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## people

This paper has been compiled and edited by: Arianna Bove, Erik Empson, Susanne Lang, Geert Lovink, Florian Schneider, Soenke Zehle. Thanks to: Franziska Frielinghaus, Suzanne Helden, Paul Keller, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Joanne Richardson, Pit Schultz and all the contributors.

## make world paper#2



The World Social Forum, organized twice in Porto Alegre 2001 and 2002, not only prompted a flurry of autonomous self-organization, crossborder organization, and creative media interventions. It also initiated an intense process of analysis and reflection on the tricky question of a 'global' dynamic of self-organization.

Across continents and movement traditions, a few key terms continue to re-emerge as focal points for reflection - above all the status of sovereignty and the limitations of a sovereign logic of organization, as well as the frustration with the various traditions of leftist representationalism. Activists have long ceased to simply march on the corporate and institutional bad guys of globalisation-as-usual. They have also begun to articulate alternative logics of organization and mercilessly sort through the archive of political pieties, challenging the dominance of an older leftist expertocracy at every juncture.

The words of Franco Barchiesi of Indymedia South Africa might well serve as a summary of this shared sentiment: "it was time for the new social movements to express the qualitatively new 'biopolitical' nature of their struggle in terms of refusal not only of the identity and mystique of 'national liberation', but also of the leadership practices of a left that has historically tended to reproduce subordination and discursive expropriation of the movements' grass-roots subjectivity."

In this issue we have brought together many different perspectives on the increasingly pressing questions of the 'movement' - its theory, its politics, its media and modes of organisation. The texts reproduced here add vibrancy, background and analysis to these ongoing debates, and irrespective of the diversity reflect that none of these issues can be treated in separation.

The first edition of this free newspaper appeared in October 2001, as a part of the Munich 'Make World' festival and exhibition that brought together activists, new media artists and theorists. The first paper dealt with responses to 911, migration, immaterial labour, free software and featured a number of art projects. The free paper format already has a certain tradition. Within our context it started with the nettime ZKP4 paper, produced for the nettime meeting in Ljubljana, May 1997. Another one appeared in Zagreb, August 1999. In the global edition of 'Bas-tard' a group of editors brought together critical texts related to the Kosovo conflict.

Within this 'tradition' the Make World paper#2 also works with the concept of collaborative text filtering. The amount of key texts and strategic debates on the Internet is overwhelming. There are so many interesting lists and weblogs. It is a potlatch of content. This abundance of material could drive one mad. Yet, it also makes selecting and editing much easier. There is less of a feel of censorship and exclusion. All the texts, in their full length, including responses, are available online.

The context of this issue is the summer and fall of 2002, defined by the growing threat of an US-led Iraq invasion. The texts for this issue were selected alongside some significant events of the last few months such as the noborder camp in Strasbourg, where between 2000 and 3000 activists met for discussions, actions and media interventions. But it may also seen as a direct or indirect output from the work on the films and the online-platform "What's to be done?" <http://wastun.org> or the dark markets conference <http://darkmarkets.t0.or.at> in the beginning of october in Vienna. Last but not least the make-world paper#2 will be accompanied by live-streaming and mobile screening events during the European Social Forum in Florence.

## website

<http://paper.make-world.org>

## distribution

Paper#2 will be distributed for free at:

European Social Forum  
6-10 november, 2002  
Florence, IT  
<http://www.fse-esf.org/>

Futuresonic  
6-10 november, 2002  
Manchester, UK  
<http://www.futuresonic.com/>

World-Information.org  
15 november-15 december, 2002  
Amsterdam, NL  
<http://www.world-information.org/>

## what is to be done

A Documentary Series  
Eikon-Sued Productions 2002

At the 2001 G8 summit in Genova, discontent with globalization-as-usual once again burst into the open as activists alerted the general public to a multiplicity of new types of political, economic, social, and cultural conflict.

The documentary series „What's to be done?“ explores a new dynamic of democratic involvement and political intervention, searches for contemporary forms of solidarity and self-organization, and features innovative examples of linking the local and the global from across the world.

