

**Anxieties of Empire: Class, Race, Nation, and the Roots of the Anti-Neoliberal
Globalization Movement in the U.S. and Mexico, 1987-2003**

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INTRODUCTION

As the Cold War order collapsed and the “New World Order,” as U.S. president George H.W. Bush called it, emerged in the 1990s, few North Americans would have believed that in less than a decade, a wave of massive, direct-action protests would shake the cities of the Americas. The protestors’ mission: to monkey-wrench the gears of the globalized world order that Bush so favored. According to an emergent globalist ideology shared by many of the dominant political parties of the U.S. and Mexico in the 1990s, the economic globalization that characterized the Bush world order was an ambiguous force, an inevitable result, and an imminent condition.

The peoples of the world, according to the multinational companies and market-liberalizing politicians, should understand it as modernization, and celebrate it as progress. For many of the globalists, globalization meant new circulations of ideas through the Internet, satellite networks, and global media.¹ It meant new circulations of people through mass tourism and massive human migration. It meant new networks of goods through niche marketing, transnational trade, and Wal-Mart, with its

¹ Josée Johnston and Gordon Laxer suggest that this ideology is best identified as “globalism.” See “Solidarity in the Age of Globalization: Lessons from the Anti-MAI and the Zapatista Struggles,” *Theory and Society*, 32:1 (February 2003): 39-91.

multinational commodity chains and global reach. Globalization meant the end of “closed,” union- and state-regulated economies and new, “open” markets. Indeed, whole new markets emerged, as the Berlin Wall fell and the Iron Curtain dissolved, and state-regulated or communally held goods like water, land, and seed were now on the auction block to private bidders. Unencumbered by inefficiencies – like unions – which increased the cost of goods, the entrepreneurs who could most nimbly position and re-position their assets – like their workers – in the global flows would take the biggest prize.

These and related stories about globalization shaped government, economics, and culture in the Americas in the last few decades of the twentieth century, and the way they stressed the newness and the inevitability of the changes at hand enabled them to position whole populations as simply ill-equipped for the “creative destruction” of the “free market” era. In the U.S. and Mexico, no one moment signaled the onset of globalization better than the day leaders of the two countries and Canada signed the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1992. The treaty dissolved decades of state protections of the respective national economies, and converted the region into the world’s largest “free trade area.” In the U.S. and Mexico, the dominant political groups of the day – the Ivy League-educated liberalizers and technocrats in Mexico and the free trade, business-friendly globalizers in both major political parties in the U.S. – refuted their working-class opponents’ claims by condemning them to the rust pile of the Teflon-lubricated global economy. They weren’t simply wrong, the globalizers claimed,

but their positions, jobs, and lifestyles were remnants of an industrial age destined to disappear. In the U.S., unions and their leaders were called “Neanderthals,” as if from another epoch altogether, and the unionized working class was portrayed as “too old and hidebound to use a computer,” as one union leader wrote. In Mexico, indigenous peasants and popular classes demanded rights and justice by identifying themselves as “the forgotten of the country.” Meanwhile, members of the steadily declining Old Guard of the dominant party were dubbed “dinosaurs,” tied to the patronage-created public sector unions and peasant organizations no longer suited to an international economy that favored agility, high technology, and liberal internationalism, not party bosses, repressed stability, and anti-American nationalism.²

This dissertation examines the roots of the anti-neoliberal globalization, or “anti-globalization,” movement, by examining how some of the very people who were condemned to be casualties of this new, globalized free trade area – the unionized working class in the U.S. and the peasant workers of indigenous southern Mexico – developed an alternative vision of that economy as they built organizations to resist it.³ It considers the historical roots of the movement, but also considers roots in another

² The “forgotten” (*los olvidados*) is, in fact, how one of the organizations this dissertation focuses on described the Zapatista peasant rebels and, by extension, itself, in the organization’s first political statement. Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca “Ricardo Flores Magón,” *Las Noticias de Oaxaca*, Nov. 19, 1997, 15a.

³ Though the most accurate name for the movement in this time period, in the U.S. and Mexico, is the anti-neoliberal globalization movement, I occasionally call it other, related names. I do so simply to make for easier reading, and the names also reflect how people named it in the respective countries. While the “globalization movement,” the “anti-globalization movement,” or the “anti-neoliberal” movement would have been understood in both countries, the term “global justice movement” was much more a part of the U.S. lexicon.

sense. Instead of looking at NGOs, policy-oriented organizations, political parties, or direct-action collectives, this dissertation examines the movement by how it played out in the organizations that were rooted in communities. They were, in a word, grassroots. To do so, I examine the development of two popular organizations that became crucial links between poor communities and the larger movement. One is from the U.S. union sector, the hemispheric aristocracy of labor whose leaders had long ago traded militancy, union democracy, and working-class anti-imperialism for middle-class wages for (white, male) members, union bureaucracies, and fervent anti-communism and U.S. nationalism. The other is a group whose demise had long been predicted by modernizing elites: the peasant workers, and especially the indigenous peasantry, of Mexico.

The indigenous peasantry was doubly doomed to disappear. In Mexico, twentieth century state-builders sought to forge a unified nation by enforcing an ideology of harmonious racial mixture, or *mestizaje*. While *mestizaje* romanticized the culture of its *indios* as part of the nation's glorious past, it suggested that present-day indigeneity signified a primitive poverty unfit for modern society, and state education, culture, and economic programs punished expressions of indigeneity. In Latin American in general, the peasantry had long been seen as unfit for modern society or simply destined to be swept up in waves of industrialization and urbanization, ideas which

appeared in rejuvenated form in Mexico in the 1980s and after.⁴ Indigenous peasants also constituted, at the turn of the twenty-first century, a class of colonized labor, as historian Gilbert Gonzalez has recently termed the migratory workers from Mexico who long occupied some of the lowest rungs on the U.S. labor ladder, and who lacked the citizenship, racial, and class privileges that native-born white male workers took for granted. In the era of neoliberal globalization, market reforms became the latest forces in a long history of colonialism to displace Mexican peasants from their land, and the Mexicans who increasingly migrated to the U.S. in pursuit of low-wage, non-union work were the indigenous workers of states like Oaxaca.⁵

The two organizations featured in this dissertation, then, come from the opposite ends of the continental working-class shaped by the economic forces of the U.S.-Mexico free trade area, but both were figured by many to disappear, and both resisted the neoliberal reforms of the era.⁶ The organizations are Jobs with Justice (JwJ),

⁴ Indigenous people, because mestizo nationalist leaders denies them a place in the present, “is used to render Indian political claims illegitimate or invalid because it posits indigenous cultures as archaic, primitive, premodern, out of step with history.” See Estelle Tarica, *The Inner Life of Mestizo Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 1-2. Tarica cites the work of Johannes Fabian on how colonizers have denied the coevalness of indigenous populations. See *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); the status of the peasantry was an important academic debate in Latin America, and especially in Mexico, in the 1970s and 1980s. The *descampesinista* school in that debate argued that the peasantry was bound to disappear. For an overview of the debates and a critique, see Gerardo Otero, *Farewell to the Peasantry? Political Class Formation in Rural Mexico* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999).

⁵ See below for a definition of neoliberalism.

⁶ As this dissertation shows, both groups, and especially indigenous peoples, resisted disappearing, and in Mexico a new form of state-fostered “neoliberal multiculturalism” emerged in the 1990s that celebrated tourist-friendly forms of indigeneity even as its economic policies threatened the livelihoods of most indigenous peoples.

a U.S.-based union alliance that was founded in 1987 to build solidarity between unions and other communities, and the Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca – Ricardo Flores Magón (CIPO-RFM), a peasant- and indigenous-based coalition formally founded in early 1997, and one of the leading pro-Zapatista groups in indigenous southern Mexico.⁷

By the late 1990s and early 2000s – what scholars consider the high point of the anti-neoliberal globalization movement – both groups led poor workers to massive global justice protests, organized campaigns that confronted the local effects of global business agreements, used new technologies like the Internet to create solidarities, and exposed the myths of newness and inevitability that the ruling globalizers invented and deployed like acid to dissolve popular solidarities, eat away at multiracial organizing, and disfigure the social networks that nurtured poor workers' struggles. The organizations showed how the political techniques and economic practices that built globalization surfaced with the emergence of neoliberalism as the dominant political and economic philosophy of the post-1960s era. They revealed how older metaphors that popular organizations used to understand international economics, like colonization in southern Mexico or corporate domination in the U.S., remained altogether applicable in the supposedly new economy.

The principle argument of this dissertation is that the histories of JwJ and CIPO-RFM show that anxieties about empire helped shape how leaders and organizers

⁷ More specifically, this dissertation is an examination of the politics and collective identities based in and around the leaders and organizers of the two organizations. Although it embeds them in their respective organization and in the global justice movement, this dissertation does not claim to capture the voices of social bases of the group, which in both cases, but especially in Oaxaca, was extremely heterogeneous.

encountered and understood the global economy, and decidedly old categories of class, nationalism, and race were central in the development of the organizations' understanding of globalization, as well as of their articulation of political identities within it. The dissertation, which proceeds chronologically through alternating chapters on the U.S. and Mexico, shows, first, how Jobs with Justice attempted to re-center class in an era dominated by New Right populist nationalism, even as anxieties about what the group called an "America in decline" led it to associate defending the working class with defending the U.S. Anxieties about U.S. empire and its presence through 1990s-era free trade agreements also gave form to Oaxacan organizers' understandings of race, class, and neoliberalism, as CIPO-RFM, at the other end of the NAFTA-created free trade area, built foundations for anti-globalization activity in Mexico in the mid- and late-1990s. While a new generation of JwJ organizers in the 1990s reconfigured anxieties about America and empire to use preoccupations with the U.S. role in the global economy to lead it to become one of the leading working-class organizations at the 1999 "Battle of Seattle" protests at the World Trade Organization ministerials, parallel concerns with corporate control – understand as a new form of colonization – led CIPO-RFM to develop its own form of grassroots anti-globalization at the height of the global anti-globalization movement, from 2000-2003.

Before I present the other arguments of the dissertation, it would be useful to introduce the scholarly literature's main historical understanding of the development of the anti-neoliberal globalization movement. According to that literature, the counter-

movements of globalization developed around opposition to proposed multinational trade agreements, like NAFTA. Though people in poor countries had engaged in “food riots” and street protests since the mid-1970s to express their dismay at the austerity measures political leaders implemented to qualify for World Bank and International Monetary Fund rescue loans, anti-globalization movements began to take shape with the public appearance of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation in southern Mexico in 1994. They really got noticed, however, with the 1999 “Battle of Seattle,” where tens of thousands of protestors shut down the meetings of the World Trade Organization. For the next half-decade, the new, transnational movement led enormous protests each time political leaders met to discuss international trade and politics. This movement – built on heterogeneous activist networks, Internet flows and circulating solidarities, and non-governmental organizations and international gatherings – often put forth new proposals of democracy, transnational solidarity, and global civil society, unlike the other kinds of resistance to globalization that emerged in the 1990s: the dangerous fundamentalisms of Islamist radicals and the Christian militias.⁸

⁸ The literature, then, has made the Zapatistas and the Seattle demonstrations the “usual suspects” of anti-globalization literature, according to Catherine Eschle and Bice Maiguashca, *Critical Theories, International Relations, and the ‘Anti-Globalisation Movement’* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 6. The presence of and distinctions between the Zapatistas, others opposed to globalized “network society” like the protestors at Seattle, and the U.S. militias and Islamist radicals, is made clear, for instance, in Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Malden: Blackwell, 2009); Ronaldo Munck, *Globalization and Contestation: The New Great Counter-Movement* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007). Others, particularly in discussions about Europe, cite the French general strike of 1995 and ATTAC, the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens. See Arthur Mitzman, *Prometheus Revisited: The Quest for Global Justice in the Twenty-First Century* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2003). Most of the literature about anti-globalization contains little about the history of the movement, and is based in the disciplines of sociology, International Relations, anthropology, or political science. For more on what some have called riots in the Third World about

This dissertation complicates the above picture of resistance by tracing the historical development of two grassroots organizations that formed part of the larger globalization movement. By focusing on protests and international summits, the existing literature tends to privilege elite actors, and is often Eurocentric, despite the political sympathies many of the scholars seem to have with at least some of the perspectives of the global justice movement. Indeed, as many organizations from communities of color in the U.S. expressed after the Seattle protests, activists with few family or economic commitments, lobbyists and NGO representatives, college students, and union members with union travel funding – a demographic overwhelmingly white – were best able to navigate the economic and cultural barriers to arrive in Seattle in 1999 and the demonstrations that followed.

Their critique rings true for me personally, since I was one of those footloose, summit-hopping activists between 2000 and 2002. It began in early 2000. Intrigued and inspired by the *Time* magazine pictures of the WTO blockades in Seattle a month or two earlier, and with a flexible job as a bike mechanic, rent-free housing with my upper middle-class parents in low-cost North Dakota, and a vague critique of the World Bank I mostly learned in college classes or as a college activist, I had little to lose when I scanned Internet ride boards to find a lift to the International Monetary Fund / World

scarcity and austerity, see David Seddon and John Walton, *Free Markets and Food Riots: The Politics of Global Adjustment* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994).

Bank protests in Washington, D.C.⁹ A few days later, a mini-van filled with young Manitobans pulled up to my door, and twenty hours later we arrived at the activist convergence center at 5 a.m. After two hours of sleep we awoke to great commotion, as the police raid on the A16 convergence center – an event oft-noted in the scholarly and activist literature on the global justice movement – was underway.

By focusing on protests, summits, and activist networks, and particularly on what some scholars have seen as the qualitatively new elements of them, much of the literature has tended to obscure the forces that have long shaped social movements – like class, race, and nationalism. In doing so the literature often privileges people like me, and obscures the life-or-death struggles not only of indigenous people in the Amazon – who were often named, defended, or otherwise claimed by groups like the Rainforest Action Network as part of the globalization movement – but of the Mexican immigrants who lived within blocks of the convergence center. Many of them had likely been forced off their land or out of their jobs because of IMF- or World Bank-imposed programs or NAFTA, had highly personal understandings of the relationship between commodity prices, land privatization, and peasant survival, and many of them had stood up for their rights – as tenants or workers, for instance – as economic refugees in cities like D.C.¹⁰

⁹ Those protests are often referred to as the A16 protests, as they occurred on April 16, 2000.

¹⁰ The immigrant taxi workers who went on strike in Seattle during the protests or refused to charge protestors for rides, for instance, are good examples of grassroots, anti-globalization militancy. See Camilo Viveiros, “Solidarity from a Taxi Driver,” <http://www.realbattleinseattle.org/node/73>, (accessed August 2, 2010).

The focus on big protests and international summits tends to privilege, then, people who had every opportunity to be global – with international Internet contacts, travel experience, NGO or student networks, or even budgets for hotels and per diems for weekend conferences, as unions and NGOs enjoyed. The premise for this dissertation is that the global justice movement consisted of layers of activists and supporters whose internationalist militancy must be evaluated not by where they wound up – in the streets of D.C. or at the World Social Forum in Brazil – but in how they applied militant action and internationalist understandings to their own local contexts.¹¹ The Oaxacan Zapotecs of CIPO-RFM, for instance, had few opportunities to engage in global solidarity, and rank-and-file communications workers in JwJ who were threatened with job loss had a significantly different opportunity structure than an NGO staffer paid to create global contacts. But the former groups took significant risks, much bigger risks than most summit-hoppers, in joining CIPO-RFM and helping create its grassroots global perspective, for instance, or in speaking out at work or defying union bosses at the WTO protests and joining the direct actionists. CIPO-RFM and JwJ, this dissertation suggests, engaged in forms of “grassroots anti-globalization,” by both participating in global summits and protests, but at the same time privileging the organizing of poor people through locally cast global justice perspectives.

¹¹ Militancy – a key foundation of any social movement – is not the same as radical political rhetoric in any context. For the debate about the meaning of militancy in a globalization movement segmented by race, class, and gender power disparities, see Eric Mann, “One Movement or Two?,” *The Ark: Newsletter of the National Organizers’ Alliance* 16: 35-37. Those layers of supporters I mention became clear to me in early 2000, when my great uncle, a low-income and politically conservative farmer from west-central North Dakota, told me he was excited about what happened at Seattle. An organization he belonged to, the Dakota Resources Council, was against it.

This dissertation engages critically with the literature that characterizes the nature of the global justice movement as new or even as an epochal shift from movements of the past. That literature takes a variety of shapes, and tends to downplay the class, race, and national hierarchies in the anti-neoliberal globalization movement. Some scholars, for instance, refer to the “postmodern politics” of the Zapatistas and other groups, who were part of a profound shift away from “old” political institutions, like political parties. They inhabited an “entirely new epoch in the world’s economic history,” and their political vision reflected a fundamental “decline” of the proletariat.¹² Others suggest that the movement is part of a “global civil society” developing for the first time, a citizen-controlled space that could bring new forms of democracy and pluralism to the world.¹³ Still others identify the development of “transnational public spheres” with the development of social movement-oriented international non-

¹² Roger Burbach, Fiona Jeffries, and William I. Robinson, *Globalization and Postmodern Politics: From Zapatistas to High-Tech Robber Barons* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 21 and 14; see also Mitzman, *Prometheus Revisited*. Mitzman’s Eurocentric reading of anti-neoliberalism in the 1990s and early 2000s suggests that European and North American groups, like Jose Bové’s peasant group the *Confédération Paysanne*, have largely dismissed the institutions and trajectories of industrial modernity and embraced a peasant localism. They have globalized that localism, Mitzman suggests, to connect with peasants and postmodern localists worldwide. Jan Aart Scholte’s “new localism” obscures the racial and class components behind the Zapatistas’ politics. See Scholte, “Globalisation and Collective Identities,” in J. Krause and N. Renwick (eds.), *Identities in International Relations* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996). For a critique of Scholte, see Bice Maiguashca, “Globalisation and the ‘Politics of Identity’: IR theory through the looking glass of women’s reproductive rights activism,” in Catherine Eschle and Bice Maiguashca (eds.), *Critical Theories, International Relations, and the ‘Anti-Globalisation Movement’* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

¹³ See John Keane, *Global Civil Society?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Francois Polet, *Globalizing Resistance: The State of Struggle* (London: Pluto Press, 2004). Ronaldo Munck criticizes the universalism that Keane affirms with his theory of global civil society, which “names an old tendency of local and regional civil society” that, Keane argues, should “link up and to penetrate regions of the Earth that had previously not know the ethics of civil society in the modern European sense.” See Munck, *Globalization and Contestation*, 55; Keane, *Global Civil Society*, 28. For another critique of Keane, see also Keck and Sikkink, *Globalization and Social Movements*, 9.

governmental organizations.”¹⁴ Some, too, emphasize the Internet, satellite technology, or the new “cultural logic of networks,” and their role in shaping political activity, particularly in how the global justice movement forged new kinds of coalitions and democracy.¹⁵

The analysis in this dissertation most closely follows the pattern established by a number of other scholars and activists, all of whom see important continuities, rather than epochal shifts, between the movements and social forces of the 1980s and during the height of the globalization movement. In many cases, these scholars have discerned those trends by examining the histories of grassroots organizations, often in local as well as extra-local or transnational contexts, and examine the class, gender, or national power hierarchies inside the movement. Annette Aurélie Desmarais’s *La Vía Campesina: Globalization and the Power of Peasants*, about the Mexico-based global alliance of peasant organizations, considers the tensions within the anti-neoliberal globalization

¹⁴ For instance, the ones who responded and supported the Zapatista uprising. See Keck and Sikkink, *Globalization and Social Movements*, 8.

¹⁵ Donnatella della Porta’s *Globalization from Below* is one of the most celebratory works, as is Polet’s *Globalizing Resistance* and its affirmation of the inclusiveness and universalism of the movement. For other celebratory examinations on the newness of the movement, see Castells, *The Power of Identity*; Tania L. Sánchez Garrido, “México Y El AlterMundismo: Avances y Retrocesos,” *El Cotidiano* 20: 129: 7-15. Some scholars, in contrast, usefully examine, in a more limited way, the impact of specific new technologies on specific groups who used them effectively. For some protest-oriented or technology-based groups, as Jeff Juris shows in the case of People’s Global Action, the Internet had a profound effect on groups that organized national or international protests. In the case of the organizations featured in this dissertation, the Internet played a minor role in the 1990s. It was, however, very important in the 2000s. See Juris, *Networking Futures: The Movements Against Corporate Globalization* (Duke University Press, 2009). See also Naomi Klein and David Graeber, whose innovative books focus have a more limited focus on of new forms of direct action, through newly formed anarchist collectives in New York (Graeber) or through “culture jamming” and anti-corporate consumerism, mostly in the U.S. or Canada (Klein). See Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009); Klein, *No Logo: Taking on the Brand Bullies* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000).

movement, much as this dissertation does. Guiomar Rovira's *Zapatistas sin Fronteras: Las Redes de Solidaridad con Chiapas y el Altermundismo* looks at the connections between everyday *Zapatismo* in Mexico with global solidarity efforts. Like Rovira's work, edited collections by Michel Wieviorka and Boaventura de Sousa Santos, respectively, see global justice as structured through transnational movements based in histories of grassroots organizing, as does the work of Raúl Zibechi, Jackie Smith, José Johnston, Gordon Laxer, and Catherine Eschle.¹⁶

The methodology of the dissertation is based in oral history and documentary research, both of which were facilitated by my own work with unions and Jobs with Justice in the U.S. and with Oaxacan groups such as CIPO-RFM. In the U.S., I conducted around 35 interviews, and countless personal conversations and experiences helped

¹⁶ Some of the lack of historical understanding of the movement is due simply to disciplinary matters. Given the recent period in question, few historians have attempted to look at it. The exception is Michael Kazin, in his chapter "Spinning the People" in *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998). The Mexican journal *Bajo El Volcan* is great at treating many of these dynamics. Demarais, *La Vía Campesina*; Michel Wieviorka, *Otro Mundo ... Discrepancias, Sorpresas, y Derivas, en la Antimundialización* (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2009); de Sousa Santos, *Another Production is Possible: Beyond the Capitalist Canon*. In Jackie Smith's edited collection *Globalization and Resistance: Transnational Dimensions of Social Movements*, José Johnston and Gordon Laxer, suggest that this ideology is best identified as "globalism." See their excellent "Solidarity in the Age of Globalization: Lessons from the Anti-MAI and the Zapatista Struggles," *Theory and Society*, 32:1 (February 2003): 39-91. Others include Raúl Zibechi, *Autonomías y Emancipaciones: América Latina en Movimiento* (Lima: Programa Democracia y Transformación Global, 2007). Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar, in her *A Desordenar: Por una Historia Abierta de La Lucha Social* (Casa Juan Pablos: Centro de Estudios Andinos y Mesoamericanos, 2006), looks at the left in the Americas more-broadly. de Sousa Santos, in his writing on the World Social Forum, did argue towards the newness of the Forum, because, among other things, it "rejects the concept of the historical subject" and has "no clearly defined ideology." Gwyn Williams critiques the newness of de Sousa Santos and others' writing in *Struggles for an Alternative Globalization*. Williams, in fact, offers an excellent overview of the literature on the movement, including a critical review of "newness" in the literature, in the book's introduction. Hagar Thorn argues that the global anti-apartheid movement built some of the links that turned into the anti-corporate globalization movement. See "The Emergence of Civil Society: The Case of Anti-Apartheid," *Journal of Civil Society* 2:3 (December 2006): 249-266. For the Latin American case, see Gerardo Rénique, "Strategic Challenges for Latin America's Anti-Neoliberal Insurgency," in Teo Vallve and Vijay Prashad (eds.), *Dispatches from Latin America: Experimenting Against Neoliberalism*.

contour my analysis. The Jobs with Justice files at its national office and the collections of the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO at the federation's Meany Archives were also crucial, as were the personal collections of JwJ founding members Joe Uehlein and Rand Wilson. The unprocessed papers of the Democratic Socialists of America at the Tamiment Library at New York University and the Services Employees International Union at the Walter Reuther archives at Wayne State University helped me understand Jobs with Justice in the broader context of the labor left. The United States Student Association papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society allowed me to consider the early political influences of Jobs with Justice organizers.

My research in Oaxaca relied on a wider-ranging set of information sources. Interviews were the key sources for the chapters on Oaxaca, and I conducted around 55 for the project. Informal conversations and participant observation helped me shape questions and evaluate the importance of historical moments. Few formal archives in either country exist with materials on this time period, and in Oaxaca, archives and libraries sometimes closed unexpectedly, because of construction, labor issues, or broader social unrest, as in 2006.

Organizational archives and small, radical document collections in Mexico, though, were integral to this project. The Mexican Center for Philanthropy and the *Biblioteca Social Reconstruir*, in Mexico City, allowed me to explore the Mexican non-profit sector in the 1990s and early 2000s and Mexico's anarchist and radical history, respectively. In Oaxaca, the public newspaper archive, the Henestrosa library, and the

Welte Institute were useful, as was the archive of the *Sección 22* teacher's union local. The *Centro Social Libertario* was critical in providing a look at Oaxaca's anarko-punk past, particularly in the early 2000s. The *agencia* of San Isidro Aloapam allowed me access to the village records, and Raul Gatica's personal archives in Tlaxiaco and CIPO-RFM's papers were the most crucial sources for the dissertation. OIDHO, CODECI, the MSM, and documents and insights provided to me from participants in the 1980s Marxist left in southern Mexico were also key. EDUCA allowed me access to their archives of the FOCO (Oaxacan Forum of Civil Organizations from the 1990s), and around a half dozen civil organizations were extremely helpful in granting me access to annual reports and other documents. The BARCA Center for Human Rights also provided me with full access to its collections on Oaxacan human rights and human rights organizations. Finally, the Armed Revolutionary Organizations in Mexico papers in the Mandeville Special Collections Library at UC-San Diego helped me understand the various strains of Marxism in Oaxaca in the last few decades.

Although the politics of neoliberalism will become clear in the chapters of this dissertation, it may be useful to briefly outline its broad contours in the U.S. and Mexico. Neoliberal leaders in the early 1980s – Ronald Reagan in the U.S., and the neoliberal wing of the PRI party in Mexico – responded to real-and-imagined crises in their respective countries by ushering in dramatic economic and political reforms in the 1980s and early 1990s. In this “roll-back” stage of neoliberal reform, the U.S. and Mexican governments sold off or deregulated public enterprises and publicly regulated

industries. Neoliberalism was based in modeling economic markets and society itself on the free market. “State-provided welfare,” one scholar asserted, “[was] viewed as disrupting the free play of individual choice (and thus the workings of the market),” and these new neoliberal leaders argued that individuals and companies pursuing their self-interest would most efficiently supply goods and services.

As national borders, tariffs, unions, and other, collective forms of popular social organization were increasingly seen as barriers to the exchange of goods and ideas in the global market, leaders in the U.S. and Mexico turned to dissolving those “barriers,” in large part by creating a multinational free trade area with NAFTA. They pushed and paid the industries that produced goods or services that compete the best in the international marketplace – like Corona beer from Mexico – and removed state subsidies for the sectors who could not, like small-scale, peasant corn production in Mexico or textile production in the U.S. Neoliberalism combined the liberalization of trade, the privatization of public or socially controlled goods (including indigenous communal land in Mexico), and the deregulation of industry in a way that favored the ultra-rich or politically connected – the two groups who could best navigate those markets for their own benefit.¹⁷ Governments, instead of investing in public goods or allowing community forms of regulation, invested in the military and the domestic

¹⁷ These macro-level economic and political reforms are only part of the story with neoliberalism. Neoliberalism was also a cultural and social philosophy. See John Clarke, *Without Guarantees*, 88. The “second generation” World Bank reforms in the 1980s focused on the decentralization of power to local authorities, popular “participation,” and generating peoples’ social capital – through civil society organizations like NGOS. See Liisa L. North, *Rural Progress or Rural Decay*, 5. Institutional reform to judicial branches to make investment more transparent was also part of those reforms.

security industry to manage the inevitable conflicts that neoliberal displacement would create.¹⁸

This dissertation examines the effects of and resistance to these forces by beginning, in chapter 1, with Jobs with Justice in the 1980s, when a batch of progressives inside U.S. unions tried to create permanent labor-community coalitions to both recover the community ties that the labor bureaucracy had long ago lost, and to contest the mergers, acquisitions, and corporate aggression of the Reagan era. To deflect the influence of New Right populism – which centered on the appeals of family, faith, and country – JwJ tried to build class unity. It did so, in part, by conceptualizing a threat that could help unify a fractured labor left: that threat was a transnational class of “corporate robber barons.” This chapter argues that JwJ’s class unity idea was constantly challenged by gender hierarchies and nationalist impulses inside the coalitions. Indeed, the robber barons weren’t only economic bandits. For JwJ leaders and organizers, the barons’ threats to the working class were also threats to American family and country. Anxieties of empire – about an “America in decline” – often influenced JwJ’s class appeals, and its unique vision of transnational corporate

¹⁸ Particularly in the 1990s, and in part because of early protests about neoliberal reforms through structural adjustment programs, development entities and the Bank granted access to some proceedings to NGOS, and began to sponsor “civil society organizations” like NGOs to implement programs. By the mid-1990s NGO advocates of poor people’s entrepreneurship and local initiatives spanned the entire ideological spectrum. In effect, World Bank-associated technocrats, disenchanted Marxists, and NGO activists found themselves in the same camp. In doing so they helped create the NGO explosion of the late 1990s, including in Oaxaca, and in doing so they reconfigured the political landscape of the state. Hundreds of such civil associations emerged, with World Bank or other development funding. Some existing grassroots groups opted for World Bank money as they tried to continue with their pre-existing plans.

domination, grassroots struggles against neoliberal reforms, and populist Americanism all constituted early roots of the U.S. anti-globalization movement.

As Chapter 2 shows, poor workers' anxieties about empire took on an entirely different form in southern Mexico, where struggles against neoliberal economic reform were contoured by the most powerful anti-neoliberal force on the continent: the Zapatista National Liberation Army. Neoliberalism was the dominant ideology of Mexico in the 1990s, and in Oaxaca neoliberalism played out through the same institutions that had kept the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in control of the state since the 1930s. While CIPO organizers agreed that the "neoliberal hurricane," as they called the development of the post-NAFTA economic order, was a continuation of the U.S.-sponsored "peaceful conquest" of the nation, their varied understandings of the importance of class, indigeneity, and gender allowed them to become a powerfully diverse, if not dangerously volatile, organization in 1997 and 1998. In addition, the chapter argues that CIPO-RFM's support for the Zapatistas, their critical perspectives on neoliberalism, and their creative direct action techniques all help establish early CIPO-RFM as one of the many roots of the anti-neoliberal globalization movement that surfaced worldwide in the early 2000s.

In the 1980s, Asia's cheap imports and its sweatshop wages spurred on many U.S. unionists' nativist concerns of national decay and economic decline, but in the 1990s their anxieties about threats from abroad took a dramatic turn south, toward Mexico, as migration to the U.S. reached near-record levels and the U.S. and Mexico signed NAFTA

in the early 1990s. Jobs with Justice, before the mid 1990s, envisioned working-class solidarity as part of an effort to recover the country's past greatness, in part by identifying with what it called the country's core values of family and economic fairness. By the late 1990s a different set of anxieties about the U.S. emerged in the organization: a new generation of JwJ organizers led the group into the early global justice movement, in part because of its anxieties about the imperial politics of the U.S. in the world through the country's domination over "free trade" markets and the World Trade Organization. JwJ, the chapter shows, positioned itself in a heterogeneous mix of progressive populists and New Right radicals in the early anti-neoliberal globalization movement by distancing itself from the populist inflections of its earlier organizing. By turning towards protecting the working class and away from protecting America, JwJ became one of the few organizations with a "worker," and not "citizen" focus, which facilitated its entry in a crucial arena of globalization – immigrant labor and race – that the populists and white-dominated progressive organizations of the movement controversially tried to silence.

Much of the scholarship associates Seattle with the founding of the global justice movement, and a self-aware "anti-globalization" scene in Oaxaca did indeed develop between 2000 and 2003. Those were the years of the major street protests, in Mexico and elsewhere. CIPO-RFM attended summits and protests throughout those years, and this comparative understanding of the anti-globalization movement ends by examining how the organization maneuvered in and around the diverse, contradictory, and

transnational Oaxacan left. Unlike its first campaigns in the 1990s, CIPO-RFM in the early 2000s envisioned the neoliberal economy as a new form of global corporate colonization, sponsored by the U.S. and its supranational financial institutions. In doing so it de-centered class and nationalism through envisioning the collective subject of its struggle less as workers or citizens, two of those identities in play in the original CIPO coalition, and more as indigenous and colonized peoples.

Anxieties of colonization, in fact, pervaded the political approaches of the social organizations of the day, but CIPO-RFM forged a unique place in the grassroots anti-globalization left. Neoliberalism, more than merely an economic philosophy, structured associational and social life in the 1990s and early 2000s, and the explosive growth of the “civil society” sector – funded largely by Europe- and U.S.-based foundations – constituted another element of Oaxacan society that CIPO distanced itself from as it increasingly created an alliance with another network of organizations very much forged through the transnational flows of ideas and organizational forms: the growing community of Oaxacan *anarko-punks* (anarchist youth influenced by punk rock culture) who had developed their own anti-globalization, anti-colonization, indigenous-based politics.

CHAPTER 1

LABOR, CLASS, AND NATION: JOBS WITH JUSTICE IN THE EARLY YEARS, 1987-1989

"Family, Country, Union and Job." The picket sign, hoisted by rallying U.S. workers in the mid-1980s, spoke volumes about the state of the U.S. union movement. Being in a union, and having union rights, was not just about work. It was, as workers and union leaders in a new coalition, Jobs with Justice (JwJ), argued, part of an "American way of life." And that way of life, they asserted, ached under a barrage of attacks and new animosities. Much of the union movement – whether inside the 13 million mostly male, native-born workers who belonged to the dominant labor federation, the AFL-CIO, or outside of it – argued that all things foreign were at fault. Foreign products flooding markets. Foreign corporations unfairly competing with U.S. companies. Foreign workers stealing jobs or undercutting "[o]ur way of life."¹

The way of life they referred to was created amidst the greatest capitalist economic expansion in the history of the Earth in the mid-twentieth century. The U.S., built as a settler colony with its own imperialist engine, dominated world affairs after World War II, and government, business, and union leaders regulated the U.S.

¹ "Jobs with Justice," circa Jan.- Feb., 1987, IUD, unprocessed collection; "CWA, Union Leaders Kick off Jobs with Justice Campaign," *CWA News*, June 11, 1987, p. 6; "Nation's Largest Unions Launch Campaign for Workers' Rights," *John Herling's Labor Letter*, July 4, 1987, 1-2.

warfare/welfare economy through a broad “social compact.” Unions, made up of mostly white and male workers and leaders, agreed to work (not strike) and produce (at record levels) in exchange for middle-class wages, while government, business, and union leaders themselves went about the business of empire. They created and controlled world markets, infiltrated foreign media and unions, launched wars and coups, and extracted super-profits from the labor and land of colonized populations.

Union leaders too often forgot, or repressed, the idea that government and business did not see them as equals, despite their Country Club memberships, cars, and skin color. Labor leaders helped build a Cold War culture of imperialism, which explained U.S. workers’ modern lifestyles and relative wealth as symptoms of their fundamental differences with workers from the “darker nations.” Empire, put simply, became a “way of life.”² The unions constricted their vision of the working class to those already organized into unions, and leaders’ anti-communist nationalism limited union possibilities for challenging other sorts of domination, such as those based on gender, race, or nation. AFL-CIO union leaders had ascended to power less through such business-friendly nationalism than through waves of grassroots organizing, wildcat strikes, and workers’ solidarity efforts in the 1930s and 1940s. Once the productivity and profit rates of the Cold War expansion started to slide, big business ditched the social compact – increasingly with the help of the Republicans and the Democrats. The

² Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993). For the “way of life” phrase, see William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life: An Essay on the Causes and Character of America’s Present Predicament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). For the “darker nations” notion, see Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World* (New York: New Press; Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2006).

unionized working class lost what organizers in the 1980s would call the “security” and “stability” of those decades, and Jobs with Justice in the early 1990s associated the decline of the working-class with a generalized “America in decline.” And the workers of color and women who rarely saw the benefits of the mid-century boom lost even more.³

The New Right and economic elites launched a post-1960s political assault that mirrored the effectiveness of the economic one, and they increasingly captured the imaginations of unionists and their lost “way of life” in a nation in decline. The ascendant Reagan Republicans successfully centered political debate around family, country, and God by suggesting that all three were “under siege.”⁴ Communists, they claimed, and dark-skinned communists at that, were as close as Nicaragua and El Salvador, and U.S. imperial might had lost its manly vigor after stinging defeats in Vietnam and Iran. This New Right populism, with its unionized Reagan Democrats, called on their Moral Majority to serve as the muscular guard of the (implicitly white) Nation. They sought to defend it from the state itself, with the its hordes of black welfare mothers, unions and other “special interests,” liberal elites, permissive urbanites, dark foreigners, and all who demanded “special rights” – including abortion – instead of taking “personal responsibility.” According to historian Jefferson Cowie, “[b]y the time

³ I examine JwJ’s early-1990s idea of American in decline in chapter 3. For the experiences of Latina/os and Blacks, for example, see Antonia Darder and Rodolfo E. Torres, eds., *The Latino Studies Reader: Culture, Politics, and Society*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998). See Pt. IV in particular. See also Gilbert G. Gonzalez and Raul Fernandez, eds. *A Century of Chicano History: Empire, Nations, and Migrations* (New York: Routledge, 2003; George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, 2nd. ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006*, 3rd. ed., (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007).

⁴ Natasha Zaretsky, *No Direction Home: The American Family and the Fear of National Decline, 1968-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 224.

Ronald Reagan was reelected in 1984, flags, God, guns, heterosexuality, and whiteness had eclipsed the economic politics of labor rights, wages, unions, and working conditions,” and this shift in identity for many union workers was enough “to swing the balance of the nation.”⁵

The fact that the “Family, Country, Union and Job” picket sign was used in a Jobs with Justice campaign, and that it was displayed prominently in one of the main campaign brochures of the late 1980s, reflects three important elements of the ideological mix in the 1980s. First, it reflects the depth of the anxiety about all-things-foreign in the 1980s union scene, as the privileges unionists won during the massive capitalist expansion were suddenly threatened. Most of the Jobs with Justice union leaders – from the communication workers (CWA), service employees (SEIU), government workers (AFGE), miners (UMWA), and others – were progressive, post-1960s labor liberals who struggled with the conservative nationalist AFL-CIO leaders in the 1980s. The latter had accepted hundreds of millions of dollars of U.S. State Department money to infiltrate or create unions in other countries, rewarding those who supported U.S. foreign policy and capitalist development, and working to destroy

⁵ The masculine imagery and emphasis on restoring authority in the family, in addition to Reagan’s positions against the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion, led to an unprecedented gender gap in the 1980 election, as 9.6 percent fewer women than men voted for him. See Martin Gilens, “Gender and Support for Reagan: A Comprehensive Model of Presidential Approval,” *American Journal of Political Science* 32 (1988): 19-49. For a widely read indictment of the Reagan administration for its “undeclared war against American women,” see Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992). For a thorough examination of the race and class dynamics undergirding the decades-long formation of the New Right, and how it could maneuver ideas of “states’ rights, more punitive sentencing, opposition to welfare, neoliberal economics, and ‘family values’ into one political identity,” see Joseph E. Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 157. Jefferson Cowie, “Dead Man’s Town: ‘Born in the U.S.A.’ Social History, and Working-Class Identity,” *American Quarterly*, 58 (June 2006): 353-378.

those whose democratic, militant, or left-leaning nature might endear them to “communism.” In the early 1980s, as the AFL-CIO cooperated with the Reagan administration to repress Salvadoran militants and to destroy Nicaragua’s new, revolutionary Sandinista state and economy, many of the Jobs with Justice union leaders formed the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador (NLC) to oppose the policies. The Jobs with Justice unions in the NLC supported working-class efforts in Central America. They mobilized a transnational vision of class that trumped the emphasis on U.S. world dominance and state military might.

Second, the “Family, Country, Union and Job” picket sign reflects the power of the New Right’s populism.⁶ More than just another sound bite or discourse, the New Right had crafted an ideology, an unspoken classificatory framework or “common sense.” It was part of the First-World development of what scholar Stuart Hall called “authoritarian populism,” a reaction to the popular upsurges of the 1960s that produced Thatcherism in England and Reaganism in the U.S. Asserting or defending your “nation,” “culture,” “tradition” became acceptable ways for whites to divide the world into “us” and “them” and avoid talking about “race,” itself rarely mentioned in the “color-blind” politics of the post-60s, post-Civil Rights Act First World. By the late 1970s it was political suicide in the U.S. for Democrats to even call themselves “liberals,” or speak highly of “big government,” and unions and labor were associated with the “creeping

⁶ As opposed to the populism that grew in Europe in the 1990s, and grew in the U.S., as seen with the presidential campaign of Ross Perot in 1992 and the resurgence of Pat Buchanan in the 1990s, populism is an ever-present aspect of party politics in the U.S. Organized around an idea of “the people” versus the Establishment, populists tend to emphasize “their closeness to the grass roots and their distance from the political establishment,” see Margaret Canovan, *The People* (Cambridge; Malden, MA, Polity, 2005), 76; see also Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

collectivism” and bureaucratic waste of both. New Right populism’s core components – ideas of nation, culture, church, faith, the “free market,” and “family” – made sense together in ways that would have seemed forced as early as ten years earlier.⁷

Those ideas resonated together most powerfully when situated next to an opposite, and especially against a threatening “other” that stood ready to infect the “moral center of the nation,” which as early as the 1970s was “implicitly defined as law-abiding whites.”⁸ African Americans, usually represented as welfare mothers, crack addicts, or gang members, fundamentally threatened tradition, culture, and family values. Reaganism championed manly self-sufficiency and familial authority, and liberals were too feminine to stand up for themselves, for the country, or in the free market. Dark-skinned foreigners threatened the nation with ideas and goods. The conflicts that pitted unions against employers for decades were submerged in a common sense that suggested that the fundamental conflict in U.S. life was not that of workers versus bosses but that of Americans and their families in a national project to restore responsibility and patriotism to the nation-state. Increasingly, these U.S. union workers

⁷ For “creeping collectivism” and authoritarianism and democracy in the 1970s and 1980s, see Stuart Hall, “Popular-Democratic vs. Authoritarian Populism: Two Ways of Taking Democracy Seriously,” in Alan Hunt, ed., *Marxism and Democracy* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980), 142. The birth of the Right’s resurgence goes back decades, but key ideas in the electoral bloc – like restrictions on abortion – were new. See, for instance, John McGreevy, “Catholics, Democrats, and the GOP in Contemporary America,” *American Quarterly* 59, 3 (Sept. 2007), 669-681.

⁸ Porter, “Affirming and Disaffirming Actions: Re-making Race in the 1970s,” in Beth Bailey and David Farger, eds., *American in the Seventies* (Lawrence, KS: The University of Kansas Press, 2004): 50-74. Quotation on 65.

chose race, religion, nation, and manliness over class.⁹ Given the progressive labor liberalism of the JwJ unions, the focus on “Family” and “Country” in the picket sign reflects the depth of New Right populism in the white-dominated union world of the 1980s.

Third, the “Family, Country” picket sign reflects the silencing of critical ideas about class and nation in the U.S. labor left after the 1960s. “Counterhegemonic nationalisms” like that of the Black Panthers, Brown Berets, the Third World Women’s Alliance, or other internationalist currents of the New Left presented fundamental critiques of U.S nationalism from within the core. Though organizational ideologies differed, and varied even between local chapters of the same organization, they all saw class as embedded in intersecting hierarchies of race and nation class inequality. Feminists and others, and certainly the Third World Women’s Alliance, critiqued the patriarchal nature of many of these male-dominated insurgent nationalisms, and through the 1970s the ferment around questions of nationalism and liberation faded amidst political repression and cultural and economic change. Many of these militants had abandoned hope for the dominant U.S. unions to serve as agents of change, but a substantial number entered the labor left of the U.S. after the 1960s. Some generated independent organizing efforts, autonomous from the AFL-CIO, and others, whether

⁹ See Mike Davis and Michael Sprinker, eds., *Reshaping the U.S. Left: Popular Struggles in the 1980s* (London; New York: Verso, 1988); David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London; New York: Verso, 1999); and W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black reconstruction in America: an Essay Toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964). For more on the Reagan era, see Gary Gerstle, “Epilogue: Beyond the Rooseveltian Nation, 1975-2000,” in *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).

social democrats, liberals, or radicals disillusioned after years of repression and struggle, found roles inside the union bureaucracy, including those who founded Jobs with Justice in early 1987.¹⁰

In the U.S., as New Right populism surged, workers' real wages declined and union membership hemorrhaged, and unions had few good proposals to regain traction. Now that they had an updated language to blame the foreign for their ills, some unions, instead of working to organize workplaces in Latin America or Asia where companies threatened to move, worked in conjunction with the very bosses they had battled feverishly for decades. *Labor Notes*, a newspaper founded by union democracy dissidents in 1979, uncovered multitudes of examples in the 1980s of union nationalism, or, more often, conservatism and bureaucratization. One of the most militant union campaigns of the early and mid-1980s, the strike by Local P-9 at Hormel in Austin, MN, was actually resisted by its international parent union, the United Food and Commercial Workers.¹¹ The leaders of the UAW, historically one of the biggest and most progressive industrial unions, increasingly sought "teamwork" with the auto companies, much to the chagrin of local unions, union democracy advocates, and other dissidents.¹²

¹⁰For more on the TWWA and the fading of these post-1960s movements and debates see, for example, Kimberly Springer, *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). For the "counterhegemonic nationalisms" idea, see María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, "Feminism and the Possibility of Transnationalism in *Between Woman and Nation*," *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 2 (2000): 431-444.

¹¹ See the work of Peter Rachleff or the documentary *American Dream*, prod. and dir. Barbara Kopple, HBO Video, 1992, VHS.

¹² See Dana Frank, *Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1999).

Indeed, workers' direct action – rather than serving as the base for democratic, militant unionism – too often took the form of white terror in the 1980s. In 1979, Klan members killed five anti-racist union organizers in a rally in Greensboro, North Carolina. In 1982, two autoworkers beat to death an Asian man who symbolized, for them, the idea that foreign imports – and not corporate greed and mismanagement – were sinking the auto industry. In the early 1980s white men went to Nicaragua to risk their lives in another country's popular insurgency – but for the *Contra* rebels. They documented their jungle exploits in arms magazines like *Eagle: For the American Fighting Man* and *Behind the Lines*. In the late 1980s and early 1990s a spate of hate crimes against students of color and foreigners helped generate the debates of the “culture wars.” And by the late 1980s the neo-Nazi right surged in much of the U.S., opening chapters in places like South St. Paul, Minnesota – just up the road from the Hormel plant in Austin – where they opened an office a five-minute walk from this white, working-class town's high school.¹³

¹³ For more on the Greensboro Massacre, see Sally Avery Bermanzohn, *Through Survivors' Eyes: From the Sixties to the Greensboro Massacre*. For *Contra* solidarity, see the Sept. 1986 version of *Eagle* magazine. In *Behind the Lines*, see the 1994 issue. For more information, see Peter Kornbluh, *Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention: Reagan's War against the Sandinistas*, (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1987); The neo-Nazi group was likely the National Socialist Movement, a successor to the American Nazi Party. For more information see Anti-Defamation League, “American Stormtroopers: Inside the National Socialist Movement,” 2008, www.adl.org/Learn/Ext_US/nsm/NSM_Reportv12.pdf, accessed Nov. 14, 2009. For more on how neo-Nazis affected labor in an urban, multiracial neighborhood in the early 1990s, see Deirdre A. Royster, *Race and the Invisible Hand: How White Networks Exclude Black Men from Blue-Collar Jobs*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

As midnight seemed to near for the U.S. union movement, rainbows emerged.¹⁴

Jobs with Justice was one of the brightest, and one of the few that lasted. In the years between its first major event, in Miami in 1987, to the “Battle of Seattle” and the globalization debates in the late 1990s, this labor-community coalition developed a radically different view of unionism. Instead of associating it with nation, state, family, or country, JwJ developed a vision of unionism and class that, at least in certain instances, sought to transcend national borders and break down racial and gender boundaries. As the Cold War ended and the globalization of the “New World Order” of the 1990s began, Jobs with Justice became the leading union effort to confront the racial, gendered, and transnational inequalities of the post-NAFTA economy.¹⁵ But JwJ’s late-1990s political project differed its early efforts in important ways as well, as the “Family, Country” picket sign suggests. This chapter examines the political vision of 1980s-era JwJ, a vision that JwJ organizers, members, and participants built as they shaped assumptions, ideas, and discourses into a relatively stable vision of class politics through the everyday unionism of events, appeals, correspondence, and, rallies.

National organizers and leaders of Jobs with Justice in the late 1980s and early 1990s created a unionism that sought to unite union members and other workers not so much around race, manliness, or nation but primarily around their common interests as “workers.” They did so by naming an adversary: “corporate robber barons” who, like the

¹⁴ This terminology comes from George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

¹⁵ The NAFTA was the North American Free Trade Agreement, a treaty signed by the governments of the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to establish a continental market between the three countries. The treaty undid decades of state regulations that protected local and national markets, exposing workers and small businesses to competition from multinational corporations, and particularly from the U.S.

John D. Rockefellers and Cornelius Vanderbilts at the turn of the previous century, fundamentally threatened workers' rights. Organizers intended Jobs with Justice to be a broad coalition of unions, churches, and community organizations, and class, for the organizers, was coalition-speak. Class could gloss over the Reagan-era political animosities inside the unionized working class. Class, they thought, could shift national debate from "divisive" social issues to basic economic security. Class could subdue the racial differences, gender disparities, homophobia, and nationalist xenophobia that kept U.S. workers from building broader, and even transnational, solidarity efforts. After all, nearly everyone Jobs with Justice was talking to had a real wage that was dropping, a boss, and a time card – unless their job had already been cut or exported.

This dissertation will show that early Jobs with Justice, with its vision of the new omnipotence of transnational corporate power, its militant direct action, and its anxieties about the vitality of the nation in the face of international competition and working-class decline, established some of the early foundations of the anti-neoliberal globalization movement that took shape in the U.S. in the 1990s. This chapter argues organizers' powerful efforts to re-center anti-corporate class conflict in the popular discourse and labor-community organizing world of the late 1980s was an important, early Jobs with Justice victory. At the same time, anxieties about the decline of U.S. international dominance facilitated the way populist, nationalist appeals to defend the moral and economic vigor of America threaded themselves into JwJ efforts to defend the working class. Indeed, the growing class, national, and even gender inequalities of the mid- and late 1980s complicated JwJ's class universalism and populist Americanism.

Though this chapter complements a variety of scholarly literature on race, gender, and nationalism in the U.S. labor movement, it most directly converses with the work of Dana Frank, Paul Buhle, Bill Fletcher, and Andrew Battista. Following Fletcher and Battista, the chapter shows how progressives in the U.S. labor movement slowly, and unsteadily, gained influence in a union apparatus dominated by the AFL-CIO old guard in the 1980s and early 1990s. However, as Frank, Buhle, and Fletcher argue, the legacies of racial nationalism and other exclusions continued to powerfully influence labor organizing, even, this chapter argues, within its most-progressive circles.¹⁶

As with many organizing efforts of the U.S. labor left in the twentieth century, Jobs with Justice organizers and leaders often couched class in the populist appeals of family, community, and country, though they avoided the strident racial nationalism that suggested that foreigners – and especially the Japanese – were as responsible for U.S. workers’ hardships as were corporate executives. The U.S. was at the threshold of what many called “globalization”: the end of the Cold War and the advent of the “New World Order,” multiculturalism and the “culture wars,” the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Rodney King beating and the popular convulsions in Los Angeles, and mass immigration to the U.S. and a nativist backlash against Mexicans would all rattle workers’ and organizers’ understandings of class, race, and national identity in the early

¹⁶ Dana Frank, *Buy American*; Paul Buhle, *Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland, and the Tragedy of American Labor* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999); Fletcher, Jr., *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path Toward Social Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Andrew Battista, *The Revival of Labor Liberalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008). See also Michael Kazin’s “A People Not a Class: Rethinking the Political Language of the U.S. Labor Movement,” in Mike Davis and Michael Sprinker, eds., *Reshaping the U.S. Left: Popular Struggles in the 1980s* (London; New York: Verso, 1988), 257-286.

