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Book Review: From ACT UP to the WTO: urban protest and community building in the era of globalisation

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the ability of local citizens to define their own conditions of development, but tensions existing between goals and capacities of actors working from different places (north, south, urban, rural) is only noted as 'needing more critical investigation'.

Robinson's chapter on the new spaces of development, cities, gives a finer analysis of displacements than the other chapters by detailing the flows of people and capital that can both cause and solve development complexities related to urban restructuring, yet still fails to adequately explain the relationships between place and process. International financial networks, global fluxes of people, resources, commodities and the establishment of 'world class cities' are juxtaposed with the importance of strengthening territorially organized municipal governments. But Robinson provides no analysis as to how these networks and flows can work to undermine local government by acting as globalizing processes of the economy; or how its neoliberal ideology can reorder responsibilities of local governance structures through processes of decentralization and privatization. This is also seen in the concluding chapter of the text. This chapter investigates the implications of a 'displaced' development approach for the concept of governance. But the possibilities of deterritorialized governance structures are equated only with the positive conceptions of a global citizenship (its benefits for state-less people), and not extended to the spreading of an equally deterritorialized governance structure dominated by decisions of trans-national companies and the private sector. The World Bank's promotion of a private-sector partnership-led development also operates on the premise of a lack of connection between places where decisions are made and where they are enacted. However, as this form of global governance opens up areas for (foreign) private investment (especially into social service provision), it usually decreases, not increases, the rights of local citizens (to participation, to public goods). The deterritorialization of the arena in which crucial development decisions are made holds the potential for both positive and negative interventions, but any promotion of displaced, global governance must examine the contexts of local places where these processes occur.

In conclusion, Robinson's compilation of alternative conceptions of 'development and

displacement' is, in its complexity and seeming contradictions, a 'textbook case' of development practice. And, while the cohesiveness of the chapters under the framework of displacement is questionable, the illustration of a new way of approaching development provides a refreshingly empowering approach to displacements. However, if the re-appropriation of a term associated with the negative processes of dislocation is not to be a glib erasure of the harsh realities of forced migration, adequate attention must be given to the conditions within particular places that allow citizens to enact displacement as a solution to, rather than suffer as negative effects of, development crises. Given that the term displacement already carries so laden a connotation within international development (recognized and codified with in World Bank policy), is there not a better framework within which to analyse the positive and negative impacts of a rapidly re-spatializing world, while giving students a more balanced understanding of complex relationships between people, place, and displacing processes?

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Shepard, B. and Hayduk, R., editors 2002: *From ACT UP to the WTO: urban protest and community building in the era of globalisation*. London: Verso. xii + 429 pp. £45.00 cloth, £15.00 paper. ISBN 1 85984 653 X cloth, 1 85984 356 5 paper.

A text for a course for activists of the twenty-first century – this is Eric Rofe's description of *ACT UP to the WTO* in the foreword. This book honours the pioneering work of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power in the USA, weaving a thread of ACT UP's wider impact on activism through the book. Marshall Berman (*All that is solid melts into air*, 1982) endorses the book as a work that indicates where the first 'movement' of the twenty-first century is coming from, perhaps vindicating its aim of identifying a literature for a new generation of activism. There is an explicit editorial concern with liberating this activists' textbook from the legacy of associations with the previous 'Baby Boomer' generation of activists (p. xi). Many of

the contributors to this work are themselves actively engaged in passing on inspiration and skills to future activists. Rofe considers, from his teaching experience, however, that 'Boomer' generation activism reflects the ideals of the parents and grandparents of today's activists and is no longer current. For the new generation of activists, the cultural significance of the videos of Julia 'Butterfly' Hill (2002) and music by 'Rage Against the Machine' have apparently overtaken those of Martin Luther, Jr and Joan Baez, respectively (p. xi).

This book helps the uninitiated reader to chart the development of a new kind of social activism in the period of 12 years from ACT UP's first demonstration in 1987 to the Battle in Seattle in 1999, notably a period prior to 11 September 2001, after which social and political activism have taken some new turns.

The US administration, long before 11 September 2001, was seeking to delegitimize activists as terrorists – perhaps 'barking up the wrong tree'. FBI director Louis Freeh testified in a 10 May 2001 senate committee hearing that 'anarchists and extreme socialist groups – such as ... Reclaim the Streets ... have an international presence ... and represent a potential threat in the United States' (p.16 and Hoffman, 2001). This collection of essays and interviews, however, provides much needed information and commentary on this and other social movements of global importance today.

This collection of 41 essays is a useful contribution to the culture and literature on activism and organizing at this time in history, the early twenty-first century. The manuscript had already been turned in when two planes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York. However, as global justice movements attempt to 'find their legs' after 11 September 2001, there is a message that justice delayed may become justice denied for another generation (p. 16). The book will provide material for debate, and the appearance of this sort of material, for example at the Conservatives Bookshop alongside Margaret Thatcher's *Statecraft* (2002) is an ironic example of its wider availability.

Story telling and community building are the primary objectives of activism that stand out in this anthology of essays and interviews. The collection suggests that narratives are as important to building social movements as organization. However, the tone of this work emphasizes activism as praxis rather than

theory. 'Direct Action is the driving force behind the new unrest' says radical historian L.A. Kaufmann, contrasting the effectiveness of this strategy with endless rallies where speakers drone on and on, with meetings after meetings and studies that never end (p. 17).