Each documentary returns to the question of perspective, strategy, and the organizational logic of the movement. Four thinkers - Michael Hardt, Toni Negri, Saskia Sassen, and Franco 'Bifo' Berardi - reflect on the question at the heart of the series: "What is to be Done?"

### A WORLD TO INVENT

Documentary by Florian Schneider  
Germany 2002, 40 minutes

Four leading thinkers reflect on the (so-called) anti-globalization movement.

### ALL IN WHITE - TUTE BIANCHE

Documentary by Adonella Marena  
Italy 2002, 30 minutes

Two influential Tute Bianche-activists analyze possibilities for political intervention in Italy today.

### DEPORTATION CLASS

Documentary by Kirsten Esch  
Germany 2002, 30 minutes

A network of human-rights activists organizes an anti-deportation campaign against a major airline.

### THE UNORGANIZEABLES

Documentary by Florian Schneider  
Germany 2002, 35 minutes

Three examples of creative workplace struggle in California, where a new wave of migrant activism is revitalizing union culture.

### HTTP://WASTUN.ORG

Online-Film Project  
[to be continued]

First version of an online platform, which aims to continue the current debate on activism and democracy in different media formats and to interconnect the various theoretical and practical approaches across borders: from text and images, to links and background material, as well as the presentation of all four films, complemented with out-takes and updates.

## order a tape

Tape orders of the **WHAT'S TO BE DONE** films should be sent by electronic mail to [info@wastun.org](mailto:info@wastun.org) or by snail mail to: EIKON-Sued GmbH, Birkerstr. 22, 80636 München/Germany. The tape with all four films costs 20 Euros.





































**Over** the last few years groups across the spectrum of the traditional and radical left have all made particular concessions towards aligning with a broad 'anti-capitalist' movement. With all manner and diversity of groups jockeying to lead the carnival procession, what was needed was a politics of moderation or a moderate politics. What more suited to a symbolic politics than a politics of the symbol? Enter Klein.

Klein builds an image of capitalism driven by marketing, corporate identities and brand imagery in the West that sits on a bedrock of exploitation in the South and the Third World. She diligently pursues the most familiar large corporations around the globe highlighting their excesses and abuses of power. Carefully covering a wide range of commercial practice companies brokering promotional contracts with schools and universities, the proliferation of temporary or low paid contracts wrapped up in the language of choice, the horrors of sweat-shop labour Klein produces a picture of the modern world throttled by unaccountable and profiteering capitalists. However, alongside these developments, a story is given of resistance: that of young people seeing through the media-marketed hype and creatively shaming, naming, prosecuting and organising against the power of commercial society. No Logo is not just a list of facts: it is peppered with statements from companies and activists alike, presenting an image of a world in hot contestation, as if the political was being reborn and recast as the fight between staid economic interests and an idealistic youth.

Yet behind the high-rise rhetoric of Klein's political landscape there is the sinister shantytown of real politics. Fuelling No Logo's and its readership's indignation against unethical consumption is either the implicit idea that hoodwinked consumers in the West are responsible for the working conditions of producers in the third world or a moral duty to ameliorate them. In the discourse of anti-capitalism this means that the genuineness of anti-corporate activism lies in the extent of our rejection of the perks of Western consumer society. If we expose the criminal production practices of major high-street retailers, the power of the manufactured image of those companies will be subverted. Almost overnight the onerous school-ground behaviour of judging people by what they wear has been instantiated as a form of politics itself.