1990s. Jobs with Justice, by the mid-1990s, would take the lead in building a class force attuned to the stratifications of the international working class. But in the late 1980s, as the “Family, Country” picket sign attests, many organizers, even in this, the progressive wing of the U.S. union movement, continued to see class as in terms of “American” democracy and its “way of life.”

1987: “A new kind of campaign”

The organizers knew it would be big. The stage: The annual convention of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), the founding union of Jobs with Justice, in Miami. There, thousands of CWA members and leaders would launch the idea of “Jobs with Justice,” along with the help of the three unions confronting Eastern Airlines. Frank Lorenzo, one of the many 80s-era corporate raiders and owner of Texas Air, had acquired Eastern in February 1986, and he and his accomplices, like Philip Bakes, a magna cum laude from Harvard Law School who was formerly a Watergate Special Prosecutor, had recently christened themselves as full members of the Deep South’s neoliberal New Rich. Together, these speculators were devastating the rights of the workers of one of the relatively few union companies in the region.¹⁷ Lorenzo had taken control and immediately implemented a 20 percent slash in wages for pilots and flight attendants, and managers introduced military rigidity into the everyday routines of

¹⁷ International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, District 100; “What are the Issues at Eastern Air Lines?” Handout for the Jobs with Justice Rally, July 29, 1987, 5, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

Eastern workers. Between December 1986 and September 1988, Lorenzo reduced the Eastern workforce from 43,000 to 29,500.¹⁸ The campaign against Eastern Airlines owners wasn't big just because Eastern was one of the largest employers of south Florida, as the machinists' union (the IAM) claimed. It was also because the Jobs with Justice union leaders, the Industrial Union Department (IUD) of the AFL-CIO, and the Eastern unions were turning the struggle against Eastern into a national labor-community campaign. No one was certain how the Jobs with Justice effort, which was born of discussions between a handful of union presidents and staffers, would develop, or if it would last. Unions had tried many coalitions, collaborations, and conferences in the 1980s, and nothing had worked. The organizers didn't even know what to call it. Was it a "campaign," as some said? Or a "program," as they suggested in the Miami media information kit? A "movement"? A "permanent coalition"? Regardless, organizers wanted to make Miami into a showcase. They wanted it to show how the labor regimes in south Florida embodied the assault on unions in the Reagan years. The Miami rally, as it turned out, also embodied many of the ideas and tactics Jobs with Justice would rely on in the next twenty years.¹⁹ By the end of the event, organizers and the local media would claimed it to be the biggest labor rally in Florida history.²⁰

The process of conceptualizing a Jobs with Justice organization began in the spring of 1987, and leaders of several unions actively attended meetings: the

¹⁸ William Stockton, "Tearing Apart Eastern Airlines," *New York Times*, Nov. 6, 1988. 36-40.

¹⁹ Media Information Kit, Jobs with Justice, June 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

²⁰ News transcript, WTVJ-TV, July 29, 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

autoworkers (UAW), mineworkers (UMWA) machinists, the service employees (SEIU), and the IUD. CWA “chaired” the early coalition, and the IUD coordinated.²¹ All these unions had long histories with the IUD, a Department autonomous from the AFL-CIO but located at the federation’s D.C. headquarters. The IUD’s mission was to carry out the progressive, industrial unionism of the CIO side of the federation, and had been formed after the CIO and the conservative AFL merged in 1955. The national reach of the early JwJ unions, as well as their bureaucratic hierarchies, money, and connections to government officials, simplified the process of forging a national scope – but organizers wanted to highlight the struggles of a local site as a campaign kick-off. The leaders, who from the beginning envisioned JwJ as perhaps no more than a series of rallies, would have to choose locations where they could rely on loyal local leaders to coordinate and help fund the state campaigns. They also wanted to choose locations that normally got little attention for union activity, but which could showcase the core themes laid out by the national planners. To do so they, along with participation from a few non-labor organizations, eventually decided on several rally locations where organizers would have a chance to introduce the broad themes that JwJ represented. They whittled it down to four in the U.S. South and Midwest, and Miami would be the first.²²

This wasn’t the first time these unions had worked together after the 1960s, and they frequently scrapped with unions with roots in the AFL and its craft unionism, which

²¹ Brian Turner to Howard D. Samuel, “Jobs with Justice Campaign IUD Activities,” April 13, 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

²² Howard D. Samuel to “Participating Officers,” May 18, 1987, IUD unprocessed records; Samuel to union leaders, July 23, 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

was built on protecting the privileges of skilled craftsmen and ignoring the lowest-paid or temporary workers, who were most often people of color or women. The CIO, too, though, had purged most militants from its ranks in the McCarthyist hunt for “communists” in the early 1950s, and the leaders and unions that remained merged with the AFL in 1955. The AFL side had controlled the federation since the merger, and the leadership in the 1980s, under Lane Kirkland, followed AFL-CIO precedent. Kirkland was a born bureaucrat, who emerged from the “business unionism” of the prior several decades. Instead of mobilizing workers, spurring worker self-activity, or emphasizing direct action as means to pressure employers and politicians, business unionists like Kirkland were suspicious of all three. They created vast bureaucracies to represent workers. These staffers “serviced” their members, and leaders often saw themselves as “labor statesmen,” who would, along with their partners in the corporate and government world, work together to manage economic and national affairs for the benefit of the country and the empire.²³

The most-active early JwJ leaders and organizers were not the union presidents but their staffers, many of them former youth or students activists of the late 1960s or early 1970s. A substantial number had worked in the United Farm Workers of César Chávez, or had entered public- or service-sector unions in the 1970s. Many had risen to influential positions in union hierarchies, often in organizing departments, and many of them were helping create early versions of the “organizing model,” designed to rejuvenate the union movement through organizing and to counter the dominant

²³ Buhle, *Taking Care of Business*.

service model. Some of these activists had participated in non-labor groups – like Citizen Action – and progressive organizations in the 1980s, and part of their participation was strategic. After decades of being red-baited, co-opted, or simply ignored by the bigger, richer, whiter, and male-dominated AFL-CIO, labor’s new generation knew it had to repair old wounds and regain the trust of community organizations and liberal advocacy groups.²⁴ These unionists, political scientist Andrew Battista argues, were part of a new generation of labor liberals, who had emerged from 1960s-era struggles with critiques of the AFL-CIO’s hawkish Cold War anti-communism, suit-and-tie bureaucracy, and preference of servicing, stability, and hierarchy to organizing and mobilization. These labor liberals advocated broadly progressive or social-democratic themes, like an expansive welfare state, union power, a liberal democratic political system, and affirmative action to empower women and racial minorities.²⁵

Some, like Larry Cohen and Steve Early, worked in CWA. Others, like Andy Stern and Steven Lerner, in SEIU. Paul and Heather Booth, veterans of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the 1960s, worked in the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and in Citizen Action, respectively. Others worked in the IUD or as independent consultants, writers, or “corporate campaigners.” Most were men, many were Jews, and almost all were white. Many had established relations with each other not only through unions but in networks of national liberal

²⁴ Andy Banks, telephone interview by author, July 22, 2009. Both he and Larry Cohen, the CWA organizing director at the time, had served on the board of Citizen Action; Steve Early, interview with the author, Providence, RI, October 2008.

²⁵ Battista, *The Revival of Labor Liberalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

advocacy organizations, or in weekend trips to the Graves Mountain Labor Retreat, a rural Virginia lodge owned by liberal public-relations specialist Gary Nordlinger, another '60s-era college student and longtime Democratic Party fundraiser. These invitation-only retreats featured debates on how to rejuvenate labor organizing and make unions progressive forces in the U.S. Attendees discussed, as they did at the 1987 retreat, topics like "Being Jewish in the labor movement" or "When Lefties become managers." They also surveyed and rated themselves and their positions in their national unions. Were you, one survey asked, a "loyalist," or, "of uncertain loyalty but not viewed as threatening," or perhaps a "renegade and troublemaker?"²⁶

Despite the differences between this generation of labor liberals and the national AFL-CIO leadership, unions rarely criticized each other publicly, and Miami represented the chance for something collaborative and big. A local Florida solidarity committee had been planning for at least two months for the rally, and Florida AFL-CIO director Dan Miller had appointed Andy Banks, a union veteran and Labor Studies professor at Florida International University, to be the local coordinator. By July, the group had budgeted more than \$60,000 for the event, most of which came from donations from the international union leaders who built early Jobs with Justice. They

²⁶ See "Graves Planning 9-02-88" and "A-Where-Are-People-Coming from Questionnaire," 1988, IUD unprocessed records. Other early JwJ activists were participants at Graves, including Eddie Burke, Gene Carroll, Cathy Howell, and Bob Kingsley.

tagged Miami Dolphins star quarterback Dan Marino to do radio spots to advertise the event, and national publicity was extensive in the month before the rally.²⁷

The day started out well. Despite Miami's July sun, 3000 CWA delegates met thousands of others at a corner near the CWA convention, and together they marched more than a mile to the Miami convention center. A group of more than 10,000 workers, supporters, and journalists gathered there, and the crowd was raucous. The *Miami Herald* called it "a mix between a 1940s style labor rally and defiant 1960s civil rights rallies," as everyday workers, union leaders, and leaders of the National Organization of Women, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Florida Consumer Federation (a chapter of Citizen Action) all spoke. David Kusnet, in an otherwise-sober account of the equally sober business unionism of the 1980s, wrote that the rally had a downright "evangelical" feel, as workers seized the opportunity to denounce the rich. A group of around 100 workers, oozing with class solidarity – and perhaps frothy with booze and masculine energy – started threatening and dumping beer on an NBC news crew. The crew was a group of strikebreakers, covering the event despite local NBC workers' strike against the network. The crew resisted the harassment, but after the workers managed to force the scabs out they continued to intimidate and ridicule them outside. The rally attendees didn't stop there. When other TV crews couldn't produce union cards, they got their own douses of suds, and

²⁷ Larry Cohen to Steering Committee, May 20, 1987, IUD unprocessed records; Bahr to "JwJ officers," May 29, 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

eventually “a 12-man police escort” had to help them enter the building, and a pair of rally organizers “acted as bodyguards” for two reporters from Channel 23.²⁸

The workers there were from many unions and organizations. Despite economic, gender, and racial differences that stratified the working class represented there, they shared at least some common economic problems. Spectators “roared” with approval when Morton Bahr, the CWA President, opened his statement by declaring war on “the erosion of workers’ rights.”²⁹ Regardless of the relatively high salaries of pilots or the “glamour capital” of some flight attendants, all the Eastern workers – and most workers in the U.S. – had lost money, rights, or privileges they enjoyed only ten years earlier.³⁰ Workers in deregulated industries – and airlines were deregulated in 1978 – experienced losses as dramatic as those in manufacturing, textiles, and other devastated sectors. “Deregulation,” according to Susan Bianchi-Sand, a JwJ participant and former president of the flight attendants’ union (AFA), allowed airline owners to argue “that the competitive marketplace forces them to cut wages and benefits and to demand that hard-won work rules go by the wayside.” As in the de-industrialized Rust Belt, these owners could threaten to shut down operations if unions didn’t concede. In the case of Texas Air Corporation, Lorenzo’s purchase of Eastern and non-union

²⁸ Brent Kallestad, “Scuffle Between Union Members and TV Reporters Mars Labor Rally,” Associated Press, July 30, 1987; Reinaldo Ramos, “Thousands Rally for Union Rights,” *Miami Herald*, July 30, 1987.

²⁹ That statement, first adopted by a group of union presidents in January of 1987, became JwJ’s guiding theme in the first years. Howard D. Samuel to Morton Bahr, April 15, 1987, IUD unprocessed records; Samuel to Thomas Van Arsdale, March 2, 1988, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

³⁰ “Standard of living could drop,” *SEIU Bulletin*, Summer 1987, Executive Office, SEIU collection, Walter P. Reuther archives.

Continental allowed the company to simply shift routes over to the non-union flyer, where less pay and longer hours for workers meant more profits for Lorenzo.³¹

Deregulation, ultimately, meant less state regulation of owners and intensified state and corporate regulation of workers. By 1988, deregulation of the airlines had not introduced more competition to the industry, which was the stated goal of neoliberal politicians and executives. Rather, an oligopoly was forming, as the dozens of carriers in the late 1970s had shrunk to six. In addition, the way they divided routes reduced their need to compete with each other.³² In the strike that set the tone for the decade, Ronald Reagan, despite his fervent deregulation of the U.S. economy and the corresponding creed that market forces, and not authoritarian governments, should determine labor relations, fired 3000 striking air traffic controllers in a move of stunning governmental might. Airline workers at Eastern, too, complained not only of slashes in wages and benefits, but the company scrutiny that denied workers basic privacy rights and dignity on the job. Jobs with Justice, in early proposals to hold a Miami rally, decried how Texas Air “forced” the pilots “to sign letters saying they were happy employees.” Both pilots and flight attendants, steaming about how the Reagan administration’s “War on Drugs” barged into their workplaces, suggested that government official Elizabeth

³¹Bianchi-Sand, “What we Need” brochure, July 1987, p. 3, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

³² Stockton, “Tearing Apart Eastern Airlines.”

Dole's random drug testing order for all airlines was a form of "chemical McCarthyism."³³

No one's story at the rally, though, resonated like that of Diane Murphy, a black flight attendant who had worked at Eastern for more than 12 years. Despite years of union struggle and bargaining to win grievance procedures, Lorenzo's managers installed a boot-camp-style surveillance system that featured, among other things, an "Absence Control Program." Murphy, as she testified, had recently returned home from a vacation to find her house had been broken into. And the attacker was still there. Murphy was brutally raped that night, and courageously went to the hospital afterward to gather evidence and recuperate. Needless to say, she missed work. The next day, her manager refused to believe her story. Murphy reported that the manager demanded that she find "a white detective" to confirm the account after she filed her original police report. Murphy was told that her absence – her first – left her with one more chance before being fired under Lorenzo's absence policy. Murphy's story, along with the thousands of lay-offs, indignities, and the massive debt of a once profitable company, led some rally participants to tears that day.³⁴

Murphy's story showed how class exploitation – led by the "circling vulture" Lorenzo, who the *New York Times* described as gaunt, humorless, and discolored – could affect women in profoundly different ways than men. Murphy's story showed how

³³ "A Union President's View of Drug Testing," Victoria L. Frankovich, IUD unprocessed records. See also George D. Lundberg, "Mandatory Unindicated Urine Drug screening: Still Chemical McCarthyism," *Journal of American Medicine* 256, no. 21 (Dec. 5, 1986), 3003-3005. The Reagan administration's War on Drug was initiated in 1986.

³⁴ George Kohl, telephone interview with the author, June 20, 2008; Morton Bahr, interview with the author, July 16, 2008.

gender, race, and class oppression overlapped, and because of that it complicated the dominant ideas of unionism at the time. Jobs with Justice, in the midst of the biggest lurch to the political right in the U.S. since the 1920s, would continually face the challenge of creating a unionism that countered contemporary political trends and the living legacies of the AFL-CIO union order. Those legacies include strong threads of nationalism, sexism, and racism; narrow economic self-interest instead of broad working-class unity; and stultifying bureaucracy. In Miami and in the Eastern campaign, Jobs with Justice national organizers sought to reframe unionism and working-class identity by uniting different types of people, all workers, as “workers,” rather than as AFSCME, CWA, or SEIU union members or as specifically black, immigrant, or women workers. Instead of articulating together “particular” identities based on union affiliation or race, these “pale, male” organizers, like so many before them, sought to create a “universal” class identity for everyone else.³⁵ Their class vision both contested the racial nationalism in the 1980s working class and reinforced some of its elements. In Miami, at the rally and the next day, in Congressional hearings on workers’ rights downtown, JwJ first established key elements of the class organizing it sought to initiate.

A crucial part of creating JwJ class unity was the work of defining the fundamental problem – the greed of “corporate robber barons.” Defining the adversary was especially important in the neoliberal 1980s. Under the veil of discourses of “free markets” and “competition,” corporate speculators gained new powers to broker

³⁵ One of these organizers, current SEIU president Andy Stern, famously critiqued the unions in the 1990s as “pale, male, and stale.” “SEIU Head Urges Union: ‘Join Today’s Economic Revolution,’” Stanford Graduate School of Business, http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/news/headlines/vftt_andystern.html, accessed August 5, 2009.

buyouts and mergers and manipulate investment funds. With the stroke of a pen, newly minted “owners” could slash the jobs of thousands of workers, and then sell a company to other speculators. This was not the late nineteenth century, when the first robber barons sent Pinkerton thugs or the National Guard to do the dirty work. JwJ grappled from the beginning with the question of how to define, and then portray, the problem or problems it would confront.

The first conversation about Jobs with Justice, still without a name, occurred between CWA organizing director Larry Cohen and U.S. representative Augustus Hawkins (D-CA). Cohen told him about MCI’s recent firing of hundreds of black telephone workers, without notice, during an organizing drive only two weeks before Christmas in 1986. Cohen wanted to start a campaign to fight for broad union rights to resist such blatant employer union busting, but Hawkins convinced him that the name of the campaign should be broader than “unions.” Hawkins represented Watts, the impoverished, historically black area of South Central Los Angeles where most people didn’t have jobs, let alone union jobs.³⁶ Forming the campaign, though, was a collective process, and Cohen, organizers from the CWA, the IUD, and union presidents met regularly in early 1987 to discuss the new project. When “the JOBS with Justice group” [*sic*] met for the first time with union presidents, one IUD staffer, Brian Turner, suggested that JwJ’s “basic concept” was to create a “campaign” and “to mobilize grassroots demonstrations/activities to be pulled together in conjuncture with Congressional hearings” around a whole host of issues, from plant closings to the

³⁶ Larry Cohen, telephone interview with author, Nov. 11, 2008.

busting of organizing drives.³⁷ Jobs with Justice organizers, and particularly staff from the JwJ “umbrella” organization, the IUD, had already identified a theme that could encompass the generalized problem of labor: the “erosion of workers’ rights.” By the time JwJ sent its original “A Call for Jobs with Justice” to union presidents in the months before the Miami rally, the adversary that could unite workers and citizens had been named: the corporate robber-barons.

Early Jobs with Justice organizers also tried to forge class unity by exposing the links between seemingly isolated economic forces and disconnected social struggles. Naming the adversary and identifying it as the beneficiary of distinct phenomena was the beginning of how JwJ started to explain the union crisis to workers and supporters. In their preparations for Miami, organizers could have simply chosen the biggest fight – that at Eastern Airlines – met with key Democrats, proposed legislative help, rounded up support from a few notable organizations and labor-friendly celebrities, and launched another PR campaign. The AFL-CIO as a federation supported the Eastern struggle, and the federation was still a well-oiled money-and-lobbying machine. But JwJ organizers sought to build a sense of class-based crisis, and make union struggle not just about workers’ narrow interests but about community, coalitions, and the working class in general. And class identity could serve as the glue to bind people together.

Immediately, though, the conditions inside Miami, a budding global city with racial dynamics that reflected the urban Bantustans of the Reagan era, would challenge any attempt to explain them simply by thinking about class. The “Magic City” had

³⁷ Brian Turner to “Files: JOBS With Justice Program,” March 13, 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

changed dramatically with the introduction of banking, financial, and State Department wealth there in the 1970s. In early 1980, black residents launched an urban insurgency after the community discovered the truth behind a police cover-up. One resident, a Marine Corp veteran and insurance salesman named Arthur McDuffie, was beaten to death “like a dog” by four white cops, who, “like animals after meat,” propped his body up for each other to take turns shattering his facial bones. He did not die, as police had argued, from a high-speed motorcycle crash. After the trial of the police officers was moved to less-combustible Tampa Bay, and an all-white jury acquitted the officers, blacks in the Overtown district attacked police, property, and, sometimes, whites.³⁸ Seventeen died, and communities like Overtown, an area which itself was uprooted by the construction of a super-highway built to move white capital and residents, suffered new attacks under Reagan. The Arthur McDuffie riot, the first post-Civil Rights movement race uprising in the U.S., was followed by two others in Miami in the 1980s, including the “Overtown riots” that almost led to the postponement of the 1989 Super Bowl.³⁹

Just as the events in Miami highlighted the racial dynamics undergirding class relations in Miami, the city also reflected the “globalization” that would challenge unions and push the limits of Jobs with Justice’s class vision in the coming years. Money

³⁸ No author, “Crazy Cops,” *Time Magazine*, Monday, Jan. 21, 1980; Manning Marable, *Blackwater, Historical Studies in Race, Class Consciousness, and Revolution*, (Dayton, Ohio: Black Praxis Press, 1981).

³⁹ For decades Miami one of the most, and perhaps the most, segregated city in the U.S. William Dennis Keating and Norman Krumholz, eds., *Rebuilding Urban Neighborhoods: Achievements, Opportunities, and Limits*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999): 164.

from tax havens in the Caribbean saturated the city, and the city's conversion from a simple tourist destination to a hub of international finance was the biggest shift in Miami of the century. The metropolis, indeed, had become a "core city" in a Caribbean network of cities, labor migrations, transnational accumulation, and military might.⁴⁰ Infusions of foreign capital and Latin American elites emerged in part through the U.S. government's counterinsurgency efforts in the Americas. It was no coincidence that when the CIA organized among Nicaraguan elites to fund and coordinate the *Contra* guerrillas against the Sandinista popular revolution, the agency trained the operatives in the fields outside Tampa, along Florida's southwest coast. Miami had for decades served as the CIA's main stage, because of its proximity to Cuba, and Cuban stores that were actually CIA fronts dotted the Magic City landscape in the 1980. The agency's collaborations with the Cuban mafia helped Miami become the world's "drug capital" by the 1980s.⁴¹

Instead of following the dominant, legalistic AFL-CIO mode of response to workers' struggle, early JwJ organizers sought to bind together the seemingly distinct forces workers faced. Organizers pictured the class struggle there as one that included the slashing of wages and jobs at Eastern Airlines; the Dade County Municipal budget cuts and the loss of public transit; sudden cuts in seniority rights for mechanics,

⁴⁰ Raymond A. Mohl, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Miami," *Migration World Magazine*, 14, no. 3 (1986) 14-29.

⁴¹ Ramón Grosfoguel, "Global Logics in the Caribbean City System: The Case of Miami," in Paul L. Knox and Peter J. Taylor, eds., *World Cities in a World System*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 156-170, 159. See also essays in Richard M. Bernard and Bradley Robert Rice, eds. *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth Since World War II*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

telephone workers, and others in Florida; and the images in the national media depicting dramatic transfers of billions of dollars in Savings and Loans crises, multinational mergers and acquisitions, and the new phenomena of off-shore tax havens.⁴² The aggression of management attacks at worksites – like that on Diane Murphy, of course, but also in the way phone company managers had taken to simply tearing up workers’ grievance filings at CWA companies or the way Dade County was suddenly forcing drivers to work 14 hours with no breaks – was intimately tied, JwJ organizers sought to show in Florida, with Miami’s new downtown glitter.⁴³ In Miami, one JwJ leader decried the “stylish robber barons and their million-dollar consultants” who live and work in such metropolitan high-rises.⁴⁴

Though JwJ strategically created a class foundation of its early political analysis, these labor progressives, veterans of the Civil Rights and Farmworkers’ struggles, by no means ignored its relations to other oppressions, such as race. Some organizers, for instance, noted how those skyscrapers towered over working-class neighborhoods and Miami’s new “free trade zones” of sweatshops and migrant labor from the global South. Florida coordinator Andy Banks, in an article before the Miami rally, argued that Miami had simply become an *apartheid* city. Its white supremacist nature, he suggested, was captured by one of the main local struggles that JwJ targeted there: the Dade County transit workers’ battle against privatization. The county’s plan to sell these public

⁴² The International Business Corporation, a coordinator of such havens, was founded in 1980.

⁴³ Mohl, “Politics of Ethnicity,” 23

⁴⁴ Ibid., 23; Erik Gunn, “Unions unite for campaign,” *Milwaukee Journal*, June 25, 1987. For more on free trade zones inside the U.S. see Joel Jarreau, *The Nine Nations of North America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981).

services to corporations at cut-rate prices was part of a scheme, Banks and the workers, union discovered, by the Reagan administration to turn Miami into a model neoliberal, privatized city. The sell-offs, Banks wrote, would dramatically cut wages and even jobs from the predominantly black and Hispanic transit workers. What's more, the subsequent service cuts would make children of color in some parts of the city travel two hours to get to school. Meanwhile, the high-cost Metrorail would continue to get subsidized by the local government, though it served only a small population of white professional workers and executives by connecting their suburbs to the downtown skyways and business offices.

This "privatization" of services formerly regulated or owned by governments and the "deregulation" of the airlines and communications industries granted bosses and speculators vast powers to invest, divest, merge, legally manipulate, and shape companies or public services to maximize profit – which meant getting rid of the unions. What happened, then, on the ground – locking out workers to break their unions, firing union militants during organizing drives, hiring elaborate anti-union consulting firms to divide workforces and families, or forcing Miami's transit workers to work 12 hours without breaks – was directly related to the deregulation and privatization carried out by nameless agencies and fly-by-night corporate traders. Jobs with Justice presented these forces as new and driven fundamentally by robber barons to the detriment of all workers. Jobs with Justice didn't yet "name the system." But it had named the adversary and those who must unite to fight it: the workers. The system, whether as "neoliberalism" or "corporate globalization," would come later for JwJ.

The latent power that Miami represented, then, was not only due to the size of the crowd, or its unruliness. There, JwJ for the first time sought to create its vision of unionism not as strictly legislative or narrowly economic, but as one based on a broad understanding of class that could see through the financial sleight of hand of the robber barons' economy. Perhaps, too, its class-focused message could steer union workers away from the populist nationalism of the Reagan years. It was in this racialized and increasingly transnational moment, as the Cold War was ending and the "New World Order" rising, that JwJ would seek to bind all the contradictions together by pursuing class unity. As union leaders and staffers established the theme as the erosion of workers' rights in early 1987, they also sought to establish the demands. They would almost certainly be general or abstract claims, as JwJ represented the thinking and interests of many unions and organizations. Some undoubtedly sought legislative solutions to the problems of workers; in fact, JwJ had annoyed the UAW leadership, who had considered staging the first JwJ rally in Detroit, because they had no specific legislative proposals. By autumn, though, it was clear that most organizers working through JwJ saw it not as a policy organization but rather one that prioritized direct action and organizing.

That's not to say these organizers rejected policy work or electoral politics. In fact, most had considerable experience in both, and neither contradicted their labor liberalism or the new "organizing model" of unionism that was slowly developing in progressive union circles in the 1980s. Their goals, though, would be much broader than a simple law or amendment. At least in the short term, they were interested in putting

union rights on the national agenda. They sought to put class relations back into the national discourse. It didn't hurt that the presidential election season, starting with the primaries, would begin at the end of the year and ridding the White House of both Reagan and Vice-President George H.W. Bush were major priorities for the unions. Elmer Chatak, an IUD official and former steelworker, suggested in an early press release that the JwJ program was closely tied to the 1988 elections, because after all the rallies and events "we hope to celebrate at the end" of 1988.⁴⁵ As Banks said in various press releases and news stories, getting workers' rights on the national agenda was perhaps the most-important immediate goal.

JwJ sought to cast the net widely in establishing its initial demands. In early 1987, leaders in the IUD and early JwJ circles settled quickly on those that would remain at the core of Jobs with Justice for more than 20 years: job security and an end to violations of "workers' rights," and particularly the right to organize a union.⁴⁶ The final demand, which emerged in Miami as that "for a fair and adequate standard of living," underwent a series of changes in 1987. In the earliest draft of a "call" for Jobs with Justice, the third demand, here called a "critical factor," was "[t]he use of 'competition' to destroy the living standards of American workers and for union members their ability to collectively bargain." By April, the IUD adjusted the focus on standard of living by suggesting the third demand be a traditional labor rallying cry: fighting for "a national commitment to full employment." In fact, that objective was still the basis of its own

⁴⁵ Arlee C. Green, "Coalition opens 'jobs with justice' drive," *AFL-CIO News*, June 27, 1987.

⁴⁶ "Jobs with Justice," circa Jan.- Feb., 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

coalition, though real hope for national full employment – a standard pledge in the kind of welfare state, Keynesian economy of the early Cold War years – faded as quickly as economic elites undid the social compact.⁴⁷ By Miami, organizers had condensed the first option, that for decent living standards, into a third demand. Mobilizing the JwJ class vision in the coming years would be shaped around these three demands.⁴⁸

Nowhere did they get articulated as powerfully as the Jobs with Justice “I’ll be there” pledge card. The pledge cards were JwJ’s centerpiece for putting class organizing into practice. They were the concrete way that everyday workers and community members could “stand up” for “American” workers. Union leaders said to the press before Miami that they were calling on all members of AFL-CIO unions to sign one. Early in July, Bahr claimed that JwJ would get 15 million workers to add their names.⁴⁹ On one side of the early cards, JwJ presented a list of problems or situations that demonstrated the struggles of workers in Reagan’s U.S. On the other, they asked individuals to sign their names to pledge to “be there” at least five times for other peoples’ struggles in the coming year. The three demands – for job security, the right to organize, and a fair and adequate standard of living – framed the workers’ pledge to take action. In Miami, the

⁴⁷ There was considerable overlap in leadership between the full-employment coalition and JwJ. Leaders of the former included Samuel, Lane Kirkland, and presidents of JwJ unions and early ally organizations, like the National Organization of Women.

⁴⁸ The IAM and CWA newsletters to members, for instance, regularly repeated these demands to membership in summer and autumn, 1987.

⁴⁹ Rick DeVecchio, “A Drive to Make Labor Issue Big in ‘88,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 24, 1987.

crowd collectively took the “I’ll be There” pledge right before musician, organizer, and emcee Si Kahn closed the event with a folk song.⁵⁰

Though from the beginning JwJ was formally a labor-community coalition, organizers presented unions as the central vehicles in shaping class politics. Unions – not community groups – created Jobs with Justice, though organizers sought community group participation in the early months of Jobs with Justice planning. A number of groups organized workers in the 1980s, and the decision to focus on unions was a political choice. ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, for instance, had grown considerably in the 1980s, and a network of “poor workers’ unions” had emerged from the welfare-rights and Saul Alinsky traditions after the 1960s. The worker-union link, though, was fundamental to the pledge card. The “right to organize,” after all, was sometimes coupled with the right to collective bargaining, and state-sanctioned unions had special rights to do so under U.S. labor law. Steve Rosenthal, a CWA activist and JwJ “spokesman” at Miami, made it clear that workers’ rights meant union rights. “We need all unions to stand together,” he said, “to fight back against the job insecurity and terrible working conditions that exist ... An injury to one is an injury to all, that’s what this is all about.”⁵¹

Though JwJ leaders never publicly advocated specifically for union democracy, part of building this early JwJ class unity was to mobilize individual workers to take

⁵⁰ The pledge card was one of the centerpieces of JwJ’s 1988 program. “Jobs with Justice Program for 1988,” circa late 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

⁵¹ Rosenthal quoted in Reinaldo Ramos, “Thousands Rally for Union Rights,” *Miami Herald*, July 30, 1987; Karen Clarke, telephone interview with the author, October 11, 2008.

action. The pledge card is perhaps the best reflection of that ethic. In Miami, the organizers didn't want it just to be about the big-shot union leaders. Only two union presidents spoke, and they spoke briefly. Several workers, like Murphy and IAM mechanic Elliot Rodriguez, spoke along with non-labor organizational leaders. JwJ's model for mobilizing local coalition action, too, reflected its idea that workers should stand up for themselves. In the original search for the first year's sites of JwJ action – which turned out to be Miami, Iowa, Nashville, and Birmingham – one of the goals for leaders was to get local people involved. The link between workers and unions would shift in JwJ circles by the late 1990s, as the explosive growth in non-governmental organizations and community groups helped them establish themselves as both important organizations for workers and organizations who collectively bargain, with or without formal union rights to do so.

Miami, by all organizers accounts, was a success. The Eastern unions had to start generating activity for what would be a two-year fight, until at least 1989, when the machinists' contract would expire. They knew that Lorenzo, as he had so often done, would try to break the IAM at that point, perhaps forcing the union to strike and then replacing or firing all of them. Miami, with its size, energy, press activity, and with the successful congressional hearings, all met major JwJ goals. The Miami transport workers, over the coming year, would win modest limits to the privatization of transport funding, and the press coverage, in newspaper, radio, and newspapers, was both local and national. Some newspaper reports, in fact, suggested the downturn of the U.S. union movement might be ending. JwJ had emerged from the long-anticipated Miami rally

with its goals largely met, and it had done so by articulating an understanding of unionism and the U.S. political situation as centered on a fundamental conflict between Americans' rights as workers and corporate robber barons. There was even some international solidarity. JwJ had sent T-shirts and buttons to South African workers, almost certainly linked to Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), in the middle of 1987. The shirts were confiscated by the apartheid government, but JwJ reported that the unionists liked the buttons enough to make their own supply. In the Nashville rally in November, a leader of a South Africa mine workers' union even arrived to speak.⁵²

Putting a class unity message to work in everyday struggles, like that of Eastern, would be another challenge. As in the city in general, the politics of inter-union cooperation featured divisions and hierarchies not only around class but also around race, nation, and gender. Getting unions to work together, though, was a fundamental part of building JwJ class solidarity. One major challenge was the historic male dominance in U.S. unions. Even unions that had hundreds of thousands of female members rarely had more than a few national officers in the 1980s, and sometimes they didn't have any. The late 1980s was a moment after the U.S. "subtle revolution" of women entering the formal work force in new numbers, and in the midst of a global feminization of wage-work poverty. The gendered nature of class and union politics in the early Eastern struggle complicated JwJ's national discourse on class.

⁵² "Jobs with Justice Rolls Across America," 1994, 2, Jobs with Justice, national office files.

Both class and gender, in fact, shaped the union context in Miami and in JwJ. The pilots, after all, were the airline union worlds' airborne aristocrats, many of them with military backgrounds and a pilot's salary that equaled more than that of a machinist and a flight attendant combined. They were a conservative union, but Lorenzo's regime had led them to pursue their own acts of direct action, like intentionally leaving engines on to burn through jet fuel. The pilots were overwhelmingly male. In 1990, 102,000 of the 110,000 pilots in the U.S. were white men.⁵³ The machinists were also male dominated. Almost all of the major unions that participated in Jobs with Justice beyond Miami in the late 1980s and early 1990s were led by men – even if their members were mostly women – and most of the limited union support for women's rights in that era happened only when gains would also benefit the male-dominated unions and their bureaucracies.⁵⁴ The rights of "workers," "Labor," "organized labor," and certainly "leaders" usually meant those of white men. The big exception was the flight attendants. The Association of Flight Attendants – Transport Workers Union (AFA-TWU), in fact, was one of the few female-led and female dominated unions in the world. And the efforts of the women of the AFA were crucial in getting JwJ off the ground.

⁵³ Liesl Miller Orenic, "Air Line Pilots' Association," in Eric Arneson, ed., *Encyclopedia of U.S. Labor and Working-class History*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 41-42.

⁵⁴ See, for instance, AFSCME's approach to the comparable worth struggles of the 1980s. Key unions in early Jobs with Justice – CWA and SEIU – and a union that would soon be important, AFSCME, were some of the main union proponents of women's rights. See Barbara Mayer Wertheimer, "To Rekindle the Spirit: Current Education Programs for Women Workers," in Diane Balser, ed. *Sisterhood and Solidarity: Workers' Education for Women, 1914-1984*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 287-323. See 298-300. All of those unions had substantial numbers of public-sector and women members. As there were almost no specific efforts to organize women in the U.S. before the 1970s – unions had rather organized industries, especially in the public sector, that happened to employ women. See Deborah E. Bell, "Unionized Women in State and Local Government," in Ruth Milkman, ed. *Women, Work, and Protest: A Century of U.S. Women's Labor History*. London and New York: Routledge, 1985, 280-299.

The national leaders and organizers, in fact, were having difficulty getting JwJ off the ground in early 1987. A good local site had proven difficult to generate. Detroit fell through, and few of the other potential sites seemed worth the effort. Independent of the JwJ national leaders, though, women from the AFA approached Banks about working together to fight Lorenzo and his ongoing assault on the Eastern unions. They knew that taking on one of the biggest union-busters in the U.S. would require two years of ground work, and the flight attendants felt that the coming campaign must be militant and must begin immediately. Banks looked nationally for ideas or support, but found little. Finally, Gary Nordlinger, of the Graves Mountain Labor Retreats, suggested that Banks, representatives of the AFA, and the IUD meet for a weekend in his condominium in Rehoboth Beach, DE. There, the Florida group – Banks, Mary Jane Barry, and Nancy Coughlin – would meet Joe Uehlein, from the IUD; Randy Barber, the labor writer; and a few others. When Uehlein mentioned the Jobs with Justice idea and described problems finding a good site to start with, the Eastern Campaign and Miami seemed like a perfect fit.⁵⁵

The flight attendants had a long history of fighting for rights as women and as workers. After Eastern fired her for slightly exceeding a body weight limit, Sandra Jarrell worked with her colleague Jan Fulsom to form Stewardesses for Workers' Rights in the early 1970s. Fulsom decided to organize after she "had a drunken passenger tear her skirt off." They battled against the objectifying advertisements of the airlines and forged caucuses and rank-and-file networks of workers. They were part of a general push to

⁵⁵ Andy Banks, telephone interview with the author, July 21, 2009.

gain independence from male-dominated parent unions, like the Transport Workers Union, and from male pilots' unions. They also initiated, and helped win, campaigns like that against hazardous cargo in planes, which benefitted all crew members, and not only the majority-women stewardesses.⁵⁶

The AFA had a rocky history with several of the players in the Eastern struggle, which at least at times had something to do with gender. The progressive leadership of one of the main unions coordinating Miami, the Eastern Airlines activity, and JwJ in general – that of the IAM's socialist leader Bill "Wimpy" Winpisinger – is one example. In the wake of the Equal Rights Amendment battles of the 1970s, rumors circulated about Wimpy's opposition to gender-based affirmative action. Only a year before JwJ planning began, Winpisinger refused to support another flight attendants' union, the IFFA, and in a letter to the female president derided "her for having opposed a merger with the IAM ... [and] chastised her for criticizing international unions for being out of touch with their members." A considerable number of IAM members, actually, openly supported the IFFA strike and its demands for workers' rights and an end to worksite sexual harassment.⁵⁷ In Miami, the Machinists had actually tried to recruit the corporate boss that the IFFA was fighting, Carl Icahn, to buy Eastern. Anybody would be better than Lorenzo, they figured. But Icahn was a sexist boss, as revealed in a mid-1980s strike, when he said that "female flight attendants were not real 'breadwinners' and that male attendants should 'get a real job.'" The Transport Workers' Union, the parent of the AFA

⁵⁶ Kathleen M. Barry, *Femininity in Flight: A History of Flight Attendants*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 190-209, quotation on 190.

⁵⁷ Kim Moody, "Failure of Solidarity Leaves TWA Flight Attendants on the Street," *Labor Notes*, July 1986, 5.

at Eastern, had done little to support the flight attendants at Eastern, and was run by an old boys network in the Northeast. Even the male elected leader of the AFA local itself refused to follow the militant course of the other, female officers, because, according to Banks, “he was afraid to get blamed [if it failed].” Neither the pilots nor the machinists took the flight attendants seriously, and still referred to them as “girls” as the JwJ campaign began.⁵⁸

The flight attendants, in fact, had developed the kind of class solidarity that JwJ envisioned. Before the sale to Lorenzo, former owner Frank Borman sought to break the unions by exacerbating the divisions between them. Their contracts were not set to expire at the same time. The pilots’ contract, for instance, came up six months after that of the flight attendants, and they could very well strike. Pilots, unlike other Eastern workers, couldn’t be replaced easily in the event of a labor stoppage, so Borman sought to prevent a pilots strike at all costs. His strategy, flight attendants agreed, would be to prey on them, impose draconian new work rules to “get these poor dingbat women, force them to strike, devastate them, and the pilots will cross their picket line and break the strike, and everyone will hate each other, and then the pilots’ lines will be crossed” if they strike.⁵⁹ But the attendants prepared for the onslaught, outwitted the owner by waiting to strike until the pilots’ contract was up, and endured the newly imposed work conditions.

⁵⁸ Joe Uehlein, interview with author, August 10, 2008.

⁵⁹ Andy Banks, telephone interview with the author, June 30, 2008.

As was so often the case, the women sacrificed for the good of everyone, and in this case they kept morale high by joking about their “drone power.” Indeed, they did the dirty work behind the scenes to subvert Borman’s efforts. In 1987, the flight attendants, and their leader Mary Jane Barry, succeeded in attracting the National Organization of Women to Jobs with Justice steering committee (which was almost entirely men), and Barry criticized the Jobs with Justice original logo for including only one female worker and failing to include an African American. The male organizers hesitated because of the extra work the change would involve, but agreed to change it. The image of four workers that JwJ developed as a result of the changes has been printed on hundreds of thousands of signs and flyers, and remains today, unchanged, as the JwJ logo.

In the years following the Miami rally in the late 1980s, Jobs with Justice organized actions that put its class vision into action. As early organizer George Kohl said, getting 10,000 people in a Miami was important, but organizing workers to sign solidarity pledge cards and make good on their pledge to “be there” for others was more important to the sustainability of the campaign. Whether the pledge card served its purpose or not, tens of thousands, and perhaps more, were signed, and JwJ carried out a series of big actions in the late 1980s. Organizers in the Eastern airlines campaign, for instance, coordinated workers and supporters to drive hundreds of cars around Eastern terminals at the busiest hours of the day. Participants honked, waved union signs, and, most importantly, only drove a few miles an hour. Stopping and blockading the terminal would break “No Parking” or “No Stopping” rules, and leave the

demonstrators vulnerable to arrest or harassment, but these “drive-throughs” made transportation in and around the terminals a nightmare, and forced major disruptions in Eastern service. Regardless of the JwJ efforts to avoid arrest, police snatched up participants in several cities.⁶⁰ In one of JwJ’s first decisive victories, CWA organized an explicitly “Jobs with Justice” campaign to force the Buffalo, NY, DeGraff hospital to give back the jobs of CWA nurses who had struck the company and then been replaced permanently by strike-breaking workers. Permanent replacements were a major component of assault on unions in the 1980s, and JwJ organized workers and community members to “stand-in” the hardware store of one of the hospitals’ powerful directors, effectively shutting it down. By the middle of 1988, local coalitions had organized in over twenty cities.⁶¹

The profoundly racial, and globalizing, form of class relations in Miami had complicated JwJ’s nascent class vision, but JwJ responded to the racialized nature of class in the 1980s in a number of ways, before and after Miami. The name itself – as a “jobs” organization rather than a “union” one – resulted from organizers’ recognition that many African Americans and immigrants had little experience with unions, but desperately wanted jobs. Workers in the formal economy were mostly white and more often unionized, while the growing informal economy of sub-employed and unemployed

⁶⁰ Mary Jane Barry, telephone interview with the author, June 11, 2008; Uehlein, interview; See also Kohl to “Participants in the Austin, Friday Morning Dialogue,” Feb. 19, 1992, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

⁶¹ For Buffalo, see “Working People and Winning Jobs with Justice,” flyer, circa 1989, Jobs with Justice, national office files; and “Jobs with Justice – Questions and Answers,” IUD, unprocessed; Paul McLennan and Vicki Trifiro, “‘Time to Revitalize’ Southern Labor,” *Southern Changes*, May-June 1988 15-16, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

workers, often migratory and usually black or Latina/o, rarely had union representation. Though JwJ organized more activities in the U.S. South than in any other region in the late 1980s, it wasn't due to an intentional strategy to organize the region or the large numbers of African American workers there. Still, the IUD, a key early JwJ interlocutor, had made repeated efforts to do just that in the 1980s. JwJ obliged, spending more money on staffers there than in any other region, and many of the work sites in question in Nashville, Birmingham, Atlanta, Florida, and Texas were multiracial or majority black.⁶²

It was common knowledge in the 1980s union movement that blacks favored unionization more often than whites, and because of that the organizing unions rushed to black industries. The sudden burst of such organizing had less to do with white anti-racism than with the prospect of new, dues-paying recruits in a time of union collapse. But JwJ also participated in at least two early campaigns that drew out the unique ways that blacks experienced poverty, instead of simply recruiting them into unions as "workers." For instance, the mostly black, mostly female cafeteria workers in Nacogdoches, Texas, organized through JwJ in early 1988, around both wage complaints and racial profiling by the management. Perhaps more significantly, JwJ invested around \$10,000 early in 1988 in an effort organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. They staged a month-long march through several states in the South to commemorate the anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery civil rights march of 1965.

⁶² The Mid-South local, for instance was one of the most active early chapters. It was based in Nashville. See Brian Turner to Jobs with Justice Steering Committee, January 25, 1988, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

In addition, JwJ and affiliate unions, and especially the CWA, regularly spoke highly of Jesse Jackson, presumed to run a second time for president in 1988, and included him in activities and photo opportunities.⁶³ Simultaneously, the ascendant wing of the Democratic Party quickly abandoned black-specific needs in the 1980s and re-discovered itself as “tough” on gangs, drugs, and black vice in the 1980s. After the defeat of Democrat Walter Mondale in 1984 presidential election, Harry McPherson, a former aide to Lyndon Johnson, decried the fact that, “Blacks own the Democratic Party. ... White, Protestant male Democrats are an endangered species.”⁶⁴

Though it said little, the AFL-CIO leadership was suspicious of these JwJ rabble-rousers. This was only a few years after many of the same unions had dared to publicly defy the AFL-CIO with the National Labor Committee, after all. Even the NLC effort, Banks said, “was extremely polite” in its rejection of the AFL-CIO position on Central America. The silencing of dissent within AFL-CIO circles at that time was intense, he explained. “If anyone [in those years] even inserted a question about not agreeing with the ‘dirty commies’ down there, I don’t care if you were a union president, you’d be ostracized in front of the entire U.S. labor movement,” Banks said. The Graves Mountain group also raised the hackles of the AFL-CIO leadership. When AFL-CIO Director of Civil Rights Don Slaiman heard a rumor that some people might be getting together to talk

⁶³ For a critical perspective on the Jackson campaign and the Democrats, see Manning Marable, *Crisis of Color and Democracy: Essays on Race, Class and Power* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1992).

⁶⁴ Quoted in John Kenneth White and John Clifford Green, *The Politics of Ideas: Intellectual Challenges Facing the American Political Parties*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 114. For an extended discussion of race and the Democratic Party in the era see Robert Charles Smith, *We Have No Leaders: African Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1996).

about unionism, he called Joe Uehlein, an early JwJ organizer, into his office to inquire about it. But Uehlein refused to talk. Perhaps it was no surprise, then, that when George Kohl started making calls about the Jobs with Justice idea, some local leaders called him a communist. Others circulated rumors that JwJ was practicing “dual unionism,” akin to the radical “Wobblies,” or Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a union powerful in the early twentieth century.⁶⁵ But leaders’ memories of a much more recent sort of dual unionism were fresh in the Reagan years.

In the 1970s an array of dual-union-style labor efforts emerged as alternatives to the “rotten and dilapidated” AFL-CIO. The black-led Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union left the AFL-CIO because the walls of the big “house of labor,” they said, had started to “crumble” and “sag.” Most of the feminist, anti-war, and poor peoples’ left – but not the liberals – had abandoned the federation and built new organizations and networks. Both the AFL and the CIO had, since the 1940s, rejected calls for independent or autonomous black organizing, and many of the dual union or independent caucus impulses of the 1970s were based on a sense of hopelessness about the possibilities of fighting both white supremacy and class exploitation in majority white organizations with race-blind, class-centric politics. The League of Revolutionary Black Workers in the auto industry was perhaps the broadest effort, as it grew to include affiliate “Revolutionary Union Movements” throughout the country. Maoists and other “New Communists,” including the Greensboro organizers massacred by the Klan in 1979, rejected the federation as an imperial labor aristocracy invested in

⁶⁵ Bryan Abas, “Look for the Union Label: Jobs with Justice has a label for one local AFL-CIO official: spy.” *Westword*, April 12-18, 1999, 12, 14.

maintaining its national privileges through the subjugation of Third World workers. Also in 1979, the Chinese Staff and Workers Association formed in New York City, and elaborated a workers' program that included autonomy from the dominant unions and the AFL-CIO.⁶⁶

AFL-CIO resistance to early JwJ varied in its intensity, but often centered around JwJ's use of direct action. The Kirkland administration issued letters prohibiting the airport "drive-throughs" of the late 1980s, and would issue a similar letter about JwJ's participation in road blockades in the militant West Virginia coal miners' strike at Pittston Coal in 1989. The resistance, though, was deepest in one of the most active locals, in Denver, CO, where CWA member Mary Blue and others organized actions and campaigns around worker abuse at a variety of high-profile locations, including the *Denver Post* newspaper and Denver Symphony Orchestra. In March 1989, before the Eastern unions would finally strike Eastern – and ultimately drive the company out of business – Denver organizers planned to have thousands of people converge on the Stapleton airport to protest Eastern and slow movement around the facility to a crawl. But Steve Bieringer, the head of the Rocky Mountain states AFL-CIO, ran interference. Bieringer had been installed by former AFL-CIO leader George Meany to replace an anti-

⁶⁶ For "rotten and dilapidated" quotation, see Gene Grove, "Something New in the House of Labor," *St. Petersburg Times*, March 17, 1970. For the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, see Dan Georgakas and Melvin Surkin, *Detroit, I do Mind Dying*, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998); Other unions, like the United Farm Workers, the female clerical workers' 9to5, or the New York City 1199 all had different reasons for autonomy from the AFL-CIO, and would be incorporated into it in the coming years. At the same time, much of the organizing in community organizations, including welfare rights' organizing and Alinskyism, developed in part as "poor workers' unions" consciously separate from unions. In 1980 the Center for Third World Organizing formed to counter the race-blind organizing of Alinskyist groups. For background on community organizing, see Vanessa Tait, *Poor Workers' Unions: Rebuilding Labor from Below*, (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005).

Vietnam war director who dared to challenge Meany in the 1970s. In Denver, he spied. He spread rumors. He called union-friendly politicians and asked them not to attend numerous rallies sponsored by progressive union leaders or JwJ ally Citizen Action. And he ultimately confused potential participants by staging another airport rally simultaneously – miles from the airport. Bieringer, in fact, supported labor efforts to help the Eastern unions – but through “back-door,” official strategies, like personally lobbying legislators or Eastern executives, and not through collective direct action.

Populism, Working-Class Americanism, and Jobs with Justice

Regardless, JwJ campaigns, in Miami and in the following two years, continued to create a sense of class power, not limited by union affiliation, industry, or geography. Though re-asserting class as an important social category in the Reagan era was one of JwJ’s primary impacts of the 1980s, that vision was sometimes framed by the populist, community-oriented Family-and-Country message that linked being in a union with stability, community, everyday normalcy, and national pride. At the same time, this populism distanced unions the bureaucratic ogres that the New Right connected them to: inside-the-beltway Big Labor and big government.⁶⁷ To an extent, JwJ sought to inject class into the nationalist, Christian populism of the day, whether that of the

⁶⁷ The populism of the era also overlapped with changing understandings of white ethnicity. See Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Reagan Republicans, conservative democrats, or the Christian Coalition populism that exploded on the scene in 1987 with Pat Robertson's bid for the presidency.

Historically based in the rural Midwest and South, populism, and its anti-elite, anti-establishment message emerged most powerfully with the People's Party and other groups in the late 1800s. But political activists have used populism, and ideas of working-class Americanism, consistently in U.S. history. Historian Michael Kazin has suggested that populism is less an ideology than a "persuasion," deployed by right-wing demagogues as often as citizen socialists, based on distinctly "American" notions of grassroots democracy, community, and local control.⁶⁸ Perhaps it should be no surprise, then, that two of the most powerful populisms of the late 1980s surged from the social bases of two very different preacher-politicians – white, ultraconservative Pat Robertson and black progressive Jesse Jackson. Despite the candidates' differences, polls at the time showed how supporters of both candidates shared core beliefs in community action and the Christian church. A substantial number of Jackson voters favored Robertson more than their party's candidate, Michael Dukakis. Robertson supporters, too, often thought more highly of Jackson than of Bush.⁶⁹ Jackson himself never called himself a populist – but an increasing number of Democrats, liberals, and progressives did. After Reagan's landslide election in 1984, the "Limousine liberals," themselves usually the targets of populist rage, reached for the work boots and beef

⁶⁸ See Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁶⁹ Allen D. Hertzke, *Echoes of Discontent: Jesse Jackson, Pat Robertson, and the Resurgence of Populism* (Washington, D.C. CQ Press, 1993).

jerky.⁷⁰ They tried to harness populism's anti-elite ethic and articulate it not to Big Government but to the elites in JwJ's crosshairs: the corporate robber barons.⁷¹

Labor-community rallies were big parts of JwJ's national repertoire in those years, and in the rallies following that in Miami, as well as Labor Day mobilizations in 1988, JwJ worked to forge links between farmers and workers, the historical agents of populist action, against the robber barons. In Iowa, in what early organizers called "Heartland JwJ," the UFCW, the UAW, and the state AFL-CIO were designated as coordinators. The miners and paper workers took the lead in Nashville. The National Family Farm Coalition, active already in Miami, was the primary agricultural group involved in the mid-South and Midwest. The organization had emerged from farmers' struggles of the 1980s, as deregulation and "free trade" led to mass small-farm foreclosures. The foreclosures inspired national Farm-Aid fundraising concerts, organized by country-western artist Willie Nelson, as well as the populist rock of John "Cougar" Mellencamp, whose "Scarecrow" album sold millions with bank-bashing songs like "Rain on the Scarecrow" and "Face of the Nation." JwJ, in the late 1980s, increasingly associated its main coalition partner – the "community" – as the hardscrabble producers left behind by international economics and plundering politicians. JwJ's populism flavored its class vision with a homespun Americana.

