

wish to adhere fiercely to the First Amendment, to preserve the open door policy of libraries as civic forums, if we are committed to shunning non-stop corporate huckstering at our very workstations, and to slowing the relentless march to digitization (in order to formulate and examine its implications at every step coherently, *on our terms*, not Microsoft's), then each and every one of us had better infuse into our daily practice a meaningful discussion of these issues and openly examine their implications among our colleagues, patrons and administrators. Short of that, the Exxon Reading Room will be coming to a library near you!

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GII: Global Power Grab

by Vigdor Schreibman

A One Trillion Dollar Telecoms Deal

Fins [Federal Information News Syndicate, published by V. Schreibman — eds.] Information Age Library has mounted a new directory: Global Information Infrastructure Links. If you take a look it will give you a rough idea of just how dominant a role international public sector organizations now hold (e.g., ITU, OECD, WTO, GATS, NAFTA, APEC, WIPO, EC, G7), when armed with a franchise of delegated power from the nations of the world to decide global socioeconomic public policies. A stunning example of this pattern took place Feb 15, 1997, when more than 60 countries adopted an agreement to open their own telecommunications systems to foreign exploitation, which is set to enter into force on 1 January 1998. This agreement was negotiated under the auspices of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), World Trade Organization (WTO), and General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS). It followed the European Commission's *Bangemann Report*, 26 May 1994, for a "Global Information Society" (Fins-GII-ECb) and the proposal by the United States for "The Global Information Infrastructure: Agenda for Cooperation," announced Feb 1995 (Fins-II2-03).

Data on telecommunications markets covered by the WTO Negotiations on Basic Telecommunications, were released Feb 17 from the International Telecommunication Union database on World Telecommunication Indicators. This reveals that "global telecom services revenue in 1995 stood at \$601.9 billion (in US dollars), a figure which represented 2.1% of global GDP." Just two of the participants in the negotiations, the European Community and its Member States, and the United States, account for 68% of revenue and 58% of international traffic.

Renato Ruggiero, the Brazilian Director-General of the WTO, congratulated member governments "for their determination and foresight in bringing the negotiations on basic telecommunications services to a successful conclusion" (Fins-GII-WTO). Explaining the expected benefits, Ruggiero claimed that, "The telecoms deal will contribute to lower costs for consumers, and the price reductions will be very significant. This is good news for firms, which in the aggregate spend more on telecommunications services than they do on oil. It is difficult to be very precise in these matters, but telecoms liberalization could mean global income gains of some one trillion dollars over the next decade or so. That represents around 4 per cent of world GDP at today's prices."

The Fiction of "Free Market" Theory

Nevertheless, people have heard this rosy scenario before. What gives rise to alarm over this pattern of global economic activity is the largely authoritarian decision making process put in place by the new globalization regime. The basic idea advanced by the dominant powers, the EC with the concurrence of the United States, is the implicit demand for a free ride on society, as specified by the *Bangemann Report*: "Market forces must drive progress of the Information Society" with removal of all "non-commercial political burdens and budgetary constraints imposed on telecommunications operators." The import of this hard line strategy was made perfectly clear at the G7 meeting in Ottawa, June 1995, in seeking to "dismantle the labor laws and cut social safety nets," purportedly to "encourage the world's unemployed to look harder for work and help businesses create jobs" (Fins-SR3-19; Fins-NC4-18).

Special concerns were raised by the ITU, UNESCO, and EU, concerning the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the GII. However, a review by FINS of initiatives in those areas indicates that they have focused on securing "widespread public acceptance and use of the new technology" under market controls. In the United States, support for the remarkable National Education and Research Network (NREN) program, based on a long-term vision of "broad support of the Nation's intellectual activity" (Fins-II-02, para B.3), was abruptly terminated under pressure from industry for market controls.

The economist's model of "free market" theory is based on the "entirely independent behavior of individuals." This is insupportable. Mary Parker Follett, who is recognized as the "Prophet of Management" (1995), observed that "[A]n individual is one who is being created by society, whose daily breath

is drawn from society, whose life is spent for society." Market theory is, in short, a "broadly perpetrated fiction," rejected by post-industrial knowledge and experience. See e.g., James Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (1990); and Andrew R Schmookler, *The Illusion of Choice* (1993).