To wear certain trainers, a well-established criterion of social inclusion for youth across the globe, has been re-posed as a sign of complicity with the heady world of exploitation. Counterpoised to Ali G like carriers of commodity sign values, Klein's young anti-capitalists emerge as virtuous ascetics happy to divest themselves of the garb of capitalist logic. Klein's choice of the logo as a key to unlock the secret working of the social system makes political conclusions such as these unavoidable. However the personable story of No Logo sets up preliminary lines of defence against these accusations. Klein too was once inebriated with cocktails of corporate signifiers, before she saw the light. No Logo bares all, from the sewing of labels on to jeans to the yearning for fast food, with a spirit of confession that would make a Catholic blush. Now saved from perdition, Klein's story re-enters the sinful world of her youth with a rigorous attention to banal detail that outflanks Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* and has Douglas Coupland checking his notes. As an artistic whole No Logo is endangered by the banality of its subject matter. Everywhere the language of the mass-marketing machines is taken at face value, and the bizarre justifications of commodities within market society are read as if they expressed its inner workings. The nauseating saturation of sign values and the televised spectacle of commercial society are reproduced here in full. No sooner are we treated to prosaic quotes from the likes of the chairman of United Biscuits than we are raised up by the plight of workers sweating for a dime. Set against the tyranny of the logo, grass roots protests are re-posed as rising up against its logic. No one else has sifted through the garbage can of the self-serving rhetoric of the make-believe corporate world with more zeal than Ms Klein. But no one else has performed such a disservice to those who oppose the power of the corporation by constantly depreciating their political activity to serve as counterpoint to a journalistic device.

No Logo was potentially a powerful intervention. But the play between the rhetoric of the multi-national corporation and its inhuman reality is never really convincing. In places No Logo chastises an earlier political generation for maligning reality in the face of the image, yet the major import of Klein's argument is to do exactly the same. Apparently obsessed with the writing on the wall, 80s activism did not notice that the 'wall had been sold'. However, Klein's own empirical bricks and mortar have no foundations except the juxtaposition between a commercial puppet show and extreme labour practices necessary to the capitalist system. In this admixture of indignation, intrigue and outrage Klein fails to posit exactly how such pernicious extremes have developed and the basis wherein companies themselves present their own activity not as creating products but as the creation of an experience through a brand.

Although No Logo tries to balance its attack on the commercial world with the reality of production, what tends to be missing is any connection between the ideologies of consumer society and the social needs that are generated by the cultural reproduction of the worker. We are continuously offered sound-bite rebukes to corporate ideology, yet the generality of conditions that have given rise to these ideational social forms are never explored. A case in point is a section that deals with the encroachment of private interests into education. Though usefully detailing how in the U.S. soft drink brands and computer manufacturers have exchanged money for publicity with public bodies, Klein saturates the text with her own outrage to the extent that the reasons behind these events receive little remark. Indeed not once does she attempt to explain exactly why such processes should be condemned. Rather she assumes that it will be self evident to her readership why genuine public life ought to be preserved. For what reason? The resistance against 'brand-extension' into education turns out to be entirely symbolic: 'these quasi-sacred spaces remind us that unbranded space is possible'. This might convince her coffee-shop comrades, but it will make few inroads into shaping the politics of inner-city kids for whom Coke day is a welcome break from being taught social obedience.

Brands are not the power, yet Klein colludes with the market rhetoric to the extent that she presents them as such. Most capital is anonymous and apart from high-street stores, much corporate marketing is not directed at consumers at all, but at other capitalists. This goes on in a world where corporate power and its legitimacy as the very motor behind social interchange has already been established and entrenched. Brands do not colonise space, the social power of capital has already made this space its own. Rather the brand fills out already colonised spaces, and herein certain companies in competition for the same market use resources to produce a social meaning to attach to their wares. In a Marcusean vein Klein is sensitive to the fact that this process involves the incorporation of any manner of existent cultural discourses and their reproduction as the exclusive property of a particular commodity. Hence the impression that capital speaks for and can satisfy our social desires coupled with the explosion of a market for people skilled in fabrication and mystification. Most of this stinks, but it could never be the basis for a politics. Capital itself is not tied to any particular identity; if one particular manifestation is discredited it will simply move to a different domain, this is given by its character as a social power. The celebration of symbolic campaigns against individual capitalists shows that Klein has bought the fetishism of the commodity wholesale. There is however no reason why we should. As the grandfather of the critique of capital scribbled in his notebooks so many years ago, the 'worker cares as much about the crappy shit he has to make as does the capitalist himself who employs him, and who also couldn't give a damn for the junk'.

