



## **PREFACE**

This new edition of *Globalism* seeks to update and expand the arguments of the original version in light of the political and social changes brought about by the al Qaeda attacks of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing global War on Terror. These world-historic events notwithstanding, the basic premise of the book has remained the same: globalization contains important discursive aspects in the form of ideologically charged narratives that put before the public a particular agenda of topics for discussion, questions to ask, and claims to make. The existence of these narratives suggests that globalization is not merely a set of material processes anchored in economics and technology, but also constitutes a system of ideas circulating in the public realm as more or less coherent stories that attempt to define, describe, and evaluate these very processes.

As I pointed out in the first edition of book, the term “globalism” refers to the most influential of these globalization stories—a political ideology that endows the concept of globalization with market-oriented norms, values, and meanings. The only viable public policy, so this dominant story of globalization goes, is one supportive of economic deregulation, privatization, free trade, unfettered capital movements, low taxation, and fiscal austerity, especially with regard to social programs. The attempt to globalize this neoliberal story of globalization is also part of globalism. Given that this ideological talk about the phenomenon, in itself, contributes to the development of a certain manifestation of globalization, it is only logical to conclude that globalism demands critical analysis in its own right—a task I hope to accomplish in this new edition of *Globalism*.

During the 1990s, the public interpretation of globalization fell disproportionately to powerful social elites enamored with the philosophical and economic principles of the neoliberal Thatcher–Reagan revolution of the

## PREFACE

early 1980s. Located mainly in the global North, this phalanx of social forces consisted mostly of corporate managers, executives of large transnational corporations, corporate lobbyists, prominent journalists and public-relations specialists, cultural elites and entertainment celebrities, academics writing for large audiences, high-level state bureaucrats, and political leaders. These groups marshaled their considerable material and ideal resources to sell to the public the alleged benefits of the global liberalization and integration of markets: rising living standards, reduction of global poverty, economic efficiency, individual freedom and democracy, and unprecedented technological progress. Other paths of development were discredited as being either “protectionist” or “socialist.” Indeed, the stunning collapse of Soviet-style communism in the late 1980s proved to be a particularly useful trump card in the rhetorical arsenal of globalists.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, however, this idealized vision of neoliberal globalization became increasingly tarred by the reality of growing social inequalities and rising cultural tensions. Massive antiglobalist demonstrations erupted in Seattle, Washington, D.C., Davos, Salzburg, Bangkok, Melbourne, Prague, Quebec City, Gothenburg, and many other cities around the world. The first edition of *Globalism* appeared at the peak of these developments—two weeks after the massive antiglobalist demonstrations at the G-8 Summit in Genoa, Italy, and two weeks before the terrorist strikes of September 11, 2001. Change was palpable during these waning summer days; the only question was what kind of change and in which direction. One thing seemed to be certain: the prescriptive neoliberal market model of globalization that had reigned supreme throughout most of the 1990s had come under severe attack from opponents on the political Left and Right all around the world who rejected—for different reasons—the globalist dream of a single global economy driven by unimpeded market forces and anchored in consumerist culture. Increasingly viewing globalization as the Americanization of the world order—the global imposition of a particular economic and cultural model in the name of universality—these challengers intensified their counteroffensive. The reaction from the political and economic elites in the global North was swift and unambiguous—a shift from what political scientist Joseph Nye calls “soft power” (the capacity to shape opinion, interests, and identities in favor of the globalist model) to “hard power” (the massive use of military and economic force to compel compliance). Claiming to act in defense of democracy and free markets, globalists began to rely more heavily on the coercive powers of the state to keep dissidents in check.

The dramatic events at the G-8 Summit in Genoa in July 2001 marked the culmination of this strategy. The globalist media fueled public fears by pushing the stereotype of chaotic, Molokov cocktail-throwing antiglobalizers on ill-

## PREFACE

informed TV audiences thousands of miles away. These attempts to stabilize the neoliberal model by means of generating fear were increasingly reflected in globalist discourse. Globalizing markets were now portrayed as requiring ample protection against irrational forces. In other words, the historically “inevitable” evolution of the globalist project suddenly needed to be helped along by strong law enforcement measures and military mechanisms that would “beat back” the “enemies of democracy and the free market.”