⁷⁰ Labor populist and JwJ collaborator Jim Hightower had described populists as "the people who are down at the Seven-Eleven picking up a Budweiser and a Slim Jim and not the yuppies enjoying a midday repast of cold melon mélange and asparagus and goat cheese and a delightfully fruity and frisky California white wine." See John Atlas, "And the World Keeps Changing: 25 years of Programs, Policies, and Politics with *Shelterforce*," <http://www.shelterforce.org/online/issues/110/atlas.html> (accessed Oct. 11, 2009).

⁷¹ Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, 231.

Part of the populist threads in JwJ leaders and workers' jackets came from its early focus on former bastions of U.S. populism, the rural South and Midwest. Neighborhood businesspeople, like farmers, workers, and churches, were longtime populist allies against entrenched, distant power. JwJ organizers, early on, showed that their idea of class unity was couched in a larger citizens' vision for social change in America. In Iowa, a minister, a senior citizens' representative, a farmer, and the Des Moines mayor all shared the stage with beltway-based union presidents like Bahr, the UAW's Owen Bieber, and UFCW's Vice President, Lewie Anderson.⁷² Farmers were a big deal to JwJ. The JwJ logo, criticized by Mary Jane Barry, featured a farmer from the beginning. One AFSME worker, in his Congressional testimony the day after the Iowa rally, included the plight of small businesses in his statement denouncing Reagan's corporate rule. In several of the rallies in the first two years, local mayors spoke not on behalf of workers alone but of "Main Street" and of local change more generally. In Texas in 1988, and in most of these rallies, Democratic politicians spoke, including Tom Harkin, member of the recently formed Congressional Populist Caucus. Populist Jim Hightower, the Texas Secretary of Agriculture at the time and regular speaker at JwJ events, perhaps best summed up JwJ's early populism at a rally in Nacogdoches.

The powers that be try to divide us. They say to the farmer, 'your enemy is labor.' And they say to the laborer, 'your enemy is small business.' Then they say to the small business person 'your enemy is the environmentalist.' ... but our fundamental struggle is exactly the same, and it comes down to this – too few people control the

⁷² Transcript testimony, AFSCME worker, Jobs with Justice hearing, Oct. 11, 1987, Jobs with Justice, national office files.

money and power in our society! The power that is exporting our jobs and busting our unions is exactly the same power that bankrupted those dirt farmers out there.

Defining the problem as a “new generation of robber barons,” itself a reference to the first generation of trusts during the Populist Era, led JwJ to the populist path, and the coalition forged ahead. Many of its rallies in the first two years had an “everyman,” grassroots feel. In Texas on Labor Day 1988, organizers advertised a post-rally food fest of “Democratic Caviar.” It turned out to be chili. In Madison, WI, they opened the event with bingo. Leaders also emphasized the need for workers themselves to stand up in the face of a corporate barrage. The JwJ movement wouldn’t be led by pencil-pushers, they seemed to argue, and Steve Rosenthal of CWA said its best: “We wouldn’t want to make it seem like this came straight out of Washington.”

Its farmers, folk music, and “heartland” practicality likely spoke to some workers more than others. In a 1988 collection of essays called *The New Populism*, Elizabeth Minnich argued that populism’s “family” focus, its celebration of tradition and tough self-sufficiency, and its emphasis on producers – and not reproducers – all made it seemed distinctly male. Cornel West, in the same volume, argued that the focus on “tradition” and “community” made populists susceptible to the racist appeals of the Reagan Right. More generally, West asserts that many African Americans would view the populism’s praise of “the goodwill of the American people” with suspicion. After all, the two foundational moments in the struggle for black freedom – the 1954 ruling in

Brown v. Board of Education and the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation – “both would have lost in a national referendum.”⁷³

Though JwJ’s project was based in its “I’ll be There” vision of class-based solidarity, some of the figures in this loosely-connected JwJ coalition spun social class in populist wool. The Americana feel of their organizing reinforced the white political culture inside the progressive world of the decade. As Andrew Battista argues, this labor populism first took shape in the early 1980s with the Citizen Labor Energy Coalition, and its articulation of class-based populism was meant to avoid questions of race and gender that would likely turn union leaders and workers away.⁷⁴ JwJ organizers, or at least those on the steering committee that was forming, were almost exclusively white men. For decades, the officers of the major U.S. unions, including those in the coalition, were white. Farmers, especially in the rural Midwest, were almost all white. African Americans, increasingly represented by the New Right as welfare parasites, hardly fit the producerist vision of progressive populism. The music that JwJ featured at its many rallies reflected the white Americana of its populism. Rootsy folk singers, whose music likely resonated with fans of Mellencamp’s barnyard rock, were often the musicians of choice. At Miami, the program featured Pete Seeger’s clawhammer-style banjo picking and power-to-the-people lyrics. Peter, Paul, and Mary, the 1960s folk heroes, also

⁷³ West, “The New Populism: A Black Socialist Christian Critique,” in Harry C. Boyte and Frank Riessman, eds., *The New Populism: The Politics of Empowerment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 56-81. See page 59 for quotation.

⁷⁴ The CLEC was a progressive labor-community coalition that was in some ways a forerunner to Jobs with Justice. See Battista, 116-118. Battista cites several additional sources for examinations of the era’s populism. Jeff Faux, “A New Conversation: How to Rebuild the Democratic Party,” *American Prospect*, 1995, 35-43; Harold Meyerson, “Why the Democrats Keep Losing: The Abandonment of Economic Populism,” *Dissent*, Summer 1989, 305-10.

played. In Iowa, a local folksinger played four times at the rally. Still, the potential drawbacks of JwJ's populist inflections were limited by the anti-racism in the network. The emcee of the Miami event, actually, was Si Kahn, anti-racist singer and activist.

The decentralized, do-it-yourself nature of 1980s populism also corresponded to JwJ's developing organizational structure. JwJ's labor populism required workers themselves to do something. Bahr, in an early statement to the press, said that "it's time for workers to get off their duffs," and another organizer suggested the "apathy" of workers in the 1980s was a crucial reason for the decline of the unions.⁷⁵ In the same period, JwJ organizers made important decisions about JwJ structure. While they agreed it should be a "permanent coalition," ready-made so that workers and community members wouldn't have to "reinvent the wheel" every time crisis shook their local economies, the steering committee and executive council agreed that it not be "another bureaucracy." These early leaders wanted to re-energize everyday workers, and, as George Kohl explained, creating a permanent staff might hinder that. "If you give someone a position and a salary," he said, "then everybody's going to wait around for him to do [the work]." Instead, work and resources would be donated by unions, national organizations, and local workers and residents. In the first years, almost all of JwJ's annual budget came from donations from national unions.⁷⁶ JwJ valued the

⁷⁵ Morton Bahr, quoted in Rick DeVecchio, "A Drive to Make Labor Issue Big in '88," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 24, 1987.

⁷⁶ The steering committee was made up of union staff, union organizing directors, and representatives from national organizations like the National Family Farm Coalition and the National Organization of Women. The steering committee members did most of the coordinating national work. The executive council consisted of the "principals" – the national union leaders – who put their union name and money behind the effort, but did little of the day-to-day work. Much of the structure of early Jobs with Justice

everyday contributions, and militancy, of union members and others, but the national decisions, including funding decisions, were made by national leaders.

In the same years, some of JwJ's interlocutors in the labor liberal world, like Citizen Action, took up some of the populist creed. The book *Citizen Action and the New American Populism*, written by Steve Max, Harry Boyte, and Heather Booth, shares many of the core components of the populism of JwJ and Hightower. By emphasizing the inherently American nature of 1980s progressivism, their citizens' populism could tap into the rural and conservative working-class as it turned toward the right in the 1980s.⁷⁷

In the "color-blind" 1980s, no one had suffered as much as African Americans. If white workers had lost savings and pensions, blacks had too often lost their lives or their freedom. Black workers and women, always the "last hired, first fired," were let go en masse in the stagflation years of the 1970s. The industries hardest hit after "the great u-turn" in the early 1970s, like autos and steel, were two of the main vehicles for blacks to enter working- or middle-class stability.⁷⁸ In the 1980s, the upper classes of all races in the U.S. did well – but the draconian state regulation of poor blacks in the era of

was decided in meetings in the late months of 1987 and meetings at the annual February (1988) AFL-CIO meetings in Bal Harbour, Florida. See, for instance, Larry Cohen and Brian Turner to "Jobs with Justice Staff Committee," circa Oct., 1987; and Cohen to "Jobs with Justice Steering Committee," Oct. 2, 1987, IUD, unprocessed collection.

⁷⁷ Italics in the original. Heather Booth, Harry Boyte, and Steve Max, *Citizen Action and the New American Populism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 27, 57.

⁷⁸ Porter, "Affirming and Disaffirming," 59; Gregory D. Squires, *Capital and Communities in Black and White: The Intersections of Race, Class, and Uneven Development*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 20-21. For the "great U-turn," see Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America*, (New York: Basic Book, 1988); and *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry*, (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

neoliberal “deregulation” offset gains they had made in the 1960s and early 1970s. In the post-Civil Rights era, poor blacks, along with growing numbers of Latina/os and other immigrants from the Third World, formed an ever-growing pool of colonized labor.

For blacks, problems regarding work were exacerbated by housing and urban segregation, racist law enforcement policies, and abandonment by white liberals and their institutions. The government had long subsidized white suburbanization and home ownership, and white flight had dismantled urban tax bases. Employers intentionally created jobs in white areas, where they could avoid EEOC regulations and black workers, who were more likely to favor unionization. The “law and order” legislative movement that politicians devised in the wake of the 1960s uprisings forced multitudes of poor young blacks into prisons, long before Reagan’s “War on Drugs” led to another spike in black imprisonment.⁷⁹

As Reagan’s Secretary of Education and morals-czar Bill Bennett admitted, most cocaine users were white suburbanites, but this domestic battlefield rarely included the suburbs. Majority-white police forces had to meet quotas and targets to maintain drug war budgets. As the Albany, N.Y., police chief said at the time “[w]e don't have whites on corners, selling drugs. They're in houses and offices.” Blacks were easier to arrest, he admitted, and in Albany the black arrest rate for drug offenses reached as high as eight times that of whites. Though drunk driving, a predominantly white crime, claimed many more lives, and many blacks were jailed for non-violent drug offenses, police channeled

⁷⁹ Squirres, *Capital and Communities*.

drunk drivers into rehabilitation or other programs, while blacks were sent to prison. In addition, crack cocaine, which may have been introduced into the inner-city by the U.S. government itself, became an “epidemic” that reflected blacks’ inherent mental, cultural, or biological deficiencies. Less than ten years earlier, a drug “craze” among white women – over valium – was presented by the media and elites very differently. The burst of women’s valium addiction was not a sign of their inferiority but simply a result of the demanding lives of middle-class women in the U.S. Rehabilitation and understanding, the media and politicians reasoned, was surely the answer. The understandings of drugs and race in the U.S., then, were profoundly discriminatory. Though poor blacks and whites both suffered in the 1980s, cultural and political forces like these were forms of oppression unique to blacks.⁸⁰

Maneuvering around race and gender questions may have led, ultimately, to failing to inoculate whites and white men about the way those categories shaped the 1980s U.S. Scores of progressive and radical groups of the late 1980s and early 1990s endured ruptures around questions of institutionalize race and gender hierarchies. The leaders of the National Toxics Campaign Fund, for instance, an ally of JwJ in Denver and Massachusetts and closely linked to Citizen Action, the main non-labor JwJ ally in the 1980s and early 1990s, were charged by some members with reinforcing racism and sexism inside the organization, underneath the group’s anti-corporate, progressive national political program of helping “citizens” beat the threats of toxic wastes in their

⁸⁰ Squires, *Capital and Communities*; For the Valium panics, see David Herzberg, “‘The Pill You Love Can Turn on You’: Feminism, Tranquilizers, and the Valium Panic of the 1970s,” *American Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2006): 79-103. White feminists had access to the media and middle-class professionals – unlike most African Americans – and their access helped them influence the discourse as well.

neighborhoods. In JwJ's early campaigns, even one of its big successes – the unionization of black women workers in Nacogdoches, under both economic and racial justice demands – fragmented only six months later, when 200 workers deserted the bargaining units over disagreements on an anti-discrimination clause.⁸¹

Compared to the bureaucracy and shadowy nationalism of the AFL-CIO or the increasingly conservative Democratic Party, JwJ's class-unity organizing glistened with the prospects of labor renewal. Jobs with Justice was also a creature of its time, and its leaders' languages of class and unity reinforced the populist Americanism of the "Family, Country" picket sign. In the years before JwJ took up health care organizing and anti-free trade advocacy in the early 1990s, its organizers and leaders represented class, and practiced union solidarity, not in an international solidarity network of workers, but as fundamentally part of a U.S. national project for democracy and decent living standards.

The parallel between union rights and American power emerged in several ways in the early JwJ class vision, and one of those was through the specter of international competition responsible for a nation in decline. As much as JwJ sought to center working-class and national discourse on class and the plunder of the robber barons, the threat of the foreign – so pronounced within the unions that shaped the early JwJ coalition – continued to inflect its efforts. The specter of competition loomed over JwJ's early class politics and was part of the reason for the decline of workers' rights. "The time is now," an early "Call for Jobs with Justice," exclaimed, "to stop destructive

⁸¹ Cathy Hinds, et al. "The National Toxics Campaign: Some Reflections, Thoughts for the Movement," 1992.

competition: to end unfair foreign competition and mindless deregulation which destroy jobs and devastate the lives of workers.”⁸² Whether they included the term “foreign” or not in their screeds about competition, protecting unions from it was vital for “America.”⁸³ “America,” the Call exclaims, “cannot afford a future” without union and workers’ rights. JwJ leaders, in these early press releases and appeals, generally decried both the threats from abroad and the robber barons’ union-busting. Throughout 1987 and 1988, JwJ both validated the threat of competition and denounced how employers used it as a justification or “cloak” for attacking workers and unions.⁸⁴ Competition was leading to the precipitous falling standard of living that threatened a whole First-World way of life that the standard provided.⁸⁵ Saving unions, early leaders argued, was a much grander project than increasing wages or holding on to health care. “Our values,” mineworkers’ president Richard Trumka declared, are threatened by foreign products. Another warned before the Miami rally that “If the interests of “organized labor” get smashed, so will “American democracy.”⁸⁶

⁸² “Call for Jobs with Justice,” circa April-May 1987.

⁸³ Owen Bieber testimony, Sept. 16, 1987, *Congressional Record*, 105th Cong., 2nd. sess., 1987, 55. Competition was closely tied to trade, and some JwJ groups focused on supporting or creating a “fair trade” bill. It was front page news, for instance, for the IAM in its newsletter in 1988. See *IAM Report from Headquarters*, Volume 13, May 31, 1988, No. 26, 1, JwJ, national office files.

⁸⁴ “Call for Jobs with Justice,” circa April-May 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

⁸⁵ “Jobs with Justice,” circa Jan.- Feb., 1987, IUD, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

⁸⁶ For Trumka’s words, see “Nation’s Largest Unions Launch Campaign for Workers’ Rights,” *John Herling’s Labor Letter*, July 4, 1987, IUD.; For those of William H. Bywater about “democracy,” see W. Morgan Mallard, “Unions planning series of pro-labor political rallies,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, June 24, 1987, JwJ, national office files.

Most U.S. union leaders and even workers had few problems with U.S. trade policy, or the U.S. government's notion that free markets would lead to free societies, before the 1980s. Indeed, the U.S. was winning in those years, and the way the U.S. controlled foreign markets was due in part to union-supported U.S. imperial excursions and occupations, usually to fend off threats from the Soviet "Evil Empire," itself trying to do the same. Things started to change in the 1970s. The sense that the U.S. was losing its imperial greatness – so common in the 1970s "malaise" era of Watergate and losses in Vietnam and Iran – remained in the 1980s in terms of international trade. The U.S. was still winning the trade wars – but not by much. In fact, in 1986, for the first time in decades, the U.S. imported more than it exported. The dip only lasted a year, but the U.S. trade surplus had been dwindling for years.⁸⁷

The possibility of U.S. workers sinking to the level of those of the Third World made the competition threat even more foreboding. When the crowd in Miami "roared" at Bahr's opening line about the erosion of workers' rights, the CWA president brought the crowd "to its feet" when he finished his thought. "What's at stake is not only our rights but our national place in the world," he exclaimed. "Corporate America's solution to the problem of competing in an international economy is lowering American workers' wages to the levels of workers in South Korea and South Africa. That is not the answer.

⁸⁷ Anthony DiFiippo, *From Industry to Arms: The Political Economy of High Technology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1990), 20.

We are angry.”⁸⁸ JwJ claimed in the media kit it assembled for a later rally that descending to the level of South Africa, “is not the answer. We are angry and are being pushed to the wall and we are not going to take it anymore.” Other leaders played on the First-World nature of the U.S. by comparing workers’ rights with those of the other “industrial Democracies” – and the U.S. workers, they claimed, fared poorly.⁸⁹

The idea of unfair foreign competition and the pounding waves of foreign (and especially Japanese) products was a sign, for some, of the corporate betrayal of both workers and nation. Trumka, in the Nashville rally in early November, boomed that American workers were suffering not only because of corporate greed but because workers elsewhere were unjustly enjoying U.S. workers’ privileges. “[O]ur standard of living,” he said, [is being] exported.”⁹⁰ Some early JwJ actions targeted arms manufacturers, like a Colt weapons plant in Connecticut, for daring to outsource part of “America’s security” and its “national defense” to foreigners. The machinists’ union, early on in the Eastern Airlines campaign, strategically decided to target Lorenzo himself, instead of Eastern, to portray him as anti-American tyrant. Despite the connection between the fate of the working class and that of America, JwJ refrained from reinforcing threats of invasion from abroad in the form of a “Yellow Peril” kind of race panic, similar to those tides of anti-Asian nationalism that have emerged regularly

⁸⁸ JwJ made the same comment in its media kit. “Jobs with Justice Media Information Kit,” Nov. 1987, IUD, unprocessed records; speech transcript, Morton Bahr, Miami JwJ rally, July 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

⁸⁹ Abas, “Look for the union label,” 19; “Call for Jobs with Justice,” circa April-May 1987,” IUD, unprocessed records; “Photos,” circa Sept. 1988, Odessa, TX, Labor Day, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

⁹⁰ “Jobs with Justice,” *The Paperworker*, Nov. 1987, 12-13.

in U.S. history. Yellow Peril themes, which depict Asians as tricky Orientals threatening to overrun the country with their values, products, and workers, have led to brutal anti-Chinese laws and white-led mob violence. In the 1980s, Vincent Chin's murder occurred amidst the deepest Yellow Peril since World War II. Autoworkers smashed Japanese cars with sledgehammers in ceremonies of symbolic violence, and several unions responded to corporate assaults with racial stereotyping. In 1992, some protesters at an anti-imports picket suggested that what "we did" to Japan in 1945 – referring to dropping the atomic bombs to "beat" them – is something we need "to do again in '92!"⁹¹

Still, the specter of industrializing Asia did filter into JwJ's class-based politics. One local labor leader tried to rile up the Labor Day crowd Odessa, TX, in 1988 by claiming the Reagan-Bush administration was "the best President and Vice President of the US that the Japanese have ever had." In August of the same year, the Denver JwJ coalition, the second-largest local, staged an event on Pearl Harbor Day to decry "AT&T's 'sneak attack' in announcing job reductions a few weeks before Christmas."⁹² The blurring of class lines – but subtle hardening of race and national boundaries – was altogether apparent in a Steelworkers' rally less than a week after the JwJ Miami rally. Though the steelworkers' participation in early JwJ was limited, they faced many of the same economic forces as the other manufacturing unions in the coalition. In the rally in Pittsburg, CA, protesters carried signs like "Unemployment Thanks to Korea," despite

⁹¹ Photo caption, in "Buy American: Should we Follow that Flag?" *Labor Notes* Special Section, May 2009, p. 2. The Vincent Chen murder, also mentioned on page seven, occurred in 1982 when UAW members killed an Asian American man. For unions and Yellow Peril ideas, see Frank, *Buy American*.

⁹² Abas, "Look for the union label," 19. The Denver coalition had 1200 signed pledge cards. The biggest coalition at that time was Miami.

the fact that a Korean company had recently purchased only a small share of a new steel mill, and despite the fact that a non-union company from the U.S. South was building the facility, and was importing workers from the South – and not from South Korea.⁹³ The following year, Howard Samuel, president of the IUD, declared that defending the nation-state against “unfair” foreign trade called not for a politics of thought but of belligerence. “We need to be less Ricardo and more Clausewitz about this,” he said, referring to Carl von Clausewitz, the Prussian military thinker who famously said that “War is merely a continuation of politics.”

For early JwJ leaders and organizers, class continued to trump nation. Most of JwJ’s early nationalism animated its class politics, rather than subjugated it. But the thread of militant working-class Americanism both helped define JwJ unionism as implicitly national, and constituted a countertendency to many JwJ organizers’ efforts to re-insert class into the national debate. For instance, the “Buy American” idea that had so dramatically led unions to desert international, and even national, working-class solidarity to protect “American” bosses and industries also seeped into the loose JwJ network of the late 1980s. These Buy American campaigns, as historian Dana Frank has shown, have emerged regularly in U.S. history. One of the most extreme examples of the “Buy American” campaigns of the 1980s was that of textile mogul Roger Milliken. The billionaire Milliken had proven to be one of the most virulent labor-breakers in the history of the twentieth-century South, but the unions he busted – like the garment

⁹³ “Labor News Briefs,” Press Associates, Inc., Aug. 3, 1987, IUD, unprocessed records. The Steelworkers would play a prominent role in JwJ in the late 1990s, and particularly inside the anti-neoliberal globalization movement, in Seattle in 1999 and after. See chapter three for more.

workers, itself a JwJ collaborator – decided to help him galvanize brand and company loyalty by framing its goods as patriotically “American Made.”⁹⁴ Union leaders hoped consumer nationalism would help inflate profits, which could filter down to employees. Since the textile workers’ union (the ILGWU) and other unions had invested little effort in organizing Third World factories where companies were sending jobs, they relied on the familiar language of racial nationalism by creating an “us versus them” dynamic that positioned U.S. consumers, workers, politicians, and corporate robber barons together, united against foreigners. These Buy American campaigns blurred the poor versus rich dynamic that JwJ worked so hard to rejuvenate.⁹⁵

The economic nationalism of these Buy American campaigns, though by no means a dominant theme in JwJ, nevertheless wove through the social and political networks of early JwJ. One of the first people hired by JwJ to coordinate events, Johnny Carson, previously worked coordinating Buy American campaigns in the South. At the Nashville rally, even as JwJ tried to center attention on class solidarity, one local union president and his members stood beneath a big sign that suggested U.S. workers had foreigners to blame, not bosses: “Stop Unemployment. BUY AMERICAN.”⁹⁶ As JwJ grew, it got the attention of a number of efforts, including a UMWA member in Kentucky who started a mail-order business by taking advantage of JwJ networks of union members

⁹⁴ The textile workers’ union was the International Ladies’ and Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU).

⁹⁵ In other cases, as with New Balance shoes, the company forced deep concessions from union workers and persuaded them to help it create a Buy American campaign around the sneakers. Simultaneously, though, the company pulled in monster profits by secretly continuing to export jobs to sweatshops in Asia and Latin America. See Frank, *Buy American*, 183-201.

⁹⁶ “Jobs with Justice,” news clipping, Nov. 1987, 16, Joe Uehlein, personal collection.

and organizations. Hawking an “American Labor Movement Centennial Silver Eagle” coin, Bill Hackworth tried to get loyal unionists to buy this “memento” [*sic*] which was certain “to be passed down from generation to generation.” His advertising strategy? To help fund Jobs with Justice, where some of the funds, Hackworth claimed, would go. And, of course, to “BUY AMERICAN.”⁹⁷

Buy American extended beyond the South as well. In the October 1987 rally at the Colt weapons plant, as JwJ union leader William Wipinsinger decried foreign manufacturing of U.S. armaments, a crowd stood behind him and a Dutch-made howitzer cannon. They were CWA members, holding up Buy American signs, perfectly placed for the newspaper cameras. At about the same time as the Colt rally, in a newsletter to members, Richard Cordtz, the secretary-treasurer of SEIU, a major JwJ union, ended his column by shifting the focus to unionists. “[W]e union members,” he wrote, “must practice what we preach. We, too, must buy into America ourselves.” In Iowa, the State Federation of Labor had endorsed a Buy American clause at the same time it endorsed participation in Jobs with Justice.

The economic nationalism behind the Buy American idea also existed inside the IUD, one of the most influential early JwJ affiliates. Trade was an enormous issue for the Department in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and officials like Howard Samuel were leaders of major labor-business coalitions designed to strengthen the trade advantages

⁹⁷ “Labor Concepts,” circa 1989, IUD, unprocessed records. See also Melba Fiser to Brian Turner, April 1989, IUD, unprocessed records. Outside JwJ, the UAW, with support from ACTWU, founded the Made in the USA Foundation with its motto “Buy American, Be American.” See Made in the USA Foundation, pamphlet, circa 1990, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

of the country. Several such groups emerged in the neoliberal crisis of the 1970s and 1980s. The IUD itself had reinforced Yellow Peril-style threats in the 1970s, and in 1979 it helped form LICIT, the Labor/Industry Coalition for International Trade. Howard Samuel, the leader of the IUD, was a co-chair of the coalition from the beginning. This group of dozens of union presidents and corporate executives – who were, ironically, some of the biggest robber barons in the country – worked together to garner public support for action against the “threat” of international trade, and it labored and lobbied for trade policy that would benefit represented industries. In meetings of LICIT and other such groups, like the Council for Competitiveness or the Coalition for Open Trade, the IUD and major JwJ union presidents – including Morton Bahr – worked with some of the most powerful corporate executives in the land.

Though the IUD mission to push for trade reform beneficial to U.S. labor led it to clash at times with the business representatives, relations between Samuel and at least one corporate executive were downright friendly. Representatives from Corning Glass (now Corning, Inc.) sat on several of these labor-industry boards, and in 1986 Samuel and Alan Cors, a Corning vice president, exchanged a series of personal notes and letters, including several about Samuel’s upcoming trip to France with friends and family. Samuel gratefully accepted Cors’ guidebook of inns and hotels, and asked if Corning’s Paris office could help him arrange for the one they ultimately chose: the *Manoir du Vaumadeuc*, an inn in a “15th [sic] century stone Manor House” in the French countryside. The subtle blurring of the class lines that JwJ struggled to clarify, then, occurred not only through working-class Americanism at the community level, but also

through some of the national figures in the JwJ movement. In another instance, the leader of the “Made in the USA Foundation,” who represented celebrity and corporate board members including Bob Hope, asked for Samuel’s help with the project, emphasizing the many times the two had met at the social events of Samuel’s son.⁹⁸

JwJ, by 1990, had turned into a supple network of labor-community coalitions to fight union causes, all directed through union money. As JwJ established its national vision of class unity in local contexts, whether in rallies, in direct actions, or in campaigns to get unions to simply work together, several key aspects of JwJ’s class politics crystallized. First, two decisions – to ignore internal union politics, and to seek community help for union-specific causes – seemed to hold. Both of those decisions shaped how JwJ would identify what was political and what was not. Second, it created a unionism not based on union members’ narrow economic interests, or merely providing a “service” for them, but based on militant direct action, all centered around the idea of national unity around workers’ rights.

As in the Miami case, this class unity vision was complicated by local forces, and took on and reflected many of the characteristics of the U.S. society of the late 1980s. It defined fighting the robber barons as the central task, for which the answer was building unions by uniting community members and wage workers as workers. Any organization’s singular vision – whether based on class, race, or another social category – can leave other relevant questions outside the realm defined as political. In a network

⁹⁸ For example, Howard Samuel to Allan Cors, March 26, 1986; for Made in the USA, see letter from Joel Joseph to Howard Samuel, Aug. 15, 1990, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

as varied and un-articulated as that of early JwJ, and with the gaping power disparities of the U.S. in the 1980s, some of those who took up the JwJ mantle inevitably reflected the social or economic violence of such disparities.

By focusing on fighting corporations by growing unions instead of changing them, JwJ subdued a number of factors that were profoundly responsible for the union crisis. One was union democracy. Some of these unions faced internal challenges regarding verticalism and bureaucracy even as they fought for greater workers' rights. Lewie Anderson, a vice president of the UFCW and a JwJ player in the Iowa JwJ rally, helped destroy a UFCW local's grassroots campaign and strike against the Hormel Corporation in Minnesota only a year before JwJ started organizing. The same was true in the JwJ structure itself. Even as workers and coordinators were developing their populist vision of community direct action by playing Bingo together and eating "Democratic Caviar," the JwJ "principals," staged a "dinner meeting" in August 1987 in the ritzy Sheraton Carlton Hotel in Washington, D.C. There, they discussed the prospects of upcoming actions as they dined on "Melon Parisienne," "Heart of Bibb with Raspberry Vinaigrette," "Rondels of Chicken with Veal Dressing and Wild Mushroom Sauce," and a "Chocolate Barquette with White Chocolate Mousse with Apricot Sauce." Pink, fan-folded napkins and burgundy table cloths, all chosen by the "Banquet Maitre D' Hotel," helped create the ambiance for discussion, as did generous doses of wine and cocktails at an open bar.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Menu, The Sheraton Carlton, Aug. 17, 1987, Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

Union sexism and homophobia constituted other factors that helped lead to the crisis for unions in the 1980s. In one UFCW meatpacking plant in Iowa, in the same year as the Iowa JwJ campaign, male workers faked having sex with dead pigs and dumped pig blood on the white pants of one of the few women who dared to enter this male-dominated, high-wage, union work. The UFCW local union refused to acknowledge gender discrimination as a problem in this case, even when *company* discrimination practices could have served as key targets for a local union facing unprecedented demands for concessions. The UMWA, another key union in early JwJ, also resisted the entrance of women into its ranks in the late 1980s, and intimidated the women who tried. Significant disparities between the rights and wages of men and women, respectively, plagued these and other union industries.¹⁰⁰

Perhaps no other event complicated the JwJ class unity vision as much as an assault at the Nashville JwJ rally in 1987. Workers and supporters from throughout the South arrived. There, several men and women of the Tennessee Lesbian and Gay Coalition (TLGC) put up a gay rights banner on a park fence near the rally's edge. They had used the banner in several Tennessee events, including marches against the Ku Klux Klan. But rally marshals, according to the TLGC, claimed that they controlled the event, demanded the banner be taken down, and physically assaulted one of them after they refused to remove the banner. "We had sent in our endorsing form to "be there" for

¹⁰⁰ For the UFCW case, see Deborah Fink, "Reorganizing Inequity: Gender and Structural Transformation in Iowa Meatpacking," in *Unionizing the Jungles: Labor and Community in the Twentieth-Century Meatpacking Industry*, (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1997), 218-241. For UMWA, see Clara Bingham and Laura Leedy Gansler, *Class Action: The Story of Lois Jenson and the Landmark Case that Changed Sexual Harassment Law*, New York: Doubleday, 2002.

others in need,” one coalition member wrote in a letter afterward to JwJ, “and instead we found ourselves in need of the simplest form of decency.”¹⁰¹ One JwJ organizer, in a 2010, doubted the truth of the coalition’s claim, and another who was there suggested an attack indeed happened, and the JwJ coalition was mostly worried the group would sue.¹⁰² Regardless of the details the matter, it shows how other kinds of tensions – aside from class – gave form to early JwJ organizing.

As much as JwJ re-created a form of unionism based on a vision of class unity and in a specifically national context, a network of other forces and oppressions – like those based on race, gender, nation, and sexuality – shaped class reality in the 1980s and early 1990s. JwJ organizers, as they navigated the difficult political terrain of the late 1980s, embraced political languages – such as labor populism or working-class Americanism – that foregrounded class in a national atmosphere ripe with rejuvenated patriarchal norms and xenophobia. Indeed, Jobs with Justice was born in a social context characterized with the deafening rise of Reaganist New Right populism and the consequent attack on unions and workers. This chapter has argued that popular anxieties about a nation in decline facilitated the way defending the U.S. working class, even in the progressive circles of JwJ, could overlap with popular ideas of defending family, country, and populist tradition.

¹⁰¹ Tennessee Gay and Lesbian Rights Coalition, statement to Mid-South JwJ, Nov 3, 1987; and Fiser, et al, to Scioppettulo, Nov. 5, 1987; Industrial Union Department, Unprocessed records at The George Meany Memorial Archives.

¹⁰² Stewart Acuff, interview with the author, September 2010; Melba Collins, telephone interview with the author, August 2009; Local organizers, in a statement, expressed regrets for the incident, and claimed that “[t]he person who did this does not reflect the view of the Mid-South Jobs with Justice Campaign.”

Enormous shifts in the global economic order would prove to be a challenge for JwJ's national, class focus in the early 1990s. As in Miami, JwJ would again need to make sense of an array of seemingly disparate economic mechanisms, new regulatory entities, and transnational capital flows. As in Miami, they would again be on the defensive, seeking to respond to an imminent, and potentially devastating, prospect the roots of which U.S. unions had chosen to ignore for most of the century. The prospect was that of a "free trade area" in the Americas that George H.W. Bush began to discuss in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹⁰³ This integral element of his "New World Order," which he sought to build by first creating a North American free trade area, eerily paralleled the forces within which JwJ operated in south Florida in 1987. Based on ideas of deregulation, privatization, trade, and market efficiency, a North American free trade area would grant the biggest corporate players vast powers to crush all forms of "trade barriers," including unions, which, the neoliberals argued, made business inefficient and increased prices for consumers.

As we will see in the following chapters, union workers in the U.S. and peasant, indigenous workers in Mexico were two groups that the globalizing economic and political elites of the 1990s portrayed as obsolete holdovers from a rusting industrial age or, for Mexican peasants, from a rustic rural society. Both, they suggested, were destined to disappear as the imminent waves of globalization reconfigured the foundations of the North American economy. As we will see in the following chapter, the workers at the other end of the emerging continental economy would mobilize their

¹⁰³ Maxwell A. Cameron and Brian W. Tomlin, *The Making of NAFTA: How the Deal was Done*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000.)

own anxieties about America and its empire to cast the molds of the anti-globalization movement in Mexico.

CHAPTER 2

THE “NEOLIBERAL HURRICANE” AND THE SOUTHERN MEXICAN ROOTS OF THE ANTI-GLOBALIZATION MOVEMENT: THE POPULAR INDIGENOUS COUNCIL OF OAXACA - RICARDO FLORES MAGÓN IN THE 1990s

*So poor, sick, and undernourished, without water or food, I ask of God
That the PRI government dies, dies, dies,
That this hell ends
-Lyrics sung and written by women from CIPO in the late 1990s, sung to the
popular ranchera song, “El Tiempo Pasa”*

“Nah, but we don’t wanna compete with the EZLN when they’re our brothers,” one of the men said as they sat in an occupied, or squatted, house in the center of Oaxaca City, Oaxaca, the most indigenous – and most rural – state of Mexico in the 1990s.¹ It was late, and they had already paid for a space in the next day’s edition of one of the leading newspapers of the region. They had to submit their manifesto soon. And they had to choose a name of their organization.

The men were leaders of local poor people’s groups, many of them with large numbers of indigenous members and some of the organizations with explicitly

¹ INEGI, *Perspectiva Estadística de Oaxaca*, INEGI: Dirección General de Difusión, 1997, 20. Between 1990 and 1995, Oaxaca was the most rural state in Mexico within slightly over 40 percent of its population living in cities.

indigenous political identities. When one suggested they pay homage to long-dead Mexican peasant revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, one leader balked. The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), from nearby Chiapas, revolted on Jan. 1, 1994, the same day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was implemented. Like the EZLN, the many of the leaders who sat huddled in Oaxaca were leaders of the anti-NAFTA popular resistance in the early 1990s, because they saw the agreement as exacerbating the racialized wealth inequalities between poor Oaxacans and elites inside Mexico, as well as between Mexico and the United States. Many of the organizers had dedicated much of the prior three years to furthering the Zapatista cause, a cause which scholars identify as one of the early sparks of the anti-neoliberal globalization movement. Still, at least one of the organizers didn't want to step on their turf with a name.²

One of the moderate leaders at this early CIPO meeting proposed to name the organization after Benito Juárez, the Oaxacan who introduced liberal reforms in the country in the late nineteenth century as Mexico's president. Another leader later recalled that "I, without understanding that there was already a big acceptance of [Ricardo Flores] Magón," mentioned his name. [Another leader] said, "Damn, I'm going

² It was also not particularly safe to dub yourself a "Zapatista" group during the years of the government's low-intensity warfare on the EZLN. Confidential interview, 2010. Some interviewees in (or formerly in) CIPO or other popular organizations are identified with the phrase "Confidential interview" and the year of the interview. For a similar methodology, see Kathleen Bruhn, *Taking on Goliath: The Emergence of a New Left and the Struggle for Democracy in Mexico* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). I conducted around 35 interviews for this chapter. A total of 16 interviews are cited in this chapter.

to be happy, *cabrón*, if you all put Magón.’ [Another] said so as well. [But another] said Magón was very radical, he’s going to leave us without a lot of people, and he wasn’t convinced.” And then the discussions started over again.³

The group made its deadline, and Flores Magón made the cut. Over the next seven years, the leaders and core organizers of the Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca-Ricardo Flores Magón (CIPO-RFM) would engage in countless discussions about solidarity, self-determination, and the meanings of the global economy in southern Mexico. In its earliest years (1997-98), CIPO was one of the Zapatista’s biggest regional allies, and it took up the anti-neoliberal mission the EZLN championed. It is difficult to compare CIPO and other popular organizations with the Zapatistas – who one scholar called an “Antiglobalization Icon” – because the EZLN’s army fundamentally distinguished them from the unarmed CIPO groups.⁴ The Zapatistas, though, “set the agenda” for CIPO and many popular organizations.⁵ The Zapatistas became icons of anti-globalization because multitudes of people worldwide embraced, embellished, or invoked the Zapatistas’ ideological foundations, polemical flourishes, and political strategies in the broader anti-neoliberal movement of the 1990s and early 2000s. In the face of growing animosity to multinational corporations and neoliberal reforms, as seen

³ Raúl Gatica, interview with the author, Vancouver, British Columbia, November 2009. Gatica asked to be identified in citations of interviews with him.

⁴ Bob Clifford, “The Making of an Antiglobalization Icon: Mexico’s Zapatista Uprising,” in *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, the Media, and International Activism*, edited Bob Clifford (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁵ Confidential interview, 2009.

with the early experiences of Jobs with Justice in the U.S., the Zapatistas were one of the first organizations to name neoliberalism as a system to be defined and attacked.

Starting almost immediately after the CIPO's first mass demonstration, the Oaxacan government reacted, in many cases viciously, to divide or destroy the organization. Its members were mostly poor indigenous people from Oaxaca's rural mountain communities, communities whose populations increasingly migrated to the U.S. for work and increasingly constituted a flexibilized, "cheapened" labor force in Latin America, or what sociologist Alejandro Portes dubbed an "informal proletariat." Desperate for work and with few state-guaranteed rights, they crossed ethnic, state, and national borders to pick cucumbers, scrub toilets, or dig ravines, which all too often resembled the treacherous *arroyos* they traversed in Arizona as they scoured the continent for jobs.⁶

The organizers chose the name Flores Magón, but, as illustrated above, their choice didn't necessarily reflect a consensus on, or even knowledge of, *Magonista* political thought, whether from his liberal phase in the first decade of the twentieth century or his anarcho-communist one in the following twelve years, much of which he spent in exile in California or imprisoned in U.S. jails.⁷ Yet, as I will show in chapter four,

⁶ For more information on "cheapened labor," see Cynthia H. Enloe, *The Curious Feminist Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 60. For more on the "informal proletariat," see Alejandro Portes and Robert L. Bach, *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

⁷ The strategy of referencing historic figures is a common practice. Organizations, whether government-linked or independent, have regularly appropriated revolutionary or national heroes for their own

the influence of Flores Magón's political ideology on CIPO grew, even though the group hardly resembled Flores Magón's organization, the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM). For instance, their methods differed. The PLM was an armed revolutionary organization, while CIPO used direct action and community organizing. Their geographical coverage was also different. Most of the PLM activity was in the Mexican north and the borderlands of the U.S. and Mexico. CIPO, despite its international ties, was based in the state of Oaxaca.

Other differences illustrate the complicated relationship between *Magonismo* and CIPO. Much of this stems from their varying emphasis on the importance of class versus ethnicity. Though the original *Magonistas* saw a class-conscious, and primarily male, proletariat as the central agent of revolutionary change, they also developed important relationships with indigenous communities during the Mexican revolution, and Flores Magón saw in them the kind of communal society he hoped to build. CIPO, in contrast, saw indigenous peoples as one of the crucial actors for re-making society. At the same time, many of the early organizers in CIPO came from unions and other organizations that emphasized class-based organizing. Though CIPO, by the 2000s, was often seen as an "indigenous" organization, CIPO organizers never abandoned the politics of class.

immediate political needs. The Mexican CNC for instance, in the 1970s, built a statue of Zapata in response to radicals' attempts to re-capture the symbol of Zapata to illuminate the contradictions between Zapata's vision and that of the PRI. See Samuel Brunk, *The Posthumous Career of Emiliano Zapata: Myth, Memory, and Mexico's Twentieth Century* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2008), 205.

CIPO associated itself with Flores Magón because of his struggle for justice, his Oaxacan origins, and what some CIPO members identified as his indigeneity. He was from a Mazatec village in the state of Oaxaca and he had an indigenous father, but Flores Magón went to law school in Mexico City and was a prolific writer and traveler. The organization wanted to claim the revolutionary heritage of Flores Magón. One CIPO leader argued at least once with a local supporter about whether Flores Magón could be accurately called a *Mixteco* from the Mixtec region of the state, where much of the early CIPO activity was based.⁸ Regardless of debates, or lack of debate, regarding Flores Magón, CIPO as an alliance in 1997-98 did little concerted ideological education with members, most of whom likely considered themselves members of their specific organization first, and to the broader CIPO alliance second. The different organizations had their own political perspectives, and Flores Magón and his thought occupied an important place in only some of them.

In Oaxaca and in Mexico more generally, economic globalization, spurred by neoliberal economic and political practices that dominated the era, restructured Mexican society in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Some scholars, in fact, dub the post-1982 period the “Second Mexican Revolution.” The 1992 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which converted the U.S., Mexico, and Canada into a “free trade area,” represented the peak of the era’s zeal for economic liberalization, and the treaty’s profound economic changes left what scholar Josefina Saldaña has called a

⁸ Confidential interview, 2010.

“shadow of NAFTA” over the region. After decades of state-sponsored pride in the country’s independence from the “colossus of the North,” Mexico’s elites rapidly and openly meshed the country’s economy with that of the U.S. in the 1990s, and downplayed the potential for complete U.S. economic dominance over the semi-peripheral neighboring nation. But the looming potential for national subjugation, much like Saldaña’s “shadow,” hovered in the minds of many. In the 1990s and 2000s, as this dissertation shows, the potential for a new wave of colonization – both from abroad and from the predatory state – shaped how organizers in Oaxaca viewed the state government and the class, racial, and national identity of the *despojados*, or “dispossessed,” as CIPO sometimes referred to the indigenous.⁹

Just like in the U.S., where anxieties about an “American in decline” framed Jobs with Justice’s understanding of the working class and the global economy, anxieties about America and its place in a hemispheric empire also shaped politics in Mexico and in CIPO. Indeed, preoccupations about changing national boundaries and sovereignties, all colored by the looming presence of the U.S. and its economic policies, shaded organizers’ political perspectives at the other end of this emerging continental economic order.¹⁰ The leaders who debated *Magonismo* the evening of Nov. 18, 1997, operated

⁹ María Josefina Saldana-Portillo, “In the Shadow of NAFTA: *Y tu mamá también* Revisits the National Allegory of Mexican Sovereignty,” *American Quarterly* 57, 3 (2005): 751-777. For other perspectives, and reviews of the literature, on changing conceptions of nationalism in Mexico, see the work of Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, including his *Exits from the Labyrinth: Culture and Ideology in the Mexican National Space* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

¹⁰ I take “the biggest industry in the state” idea from a 2007 confidential interview.

with few grants and dues payments, and organizers could only occasionally afford to pay for publicity. With few permanent jobs in national trade union bureaucracies and with little money to travel or for phone calls or computers, outreach to the next state, let alone outside the country, was difficult. This chapter argues that CIPO organizers' shared understanding of the way neoliberalism corresponded to a long history of the U.S.-sponsored, market-based "peaceful conquest" of Mexico, as well as their varied ideas of the importance of class, indigeneity, and gender in the nascent *consejo*, helped make CIPO-RFM one of the most powerful and diverse social organizations in the region in 1997-98.¹¹ In addition, because of CIPO's direct action tactics, anti-neoliberal politics, and pro-Zapatista alliances, the chapter argues that CIPO-RFM's early campaigns constituted some of the roots of anti-globalization activity in Mexico, and in CIPO-RFM itself, in the early 2000s.

Race, Class, and Nation: Mexico and the United States in the Twentieth-Century

Oaxacan peasant organizers, most of them men and some of them veterans of Oaxacan union campaigns, forged their vision of neoliberalism, class, race, and nation under the shadow of US economic colonialization in the 1990s. Latin America, and certainly Mexico, faced the twenty-first century "with virtually the same inequalities as

¹¹ See below for more on the term "peaceful conquest."

those with which [it] began the nineteenth.” In the wake of the “Lost Decade” of the 1980s, when Mexico confronted a world-historical economic crisis, an epochal earthquake in what would soon be the most-populous city on Earth, and increasingly aggressive neo-colonial policies by U.S. government and business, a political apparatus dominated by white and mestizo men continued to reign over dark-skinned multitudes of indigenous, rural, and migrant Mexicans. The latter occupied the “underside” of globalizing Mexico, a volatile site forged through decades of state-driven modernization. This underside, a “deep,” indigenous, and deceptively “silent” Mexico, reflected the extreme power disparities in a Mexico that faced “the gravest crisis of its post-colonial history.”¹² When CIPO organizers in the 1990s, then, crafted a vision of social change they did not simply pull together freely floating ideas. Though they indeed articulated and re-articulated creatively the categories of class, race, and nation, the concepts were seared into everyday life in Oaxaca by decades of a classed and racialized economic system, all influenced by Oaxaca’s colonized place in a global system of states and economies.

¹² Though I use here Saldana’s idea of a “shadow” of NAFTA, my formulation was influenced by other scholars conceptualizing the “coloniality” of the age of neoliberalism. See Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, “Americanness as a Concept, or the Americas in the Modern World-System,” *International Social Science Journal*, No. 134 (Nov. 1992), 549-557. For “coloniality,” see Quijano, “Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America,” *International Sociology*, 15.2 (2000): 215-232; Arturo Escobar, “Beyond the Third World: Imperial Globality, Global Coloniality, and Anti-Globalisation Social Movements,” *Third World Quarterly*, 25.1 (2004): 207-230; Ramon Grosfoguel, et al., eds. *Latin@s in the World-System: Decolonization Struggles in the Twenty-First Century* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005). See also Chapter 7, in Lynn Stephen, *Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2007). The “deep” and “silent” terminology comes from Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996); and Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: an Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

Mexico and the U.S. were never simply neighboring, sovereign states. Mexico had been invaded four times in the nineteenth century and Porfirio Diaz, the Oaxaca-born Mexican dictator who himself had deep ties to French and Austrian elites, famously referred to Mexico's precarious colonial status by saying, "Poor Mexico, so Far from God and so Close to the United States." Despite the sentiment of Diaz's statement, which invokes the U.S. threat to Mexico, Diaz ironically was one of the Mexican leaders who most actively facilitated U.S. influence on Mexican life. Under his rule, turn-of-the-century U.S. business interests controlled much of Mexico's oil, agricultural, and mineral economy. Decades earlier, before Diaz ascended to power, the U.S. government had invaded the country and taken nearly half of the country's national territory – what today is the U.S. Southwest – and U.S. business and politicians had subsequently set their eyes on "taking all of Mexico" through the "peaceful conquest" of economic policy.¹³ The northwestern chunk it took through military force – with its massive cotton production, key links to the railroad system developed by Diaz and U.S. capitalists in northern Mexico, and oil and mineral wealth – fed, clothed, and powered the unprecedented economic expansion of the late-nineteenth century U.S. economy and its "economic empires of the North American southwest."¹⁴ As did the British and

¹³ See Gilbert Gonzalez's discussion of this point, in his *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?: Mexican Labor Migration to the United States* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), 20.

¹⁴ In the wake of the Spanish-American War of 1898, after it colonized Puerto Rico and Cuba became a semi-colony, the U.S. intervened militarily in Nicaragua, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and entered Mexico twice during the Mexican Revolution. David Maciel, *Al Norte del Río Bravo (Pasado Inmediato) (1930-1981)*, (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno, 1981), 7.

French in their colonies, U.S. capitalists constructed railroads running directly north, to the imperial core. The kind of dependent industrialization they envisioned was not meant to satisfy domestic consumers in Mexico – but rather the avaricious U.S. imperial engine in the North.¹⁵

The confluence of U.S. economic imperialist interests and Mexican government policy came at a heavy cost to rural, Mexican populations. U.S. and Mexican investors desired cheap land and labor for factory farms and railroad construction. Their needs were met by policies of the Mexican government, which evicted rural, indigenous Mexicans from their lands in the name of “modernization.” The government forced them to choose between working on brutal *haciendas* or migrating to the U.S. By 1910, on the eve of the Mexican Revolution, 80 percent of Mexico’s population depended on wages in agriculture, and almost 97 percent of rural households were landless.¹⁶ This cheap labor – or “cheapened labor” – served U.S. interests inside Mexico as well as in the U.S. As with Mexican migration to the U.S. in the twentieth century, Mexico (and its women, who did the work of raising children) bore the costs of infrastructure, schooling, and, in short, producing and reproducing its work force, while U.S. business benefitted from its super-exploitation. As one U.S. business magazine reported during the

¹⁵ Food prices rose dramatically during the Porfiriato. See Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?*, 23. For railroads, see Gonzalez, 20.

¹⁶ James Cockcroft, *Outlaws in the Promised Land: Mexican Immigrant Workers and America’s Future* (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 46. In 1910 in Oaxaca, only nine percent of the population could read, and of the few who went to school, only one fifth were women. Francie R. Chassen de López, *From Liberal to Revolutionary Oaxaca: The View from the South: Mexico, 1867-1911* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 416.

Porfiriato, “Men, like cows, are expensive to raise, and a gift of either should be gladly received. And a man can be put to more valuable use than a cow.”¹⁷ By the 1920s, “Mexican workers had become “a permanent institution” in the southwestern U.S.”¹⁸

Though a nationalist impulse, reflected in the revolutionary cry “Mexico for the Mexicans,” shaped much of the Mexican Revolution, the U.S. maintained its control on Mexican life despite the “revolutionary nationalism” that persevered, remarkably resiliently, in Mexican governing circles until the 1980s. Though the Mexican revolution granted vast powers to the Mexican state to limit foreign ownership and to develop the domestic economy with tariffs and quotas on imports, the U.S. mobilized political, economic, military, and cultural tools to maintain influence. The threat of invasion, particularly in the years immediately following the Mexican Revolution, was palpable. In those same years, the U.S. had invaded, occupied, and installed regimes friendly to U.S. economic and political interests throughout Central America and the Caribbean.¹⁹ Foreign powers like the U.S. and England were intent on making sure countries like

¹⁷ Cynthia Enloe uses “cheapened labor” in *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*, 60; See also Gonzalez, 21-22; quotation in Cockcroft, *Outlaws in the Promised Land*, 38.