## Phenomenology of the market

Still we inhabit a world where the colonisation of capital seems complete. It is a fair project that perceives here that the total subsumption of the social by capital implies a reconfiguration of the sites of political resistance. However, truths remain at the level of production that is not subverted by this logic. This is the truth of the necessity of work and the predominance of time spent

at work. The cultural effects of market society lie in our incapacity to be creative outside of work. Entertainment has become a specialised industry and from computer games to motion pictures our cultural reproduction lies in received entertainment; lacking the time and skills, as individuals we are constrained to consume what others produce. The enormity of time that people are forced to spend under the social power of a master de-limits their capacity for developmental creative activity outside of it. Moreover, with the specification and diversification of types of work demanded by capital, the responsibility for developing the capacity to work is transferred away from the capitalist. Out of need we are forced to occupy the culture of our work, to enhance our productivity, and we often feel obliged to into making our 'free' social activity orientate around work. On the level of politics No Logo degenerates from a potentially powerful critique of the spectacle, the actualised phenomenology of the market, into a rehearsed appeal for a mode of liberalism. Economically speaking this is the voice of the owner of a boutique crying business as usual in the aftermath of the blitz.

Implicit here is a culturally elitist disdain against mass production and homogenisation, wherefore the socio-political struggle of the middle class and the desire to restate a sphere of production and consumption outside the realm of capital, in the name of quality whether ethical or material. Behind the general victim mentality of Klein's vision lies disdain for the masses, those hoodwinked into identifying quality with what is predominant, most immediate and socially manufactured as cool. No Logo is fuel for the burgeoning fires of cultural separation along class lines and of disdain for the ethically irresponsible and marginalized who seemingly sustain a market for secular idols.

## Political imperative

What emerges as the political imperative in No Logo is not to subvert the power behind the saturation of corporate ideology into our social space, but to campaign against it being rubbed in our face. For all its symbolic power, the masses' struggle against the corporation is reinvented as a demand upon the corporation to be ethically accountable. Forgotten here are precisely the premises of the brand and logo: that companies are already ethical. Realising commodities on the market now implies that the commodities satisfy social needs for inclusion, standards and quality that are generated out of the subsumption of the political and the public by private power. In No Logo, Hertz's recent book, the Silent Takeover, these same processes are understood in a positive light, and this demonstrates the extent to which Klein's premises by no means necessarily serve a radical agenda.

With a similar emphasis of corporate abuse of power and the excessive gravity of the inequality it engenders, Hertz endeavours to utilise the same type of personable journalism as her Canadian counterpart. Indeed if Klein's brief was to marginalize activism to a liberal agenda, Hertz's remit was clearly something like: 'write a Klein-esque book, young, punchy, but try to change the ending if in doing so you can make out anti-capitalism to be good for capitalists, you can write your own cheque.' Indeed if Klein's demand was to build an ethical universe in response to branded corporations, Hertz, with characteristic naivety, confesses her belief that capital is often best placed to offer social justice. Similarly, the encroachment upon the public is seen as a process that could be reversed. Essentially *The Silent Takeover* tries to explain that the co-option of the public by capitalists has led to un-democratic resistances to capitalism. Hertz wants to reinvent an anti-capitalist rationale for the state that can regain political legitimacy by kowtowing to consumerist demands that provide moral and ethical justification for political regulation. This is not just about making capitalism accountable; it is more explicitly a means of making capital more profitable. Whom Hertz sees as her audience becomes very clear when she recommends to business that a set of ethical principles would enhance their credibility and sales potential.

The working refrain of *The Silent Takeover* is the crisis of representation and the lack of faith citizens have in the democratic process. Hence 'shop don't vote' has become the hallmark of societies infected by the paradox wherein political statements are made through the boycotting of

# Anti-Capitalism with a smiley face

# Erik Empson

It does not seem to have been activists who made No Logo 'part of

a movement '. Rather it seems largely the media itself that pro-

pelled Klein and her particular take on activism to fame. The rea-

sons for this are relatively clear. With the growth of diverse and of-

ten contradictory forms of 'anti-capitalism', society at large

needed to reduce these either to something recognisable (it's

1968 all over again), or to something ideologically containable:

criminals, thugs and rioters.











