By the time al Qaeda launched its devastating attacks on the world’s most recognized symbols of a U.S.-dominated globalized economy and culture, the link between political violence and antiglobalism was already so firmly anchored in the public mind that a number of commentators in the global North immediately named “radical elements in the antiglobalization crowd” as prime suspects. When it became clear that a global terrorist network led by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri was behind the attacks, the negative stereotype of the violent antiglobalizer merged with that of the Islamist extremist. As U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft made perfectly clear time and again, the “terrorist” label could now be stretched to apply to any individual or group whose public dissent could be interpreted as directly or indirectly giving “aid and comfort to the enemy.” In clear violation of international law, the Bush administration argued that human beings could be denied their most basic rights simply by designating them as “unlawful combatants.” As market ideology met terrorism in the fall of 2001, globalists turned the deep crisis inflicting their paradigm into a golden opportunity for extending their hegemony on new terms. The remarkable merger of Clintonian neoliberalism and the Bush administration’s neoconservative security agenda marked the birth of imperial globalism. Indeed, after 9/11, the link between globalism and the U.S. empire became apparent to the rest of the world in a stark new light.

While radical Islamism may yet turn out to be a much less formidable ideological force than fascism and bolshevism, it has now become even harder to dismiss the argument I made in the first edition of *Globalism* that the first decade of the twenty-first century has turned into a teeming battlefield of clashing perspectives on the meaning and direction of globalization. Globalism and its multiple challengers appear to be locked in a protracted struggle, and in the process are adjusting some of their ideological claims that no longer resonate in a political landscape forever altered by the events of 9/11.

Increasingly subordinated to and lumped together with the global War on Terror led by the United States, free-market globalism still retains some of its original features. At the same time, however, today’s “imperial” globalism represents a more militaristic and openly coercive version than its economic predecessor of the 1990s. Subtle ideological maneuvers are giving way to blunt propaganda initiatives designed to counter “anti-Americanism” and justify global military

## PREFACE

operations that have become as important—or perhaps even more important—than global trade initiatives.

What, exactly, is globalism? What are its core claims and features? How does the imperial globalism of the twenty-first century differ from the market globalism of the 1990s? What are the most likely future trajectories of the ideological confrontation between globalism and its challengers? These are the central questions I seek to answer in this new edition.

I end this preface on a word of caution. I wrote this study out of a firm conviction that globalization does not necessarily have to mean or be what globalists say it means or is. Indeed, my skepticism toward the central claims of globalism has fueled my desire to explore the workings of an ideology that strikes me as diminishing the capacity of human beings to participate in shaping their destinies and live in dignity and relative material security. However, my skeptical posture toward globalism should not be interpreted as a blanket rejection of globalization. I take comfort in the idea that the world might turn into a more interdependent place in which people have a better chance of discovering their common humanity. Hence, I welcome the progressive transformation of social structures, provided that modernity and the development of science and technology preserve cultural diversity and go hand in hand with greater forms of political freedom, economic equality, and a more effective protection of our planet's ecological systems.

The overarching intent of this study, then, is not to denounce globalization, but to contribute to a critical theory of globalization that encourages the reader to recognize the internal contradictions and biases of the globalist discourse and thus provides people with a better understanding of how dominant beliefs about globalization fashion their realities and how these ideas can be changed. Derived from the Greek verb *krinein* (to discern, to reflect, to judge) and the Greek noun *theoria* (contemplation), “critical theory” signifies the noble human impulse to contemplate the validity and desirability of social institutions. Guided by a normative vision—the ideal of a more egalitarian and peaceful global order—a critical theory of globalization weakens the authoritarian tendency inherent in all political ideologies to silence dissent. Thus, critical theory represents the lifeblood of all democratic politics—past, present, and future.