¹⁸ Maciel, *Al Norte*, 7.

¹⁹ Mary Kay Vaughn and Stephen E. Lewis, eds. *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 13. U.S. government officials continued to suggest that leaders in the ruling party were communists in the decades after the revolution, a common claim to justify intervention even in the early years of the Soviet Union. Mexico broke ties with the latter in 1930. See Vazquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *México Frente a Estados Unidos: Un Ensayo Histórico, 1776-1980* (México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 1982).

Mexico did not establish “undesirable precedents” of independence.²⁰ The ability to withhold needed credit and investment in oil and silver, as well as its ability to threaten Mexico by withholding purchasing, were key ways the U.S. could alter Mexican policy in the first few decades after the Revolution. In addition, U.S. investors could still control sizable portions of select Mexican industries, and the size of U.S. direct investment increased steadily, even if the proportion of it to Mexico’s economic output fell.²¹

Though Mexico’s nationalist, one-party rule by the PRI, from 1929 until the 1980s, pushed a program of developing national industry instead of importing goods, the country’s dependency remained. Part of that dependency was result of the sheer power of the U.S. military and economy. The U.S. could ruin Mexico’s international trade economically or politically, as between two-thirds and three-quarters of Mexico’s exports went North.²² Domestic industrialization, though, and not foreign trade, was the first priority of the PRI nationalist state, but U.S. capitalists controlled profits in an equally exaggerated way in the industrial sector. As in most cases of Third World

²⁰ Lorenzo Meyer, “The Mexican Revolution and the Anglo-American Powers: The End of Confrontation and the Beginning of Negotiation,” *Research Report Series*, 34, Center for U.S. Mexican Studies, 1985, translated by Sandra del Castillo, iii.

²¹ Meyer, *Nacionalismo Revolucionario e Imperialismo: Una convivencia Difícil (1920-1940)*
For oil and silver from the Revolution through the 1930s, see Robert Freeman Smith. Smith, though, arguing against historians like Lorenzo Meyer, suggests that the U.S. disagreements with Mexico were more due to cultural differences than U.S. economic and political interests. See Smith, “The United States and the Mexican Revolution” in *Myths, Misdeeds, and Misunderstandings*, ed. Jamie E. Rodriguez O. and Kathryn Vincent (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). See, too, Daniel C. Levy, Kathleen Bruhn, and Emilo Zebadua *Mexico: The Struggle for Democratic Development* (Berkeley: U of California, 2006).

²² Van R. Whiting, *The Political Economy of Foreign Investment in Mexico* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 25.

dependency, the colonial core controlled the technology, capital goods, and other factory machinery that Mexico needed to develop industrially. Through trademarks, patents, pricing, and “restrictive clauses” that prohibited Mexicans from using technology in ways that threatened *Gringo* control, Mexico by the 1960s was one of the most dependent countries in the world.²³ U.S. capitalists extracted massive profits from Mexican agricultural and factory labor through the *Bracero* program and later, starting in 1965, with the *maquilas* of the Border Investment Program. In addition, decades of the marketing and selling of (often superior) finished consumer goods by the U.S., combined with a transnational, but U.S.-controlled, culture industry, reinforced ideas of the superiority of not only Del Monte and Kellogg’s but of whiteness and modern “civilization.”²⁴

In the 1970s, the populist administration of Luis Echeverria sought to control Mexico’s dependency, but with little success. It tried, for instance, to limit U.S. access to Mexican markets by constructing Mexico’s domestic economy, and especially its oil production, by taking out massive loans. Between 1970 and 1976 the debt skyrocketed from 4.2 billion to 19.6 billion, and to a stratospheric 59.6 billion in 1982. The country’s tourism industry, its no-chimneys “white petroleum” geared to promote tropical ecstasy for even whiter travelers, overshadowed the desperate, indigenous poverty of those

²³ “In 1969, 90 percent of all patent applications filed and 92.6 percent of all patents granted went to foreigners rather than nationals.” (Whiting,154)

²⁴ Shelly Streeby, *American Sensations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

who had been forcefully evicted from land to build room for resorts (as in Oaxaca and neighboring Guerrero).²⁵ Through its theme “Mexico, the Amigo Country,” Mexico saturated the U.S. and Mexico with millions of brochures and posters, which reached an estimated 1.6 billion people.”²⁶ In 1980, the industry, mostly geared to travelers from the U.S. and Canada, accounted for 38 percent of Mexico’s balance of payments, six percent of the GDP, and had become the U.S.’s “number one country for air travel.”²⁷

The PRI’s gamble failed. Debt-ridden farmers drove their tractors into a high government building in 1981 – but in the U.S. That’s because the U.S. Federal Reserve controversially raised interest rates in the early 1980s, leading to unemployment and debt in the U.S. as well as in Mexico, since its loans were dollar-denominated.²⁸ When oil prices suddenly dropped, a thunderous debt crisis gripped the foundations of the world economy, first in Mexico and then shuddering through the “darker nations.”²⁹ Perhaps fittingly, U.S. banking and First-World political interests profited from Mexico’s

²⁵ For “white petroleum,” see William Cobb, “Tourism as a Positive Factor in the Mexican Economy and in Mexican Foreign Relations,” in *Mexico and the United States* (Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1981), 191; For Acapulco, see Andrew Sackett, “The Two Faces of Acapulco during the Golden Age,” in *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

²⁶ Cobb, 190.

²⁷ Cobb, quote on 178. See 178-179. For Oaxaca, see 187.

²⁸ *Mexico since 1980*, 63.

²⁹ See John Saxe-Fernández, *Imperialismo Económico en México: Las Operaciones del Banco Mundial en Nuestro País* (México, D.F.: Debate, 2005); and Susan George, *A Fate Worse Than Debt* (New York: Grove Press, 1990). For the “darker nations” notion see Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

entrance into the Lost Decade sinkhole.³⁰ Though President José Lopez-Portillo reacted in part by nationalizing the country's banks, the shift to neoliberalism – and the consequent dismantling of the PRI-Mexican developmental state – was on. The neoliberal wing of the PRI or the right-wing PAN, often led by U.S.-trained economists and technocrats, dominated the politics of the country from the next thirty years.³¹

If Mexico's colonial shadow was produced in part by the U.S.'s "peaceful conquest," it was also defined, as Oaxacan social organizations acknowledged in the 1980s and 1990s, by a sort of "internal colony" inside Mexico. That colony, the deep Mexico of the country's indigenous and other forgotten people, can only be understood in relation to PRI nationalist governance in the decades before the debt crisis and neoliberalism.³² As was the case with other Third World nationalisms in the wake of

³⁰ George, *A Life Worse than Debt*; and Daniel C. Levy and Kathleen Bruhn, *The Struggle for Democratic Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 160-161. Most of the money from petrodollars in international banks came at a higher cost than official borrowing from the World Bank, and newfound oil reserves made Mexico a more enticing recipient of loans, since oil was collateral. Figures in Bruhn, *The Struggle for Democratic Development*, 161-162. See also Victor Raúl Martínez, *Movimiento Popular y Política en Oaxaca, 1968-1986* (Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, Dirección General de Publicaciones, 1990), 182. For a more polemic take on U.S. and first world debt in general, see Paul Vallely, *Bad Samaritans: First World Ethics and Third World Debt* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990).

³¹ The PRI, or the even more solidly neoliberal PAN, controlled the presidency in the period.

³² For more on the "internal colony" idea, see Courtney Jung, *The Moral Force of Indigenous Politics: Critical Liberalism and the Zapatistas* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). The original formulation in Mexico for internal colonialism came from Pablo Gonzalez Casanova and Rodolfo Stavenhagen in the 1960s. Though the "internal colony" idea is useful metaphor to begin the discussion of Oaxaca's place in Mexico, considering the "coloniality" of Oaxaca and Mexico is more useful in that coloniality recognizes the "internal" nature of these colonial relations as well the transnational forces that condition them. See note 21 of this chapter for more. The "faceless" term is also cited in Neil Harvey, "The Political Nature of Identities, Borders, and Orders: Discourse and Strategy in the Zapatista Rebellion" in *Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory*, eds. Mathias Alpert, David Jacobson, and Yosef Lapid (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2001), 249.

formal colonialism, the PRI's was configured in a corporatist system in which the government divided society into "sectors" of "workers," "peasants," and the "popular class" of small business and public employees. It then incorporated them into the centralized, PRI developmental state through state-created unions and popular organizations. For much of post-Revolutionary Mexico, a "revolutionary family" of "former presidents, regional strongmen, certain state governors, the heads of the ['official' unions and organizations of the popular sector and workers and peasants] and the country's wealthiest businessmen ... joined the country's most important cabinet minister and directors of the key public companies in influencing policy."³³ They united around a broad consensus about economic modernization, the development of institutions, the construction of a specifically mestizo nation, and the centralization of power, all run through vast patronage machines, in which the PRI granted credits and services to its constituents in exchange for votes and loyalty.³⁴

For indigenous people, not represented in this revolutionary family, development, industrialization, nation-building, and modernization often meant assimilation, exploitation, or even extermination. Though the CNC was the government's official "peasant" organization, the PRI and CNC leaders famously abandoned support of peasants, despite official rhetoric of land reform and rights,

³³ Kevin Middlebrook, *The Paradox of Revolution: Labor, the State, and Authoritarianism in Mexico* (Baltimore, John Hopkins University, 1995), 180.

³⁴ See Middlebrook, 26-28, for the economic and institutional details.

especially after the populist government of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40).³⁵ If anything, the industrializing modernization of the PRI family pushed for a kind of factory farming that threatened the autonomous small-scale production of many indigenous people. In the 1970s, indigenous people were a kind of “subproletariat,” the left-behinds of the PRI order who collected scraps in cities, or gathered plants and fruits in Mexico’s arid plateaus, or, if lucky, found temporary jobs as landless laborers.³⁶ Despite the PRI’s egalitarian language, and in the midst of the “Mexican Miracle” of industrialization and high national economic growth before the neoliberal crash of the 1980s, the wage disparity between the rich and the poor – who were overwhelmingly rural – was one of the biggest in the world.³⁷ As Arturo Warman noted, rural Mexicans understood their subjugated place in a larger system, and that understanding would soon explode into action in places like Oaxaca. They know, he wrote “that exploitation comes at the hands of bureaucrats, industrialists, the state, and the middle classes and even marginal

³⁵ As *Mexico since 1980* shows, the public employees got treated the best, and that by the 1930s the state “was claiming to act ‘in the name of the masses’ (that is, on behalf of workers and *campesinos*),” from Arnoldo Córdova, *La Política de Masas del Cardenismo* (Ediciones ERA, 2006), 47.

³⁶ Ricardo Pozas and Isabel H. de Pozas, *Los Indios en Las Clases Sociales de Mexico* (Siglo Veintiuno editores, 1971) Fifth edition, 1976, 173. Their structuralist Marxism was a common analytical framework in Mexican social science in the 1970s. It analyzes their relationship to different class-based sub-groups and speaks of the detribalization of indigenous people not through the Mestizaje campaigns of the PRI or the INI, but through wage-work and labor migration itself. Norberto Valdez has an overview of some of this literature, with an anthropological twist, distinguishing the “structuralism” with the “Vía Campesina” literature of Gustavo Esteva. See Norberto Valdez, *Ethnicity, Class and the Indigenous Struggle for Land in Guerrero, Mexico* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 7-16.

³⁷ Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor*, 25; see also Dennis Gilbert, *Mexico’s Middle Class in the Neoliberal Era* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007). Gilbert shows how “[b]etween 1940 and 1982, the Mexican economy grew, almost continuously, at annual rates in excess of 6 percent, a happy phenomenon often referred to as ‘the Mexican miracle.’” For more on wage disparities, see Bruhn, *The Struggle for Democratic Development*, 156-157.

[urban dwellers who] as a bloc, divide up the wealth of the peasantry. In different ways, we are all part of the peasant problem, and the peasantry knows it.”³⁸

The Mexican South: “Calling yourself Oaxacan was something shameful.”

Wage disparities and “peasant” identity, though, didn’t fully describe national development, or rural workers’ response to it, in the twentieth century. As the revolution was implemented in the countryside, some government officials, like one in Chiapas in the 1930s, decided the “main obstacle” to development was not the foreign threats to Mexico’s sovereignty, the lack of capital goods, or political corruption, but simply the “masses of indigenous people.”³⁹

Oaxaca’s governor from 1992-1998, Diodoro Carrasco Altamirano, was the head of a state that reflected many of the race and class dynamics of post-Revolutionary Mexico. These dynamics, more than simply background, helped shape the framework and the concepts of race and class that indigenous and poor peoples’ organizers would use in the 1980s and 1990s. Modern Mexico had created its “deep” other, and nowhere was the underside of modernizing Mexico more concentrated than in southern states like Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Guerrero. The biggest challenges to the neoliberal order in

³⁸ From Arturo Warman, *Los Campesinos Hijos Predilectos del Régimen* (México: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo), 130.

³⁹ See Rosalva Aida Hernández-Castillo, *La Otra Frontera*, 126.

Mexico would come, not from unions, NGOs, or politicians, but from rural, cash-strapped social organizations in the states of the South, including Oaxaca.

Oaxaca was the most indigenous state in Mexico, with almost 38 percent of its population speaking 15 different indigenous languages and over 150 dialects.⁴⁰

European chemists and their synthetic dyes, as well as Guatemalan competition, had destroyed Oaxaca's export-oriented Cochineal economy in the nineteenth century, and internal political struggles during the Revolution left Oaxaca with little power in national Mexican politics through the 1960s. Oaxacans, outside Mexico's ruling sphere, suffered from the latter's "development" projects. In the early 1970s, for instance, the construction of the *Cerro de Oro* dam threatened the Chinantec people with "ethnocide."⁴¹ Oaxacans also suffered in the national wage economy. In the Mixtec and Zapotec regions, men and women had long served as temporary, cheapened labor as domestic and construction workers in Mexico City; plantation workers in Veracruz, Chiapas, Michoacan, or in northern Mexico; or as hired temporary "arms" in the U.S. Southwest.⁴² After their village harvest or when they couldn't find wage work, many

⁴⁰ See Miguel Bartolomé and Alicia Barabas, "La Pluralidad Desigual en Oaxaca," in Bartolomé and Barabas, eds., *Etnicidad y Pluralismo Cultural La Dinamica Etnica en Oaxaca*, (Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, Dirección General de Publicaciones: 1986), 18, 25. Zapotec workers, especially by the 1980s, increasingly worked service jobs in northern Mexico and the U.S., while Mixtecs remained more heavily in agriculture. See Stephen, *Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁴¹ Miguel Alberto Bartolomé and Alicia Barabas, *La Presa Cerro de Oro y el Ingeniero El Gran Dios: Relocalización y etnocidio Chinanteco en México* (Mexico, D.F. CONACULTA, INI, 1990).

⁴² Stephen, *Transborder Lives*, 75. See also Chapter 5. See also Sanderson, *The Transformation of Mexican Agriculture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986),

Oaxacans sold goods in local markets. But *caciques* – rural bosses usually linked to the PRI – controlled credit and local politics. Oaxacans were also vulnerable to variations in U.S. markets and consumer tastes, particularly in tourism or with select cash crops. In the 1970s, even before the neoliberal PRI tied the national economy even more tightly to that of the U.S., the U.S. bought three quarters of Mexico's coffee. Coffee was the biggest cash crop for Oaxacans, and by the early 1990s the U.S. bought more than 85 percent of it.⁴³ Oaxaca was consistently among the three poorest states in Mexico throughout the twentieth century.

Colonial rulers had first forged Mexico's racial hierarchy by suggesting that the vastly diverse, often-at-war native people they conquered were fundamentally different from white Spanish Christians and were, in fact, one type of person – all were *indios* from an inferior, dangerous, and savage race. The mestizo “cosmic race” on which the PRI nationalist leaders built the post-revolutionary Mexican nation was a dramatic change from the European whiteness elites during the Porfiriato so valued. *Mestizaje* again relied on a singular idea of “the Indian” – a mythic, homogenous race that no longer could exist as such, but whose spirituality nobility were necessary elements in modern mestizo identity. Indeed, those traits distinguished Mexicans from the cold rationality of the U.S. Americans.

⁴³ Jorge Hernández-Díaz, *El Café: Crisis y Organización: Los Pequeños Productores en Oaxaca* (Oaxaca: IIS, UABJO, 1998), xi. For tourism and gender, see Darcie Vandegrift, “‘This isn't Paradise—I Work Here’: Global Restructuring, The Tourism Industry, and Women Workers in Caribbean Costa Rica” *Gender and Society* 22.6(2008): 778-798. For an excellent comparative examination of Mixtec and Zapotec labor in the twentieth century, see Stephen, *Transborder Lives*.

After the revolution, state-builders worked to get indigenous people to identify as Mexican and aim for assimilation into the newly conceptualized “mestizo ‘national culture,’” and government officials imposed on them new laws, the Spanish language, and unaccountable mestizo municipal authorities, all “in the name of the ‘right to equality.’”⁴⁴ Education workers, bureaucrats, and technicians from the National Indigenist Institute (INI) scoured the countryside in the 1920s and after. They went about Mexicanizing the indigenous, “attempting a radical transformation of the socialization model of [indigenous] children and young people – [and] assumed many of the responsibilities previously shouldered by family and community.”⁴⁵ In addition, the process would subdue children’s loyalty to family and indigenous authorities and convert it to trust and “local involvement in municipal politics and the sectoral organizations of the PRI.”⁴⁶ The INI tried to suffocate the barter and autonomy that still existed in some regions by pushing indigenous people farther into wage work.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Guillermo de la Pena, “Social Citizenship, Ethnic Minority Demands” in *Multiculturalism in Latin America*, ed. Rachel Seider.130 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002),131. Lynn M. Stephen, Shannon Speed, and R. Aída Hernández Castillo, eds., “Introduction” in *Dissident Women: Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas* (Austin: University of Texas Press: 2006), 35.

⁴⁵ de la Pena, 131.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Rodolfo Stavenhagen, “Indigenous People and the State,” in *Multiculturalism in Latin America*, ed. Rachel Seider (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 28.

Caciques, political parties, land politics, and economic desperation often divided villages, families, and even regions in Oaxaca.⁴⁸ For many indigenous people, centuries of racism had led them to internalize it or, especially for the men who had better chances of learning Spanish and traveling, to seek to assimilate into mestizo society.⁴⁹ Those who voted tended to vote for the PRI authoritarianism that shaped everyday life. They did so because of caciques or other bosses from the official peasant and worker organizations, who often maintained PRI rule through patronage, threats, and cooptation. As a member of early CIPO once stated, the politicians come to the communities with gifts and they “buy consciences before the elections, and when they arrive to power they forget about the communities.”⁵⁰

Regardless of the PRI’s assimilationist policies, indigenous conflicts with state and mestizo elites ran deep in Oaxaca. In the “War of the Pants,” indigenous people in Juquila took up battle with local mestizos with European pretensions and economic power at the turn of the twentieth century.⁵¹ In communities like Yalalag, later to be part of CIPO mobilizations, struggles between “those who defended customs, culture,

⁴⁸ For information on caciques, see Bartolomé and Barabas, “La Pluralidad Desigual en Oaxaca” in *Etnicidad y Pluralism Cultural*, 28.

⁴⁹ Barabas. “La Lucha Indígena en Oaxaca” in *Etnicidad y Pluralismo Cultural La Dinámica Étnica en Oaxaca*, Bartolomé and Barabas, eds., (Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, Dirección General de Publicaciones: 1986)

⁵⁰ Colin Clarke, *Class, Ethnicity, and Community in Southern Mexico: Oaxaca's Peasantries* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2001); Confidential interview, 2007..

⁵¹ Chassen-López, *From Liberal to Revolutionary Oaxaca*.

and indigenous language versus those who wanted to change to Western life” have riveted the area since at least the 1920s.⁵² Many of the conflicts have surged around the control of the land. After the Mexican Revolution, the government’s “land reform” in Oaxaca often consisted of giving peasants marginal land vulnerable to exhaustion, instead of expropriating the fertile soils of the large landowners. In the process, it incorporated peasants into the government’s official organizations, as much of this land was organized into state-coordinated *ejidos*, which themselves were part of the PRI-linked official peasant organizations like the CNC. Forcing the indigenous onto the worst land, and giving the best land to *hacienda* owners, led to additional problems for the poor. In the Mixteca, for instance, the soil is today some of the most chemically degraded in Mexico, and the area has endured the vast desertification of once fertile land, both through *hacienda* mono-cropping and slash-and-burn peasant agriculture by families desperate to get one more crop out of starved land.⁵³ The “peasant problem” that Warman suggested “everyone was part of” was, at the same time, a racial “problem” about domination and resistance of indigenous people in Mexico. In Mexico,

⁵² For the “War of the Pants,” see Chassen-López, *From Liberal to Revolutionary Oaxaca*; Víctor Leonel Juan Martínez “Yalalag, Las Contradicciones de una Lucha por la Autonomía,” in *Ciudadanías Diferenciadas*, ed Jorge Hernández-Díaz (Siglo XXI, 2007), 199-228. For Mixe and Chontal resistance to colonization, see Jorge Hernández-Díaz, *Reclamos de la Identidad: la formación de las organizaciones indígenas en Oaxaca* (Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca: M.A. Porrúa, 2001), 175.

⁵³ The Mexican government admitted that was so before NAFTA. For analysis see Michelle Leighton Schwartz and Jessica Notini, “Desertification and Migration: Mexico and the United States” (U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform: Fall 1994), 9. The document cites a 1993 study by the National Commission for Arid Zones (Ch. 2, sec. 2.3.2-2.3.7). For the way *ejidos*, and communal land, linked peasants into the PRI structure, see de la Peña, “Social Citizenship, Ethnic Minority Demands,” 130. See also Rodolfo Stavenhagen, “Indigenous People and the State,” 28.

“calling yourself Oaxacan was something shameful,” according to Oaxacan writer Manuel Matus Manzo.⁵⁴

NAFTA and National Sovereignty

CIPO emerged in post-NAFTA southern Mexico, but it didn’t emerge in the NAFTA debates of the early 1990s. The term “debates” implies deliberation and compromise, and thus exaggerates the extent of both inside Mexico in the early 1990s. The Mexican government of Harvard-trained economist Carlos Salinas de Gortari spent more money than the governments of the U.S. or Canada to convince the Mexican public that a three-country “free trade area” would help Mexico, and it saturated the media in Mexico and Oaxaca with perfumed portrayals of the permanent treaty. NAFTA, or the North American Free Trade Agreement, would remove tariffs and import quotas from most everything in North America, and would dramatically affect Mexican industries like agriculture, forestry, entertainment, auto manufacturing, tourism, and transportation. The movement of commercial goods, business ideas, and credit would be determined less by government planning and more by the dictates of markets, granting the biggest players in the North American market – who were mostly U.S. corporations – major investment opportunities, especially in previously insulated

⁵⁴ Matus Manzo, “Cultura: Permanencia en lo tiempo o lo fugitivo de un nuevo siglo,” in *Voces de la Transición en Oaxaca*, ed. Claudio Sánchez Islas (Oaxaca: Carteles, 2004), 195.

Mexico. Given the power of the President, and the one-party domination of the media and the executive, legislative, and judicial branches in Mexico, formal passage of the agreement was almost a given. But the legitimacy of the PRI was fading, and Salinas had been elected by fraudulently. As famed Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes wrote, every Mexican president is known for one thing. Salinas's would be NAFTA, and he undoubtedly wanted it to be popular.⁵⁵

In the U.S., where union workers had faced dramatic cuts in the last two decades and saw NAFTA as an attempt to further slash the wages, rights, and privileges they had won both through union struggle and by virtue of being born north of the *Río Bravo*, politicians' responses to their anti-NAFTA pressure was usually tepid, frequently dishonest, and occasionally comical. One labor ally wrote of the surreal scene she watched unfold in the U.S. Senate in the moments before they voted to fundamentally change nearly a century of U.S.-Mexico economic and political policy and almost certainly force millions of poor, often indigenous Mexicans off their land.

I looked down [from the Senate gallery to the Senate floor], expecting to see the exchange that we had been asked to observe with dignity ... [but the] senators, it became apparent as the presiding individual allowed his annoyance to be more and more transparent, were nowhere to be seen by the public. They were not engaged in a public debate of NAFTA. Those speeches were already written or waiting to be written for submission to the Congressional Record. The

⁵⁵For more information on the NAFTA before it was implemented, see Maxwell A. Cameron and Brian W. Tomlin, *The Making of NAFTA* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 45. See also Carlos Fuentes, *A New Time for Mexico* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux), 96. The PRI is the Institutional Revolutionary Party.

Agreement had been approved by the House on November 17, and perhaps this vote seemed like a 'done deal.' Most of the senators, having abandoned the lone speaker discussing grain production with a great deal of animation aimed at the C-SPAN camera, were in a back room watching a college football game.

The atmosphere south of the border, in Oaxaca, only a day's drive but a world away from the halls of power in Mexico City, was equally surreal. "Consensus already exists" on NAFTA, screamed a headline in a major Oaxaca newspaper in October 1992, paraphrasing Salinas's words as he planned his next meeting with U.S. and Canadian heads of state Bill Clinton and Brian Mulroney. Consensus didn't exist, but few Mexicans knew that. Most had no idea that the powerful governments to the North faced stiff resistance to the treaty, and few probably paid attention to the "*Inditos sucios*" in Oaxaca who dared to speak out against a treaty they saw as a new threat to indigenous economies and culture.⁵⁶ If the urban Oaxacans with access to newspapers would have let their eyes drift to the bottom of the page, however, they would have at least seen that Salinas's "consensus" was thin indeed. There, they would have read that 500 peasants declared that the upcoming, government-created celebration of the 500th anniversary of the 1492 arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas was a "farce." What the government was commemorating as the fifteenth-century "meeting of two worlds" was instead, they claimed, an imperialist invasion, which had led to centuries of

⁵⁶ See note 1, page 1, for more on "*Inditos sucios*," or "dirty little Indians." See Judith Adler Hellman, "Mexican Perceptions of NAFTA: Support and Opposition to NAFTA" in *The Political Economy of North American Free Trade*, eds. Ricardo S. Grinspun and Maxwell A. Cameron (New York: Palgrave, 1993), 193-204.

misery for indigenous and poor Mexicans. And that imperialism “continues beating down the people of Mexico, but now in new manifestations like that of the Free Trade Treaty.”⁵⁷

Neoliberalism and its rhetoric of undoing government controls and “opening” national industries to international competition proposed to grant broad new freedom to investors. It would “deregulate” their bank-rolled speculating while violently regulating the lives of the poor and racially subjugated, from the black textile workers of the U.S. South to the indigenous farmers of southern Mexico. NAFTA threatened to close the casket on indigenous industries like coffee or corn production, for instance, as corporate mega-farms could produce and distribute both at much lower prices. It’s fitting, in fact, that the same Midwestern corporate farm industry that Jobs with Justice fought against in the middle and late 1980s would be one of the main agents of the dispossession of indigenous Mexicans in the 1990s. Indeed, the U.S. increased its subsidies to Cargill and other corporate farmers, allowing them to under-price corn, saturating Mexican markets (which were open to foreign commodities because of NAFTA) and driving more Oaxacan peasants off their land.⁵⁸ Desperate for income, men would seek jobs in nearby cities, in the plantations of Sonora, Mexico, or in pesticide-

⁵⁷Rosy Ramales, “Plantón frente a Palacio,” *Las Noticias*, Oct. 6, 1992, 1.

⁵⁸ Indeed, the U.S. increased its subsidies to Cargill and other corporate farmers, allowing them to under-price corn, saturating Mexican markets (open to foreign grain because of NAFTA).

soaked fields of southern California or south Jersey.⁵⁹ Women, often with almost no formal schooling and usually dependent on men, stayed behind to manage a household economy with impossibly little money, or themselves migrated to look for domestic work.

In addition, economic and political elites would have new powers to copyright and own what had been protected spaces of poor and indigenous people – like land, water, wind, seeds, and unique agricultural knowledge – all of which threatened potential profits for transnational corporate speculators.⁶⁰ Oaxaca and its Isthmus region, at various moments in postcolonial Mexican history, had been sites these speculators drooled over. The state connected Mexico to the rest of Central America and South America, and the Isthmus was the narrowest stretch of land in Mexico separating the Pacific rim from the Gulf of Mexico. Oaxaca was one of the most biodiverse states in one of the most biodiverse regions in the world, and the shore along the Oaxaca coast featured one of the biggest oil deposits in Mexico and the Caribbean.⁶¹

The Salinas administration spent \$30 million dollars on advertisements and the like, showing how NAFTA would turn it into a First World country – or even claiming that

⁵⁹ Raúl Delgado-Wise and Humberto Marquez Covarrubias, *The Reshaping of Mexican Labor Exports under NAFTA: Paradoxes and Challenges* (Zacatecas, Mexico: University of Zacatecas, Red Internacional de Migración y Desarrollo). See David Harvey, for instance, for his take on the “accumulation and dispossession” at the heart of neoliberalism. Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁶⁰ Vandana Shiva, *Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology* (New York: Zed Books, Ltd, 1993), 110-115.

⁶¹ Carlos Beas, “Un Territorio en Disputa,” unpublished article, 1996, 1-4.

it already was one. But when the NAFTA debates got started, the wealth divide between the U.S. and Mexico was the biggest of any neighboring countries on Earth, and a “free trade” pact between such different countries was unprecedented. Small-scale, indigenous farming hardly fit into any planners’ vision of a twenty-first century. Though NAFTA proponents suggested that new industries and foreign direct investment would create new jobs, some U.S. and Mexican officials prepared for mass migration from the countryside that dispossession would produce.⁶² Even the PRI administration’s stated agricultural consequences of NAFTA – new foreign investment and technologically advanced, corporate owned factory farms – dramatically failed, at least in the South. The economic growth created by NAFTA exacerbated regional wealth disparities in Mexico, including between the Mexican North and its South.⁶³ Corn imports rose significantly in the mid-1990s from the late 1980s, as the productivity gains of factory farming didn’t offset the increased competition from the U.S. Even with the federal credits given to farmers to offset their losses following the NAFTA shock, indigenous

⁶² Donald E. Schulz and Edward J. Williams, “Crisis or Transformation? The Struggle for the Soul of Mexico,” in *Mexico Faces the 21st Century*, eds Donald E. Schulz and Edward J. Williams (Westport, Co: Greenwood Press, 1995), 27.

⁶³ Rafael Tamayo-Flores, “NAFTA-Driven Changes in the Regional Pattern of Economic Growth in Mexico: Profile and Determinants,” in *Changing Structure of Mexico: Political, Social and Economic Prospects*, ed. Laura Randall (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 119. See also Rafael Tamayo-Flores, “Mexico in the Context of the North American Integration,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 33 (2001): 377-407.

staple crops like beans and corn had lost around forty percent of the real value since the early 1980s.⁶⁴

In the months before NAFTA's implementation on Jan. 1, 1994, Mexican television regularly broadcast advertisements featuring dancing, clown-like Chamula Indians – actually, Mexico City actors with noticeable urban accents – “speaking like imbeciles,” as one scholar said, and acting like children. Those degrading advertisements, for one Oaxacan indigenous scholar, spoke volumes about the racial order in this modernizing country that claimed to be “pluricultural.”⁶⁵ Finally, on the night before NAFTA, Carlos Salinas “went to sleep,” as the well-known joke goes, “thinking he would wake up in the USA. Instead, he woke up in Guatemala.”⁶⁶ In the early morning hours of Jan. 1, rifle-tugging indigenous Chiapanecos, including *real* Chamulas, passed silently through southern Mexican forests and, in Mexico's biggest guerrilla action since the 1920s, took over several municipalities. The militancy and indigenous nature of this fighting force, the EZLN, inspired organizers throughout the South to organize marches, rallies, and fundraisers for the Zapatistas.⁶⁷ The Oaxacans

⁶⁴ The credits came through the PROCAMPO program. For more on differences in real values, José Luis Calvo, “Funciones de la Agricultura,” in *La Sociedad Mexicana*, 505-541, p. 506.

⁶⁵ Benjamín Maldonado Alvarado, “El concepto de ecología social,” *Las Noticias*, Oct. 12, 1992, 10a.

⁶⁶ Quoted from Bill Weinberg, *Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico* (New York: Verso, 2000), 98.

⁶⁷ Weinberg, 30-32. Most of the NAFTA dreamers like Carrasco and Salinas had their bubbly visions deflated when Salinas woke up in Guatemala and Chiapas woke up with a microphone in its face. The idea that Mexico was a country stable for business and therefore free of impulsive dictators who expropriate banks (as the PRI did in 1982) or battle peasant guerrillas (as it had quietly in its own “dirty wars” of the

working in indigenous, social organizations in neighboring Oaxaca were among the most active, including those who would soon band together and found CIPO-RFM in early 1997.

The emergence of the Zapatistas was perhaps the main reason that questions of national identity and national unity took on increasing urgency in the 1990s. As the introduction to this dissertation suggests, deep anxieties about sovereignty and the blurring of national culture wove through many areas of Mexican life, from unions to education, law, business, and foreign policy. Though historians of Mexico have increasingly discredited the idea that a harmonious “golden age” or *pax Priista* characterized life in mid-twentieth century Mexico, it is evident that old divisions and exclusions were exacerbated in the 1990s, just as surging economic inequality, the illegal drug trade, and other factors seemed to create new ones.⁶⁸ Like most of these prominent divisions, those that the EZLN confronted had deep roots but branched into Mexican society in newly reconfigured ways. The EZLN blended ideas of class

1970s and 1980s) was key for the passage and acceptance of NAFTA in the U.S. and Canada. As the Salinas administration proved in the two weeks after the uprising, it could manage – militarily – an outbreak such as that of the EZLN. But the solidarity that the Zapatistas generated, throughout Mexico and the world, was something politically threatening to the NAFTA order, especially to that of the Mexican South, where guerillas and, much more often, non-violent poor peoples’ organizations, had consistently built movements around class, ethnic, and racial oppression after the political crisis of 1968. In 1968 the Mexican government, in the “Tlatelolco Massacre,” murdered hundreds of protesters in Mexico City. The “dirty war” counter-insurgency that the Mexican government had mobilized in the 1970s and 1980s had been mostly kept quiet until 1989, when an ex-soldier went public – to the *New York Times* – and went into exile in the U.S. See Larry Rohter, “Former Mexican Soldier Describes Execution of Political Prisoners”, *New York Times*, Feb. 19, 1989.

⁶⁸ Tanalis Padilla. For the major shifts in Mexican national identity, particularly around mestizaje and multiculturalism, see Carrie C. Chorba, *Mexico, From Mestizo to Multicultural: National Identity and Recent Representations of Conquest* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2007).

exploitation and indigenous solidarity, and challenged the way indigenous people had been colonized internally by a dominant nation and state. That colonization was evident not only in long-term processes of culture and economic dispossession but also in the recent state-supported expropriations of land in Chiapas in the 1970s and 1980s for oil- and cattle-based economic development.⁶⁹

The Zapatistas, the first post-Cold War guerrilla movement in the Americas, surprised many with their commitment to democracy and indigenous autonomy instead of a “dictatorship of the proletariat.” Their “First Declaration from the Lacandón Jungle,” part of their flurry of communiqués and actions that led hundreds of thousands to offer support in Mexico, reflected their understanding of contemporary Mexico as one shaped by the intersection of race, national, and class hierarchies. It opens by stating that “[w]e are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American Imperialism.” By establishing themselves as heirs to a “struggle” that began with European colonialism in 1492, and later with slavery, they present themselves as an army fighting racial and national oppression. Zapatista claims for autonomy, though, never meant separatism. It did mean, however, indigenous control over natural resources, land, and regional economies as well as cultural independence.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Hernández-Castillo, et al., *Dissident Women*. See also Weinberg and Harvey.

⁷⁰ Scholar and EZLN advisor Gilberto López y Rivas suggested in 1996 that the Zapatista San Andres proposal for autonomy was best understood in Gramscian terms, and about building a national-popular

The Zapatistas combined class terms with their indigeneity. In the same “First Declaration” cited above, the EZLN claims allegiance with the revolutionaries of 1910, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, by suggesting that they were “poor men just like us.” These new Zapatistas argue that they are a group of the “millions” of “dispossessed,” with “no land” and “no work,” and who wear “black and red,” the colors of anarchism and communism, respectively “as our symbol of our working people on strike.”⁷¹ As Sonia Toledo Tello and Anna María Garza Caligaris have suggested, in Chiapas “land and peasants were the two main symbols around which an array of demands, discourses, identities, and actions were structured” before the public emergence of the EZLN in 1994.⁷²

Part of the attraction for the tens of thousands of active Oaxacan supporters that emerged in the following years, and part of the reason for Oaxacan political leaders to fear the new insurgency and its spread, was precisely because of the way groups like the

counterhegemonic bloc. See Gilberto López y Rivas, *Nación y Pueblos Indios en Neoliberalismo*, (Plaza y Valdes Editores, 1995). Maldonado said that autonomy was never about secession, and wouldn’t “lead [indigenous people] to automatically demand their independence as a nation. It [would] simply strengthen their presence as a people in a pluricultural nation.” Maldonado, *Autonomía y Comunalidad India*, 17. That’s how many scholars have seen the demands of the Zapatistas, including Josefina Maria Saldana-Portillo. See Josefina Maria Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Age of Development* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

⁷¹ This reading paraphrases that of Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Age of Development*. As Christine Eber, and using Harvey 1994 write, the 1970s movements were often (indigenous) peasants confronting elite indigenous *caciques*. See Christine Eber, “Buscando una Nueva Vida: Liberation Through Autonomy in San Pedro Chenaló, 1970-1998,” *Latin American Perspectives* 28.2 (2001): 48.

⁷² Sonia Toledo Tello and Anna Maria Garza Caligaris, “Gender and Stereotypes in the Social Movements of Chiapas,” in *Dissident Women: Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas* (Austin: University of Texas Press: 2006), 98.

Zapatistas organized not only as peasants or workers but in the way they threaded together different forms of oppression. As Oaxacan scholar Benjamin Alvarado Maldonado, for instance, has argued that the rise of the Zapatistas re-awakened long-repressed “Indian utopias” of racial unity, ethnic diversity and autonomy, and collective power. After all, “We’re all Indians!” or “We’re all Marcos!” were the chants that characterized the solidarity actions throughout Mexico in the years following the uprising.⁷³ The Zapatistas, in short, forged an explosive mix of race and class that threatened to establish, for the Mexican ruling classes, a dangerous precedent as an inspiration for popular and indigenous movements throughout the country. When both the EZLN and their counterparts from the Mexican congress agreed to a constitutional pact referred to as the San Andrés accords in 1996, Zedillo refused to implement it, suggesting that indigenous autonomy would “balkanize” the country.⁷⁴

The Zapatistas challenged many Mexicans’ ideas of national unity and identity, as did the liberalized economy and its ramifications on the poor. Liberalization not only forced indigenous people and other peasants off their land, it forced them to migrate internationally, splitting up families and even altering national loyalties. The number of

⁷³ See Barabas, “La Lucha Indígena en Oaxaca” for more on the racial impact of the Zapatistas. See also Saldaña -Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination*, for more on solidarity marches. “Marcos” was *Subcomandante* Marcos, the charismatic spokesman of the organization.

⁷⁴ See the introduction of Chapter 4 for more on how the Zapatistas affected political discourse on national unity. Quoted in Alejandro Anaya Munoz, “The Emergence and Development of the Politics of Recognition of Cultural Diversity and Indigenous Peoples in Mexico: Chiapas and Oaxaca in Comparative Perspective,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37 (2005): 587, cited from Moisés Franco Mendoza, “The debate concerning indigenous rights in Mexico,” in *The Challenge of Diversity: Indigenous Peoples and Reform of the States in Latin America*, 68-72.

immigrant Mexicans living in the United States more than doubled between 1980 and 2001, and by the late 1990s, Mexico had “the highest emigration rate in the world.”⁷⁵ The biggest emigration spike happened immediately after NAFTA. As the U.S. government militarized its national border in the 1990s and 2000s (in response to anti-immigrant panic and to ensure, it said, national security, it failed to accomplish what it called its primary goal: to curtail immigration. But it did curtail cyclical migration. The risky border passage simply made migrants stay in the U.S., further distancing millions of Mexicans from their home, not only for a few years but for lifetimes.⁷⁶ Migration and “transborder” communities challenged and changed older ideas of Mexican national identity, and the racism migrants encountered only heightened anxieties about U.S. dominance over Mexicans. In the early 1990s, when NAFTA was often the lead story in the pages of *Noticias*, racism in the U.S. against Mexican immigrants was often on page two.⁷⁷

Oaxaca was important in these questions of national unity because of its indigenous population and proximity to Chiapas as well as its growing identity as a major labor exporter. It was especially important, though, because of its place in the

⁷⁵ Ann Aurelia López, *The Farmworkers' Journey* (Berkeley: university of California Press, 2007), 4. Her figures come from Armas (2002) and Durand (2000), 4.

⁷⁶ Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican immigration in an Era of Economic Integration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003).

⁷⁷ That anti-immigrant panic produced, among other things, Proposition 187 (the “Save our State” initiative), a law which passed in California which would have cut all social services to undocumented immigrants. It was ruled unconstitutional in 1997. For transborder identity see Stephen, *Transborder Lives*.

debates over indigenous self-governance in the mid and late 1990s. In a move that many indigenous leaders and future CIPO organizers saw as a government attempt government to dilute support for the San Andrés Accords, the state government amended laws twice, in 1995 and in 1998, to allow indigenous municipalities and communities to choose leaders through indigenous *usos y costumbres* (“ways and customs”) rather than through the official party system. The specter of indigenous governance provoked major debates about national unity, with even leftist intellectuals, like Roger Bartra, suggesting that *usos y costumbres* would result in violent lawlessness and chaos.⁷⁸ It also divided the emerging indigenous organizations inspired by the Zapatistas. Gustavo Esteva, an EZLN advisor and prominent Mexican intellectual (and Oaxaca resident), worked closely with Diodoro Carrasco to implement the policy, and moderate indigenous intellectuals whose organizations never engaged in direct action to pressure the state, were prominent supporters.⁷⁹ CIPO leaders saw them as helping the state government paint itself as pro-indigenous, even if the legal changes were mostly cosmetic. Even the most-moderate CIPO founder opposed the law and suggested in 1999 that the conflict between organizations created a “fissure, like a wound,” that “remains open.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Bartra was only one of several prominent left-leaning intellectuals. See Hernández-Castillo, et al., *Dissident Women*.

⁷⁹ Gustavo Esteva, interview with the author, Oaxaca City, Oaxaca, June 29, 2010.

⁸⁰ Sergio Sarmiento y Claudia E.G. Rangel Lozano, “El Movimiento Indio Frente al Dilema del Reconocimiento,” in Lourdes de León Pasquel, *Costumbres, Leyes, y Movimiento Indio en Oaxaca y*

Though the *usos y costumbres* debate had spurred considerable anxiety in Mexico about the imminent fracturing of the nation, autonomy never meant separatism. It did mean, however, indigenous control over natural resources, land, and regional economies as well as cultural independence, which CIPO would soon argue for, and none of which the government's re-worked law provided for. As one Oaxacan scholar has suggested, indigenous autonomy – like that outline in the Zapatistas' San Andres Accords with the government – was never about secession, and wouldn't "lead [indigenous people] to automatically demand their independence as a nation. It will simply strengthen their presence as a people in a pluricultural nation."⁸¹ They began to see indigenous peoples, and not the Mexican nation nor the "workers" of that nation, as the central actor in a broad-based struggle for justice. In doing so they exposed the exclusions in nationalist ideologies, exclusions which had led to tensions between nationalist revolutionaries and indigenous people in almost all the recent Latin American national liberation efforts, like in Peru, Guatemala, and, most prominently, in Nicaragua.⁸² One of the earliest Mexican organizations to embrace indigeneity and

Chiapas, (CIESAS, Miguel A. Porrúa: México, 2001): 283. For a brief discussion of CIPO's view of its "paternalism" see Alejandro Anaya Munoz, "The Emergence and Development of the Politics of Recognition of Cultural Diversity and Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Mexico: Chiapas and Oaxaca in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 37 (2005) 585-610: 590-592.

⁸¹ Benjamín Maldonado Alvarado, *Autonomía y Comunalidad India: Enfoques y Propuestas Desde Oaxaca* (Oaxaca: Conaculta-Inah: CEDI: Movimiento Pedagógico Plan Piloto SMPPIO: Secretaria des Asuntos Indígenas, 2002), 17. That's how many scholars have seen the demands of the Zapatistas, including Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Age of Development*.

⁸² Stavenhagen, in "Indigenous People and the State," argued that In Guatemala, the guerrillas never fully recovered from their lack of initial attention to indigenous organizing;

develop a vision of autonomy, in fact, took its model from those indigenous efforts to institutionalize autonomy inside Sandinista state in Nicaragua.⁸³

Another reason Oaxaca was at the center of anxieties about national unity in the 1990s was because of its central role in attempting to dislodge the PRI from its 60-year grip on power in Mexico. In 1977 Oaxacans successfully deposed a PRI governor. In 1983, a popular organization made up of students, workers, peasants, and others successfully elected a left-wing city government – the first non-PRI party to rule a municipality in the nation that was not the conservative PAN. In addition, the teachers of the state effectively challenged the PRI leadership of the enormous national teacher's union, and formed their own, independent, and anti-PRI local in Oaxaca in the 1980s. Finally, the biggest social movement of the era, the national, and international, indigenous movement, was rooted in states like Oaxaca, with groups like the Movement for Triqui Unification and Struggle (MULT) and others forming.

For many of the 1990s-era organizations who took up mantle of the earlier groups, the preoccupations with national unity and the economic uncertainties had everything to do with national sovereignty. To many popular organizations and the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD), the main left-leaning political party, the neoliberal shift in the country's governing classes was closely linked to national leaders' betrayal of popular interests to the money and power of the "colossus to the North" and to supra-governmental organizations like the IMF, GATT/WTO, and World Bank. It

⁸³ Mentioned in Hernández-Castillo, et al., "Introduction" in *Dissident Women*.

seemed like everything was on the table. In 1992 the Salinas government undid decades-old commitments to redistribute land, and in late 1993, Salinas passed through the PRI Congress legislation to undo restrictions on “coastal and border property,” the law of which called “once the bulwark of Mexican economic nationalism.”⁸⁴ In a rally at the Mexico City Zocalo in the early 1990s, Cuahtémoc Cárdenas, the PRD leader, suggested that Mexicans take up a “national collection ... to buy one or a few petrochemical businesses,” as the neoliberals were threatening to sell to foreigners the national oil company first nationalized by Cárdenas’s father in 1938. The rally was attended by future CIPO affiliates and allies like CODEP, FAC-MLN, the independent truckers from Mexico City’s Route 100, and the CNTE, the national, democratic network of teachers highly influential in the Oaxacan teachers’ local, Section 22.⁸⁵

Many of these Oaxacan organizations appealed to national unity in the face of U.S.-based threats to sovereignty. Rural teachers have a long history of important roles in Mexican rural politics, and many early CIPO organizers were teachers or otherwise linked to CNTE.⁸⁶ In fact, many of the organizers in the *Magonista* Social Movement

⁸⁴ Richard Krooth, *Mexico, NAFTA, and the Hardships of Progress* (New York: McFarland & Company, 1995), 295. One of CIPO’s prominent campaigns in the early 2000s would be precisely to defend peasant lands taken by hotel developers around coastal resort of Huatulco, and almost every major CIPO conflict in the next few years revolved around access to land.

⁸⁵ CODEP (Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the People); FAC-MLN (Broad Front for the Construction of a National Liberation Movement); CNTE (National Coordination of Education Workers).

⁸⁶ Guillermo Palacios, *La Pluma y El Arado: Los Intelectuales pedagogos y La Construcción Sociocultural Del “Problema Campesino” in México, 1932-1934* (Mexico, D.F.: Centro de Estudio Históricas, Colegio de México: División de Estudios Políticos, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, 1999).

(MSM), a group inside CIPO between 1999 and mid-2001, met as activists in the CNTE between 1995 and 1998.⁸⁷ There, they undoubtedly encountered the popular nationalism of the organization. In 1995, the CNTE in Oaxaca denounced how PRI government “subordinated the country to the interests of the U.S. government and the monopolies and international financial institutions.” “The last constitutional reforms,” it argued, “facilitated the road for the implementation of NAFTA” which has handed over the “natural and social wealth” of the country to foreign interests.⁸⁸ “The globalization of the economy,” and the PRI government’s response to it, declared the Secretary-General of Local 22 to the CNTE in 1997, “flagrantly violates the elemental rights of man in our country.”⁸⁹ Another organization, the (Communist) Union of Poor Peasants (UCP) wrote that “big foreign investment and exploitation of [natural] resources” has meant that “forests, minerals, coastline, etc., are being mortgaged and blatantly sold to transnational capital and with it gradually losing the sovereignty, identity, and heritage of Oaxacans.”⁹⁰

In a world of economic globalization, the Latin American left’s old model of state-planning and sheltered industrialization resonated less and less after the defeat of the Sandinistas, the authoritarian turn of the Cuban government, and the post-Cold War

⁸⁷ See chapter four for more on the MSM.

⁸⁸ Local 22/CNTE, “Documento Único de Orientación a Las Bases,” June 1995, 2, archives of Sección 22.

⁸⁹ “Mensaje Político del Secretario General de la Sección 22 al IV Congreso Estatal de la CNTE,” Oaxaca, Oct. 10, 1997, 1-10: 1, 3, archives of Sección 22.

⁹⁰ UCP, boletín, archives of Sección 22.

hype about transnational flows and global economies.⁹¹ Just as the CNTE and others framed Oaxacan reality in terms of a loss of national sovereignty, CIPO began to de-center the nation-state and re-work the category of class, long central to the Latin American left's efforts.

Due to the growth of the indigenous movement in the 1990s, even the organizations who advocated for the *pueblo trabajador* and "popular" and "national" unity to preserve national sovereignty began to include indigenous rights, and at least limited autonomy, in their political vision. The (Communist) Union of Poor Farmworkers (UCP), for instance, repeated well-worn Marxist ideas in the mid-1990s that indigenous agriculture was "backwards" and "primitive." They argued for the power of unity between industrial and rural workers in Oaxaca, the latter identifying themselves not as ethnically particular indigenous people but as a class of landless *campesinos*. At the same time, though, the UCP both recognized the importance of (limited) indigenous autonomy, and seemed to acknowledge Sandinista mistakes in forcing the state-coordinated collectivization of indigenous and peasant agriculture. That imposed collectivization, in which the Sandinistas hoped to develop proletarian consciousness and class unity in the countryside in the early 1980s, led to mass unrest amongst Miskitus and other Nicaraguan indigenous groups. The UCP, in the same document in

⁹¹ Ed McCaughan, *Reinventing Revolution: The Renovation of Left Discourse in Cuba and Mexico* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

which it suggested Oaxacan agriculture was primitive, suggested that Oaxacan peasants should collectivize production, “but only if they want to.”⁹²

The state’s grassroots political dynamism, this chapter shows, was framed by a Mexican political economy that, despite reassurances from its PRI leaders, was dependent on the U.S. and vulnerable to that country’s political and economic manipulations. Just as the U.S., since the 1800s, maintained in the twentieth century an exploitative relation with Mexico that resembled those of the colonial past, indigenous states like Oaxaca and Chiapas endured a sort of “internal colonialism” inside the country that made hierarchies of race, ethnicity, and class altogether apparent for many Mexicans. This long history of racial and class subjugation influenced the way CIPO organizers articulated a race, class, and national political vision and helped it resonate with thousands of Oaxacans.

“The Hurricane of Neoliberalism”: the First Era of CIPO-RFM

As in Chiapas, “land and peasants” were two of the key symbols in the popular organizing scene in Oaxaca before the 1990s, but the organizations that would help create CIPO in 1997 increasingly acknowledged the indigenous question in the years after 1992 Columbus Quincentennial and the 1994 emergence of the Zapatistas. Like the

⁹² A later statement in Zedillo/Carrasco suggests that Oaxacan agriculture is “primitive, backwards.” See chapter four for more analysis of why ideas of indigeneity became more prominent in Oaxacan popular organizations in the 1990s.

