept and self-esteem." Staub, in his *The roots of evil* (1989), devoted a

substantial part of the volume to examining the psychology of hard times and how difficult life conditions can lead to genocide or intensify the existing genocide. And, for him, a key-word of genocide is "aggression". It does not follow, however, that all kinds of aggression will end up in genocide, but there can be no genocide without aggression. As such, the next task is to reveal the possible linkage between the neoliberal global social structure and the increasing act of genocidal aggression within states and without.

An adaptation from Staub's study about psychological states and processes that promote aggression can help clarify such a linkage. In this context, the neoliberal global politics should be viewed as genocidal attacks to the real and potential victims of the neoliberal imperialism. The neoliberal global politics incite anger, rage, and the motive for *retaliation* and *harm doing* (Staub, 1989). Only a few, perhaps, would formally condone the September 11, which represents attacks against the World Trade Center - Pentagon "axis of evil", and the Bali carnage of October 12, which represents attack on the Washington - Canberra axis. But many would understand such genocidal attacks as retaliation against the practice of the US neoliberal global politics. The following is a note of conversation in New York between Tariq Ali, the author of *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*, and a white-bearded Latino taxi driver who drove him to the airport:

[Ali]: Where were you on September 11<sup>th</sup>?

[Driver]: (looking at [him] closely in the rear-view mirror) Why do you ask?

[Ali]: I just wondered.

[Driver]: Where are you from?

[Ali]: London.

[Driver]: No, I mean where are you *really* from?

[Ali]: Pakistan

[Driver]: I'm Taliban. Look at me. No, no. I'm from Central America. Can't you tell?

[Ali]: I just wondered whether you were anywhere near the Twin Towers that day.

[Driver]: No, I wasn't but I wouldn't have cared if I was.

[Ali]: What do you mean?

[Driver]: It wouldn't have mattered if I had got killed. The important thing is that *they* were hit. I was happy. You know why?

[Ali]: No.

[Driver]: You know how many people they've killed in Central America. You know?

[Ali]: Tell me.

[Driver]: Hundreds of thousands. Yes, really. They're still killing us. I'm really happy they were hit. We got our revenge. I feel sorry for the ones who died. That's more than they feel for us.

[Ali]: Why do you live here?

[Driver]: My son is at school here. I'm working to pay for his education. We had to come here because they left nothing back home. Nothing. No schools. No universities. You think I'd rather be here than in my own country? (Ali, 2002: 291-292).

The Latino taxi driver in New York was no fan of Major General Butler or bin Laden, or perhaps, had never heard about them. But he shared with Major General Butler the disgust towards the US exploitation of Latin America. And he, too, shared the grievance to free the world from neoliberal exploitation as articulated in bin Laden's *Declaration of War* (1996). The point is that those who live under the neoliberal global oppression share the same desire to retaliate.

Retaliation aside, aggression, for Staub (1989: 39), "is an effective self-defense, since it communicates that [genocidal] instigation does not pay and makes renewed instigation less likely." But such a communication will only be effective if the conflicting parties speak the same language of violence. Here, self-defense, for one, tends to be interpreted as *anticipatory* or *pre-emptive* self-defense. As such, the self-defense always represents naked aggression (eg, the case of the September 11 terrorist attacks and the corresponding attacks of Afghanistan and Iraq). Second, each party can play victim of the other, and thus use the notion of self-defense as the ground of its aggression. Determination to commit self-defense is not only practical, but also psychological.

The neoliberal global politics can also incite to the desire to protect *the psychological self* such as identity and self-esteem (Staub, 1989). Protection against who? A protection against the perceived hegemon, for one, can give rise to the desire for harm doing as suggested in the previous point. But, worse, often "it employs such 'internal', psychological means as scape-goating or devaluation of others, which eventually provides a basis for



violence against them" (Staub, 1989: 39). Those who attempt to protect the psychological self can arbitrarily determine the "others", which might include minority and unwanted groups, which have nothing to do with the provoking hegemon. Thus, for instance, facing the mounting US military threat at the end of 2001, the anti-American sentiment within the Taliban regime was directed against the non-Phustun Afganis such as Hazaris, Tajiks and Uzbeks. And in the 1991 Gulf War, the anti-American sentiment within the Iraqi regime was directed against the Kurd minority. The next instigating factor to observe is the question of (in)justice.