The fiction of market theory has opened a wide gap between capitalism and democracy. Many scholars have argued during the past two decades that this anti-democratic, 19th-century structure of power must be brought into better balance for the future. Among those who make this argument are: Lester C. Thurow, *The Future of Capitalism* (1996); Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (1995); Kevin P. Phillips, *Arrogant Capital* (1994); Neil Postman, *Technopoly* (1993); William Greider, *Who Will Tell the People?* (1992); Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent* (1988); and Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets* (1977).

The market simply disregards the multiple perspectives and criteria, including empowerment of the people to facilitate design by the stakeholders of social systems, followed by state-of-the-art social systems design. For all the euphoria over the GII deal, the market scheme is likely to fail all the tests: of authenticity, sustainability, responsiveness, uniqueness, personal development and organizational learning, and the ethics of design. See Bela H. Banathy, *Designing Social Systems in a Changing World* (1996, 223-231).

Industrial Age Newspeak in the Knowledge Age

With the advent of globalization, colossal power is being placed in the hands of a few "Global Gladiators," as Alvin Toffler (1990) described the new breed of multinational behemoths. Yet American commentators critical of the global power grab were shunned in reports on the telecoms deal issued by leaders of the national press corps: *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*. Meanwhile, the Associated Press cynically reported a derisive but easily dismissed editorial on this topic by the Iraqi government newspaper *Al-Jumhuriya*, Feb 17, 1997. The AP wire story was picked up Feb 19 by EDUpage, an Internet news service that quoted Baghdad's criticism of the rapidly expanding Internet, depicted as, "the end of civilizations, cultures, interests, and ethics," and "one of the American means to enter every house in the world. They want to become the only source for controlling human beings in the new electronic village."

It is wicked journalism to quote the hated Baghdad on this controversial issue of importance, while censoring by silence learned American civil libertarians such as Barber, Chomsky, Grieder, Phillips, Schmookler, and Thurow who may concur with Baghdad in this instance. The threat of "total control," was named as the singular issue of concern to Americans, in e-mail sent to the Cultural Environment Movement discussion list, Feb 12, 1996, by Dr. George Gerbner dean emeritus of the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania. This statement followed approval of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Feb 8, 1996. The new field of global control opened by the WTO telecoms deal greatly exacerbates such concerns.

End "total control" of GII

"Total control" of GII must end when the telecoms treaty comes before the US Senate for ratification. Global conquest and oligopoly were of the industrial age. In the 21st-century knowledge age, one may triumph only with people power.

DOCUMENTS

Text of speech delivered on February 15, 1997, by Wayne Kelly, the Superintendent of Documents, to the Federal Documents Task Force at ALA's Midwinter meeting in Washington DC.

I'd like to take a few minutes this morning to discuss a growing trend to transfer Federal Government information from the public domain to private ownership.

This is happening in a number of ways. One is for agencies to establish exclusive or restrictive distribution arrangements that limit public access to information. Another is to charge fees or royalties for reuse or redissemination of public information. In some recent cases government publishers have actually assisted in transferring copyright to the new owner.

Let me give you an example. For many years, the National Cancer Institute procured the printing of its *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* through the Government Printing Office. The Superintendent of Documents Sales Program sold subscriptions to the *Journal* and it was distributed to Federal Depository Libraries at GPO expense.

In 1987, NCI made the semimonthly *Journal* a more current, higher-quality cancer research publication. It was heavily promoted by our Office of Marketing in coordination with the NCI staff. By 1992, the *Journal* was selling 6,240 copies at an annual subscription of \$51, and was distributed free to more than 800 selecting depository libraries throughout the nation. It had achieved recognition as "the number one journal" in its field, publishing the best original research papers in oncology from around the world.

In 1993, the National Cancer Institute notified us that they were developing a "Consolidated Services" concept making all print and electronic data information available only through an "Information Associates Program." GPO could no longer sell subscriptions at \$51. The only way to get a subscription was to buy an Associates Program membership from NCI for \$100. NCI agreed