Mexican Marxists of much of the twentieth century, they couched their working-class organizing in a context of U.S. imperialists and traitorous, Gringo-loving Mexican elites. Unlike in the U.S., where appeals to America were overtures to the political right, in Mexico and in many countries on the bottom end of the imperial order, nationalist appeals were part and parcel of the left. All the founding CIPO organizations could agree on the imperial aspects of the neoliberal order. But they didn't necessarily agree on who should lead the struggle against it.

CIPO was formed in early 1997 when Alejandro Cruz, the leader and founder of OIDHO (Indian Organization of Human Rights of Oaxaca); Carlos Beas, the leader and founder of UCIZONI (Union of Zapotec Communities of the Northern Isthmus); and Catarino Torres Pereda, leader of the newly formed CODECI (Committee for the Defense of the Citizenry) gathered to launch a statement and public action on April 7, 1997. All of the organizations were heavily indigenous and all dealt closely with indigenous peoples' rights to land, particularly in the face of rural *caciques*, and all supported the Zapatistas and had traveled to Chiapas less than a year earlier for the EZLN's first "Intergalactic" meeting, the Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism, one of the crucial founding moments of anti-neoliberal discourse and action in the Americas.⁹³ The impetus for the early action was to make clear their unity in support of the EZLN and opposition to the militarization of the Mexican south, which had recently been

⁹³ Confidential interviews; and untitled declaration (the first CIPO public statement), CODECI, OIDHO, UCIZONI, April 7, 1997, OIDHO archives.

sharpened with the emergence of another guerrilla force in the region, the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR).⁹⁴

Despite their budding unity in 1997, the histories of the early CIPO leaders varied widely, and their organizational forms differed as well. Beas, who came to Oaxaca after his college years, had studied economics in the 1970s at the UNAM in Mexico City, a center of student leftism as well as power-broking for up-and-coming politicians. In the city, Beas had acquainted himself with anarchism through the *Colectivo Regeneración*, a network of longtime anarchists who kept up the publishing of *Regeneración*, the paper Flores Magón's Mexican Liberal Party founded. During Mexico's Dirty War in the late 1970s, Beas fled the country a number of times, and came to the Oaxacan Isthmus in the early 1980s to live and work in indigenous communities. He and others founded UCIZONI in 1983 as part of a struggle against caciques in San Juan Guichicovi.⁹⁵

Beas and UCIZONI would increasingly create political forms that revolved around indigenous, and not only Zapotec or even Isthmus-based, political identities. In 1987, he co-published a short book titled *The Indian Movement and Magonismo in Mexico*, and UCIZONI slowly started to extend beyond its Zapotec communities in the late 1980s. At the time, for instance, the group asserted that its mission was not only to manage production resources or undermine *caciques*, but to do battle in historically indigenous

⁹⁴ The EPR launched its first attacks in 1996 in Oaxaca.

⁹⁵ Confidential interviews; UCIZONI will soon be publishing a history of the organization. I thank Carlos Beas for sending me a copy of the manuscript.

struggles for the “defense of natural resources, the defense of human rights, and defense of the cultures of the indigenous communities in the northern zone of the Isthmus,” a statement which likely meant Zapotec as well as Mixe communities in the region.⁹⁶ The organization increasingly conducted all meetings in Mixe or Zapotec in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it incorporated an indigenous cultural center into the group, and it increasingly, like the Zapatistas, included “indigenous autonomy” as one of its claims.⁹⁷

UCIZONI and the other groups had always argued that the 1492 conquest was an invasion that led to centuries of economic and racial subjugation for indigenous peoples. UCIZONI was one of the two dozen organizations that helped create the indigenous response to the Mexican government’s celebratory plans for the 500th anniversary of the Spanish invasion of the country in 1992. Instead of seeing it as the start of a profound “sharing of cultures,” UCIZONI, through regional and national networks of the recently formed Indigenous Council - 500 Years of Resistance, organized events throughout 1992, punctuated by a major march on Mexico City from many regions of the country. As one observer wrote about the UCIZONI-coordinated march from neighboring Guerrero, many kinds of indigenous people gathered for the multi-week march to the capital, many with no shoes and with no money.

⁹⁶ Jorge Hernández-Díaz, *Reclamos de la Identidad: la formación de las organizaciones indígenas en Oaxaca* (Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca: M. A. Porrúa, 2001), 222.

⁹⁷ Confidential interview, 2010.

The threat of new aggression against indigenous peoples, like “peaceful conquest” measures by the U.S., gained prominence in the wake of national *Salinismo* and the enhanced freedoms of transnational speculators in the neoliberal era. In 1992, Beas wrote to *Noticias* to document how indigenous people of many ethnic backgrounds in the South were uniting against foreign threats. Some allies, linked to the Puebla/Tlaxcala local of the Indigenous Council - 500 Years of Resistance, marched around 26 miles to meet with local indigenous representatives battling the German investor Klaus Feldman, who was trying to privatize 1300 acres of indigenous land. The struggle between the government, Feldman, and indigenous people in Oaxaca and the neighboring state of Puebla had already cost ten lives and threatened more. “The representatives of the community,” the UCIZONI leader wrote of the initial encounter between the marchers and the local leaders, “welcomed the marchers in Náhuatl, [and] the greeting was responded to in the Mixe language.” In response to UCIZONI’s increasingly pan-ethnic efforts, the state government published arrest warrants for several of the group’s members, a common tactic to try to silence indigenous and social organizations.

CODECI, in contrast, organized indigenous people but identified only secondarily on ethnicity or pan-ethnic indigeneity, casting itself instead as a “citizen’s” group. A small group of men founded CODECI in 1995 in the tropical pineapple country of northern Oaxaca, and it organized primarily in the refugee communities of indigenous

Chatinos and Mazatecs who were displaced by the government's enormous *Cerro de Ojo* dam in the 1970s. One of CODECI's founders and current leaders, Catarino Torres Pereda, was the son of a regional peasant leader who organized indigenous resistance to the dam in 1974, and eventually tried, and failed, to win political office in Tuxtepec. It's likely that Torres Pereda and others, including his brothers, were part of informal networks of Marxists and dissident leaders in Oaxaca, and, Torres Pereda had worked in the Secretary of Agrarian Reform, the institution the PRI had created to defend peasants.⁹⁸

CODECI, like most social organizations, tried to take advantage of the momentum of the Zapatistas, but the organization's political approach reflected less the influence of the indigenous-identifying Zapatista movement and more of the populist nationalism of the emerging national network of the Francisco Villa Popular Front and its local "defense committees," mostly in Mexico's mestizo north.⁹⁹ Torres Pereda and CODECI leaders centered their activities on demanding government support for what they sometimes called the "development" of peasant and indigenous areas.¹⁰⁰ Indeed,

⁹⁸ Confidential interviews, 2010.

⁹⁹ Torres Pereda's first organizational effort after the Zapatista uprising was the Independent Peasant Movement.

¹⁰⁰ The term "development" was almost never used in CIPO contexts, as most of the other organizations' demands and public pronouncements were much more revolutionary in nature. That is, they expressed the need for fundamental changes, not the tamer idea of fostering economic development. In one case that reflects the dynamic, a leader explains that the problem is that "the government has stopped investing in productive programs" so he proposed "real investment in the country side" with projects around the Camedor Palm and organic coffee that would "allow for indigenous people to have meat at hand" to eat rather than less nutritious food. Pedro Valle Meza, "Preocupa a Organizaciones Sociales

of all the early CIPO organizations, CODECI was perhaps the one most amenable to making deals with the government.¹⁰¹ One of the early CODECI leaders told me that as they decided how to conceptualize their germ of an organization in 1995, they considered the northern defense committees in places like Coahuila, even Zacatecas, Nuevo Leon, and we copied them in name, but instead of using “popular” we used “citizenry,” in order to include everyone, from miners, to workers, the teachers’ union, peasants, the indigenous, women. Popular implied something totally more urban, like popular neighborhoods (*colonias populares*) on the outskirts of urban areas. It didn’t imply the peasant movement and we understood citizenry as a generalizable term, universal, plus it recovers the citizen character that we all have, which means after 18 years everyone shares that, being a citizen.¹⁰²

OIDHO, like UCIZONI, developed as a self-identified indigenous organization, although in a human rights framework developed through founder Alejandro Cruz, a lawyer who defended indigenous peoples’ legal claims, usually for land, through the court system. Cruz, a Zapotec-speaking man from the town of Xanica in the southern

Pobreza de los Pueblos Indígenas,” *Horizonte 2000, Periodismo de Verdad*, Sept. 6, 1999, 3-4. The early news coverage of the organization, for instance, recounted various instances that involved Torres Pereda opposing PRI institutions. In one, after peasants linked to CODECI confront peasants linked to the “official” PRI peasant organization (the CNC), Torres Pereda and the CNC leader are cajoled into negotiating by government administrators. See Eloy Pacheco López, “Recrudescen Disputas por Límites de Tierras,” *El Correo de Sotavento*, Jan. 25, 1996. Others CODECI articles appeared in *Las Noticias de Oaxaca* and *Cantera* (Oaxaca, Oax.). I thank CODECI for allowing me peruse some of their files.

¹⁰¹ CODECI, for instance, had a close relationship to the Union of Democratic Peasants, an organization linked to the PRD and one of the early founding members of CIPO.

¹⁰² Confidential interview, 2010. Their language of the universality of the term citizen, one former CIPO activist told me in 2010, was striking for its “western” basis.

Oaxaca mountains, was influenced by Oaxacan liberation theology in the 1980s, a arena influenced by the Maoism of the day as well. Like most of the influential founding leaders of CIPO, had a university education or some kind of professional training. Like CODECI and UCIZONI, a major part of OIDHO's early action was to defend indigenous land rights from *caciques* with access to markets and key political connections. With its phrase "Enough of the Repression and Misery in the Indigenous Pueblos" and through occupations of the public plaza, marches, and legal work, the organization succeeded in at least saving some of the 57,000 hectares that *cacique* cattle ranchers had nearly privatized and taken from communal landholders in Trinidad de Yaveo, Oaxaca, in the early 1990s.¹⁰³

The personal networks that founded CIPO took shape after the Zapatistas rose up in 1994. Torres Pereda had been introduced to Cruz by a peasant villager they knew in common in northern Oaxaca, and Pereda had attended OIDHO's 28-day walking march to Mexico City in February of 1995. Other early leaders, like Raúl Gatica, also ran into each other at Zapatista solidarity events, and participated together in the Zapatista-solidarity coalition COIAC, and likely attended the (Zapatista-impulsed) State Indigenous Forums of Oaxaca, which happened yearly in the mid 1990s.¹⁰⁴ Though the original, isolated action in April was created by only CODECI, OIDHO, and UCIZONI, and the name

¹⁰³ Confidential interview. Photo from OIDHO office wall, August 2010, with picket signs and their "Basta" phrase, a term that soon exploded in popularity when the Zapatistas opened their first declaration with "Ya Basta!," or "Enough already!"

¹⁰⁴ Confidential interviews, 2010.

CIPO had yet to be created, through the rest of the year Gatica, a leader of the Marxist CODEP organization, sought entry as well.¹⁰⁵

Though the organizations and their leaders were considerably different, the entry of CODEP had perhaps the most profound impact in the long run. CODEP, created in 1994, stemmed from the reconfiguration of class-based “popular” organizing groups in the 1980s Mixteca. The first emergence of the groups emerged with a struggle against the PRI-led privatization of the Lázaro Cárdenas school in the late 1970s in Tlaxiaco, a regional trade center in the Mixteca. There, the Tlaxiaco Popular Unity (UPT) formed in 1983, and soon after it grew and broadened its work to the entire Mixteca region, and called itself Popular Mixtecan Unity (UPM). Both groups staged marches and rallies throughout the Mixteca, seeking to build unity between rural and urban workers and defeat PRI-linked *caciques*.¹⁰⁶ During the 1986 *Carnaval* celebration in Putla, near the Guerrero border, loyalists of a PRI *cacique* attacked a UPM march, who had led peasant land occupations of *cacique* fields. A bullet grazed the stomach of one future CIPO leader, and five members were killed.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Confidential interview, 2010.

¹⁰⁶ Confidential interview, 2009. The time was a moment of relatively strong agrarian protest, nationally, as April 10 became a big day, demanding new agrarian reforms. In Oaxaca, protesters tried to occupy the agrarian reform building. In Tuxtepec, land conflict was common in these years. See Brunk, *Posthumous*, 215-216.

¹⁰⁷ CIPO-RFM to Dr. José Luis Soberanes, “Carta Solicitando la Intervención del Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos,” Dec. 2, 2003. <http://www.nodo50.org/cipo/documentos/cipo48.htm>. Accessed May 19, 2010.

Most Oaxacan villages in the 1980s, were extremely isolated from state programming, since federal monies that went to the poor state went directly to the state government, and corruption and social control tactics made it so little money ever reached the villages. But inside rural Oaxaca a distinctly transnational radical left took shape in the 1980s, which fed the efforts of the UPT, UPM, UCIZONI and probably the other organizations as well. A significant number of radicals descended to places like Oaxaca in the 1970s and 1980s from elsewhere in Mexico, because social discontent in rural areas was relatively easy to tap and Maoist influences led many (and most famously *Subcomandante* Marcos of the Zapatistas) to peasant areas. Some had even been to China to better understand Chinese Maoism, and one, Florencio Medrano, tried to set up a Maoist encampment on the Oaxaca - Veracruz border in the 1970s.¹⁰⁸

The revolutionary process (and 1979 victory) of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua led much of the Mexican and Oaxacan Marxist left to find ways to collaborate across borders. In some cases, Mexicans who wanted to fight or train in revolutionary settings in Nicaragua and El Salvador faked car crashes or otherwise feigned death to hide any traces of themselves as they went South. With the volatility throughout Central America at the time, the solidarity and transnational nature of the Mexican left – which had always been the home of radical exiles and revolutionary staging grounds – fed even the

¹⁰⁸ Ramón “Tianguis” Pérez, *Diary of a Guerrilla*, translated by Dick J. Reavis. (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1999); Matthew Rothwell, *Transpacific Revolutionaries: the Chinese Revolution in Latin America* (Ph.D. Diss. University of Illinois-Chicago, 2009).

seemingly isolated left of a state like Oaxaca.¹⁰⁹ The UPT/UPM circles, with probably the closest relations to Mexican Marxism, allied with the trotskyist Revolutionary Workers' Party (PRT), the Plan de Ayala National Coordinator (CNPA) in the 1980s and 1990s, and participated in the major national mobilizations against the austerity programs of neoliberalizing Mexico in the 1980s and early 1990s.¹¹⁰

By the early 1990s much of the transnational action declined, however. One movement veteran said that "In 1988 the old discussion about elections" came up in the Marxist left, this time with respect to the presidential candidature of a left-oriented candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. The "reformists" of the left, as he called them, won the debate, pulling in much of the revolutionary left. With the 1988 fraud, however, Cárdenas failed to gain the presidency, and the Mexican Marxist left, after so much effort invested in the campaigns, lost its moorings. The fall of the Soviet Union, too, led Mexican Marxists to re-think much of what they had assumed or considered scientifically certain in Marxism.¹¹¹ Though between 1989 and 1992 the development of the anti-bicentennial indigenous organizations developed ties with indigenous groups

¹⁰⁹ Several interviews with CIPO-linked veterans led me to these conclusions. I also thank Luis Hernández Navarro for helpfully orienting me on many of these points. State policy also nurtured the arrival of leftists from other parts of the country. The Mexican government created the new CONASUPO community stores and kitchens to help stop out migration, and for a variety of reasons, leftists, including former political prisoners, took jobs in the Oaxaca communities and often organized in local contexts. The CONASUPO facilities also meant government pick-up trucks, which proved to be crucial resources for organizers, including in UCIZONI, needing quick transportation to other communities.

¹¹⁰ Confidential interview, 2009.

¹¹¹ Confidential interview, 2010.

throughout the hemisphere, the momentum declined quickly after 1992. In addition, the Sandinista election loss in 1990 and the peace negotiations elsewhere in Central America led those movements to look inward. Though the Zapatista insurgency in 1994 facilitated spectacular displays of international solidarity and exchange, by the time CIPO initiated its activities in 1997 the EZLN and Oaxacan solidarity groups mostly concentrated on contesting the low-intensity war in the Mexican hinterlands.¹¹²

For some Mexican Marxists, including some in UPM - CODEP circles in the early 1990s, the question of who would lead the revolutionary struggle in southern Mexico became increasingly a question for serious debate. With fading faith in the proletariat as a revolutionary subject, even with a peasant ally, some began to formulate an idea of “popular power,” which could include peasants, indigenous people, workers, and others.¹¹³ One of those groups was CODEP, which stemmed from the UPM and officially formed in 1993 as the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the People, and it organized largely around class and sought to develop “Proletarian and Popular Power” in Oaxaca.

In part because of its efforts to broaden itself through the popular, CODEP was formed as an alliance of several sectors. One of its strongest bases was in the teachers’

¹¹² Confidential interviews, 2010.

¹¹³ Confidential interview, 2010.

union, but it also had what it called a “peasant” and a “popular” base.¹¹⁴ The organization, as with other early member organizations of CIPO, advanced class-based, anti-poverty projects in highly indigenous areas. In some cases, it organized the unemployed, or taxi drivers in regional cities like Tlaxiaco or Putla. In the latter campaigns, CODEP had to face off with the state government – which regulated the industry and granted taxi licenses – as well as battle the “official” unions, many of whom were accustomed to defending their privileges with arms.¹¹⁵ CODEP’s overall goal in the early 1990s was to push Oaxacans “[t]o go beyond the struggle for economic, social, union, and [immediate] demands” and convert those struggles into “popular power,” to seek state power and plant the “seeds” of a new order.¹¹⁶

By 1990, some organizers and intellectuals in the UPM-CODEP circles heard about Marcos and the Zapatistas’ turned toward indigenous collective identity in Chiapas, and in the following years these Oaxacans went to the Zapotec Sierra Norte to get a sense of the indigenous organizing of leaders like Joel Aquino and Floriberto Díaz.¹¹⁷ Though CODEP remained an organization based on class, it increasingly referred

¹¹⁴ Confidential interview, 2009. CODEP, “Poder Proletario y Popular,” circa 1994, Raúl Gatica personal archive.

¹¹⁵ Confidential interview, 2009.

¹¹⁶ CODEP, “Diputados de Partido o Diputados del Pueblo,” circa late 1994; PODER-M, “Manifiesto Rumbo al congreso 4 y 5 de febrero,” circa early 1990s. I thank the former member who allowed me to get copies of the documents.

¹¹⁷ Confidential interview, 2010. They heard about the EZLN embrace of indigeneity through personal networks in the southern Mexican liberation theology scene.

to indigenous solidarity and the indigenous nature of the organization in the mid-1990s and after the Zapatista uprising. Organizers referred to the group, for instance, as a “mostly indigenous” organization, in 1994. At the end of 1994 it claimed to consist of Mixtecs, Amuzgos, Tacuates, Triquies, and Nahuatls.¹¹⁸ The group also created an indigenous human rights center in Putla in the early 1990s. The center was directly associated with the threats to human rights faced by indigenous people in the Mixteca.”¹¹⁹ In 1994, CODEP adopted the “five stars of the five indigenous groups” insignia, and chose yellow, the color of the sun, as its color, and CODEP hosted its “First Assembly of Indigenous Peoples” in 1995.¹²⁰ Though CODEP remained a democratic centralist Marxist organization, the Zapatistas in the early 1990s had led some in the organization’s circles to sense the possibilities of understanding Marxism and social change as led by indigenous peoples.

The organizations that founded CIPO, then, understood the neoliberal moment of the 1990s in a variety of ways. Their approach to the government, their ideological histories, their regions of the state – from the Mixteca, Cuenca, Isthmus, and southern mountains – all generated different priorities and conceptualizations. One thing they could agree on was the need to work together to protect themselves from the

¹¹⁸ The form of this pamphlet, and the way CODEP list all the kinds of people they’re appealing to, is new for CODEP and directly resembles the way the Zapatistas and, later, CIPO, articulated the diversity of contemporary Mexican identities and organizations.

¹¹⁹ “Nuu Saavi,” as CODEP organizers noted, is the Mixtec word for “the Mixteca.”

¹²⁰ CODEP, “Encuentro,” circa mid-1990s, Raúl Gatica personal archive.

increasingly violent government attacks on social organizations, attacks that it justified as part of its anti-guerrilla efforts against resurgent guerrillas in Mexico with the EPR (Popular Revolutionary Army). Another thing they could agree on was the intensity of the threats from abroad – and especially from U.S. capitalists in the age of NAFTA – and the way they challenged not only the poor or indigenous but also the nation. In the first-ever statement, without the participation of CODEP, the yet-to-be-named coalition offers a blistering defense of the Zapatistas and their shared goal of the autonomy that would take shape with the implementation of the San Andres accords. Addressed to “the indigenous pueblos of Mexico” and “to *el pueblo* in general,” the alliance writes that

We energetically refute the attitude of the Federal Government ... which is arguing that [the accords] violate the sovereignty of our country, when we realize what really destroys our national sovereignty are neoliberal policies imposed by the federal government in collusion with its North American allies. They are the same economic interests that are currently pushing the so-called “Transsystemic MegaProject” which tries to turn in a strategic zone of our country to foreign interests and to the rich of this country. ... [s]ince [originary peoples] form an essential part of this nation whose sovereignty we will defend in each one of our region against the pillage.

The statement they faxed to *Las Noticias* the November night before the first full CIPO action (as the introductory paragraphs to this chapter describe), exudes a similar kind of anti-imperial anti-globalization. Though the statement is released to coincide with the beginning of the Mexican independence struggle, which makes it only fitting that it refers to national sovereignty, the coalition specifically details the kinds of 1990s-

era imperial practices it condemns. The newly formed CIPO wrote that Mexicans “have been betrayed by those ... who have exercised their domination over us for decades.” In particular, CIPO cites the neoliberalism of “the authoritarian government ... in alliance with national and foreign capital,” whose neoliberal politics “destroy the foundations of our national sovereignty.”¹²¹ With NAFTA and “the countries of the north” and their neoliberal changes, “foreign capital owners ... have total freedom to invest in projects and megaprojects [in Mexico].”

Though the anxieties over the influence of the U.S. are palpable in this and many of the statements, CODEP’s presence is also clear on the Nov. 18 release. Whereas the April statement had almost exclusively focused on protecting indigenous people, this one downplays its ethnic and racial nature. Instead of the “*pueblos* of the world,” the letter is made out to “Oaxacans” and “Compañer@s,” which like refers to co-workers and organizational members. Instead of the citizenry or even indigenous-centered politics, the statement speaks of the “peasants, indigenous, and shantytown residents (*colonos*) in the belts of misery.” In defending the sovereignty of the nation,” the statement says that “the ideas and sentiments of the nation, [are] forged by the poorest, the indigenous, the peasants, the peons, and the workers,” and the nation is threatened by the traitorous political parties serving foreign capital. The document ends with declaring CIPO’s political commitments, and one is “[t]o defend the economy and popular power,” as well as to “[d]efend human and labor rights of indigenous and non-

¹²¹ Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca “Ricardo Flores Magón,” 18 Nov. 1997, 1, ODHIO archives.

indigenous workers.¹²² The Nov. 18, statement, then, reflects a relatively clear class- and “popular” sector influence that CODEP’s aggressive efforts to work its way into the organization.

The organizations all seemed to agree on threats to the nation from the North, just as they agreed on the need to unite to contest the developing low-intensity warfare in southern Mexico. They didn’t always agree, however, on who exactly the conditions threatened the most. The proletariat and its popular sector allies? Citizens? The indigenous? These were the questions that both spoke to the diversity of the coalition, but also suggested how easily race and class identities could overlap in Oaxaca. As the colonial kind of shadow that had so structured Mexican society hovered in the 1990s, for most Oaxacans to be indigenous almost certainly meant to be poor.

CIPO-RFM, as it began to position itself in relation to the state government and amongst the heterogeneous Oaxacan social and political organizations, made it clear from the beginning that it would be a coalition of action.¹²³ Some CIPO members proudly say that the day after the first meeting, on Nov. 17, the group launched in first

¹²² Ibid, 2.

¹²³ There were many organizations in Oaxaca at the time – many tied to the PRI, others part of the growing NGO sector, and others who formed simply to press the government for a single demand, and then faded. Confidential interview, 2010. April 10 was rejuvenated by peasants and popular sector organizations in the early 1980s as a day that commemorated peasant struggle for land. April 10 was the anniversary of the murder of Emiliano Zapata. See Brunk, *The Posthumous Career of Emiliano Zapata*, 212-219. The Democratic Peasant Union also joined in November, but left the emerging *Consejo* after the first mobilization. See OIDHO, “Breve Historia del CIPO,” circa 2001. Confidential interview, 2006.

major action.¹²⁴ Indeed, on Nov. 18, the day after the meeting in which leaders debated associating the organization with Flores Magón, the member organizations staged a march, rally, and a three-day *plantón*, or occupation, in front of the Government Palace in Oaxaca City.¹²⁵ There, indigenous men with bandanas over their faces watched for police aggression as pickup trucks, banners, megaphones, and people from other parts of the state crowded in front of the house of representatives on their way to the palace. One of the coalition's first demands was to denounce the "the government policies that apply to indigenous peoples, communities and organizations, characterized by neoliberal economic measures, the imposition of authoritarian and antidemocratic relations, and repressive actions."¹²⁶ The Zapatista's demand for constitutionally granted autonomy and collective rights, as stated in the San Andres Accords, must be met, the new coalition argued.¹²⁷

The social organizations that founded CIPO, though non-violent and, therefore, fundamentally different from the EZLN, also faced a wide variety of threats for supporting the Zapatistas. Unlike the Zapatistas, though, they had little cover for the increased militarization of society, while the Zapatistas continued to enjoy the world

¹²⁴ Confidential interview, 2006.

¹²⁵ Vélez Ascencio, Octavio. "Marcha y plantón del Consejo Indígena frente Palacio de Gobierno," *Noticias*, Nov. 19, 1997, p. 1, 10A. The first march, according to MSM, had 2000 people in different regions of Oaxaca.

¹²⁶ Vélez, "Marcha y Plantón," *Noticias*.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

spotlight. CIPO's early formation was part of a conscious effort to build solidarity for mutual protection, both of the organizations and of Oaxacan indigenous people.¹²⁸ It was also about negotiating resources for the villages these leaders represented. All were experienced negotiators. They all complained, in one negotiation, when the governor sent a *delegado* from the Agency of Agrarian Reform, a mere "second-level [bureaucrat]." ¹²⁹

As discussed earlier, agreeing on a name for the "alliance or convergence" was hardly an easy task for early leaders, and the process of agreeing on CIPO-RFM reflected tensions between the organizations regarding how class, race and indigeneity, and ethnicity fit together. One tension centered, for instance, on the "popular" versus the "indigenous" nature of the council. On the one hand, organizers named it a "council," rather than the more-traditional (and Marxist/Maoist) "front," because it reflected council invoked indigenous collective process, as reflected, as one said, in the councils of elders that were influential in many Oaxacan villages.

On the other hand, it was not only an indigenous organization. The name, after all, was the indigenous *and* popular council, and the contested term popular, loosely translated as "people's," had served as an umbrella term for many poor peoples' organizations in Mexico. It was hardly an invention of CODEP, despite its championing of *poder popular*. Elites and the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, the party that

¹²⁸ Confidential interview, 2007.

¹²⁹ Confidential interview, 2009.

had ruled Mexico for decades, employed it as well. The PRI consistently sought to define and incorporate the “popular” classes and neighborhoods of Mexico into its government-controlled organizations. But it was also an identity of resistance, and the historian-turned-politician Jorge Castañeda suggests that it surfaced in its contemporary form in Mexico the 1980s-era urban movements, which were collaborations of groups of landless squatters and Mexican “students, peasants, Church groups, and women.” Because of the small size of the urban working class in poor countries like Mexico – and that class is Marxism’s traditional historical agent – many movements have consciously identified as “popular,” or of “the people,” to broaden their impact, Castaneda argues. Other Latin American leftists drifted toward the popular classes in the 1960s and 1970s because they viewed unionized urban workers in Latin Americas as sold-out and “co-opted,” “puppets” of Third World states.¹³⁰ In Oaxaca, when “land and peasants” dominated the organizing scene before the 1990s, popular organizations united

¹³⁰ See Castañeda, 243-236. Quotation on 236. See also Paul Lawrence Haber, *Power from Experience: Urban Popular Movements in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico* (University Park, PA; Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Pedro Moctezuma, *Despertares: Comunidad y Organization Urbano Popular en Mexico, 1970-1994* (Mexico: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1999).

workers, peasants, and students.¹³¹ The idea of the popular was the glue that articulated different interests and identities together.¹³²

CODEP, despite its increased acknowledgement of indigenous struggles, remained an organization with sizable popular bases of teachers, students, and other mestizos and urban dwellers. Though it worked with many rural communities, it tended to identify them as peasants (in terms of their place in a class hierarchy) rather than foregrounding their racialization or ethnic identity.¹³³ Some early CIPO leaders wanted to call CIPO a specifically indigenous, and not popular, council, but CODEP succeeded in getting popular added to the name, precisely to appeal to its bases that didn't seem themselves as indigenous.¹³⁴ One of the early newspaper articles about CIPO, the day before the first march, suggests that even at that point they weren't clear on the name.

¹³¹The popular identity was hardly new, though, to Latin American social movements. In post-revolutionary Cuba and in Allende's Chile "popular" institutions were of critical importance. As identified with the UPT and UPM, popular organizing has roots in 1980s-era Oaxaca as well. See also the emergence of the "popular city council" of Juchitán in the early 1980s. See Jeffrey Rubin, *Decentering the Regime: Ethnicity, Radicalism and Democracy in Juchitán, Mexico* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1997).

¹³² One could call it an "ideological pin," as Jean Franco discusses in her cultural history of gender and power in Mexico. See her *Plotting Women*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), xiii. For more on that process in Latin America, see George Yúdice, et al. *One the Edge: The Crisis of Contemporary Latin American Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 8.

¹³³ In addition, it elaborated a vision of "popular power," outside of the political parties, but aimed at state power by building influence in civil society (and not just in cadres or *focos*). This was partly inspired by their understandings of Antonio Gramsci, widely read in the Latin American Left in the 1970s and after. Kristin Norget, in her *Days of Death, Days of Life: Ritual in the Popular Culture of Oaxaca* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), defines "popular" as non-elite actors and groups.

¹³⁴ ODHIO stands for the Indigenous Organization for Human Rights. CODECI stands for the Committee for the Defense of Indigenous Communities.

In some cases in the months after November, organizers and journalists referred to CIPO as the “popular *and* indigenous council of Oaxaca” (italics mine).¹³⁵

Journalists and organizers both elaborated on the indigenous and popular nature of the coalition in the first few months of its existence. In its first public document in November, the council denounced the state government’s politics, “which has as goals the exploitation of the [indigenous peoples] and the sustenance of the political oppression, exclusion and discrimination of indigenous communities and popular sectors.”¹³⁶ While the idea of a “popular sector” was only rarely articulated in CIPO – indeed, even CODEP seemed at least to be distancing itself from the traditional PRI division of society into peasant, worker, and popular “sectors” – even the most indigenous of the organizations saw CIPO not as a coalition that organized only on a racial, or a pan-ethnic, basis, but also included group who saw themselves as class-based peasant or workers’ groups. In some cases, organizers spoke of CIPO as a conglomerate of “indigenous and peasant organizations.”¹³⁷ In OIDHO’s 2001 consideration of the first months of CIPO, it notes how a principal goal of the organization was “pushing for public policies that would benefit the poorest sectors of the state of Oaxaca.” In fact, it

¹³⁵ Even an official letterhead, with a Flores Magón logo, featured the “popular and indigenous,” version, though most organizers referred to it as “popular indigenous council”; Roberto Sanchez Riano to Oaxaca Chamber of Deputies, April 22, 1998. An analysis of early CIPO by the CODEP-linked BFP also wrote it as “popular and indigenous.”

¹³⁶ Vélez, “Pactan coalición organizaciones; hoy, su primera manifestación,” *Noticias*, Nov. 18, 1997.

¹³⁷ Jacobo Ventura, “Agudiza la militarización en Oaxaca, dice UCIZONI,” *El Imparcial*, Nov. 25, 1997, 3A. “Breve Historia,” 1.

doesn't even mention indigenous people in its delineation of the organization's "central" goals in the early period.¹³⁸

On the third and final day of the *plantón*, around 700 CIPO militants marched to the center of Oaxaca to a ceremony honoring the 87th anniversary of the beginning of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. The same day, the powerful archbishop of Oaxaca had declared that the Zapatistas, and *Subcomandante* Marcos, a leader and the globally recognized masked spokesperson of the organization, were "mistaken" and were "confusing the people." CIPO could have received the same government criticism after its Nov. 20th action, because it appropriated governmental symbols of the country's revolutionary past (like Emiliano Zapata) and sought to expose the hypocrisy of an authoritarian party that still claimed to be the inheritor of the Mexican Revolution.¹³⁹ The militants arrived early, and created a parallel, alternative ceremony about the revolution. It honored Flores Magón, who was ultimately repressed by the centralizing leaders of the revolution itself.¹⁴⁰ For CIPO, the Revolution was a "[r]evolution 'betrayed' by the PRI-government."¹⁴¹ At the rally, a *campesina* stood near a CODEP

¹³⁸ "Breve Historia," 1.

¹³⁹ No author, "Equivocados, 'Marcos' del EZLN, considera arzobispo de Oaxaca," *Noticias*, Nov. 21, 1997, 1.

¹⁴⁰ See, for instance, the Salinas government's PRONASOL pamphlets on Mexican history. In particular, the "Social Liberalism" pamphlet discusses the life of Flores Magón, but cuts off in 1909. INDESOL archives, Mexico City, Mexico.

¹⁴¹ Vélez Ascencio, Octavio. "Marchan indígenas otra vez y honran la memoria de Zapata y Flores Magón." *Noticias*, 21 Nov. 2008, p. 1, 10A.

banner that featured hand-painted likenesses of Flores Magón and the peasant leader Zapata, both under the block-printed words “This sky, this flag, this land ... We will defend it with dignity, constructing people’s power [*poder popular*].” Later, after “the peasants left,” as *Noticias* described it, the pomp and circus of the official celebration arrived. The “civic-sports parade” of the government’s event featured dog tricks, bicycle ramps, flags galore, and “pretty horsewomen” posing as the long-revered *Adelita* soldiers. Behind them, solemn columns of the PRI’s official unions paraded in rigidly straight rows.¹⁴²

With its claiming of the legacy of Zapata and Flores Magón, its support for the Zapatistas, and its early visions of collective, indigenous power in the face of the state’s militarization, CIPO-RFM was distinguishing itself in Oaxaca for its militancy. Indeed, other pan-ethnic indigenous organizations, like MICHIZA and ODECO, had been invited to participate in the council, but apparently turned down the offer.¹⁴³ CIPO, with its *plantón*, with its constituent groups’ histories of struggle and their multi-ethnic organizing and work in distant villages around class and race, distinguished itself from other 1990s organizations with its militancy. That was especially the case with the

¹⁴² Carlos Román, “LXXXVII Aniversario del inicio de la Revolución,” *Noticias*, Nov. 21, 1997, 8A.

¹⁴³ “Breve Historia,” 1.

nascent non-governmental organization sector, who some CIPO organizers saw as profiting off the two recent hurricanes by accepting large foreign contracts.¹⁴⁴

In addition, despite its reclaiming of the Mexican Revolution, CIPO rarely articulated the kind of Mexican nationalism like that of the CNTE. The demands from the first *plantón*, for instance, reflect pan-ethnic, racial, and class consciousness, but not in relation to the Mexican national liberation. They much more reflect a framework of the autonomy and self-defense of indigenous peoples, similar to that which the EZLN asserted in the San Andres negotiations with the government. “The first [demand],” one CIPO leader stated, “is the fulfillment of the [San Andres] accords” between the government and the Zapatistas.¹⁴⁵ The second demand at the *plantón* was “for the demilitarization of select regions of Oaxaca and of the country,” and the third a call for what was, in southern Mexico, the foundation of indigenous modes of production: “productive land.”¹⁴⁶

Despite the many distinctions between early CIPO and the Magonista PLM, some of the new leaders’ and organizers’ embrace of the figure nevertheless spoke to their willingness to confront the state if needed. Organizers from other related organization incorporated ideas and images of Flores Magón as well. OIDHO, for instance, used the image and words of Flores Magón, and would develop small production and retail

¹⁴⁴ Gatica, telephone interview with the author, March 2010.

¹⁴⁵ Flores Magón is said to have first created the “Land and Liberty” demand, but Zapata made it famous. San Juan Larrainzar is the village where the San Andres Accords were negotiated.

¹⁴⁶ Jacobo Ventura, “Agudiza la militarización en Oaxaca, dice UCIZONI,” *El Imparcial*, 25 Nov. 1997, 3a.

cooperatives with anarchists in Eloxchitlán, Flores Magón's birthplace, in the late 1990s. ODHQ's ties to one anarchist collective active in Eloxchitlan, in particular, the Mexico City-based CAMA (the Autonomous *Magonista* Collective), led to an important multi-year collaboration between the two groups.¹⁴⁷ In Eloxchitlán, the community put together a "Citizens' Year of Ricardo Flores Magón" starting on Nov. 22, 1997, the anniversary of the day he died in 1922.¹⁴⁸ Many of the early leaders of CIPO's affiliate groups were teachers and had participated in the teachers' union, and the state union's Executive Committee commemorated Flores Magón in 1998 as well. At that time it had a vocal pro-Zapatista faction sympathetic to the idea. CODEP cited Flores Magón as an influence in its 1994 charter, and regularly used his image in their propaganda in the middle and late 1990s.¹⁴⁹ In 1997, a bloc of urban and teachers' groups, including CODEP, used Flores Magón as an influence in elaborating their understanding of neoliberalism and poor peoples' struggle in class terms.¹⁵⁰

A month after its first *plantón*, CIPO upped the ante. CIPO had pulled away after three days of occupying the plaza in November, after Carrasco had promised to attend

¹⁴⁷ Spanish anarchists were also working with CAMA and the Eloxchitlán community. Confidential interview, 2007.

¹⁴⁸ Flores Magón died – probably of assassination – on Nov. 21, and was born on Sept. 16. See <http://www.laneta.apc.org/magon/razones.htm>. The year would end Sept. 16.

¹⁴⁹ CODEP, "Acta Constitutiva," 1994, Raúl Gatica personal archives.

¹⁵⁰ PODER-M, CODEP, BFP. "Documento que la Promotora de la Organización Democrática (sic) y Revolucionaria del Magisterio (PODER-M), miembro del CODEP-BFP, presenta a los camaradas dispuestos a construir la CORRIENTE NACIONAL PROLETARIA DE LOS TRABAJADORES DE LA EDUCACION." (circa 1996), Raúl Gatica personal archives.

to the various demands CIPO brought. The promises Carrasco made had amounted to little. A week later, on Nov. 25, a UCIZONI representative said that “the abuses and violations against indigenous peasants have been constant,” and new actions must be taken, since “international organisms [that] have intervened about human rights” have “not diminished” the aggressions.¹⁵¹ One OIDHO leader suggested that “this is a collective effort that is not [merely] short-term.”¹⁵² CIPO saw a crack in the government’s armor in late December – and dared the state to respond to them with swarms of foreign tourists in the city. That’s when the latter converged on the area for its annual “Night of the Radishes,” a celebration inflected with indigenous cultures, which featured elaborate sculptures of radishes, often next to intricate *tapetes*, or sand-and-flower models sculpted into the ground.

The Oaxacan business class, headed by the commerce association CANACO, was already desperate because of the two hurricanes and the threat of the EPR. All were major factors that kept tourists out Oaxaca, a state where the major foreign investment was not in *maquilas* but in hotel rooms and mezcal, the Oaxacan liquor.¹⁵³ CIPO knew the businessmen, part of the old Oaxaca ruling “Valleystocracy,” lost considerable business when actions disrupted everyday affairs in the capital city, and CANACO had already denounced CIPO’s mobilizations. CIPO indeed created a spectacle amongst the

¹⁵¹ Jacobo Ventura, “Agudiza Militarización en Oaxaca, denuncia UCIZONI,” *El Imparcial*, Nov. 25, 1997, 1.

¹⁵² Gisela Ramírez, “Forman el consejo indígena popular ‘Ricardo Flores Magón.’” *El Imparcial*, Nov. 19, 1997, 2a.

¹⁵³ José Luis Sarmiento, “El EPR afectó más al turismo que ‘Paulina,’” *El Imparcial*, Nov. 25, 1997, 1.

thongs of confused tourists. Yelling “Viva el CIPO!” and “Viva al EZLN,” CIPO members were accompanied by a thumping brass band from a Mixtecan village in a march to the center of the city. This was, organizers said, the “March against the Neoliberal Hurricane.”¹⁵⁴

Business leaders wanted U.S. tourists and Christmas cheer to fill their glittering December Zócalo, not peasants in farm clothes talking about yet another destructive tropical storm. CIPO-RFM re-asserted, here, that neoliberalism was the structure behind the issues – like poverty, incarceration, and lack of nutrition – that they negotiated with the government about. On a sunny day followed by the cold mountain rain of a December night, CIPO members targeted not the state government – who in fact was the target of most of the organization’s charges – but the neoliberal reformers of the era. The CIPO members marched around the city in masks with disfigured likenesses of Carlos Salinas, the NAFTA instigator; contemporary president Ernesto Zedillo; and the *cacique* (and NAFTA supporter) of the PRI’s official union federation.¹⁵⁵ They hung effigies of Salinas and Zedillo, and Gatica explained, as one reporter wrote, “that the promoters of liberalism have led to 70 percent of children in the country unnourished, while 24 rich men earn what do 35 million Mexicans.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Octavio Vélez Ascencio, “Inicia movilizaciones el Consejo Indígena Popular ‘Ricardo Flores Magón,’” *Noticias*, Dec. 22, 1997, 1.

¹⁵⁵ No author, “Instala Consejo Indígena platón frente Palacio; hoy seguirá sus protestas,” *Noticias*, Dec. 23, 1997.

¹⁵⁶ Mireya Olivera, “Marchan Cinco Organizaciones en la Ciudad,” *Marca*, Dec. 23, 1997, 5.

Organizers' ideological efforts often framed the evil of neoliberalism with its threats to indigenous people. In addition to Salinas and Zedillo, CIPO organizers also walked around in a disfigured version of Santa Claus, with a skull mask for a face. CIPO saw its project as one of the poor, but linked class and economics to sovereignty and indigeneity in a way that directly targeted the tourist economy and its role in distorting indigenous cultures and economies. "We're going to take back" what's ours," leader Carlos Beas cried, referring to the commercial contamination of formerly indigenous celebrations. The season's parties and events "have been robbed of their original spirit" and "hide the misery of the state," he said. The *Guelagetza*, the ceremony and party that had long celebrated indigenous life in Oaxaca, was increasingly, like the parties mentioned above, easily accessible to foreign tourists but prohibitively expensive for indigenous Oaxacans. "The Zapotecs, Mixtecs, the Mixes, Tacuates, Triquis," Beas continued, are making demands for health, training, and cultural programs, and that "all political prisoners and all those detained unjustly be freed."¹⁵⁷ With the music, chanting, protests, and nascent "Indian utopias," the Zócalo, some business people said, had become a veritable "hostage of political groups."

Simultaneously, the Oaxaca government, with help from federal agencies, claimed to have arrested *Comandante Ticher*, an EPR leader, and were said to be hot on the trail of a *Comandante Ricardo*. The EPR presence, and threat, was significant, and

¹⁵⁷ No author, "Instala Consejo Indígena platón frente Palacio; hoy seguirá sus protestas," *Noticias*, Dec. 23, 1997.

the state government was able to use the armed organization's presence as a justification for surveillance of all social and indigenous organizations. The EPR first emerged with attacks on seven states, including major strikes in Oaxaca, in 1996, and their threats allowed the government to mobilize more of its "post-Zapatista counterinsurgency plan." That plan included eliminating support from civilians and civil groups; targeted, specific military occupations; and control over the media.¹⁵⁸ Plus, rumors had been spread that men wearing "FBI" caps had been present at some illegal detentions in the Loxicha zone in 1996, and a report in *Noticias* in late 1997 confirmed that the FBI was conducting workshops with the Mexican and Oaxacan state and federal Preventative Police.¹⁵⁹ Many organizers had already suspected U.S. meddling in Mexico's counterinsurgency efforts, as a leaked memo from Chase Manhattan's "Emerging Markets Group" in 1994 implicitly suggested that the presence of indigenous groups engaging in militant direct action and advancing claims for collective rights, jobs and schools, and autonomy – and gaining Mexicans' support in the process – was a profound threat to investment stability and the NAFTA order.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Kristin Norget, "Caught in the Crossfire," in *When States Kill: Latin America, the U.S., and technologies of Terror* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2005). 118. Gustavo Esteva, in a 2010 interview, provided good information on the government's reaction to the EPR.

¹⁵⁹ *When States Kill*, 59.

¹⁶⁰ That memo is now widely available on the Internet. See <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/46/027.html>. The repression was deeper as well. The state and federal government responded with more repression against popular organizations like CIPO in the months that followed. On the same day CIPO started its Christmas-week escalation, paramilitaries had attacked a pro-Zapatista village in Chiapas, leaving 45 indigenous people dead, including 21 women, 14 kids, and a baby. The state, it seemed, was also upping the ante. On Dec. 22, Carrasco himself had pulled together more than 36

The Carrasco administration, which had made no gestures to CIPO since its original “promise” to change things, remained silent. In January, judicial police began circling and intimidating the OIDHO offices, actions which led CIPO to call 2000 people into the streets. In February, CIPO released notices that organizers would coordinate more direct action in the streets if the government didn’t agree to substantive negotiations. CIPO spokespeople ridiculed the government and portrayed its elections as farcical, echoing an attack on the country’s political parties it had maintained from the beginning. The “bad government” – a term used commonly by the Zapatistas as well as from the Mexican Revolution – spends money only “to buy votes and train paramilitary corps,” the group wrote.¹⁶¹ Still, no word from Carrasco.

From the beginning, a women’s committee had come together inside the organization. Throughout the first few months, while the men, as so often happened, spoke to the public and led the public events, women organized quietly. On March 9, only a few months after the founding of the coalition, “more than 1000 women” of CIPO marched, “demanding their rights” and seeking a just politics of gender.¹⁶² They

leaders of villages and towns in the *Mixe Bajo*, in the center of UCIZONI territory. It was a highly publicized statement that the governor would intervene personally to draw support away from CIPO-affiliated groups and work to “continue resolving [the] problems” of indigenous communities.” Meanwhile, indigenous people continued to be threatened in the Loxicha area. Another Zapotec man mysteriously disappeared, and many claimed he was taken by political opponents, perhaps with links to the state government. No Author, “Lideres de las 36 Agencias Municipales del Bajo Mixe,” *Noticias*, Dec. 22, 1997.

¹⁶¹ CODECI, CODEP, FIOB, OIDHO, UCIZONI; Press Bulletin, January 8, 1998, CIPO archives. CIPO-RFM, Boletín de Prensa, Feb. 25, 1998, CIPO files.

¹⁶² Dora Avila, Estela Velez, Virginia Gatica Bautista, Isavia Candelario Baltazar; Untitled press release, June 4, 1998, OIDHO files. Confidential interview, 2007.

simultaneously released a “Declaration of the Women of CIPO-RFM,” and made it known to the state what Carrasco had said three years earlier. Women, they showed, knew indeed how politics work in Oaxaca. After all, “they managed what had not been achieved in four previous marches: open the gates of the government.”¹⁶³ The Carrasco administration, finally, met with CIPO members, but little ground was gained. When his administration said that it could just discuss women’s issues with men, the men and women “refused to fall into that dirty game.”¹⁶⁴

The mid-1990s marked a moment in Mexico when women began organizing in a women’s movement that addressed not only gender and class but also ethnicity and indigeneity.¹⁶⁵ Richer, whiter, and educated women were winning unprecedented access to professional circles, but their struggles meant little to poor Oaxacan women. For them, economic changes increasingly forced them to add backbreaking wage work to their already arduous shift at home. Women of all classes had to face physical violence at home, but the brunt of the economic violence fell on poor and indigenous women’s shoulders. In 1994 – before the 1995 peso devaluation – you could buy only around a third of the rice or beans you could buy in 1987 with the same money, and women usually had to negotiate family health and survival in such an impossible

¹⁶³ Breve Historia, 2.

¹⁶⁴ CIPO-RFM, *Vivir Para Ser Libres y Luchar Para Dejar De Ser Esclavas*, May 2002. Available online. <http://www.nodo50.org/cipo/documentos/cipo1.htm>. Accessed August 15, 2009.

¹⁶⁵ Hernández-Castillo, et al, “Introduction”, *Dissident Women*, 41.

household economic situation.¹⁶⁶ In future CIPO communities like Plan de Zaragoza or San Isidro Aloapam, many girls were kept out of schools by their fathers, and some continued to be forced into arranged marriages in the 1990s.¹⁶⁷ In addition, almost all of the early CIPO leaders were men.

Part of the poor women's strategy for empowerment in the 1990s was to join marches or participate in organizations, like CIPO, that worked through direct action. According to the Oaxacan newspaper *Noticias*, a few hundred women marched to demand an end to violence against women only a week after CIPO's first string of marches in November 1997. "For the first time in the history of marches in Oaxaca," the reporter gushed, "housewives, women teachers, indigenous women, peasant women, female social fighters, students, and professionals won the street to demand respect and physical and moral integrity."¹⁶⁸ It was, in fact, not the first, but it undoubtedly was a new phenomenon. CODEP already had an active women's organizing project, and, according to one CODEP organizer, coordinated a women's march in the mid-1990s that took over the toll booth on one of the biggest state highways, letting cars pass freely, and held it until the state government relented to their demands for roads and electricity in their indigenous villages. CODEP, around the time it first joined CIPO, had a

¹⁶⁶ EZLN, "Gran Consulta Nacional: Taller de Análisis sobre Chiapas," Aug. 27, 1995, 1-28, 16.

¹⁶⁷ Confidential interview, 2007; Confidential interview, 2009.

¹⁶⁸ Chavela Rivas, Silvia. "Marchan mujeres por la igualdad y la no violencia." *Noticias*, 26 Nov. 1997, 1, 14a.

major women's gathering in May 1997.¹⁶⁹ OIDHO and UCIZONI also had women's commissions.¹⁷⁰

Differences around how the organization would treat race and class also affected the women's commission. Just as some early organizers had debated the usefulness of "popular" unity, the question arose in the women's commission as well. According to one of its members, some women, presumably linked to the Marxist CODEP, suggested that the purpose of a women's group is to represent one sector – women – in a broader struggle around class-based, popular justice. Other women, however, argued that women should not subsume women-specific goals or organizing strategies under general unity, but rather push for the "democratization" of relations in the organization. They sought to fight the tendencies of male leaders to try to be in charge (*llevar la batuta*), for instance. After marches or demonstrations they sang a popular love song, but they re-worked the lyrics, and it reflected how the CIPO struggle should directly confront machismo, so that "we will never again be humiliated in the street or in the house."¹⁷¹

By April 1998, five months after CIPO-RFM's formation, the *consejo* had become the biggest, and most radical, anti-neoliberal organization in the state. It was nurturing, in fact, the roots of the anti-neoliberal globalization activity that gained widespread

¹⁶⁹ Confidential interview, 2007.

¹⁷⁰ Confidential interview, 2007.

¹⁷¹ See introductory quotation.

traction in the early 2000s in Mexico and in the Americas. Indeed, CIPO's struggle against the repression in April and May featured many of the key features of the anti-globalization movement that soon emerged: radical direct action, ideas of indigenous rights, transnational social-movement connections, human rights discourses, and, most importantly, a vision of the world that connected local struggles to world neoliberalism.

By April, CIPO had presented a list of demands to the state government, not only for the San Andrés accords but for coffee pricing programs, developmental job projects, and new roads in rural communities. The organization, which continued to position itself in the mix of post-NAFTA Oaxacan popular organizing, had been coordinating meetings throughout the state for "the popular and indigenous movement," with aims of challenging its lack of aggression.¹⁷² CIPO had still had gotten few guarantees from the state government, and in fact the police initiated a new round of harassment in April, and quietly nabbed two of CODECI's leaders, in Tuxtepec, ambushing them as they negotiated with government agents.