A sense of *injustice* can incite resentment, anger, and violence (Staub, 1989). For instance, following the political reform in 1998, Indonesia is becoming more democratic but poor. Yet, it is the democratisation—more than the simplistically alleged radicalism—which gives rise to the anti-American sentiment. More and more Indonesians dare to challenge, although with little success, the practice of US neoliberal global politics. Why should Indonesians who work for an American leading sportswear company in Indonesia be paid less than US\$ 2.00 per day for a product worth US\$ 45 - US 80 in American market? (McKinley, 2001). Aside from the question of (in)justice, the rising anti-American sentiment in Indonesia, and in the third world in general, which has sometimes led to violence, should be viewed as a result of frustration, acute deprivation, and sense of powerlessness.

Such psychological conditions will motivate peoples to regain a sense of *personal efficacy* and *personal power*. If people feel vulnerable to diseases, poverty, the constant threat of military pre-emptive strikes and weapons of mass-destruction, and, ultimately, death, then killing (eg, homicide, genocide) "may give the killer a feeling of invulnerability and power over [the] death" itself (Staub, 1989: 41). Such killings elusively help improve a sense of personal power. And this personal power is a psychological tool to help survive the increasing uncertainty, anarchy or chaos.

"Chaos, disorder and sudden profound changes, especially when accompanied by frustration, threat, and attack," for Staub (1989: 41), "invalidate the conceptions of self and world that serve as guides by which new experience acquires meaning and life gains coherence." As such, chaotic changes from a society based on the value of work to a workless society, as discussed in the previous section, would trigger moral panic until the arrival (or the acceptance) of a 'new' ideology that is perceived as able to

provide a renewed comprehension. If you were deprived from material gain, why would you not embrace something against (or destroy) all kinds of material gain? (eg, the case of Taliban anti-modernisation policy in Afghanistan) If you were deprived of a better life (and in no way can attain this) why would not you embrace a sub-culture that destroys all kinds of lives (eg, the case of terrorist ideology). In either case, albeit suicidal-genocidal, you were no longer a loser. Thus, the neoliberal global politics help the appeal of such destructive (and murderous) ideology in the decaying society.

The point is that not only is the neoliberal theory-as-practice genocidal, as depicted in the previous sections, but also it inflicts difficult life conditions that increase the severity of the existing global genocide. Most big cases of genocide happened in the backdrop of difficult life conditions. Turkey committed genocide against the Armenians after years of humiliation —losses of territory, power, and global political status— before and during the World War I. Difficult life condition following the defeat of Germany in World War I helped Hitler's rise to power. And the Holocaust was committed in the years when Germany was losing World War II. In Cambodia, the Polpot regime committed genocide in 1970s after years of civil war, starvation, and misery. In Argentina, severe economic problems preceded genocide (Staub, 1989). In Rwanda, the collapse of the coffee industry, the country's main national earning, preceded genocide. And in Indonesia, symptoms of genocidal society have been apparent since the collapse of the national economy following the Asian economic meltdown in 1997. With the neoliberal theory-as-practice, genocidal global politics is materialised and intensified.

## **5. Conclusion**

The course of neoliberal globalisation seems to have headed toward 'creative destruction' of the very important social fabric of global societies. The social disorganisation at the global level will incur unbearable social costs for human civilisation. It is thus the responsibility of every one who has the power —political, economic, scientific, and moral— to lead the international community to alter this deadly genocidal course. If the world is to take Polanyi's critiques seriously, there is an urgent need to review the neoliberal perception of values of society and the free market. The present capitalist regime must be changed in order to become a sustainable one. The capitalist regime must serve at best the basic tenet of liberalism, that the economy

must work to the good of the majority, not the *vice versa*. Otherwise *homo economicus*<sup>3</sup> could develop into *homo homini lupus*<sup>4</sup>, and hence rampaging genocidal societies at both local and global levels.

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<sup>3</sup> Economic man

<sup>4</sup> Translated to mean: men who behave like wolves to their fellow man

**Table 1: Gradient of genocidal criminality**

	First Degree	Second Degree	Third Degree
Mental Element (intent or knowledge on genocide)	+	-	-
Material Elements (genocidal acts)	+	+	-
Destruction of a human group in whole or in part	+	+	+

Note: + = existence of clear evidence; - = lacking of clear evidence (Pramono, 2002:

12)

**Table 2: Violation of Trade Union Rights**

Cases	1992	1993	1994
Murders	399	217	528
Injuries	551	1,195	1,983
Arrests/ Detentions	5,067	3,890	4,353
Dismissals	71,289	76,044	66,029
Government Interference	193	318	323
Legal Barriers	70	87	250
Total Violations	77,569	81,751	73,466

Source: compiled from ICFTU, 1995: Introduction.

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