Political science academic at CUNY and former social worker Ronald Hayduk has collaborated with Benjamin Shepard, housing programme director for people with HIV/AIDS in the South Bronx in selecting a very diverse set of essays and interviews around five themes. There are correspondingly five sections of the book, addressing: the new social movements; public and private space and the use of street theatre to reclaim public space; queer and sexual politics; media and electronic civil disobedience; and race and community building.

The first section, on global proclivities, maps out the context of this work and the new social movements, and profiles actions such as Critical Mass, Reclaim the Streets and the Battle in Seattle. The communiqués of the Acme collective, explaining the targets of the WTO protest targets – those involved in gentrification, abusive labour practices or human rights violation – are illuminated to provide better understanding of the intentions of these actions.

Sexuality and gender liberation is the important theme running through the developments in US activism extending from ACT UP, and this is developed in the second section, on queer community organizing. Seven essays and three interviews cover issues from protests around Matthew Shepard's murder to the constitution of the public and private city space and action on same-sex marriage.

Part three extends the idea of making the city and access to space: 'Public versus private spaces, battlegrounds and movements'. The exclusion from and closure of public spaces to marginalised communities is addressed in 'Culture jamming a sexpanic'. Kirstin Mikalbrown narrates the rise and fall of a community garden and its giant frog, the Coqui at El Jardin de la Esperanza. It tells a tragic story of the community activists occupying the Coqui until their protest was finally destroyed by police and bulldozers. Her conclusion, however, reflecting on urban life, is poetic. 'When you walk down the street where you live tomorrow, ... look for the cracks in the concrete where seeds could be squeezed in, and a community could start to grow' (p. 233).

Poignant in this section on public and private is the work on the maligned Reclaim the Streets movement. Stephen Duncombe's article not only provides a first-hand narrative of the 4 October 1998 action in New York City, but also provides a history of the movement from London in 1991 and the Claremont Road occupation in 1994. Here, there is some valuable scholarly analysis of protest, and the advantages of the medieval carnival model over the nineteenth-century parade and rally model (p. 222).

Part Four of the book looks at the use of media in actions including electronic civil disobedience, alternative video and the Indymedia revolution. From Naomi Klein's critique of media coverage of Seattle, to occupations of Starbucks in New York City, the contributors again narrate some ingenious occupations like cell phone operas and spat theatre performances, but also reflect on the potentials of the new media strategies for activists.

The final section offers broader reflections on 'world making', assessing the roles of race and poverty. Lessons in global resistance from Seattle, Black radicalism and the fight for wages lead effectively into housing and community building movements, and the frequent opposition between community development and community organization is discussed in an essay by Stoecker.

A short conclusion ties together some of the diverse and complex threads of this project, and explains the aim of the editors in showing the diverse oppressions of marginal groups as linked, rather than competitive. The root goal of democratizing public sphere and the project of globalisation is worthy indeed.

While the US-based editors indicate that these strategies are indebted to the work of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power in the USA, perhaps they underemphasize the importance of global and marginal protest in Adelaide, Madrid and Freiburg (RTS, 2002). While the topic is a clearly a global one, the approach taken in the contributions is appropriately glocal (p. 5). It is slightly jarring that the book refers to the activism igniting 'our nation' (xii.) As recent developments of social movements – especially in the last year – have suggested, this work reaches clearly to all the corners of our globe.

This book indicates that the new activism of Seattle 1999 had created optimism about the effectiveness of organizing social movements

using three main strategies; non-violent disobedience, guerrilla theatre, and sophisticated media work. *ACT UP to the WTO* inspires readers, students and activists alike to debate and to continue to put its ideas into practice.

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Hill, Julia 'Butterfly' 2002: Online: <http://www.circleoflifefoundation.org/> (last accessed 23 June 2003).

Hoffman, Hank 2001: *In these times*. (1 October 2001). Online: <http://www.inthesetimes.org/issue/25/21/hoffman2521.html> (last accessed 23 June 2003).

Reclaim the Streets (RTS) 2002: Online: <http://www.reclaimthestreets.net/> (last accessed 23 June 2003).

Thatcher, M. 2002: *Statecraft: Strategies for a changing world*. New York: HarperCollins.

Zarsky, L. editor 2002: *Human rights and the environment: conflicts and norms in a globalizing world*. London: Earthscan. 288 pp. cloth, 299 pp. paper. £48.00 cloth, £17.95 paper. ISBN: 1-85383-814-4 cloth, 1-85383-815-2 paper.

I suppose the first thing you look for in a text about the environment is to check the paper used and if they have identified the particular forest. I can report it is on elemental-chlorine-free paper.

Bearing in mind the media interest in business ethics and the 'need' to locate other oil sources, this is a timely text emanating from the Nautilus Institute in California. This is a well constructed and composed contribution to the negative forces present in the environmental/ethical debate and, like the poor and disadvantaged, ever with us. (See also the review of Louka (2002) *Biodiversity and human rights*, earlier in this section.) However, the intended audience for this book edited by Zarsky appears to be the converted that favour an academic style. I would hope to see a follow up targeted at differing audiences using a range of media. The subject of human rights and environment is too important to be confined to the status of a reference text alone, where it is used only as a source for other works.

The whole text was born out of, and developed from the work of, the Earth Council,