A wave of new actions followed. CODECI men and women, following a tactic developed first in Mexico by students training to be school teachers (*normalistas*), roamed the streets of Tuxtepec, stopping and occupying public busses. They asked the passengers to get off, and all-but-forced the driver to let them use the bus to take supporters to Oaxaca City to march, occupy government buildings, and demand the freedom of the two CODECI (and CIPO) leaders. Soon, they had gathered dozens of

¹⁷² Breve Historia, 2.

busses for the mountainous, seven-hour drive. In Oaxaca, they led a *plantón* in front of the Secretary of Agrarian Reform (SAR) and in the Zócalo, but when police tried to force them out of the SAR, many members scattered, some finding their way back to Tuxtepec themselves, others returning to the Zócalo where the busses were being kept, along with a *plantón* with teachers and others.¹⁷³

Other actions took place in Tuxtepec, in Putla (a CODEP stronghold), and in the Oaxacan south, dominated by OIDHO and UCIZONI. In fact, when police agreed to negotiate in Tuxtepec, Gatica and Cruz borrowed a pick-up truck and left for northern Oaxaca. Meanwhile, UCIZONI's Carlos Beas, an experienced negotiator and often hesitant to confront the state government, negotiated in Oaxaca City with the Secretary of Government, Hector Anuar Mafúd, as mobilizations in Tuxtepec continued. The police offer to negotiate in Tuxtepec with Gatica and Cruz, however, was probably a trap. Police arrested them and psychologically abused them on the isolated roads back to Oaxaca City, where they forced them to get down from the truck at gunpoint and threatened to execute them on the road.¹⁷⁴

Beas meanwhile, himself most likely receiving threats, soon hid in the teacher's union building and only managed to leave escorted by a crowd of people.¹⁷⁵ In the wave

¹⁷³ Confidential interview, 2010.

¹⁷⁴ CIPO-RFM, Declaration to the Secretary General of Amnesty International, May 29, 1998, OIDHO files. Reseña, 1.

¹⁷⁵ This paragraph is based on a number of interviews with organizers and leaders from several of the member organizations between 2007 and 2010.

of CIPO actions, police arrested 128, tortured at least 75, and injured around 80 others. The groups feared two had been disappeared or killed because they were nowhere to be found, but had fled and appeared on April 21st.¹⁷⁶ Another was released on the 23rd with a broken leg, and all the other 31 indigenous people “showed signs of torture,” CIPO claimed. In response to the wave of assaults and arrests, CIPO blocked more highways and streets, occupied government offices, public spaces, and courtrooms in many Oaxacan cities, and held a five-day *plantón* in front of the Oaxacan government palace.¹⁷⁷

The solidarity that CIPO inspired between April and June reflected the way the organization understood itself, and appealed to others, through class-, indigeneity-, and even gender-based claims. CIPO had pre-existing ties to the EZLN-linked National Indigenous Congress (CNI), and it arranged for a CNI march from Chiapas to Mexico City to stop in Oaxaca and make the CIPO repression a national issue. Though most of the prisoners had been released by April 25, around 20 remained, including the lead organizers. CIPO, then, sent a caravan with the CNI march, and in the Mexico City Zócalo the delegates joined the people’s encampment. Those that stayed in Oaxaca organized other activities to pressure the state to release the prisoners. During the “First State Assembly of Women,” organized by NGOs and social organizations, CIPO organizers

¹⁷⁶ Reseña, 2; Escobar Ocaña, Hernán, et al. “Asunto: se solicita intervención [*sic*]; Escobar Ocaña to H. CAMARA DE DIPUTADOS; Oaxaca, Oax. April 22, 1998, CIPO files.

¹⁷⁷ Vélez Ascencio, Octavio. “Ocupa CIPO juzgados en 6 ciudades; demandan libertad de dirigentes,” *Noticias*, April 18, 1997, 10A.

attended and were asked to speak about the situation. They also amassed supporters in order to re-open by force the CODECI offices in Tuxtepec, which had been closed because of illegal police threats and violence, and they announced a mobilization to coincide with Oaxacan May Day events. Teachers wrote letters in support of the teachers and others in jail, arguing that CIPO is an important part of Oaxaca, and CIPO leaders “do the work needed in rural and indigenous communities.”¹⁷⁸

Pressure mounted, as three CODECI leaders and members, and one from CODEP, remained in prison. In June, five CIPO women initiated a hunger strike outside the government palace, and criticized the governor for calling their tactics “blackmail.” “You don’t put your life in danger,” they wrote, “simply to blackmail.” Their struggle, they argued, was to stop the impunity and abuse of power so common from government officials in Oaxaca. Like the Zapatistas, they called on not only peasant and indigenous people for support, but on “housewives, students, teachers, professionals, peasants, artisans, etc.” to join. A week later, when they ended the hunger strike because of the danger to their bodies, they spoke about how they were strong and would continue to work for the “peasants, indigenous people, and poor people” of Mexico.

Though the economic overlap between indigeneity and class, built through centuries of colonialism, facilitated the affinities between the class- or citizenship-oriented organizations and those who explicitly mobilized indigenous identities, CIPO

¹⁷⁸ No author, “Las mujeres organizan,” *Noticias*, April 22, 1998, 1; Raúl Garza et al to Chamber of Deputies, April 20, 1998, CIPO files.

organizers deftly positioned their organizations according to changing opportunities and challenges. The organizations that built this early CIPO, and particularly UCIZONI, had ties to international human rights organizations, and their statement to Amnesty International in May 1998 reflected their cognizance of the nuances of international solidarity and its human rights apparatus. In the declaration, the language of class and the popular sectors almost completely disappeared, and CIPO, likely seeking to tap into the indigenous focus of much international human rights activity after the U.N.-sponsored International Year for the World's Indigenous People in 1993, cast itself in a distinctly indigenous light.¹⁷⁹

The hunger strike ended, and the first phase of CIPO-RFM came to a close. The four prisoners would be released in a matter of months, and CIPO's efforts had gained it a new reputation for militancy. In the spurt of CIPO activity following its founding in 1997 and the April mobilizations and their immediate aftermath, a number of tensions subtly emerged. The UCD, one of the first groups to join CIPO, did not just fade from view. It left, and, according to one of the founders, it had largely joined in order to see how the group's mobilizations could bring home benefits to its leaders and members, rather than with a broader view of justice. In addition, it was tied to the PRD, and CIPO was adamant, throughout the first year of existence, about its autonomy from the political parties. UCIZONI, too, was working with the PRD in a campaign throughout 1998, and relations between the group and others in CIPO frayed. Some organizers sent

¹⁷⁹ Beas (CIPO) to Amnesty International, request for support, May 10, 1997, ODHIO files.

a letter to the organization in May, and a commissioner responded, reassuring them that UCIZONI stood with CIPO in every way, and especially with the political prisoners who had been arrested in April. But they stopped collaborating. Carlos Beas, the longtime leader, fled the repression. In addition, one leader suggested that UCIZONI felt that other leaders had led the group to massive confrontations with the state without the agreement of all members. Another said that some organizations didn't have the resources, either, to carry out large mobilizations, and privilege working in indigenous communities.¹⁸⁰

In 1998 and after, neoliberal reforms would again re-shape Oaxacan social life. In a wave of decentralizations, a federal law decentralized the state government. The federal government decentralized spending in a way that allowed greater power to municipal authorities (rather than those at the state level). And Oaxaca adopted a new *usos y costumbres* law that seemed to give indigenous communities more local-level control, but at the same time was widely criticized by CIPO as a publicity ploy to dilute support for the government's implementation of an indigenous ruling with teeth: the Zapatistas' San Andres Accords.¹⁸¹

As in the U.S., anxieties about American empire contoured politics in Mexico and in CIPO in 1997-98. Such anxieties were characteristic of the global anti-neoliberal movements, particularly in peripheral and semi-peripheral areas. Many of CIPO-RFM's

¹⁸⁰ Two interviewees suggested that tensions between Beas and Cruz and Gatica led to the separation.

¹⁸¹ Confidential interviews, 2010.

early qualities help establish it as one of many antecedents to the anti-neoliberal globalization movement in Mexico and beyond. CIPO built alliances, appealed to democracy and rights in the face of global economics, embraced not only class identity but those based on race, ethnicity, and even gender, and engaged in the kind of militant direct action that the anti-neoliberal globalization movement would become known for. CIPO founders originated in a variety of class-, race-, and citizen-based political organizations, and disagreements between tactics, campaign strategy, and the relative importance of different kinds of oppressions were almost inevitable. One item on which the organizations could agree, however, was the danger of growing U.S. economic and cultural control over southern Mexico. As the anti-neoliberal globalization movement took shape in the U.S. and Mexico in the 1990s and early 2000s, many of the preoccupations of Mexican organizers would parallel those of the hemisphere and the world.

CHAPTER 3

AMERICAN ANXIETIES AND THE 'BATTLE OF SEATTLE': JOBS WITH JUSTICE AND GRASSROOTS ANTI-GLOBALIZATION, 1992-1999

In the late 1980s, Jobs with Justice (JwJ) envisioned the fate of the U.S. working class as closely tied to the fate of “America” and its “way of life.” In the 1990s, Jobs with Justice continued to see the working class and its labor unions as related to a national, and even international, context, and nowhere was that more apparent than in the 1999 World Trade Organization protests – or the “Battle of Seattle,” as it was dubbed immediately for the ways tens of thousands of protesters shut down the WTO ministerial meetings, despite the waves of arrests, military-strength CS gas, percussion grenades, and police-state curfews designed to stop them.

In a poignant letter circulated in the days after the crowds filtered out of Seattle, Jeff Crosby, president of electrical workers’ Local 201 and a JwJ ally, argued that Seattle helped union workers show that they were not, as the dominant logic of the neoliberal era dictated, hapless remnants of the industrial age destined to be left behind by the inevitable forces of globalization. “Without the direct action” in Seattle, he wrote,

the labor march would have received a 90 second clip on the nightly news, with some voiceover like, 'A bunch of inefficient union workers from the rustbelt marched for a return to the bad old days. Fortunately the WTO delegates largely ignored these bits of road kill on the way to the new economy. Although they are hopeless Luddites, it is true that something must be done for the losers in the new world economy who are too old and hidebound to run a computer' ¹

This chapter seeks to understand how, in the 1990s, JwJ found a place for itself inside a larger "anti-globalization" movement through how it understood, as JwJ unionists in 1996 said, "the faceless forces" of the era's "global economy." ² How did it understand and articulate social class in the decade that marked the peak of neoliberalism as a world political program, a decade defined by the "globalization" that characterized the "New World Order"? ³ How did Jobs with Justice emerge, by 1999, as one of the most important working-class organizations of the emergent anti-neoliberal globalization movement?

¹ Crosby's union is the IUE-CWA Local 201. Estimates on the numbers of union members who attended the Seattle protests vary, but it is likely between 20,000 to 40,000. See Mike Carter and David Postman, "There was Unrest Even at the Top during the WTO Riots," *Seattle Times*, Dec. 12, 1999.

² "Draft jwj article on economics education," circa 1996, JwJ national office files. "Anti-globalization" is the term the media imposed on the protestors at Seattle. Because of the breadth and ambiguity of the term "globalization"; the fact that most protestors supported the globalization of democracy, rights, justice, or solidarity; and because all the actors involved opposed the increasingly corporate internationalization and imperial overreach, I believe the term "anti-neoliberal globalization" is the best term for this movement, at least in the 1990s.

³ In the mid-1990s Jobs with Justice consisted of close to 20 local coalitions, but that number would double by the early 2000s. Neoliberalism is a political and economic perspective that seeks to structure society based on the logic of the market capitalism that privatizes and individualizes social relations, partly by diminishing state-based planning and state redistribution of wealth. The neoliberal economic policies that gained prominence in the Americas after the 1960s were based on a laissez-faire economics that required states to privatize public goods, liberalize trade and investment internationally, and remove or modify state regulations of financial and other domestic markets. See Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Pub., 2004). Also cited in Kaufman, *Ideas for Action*, 59.

Much of the literature about the anti-neoliberal globalization movement considers Seattle a watershed moment. For Jobs with Justice, though, anti-corporate globalization activity hardly began with Seattle. It began with the negotiations of, and campaign against, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between 1991 and 1993. Although the treaty was only one of Jobs with Justice's organizational priorities in the early 1990s, many JwJ activists were also members of unions, community groups, churches, or farm organizations that made stopping NAFTA their agenda-item number one. The seemingly unlikely alliance between labor and environmentalists in Seattle – the often-celebrated debut of the “Teamsters and turtles” partnership – was actually first forged in these anti-NAFTA coalitions.⁴

This chapter suggests that another seemingly contradictory duo gathered strength in the anti-neoliberal globalization movement of the 1990s, and JwJ's relation to it – or lack of relation to it – said much about the development of the organization. The pairing I refer to is more of an ideological overlap between the racist, right-wing populists like Pat Buchanan and the white-dominated progressive organizations or “progressive populists” who hovered in and around the labor left. While the globalizing economy led the former to mobilize white citizens to protect “America” from immigrants, imports, and the traitorous transnational corporations, the latter saw technology, transnational trade, and “big” corporations as defiling the independence, community, and “small ‘d’ democracy” of local America. Though in the 1980s and early 1990s Jobs with Justice appealed to union and class solidarity through a subtle populist

⁴ Progressives in U.S. unions and community / political organizations (such as Citizen Action), though, had completed much of the groundwork for such a coalition to emerge in the 1980s.

Americanism, in the 1990s it largely distanced itself from the populist and nationalist languages of class. Like its populist allies in the emergent anti-neoliberal globalization movement, Jobs with Justice responded to anxieties about the globalizing economy by fighting the growing power of the transnational corporations, but largely kept its distance from the populisms that blurred the class differences it tried to expose and the racial and national hierarchies that it tried, to varying degrees, to confront.⁵

This chapter argues that JwJ's role in the emergent anti-globalization movement in the 1990s was important in several ways, all of which revolve around how JwJ positioned itself around challenging the class and race hierarchies of the era.⁶ JwJ's class-based solidarity message – founded on its “I’ll be there” pledge for individuals and groups to “be there” for other people’s struggles – added a class perspective to an emerging anti-corporate globalization movement whose loudest voices were often

⁵ Several populist figures are featured prominently in this chapter: conservative Roger Milliken, long-time Southern textile impresario and union buster; progressive populist Lori Wallach, of Public Citizen’s Citizen’s Trade Campaign; Mike Dolan, also of the Citizens Trade Campaign; and the populists of the Progressive Populist magazine, and especially Jim Hightower.

⁶ Taking from Ronaldo Munck’s notion that “populism” is a good way to understand the political appeals to the traditions of “the people” in the age of globalization, the few works that deal with anti-globalization from both the right and left have avoided the topic of immigrant workers and have largely defined U.S. “anti-globalization” through economic summit protests, not through grassroots organizing. Most U.S. Americans, as Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez and others noted after Seattle, are more likely to take action in local contexts because of economic constraints. Researchers focusing on the series of large protests (from the APEC meeting in Vancouver through Seattle in 1999, D.C. and Prague in 2000, and Quebec City and Genoa in 2003) tend to overstate the kinds of political action more likely led by college students, middle-class whites, male NGO directors, etc. See Munck, *Globalization and Contestation: The Next Great Counter-Movement* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007. especially the chapter “Reaction and Globalization.” Others, like Catherine Eschle in “Constructing ‘the anti-globalization movement,’” focus also on internationalist organizations, direct action groups, and international fora, like the World Social Forum. See Catherine Eschle, *Critical Theories, International Relations, and ‘the ‘Anti-globalisation movement’: The Politics of Resistance* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995); David Graeber’s ethnographic work on direct action networks is mostly about the period after Seattle and deals primarily with similar organizations. See David Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography*, (Edinburgh; Oakland: AK Press, 2009).

those of the liberal progressives and populists who privileged the defense of “America” or “the community” over that of the racially stratified working classes. JwJ’s class-based focus facilitated its efforts to work with globalization’s refugees, the migratory immigrant classes that occupied the lowest rungs of the free trade socioeconomic ladder.

These campaigns in the late 1990s constitute an often overlooked form of grassroots anti-neoliberal globalization politics, a form unthinkable for right-wing populists and unlikely for progressive populists. By the time the Seattle WTO protests rolled around in late 1999, JwJ nurtured many of the components of the global justice movement that would emerge later. One of the major challenges JwJ faced, and would continue to face in the 2000s, was navigating the tensions between radicals, union leaders and workers, community organizations, and faith-based groups. That diversity of interests and ideologies was on display in Seattle, as JwJ took an important step in developing the global justice politics that would take shape in the early 2000s.

NAFTA and Threats to the Nation

This section examines how in the era of the NAFTA debates, a range of progressive organizations, unions, and populists came together to oppose neoliberal “free trade.” In doing so they saw it as a threat to the working-class or to “America,” and the political logics they developed in many cases led them to develop alliances in the early 1990s with some of the same force they had, for decades, battled against.

The anti-neoliberal globalization coalition of Seattle in 1999 first worked together then, as it groped for a strategy to block NAFTA, the treaty that was, by far, the most expansive effort by neoliberals in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada to create a supranational economic arena in the hemisphere. Political scientists Tamara Kay and Frederick Mayer have both noted that the NAFTA debates in the early 1990s spoke to populist appeals and tapped into “gut” feelings. Indeed, trade policy in the U.S. has always been a crucible through which U.S. Americans debated the boundaries and identity of the nation. In the early-1990s NAFTA deliberations, discussions of tariffs and foreign investment invoked politically potent imagery of modernization (for NAFTA supporters in Mexico and the United States) and dire threats to national sovereignty (for opponents).

Though the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union gave rise to a degree of U.S. triumphalism, the early 1990s were hardly a time for celebration for many in the U.S.: recession, war with Iraq, and nagging anxieties about imports and immigrants shaped political life for many union workers. NAFTA spurred many of those concerns, and newspapers and magazines of the early 1990s referred to the “deep economic anxieties of many Americans” that “diverse opponents” from both the left and the right could appeal to. A NAFTA trade council or other supranational body were easy targets for many politicians – neither directly funded campaigns, after all, neither would retaliate directly, and attacking either entity could appeal to populists on the left and the right who associated them as either the un-American servants of job-exporting “big business” or freedom-sucking “big government,” respectively. Both kinds of

populists fretted about the nation “surrendering its sovereignty to a new, ominous” supranational body or foreign country, and the scope of both NAFTA and the 1995 GATT agreement – which created the World Trade Organization – was unprecedented: the latter was likely “[t]he most sweeping trade measure in history.”⁷

To many in the media, the emerging anti-NAFTA coalition was an unexplainable collection of seemingly different interests. The *Wall St. Journal* called the main alliance a “motley group,”⁸ and in doing so inspired the group’s name: MODTLE, or the Mobilization on Development, Trade, Labor and the Environment. The neo-populist gathering consisted, in fact, of many of the groups that had first formed coalitions with Jobs with Justice in the mid and late 1980s. As in the 1980s, what bound them together to oppose NAFTA was their shared desire to expose and defeat the forces that “help multinational companies but hurt the little guy.”⁹ Unions, environmental organizations like the Sierra Club, farm organizations like the National Family Farm Association, and church groups concerned with development and human rights joined. Public Citizen, the

⁷ Terry Atlas, “Job Worries At Root of Gatt Fears,” *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 27, 1994. http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1994-11-27/news/9411270355_1_trade-deal-global-trade-trade-barriers, (accessed June 12, 2010); The GATT agreement had been negotiated by the administrations of presidents Reagan, Bush, and Clinton. NAFTA, which passed first, “became a Rorschach,” said Pat Choate, the vice presidential candidate on the ticket of the populist protectionist Ross Perot who garnered 19 percent of the popular vote in the 1992 election primarily on his colorful remarks on the dangers of NAFTA. The treaty, Choate said, “was a symbolic issue as much as anything.” Frederick w. Mayer, *Interpreting NAFTA: The Science and Art of Political Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 231.

⁸ For a discussion of the name, see Susan Ariel Aaronson, *Taking Trade to the Streets: The Lost History of Public Efforts to Shape Globalization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 124.

⁹ Gary N. Chaison and Barbara Jane Bigelow, *Unions and Legitimacy* (Ithaca and London: ILR Press, 2002), 61. Cited from Davis, *Gaining Moral Legitimacy*, 1992, A1. The MODTLE formed early, when word first surfaced that U.S. President George H.W. Bush and his Mexican counterpart, Carlos Salinas de Gotari, had begun to talk about a trade agreement between the two countries.

consumer group founded by Ralph Nader, and whose trade specialist was lawyer Lori Wallach, was one of the most active and well-funded organizations.¹⁰ Though each labor union had its own set of interests regarding NAFTA, the avenue through which unions and other organizations could build unity was, as the Teamsters wrote for the Fair Trade Week of Action in early 1992, to rally together and “[i]solate the only constituency that favors NAFTA – multinational corporations – as special interests pushing a scheme that would hurt the rest of us.”¹¹

All of the organizations had worked for state regulation of labor, consumer safety, and environmental protection – often against corporate interests – and all saw those laws endangered by new trade pacts.¹² Already, they had seen that “air quality and food safety standards ... were seen by other nations as trade barriers, no different from tariffs.” These “democratically determined regulations,” as they called them, became law only after long and expensive political battles, and could be targeted by other countries or companies as unfair obstacles to trade. An appointed NAFTA trade panel would determine if the legislation or practice in question did, indeed, violate NAFTA, and could then repeal it, despite the domestic support and purportedly

¹⁰ Aaronson, *Taking Trade to the Streets*, 124. The group would soon change its name to the Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART). See “U.S. Citizen’s Analysis of the North American Free Trade Agreement,” written by participants and allies of the ART, including the UAW, Sierra Club, the Fair Trade Campaign, and Public Citizen. Archived document available at <http://www.tradeobservatory.org/library.cfm?refID=96716>.

¹¹ No author, Teamster strategy sheet, circa 1991, JwJ, national office files.

¹² Aaronson, *Taking Trade to the Streets*, 122.

democratic process that helped create the regulation in the first place.¹³ Before long, Public Citizen, Friends of the Earth, and others formed a new Citizen's Trade Campaign (CTC) to join the push to stop NAFTA. Unlike the MODTLE, which was partly led by the relatively militant environmental group Greenpeace and made concerted efforts to join with grassroots Mexican and Canadian organizations in creating a continental resistance effort, the CTC was a full-blitz, U.S.-based lobbying force.¹⁴

Despite the differences that existed between them, the impact of re-working decades-old state regulations, empowering non-elected trade bureaucrats to determine social policy, and facilitating what one union called the "Great American Job Giveaway" led many to see their concerns with NAFTA as concerns with national sovereignty. Tom Donahue of the AFL-CIO said that "[i]t is not every day that a sovereign nation seeks to negotiate an agreement that is certain to destroy the jobs of tens of thousands of its citizens."¹⁵ Ralph Nader, in 1993, said that "[t]he new trade agreements are invading

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ MODTLE, though involved with the Economic Policy Institute, United Electrical Workers (UE), Development GAP, was largely pushed by Greenpeace. The UE started its own cross-border union collaboration with the Mexican union *Frente Auténtico de Trabajo* (FAT). The CTC consisted of bigger constituency groups with lobbying power. Other organizations like the Rainbow Coalition and Americans for Democratic Action were part of the CTC. See Aaronson, *Taking Trade to the Streets*, 126. The Fair Trade Campaign, with roots in the Midwest, was closely tied to the AFL-CIO. See John J. Audley, *Green Politics and Global Trade: NAFTA and the Future of Environmental Politics* (Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 1997), 94; Rand Wilson, interview with the author, Boston, Sept. 25, 2010. There were also significant differences between many of the organizations, such as the environmental ones. More specifically, the more-conservative environmental groups like the World Wildlife Federation supported tighter environmental restrictions but did not oppose trade liberalization. For an inside look at one activist, Don Weiner, see David Moberg, "Grassroots Activist for a New World Order," *Chicago Tribune*, August 18, 1992, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-08-18/features/9203150240_1_grass-roots-coalitions-new-world-order/3 (accessed June 3, 2010).

¹⁵ Mayer, *Interpreting NAFTA*, 78. Donahue here refers to Fast Track, a procedure the newly elected Clinton pursued to bypass debate in Congress. "The Great American Job Giveaway" was the title of a story from 1991 a story about the National Labor Committee in an SEIU members' publication. The Committee was first formed by some future JwJ unions in 1980 to oppose U.S. intervention in El Salvador, and had

internal sovereignties.”¹⁶ And friend-of-labor politician Rep. David Bonior (D-MI) went on to explain that “[i]t is the old story around here. You work for the government ... [in] the Trade Office. And you leave and get a job with Japan or Mexico. You know the system. They will pay you big bucks. You come back here and try to work the system that you have been a part of and gave you a livelihood to the detriment of those people who are trying to make a living in this country.”¹⁷

In doing so Bonior touched on a theme taken up less by these progressive non-governmental organizations and more by another band of neo-populists. Jobs with Justice had, from the 1980s, staked its place on the progressive left by advocating an expansive central government that softened the blows of the U.S. economy by providing universal health care, implementing and enforcing labor laws that protected workers and unions, and progressive taxation that would lead to ample funds for education and job training. Unlike this anti-NAFTA progressive left, populists from the New Right argued in the early 1990s that the federal government – and most Democrats and most Republicans – were “globalists” who were leading the U.S. into a New World Order controlled not by sovereign nations but by the United Nations and other elite, supranational institutions who would regulate a global market and dissolve local sovereignties and values. Removing tariffs, subsidizing the flight of U.S. companies, and

turned from documenting human rights abuses in national liberation struggles in the 1980s to sneaking in to high-level trade conferences in the early 1990s. The Bush administration, the NLC charged in *SEIU Update*, “spent \$1 billion in taxpayer money over a decade to promote ... the export of jobs to low-wage havens in the Caribbean and Central America.” See Jonathan Tasini, “The Great American Job Giveaway,” *SEIU Update* Winter 1993, 20-24.

¹⁶ Bob Herbert, “In America; Nafta and the Elite,” Nov. 10, 1993. See Krooth for note on the article, 232.

¹⁷ David Bonior, *Congressional Record*, November 16, 1993, H9822.

creating unaccountable, distant trade panels to adjudicate disputes all stoked fears of a World Order on the brink. In addition to threats from abroad, however, many also saw national sovereignty as eroding from within.

The most radical of the prominent New Right, anti-NAFTA populists was Pat Buchanan, who saw immigrants, imports, and supra-national organizations like the United Nations as threatening the sovereignty of the true America – the “White Republic.”¹⁸ Buchanan belonged to a resurgent white nationalist movement in the early 1990s, a new generation of white supremacists not necessarily connected to older, Nazi- or Klan-linked groups.¹⁹ For Buchanan, “Western Civilization” was at risk because of the encroaching threats of immigrating “brown and black people” and the multicultural softness in the country. The country, he argued, had lost its “soul,” its belief in “family, faith, friends and country” that constituted “the true legacy of the Confederacy.”²⁰

Though the anti-Asian zeal of the Buy American campaigns peaked in the early 1990s, it faded with the downturn in the Japanese economy. Another “moral panic,” however, about the degradation of America from abroad became the story of the 1990s. Instead of imports, it was immigrants, and preoccupations about them played out in the field of language in the 1980s. Before 1981, no one had ever proposed that the federal government seek to make English the official language of the country. Perceived threats

¹⁸ Leonard Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream* (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 2009), 281.

¹⁹ Carol M. Swain and Russell Nieli, *Contemporary Voices of White Nationalism in America*, xii, 111. In 1989, the nascent political movement helped facilitate the state legislature election of fellow white supremacist David Duke, who won with the majority of Louisiana’s white vote. Duke, a former Ku Klux Klan leader, advocated not only racial betterment but also national racial purity through separatism.

²⁰ Zeskind, 286.

of “the encroachment of other tongues,” however, led ten states to pass official-language legislation between 1981 and 1990.²¹ In the 1990 census, less than one percent of U.S. residents did not speak English well. But it was an age of anxiety regarding ethno-racial and national questions, even though some advocates attempted to cover the racial politics of the matter by saying their efforts were simply based on public safety issues or the costs of translation.²² Whoopi Goldberg and dozens of celebrities signed on to petitions from U.S. English, the organization leading the effort, or even appeared in advertisements for them. Quotations in local newspapers and in the organization’s documents, however, suggested the matter was very much about Latin American immigrants and national identity. That sentiment was reflected in a leaked memo from U.S. English in 1988. In it, the group’s leader John Tanton referred to what he had called elsewhere “the Latin onslaught,” and asked, “Will the present majority ... peaceably hand over its political power to a group that is simply more fertile?”

²¹ James Crawford, *At War with Diversity: U.S. Language Policy in an Age of Anxiety* (Clevendon, Angleterre: Multilingual Matters, 2000), 4; Raymond Tatalovich, *Nativism Reborn? The Official English Language Movement and the American States* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 21.

²² Crawford, *At War with Diversity*, 4-7. Quotation on 7. Crawford, *Hold Your Tongue: Bilingualism and the Politics of “English Only”* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1992), 92. Quoting from a *Miami Herald* exit poll, in Florida, where “English Only” passed in 1988 by a vote of 84 percent to 16 percent, the *Miami Herald* reported that “more than half of the non-Hispanic whites who voted for the initiative said they hoped it ‘would make Miami a less attractive place to live for Cubans and other Spanish-speaking people’” and around half said they voted “‘to express my protest’ about bilingualism,” even though, as Crawford wrote, “they doubted the wisdom of English Only government.” As JwJ organizers prepared marchers to take to the streets in Miami in the summer of 1987, the top-rated WNWS show bombarded the airwaves five nights a week, with angry listeners disgusted that the Spanish language made them want “America” back. Newspaper ads read ‘ONE LANGUAGE, ONE COMMUNITY.’ See Crawford, *Hold Your Tongue*, 106-107, 111.

... As Whites see their power and control over their lives declining, will they simply go quietly into the night? Or will there be an explosion?"²³

Tanton, a former Sierra Club and National Audubon Society official in Michigan, turned his eyes to population control to protect the environment in the 1970s, as did many members of mainstream environmental groups in the 1980s and 1990s.²⁴ Tanton spawned a number of anti-immigrant organizations in the name of protecting the American environment, "White culture," and usually both. His organizations in the 1990s had long-term relationships with groups like the California Coalition for Immigration Reform, which was founded in 1994 to lead the fight for Proposition 187, the most restrictive anti-immigration in decades that denied public services to undocumented adults and children in California. The Coalition's leader and founder, Barbara Coe, regularly called Mexicans "savages," and believed in the *Reconquista* conspiracy thesis, which claims that Mexico has a secret plan to take back the U.S. Southwest.²⁵ In 1989 the Sierra Club passed its harshest anti-immigration policy to the date, and in 1995 it co-published a book with a nativist intellectuals initially linked to

²³ Crawford, *Hold Your Tongue*, 151.

²⁴ Tanton founded FAIR (Federation of American Immigration Reform), which became perhaps the leading anti-immigrant organization in the U.S. But Tanton, according to Rick Swartz, the founder of the pro-immigrant National Immigration Forum in 1982, was actually the mastermind – he linked funding from white supremacist foundations and recruited members and helped start a number of different groups. See Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), "The Puppeteer." Accessed June 5, 2010. <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2002/summer/the-puppeteer>.

²⁵ Leonard Zeskin, "The New Nativism," *The American Prospect*, Oct. 23, 2005. Accessed July 22, 2010. http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the_new_nativism. Coe has said she belonged to the Council of Conservative Citizens, the segregationist White Citizens' Councils.

Tanton and the Tanton-created, anti-immigrant group FAIR.”²⁶ In the late 1980s and early 1990s, both mainstream and radical environmental groups in the U.S. had substantial numbers (or even a majority) of members who opposed immigration.²⁷

Business magnate Ross Perot, another important player in the NAFTA struggle, also saw opposing NAFTA and “free trade” as a matter of protecting America from external threats. Perot argued that creating economic independence was key for the future control of America, and the title of his major publication of the time reflected well his message: “Save your Job, Save our Country.” His “giant sucking sound” metaphor for the jobs that would be vacuumed to Mexico under NAFTA became the most-prominent single phrase of the campaign of the 1992 presidential race, when Perot first ran and gained more votes than any third party candidate since Theodore Roosevelt in 1912. Many working-class Americans supported populists like Perot and Buchanan, even though to a large extent these candidates were funded by the country’s richest people.²⁸ When NAFTA looked like it would fail in late 1992, a desperate Bill Clinton recruited former presidents to counter Perot, and they proceeded to paint him

²⁶ See SPLC, “Nativists and Environmentalists: A Timeline.” Accessed July 9, 2010. <http://www.splcenter.org/greenwash-nativists-environmentalism-and-the-hypocrisy-of-hate/greenwashing-a-timeline>.

²⁷ Earth First!, a radical environmental group that rejected the Sierra Club as a collaborationist and elitist, went through its own schisms in the late 1980s and early 1990s regarding this and other issues about race and gender. The official English movement shows that the anti-immigrant agitation reflected in the well-known Proposition 187 case has roots that were both nationwide and deep. Though Proposition 187 was the most draconian and (initially) most successful of the legislative efforts in the 1990s, similar legislation was proposed in many states, including in the Northeast, in the 1990s. All these efforts capture how race and immigration in the 1980s and 1990s were bound together partly because of perceived threats to national sovereignty and unity.

²⁸ As this chapter shows shortly, Buchanan enjoyed the funding of major industrial leaders and had many upper-middle class supporters, and Perot himself was a billionaire in the 1990s.

as an extremist. Jimmy Carter called him “a demagogue ... who is praying on the fears and uncertainties of the American public,” and painted him “as part of an anti-NAFTA lunatic fringe” including Nader, Jerry Brown, Pat Buchanan, and Jesse Jackson.” Perot won close to 20 percent of the working-class vote in 1992.²⁹

The last way that groups often opposed on policy and workers’ rights issues collaborated in the early 1990s – by evoking their commonalities as citizens of the U.S. and their subsequent obligation to protect it – was through “Buy American.” Whether you were the AFL-CIO or the “Outpost of Freedom,” the voice of the “Council of Domestic Relations,” a right-wing populist version on the Council of Foreign Relations, you overlapped about America and wanted consumers to buy it.³⁰

Buy American created partnerships between the country’s haves, like textile executive and union buster Roger Millikin (as described in Chapter 1), or Chicago executive William Lynott, and its have-nots. It blurred the gaping class distinctions of the

²⁹ Richard Blow, “The Clinton Plan to Control Perot,” *Mother Jones* (January/February 1994,) 22-25. Lane Kenworthy, Sondra Barringer, Daniel Duerr, and Garret Andrew Schneider, “The Democrats and Working-Class Whites,” unpublished paper, June 10, 2007.

³⁰ In a fact sheet released before the Trade for the Twenty-first Century conference in 1992, the AFL-CIO captured its perspective on the ramifications of NAFTA. “It will increase unemployment in vital sectors of the economy; erode the nation’s industrial base; jeopardize our efforts for a cleaner environment and a safe food supply; harm the nation’s farmers; encourage corporation to invest overseas, instead of in the United States; seriously weaken existing trade remedy and ‘Buy America’ laws; and compromise our system of democratic decision making.” In AFL-CIO, 1992, 1, JwJ, national office files. Gary N. Chaison and Barbara Jane Bigelow, *Unions and Legitimacy* (Ithaca, NY and London, UK: ILR Press, 2002), 62. For the CDR, trade deals would lead “to a violation of our Constitutional First amendment rights because slogan campaigns such as “Buy American” or “Buy Idaho Potatoes” are illegal under NAFTA,” which would leave the country vulnerable to the importation of food from Mexico. There, “Mexican farmers use DDT freely (which is a known cancer causing [sic] agent) and frequently use human feces as fertilizer.” Druck, Dan. Council of Domestic Relations, <http://www.sweetliberty.org/NAFTA.HTM>, (accessed June 30, 2010). The site also favorably notes the efforts of labor favorite David Bonior (November 1993).

1990s.³¹ One of several such groups in the 1990s, the “Made in the USA” Foundation, received start-up money from the United Auto Workers, for example. In 1996, the CWA, the union that founded JwJ, donated office space to the organization.³² The same year, Milliken became one of the closest advisers to Pat Buchanan, who as a presidential candidate won the Super Tuesday primaries. After briefly supporting Perot in 1992, Milliken, between 1992 and 1996, gave \$2.1 million to Buchanan’s “American Cause,” which built opposition to the GATT treaty and voiced the nativist protectionism that Milliken increasingly turned to.³³

Some unions clouded those class distinctions through other forms of collaboration, even when they didn’t conceptualize their partnerships through patriotic consumption. As in the 1980s, when the Industrial Union Department, one of the founders of Jobs with Justice, created LICIT (the Labor Industry Coalition for International Trade), some of the major actors in Jobs with Justice in the 1990s – and, most notably, the leadership of the CWA – continued to work in such coalitions to advance favorable trade policy for the industries in which it organized. Morton Bahr, a key JwJ official and the long-time head of the CWA, was co-chair of the Coalition for Open Trade (an affiliate to LICIT), and there he worked with the executives of the companies that have busted JwJ unions.³⁴ In the years during and after the NAFTA

³¹ Lynott’s group was the Buy American Foundation, which he created.

³² Dana Frank, *Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1999), 218-9.

³³ *Ibid.*, 194-5. Quote on 194. Steve Forbes, who praised Milliken, had a business partner linked to the Pioneer Fund. Milliken was one of the founders of the conservative Heritage Foundation.

struggle, according to former Public Citizen trade activist Mike Dolan, a weekly meeting about trade occurred between activists and politicians from the political left and right in D.C. in the early 1990s. The meetings, he said, featured unions, Milliken's people, people connected to Public Citizen, representatives of Representative David Bonior, the libertarian Ron Paul, and Pat Buchanan's sister Bay Buchanan, a conservative lobbyist.³⁵ These collaborations helped create the ideological and tactical affinities of the late 1990s, as this chapter will show.

The groups that aligned themselves together to contest NAFTA may have seemed like an ideologically motley group, but they all in some way reclaimed America, and many would work together regularly in the decade that followed. As the NAFTA debates faded, when congress debated the Clinton-created labor and environmental side agreements of the treaty in late 1993, one of Jobs with Justice's newest local coalitions helped organize what, less than a decade later, would become relatively common: the gathering of thousands of residents of the world's richest countries to protest various kinds of international economic summits held by the G-8 nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Economic Forum, and many others. Though much of the literature on the anti-globalization movement begins its story with the November 30, 1999 "Battle of Seattle," the 1999 protests weren't even the first anti-

³⁴ For example, Boeing (the Machinists' union, the IAM), or Motorola, which was charged in 1989 by the IMF of creating "a *kusadae* – 'save the company corps'—which consists of 'thugs' who," in the case of Motorola, "attacked union organizers with iron bars and cattle prods, and set four unions leaders on fire" in the late 1980s. See "Motorola – Korea Roughs Up Workers," in "Behind the Lines" section, *Multinational Monitor* 10, numbers 1-2, (January/February 1989), <http://multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/issues/1989/01/behind-the-lines.html>, (accessed July 20, 2010).

³⁵ Mike Dolan, telephone interview with the author, June 17, 2010. I haven't confirmed these specific meetings, but given the close collaborations on trade policy in other settings it seems plausible.

neoliberal globalization rallies in the Emerald City. Those happened on November 20, 1993, when an appropriately motley regional anti-NAFTA crew joined the “Seattle Host Committee” – an ad hoc coalition for the demonstrations that one newspaper called a “bizarre mix” of protestors. The Jobs with Justice local coalition was one of the most active, and most-working class, organizations in the committee.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was a forum for international leaders to discuss trade, and it planned one of its first summits in Seattle in 1993. The forum was founded in 1989 and, especially before the Asia economic crisis of the late 1990s, it dedicated most of its efforts to negotiating the liberalization of trade in the Pacific Rim. The heads of state in Seattle, invited personally by Bill Clinton, encamped themselves in the most luxurious retreats in the city. Rumors circulated that the Sultan of Brunei – at the time the richest man on earth – had once left a \$170,000 tip, and local service workers doted on these, the goliaths of Pacific Rim globalization, and the local and international press dwelled on their personal accoutrements. Some of the Taiwanese businessmen, arguing that smoking was the “Oriental thinking,” particularly when in high-pressure governmental business negotiations, persuaded the staff at the swanky Westin Hotel to overlook its smoking ban for the week.³⁶

The Host Committee wanted to alter the mood of the welcoming party. One group in the coalition – the city’s homeless residents – organized themselves to demand the sultan pay for no-charge public outdoor toilets in the gentrifying downtown

³⁶ Quotation from Michael Lee, Taiwanese journalist, as quoted in “Asian Visitors May be Shocked by No Smoking in Seattle,” *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio, Nov. 18, 1993, Lexis-Nexus Academic (July 21, 2010), transcript.

corridor. Alaskan Airlines flight attendants –like the flight attendants who spurred JwJ’s founding in the 1980s – initiated a strike and what they called a “CHAOS” strategy, and the workers, decked out in their multicolored CHAOS t-shirts instead of button-down blazers, surprised Alaskan officials with their persistence and new, anti-globalization allies in the streets. Ross Perot was set to speak at the Seattle Coliseum along with union leaders, who had arranged an AFL-CIO “Not this NAFTA” rally a few days before the protests.³⁷

But a battle this was not to be. After much speculation, the pilots refused to strike with the attendants. The street protests around trade liberalization’s effect on forests in the Third World were not Earth First!-style lockdowns – as in Seattle in 1999 – but led by moderate, single-issue NGOs pressuring for the preservation of distant forests. Perot’s November 9 appearance and cranky demeanor in his infamous debate about NAFTA with vice-presidential candidate Al Gore on CNN’s *Larry King Live* deflated the importance of his populist presence. Most importantly, a pair of weak NAFTA side agreements passed right before the demonstrations, and the two-year legislative NAFTA battle was over. NAFTA’s success augmented Clinton’s bargaining power as the meetings began, and Jobs with Justice and the other organizations of the Seattle Host Committee immediately dubbed the APEC as the “NAFTA of the East.”

The Seattle protest foreshadowed how Jobs with Justice would shape the growing anti-neoliberal globalization movement in the coming years. Jobs with Justice and Friends of the Earth – the 1993 version of Teamsters and turtles – played

³⁷ “Flight Attendants’ Welcome,” no date, JwJ national office files.

coordinating roles in the Seattle Host Committee, and populists like Perot shared the stage with a labor left still wary of his influence. In addition, it set the stage for the kinds of direct action that Seattle, and Jobs with Justice, would become known for. Indeed, only months later the Seattle coalition staged another set of demonstrations about trade issues. As then-Seattle JwJ co-chair Patricia Agostino recounted in the organization's newsletter:

Over 250 JwJers participated in an occupation of the Seattle International Trade Center. Our demonstrations of citizen outrage over NAFTA resulted in the cancellation of their 'Free Trader of the Year Award Banquet'.... The first of us to make it up the escalator to where the banquet was surprised to find no security. The NAFTA Trade Show participants never knew what hit them. Our careful strategy and planning paid off. All 250 of us made it past security, into the building, and up the escalator to occupy the banquet area. We occupied the stage. We gave speeches on the perils of free trade, and 'No Justice – No Banquet' became one of our favorite chants.³⁸

Using running scouts and early cell phones "that probably weighed two or three pounds," JwJ activists coordinated their exit with the escalating threats of the police, Washington JwJ founder Jonathan Rosenblum said. As police busses pulled up to the convention center, JwJ's designated police liaison tried to delay them, asking them if it was really worth the trouble of arresting 250 non-violent protestors.³⁹ As the police seemed to be on the verge of moving in, the protestors realized they had successfully forced banquet organizers to postpone or cancel the event. "[W]e cheered loudly when

³⁸ Patricia Agostino, "Spirit of Militancy Builds Coalition," *I'll be There: Jobs with Justice Newsletter* 7, no. 3 (July 1994), 8. Agostino was president of the Puget Sound Chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. JwJ national office files.

³⁹ Jonathan Rosenblum, telephone interview with the author, May 25, 2010.

the kitchen crew and servers began to clear the tables,” Agostino wrote. “As a parting gesture we ‘snake danced’ around the tables, down the escalator and out onto the street for a victory rally. Afterwards, several newspaper articles said the banquet was ‘postponed’...wrong! We shut ‘em down!”⁴⁰

From “American in Decline” to Globalized “Corporate Greed”

The Seattle actions also foreshadowed changing dynamics within the Jobs with Justice network itself.⁴¹ The coalition faced several challenges in the early 1990s. Despite a wish by some of the founders to remain a network of unions and community groups – and not a staffed organization itself – Jobs with Justice decided to hire its first full-time coordinator in 1992.⁴² Unions’ fluctuating levels of commitment, rapidly changing needs relative to their specific industries, and the failure of most local coalitions to become “permanent coalitions” between 1987 and 1992 made creating long-term strategy difficult. The national coordinator they hired – Fred Azcarate, former president of the United States Student Association (USSA) and organizer for Citizen

⁴⁰ Agostino, “Spirit of Militancy Builds Coalition,” 8.

⁴¹ Though Jobs with Justice did not have a national campaign against NAFTA, Ron Carey, reform leader of the Teamsters and active JwJ participant, affirmed that “[w]hen anti-NAFTA campaign activities were held throughout the nation, Jobs with Justice activists were there organizing, rallying, and lobbying for fair trade.” See Ron Carey, “Jobs with Justice: Now More than Ever” *Jobs with Justice Update*, 7, no. 2(May 1994).

⁴² The relatively small, weak central office, staffed only by Azcarate, was directed by the Presidents’ Council and the national Steering Committee. Several documents explain the challenges and decentralized structure of the organization. No author, “Coordinator Responsibilities,” part of packet mailed to JwJ supporters by CWA staffer George Kohl on April 2, 1991. JwJ, national office files.

Action – oversaw Jobs with Justice from a period when annual meetings brought 250 people (most of whom were from unions or Citizen Action and its health care campaign) – to a diverse coalition that featured national meetings with hundreds of panels and close to a thousand participants.⁴³ JwJ grew for a number of reasons, but one of the important ones was the action of local organizers. The first coalitions that took hold were in Denver, with CWA member Mary Blue, and in Austin, though the first to hire a staff person were in Boston and New York, both of whom were paid by SEIU, CWA, and other unions in 1990 and 1991.⁴⁴ Seattle, along with a group that included coalitions in Portland, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Kentucky, and Atlanta, emerged in the early 1990s as lasting local efforts.⁴⁵ Even as early as 1993, the Seattle coalition could mobilize hundreds of people in joint actions, many of which involved civil disobedience and arrest.

The NAFTA campaigns and the Seattle actions occurred as activists and organizers in the nascent anti-free trade coalition asserted different, but related, concepts of America. JwJ maintained its focus on building unity – and especially class unity for workers’ rights – through the “I’ll be There” pledge card it was known for. In signing it, people and organizations pledged to “be there” for other struggles at least five times that year. In the late 1980s, as Chapter 1 shows, many JwJ leaders envisioned

⁴³ For example, around 400 people attended Jobs with Justice’s annual meeting in 1995, compared to approximately 250 people present in the annual meeting in 1994 and in 1993. Azcarate, “Coordinator’s Report,” in *I’ll be There: Jobs with Justice Newsletter*, Vol 8, no. 2, and Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 2.

⁴⁴ Rand Wilson, personal correspondence.

⁴⁵ Rand Wilson, telephone interview with the author, Patricia Agostino and Jonathan Rosenblum, to Fred Azcarate, Jan. 31, 1993, JwJ national office files.

uniting unions and the working class as a matter of preserving an American “way of life.” In the early 1990s, the prevalent anxieties about the U.S. and its position in the world in the era of the NAFTA debates wove through JwJ as well, and it led many of its activists to see the decline of the unionized working class as illustrative of the decline of America. By 1996, they increasingly saw workers’ rights not as connected to the fading of the social compact and the concomitant decline of America but to the global “race to the bottom” of the global “New Economy.”⁴⁶

In the early 1990s, Jobs with Justice activists tended to see union issues not just as matters of wages and hours but also about the slipping terms of the social compact that made the U.S. a superpower. In 1992, the organization created its first economics education materials, and the document’s language of class and nationalism reveals much about how protecting the working-class, for JwJ, paralleled protecting the nation and its world standing. The most important item, a slideshow called “Jobs with Justice: The Economic and Political World we Organize in,” paints that world as one characterized by mass plunder at the hands of government-subsidized Corporate America, all of which has led to “America in decline.” The “Corporate Vision for America,” the slideshow asserts, would allow “corporations and the rich” to lead the country toward the Third World. The second slide of the packet features a statement from an executive arguing that wages in the U.S. need to fall “to those of the Brazils and Koreas” for U.S. business to “be competitive,” and a series of pie graphs on the next page dramatically show how U.S. labor costs tower over those in Korea, Brazil, Mexico,

⁴⁶ No author, “Talking Points for National Alliance for Fair Employment Internal Document,” circa 2000, JwJ, national office files.

and Hong Kong. Faulting U.S. policies like deregulation and the Cold War that have led to bloated defense budgets, the packet asserts that “Corporate America’s Economic Plan” is to “Get Government off our Backs” and farther into the pockets of the corporate world.

The result, JwJ argues, is a world superpower falling from its heights: the slideshow argues that “A Young Worker Today Earns 25 Percent Less Than His Father Earned at the Same Age,” and “American Children Score Behind 12 Other Countries in Math and Science.” Millions of people, it continues, “Live on the Streets,” and “Every Other Day, a Bridge Collapses in the United States.” The country, it suggests, can follow one of two paths: support unions and “invest in people and communities, or pursue the “Low-Wage Path” of NAFTA. It is on a precipice, the image of the U.S.-Mexico border in the last panel suggests. “This isn’t a border,” the text says in bold print. “It’s an edge.” The decline of the U.S. working class is not just about nickels and dimes, but also about a country tottering on the brink.⁴⁷

JwJ activists throughout the network defined class and appealed to class solidarity with implicit calls to save America and the social compact that forged it. At the major coal mine strike in Pittston, West Virginia, workers and the media-savvy unionists and activists who created a strategic campaign against the company argued that the company had a “moral duty” to uphold the promises of the past.⁴⁸ The mine workers’

⁴⁷ Eduardo Diaz of CWA was largely responsible for the slideshow.

⁴⁸ The strategic campaign against the coal mine company, similar to the “corporate campaign” model that Ray Rogers and others developed in the 1970s and 1980s, used clever forms of civil disobedience, economic pressure on both a company and the many individuals and groups connected to it, and highly-

strike, UMWA Special Projects Coordinator Kenneth Zinn said, was “not about another nickel on the dollar,” it was about “the value and sacrifices that generations of UMWA members have made” for the industry. As UMWA President Rich Trumka said, “We gave you our sweat. We have you our muscles. We gave you our blood and our lives.”⁴⁹ At the 1992 annual meeting in Austin, labor populist Jim Hightower gave the keynote address, and stressed how Jobs with Justice was really about “a fundamental American value – economic fairness.” The JwJ Update newsletter, published several times a year in the late 1980s and early 1990s, regularly suggested that unionists’ adversaries were not corporations in general but “corporate irresponsibility” that violated the terms of a long-held unspoken contract.⁵⁰

In other cases, the fate of the U.S. working class had something to do with family, country, and god. During the major campaigns at Staley Manufacturing in Illinois in the early 1990s, which Jobs with Justice supported, workers on at least two occasions scheduled meetings with managers only to abruptly cut them off and break out in “God Bless America” or the Pledge of Allegiance.⁵¹ One JwJ Update, addressed to the people of “working America,” appealed for solidarity to their “brothers and sisters” in the union movement. Claiming to be a “Voice for Working America,” a JwJ newsletter suggested

developed media strategies to pressure companies. Richard A. Brisbin, *A Strike Like No Other Strike: Law and Resistance during the Pittston Coal Strike of 1989-1990* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 134-135.

⁴⁹ No author, “Striking Mineworkers Need your Support,” *I’ll be There: Jobs with Justice Newsletter*, Vol. 6, no. 2, July/Aug. 1993, 3.

⁵⁰ Hightower, Annual Meeting program, in *I’ll be There*.

⁵¹ Uehlein, interview with the author. It was not uncommon for local unions to say the pledge of allegiance before meetings. Azcarate, interview.

that “working America” had more to lose than its jobs to the Third World. “What happens to families when jobs are exported to Mexico or Taiwan?” Picket signs in the photo below the text suggest that saving “our jobs” meant specifically American jobs.⁵² The AFL-CIO, through the 1990s, abandoned the term “working class” for “working family,” and unions continued to confront a trend they began to see in the 1980s: the “‘anxious class’ of white males” defecting to the Republicans over values – like “family” and “faith” that the New Right was successfully defining as American.⁵³

Though the end of the Cold War, for some, generated the simultaneous emergence of the “New World Order” of globalization, older languages about the Cold War and America’s place in it continued to influence the union world, even with Jobs with Justice allies. Those languages, however, varied, and by the mid 1990s the imagery or influences of the Cold War era diminished dramatically. They were most prominent in the AFL-CIO. Lane Kirkland, during the NAFTA debates, characterized the labor and environmental conditions in Mexico’s *maquiladoras* as comparable to “the worst Stalinist regimes.”⁵⁴ In the Industrial Union Department, Assistant-to-the-President Elmer Chatak, a Jobs with Justice ally since its first campaign, connected the working

⁵² No author, “This Fall, Let’s Be There as a Voice for Working America,” *I’ll Be There: Jobs with Justice newsletter*, 5, no. 2 (June), 1992, 5. JwJ, national office files.

⁵³ No author, “Austin Meeting Sounds Call to Action,” draft copy, circa 1992, JwJ national office files. For the first time, the South voted Republican in the 1994 elections. Terry Atlas, “Job Worries At Root of Gatt Fears.” Though in “Building Jobs with Justice” (1997) the group positions the various attacks on workers’ rights as part of a process where “democratic institutions” were failing because of lack of participation, “working-class communities are becoming more polarized,” and the American “way of life” needs to be resuscitated, this reference and others reflects less the decline-of-America theme and more the rather the abandonment of the corporations and the rich of the working class.

⁵⁴ Mayer, *Interpreting NAFTA*, 89.

class to America and democracy in ways highly resonant with the anxieties of the Cold War. “It behooves us all who love freedom and democracy,” he wrote in a labor journal in 1991, “to do what we can to assure strong and viable unions in America. We in the labor movement do not believe that we can have a free society and a high standard of living without free and effective unions.”⁵⁵ Other labor organizers and leaders who worked with Jobs with Justice appealed to economic fairness by contrasting labor conditions to the Communist world. The ACTWU president in Seattle appealed to economic fairness in his union organizing campaigns by demanding the U.S. live up to its position as a “free” society. Steve Early (CWA/Massachusetts JwJ) and Matt Witt, in an article about the trade deal that would later become NAFTA, wrote that in Mexico “grassroots reform efforts are met with official violence ... [t]o a degree unheard of even in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union.”⁵⁶

Traces of the “America in Decline” imagery flavors how Jobs with Justice appealed for solidarity in nationally as well as in local contexts, as in Seattle. One of the first national campaigns JwJ joined after the fall of the Soviet Union was, in fact, the Campaign for New Priorities, which sought to build a broad labor alliance to push for reinvesting Cold War-era military expenses – like troops throughout Western Europe – in the public sector for health care, education, and jobs. The idea that America needed re-investment to buttress itself in a politically and economically hostile world also

⁵⁵ Elmer Chatak, “A Unionist’s Perspective on the Future of American Unions,” *Journal of Labor Research*, XII, no. 4 (Fall 1991), 327-332.

⁵⁶ Early and Witt, “A nightmarish underside to the dream of a North American common market,” *The Boston Globe*, Saturday, April 27, 1991. I thank Steve Early for telling me about and sending me these articles.

influenced JwJ articulations of class in the Seattle APEC events, where the anti-neoliberal globalization alliance of labor, environmentalists, consumer groups, and populists began to take shape. JwJ organizers' first idea about the main labor rally would be for it to focus on a theme of "Economic Justice/Rebuild America." Probably to skirt the charge of "protectionism," Jobs with Justice elaborated on the theme by specifying that it supported more global trade, just not trade regulated by the "NAFTA of the East." In a state like Washington, whose lumber industry and industrial base had been ravaged by international competition, the NAFTA charge suggested that APEC was another job vacuum. Situating the jobs and economic issues in a context of "economic decline at home," the description reinforces that jobs and the state of the working class was tied to "Rebuild[ing] America."⁵⁷

But the JwJ collaborators who penned the first draft of themes for the APEC demonstrations also recognized the dangers of overtly nationalist or protectionist messages. Another theme of the rally should be workers' international solidarity, they wrote. In the description of the theme, JwJ noted that "[s]ome opponents of NAFTA (and even some within our own ranks) advance xenophobic arguments against a bad treaty. We know that when groups of workers are pitted against each other – whether in one company, or in a worldwide industry – we end up hurting ourselves." As if to counter nativist impulses that could arise from basing the message on the specter of "economic decline at home," they instead posited an international union-based solidarity, with the proposal that anti-APEC sponsoring groups create a "declaration that

⁵⁷ The "Rebuild America" theme was also that of the Rainbow Coalition at the time, and the coalition was active in Jobs with Justice.

we stand united with trade union members abroad on the need for any trade pact to guarantee the right to organize, bargain and strike, and the right to an improved standard of living, etc.” In the final materials distributed at the APEC actions, instead of calling for an end to corporate irresponsibility for domestic corporations and U.S. workers, JwJ evoked a class-based internationalism in its demand for “[r]esponsible corporate citizenry in all communities and countries.”⁵⁸

With the passage of NAFTA, the continued ascendance of left-oriented labor activists and staffers in unions, the focus on new organizing from service and textile workers’ unions, and the failure of most union efforts in the early and mid 1990s, Jobs with Justice changed its language of class in the mid 1990s.⁵⁹ References to a working class tied to the ideological framework of the Cold War, the post-World War II social compact, or even “America” almost never surfaced in the mid 1990s and after in Jobs with Justice. America fell by the wayside as Jobs with Justice identified and defined a new kind of adversary – a “corporate greed” that increasingly operated beyond the

⁵⁸ In the final flyer for the rally, JwJ and the Host Committee base their demands on the suggestion that APEC and “free trade” violate the democratic principles important for all nations. The document emulates, in fact, the U.S. Constitution. “We Demand Fair Trade ... With Liberty and Justice for All. We, the people, call on the leaders of the APEC to respect” “Workers’ Rights,” “Human Rights,” and “Environmental Rights.” These rights, too, are modeled on U.S.-style liberal democracy. Human rights included “Freedom of speech,” “Freedom of Religion,” “Due process for all.” the workplace.” JwJ, national office files.

⁵⁹ Bill Fletcher, telephone interview with the author, May 10, 2010. See also Bill Fletcher, Jr. and Fernando Gapasin, *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path toward Social Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) on ideas of class and “empire consciousness” among U.S. unions in the 1990s.

confines of America.⁶⁰ Though chapter one argued that JwJ's early anti-corporate politics were roots of the anti-neoliberal globalization movement of the late 1990s, the populist language of America had sometimes inflected the early JwJ language of class. That populism faded in the mid-1990s.

The change is most clearly visible in how JwJ talked to its members about the economy and world around them. By 1996, the slideshow had been updated and the narrative of "America in decline" had been changed, and the slideshow's language of class and nation reflects the changes. It outlined JwJ's vision for "[r]eclaiming power for working people, our families and our communities." Instead of workers facing concessions, lockouts, and the "decline" from earlier prosperity, the new economy in mid-1990s was built, the packet suggests, on contingent workers, part-time labor, and service work. "Corporate America" remains the adversary, but so does the more general – and more global – "corporate greed." Both forces, as portrayed here, have created a corporate-dominated planet that has led to vast economic inequality in the U.S. Though JwJ continues to portray the contemporary economy as shaped by years of increasing economic stratification between rich and poor, the idea of the decline of the nation is considerably muted.⁶¹ The dominant theme is that of corporations run amok, since

⁶⁰ The Campaign for New Priorities remained active in some JwJ circles into at least the late 1990s, though its focus and language shifted from reconstructing America from problems developed during the Cold War.

⁶¹ Whereas "[i]n 1980, the average CEO pay was 40 times the average workers' pay ... Today, the average CEO pay is 187 times what the average worker earns." Though in two instances the slideshow notes that the U.S. had the most stratified economy of all the "industrialized" countries, the specter of decline is largely absent. JwJ national office files.

“Corporate America” got the “free trade” and “deregulation” that it wanted.⁶² Whereas in the early 1990s the increase in corporate power was leading to the decline of the schools, roads, and of America itself, in 1996 corporations have become the new governments. They control the media, the slideshow says, and much more: according to a *Wall St. Journal* article the slideshow highlights, “[t]he world’s financial markets have become... the judge and jury. Instead of government dictating to markets, international markets oversee government policies.”⁶³ Although the term “globalization” is rare in the materials of Jobs with Justice or the other groups of the anti-corporate globalization movement in the mid-1990s, Jobs with Justice, with its corporate greed idea, introduced then the framework for how, only a few years later, it would understand what it would call “corporate globalization”: as a planet dominated by multinational corporations whose influence over rights, governments, consumption, and workers constituted a fundamental attack on democracy worldwide.

Just as the “robber barons” of the 1980s used “competition” to excuse boorish union busting, employers in the 1990s used, the 1996 slide show suggested, the “global economy” and its new technologies and trade regulations as a pretext for job and wage cuts. As JwJ and many other groups began to note in the NAFTA struggle, a “race to the bottom” threatened the standards of U.S. workers – but the race to the bottom played itself out in all the countries in the New World Order. Jobs with Justice, unlike some of

⁶² Examples on pp. 4, 8.

⁶³ This was part of a broader effort by national Jobs with Justice to make the slide show more applicable to “community groups, religious groups and issue and constituency organizations.” It makes, the national staff wrote in its annual report for 1997, “economic justice” “more accessible and makes the case for building strong coalitions of labor, community and religious organizations.”

its coalition partners in the anti-NAFTA networks, emerged from the early and mid 1990s and continued to assert and define the class hierarchies in the global economy. Appeals to America faded in JwJ's campaigns of the mid and late 1990s as the organization centered its appeals for solidarity in combating rampant corporate greed.

Corporate greed is a relatively generic phrase and had been used in campaigns that JwJ supported before the 1996 economic slideshow. At Pittston Coal, for example, in 1989 and 1990, workers denounced the company for catering to "corporate greed instead of human needs." In the mid-1990s it became more common. At the Staley strike in 1995, workers carried "Stop Corporate Greed" picket signs, and JwJ, especially through CWA Local 1103 and JwJ's Jan Pierce, collaborated with the effort.⁶⁴ With the Republican Revolution of the 1994 midterm elections and Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America," the new Republican congressional majority re-hashed the Reagan-era language that blurred class distinctions and blamed big government, soft men, and lazy immigrants for the problems of the country. In response, JwJ and its coalition tried to shift the focus to out-of-control corporate greed. The organization signed on to a union-led coalition – the Campaign for an America that Works – that diagnosed society as one infected with corporate greed, and called a national Day of Action in 1995 for a "Worker's Bill of Rights" in the face of corporate dominance. The theme for the next Day of Action (DOA), in 1996, was "Corporate Greed."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ For CWA local 1103's support, see Steven K. Ashby and C.J. Hawking, *Staley: The Fight for a New American Labor Movement* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 267.

⁶⁵ JwJ in 1997 approached the massive welfare cuts of the Clinton welfare reform legislation by defining the issue as a jobs one, seeking unity around the common economic marginalization the reform would

Part of the reason for the fading of the social compact, the America-in-decline vision, and the Cold War language of the early 1990s was simply the passage of time. But in Jobs with Justice and in the unions in general, it also had to do with the arrival of a new generation of young organizers, recruited often through union progressives, who had little experience with Cold War union discourses. The new activists entering JwJ in the mid-1990s reflected this trend as well, as the network grew considerably in the following five years. Unlike the first generation of JwJers, most were under 30, few had ever been union members or staffers, and an increasing number were women and people of color. Much of their political experience came from student organizing in the late 1980s or early 1990s during campaigns to defend multiculturalism or to oppose tuition increases or, occasionally, global phenomena, like the onset of the Gulf War. For them, the national Jobs with Justice office was a place that seemed more grassroots

exacerbate. JwJ designed its 1997 DOA on "Welfare/Workfare Rights." As the historic 1996 welfare reform legislation forced unemployed or sub-employed low-wage workers into local job markets, public agencies and private business rushed to outsource union jobs to its newly available pool of workers. The changes often pitted white male union workers against female workers of color, neither of whom held jobs that paid a living wage. JwJ's 1997 day of action was meant to redefine the issue as a question of "Jobs with Justice for all." Despite the protests of some unions, it succeeded in building alliances in some cities between churches, welfare rights groups, and unions, some of which succeeded in passing local "Living Wage" ordinances and impeding city governments' future attempts at playing local workers off each other. Part of the Campaign for an America that Works was the naming and publicizing of a corporate "hog of the month," and in some months the selection reflected the point from JwJ's slideshow that the government seemed subservient to corporations. In March 1995, the hog was McDonalds, which, the campaign claimed, was feeding "at the public trough" by accepting 1.6 million dollars to market Chicken McNuggets in Turkey. As the *Multinational Monitor*, one of the journals of the emerging anti-corporate globalization network reported, the Market Promotion Program, which gave companies money to "open up markets abroad for U.S. products," was a taxpayer-funded effort to use trade to retaliate against a national industry abroad by giving money to U.S. corporations to get an unfair advantage in the national market of an offending country." "McFood Stamps, Behind the Lines," *Multinational Monitor* 16, numbers 7 and 8 (July/August 1995). Accessed June 15, 2010. http://multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/issues/1995/07/mm0795_01.html. This was mainly used "in those countries deemed to have unfair trading practices. The journal was founded by Ralph Nader in the early 1980s, was tied to the alternative economic "People's Summits" of the 1990s, and was a resource for anti-corporate activists. Nader, in a controversial decision, also broke a union drive by the workers at the *Monitor* in 1984.

than D.C.-based advocacy groups, and the local JwJ coalitions operated more on solidarity and volunteerism than local unions, with their impossibly long work hours, infighting, and bureaucratic hierarchies. Jobs with Justice activists were also more willing than many unionists to confront the racism and sexism that permeated unions as well as society at large.

One of these new participants found work in the national JwJ office after a period working as an intern at the American Friends Service Committee in D.C., where she would regularly go to meetings of other D.C.-based advocacy groups. When she first arrived at Jobs with Justice meetings, she was happy to discover a culture of collective work, in which meetings featured team strategy-building and brainstorming, meetings where she would not just “feel invisible.” In Jobs with Justice, people worked through ideas on large sheets of butcher paper; at the D.C. advocacy group meetings, organizational staff handed out press clips, strategy sheets, and the meeting agenda. “Sometimes,” she said, at those meetings “it felt like it had all been figured out beforehand.”

There were just moments in this general sense when we, you know we, the professionals here in D.C., know the inside track, the political strategy. We know what we should do next ... you know, discounting, or even not looking to the voices of the people being profoundly affected by immigration reform and welfare reform. ... And like I just remember from those meetings in particular there was one meeting I think the executive director was a white man ... and there was a very high-up staff person who was a Latina woman and in one meeting she was late, she made reference to why she was late, it was because of

her kids or something, and I remember it was so nice to hear someone make a reference to life outside that room.⁶⁶

In Jobs with Justice, staffers could be much more flexible with their hours, which was crucial for those who had children or other family commitments. Another said, “there were simply people like you,” as opposed to in many unions. “You could go and talk to somebody,” she said, whereas union culture could be isolating or even abusive.⁶⁷

Immigration, Populism, and the Emerging Politics of Anti-Neoliberal Globalization

As much as Jobs with Justice asserted the contradiction between workers, on the one hand, and corporate greed, on the other, other voices of the NAFTA-era anti-neoliberal globalization coalition blurred those class distinctions in the mid and late 1990s, and saw in the global economy a threat not to workers, but rather to democracy, America, or community. Instead of “workers” as the agent of change, they built collective identities as “citizens” or “Americans.”

This was most obvious with the Buchanan camp. In 1996, Buchanan won the 1996 Super Tuesday primaries, and in some states he won close to half the votes from voters most concerned with immigration and foreign trade. His largest bloc of support was people who hadn’t attended college, but in his strongest states more than half of

⁶⁶ Confidential interview, 2010.

⁶⁷ Confidential interview, 2009.

his supporters earned more than \$50,000 a year.⁶⁸ If any doubts remained about his pull amongst union members, they disappeared during his Milliken-funded and elaborately organized presidential campaign, during which he ran as “an unemployed angry white man,” even though he had recently served as a CNN commentator and had a long history of high-power government jobs. He railed on “illegal immigration,” blamed it on NAFTA, and hammered home his most popular themes, like “cultural rot in the movies ... illegal immigration and about how American corporations are raising their profits by firing workers.” In a moment which reflected how right-wing populists like Buchanan could overlap in a few ways with the labor left, Buchanan said “[f]ight corporate greed” at a rally in Texas as he ridiculed Republican Bob Dole, his business-friendly challenger. His speech appealed to one supporter from nearby Nacogdoches, the same small town in which Jobs with Justice won one of its first organizing victories (with African-American kitchen workers) in 1988. The supporter told a reporter that she taught her children at home even though her husband was a local high school teacher, and, in the reporter’s words, “more than anything she’s worried that the United Nations is bent on destroying the sovereignty of the United States.”⁶⁹

For some JwJ allies in the anti-NAFTA struggles, Buchanan’s racist xenophobia was repulsive, but at the same time his attention to local sovereignty and fervent opposition to supranational institutions, like the WTO, constituted a common bond

⁶⁸ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 430; for 50,000, see Blaine Harden, “As Their Support Thins, Candidates Run on Faith: Buchanan’s Performances Are Fed By the Frenzy of True Believers,” *The Washington Post*, March 12, 1996.

⁶⁹ Blaine Harden, “As Their Support Thins, Candidates Run on Faith,” *The Washington Post*, March 12, 1996.

worth exploring. For them, solidarity to save America and/or its democracy, as a citizen's struggle, trumped any degree of class, racial, or national solidarity they saw as part of the program. Mike Dolan, as the field organizer to Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch in the mid 1990s, organized tours in support of a variety of bills that would have limited the scope of some NAFTA stipulations, and in the tours it was his job to build ties with the groups of the Buchananist, and white supremacist, right wing.

I was doing populist barnstorming. Sure, it was almost scary. I remember in Phoenix, not too long after the Oklahoma City bombing, I'm driving a big Ryder truck that could have had fertilizer [for a bomb]. I'm doing my events at federal buildings, and that's where this is, so I show them the inside of the truck, and I bring out the podium, and I've called everyone, including the United We Stand America people. To my left was the Sierra Club, Citizen Action, some on labor; on my right, the Teamsters for Buchanan, the 'Perotistas,' the Schiller Institute, the [Lyndon] LaRouche thing, and this guy said the John Birch Society, and I thought "Are you kidding, you guys still exist?" Then I had an out-of-body experience, I introduced all these critics, and introducing a guy from the John Birch society ... That's what populism's about, the ideological continuum on globalization, if we have the bravery ... to organize around it. ... So I sit down with these people later that night over pancakes, and I said it's not big government, it's the big corporations ... If it comes through to push to shove, what [the left and the right] are all trying to get is some grassroots ownership to vote and be empowered.⁷⁰

Part of the reason Public Citizen, the Sierra Club, and other groups would collaborate in such an alliance, and in doing so take the questions of immigration and race off the table in their trade campaigns before the Battle of Seattle, was rooted in the way they conceptualized the global economy, and how saving America, democracy, or

⁷⁰ Mike Dolan, telephone interview with the author, June 17, 2010.

the U.S. environment could blur class and race differences that profoundly affected how people experienced neoliberal globalization.

For instance, in the political essays published by Public Citizen and the Sierra Club between NAFTA and 9/11 – the period that witnessed waves of agitation around trade agreements and neoliberalism – a significant number of contributors advocated a form of localism that paralleled much of the right-wing populism of the day. It celebrated local “community” and “tradition,” implied that anything outside the local or national community was a threat to sovereignty, advocated a “local control” that blurred class distinctions, and deftly avoided the topics of immigration and race.⁷¹ Some of the language was strikingly similar to the emphasis on “small ‘d’ democracy” in the political approach of the “new populists” aligned with JwJ in the 1980s.⁷² Ralph Nader introduced one of these volumes of essays, *The Case Against Free Trade* (1993), and his introduction suggested that ‘free trade’ would lead to “the decline of democracy.” In another essay, by David Morris, the author elaborated a localism that argued that

free trade is less an economic strategy than a moral doctrine. Although it pretends to be value-free, it is fundamentally value driven. It assumes that the highest good is to shop. It assumes that mobility and change are synonymous with progress. The transport of capital, materials, goods, and people takes precedence over the autonomy, the sovereignty and, indeed, the culture of our local communities.⁷³

⁷¹ In *The Case Against Free Trade*, a 259-page volume, immigration and race are never mentioned.

⁷² See *The New Populists* or other works by Harry Boyte.

⁷³ Nader, ed. *The Case Against Free Trade: GATT, NAFTA, and the Globalization of Corporate Power* (San Francisco: Earth Island Press; Berkeley: North Atlantic Books), 1993, 139.

He continued by saying that

... most tragically, as we move further down the road to giantism, globalism, and dependence we make it harder and harder to back up and take another path. If we lose our skills, our productive base, our culture, our traditions, our natural resources, if we erode the bonds of personal and familial responsibility, it becomes even more difficult to recreate community.⁷⁴

Morris's populism celebrates independent producers as crucial to community and local democracy, in a way not entirely different from the yeoman farmer myth that U.S. Americans have often evoked as an explanation of the durability of U.S. democracy. The emphasis on personal responsibility, family, tradition, and community very much paralleled the faith-and-family emphasis of Buchanan and the New Right in general.

Others suggested that its bigness and electronic technology were some of the fundamental problems of the global economy, rather than the distribution of wealth in class, racial, national, or gender terms. Jerry Mander, for instance, opened his essay by criticizing George H.W. Bush and his defense of the "new world order," and wrote that "the late 1980s and early 1990s were breakthrough years in the evolution of technology," since innovations like "satellites, lasers, television, high-speed computation, [and] advanced high-speed travel" made it "inevitable" that corporations would gain global dominance. This global, "single interlocked machine" of '*megatechnology*' (italics in original) led to the "rapid global homogenization of

⁷⁴ Ibid., 157.

cultures” and made “local economy and local control” both “impossible and “anomalous” in the ominous new world economy.⁷⁵

Other works linked to Public Citizen and mainstream environmental groups sought to update populism for “the global economy.” Lori Wallach, director of the Global Trade Watch and Dolan’s boss, wrote shortly after the Seattle protests that the problem was really big-ness. “Progressives,” she argued, are different from liberals because the former “are likely to criticize government for getting too big, a media entry for getting too big, a private government for getting too big.” Unsurprisingly, then, Public Citizen after Seattle declared globalization a threat to “Buy American” and “buy local” laws, which, despite the class or race distinctions they may blur and exacerbate, make economic conditions appropriately small.⁷⁶ In *The Case Against the Global Economy* (2001), the essayists often pushed a buy local or Buy American agenda in response to the threats from the outside.⁷⁷ Colin Hines and Tim Lang, for instance, wrote the essay “In Favor of the New Protectionism” that defends “community values, traditional economies, or local jobs.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Mander, “Megatechnology, Trade, and the New World Order,” in Nader, *The Case Against Free Trade*, 13-22; see 14, 15.

⁷⁶ Wallach, interview, “The FP Interview: Lori’s War,” Lori Wallach and Moises Naim. *Foreign Policy* No. 118, (Spring, 2000) 28-55. Quotation on page 31. Ace Saturay, Seattle community organizer, suggested that this populist critique of bigness, instead of oppression, was big in the liberal circles and NGO networks at the WTO protests in Seattle. See Saturay, interview, WTO History Project.

⁷⁷ See, for instance, Helena Norberg-Hodge’s “Grass-roots Initiatives” section, which includes a recommendation for “‘Buy-local’ programs in order to “keep money from leaking out of the local economy,” 404.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 485.

The volume was published by the Sierra Club, and between NAFTA in the early 1990s and the WTO protests in 1999, leaders of the Sierra Club and the more militant Rainforest Action Network (RAN) – the “turtles” in the Teamsters and turtles couple – claimed to stand for environmental justice in the Third World while they remained hostile to – or silent about the plight of – the Third World workers in the U.S., who hardly fit into their vision of small-population ecological edens or the localist populists’ traditional and sovereign communities. But these workers were the economic refugees of the “global economy” the environmental groups claimed to want to democratize. Although in 1996 the Club modified its strict 1989 immigration policy, and agreed instead on “neutrality” in relation to immigration issues, few were neutral about the issue inside the organization. In 1998, the neutrality was reaffirmed, but it only won in the membership by a margin of 60 percent to 40 percent (though only 13 percent of the membership voted). RAN director Randy Hayes and militant Earth First! founders Dave Foreman and Paul Watson voted for immigration restrictions as a part of a population reduction program in the 1998 Sierra Club voting, and a number of anti-immigrant members won seats on the national steering committee in the early 2000s.⁷⁹ Even as they developed campaigns to protect “tribal forests” and indigenous inhabitants in Brazil, Mexico, and, as I will show in the conclusion, even in a Oaxaca community that has repeatedly attacked a CIPO-affiliated village, many of the environmentalists in the anti-neoliberal globalization scene distanced themselves from the consumer,

⁷⁹ SPLC, “Nativists and Environmentalist: A Timeline.” In 2004, Groundswell Sierra developed to oppose anti-immigrant forces, whom they defeated 10 to 1. See *ECOWORLD: Nature and Technology in Harmony*, “A Man for All Forests.” Access July 7, 2010. <http://www.ecoworld.com/other/a-man-for-all-forests.html>.

environmental, and citizen's rights of the same indigenous people in the U.S. who washed their dishes, picked their vegetables, and lived in their cities.⁸⁰

Jobs with Justice local activists worked occasionally with these kinds of consumer, citizen's, and environmental activists in mid-90s trade related activities. Some attended, for instance, one of the first "alternative" economic summits in the U.S. (in Denver in 1997). Mike Dolan talked trade at the Jobs with Justice annual meetings in 1995 and 1996. But probably the strongest potential link between Jobs with Justice and 1990s-era populism was through some of the figures that linked JwJ to labor populism in the 1980s, like Citizen Action veteran Heather Booth. Nine years after Booth and others identified and advocated the "New American Populism" in 1986, populist agitators like Jim Hightower and Ronnie Dugger refurbished the 1980s-era ideal in what they called "progressive populism" in the mid-1990s. Vying to "reclaim America" from the corporations, they launched the *Progressive Populist* magazine in late 1995. The magazine's most prominent writers in the 1990s included Nader, Hightower, Jesse

⁸⁰ Katherine Ellison, "Strange Bedfellows, *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 1, 6 (August 2003): 340. Some of them, began to maintain partnerships with corporations in the 1990s, the "decade in which some conservation groups acquired tremendous wealth of their own," and led to corporate partnerships with highly destructive companies like ExxonMobil or, in Mexico, with Carlos Slim. Anti-corporate environmentalism fueled the "Mahogany is Murder" campaigns to boycott timber commercialization (through U.S. conglomerates). Because of the sudden, and massive, investment of foundations in "forest certification," boycotts turned to corporate partnerships to buy wood. Those included creating or funding artisanal projects in southern Mexico. As Tim Bartley shows, foundations tripped over themselves to fund certification, including with anti-corporate environmental groups like the Rain Forest Action Network, often using connections made during Peace Corps stints by U.S. Americans in the 1980s. See Tim Bartley, "How Foundations Shape Social Movements: The Construction of an Organizational Field and the Rise of Forest Certification," *Social Problems*, 54, 3: 229-255. Part of the effect of foundation funding, he said, is both to channel protest, in part by breaking it up into single, isolated issues. Grant makers, for instance, often funded specific projects, but not general operating expenses, which broke up non-profit activities into single-issue campaigns.

Jackson, and Molly Ivins; it claimed to be the voice of America's "heartland."⁸¹ In the 1980s JwJ leaders embraced some of the populist ideas and political languages of Hightower and others, but in the 1990s JwJ situated itself much farther from their orbits.

Hightower was a political celebrity in much of the South and West. His talk radio show, *Chat and Chew*, first aired in 1996 and was funded originally by the anti-free trade United Auto Workers and Pat Choate (the vice-presidential candidate with Ross Perot in 1996). Over 100 radio stations carried the two-hour lunchtime broadcast, and it focused on populist trade concerns like fast-track legislation, a major target of populists from the left and the right. The program regularly featured a member of Nader's Public Citizen Global Trade Watch reporting from the U.S. Capitol, and Dolan, then working for the campaign, claimed to speak on the show almost every day, taking calls from rural Perot followers and other populist listeners.⁸²

In Jim Cullen's editorial in the first issue of the *Progressive Populist*, he wrote that the magazine sought to "rescue populism from the likes of the militias, Pat Robertson, Pat Buchanan, [and] Phil Gramm"; fight the Contract with America; and "resist attempts to amend the Bill of Rights, which we consider to be the greatest

⁸¹ Another populist, Charles Derber, wrote in his 1998 book *Corporation Nation* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000) that "the liberal-conservative debate" is a "diversion" from "the heart of the matter: corporate sovereignty and the democratic alternative." He advocated a "positive populism" that also sidestepped the question of immigration in "globalization." See p. 197. See also Karl Trautman, *The New Populist Reader* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997). The *Progressive Populist* was published in Iowa.

⁸² Joe Nick Patoski, "What's Left?," *Texas Monthly*, January 1998. <http://www.texasmonthly.com/1998-01-01/media.php>

accomplishment of the American democracy.”⁸³ The magazine spoke to the concerns, writers affirmed, of the populist coalition of 1980s-style populism: farmers, consumers, workers, environmentalists, and small business.⁸⁴ Dugger, whose widely cited “A Call to Hope and Action: Lets Us Rebuild a True Populist Movement” was circulated in the early anti-neoliberal globalization movement, fawned over Ralph Nader and his civic populist initiatives. In the piece, Dugger suggested that ““We, the people,”” should craft “a new Declaration of Total Democratic Sovereignty Over the Corporations” and fortify “our strength as citizens” to make the United States, “for the first time, a democracy that is actually governed by the people.”⁸⁵

NAFTA and the GATT/WTO arrangements were amongst the biggest targets of the early publications, and a few articles offered support to people they called “illegal immigrants,” but by 1997, several articles began to show how the emphases on “America” and “local” traditions and cultures could trump the classed and racialized conflicts of the 1990s as much as in the other variants of populist anti-corporate globalization. In April 1997, the Milliken-funded MADE in the USA foundation wrote a piece that blamed first Japan, then France, then Mexico for the job losses and the ills of the U.S. economy. Tom Harkin, a regular contributor, founder of the “Populist Caucus” in the U.S. Congress, and longtime JwJ ally who claimed to be on the side of “the

⁸³ Cullen, “A New Journal for the Rest of Us,” *Progressive Populist*, November 1995, <http://www.populist.com/11-95.Editorial.html>, (accessed Aug. 1, 2010).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ronnie Dugger, “A Call to Hope and Action: Let US Rebuild a True Populist Movement,” *The Progressive Populist*. <http://www.populist.com/popcall.html>. The statement, for instance, was referenced by Americans for Democratic Action and other groups in the lead-up to Seattle in 1999. For the ADA use of the document, see *The Alliance for Democracy*. <http://www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/about.html>, (accessed July 3, 2010).

people,” scored political points in the 1990s by facilitating INS raids in small towns like Storm Lake, Iowa, where the *Progressive Populist* was published. And in one 1997 issue, the managing editor of the magazine wrote a lengthy, highly personal story that ultimately exonerated “local” employers and corporations and subtly blames immigrants for the problems of Storm Lake, his hometown. The story is significant because the area had been featured in a number of national magazines, the television program *60 Minutes*, and Dan Rather’s much-publicized “Legacy of Shame” broadcast that documented high-profile INS raids in several towns.⁸⁶ As the story progresses it becomes clear that part of author Art Cullen’s objective is to counter the injustices portrayed in a *U.S. News and World Report* story, which sympathizes with “the workers who were injured on the [meatpacking] line and thrown back into their lives of poverty south of the border.”⁸⁷

To open the piece, which he titled “Immigrants, meatpacking and my town: I confess my confusion,” he pledges to complicate the typical narrative of immigrants in the small-town Midwest: “Mexicans stream across the border, invade small-town America, are victimized by IBP [the meatpacking plant], and the town is a pot of resentment.” Though Cullen seeks to sort out his own conflicted ideas about Latina/o immigrants, he ultimately gives IBP a pass, romanticizes family-owned businesses and the crime-busting sheriff, and tepidly supports the idea of having immigrants (“we want

⁸⁶ The broadcast garnered much publicity before and after it played, in part because it was an update of Edward R. Murrow’s famous “Legacy of Shame” broadcast about migrant farm labor in 1960. See, for instance, John Leonard, “And That’s the Way It Was,” *New York Magazine*, July 24, 1995, 46-47.

⁸⁷ Art Cullen, “Immigrants, Meatpacking, and My Town: I Confess My Confusion,” *Progressive Populist*, 4, 1997. Also available online. <http://www.populist.com/4.97.mytown.html>. Accessed July 29, 2010.

to help them help their poverty-stricken families in Mexico”), though he associates them with crime, drugs, disease, and education costs that are “overburdening” the community. He suggests that migrant labor in Storm Lake is not part of an exploitative, imposed labor system but is rather a community tradition: in the good times before “things fell apart” for the major employer in town in the 1980s, he reminisces about how the turkey plant, long owned and operated by “[a] local family,” used “a lot of migrant laborers, who often slept in a closed-down roller rink or camped along the lake. We called them gypsies back then,” he wrote. But these aren’t the good old days anymore. IBP, he asserts, can’t pay workers well now because none of the new, union-busting meatpacking plants can: “It’s the global economy, Stupid!,” he says, explaining why the regional UFCW director, a JwJ participant in the late 1980s, made a “sweetheart” deal with the company to leave its Iowa plants alone. It’s because of IBP, he says, that the town continues to exist, and pays immigrants, “many of whom lived in grass huts in a former life,” a reasonable \$8 / hour (even though, he admits, “the chairman is making millions” from the business). Immigrant workers aren’t being mistreated, he reasons, as long as “they show up for work and don’t get injured,” and the tough-minded sheriff from East St. Louis can handle other problems with the immigrant population. “Yes, I wish that meatpackers were nicer,” he concludes, “but they are meatpackers after all.”⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Art Cullen, “Immigrants, Meatpacking, and My Town: I Confess My Confusion,” *Progressive Populist*, 4, 1997. Also available online. <http://www.populist.com/4.97.mytown.html>. Accessed July 29, 2010.

Immigration was rapidly increasing in the South and rural Midwest in the 1990s, and U.S. government programs, like Operation South P.A.W. (Protecting American Workers) launched aggressive deportation raids, and in at least one case native-born, mostly white workers “stood in the streets and cheered the [INS] agents on.”⁸⁹ Despite their anti-neoliberal appeal, the progressive populists, like the consumer, environmental, and citizen’s groups of the anti-free trade advocacy coalition, remained vexed or silent about the workers who bore the brunt of globalization, even though these organizations admitted – and lobbied for – the idea that immigrants had been forced to the U.S. because of the privatizing effects of the neoliberal order. All these populists envisioned “the people” or “citizens” as agents of change to save “America” or “democracy,” and by pushing aside the race and class differences within America, democracy, and community, “the people,” became increasingly less representative. Nader and Public Citizen regularly recommended more security forces on the U.S./Mexico border, and in many of their political essays about globalization and the WTO in the late 1990s, the terms “race,” “racism,” or “immigration” never appear.⁹⁰

The way “globalization” became associated almost exclusively with trade policy, and not immigration, was the result of the political framing of the established, well-funded advocacy organizations.⁹¹ Even though the creation of economic refugees in

⁸⁹ Susan Williams and Barbara Ellen Smith, “Across Races and Nations: Building New Communities in the U.S. South,” 8.

⁹⁰ In the Wallach-edited book *The WTO: Five Years of Reasons to Resist Corporate Globalization* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999), which is dedicated to Mike Dolan, those terms never appear, except for “race,” which appears three times in the phrase “race to the bottom.”

⁹¹ In Mexico, for instance, concerns with NAFTA focused on the investment policy that made up a significant portion of the treaty. CIPO and other organizations saw NAFTA and similar legislations as

Mexico, and a subsequent surge of migration to the U.S., was a certain ramification of trade liberalization – and just as certain as the coalition’s projections about the degrading of consumer law and environmental protections – groups like the Sierra Club and Public Citizen were hardly inclined to address the issue of immigrant rights publicly. Much of the membership and many of their leaders remained ambivalent to immigrants.

The network of organizations that opposed neoliberal economic agreements maintained its pressure on the U.S. between 1993 and the late 1990s. Many agree, in fact, that it was the congressional defeat of fast-track legislation in 1997 that constituted the firmest evidence that this seemingly contradictory coalition – among right-wing and progressive populists, unions, environmentalists, and a host of other progressive organizations – could succeed. Jobs with Justice’s role in the advocacy coalition that fought to oppose fast-track was minor, but its anti-neoliberal globalization organizing efforts at the time were hardly inconsequential. The advocacy coalition outlined above was only one element of the nascent anti-neoliberal globalization movement.

Advocacy and lobbying, the specialties of organizations like Public Citizen, the Sierra Club, etc., do not make a movement. A social movement is different from other kinds of political pressure, according to sociologist Sidney Tarrow, because a movement relies on “contentious collective action,” which, for Tarrow, constitutes the very “basis of a social movement.” The advocacy coalition’s “grassroots lobbying” and essay-writing

dangerous primarily through the way they enable foreign entities to gain control of national economy, through foreign investment, over the land and labor of the people of Oaxaca.

were not contentious: they were not political forms “used by people who lack regular access to institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authorities.”⁹² Jobs with Justice, in the mid- and late-1990s, added the contention to the loose coalition.

The shifts in the language of class and nation between the early and late 1990s in Jobs with Justice are important in understanding how the organization positioned itself inside the emergent anti-neoliberal globalization movement. As this chapter has suggested, by the mid and late 1990s, populist ideas of saving America through saving unions faded from JwJ’s language of class, and the organization increasingly saw workers’ rights in the U.S. as threatened by corporate greed in a global “race to the bottom.” In part because it maintained its class-oriented solidarity approach – the idea of “being there” for the struggles of others rather than the populist terms of citizens, community, and America – it added to the anti-neoliberal globalization advocacy coalition an increasingly aggressive approach to confronting injustices leveled at immigrants.

Jobs with Justice’s support for immigrant worker organizing in the mid and late 1990s constituted one of the many roots of the global justice organizing in the early 2000s. Its often contentious nature helped make the networks of unions, advocacy groups, and populists who fought trade policy into a social movement in the late 1990s and after. Though JwJ’s baseline ideas of popular, class-based unity and the threats of the global economy enabled it to shift away from the populist terms that impeded

⁹² Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, second edition, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3.

solidarity with immigrant workers, that shift was also based in the anti-racism and political histories of some of the JwJ organizers most involved in later anti-neoliberal globalization agitation. Most importantly, it had to do with the militancy of immigrant workers in the U.S. who, with or without the support of the largest unions or not, challenged employers in ways that challenged the hemispheric economy of the NAFTA-created “free trade area.”

One component of JwJ’s immigrant rights organizing involved national events, like days of action, against the abuses immigrant workers faced (as in 1997), or with the National Day of Action against Immigration Raids in 1998. The most important factor behind JwJ’s work with immigrants in the late 1990s, though, was the rapid increase in immigrant worker organizing by some of JwJ’s main coalition unions, despite the leaders of the AFL-CIO and international unions maintaining their restrictionist stances.⁹³ One of the most important for Jobs with Justice was the Justice for Janitors campaign in the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). At rallies and in meetings in the 1990s, other activists often thought Azcarate was an SEIU staff member because he so often participated in their events. JwJ also had meetings throughout the mid 1990s with unions like the newly merged textile workers – called UNITE – whose merger combined the ACTWU and the old, anti-import union that aligned itself with Milliken in the early 1990s, the ILGWU. Though their focus on new organizing, campaigns in immigrant and low-wage industries, and aggressive, coalition- and media-based “corporate campaign”

⁹³ For raid and day of action, see JwJ monthly mailing materials, 1998. JwJ, national office files.

style all led to the frequent collaborations between the unions and Jobs with Justice, personal connections in progressive labor circles also facilitated the collaborations.

Many of those connections were facilitated by young, college-educated activists, either working in unions as low-level organizers or in new student or community programs in the AFL-CIO.⁹⁴ One graduated from college in Massachusetts in 1997, immediately went to work for SEIU 925 in Massachusetts, and then skipped around between Jobs with Justice local coalitions on the east and west coasts. Another student also passed through 925, and ended up working for three years at the MA local coalition. The Portland JwJ was known as a coalition with a large presence of college and young activists, and Providence's first staffer, Matthew Jerzyk, got the job partly because of personal connections between former members of Brown University Student-Labor Action in the late 1990s. Others developed connections with UNITE through its anti-sweatshop campaigns, in particular against *Guess?* Jeans in 1995-1997. Nancy Haque, for instance, a JwJ staffer in Portland in the late 1990s, went to an anti-NAFTA protest in New York as a young woman in the early 1990s, and along with other protestors ended up crashing on the floor of UNITE's international organizer Ginny Coughlin.⁹⁵

⁹⁴The programs were launched by the Sweeney administration to renew efforts to organize new workers and industries as the unionization rate continued to plummet.

⁹⁵ Confidential interview, 2008; Confidential interview, 2009; Haque, telephone interview. The most important connection – important because the SEIU's power was so centralized – was through the new president of the union, who took over after Sweeney was elected to the federation leadership. Andy Stern was a member of the original JwJ steering committee and was part of the network of young activists who entered the union world in the early 1970s and created progressive nodes inside the union bureaucracy. For more on Stern, see chapter 1. The organizing model that Stern embraced, with JwJ, was actually developed by local SEIU organizers in Los Angeles, but Jono Schaffer and other original innovators quickly conceptualized the model as a modular one: that is, it could be applied to any city with a low-wage

The basis for JwJ immigrant organizing was, as farmworker organizer and JwJ activist Rosalinda Guillen put it, “the tenacity” of immigrant workers in the 1990s who had everything to lose but whose solidarity, direct action, and political savvy earned them crucial victories. In Seattle, including in the prolonged Alaska Airlines strike, Jobs with Justice was one of the few spaces through which immigrant workers could seek solidarity relations for their struggles, though they encountered both anti-racist allies as well as union nativism. Protesters at a rally when police arrested 25 workers represented “every labor group from the Teamsters to *El Centro de la Raza*,” and during the APEC rallies in 1993, Mexican workers, taking cues from the UFW constitution and a Cesar Chavez biography they were studying, handed out leaflets about the work conditions at their workplace in rural Washington, the Chateau Ste. Michelle. Guillen, a former farm worker active in the Rainbow Coalition, noted that the conditions in the fields were particularly bad for women.

In spite of everything that had been going on—the sexual harassment at that company was really bad. That’s what pushed the campaign. There were some supervisors there that took blatant advantage of women. They had a barn, a shop, that the supervisors, in the morning, the women would come into work, and [the supervisors] would say, “I want you [pointing] over there at 3 o’clock. I want you [pointing] at 4’oclock,” and they would force them to have sex with them. Things went on like that. [Another organizer] at some point, found a little article in the newspaper out there—sometime in the ’80s, one of the workers had shot one of the supervisors when he was attempting to rape his wife. He

janitorial industry. The campaign spread throughout the union after its organizing successes, which was based on the militancy of Central American and Mexican janitors in Los Angeles, whose march in Century City in 1991 led to a police riot and inspired a movie (*Bread and Roses*, 2000) from left-wing filmmaker Ken Loach. The biggest Justice for Janitors campaigns developed in JwJ strongholds like Atlanta, Denver, Seattle, and in D.C., where Azcarate was stationed. Jono Schaffer, telephone interview with the author, Oct. 14, 2008.

shot him at work. He fled—him and his wife – they were never seen again. That’s besides the bad wages and other things. That’s the thing that they told me about that most stuck in my mind. The tenacity of these people.⁹⁶

Despite having no legal rights to collectively bargain, the workers forced negotiations on the winery and won a contract in 1995.⁹⁷

Though conflicts over immigration were a source of tension inside Jobs with Justice and certainly between JwJ stakeholders and local unions and activists, Jobs with Justice’s approach to immigrants was based on the idea of trumping racial and national divisions with a class critique against “corporate greed.” In 1997, it called for a National Day of Action Against Corporate Greed that focused on the CWA / JwJ struggle at *La Conexión Familiar*, a Hispanic telemarketing company in San Francisco bought by Sprint. When the Latina workers launched an organizing campaign with the CWA, they paraded around, inside the facility, with union T-shirts, and almost all of them signed membership cards to join the union. However, a few days before the official, National Labor Relations Board-officiated vote, Sprint closed the plant, leaving 177 without work. After taking the case of the retaliatory firings to the National Labor Relations Board, a

⁹⁶ The biography was by Jacques Levy. See *César Chávez: Autobiography of La Causa* (New York: Norton, 1975); Part of the campaign led by Rosalinda Guillen, later to be active in JwJ, organizing with the UFW and, by 1995, forming what would be the first UFW state local, and they UFW members also engaged in civil disobedience with Jobs with Justice in 1993, She went on to detail the kind of corporate campaign that so many unions would use. See Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/guillen.htm>. See also, *Chicanos in the Northwest and the Midwest*, 204-5, 195-227.

⁹⁷ Indeed, one of the biggest efforts by the Sweeney administration to re-make the image of the AFL-CIO was to organize low-wage, immigrant workers. Kentucky was one of the many locals that supported the strawberry workers. They sponsored a fundraiser, for the local coalition, and showed the documentary *The Fight in the Fields: César Chávez and the Farmworkers’ Struggle* (1996); no author (Kentucky JwJ), event announcement, May 1997, JwJ national office files. Farmworkers only had the legal right to collectively bargain in California, where the United Farm workers fought for years for such a law and won it in 1975.

NAFTA-created tribunal charged with adjudicating labor standards after NAFTA, and the U.S. Department of Labor, Sprint appealed and stalled so effectively that three years later it had still suffered no consequences.⁹⁸ The Day of Action led to actions at 15 Sprint sites coordinated by JwJ, CWA, and Union Summer (AFL-CIO).⁹⁹

The most direct way Jobs with Justice sought to overcome racial and national boundaries through class unity was through its worker-to-worker exchanges, which took shape most successfully in local coalitions in Massachusetts and Kentucky. The exchanges became most prominent in Kentucky, and the coalition there likely drew ideas from a regional JwJ ally who had run such exchanges since 1991, the Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network (or TIRN). TIRN hoped to find a way to educate and organize laid-off factory workers who were “confused and angry as they witnessed the implicit post-World War II US social compact” unraveling. They frequently voiced “bitter complaints about corporate greed and government collusion” and “‘those Mexicans’ who were ‘stealing our jobs.’”¹⁰⁰ Most of the participants the first year were women,

⁹⁸ Even though it was formally charged by the NLRB with more than 50 wage-and-hour violations. CWA Press Release, “Worker Abuse at Sprint,” check date. Jobs with Justice, “I’ll Be There!!! Jobs with Justice Demands Sprint PAY UP! July 14th International Day of Actions!” JwJ, national office files.

⁹⁹ JwJ, summary, new report. JwJ, national office files; Jon Pattee, “Sprint and the Shutdown of La Conexión Familiar: A Union-Hating Multinational Finds Nowhere to Run,” *Labor Research Review* 1, no. 23 (1995), 13-21.

¹⁰⁰ César A Rodríguez Garavito and Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Law and Globalization from Below: Towards a Cosmopolitan Legality* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 160. TIRN stood for Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network, and has since been changed to Tennessee Economic Renewal Effort. See also the work of Fran Ansley, including her, with Susan Williams, “Southern Women and Southern Borders on the Move: Tennessee Workers Explore the New International Division of Labor,” in *Neither Separate nor Equal: Women, Race, and Class in the South* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1999), 207-244. Sarita Gupta, interview with the author. She recalled, “And then it was really complicated, like with Clinton in office, and that complicated labor’s position. The push really for us came post-Nafta, around the impacts of Nafta. Before that the people didn’t really know the impact of

and TIRN organized delegations in most years after 1991. By going to Mexico, many of the native-born factory workers began to “ask questions about Latinas and Latinos working in their Tennessee communities” as well, seeking deeper explanations instead of simply blaming them for job loss. The organization claimed that “[t]hey came home with an understanding that the ‘bad guy’ was not the Mexican worker in the *maquila* plant, but the corporations who were driving down wages and worker rights on both sides of the border,” and they learned “about why Mexicans workers cross the U.S. border and [they] began advocating for immigrants workers’ rights in their communities.”

Though TIRN was a Jobs with Justice ally, JwJ’s debut with such worker delegations came in 1999, when the Hoov-R-Line line factory in Providence, KY, moved its facilities to Mexico. The front-page article in the local newspaper featured statements from the workers, and their immediate reactions reflected how they knew the departure of the factory was part of a generalized problem in their region. “I blame the government for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA),” Tom Schalfle said. “We are asking anyone who would write to your congressman about moving our jobs to Mexico.”¹⁰¹

neoliberalism, people hadn’t really grappled with what neoliberalism meant. In Chicago, I saw the steel plants close down. We felt it. In the years after Nafta, 1992-1996, we felt the impact.”

¹⁰¹ Kristie Daugherty, “More than just numbers as shutdown affects families,” *Journal-Enterprise* (Providence, KY), 1. JwJ, national office files. Harley Shaiken, a professor at the University of California-Berkeley, also led worker tours to the border area, including with the machinists’ union (IAM), active in JwJ in the late 1980s (Eastern Airlines) as well as in Seattle in the early 1990s. <http://www.iam250.org/mexico/welcome-to-nafta.html>. Accessed May 20, 2010.

The local JwJ coalition helped bring two of the newly unemployed steelworkers to an international discussion of Global Economic Justice, and one organizer said that “[i]t was an incredible link between workers in a small town in Kentucky and workers from France, Mexico, Haiti and South Africa pledging to work together to build cross-border solidarity and hold corporations accountable.”¹⁰² The first delegation, for workers to document the conditions of Mexican *maquila* workers on the border, took place in October 2000, and organizers coordinated with the Alliance of Border Workers in Mexico. Organizers saw the delegations as opportunities to enable workers from both countries to “strategize together on fighting corporate greed!” In the year 2000, six of Kentucky’s Jobs with Justice’s 11 major campaigns involved either Mexico or Latina/o workers.¹⁰³

Immigration, and organizing immigrants, almost inevitably led to an examination in JwJ about the reasons behind mass immigration to the U.S. As immigration to the U.S. continued to increase, few coalitions could avoid the issue. Margaret Butler from the Portland coalition said that the JwJ activists there who talked to workers and communities about immigrant workers’ rights inevitably began to talk about why they had to come to the U.S. in the first place. Those conversations inevitably took place, too, she said, in the coalition’s Living Wage campaign, which was driven by their Committee on Sustainable Economics. Immigration, in some organizing contexts at least, helped

¹⁰² JwJ to Christina Roessler, French American Charitable Trust, grant application, 18 Sept. 2000. JwJ, national office files.

¹⁰³ Kentucky Jobs with Justice, “Jobs with Justice in working for YOU in 2000!”, circa Dec. 2000; Kristie Daughtery, “Hoov-R-Line Moving,” *Journal-Enterprise* (Providence, KY), May 27, 1999.

push JwJ members to better understand globalization, because JwJ showed how NAFTA and other neoliberal agreements were responsible for forcing Mexicans off their land or out of their jobs.¹⁰⁴ Jobs with Justice had a window, then, to pursue education about the global economy with workers because of its immigrant worker organizing.¹⁰⁵

Dealing with the issues of internationalism and immigrants was not always easy in unions or even within Jobs with Justice. When Jaime Partridge from Portland hosted a Japanese trade unionist in the late 1980s, some workers who blamed Japan for “dumping” products in the U.S. were less than supportive. Throughout the country, unions, especially in the building trades, were often explicitly anti-immigrant. That sentiment was spurred by the capital flight of the NAFTA era. As labor scholar Kate Bronfenbrenner has observed, the threat of moving production elsewhere, which has always been a tactic used by employers in the U.S., spiked in the years after NAFTA, even if the facilities had no real plan to move. Some locals and the national office

¹⁰⁴ Sarita Gupta, interview with the author. Butler, telephone interview with the author. Other Portland JwJ founders and organizers had deep political backgrounds in the international economy. In Portland, postal worker Jaime Partridge and other former anti-Vietnam War activists began organizing in union locals about the transnational economics behind job loss to Central America, as well about the Central American revolutions in the 1980s, and the postal workers developed a sister union relationship with a local in Nicaragua. Margaret Butler, a founder of the local JwJ coalition and a CWA telephone worker, also focused on international economic issues in her local in the 1980s, and was part of the Portland Central America Solidarity Committee, a longtime supporter of Jobs with Justice. Through the local Rainbow Coalition in the early 1990s, they helped build links to the growing Latina/o community in Portland, and that effort fed into the founding of the local JwJ in the same years.

¹⁰⁵ Gupta, interview with the author. The Massachusetts local created a similar education packet about Brazilians in eastern Massachusetts. Azcarate, telephone interview. Partridge, telephone interview. Butler, telephone interview.

struggled over how much of the organization's limited funds should be devoted to translation of materials.¹⁰⁶

Race and class differences between students and workers were additional sources of tension. While Simon Greer and Azcarate from the national office tried to support early student anti-sweatshop campaigns (like that of *Guess?* Jeans in 1996), they tried to incorporate ways students could work with local workers and unions threatened with job losses, instead of creating isolated student groups, centered in East Coast private universities, operating with a mix of good intentions and *noblesse oblige*. Some students were frustrated when union staffers or members, like in UNITE, revealed accidentally the protectionist intentions behind their small grants to student anti-sweatshop organization United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS).¹⁰⁷ Jobs with Justice became a major facilitator of USAS connections to unions and union funding, including from the United Steelworkers.

Student-worker tension developed in places like Kentucky, in 2000. The local food workers' union (the UFCW), which had worked with USAS at the University of Louisville in a campaign against child labor in sweatshops and job loss to those sweatshops, wrote and introduced a buy local/buy American "domestic content" law to the state legislature. The legislation required state-funded businesses to first look to buy

¹⁰⁶ Partridge, telephone interview with the author. For building trades, personal communication with former JwJers in Rhode Island. For capital flight, *Transnational Cooperation Among Labor Unions*, 216. Increasingly, moving elsewhere meant out of the U.S. altogether. See Michael E. Gordon and Lowell Turner, eds., *Transnational Cooperation among Labor Unions* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); confidential interview, 2009.

¹⁰⁷ Confidential interview, 2009.

products or services from Kentucky or the U.S. before making purchases abroad. In a January conversation between the two groups, students took “a fairly rigid position, characterizing the union as protectionist,” according to a JwJ staffers report. But the union had its own complaints. The students “do not necessarily see a connection to these local jobs,” the staffer wrote, and the UFCW argued that the “students need to learn the culture of the union – it is speaking for its own rank and file members who can’t put food on the table [because of job loss].”

The students, in all their seeming outrage over child labor, hesitated about even mild forms of protest at the university, and their reluctance baffled the union. As the JwJ staff noted, “the students are nervous about the militancy of the action; they counsel [the UFCW organizer] not to violate public property (ie go *inside* the bookstore) [*sic*] and opt to ‘support’ the action but not to endorse or co-sponsor it.”¹⁰⁸ JwJ, as it so often did in all of its coalitions, mediated the relations between “stakeholders” with very different histories and perspectives. In this case, the students and the union were able to maintain a working partnership, at least for the proposed rally. Flyers for the action reflected both the jobs-focused agenda of the union and the sweatshop concerns of the students. “Take A STAND” against child labor, the flyer demands, not only because it is “inhumane” but also because “using overseas sweatshops labor means fewer Kentucky jobs.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ “Problem-solving on student/labor coalition in KY,” 2, 1. Feb. 9, 2000; “Keep Kentucky Working!,” sample letter to legislator supporting Kentucky domestic content legislation. JwJ, national office files.

¹⁰⁹ “Take a Stand!, announcement for Oct. 1, 2000, rally. JwJ, national office files.

Seattle, the WTO, and Anti-Neoliberal Globalization

The 1999 World Trade Organization protests in Seattle led many to draw comparisons to the 1960s. It's true that tens or even hundreds of thousands of people had rallied on other occasions after the '60s: the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Day in 1981 or in demonstrations organized by the anti-nuclear movement, the anti-apartheid movement, or against U.S. intervention in Nicaragua in the 1970s and '80s, for instance. The addition, though, of militant direct action to the mix differentiated the several-day affair in the Northwest from everything since the '60s era. The most significant element, though, was the overwhelming success of the demonstrators: they shut down a major ministerial meeting, and they led even some '60s veterans, like IUE/CWA/JwJ veteran Jeff Crosby to declare that "the kids," after all, "are alright."¹¹⁰

But it wasn't just kids. One of the stories of the protests was that it emerged from the unlikely coalition of "Teamsters and turtles," the "blue - green" alliance that has evaded the left in the U.S. in countless cases since the 1960s. The Seattle affair featured another pairing, however, of the other odd couple this chapter has traced. In addition to the ways the different populists of the 1990s shared emphases on protecting America, it is likely that at least part of the Global effort was funded by Roger Milliken, the legendary union buster Pat Buchanan adviser who tried to become a Public Citizen member in the 1990s because of his shared interest in blocking the WTO. According to

¹¹⁰ Other major protests of the era include People's Park in Berkeley, anti-Proposition 187 in L.A. in 1994, or anti-Gulf War protests in the early 1990s.

Dolan, the Deputy Director of the Global Trade Watch campaign, the “old, rock-ribbed union-busting cash” of Milliken helped fund the Global Trade Watch campaign. “I spent a lot of Milliken’s money in Seattle,” he said, though he did not give an amount.¹¹¹ Of all the anti-neoliberal globalization organizations, Public Citizen likely made the biggest investment in resources and time in Seattle. Dolan and the Global Trade Watch team hit the ground first and worked to mediate between radicals and the many groups in its own realm, the trade-oriented advocacy alliance forged during deliberations on NAFTA.

Nader and Pat Buchanan, in fact, were interviewed together immediately before the Seattle protests, and they verified that they had worked together for years. Nader ducked the question of whether he would support a Buchanan presidency, and they declared that one of their shared concerns was about defending America.¹¹² One Dolan staffer, in an interview taken after Seattle, praised the Buchananesque trade policies of

¹¹¹ Dolan, interview with the author, June 17, 2010. Dolan, who no longer worked with the campaign when we spoke, could have had many reasons to make the claim about Milliken funding. That funding has been a rumor in activist circles since Seattle. Wallach, in a telephone interview with me, said that she doubted Milliken funded the efforts. Wallach, telephone interview with the author, August 19, 2010.

¹¹² “Patrick Buchanan and Ralph Nader, The Battle in Seattle,” Transcript from November 28, 1999 *TIME Yahoo Chat*. Accessed Aug. 2, 2010.
<http://www.time.com/time/community/transcripts/1999/112899buchanan-nader.html>. One section of the transcript reads “*Pat Buchanan*: Let me say that my criticism of American corporations is that so many of them are ceasing to be American in their outlook, in their interest and in their concern. They’re turning their backs on their country, and their workers....” “*Ralph Nader*: About two years ago, I sent letters to some of the largest American corporations. I asked since they were born in the US, since they made their profits off the labors of American workers, since when they get in trouble they go to Washington for corporate bailouts by US taxpayers, and when they get in trouble overseas they call the US Marines, I suggested that these companies pledge allegiance to the American flag....Only one company said it was a good idea: Federated Department Stores, I guess because they can’t relocate overseas. All the rest who replied, about half of them, said no. I guess that illustrates what Pat was saying.”

a little-known congressman Ron Paul, a Buchanan supporter who ran for president in 1988 and 2008.¹¹³

Many factors undoubtedly led to the connections between progressive and right wing populists in Seattle, but their parallel views of the global economy, both of which emphasized external threats to the nation (or community) and its sovereignty, and de-emphasized differences based on race and class within that community – allowed them to communicate with each other in a way that other organizations, such as Jobs with Justice, would have found difficult. Their single-issue emphasis – to “fix or nix” the World Trade Organization regardless of their allies in the process – also differed from the Jobs with Justice of the late 1990s and after. The national office in those years began to re-craft how the organization participated in and built coalitions. It moved away from fleeting, “instrumental” alliances to building long-term relationships, a shift partly inspired by national organizers’ interpretation of the “beloved community” of the civil rights movement.¹¹⁴

Jobs with Justice grew considerably in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and that growth was directly related with issues regarding what Jobs with Justice would later call “corporate globalization.” Foundation grants and money from the new Sweeney administration in the AFL-CIO leadership fueled at least part of the growth, young

¹¹³ Aisha Daughtrey, interview, WTO History Project. Lori Wallach represents Public Citizen on the IFG. Some NGO progressives in Seattle openly defended alliances with the racist right, including widely cited figures like David Korten, of the International Forum on Globalization, which had a major conference in Seattle the week before the protests, or Mark Ritchie, both defended them. David Korten, whose *When Corporations Rule the World* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1995) was nearly a bible for many young activists in the Seattle era, says in the book that “rich and poor alike shared a sense of national and community interest.” He recommended dramatically reducing the world’s population since the problems of the world arise from “megatechnology” and all things “big.”

¹¹⁴ Simon Greer, telephone interview with the author, June 19, 2010.

activists inspired with Seattle-era anti-sweatshop sentiment looked for established organizations in which to base their work, and Simon Greer and Mary Beth Maxwell, two college-educated activists who had worked with issues ranging from labor (including with Solidarity, in Poland, in Greer's case) to reproductive rights, joined the staff. Azcarate and Maxwell were among many recently initiated JwJ activists who, in their college years, had worked with the United States Student Association. Many, in turn, cut their teeth in organizing through the USSA "Grassroots Organizing Weekend" (GROW) training, which was designed by the Midwest Academy, the Citizen Action-linked training academy.¹¹⁵

The USSA and GROW models were very much oriented around coalition building, and at the time USSA members regularly pushed for policies, coalitions, and political cultures inside larger coalitions that worked against racism and sexism on campuses. Part of the USSA and the GROW trainings was to build short-term coalitions, always with "primary" and "secondary" targets in mind, as ways to begin a campaign, forge an agenda, and escalate through pressure.¹¹⁶ As in the late 1980s with the Citizen Action majority strategy, the Midwest Academy, and, often, the USSA in GROW trainings,

¹¹⁵ Greer, interview; Azcarate, interview; Mary Beth Maxwell to "Board Members," April 25, 1990; conference call transcript, USSA strategy, Education for the People Conference," circa 1990. U.S.S.A. collection, Wisconsin historical society. In the U.S.S.A., students helped build a youth network that assumed an important place in the progressive foundation and NGO politics of the 1990s and early 2000s. Maxwell was the GROW coordinator in the association in 1990, and Azcarate was president of the group in the late 1980s. Many of the core activists of the group, which had thousands of members and instituted diversity guidelines in the late 1980s that led it to become a major training ground for students of color. Some who left the USSA filtered in to Democratic Party-linked Get Out the Vote efforts, others to liberal lobby organizations, and others to the Rainbow Coalition or unions.

¹¹⁶ U.S. Student Association and GrassRoots Organizing Weekends, Spring, 1988 Organizing Manual, 1988. Box 4/F4, USSA Publications, 1988-1990, Wisconsin Historical Society.

taught that groups should choose a “non-divisive” issue and form alliances, and often short-term, tactical alliances, to engage in campaigns and “win concrete victories,” in part to show people the power of organizing together.¹¹⁷ CWA member Ed Sabol, who was a member of the JwJ executive board, wrote at the time that these “transaction model” alliances require that you “Say/do anything to get desired response” from a target, such as “distortion, ‘spin,’ appeal to fear/hatred” or other tactics.¹¹⁸

Jobs with Justice began to move away from these kinds of tactical alliances, Greer said, in the late 1990s. Instead, nurturing long-term relationships with “stakeholders” (rather than simply “labor” and “community”) became a central part of Jobs with Justice practice. Greer, as well as Sabol, said that he and Azcarate developed an alliance-building practice that followed their interpretation of the early Civil Rights movement, moving away from the “instrumental, you-scratch-my-back-I’ll-scratch yours” temporary coalition.¹¹⁹ The new model of coalition-building led the organization away from unsavory alliances for short-term gains, and Jobs with Justice staked its place in the late 1990s as the “permanent coalition” that could bring together, through long-term relationship building, unions, community groups, churches, and others who had

¹¹⁷ Midwest Academy, Direct Action Organizing, circa late 1990s, 5. This document is a summary organizations used in the field of the larger Midwest Academy organizing manual. Box 8/F4, USSA Publications. Wisconsin Historical Society.

¹¹⁸ Sabol, “Strategic Campaign Planning.” Sabol was later the Organizing Director of the CWA, including when he wrote this.

¹¹⁹ Greer, telephone interview with the author.

never spoken together, and often who had very different views of organizing models as well as deeper issues of race, gender, and nationalism.¹²⁰

Jobs with Justice's changing coalition model was important in Seattle precisely because it shaped how JwJ engaged in this, a trade protest that many environmental, labor, and consumer activists on the west coast figured would be big and probably unruly.¹²¹ Locals like those in Massachusetts, Kentucky, Texas, Denver, and, especially, Portland and Eugene, took the lead for Seattle. The national office, Haque said, responded to reports about the coming protests by saying, "Oh, trade protest in Seattle, what's the big deal?" According to Margaret Butler, Portland JwJ recruited and transported thousands of workers and activists to Seattle, and said that the coalition was the only group nationally that recruited people for both major actions: the AFL-CIO sponsored march that took protestors away from the WTO convention site, and the

¹²⁰ Sara Mersha, former executive director of Direct Action for Rights and Equality, an organization that helped found Rhode Island JwJ in 1996, noted that the rule developed for local coalitions – that each coalition include at least five unions and five church/community organizations also facilitated locals' ability to develop long-term coalitions. Interview, Sara Mersha, June 29, 2007, Providence, Rhode Island. Larry Cohen and others originally founded JwJ to be a "permanent coalition" around workers' issues, so the new vision, with more of a focus on long-term relationships, was by no means entirely different from the former. Analyzing the Cohen/Early historical look at the organization, compared to Maxwell's essay, for instance, illustrates the new emphasis on a variety of stakeholders and long-term relationships. Though class and corporate greed – the "robber baron" of the 1990s – were the foundations for explaining the "faceless forces" of the globalizing economy and the pillars of JwJ's political identity, JwJ and its increasingly intentional place in a progressive network also shaped how it engaged in political struggles that were bigger than any single organization. The new coalitional approach, evident in the late 1990s in places like the Kentucky local coalition, guided JwJ's process of creating a joint student group – the Student Labor Action Project (SLAP) – in 2000.

¹²¹ Indeed, an APEC meeting in 1998 in Vancouver had generated militant protests, and radical environmentalists and anarchists in coastal Oregon had disrupted elite meetings, timber sales, and other events frequently in the late 1990s. Nancy Haque was involved in planning the Vancouver protests, and people who helped in Vancouver helped get things together in Portland. Kim Marks, telephone interview with the author, June 12, 2010.

direct actions that aimed to blockade the WTO meetings, coordinated mostly through DAN, the Direct Action Network.¹²²

The AFL-CIO was desperately worried that militant activists would “besmirch labor’s good name,” and give Bill Clinton and the Democrats another reason to leave them behind, and later analyses of FBI and Seattle police documents show that authorities worked to get demonstrators to the “parade” of the AFL-CIO and away from the direct action.¹²³ The AFL-CIO’s main link to other organizations was the Wallach- and Dolan-led “People for Fair Trade/No to the WTO! (PFT/NotoWTO!)” a creation of Dolan’s, through his work at Public Citizen. The AFL-CIO had almost no communication to the DAN, and the D.C. office of Public Citizen erased DAN events on its widely circulated public calendar of events during the week of the WTO.¹²⁴

The awkward name of the Dolan-created coalition reflected the contentious debates – and inability to even agree on a name – that threaded throughout much of the event preparations. Part of it had to do with the demands. The AFL-CIO was

¹²² David Solnit, the founder of the DAN who worked closely with Haque, noted after Seattle that JwJ in Portland “had the guts” to advertise both events, where as the PFT cut them out and tried to hustle people into the AFL-CIO march. Solnit said that Portland was the best-organized city in terms of getting people to the WTO demonstrations, better even than Seattle. Solnit, interview, WTO History Project.

¹²³ Rosenblum, telephone interview with the author. David Solnit of the Direct Action Network, perhaps most influential direct actionist in Seattle, has said that de Armond’s writings are still the best portrayal of the WTO demonstrations. De Armond here has seen the FBI’s “Terrorist Threat Advisory” and documents from Seattle Mayor Schell and Police Chief Norm Stamper that were made public after the demonstrations. See Paul de Armond, “The Plans for Battle,” *Storming Seattle: Monitor Special Report*. Accessed June 5, 2010. <http://www.albionmonitor.com/seattlewto/seattlewto1.html>. In Armond’s review of Mayor’s office files he details the negotiations between the AFL-CIO. Clinton later told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* of his conversations with the AFL-CIO before the WTO started. The SNB’s march was actually the only march that applied for a permit but was denied. The focus of it was also on the case of Mumia Abul-Jamal, the imprisoned former Black Panther. DAN refused to apply for permits.

¹²⁴ *Creating a Better World*, 35. Simer, interview, WTO History Project. Simer, a staffer Dolan hired in Seattle, sent a draft calendar to D.C. with DAN events, but it was published without them.

demanding that labor standards from the International Labor Organization be part of any WTO trade agreement, and that would automatically give labor a seat at the table (in a “working group”) and provide the environment and workers with similar protections afforded to property and investors. But Third World nations and activists feared such requirements were partly protectionist levers for rich countries, who could use such rules “to discriminate against goods from their nations.”¹²⁵ The activists who favored the No to the WTO! name saw, as did many poor countries, the World Trade Organization as an illegitimate organization, led and run by rich nations for their benefit. The AFL-CIO, Public Citizen, and others called for “fair trade” instead, suggesting the WTO could be reformed if it had seats at the table for labor and other citizens’ groups. The radical left, such as the No to the WTO!/Seattle International People’s Assembly (SIPA) saw “globalization” as a “slick” and “shiny” term for imperialism, and the WTO as merely one of its purveyors. The SIPA was based in communities of color and founded by the Sentenaryo ng Bayan (SnB), a Filipino community organization linked to the People’s Conference Against Imperialist Globalization (PCAIG), itself founded at anti-APEC rallies in Manila in 1996 and with a Marxist-Leninist background.¹²⁶

JwJ, as a coalition with strong links and funding from AFL-CIO unions, staked out a place, as usual, to bridge differences. JwJ activists with experience in the NAFTA

¹²⁵ Kevin Danaher and Jason Mark, *Insurrection: Citizen Challenges to Corporate Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 285.

¹²⁶ “The Real Battle in Seattle: A Seattle WTO People’s History Project.” Accessed July 25, 2010. <http://www.realbattleinseattle.org/node/59>. One of the SnB theoreticians who spoke in Seattle, Jose Maria Sison, said that “[c]orporate executives, bureaucrats, bourgeois academic pedants and imperialist-funded NGOs have circulated the term globalization as if it meant a new shiny and amazing thing.” Accessed July 25, 2010. <http://www.ilps-news.com/central-info-bureau/authors/jose-maria-sison/advance-the-peoples-resistance/>.

campaigns were joined in Seattle by new-generation volunteers and workers, all of whom would have been familiar with the JwJ understanding of the economy as dominated by corporate greed and framed by a global race-to-the-bottom. They mostly applied that framework to explaining the WTO to themselves and others. According to Haque, “[f]or the early message we were saying, “Hey it’s not going to be alphabet soup, because, you know we had done work about the Multilateral Agreement on Investment [MAI] and CAFTA. So ... we did these pretty quick raps, this is what the WTO is, it’s undemocratic, it hurts workers, it hurts the environment.”¹²⁷ In the weeks before the Seattle demonstration, as several local coalitions worked to send delegations to Seattle, for the first time the term “globalization” began to gain currency in some JwJ circles. As with Haque’s account, JwJ locals tended to see the WTO as a threat to democracy and sovereignty, which became the dominant message in Seattle, and which could refer to everything from the conservative complaints that the WTO wasn’t representative, and therefore needed citizens and labor to have a voice in the proceedings, to anarchists’ and others’ visions for direct or indigenous democracy.¹²⁸

In Knoxville, for instance, at a local rally in support of the Seattle protests, pickets called for “Jobs with Justice” and dubbed the WTO the “World Traitor Organization.” In Ohio, the Cleveland coalition emphasized the WTO’s responsibility for

¹²⁷ Ron Judd, of the King County Labor Council, says that the campaigns against NAFTA were those that first gathered together many of the organizations and activists that worked together in Seattle. See Judd, interview, WTO History Project; Haque, telephone interview with the author.

¹²⁸ Lydia Carbasco said in an interview that the resounding messages of the week, as coordinated by the PFT and labor, were “sovereignty, environmental, human rights, but a lot of sovereignty, a lot of human rights stuff, but not also going into specifics with people of color.” Cabasco, interview, WTO History Project.

the loss of jobs “and the sovereignty of nations to make their own decisions,” because “‘Free Trade’ ain’t free!”¹²⁹ In Kentucky, the local coalition painted the WTO and the globalization it sponsored as a omnipresent force responsible for the loss of workers’ standards of living:

Padlocked factories; increasing poverty and cuts in social services; low wages; sweatshops; more prisons; deforestation; gridlocked cities; global warming; gentrification; war.... Are you sick of watching the rich get richer while the rest of us struggle just to get by? Well, ... folks in Louisville will be taking their frustrations to the streets in a call for the end of corporate globalization and a celebration of the globalization of resistance.¹³⁰

Boston’s JwJ, working with United for a Fair Economy and the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, named its WTO coalition the Massachusetts Mobilization Against Corporate Globalization, and they set up a rally at the Federal Reserve to protest against “the WTO’s vision of a new corporate millennium.”¹³¹ Though the threat of corporate greed to democracy was the dominant theme for JwJ, and perhaps of the protests in general, the class unity idea – through the ideal of “being there” for other workers’ or people’s struggles – distinguished JwJ from other groups. NGOs and member of the NAFTA-born advocacy coalition focused less on class there and more on the unity of “citizens,” a

¹²⁹ “We’ll be There! A Cleveland Jobs with Justice Action Alert, circa November 1999. JwJ, national office files.

¹³⁰ Kentucky Jobs with Justice, “Just Say NO to the WTO,” *Action Lines: The Newsletter of Kentucky Jobs with Justice*, 1. JwJ, national office files.

¹³¹ Flyer, Mass. Mobilization Against Corporate Globalization, “No WTO!,” late Oct./early Nov. 1999, in JwJ national monthly mailing. 500 people attended the rally. See more from monthly mailing. The Knoxville comes from an untitled photo, *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, Dec. 1, 1999, 1. JwJ, national office files.

political identity that lacked reference to the class, race, national, or gender hierarchies that shape democratic participation.

Though several new elements shaped JwJ's late-1990s focus on coalitions, its role was always to bring labor together in "permanent coalitions," and in Seattle the diversity of JwJers' experiences speaks to the diversity of the organization, including across generations (between the founding group and the late-1990s newcomers, for instance) and between local organizers and those veteran (or former) JwJ activists who later became closer to the AFL-CIO and D.C.-based institutions. True to its coalitional emphasis, JwJ's first significant contribution to Seattle was simply in having its national meeting, as it did every year. There, in Louisville in May, progressives in the labor movement gathered with coalition members and rank-and-filers. In this meeting, though, two figures who would play key roles in the Seattle union scene in November first met: Ron Judd, the head of the King County Labor Council and longtime JwJ ally, and Dolan, who would be the main liaison between the AFL-CIO and the advocacy groups.¹³² Though the national office may not have anticipated the importance of the Seattle events, the JwJ network was powered by local coalitions, and the new coalition model based on long-term relationships only expanded the importance of local work. In contrast, the D.C. offices of groups like Public Citizen and the AFL-CIO tended to deploy teams of people strategically for short visits, often to pressure key legislators on national legislation. In doing so they built ad hoc alliances with organizational leaders, but invested little time in ongoing local work or long-term, grassroots development.

¹³² Judd, interview, WTO History Project. Dolan, interview, WTO History Project.

In 1999, tensions emerged between the AFL-CIO and the People for Fair Trade (PFT), on the one hand, and Seattle-based community-groups and other protesters, on the other, almost immediately. Those tensions were rooted in the D.C. organizations' instrumental use of local groups. In Seattle, one of the biggest divisions that emerged in the anti-WTO forces was that between the D.C.-based organizations and local groups, but that division was connected to the big-picture dynamics outlined in this chapter regarding race, nationalism, and immigration.

A substantial number of the interviews cataloged at the University of Washington's WTO History Archive project discussed the problems between activists and organizations that worked with communities of color in Seattle, and the PFT/NotoWTO! (as well as its main partner, the AFL-CIO). The PFT's willingness to reinforce racial and national hierarchies to secure its agenda became clear for one PFT staffer, Lydia Carbasco. After months of pressure by local groups, the PFT designated a staffer (Carbasco) to outreach to communities of color. Carbasco already, she claimed, had a full workload, and she had battled inside the PFT to push the organization to address the globalization and labor issues that affected to communities of color, but was repeatedly denied or ignored. According to Carbasco and interviewees from LELO, the PFT's resistance to their appeals, the large workload it gave to Carbasco, and the few resources she was given, made it all very much a token gesture.¹³³ In other words, according to LELO, the PFT put her in an impossible position, already overworked with

¹³³ Carbasco, interview. WTO History Project. The WTO History Project is an effort sponsored by the Harry Bridges Center at the University of Washington to document the history of the WTO protests. Many of the materials are available online. LELO was the Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office.

her former PFT task of youth coordination. Discussing the battles inside the PFT and its lack of outreach to the Seattle community and grassroots groups, Carbasco said

[i]t came to the point where [w]e have two names. It was People for Fair Trade and No WTO, and I used NO WTO, and we had a NO WTO sign on the window, where Dolan said, 'I want that taken down.' He was like, we've secured the left, we need to secure everyone else in the middle and the mainstream or whatever. And I was like, you have not secured the left....¹³⁴

How could it be that you've secured the left, Carbasco wondered, when you have almost no relationships with local organizations? Part of it, Carbasco argued, was because of how the PFT defined "the left" and "labor," and she and others asserted that groups like the PFT catered to the AFL-CIO ("labor") because of the numbers of members it could mobilize, the quantities of money it could deploy, and its access to high-power Democrats like President Clinton and Vice-President Gore. So, when Gore visited Seattle in 1999

... they wanted to have a labor message out there – what can we say about labor – right? And I was like, you need to talk about immigration. That is a labor issue. And they're like, "What?" And I was like, well, I don't have any specifics. Just because I didn't have any specifics at the time, or I was supposed to have those specifics because I was a person of color? Because, I said that's why people are immigrating, or even migrating within their own countries.¹³⁵

Meanwhile, in the poor neighborhoods in southern Seattle or around Seattle Central Community College, Ace Saturay and others saw how the PFT's style of organizing led it

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

to cater to white-dominated, liberal interests from a similar angle. As a coalition against the WTO emerged in these immigrant communities, it met regularly, including with PFT staffers, and in one meeting they agreed to dub the coalition NO2WTO, but soon after, according to Saturay, the PFT's

Sally Soriano came back and then [said], "I think we have to change it. NO2WTO, Yes to Democracy," that kind of stuff, trying to put up a mellow position. For me, now, what I see is a coalition. ... How we can work together if we don't know what will be our basis of unity? So we're working. WTO – we're pretty much against WTO. Okay, on that level, we agree. So that's why I put up NO2TWO. We are all NO2WTO, but some of them, "No, no, we have to fix [the WTO]. We have to scrutinize all this. We have to review." ... [But] [w]e already experienced it. [People from the PFT] – maybe [they] haven't experience it, so that's why [they] like to scrutinize the WTO, review it, all that stuff. For us, for the third world country, we are directly affecting the free trade policy on globalization, policy on free trade, So for us, that's why our position is pretty clear. NO2WTO."¹³⁶

The structural and ideological constraints that white-dominated, well-funded NGOs reinforced in the planning and framing of the WTO protests also played themselves out with organizations and events dedicated to the environment. As detailed in chapter 1 in my discussion on the National Toxics campaign and in this chapter in my analysis of Sierra Club and its allies, including Public Citizen, conservation issues favored by affluent liberals – preserving a forest, saving a dolphin, protecting sea turtles, etc. – had long overshadowed that the poor people and people of color in the U.S. and internationally tended to bear the brunt of the worst forms environmental attack, whether by being exposed to pesticides and toxics in low-wage jobs or living in

¹³⁶ Ace Saturay, interview, WTO History Project.

areas with water contaminated from the industries owned by affluent whites. Kristine Wong, the director of the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (CCEJ), a group born in 1993 to confront environmental racism in poor areas of South Seattle, advocated an environmentalism that confronted its racial and class inequalities. Wong repeatedly asked to be part of the planning process for “Environment Day,” as planned by Public Citizen, PFT and the Sierra Club, and was repeatedly told that they “were still in dialogue,” but would put her on the email list. They never did, she claimed, and when the CCEJ tried to plan an event on a toxic contaminant (dioxin) that circulated globally and in Seattle, she looked for a space downtown, since everyone the week of the WTO would be downtown, but she found that all the spaces were booked.

Lo and behold, it was the large NGOs, Non-Governmental Organizations, who weren’t even from Seattle. They were from Washington, D.C. So it was extremely, extremely discouraging that a local community-based organization fighting a local fight that’s tied into a global issue couldn’t even get a space to do their event. ... It was important, but there was no mention of environmental health and environmental justice at all. It turned into this whole teamsters versus turtles dualism. I told them from the very beginning, “If you have those turtle suits, those are going to go down in history as what the WTO really was fighting for.” Of course, you see it a couple of months later, this little turtle cutout on the *New York Times* Op Ed. You read in the paper that the turtle suit is considering to be placed in the Smithsonian Museum. That is how history is constructed and defined.¹³⁷

Wong and others also noted that labor was part of the D.C.-based organizational scene that defined the agenda in Seattle, and Jobs with Justice allies, as they often have, found themselves pulled by both sides of the tensions between the national

¹³⁷ Wong, interview. WTO History Project.

organizations and local groups. The King County Labor Council, for instance, an important Washington JwJ ally which was headed by Ron Judd, was tied to the AFL-CIO strategies in ways that Carbasco and LELO criticized.¹³⁸

Movimiento Estudiantil Chican@ de Aztlán (MECHA), according to one member-student, was the only University of Washington student group of color who organized a contingent for the student march to the WTO convention center. The group's main connection to organizations off the campus was Carbasco, and the students decided to march directly to the convention center to support the blockade, rather than to the labor rally.¹³⁹ With Zapatista-inspired bandanas cloaking their faces and a big "Shut down the WTO!" banner, MECHA used the Zapatistas understandings' of neoliberalism to interpret the WTO-related issues. According to Carbasco, students' avoidance of the AFL rally "caused a lot of dissent with labor. I had Ron Judd calling me saying, what's going on? Are you encouraging these students to do this?... [but] [the students] wanted to have their own voice."¹⁴⁰ LELO organizer Tyree Scott said the Labor Council's catering to AFL-CIO decisions led them to desert the direct actionists who LELO supported. LELO, he said, "had a big fight with Labor and the Sierra Club, because they took the position that they opposed any non-violent direct action." He said that "even the King County Labor Council people had these own private relationships with the Mayor and Chief of

¹³⁸ Todd Tollefson implied that Judd was a very influential member of WA JwJ at the time of the WTO, and several publications of the organization about the WTO feature him prominently.

¹³⁹ David Hyde, from the University of Washington No to WTO, said "diversity" was a major problem in the UW student activism scene, and said DAN "caught a lot of flack" for just being "ignorant," not really making effort to connect this to the events of people of color groups.

¹⁴⁰ Miguel Bocanegra, Randy Nunez, Mecha, interview, May 30, 2000, WTO History Project; Carbasco, interview.

Police and so on, so they cut a deal that deserted demonstrations on the final day,” by turning the labor march away from the convention center blockade.¹⁴¹

The divisions between local and national groups surfaced between other organizations as well. The community groups claimed that some current or former JwJ activists working with unions and the AFL-CIO also reinforced the disjunctures between the two. Longtime JwJ activist Stewart Acuff said in a recent interview that it would have been almost impossible to avoid those kinds of conflicts in Seattle given the different interests of the organizations. What LELO called “these racist, liberal, bullshitting groups” of the D.C. world included the community outreach people those organizations brought in to Seattle, like longtime JwJ (Atlanta), Industrial Union Department organizer and Civil Rights Movement veteran James Orange, who they said was shipped in to recruit the African American community to the AFL-CIO activities. Cindy Domingo from LELO said that

We’d been doing work in the Black community for decades now, and Reverend Orange actually came to our first Workers’ Voices coalition meeting. Didn’t really say much, but then said, “Oh, I’ll be in touch with all you folks,” and never touched base with us again. ... If he would have just asked us, we could have told him, “You’re going to have a difficult time garnering support with that particular Black leadership, because they were focusing mainly on the Black leadership and [its legislative activities and] not in the kind of working class people or everyday people we were really trying to turn out for the WTO.”¹⁴²

LELO credited the local JwJ for helping it pressure the AFL-CIO to get non-leaders to speak at the major labor rally, and especially Third World workers that LELO brought

¹⁴¹ Tyree Scott, interview, WTO History Project.

¹⁴² Acuff, telephone interview with the author; LELO interview, WTO History Project.

to Seattle. LELO, members of which are now Washington JwJ leaders, went so far as to accuse the AFL-CIO, NGOs, and its supporters of spying. Orange, and people from JwJ ally Citizen Action, “came in [to our meetings] to see what we’re doing,” they charged, with no intention of collaboration. Domingo also claims that the AFL-CIO was trying to screen all the speeches at the labor rally by requiring the translations be done by the AFL-CIO.¹⁴³

One of the main tensions between the national organizations and local militants revolved around the kinds of marching or direct action that should happen. Orange, in fact, led the “peacekeeping” trainings that instructed close to a thousand activists and workers on how to be “marshals” or “peacekeepers” for the labor march, making sure marchers stuck to the route planned by the AFL-CIO, didn’t commit crimes, and stayed safe. One marshal, JwJ activist Todd Tollefson, recounted that prospective marshals met for a training with Orange and several other meetings, and many of the marshals were machinists, Teamsters, and a group of around 30 JwJers.¹⁴⁴ Marshalls were arranged into teams with “captains,” and at the march, Tollefson was stationed at an intersection where marshals directed marching workers to turn right, away from the crowds of people – and blockades of the convention center – directly ahead of them. Some would ask, Tollefson said, what was happening ahead, because they didn’t know. “And then we told them,” he recounted, “that the route was this way [to the right], you can go

¹⁴³ The AFL-CIO also brought unionists from abroad, but they were “intellectuals,” Juan Bocanegra said, “people from higher levels, doctors and political bureaucrats, mostly labor bureaucrats.” Reverend Orange has passed away and he was not interviewed by the WTO History Project.

¹⁴⁴ Tollefson also supported the PFT and Public Citizen.

[toward the blockades] if you really want to, but we suggest that you go this way.

Probably less the [sic] one percent would actually leave the route and go that way,” he said, and instead of firmly suggesting workers follow the planned route to the right, some marshals became “the police,” and were “saying to the people, “No! You can’t go down there,” even though Orange had told them to be less forceful. Observers estimated that around 2000 workers left the labor march to go to the direct action, but pressure from people like Tollefson and Orange led workers to avoid it.¹⁴⁵

Unlike Portland JwJr Nancy Haque, who was arrested and whose post-Seattle statement reflected the importance of unity between the direct actionists and everyday activists and workers, Tollefson and veteran JwJr Stewart Acuff, who in the early 2000s would take a job in the AFL-CIO, seemed to have an uncritical appreciation of AFL-CIO leaders. Tollefson several times calls them “dignitaries,” who in the labor march turned away from the protest zone even sooner than had been planned. Acuff’s statement on the protests is worth analyzing in depth because it was sent to the national network. It almost immediately creates a dynamic between “good protestors,” with their allies, the well-behaved workers and union leaders, and then the “bad protestors.” The statement distinguishes direct action activists who broke a small number of corporate store windows in Seattle by saying they were not “disciplined, well-trained student activists,” but merely “a small group of committed anarchists” and “some ignorant mischief-making kids,” the latter which could have been interpreted to point to the youth of color captured on news coverage and dubbed “looters.” Acuff commends “students” for

¹⁴⁵ Tollefson thought the number was much smaller.

“taking over the streets and intersection,” but doesn’t mention the workers who defied AFL-CIO orders and joined the blockades.¹⁴⁶

Though local steelworker locals and other unionists had built collaborative relationships with anarchists and other radicals, some Public Citizen staffers and other progressive populists tolerated right-wing actors like Buchanan and Milliken but actively persecuted those on their left. From Lori Wallach of Public Citizen to Medea Benjamin of Global Exchange (a large “development” NGO and environmental group), these leaders immediately abandoned support for the “anarchists,” even as hundreds of protestors sat in jail. Wallach became, in fact, a minor celebrity after the protests, and in an interview with *Foreign Policy*, recounted how

[T]hese anarchist folks marched in there and started smashing things. And our people actually picked up the anarchists. Because we had with us longshoremens and steelworkers who, by their sheer bulk, were three or four times larger. So we had them just literally sort of, a teamster on either side, just pick up an anarchist. We’d walk him over to the cops and say, this boy just broke a window. He doesn’t belong to us. We hate the WTO, so does he maybe, but we don’t break things. Please arrest him.”¹⁴⁷

One JwJ labor ally, however, took a very different position. This chapter opened with Jeff Crosby’s “The Kids Are Alright,” in which Crosby says that without the direct action, Seattle would have just been another, anti-labor “90 second clip on the nightly

¹⁴⁶ One Texas Jobs with Justice union member called the protestors who engaged in deliberate property destruction “crazies.” WTO flyer, North Texas JwJ, 1. JwJ national office files.

¹⁴⁷ Though anarchists played a variety of roles in Seattle, Benjamin and others define anarchists specifically as black bloc activists who engaged in corporate property destruction in Seattle. Many of them were Eugene-based environmental anarchists who had developed their protest techniques at other, small protests in the late 1990s.

news.” His widely circulated letter spoke also to the general response of labor and NGO leaders to the most militant protest in recent U.S. history. Crosby, the president of the IUE Local 201 and Massachusetts JwJ ally, blamed the AFL-CIO for not planning a direct action, and the federation’s general approach to Seattle

was reminiscent of the ‘old’ AFL-CIO’s campaign against NAFTA – remember ‘Not this NAFTA’? ... Did anyone really try to bring people to Seattle under the slogan, ‘We demand a working group.’? ... Some union folks were pissed off about the anarchists breaking windows downtown, feeling that it was getting all the media coverage and our message was getting lost. I heard nothing but respect [in Seattle] for the direct action folks ...

“The alleged ‘violence’ and ‘rioting’ of the protesters,” Crosby concludes, “takes the focus away from on the corporations who are trashing continents, not a few plate-glass windows.”¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

Was globalization an attack on America, an assault on the U.S. working class, or both? That question hovered in the background for JwJ and other groups who confronted neoliberalism and “free trade” in the 1990s. As with practically all the organizations in the anti-neoliberal globalization movement that emerged in the late 1990s, globalization issues were only one part of JwJ’s broad political program. This chapter has argued that JwJ’s class-based solidarity message that stressed the evils of corporate greed added a class-based perspective to an anti-neoliberal globalization

¹⁴⁸ The statement was sent around labor and activist listservs, including in Seattle, in the week following the protests.

coalition that, increasingly, was influenced by populists who saw globalization as primarily an attack on America or community, rather than a class and race-based assault by the corporations on workers. Though JwJ in the early 1990s associated the fate of the working class with the fate of America, JwJ's steady shift away from populist or nationalist languages of class in the 1990s is part of what facilitated its grassroots anti-corporate globalization organizing in the years before Seattle. Its efforts to help organize globalization's refugees, the migratory immigrant class that occupied the lowest rungs of the free trade socioeconomic ladder, constituted an often overlooked form of anti-corporate globalization politics, and one that the right-wing rejected and progressive populists mostly avoided. Still, JwJ was a unique mix of union workers and leaders, everyday radicals, and community activists, and a sampling of some of the JwJ participants' activities in 1999 reflect, I think, the different ways they navigated the range of political approaches on display at Seattle.

Jobs with Justice, from its beginnings in 1987, worked to bring together groups who often had radically different ideas of what working-class solidarity looked like. Always tied to, and funded by, AFL-CIO union leaders, JwJ was never outside of their influence. JwJ local coalitions, however, varied widely. Atlanta JwJ, the longtime home of Stewart Acuff, was actually a committee inside the city's AFL-CIO Central Labor Council. In Portland, in contrast, the CLC was hostile to JwJ, and the coalition had more of an independent activist base. Acuff's deference to AFL-CIO hierarchies reflected his background as a first-generation JwJer. Acuff, along with then SEIU-president John Sweeney and other union staffers and members, founded JwJ. The new generation of

JwJ activists in the late 1990s, like Portland JwJ's Nancy Haque, developed their political approaches as much in community organizations or through activist cultures than in labor unions.

The way JwJ asserted class-based solidarity in an emergent anti-neoliberal globalization movement served as a powerful counterpoint to the hierarchies and elitisms of the NGOs, political parties, and the unions themselves. Class led them to race and immigrant labor, but immigrant organizing efforts in JwJ also emerged through a highly unequal and divided union apparatus. As much as unions desperately needed new members to counter the ravages of neoliberal reform in the 1970s and after, most unions remained anti-immigrant labor, and those who organized immigrants did so because they served union needs for new dues payments just as much as they reflected the labor internationalism evoked in Seattle.

This chapter has teased out some of the varied interests and ideologies that uncomfortably inhabited spaces in JwJ and the anti-neoliberal globalization movement in the 1990s. Anti-globalization ideas resonated powerfully in the Americas after 1999. For the first time, the idea of a movement based solely on resistance to neoliberalism and globalization gained traction throughout the hemisphere. In Mexico, that movement consisted of organizations who focused solely on combating trade or investment policy and those organizations, like JwJ in 1999, whose anti-globalization activity spanned from local organizing to globally-linked protests. Like JwJ, these organizations emerged in the early 2000s as an important channel through which the

ideas of the movement circulated within the poor workers' communities who endured some of the harshest realities of the neoliberal economic order.

CHAPTER 4

SOVEREIGNTY UNDER FIRE: THE *MAGONISTA* SOCIAL MOVEMENT AND A NEW POPULAR INDIGENOUS COUNCIL OF OAXACA, 2000-2003

As the May showers cooled the scorch of the dry season in Oaxaca City, the hundreds of CIPO members who had trekked to the capital had more to worry about than their recently planted corn and bean plots. It was true that the land wasn't producing what it used to. It was true that intruder corn seeds from *El Norte* had sprouted their way into rural corn plots. It was true that one in four Oaxacans, by the turn of the twenty-first century, lived and worked outside the state and far from the valleys and mountainsides they called home.¹

These *Magonistas* from CIPO-RFM harnessed the deep anxieties and displacements inside Oaxaca and linked them, from 2000 to 2003, to broader questions of national belonging and global solidarity. By the early 2000s CIPO had emerged as perhaps the most powerful Oaxacan poor people's organization, with around 24 affiliate communities. Though the political vision of the group was only distantly related to that of the revolutionary liberal-turned-anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón, the member villages that formed the base of the group shared Flores Magón's belief in the power of direct

¹ Ramiro Santibella, "Viven fuera del estado 1 de cada 4 oaxaqueños," *El Imparcial* [Oaxaca City, Oax.], Nov. 21, 1997, 5A.

action. They were accustomed to converging on the state's government palace to confront authorities.

Poor Oaxacan villagers, unlike many striking teachers or government workers, couldn't afford to buy meals when they went to meetings or protests in the capital. Instead, they often set up grills and communal kitchens, or took advantage of trips to the city to sell straw baskets, chickens, or chili peppers on the street. It was hardly unusual, then, that some of the CIPO protesters lugged with them bulging bags, cardboard boxes, and stick cages of what must have looked like food and goods. Nearly a century earlier, Oaxacan-born radical Ricardo Flores Magón had dreamed of "restless" crowds, of "[g]rubby people and smelly bandits," demanding freedom, occupying urban spaces, and filling the "recesses" of their "hunchbacked" and "gnarled" barricades with "sticks, clothes, pottery, rocks, and whatever else" from everyday life.² The CIPO members in Oaxaca, with their muddy sandals, bundles, and weather-beaten wares, eerily resembled Flores Magón's vision.

After a spell of shouting, chanting, threats, and coordinated chaos that surely sent the tourists in the central plaza packing, the governor refused to step out and negotiate. Accustomed to his intransigence, some of the villagers, unionists, and urban organizers reached for the cages. Just as Flores Magón had envisioned, they brought the "whatever else" of everyday village life. Not sticks or rocks, but field mice and bugs. Not pottery, but frog-eating snakes and rats, that, once inside the government palace, sent the urbane officials running to bargain with these new *Magonistas*. CIPO, in the early

² Flores Magón, "La Barricada y La Trinchera," in Flores Magón, *Obra Literaria: Cuentos, Relatos, Teatro* (México, D.F.: Conaculta, 2009).

2000s, increasingly centered its political practice on the local knowledges and perspectives of rural indigenous people, and by 2003 re-took its position as one of the most powerful southern Mexican popular and indigenous groups.

Exactly who CIPO was depended on who you asked. When pairs of CIPO members would walk through the Oaxaca City *Central de Abastos*, the biggest market in the city, asking for food donations, many vendors in the early 2000s would hand them some carrots or *chayotes*. Perhaps they did so because they feared CIPO pickets or public pressure, but it's more likely they supported the group because they saw them as an anti-PRI, pro-democracy, or pro-indigenous organization.³ Those who denied them may have echoed criticisms that came from PRI sympathizers or even other popular organizations: that CIPO was launching protests simply to pressure the state government to hand it thick government programs for its affiliate communities, or that despite its high-minded ideals of democracy and rights, it was simply the project of a professional rabble-rouser like Raul Gatica, a true *grillero* who once agitated for the PRI, as one couple I met in a diner in Gatica's home region of Tlaxiaco told me in 2007.⁴ Some may have seen CIPO as a symbol for public disorder and danger, exactly the

³ Confidential interview. CIPO members, in the Mixtecan town of Tlaxiaco after a major assembly in the village Plan de Zaragoza, once led a spontaneous blockade of the *SUR* bus company, protesting what they saw as the enterprise illegitimately charging them when they switched busses because one bus was full. Confidential interview, 2009. But the organization never protested small food vendors, and mostly targeted government and government-run businesses.

⁴ I have never seen any evidence that would indicate Gatica worked for the PRI. A *grillero* is a term used in Oaxaca that stems from the word "cricket." Like a cricket, a political *grillero* makes a lot of noise, with little concern for issues, and is easily convinced to switch sides, issues, or parties to pursue her or his personal interest.

sentiment that a government television advertisement provoked during the 2006 Oaxaca uprising.⁵

A punk rock “gig collective” in South London, England, however, described them in terms few in Oaxaca would: for them, CIPO members were “indigenous [sic] anarchists resisting globalisation.” And that’s why the collective was organizing a “benefit jam” for CIPO’s planned speaking tour in England in early 2005. The jam featured bands like “Cupid Stunt (bearded ladies playing punk-reggae from Brum),” and ended up raising more than \$1000.⁶ The international protest wing of the emerging anti-neoliberal globalization movement in the late 1990s and early 2000s often noted the participation, claimed to defend, or directly worked with indigenous groups like CIPO. Rainforest Action Network founder Randy Hayes, for instance, claimed to have lived in a Hopi community in the U.S. southwest for ten years, and stereotypes of the “ecological Indian” or the tradition-bound “noble savage” could easily fit into localist or U.S. environmentalist narratives of globalization as a culturally homogenizing force destroying local and communitarian cultures.⁷

The Zapatista uprising in 1994 constituted one of the most important founding moments of the global anti-globalization movement, mostly because of the way they organized and inspired global solidarity. CIPO, in its literature in 2000 and after,

⁵ I was in the CIPO office when the advertisement played during the nightly news.

⁶ <http://www.eroding.org.uk/brixtonscum.html>. Brixton Scum, South London G.C. Accessed Aug 10, 2010. They raised 500 GBP, the 2005 equivalent of about \$1000.

⁷ See chapter three for the localist, populist, and environmentalist views of the global economy. Jim Motavalli, “Randy Hayes: The Rainforest Action Network’s Founder Targets Big Timber,” *E: The Environmental Magazine*.

regularly positioned itself as against neoliberalism, major corporate development plans like the Puebla-Panama Plan (PPP), or even against “globalization.” In addition to becoming one of most powerful popular and indigenous organization in Oaxaca in the early 2000s, CIPO was also one of the principal pro-Zapatista and anti-globalization groups in southern Mexico as the twenty-first century began.

Much like Jobs with Justice in the U.S., CIPO established its place at the grassroots of a varied local and national political context. After the repression of 1998, the organization grew unsteadily in the following few years, and its development reflected the trajectory of many social organizations in Oaxaca. It dealt with the Oaxacan government’s long-standing, two-tiered form of political repression. First, it sought to incorporate, or co-opt, organizations into the state structure itself, usually by offering resources, jobs, or political positions to select leaders, groups, or communities. If that proved unsuccessful, organizers and members would risk facing brutal physical violence, psychological torture, incarceration, or exile. Second, political and personal tensions, often created by government efforts to buy off coalition members or groups, led to fragmentation and rivalries. As with so many organizations, charges of *protagonismo* – the tendencies of individuals or organizations to make themselves protagonists – swirled in CIPO circles as leaders and organizers accused their peers of trying to take advantage of the group’s influence for personal gain, whether in terms of organizational power, state benefits, or other perks.

CIPO also reflected popular struggle in Oaxaca in the NAFTA era in that it increasingly recognized the challenges to sovereignty of the moment, and because its

campaigns revolved around the local effects of economic globalization. Preoccupations with the power and colonial intentions of its neighbor to the north have always shaped Mexican political culture. But many Mexicans, and in particular the indigenous, also elaborated apprehensions about a predatory state. Though the emergent discourse of anti-neoliberal globalization in the U.S. centered its critique on the omnipotence of corporate profiteering, in Oaxaca, neoliberal efforts to privatize and deregulate manifested themselves not only through corporations but through state agencies, *caciques*, and a thick mesh of social, business, and peasant associations.⁸ Though the Mexican government, dominated since the 1930s by the party that claimed to be the heir of the Mexican Revolution, presented itself as the paternalist, nationalist buffer against greedy imperialists, the Institutional Revolutionary Party's revolutionary nationalism lost currency among many Mexicans in an era of economic globalization, the North American Free Trade Agreement, mass migration, increased electoral pluralism, and anger at decades of government clientelism and greed.

When Vicente Fox became the first non-PRI president of Mexico since the 1930s, one of his biggest priorities was to build national unity in globalizing, polarizing Mexico. The Zapatistas were perhaps the biggest force he contended with, and the organization's role in galvanizing popular demands had led politicians, elites, and others to decry it as a

⁸ The political scientist Richard Snyder argues that deregulation and other neoliberal reforms in the early 1990s in Oaxaca actually led to a "reregulation" of the state through the emergence of organizations and modified state institutions. Together, they shaped the terms of neoliberalism. See his *Politics After Neoliberalism: Reregulation in Mexico* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For the inter-governmental processes of the negotiation of neoliberalism in environmental policy and reform in the 2000s in Oaxaca, see Kathleen McAfee and Elizabeth Shapiro, "Payments for Ecosystem Services in Mexico: Nature, Neoliberalism, Social Movements, and the State," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 100, no. 3 (2010): 579-599.

threat to national cohesion. They called it separatist, or merely pressing for racially particular demands, and not for the benefit of all Mexicans. Or, the movement was an effort by foreign radicals to impose their ideology on poor and ignorant Indians. It wasn't, they said, Mexican at all.⁹

In some of the Fox administration's first political statements in 2001, it appropriated the indigenous movement's language and demands (for instance, Fox's support of indigenous "autonomy") and used polls and statistics to create an image of a cohesive nation, with citizens bound together by their shared beliefs in the country's future progress. In his administration's "Advances and Challenges in Political Culture," the first question homes in on what the administration suggests is national unease. The first section of the document frames the debate, and before long addresses the topic of "citizen preoccupations about the surge of subversive movements." Graphs show how from 1994-2000 around 84 percent of Mexicans preferred "gradual change" instead of "much and very rapid" change. Pages afterward, it presents a poll that asked if "Mexicans can build a great nation" despite "the diversity of ideas and values," and the poll results suggest that they overwhelmingly can.¹⁰

Fox's promise to resolve the question of the Zapatistas in only 15 minutes reflected as much his need to reassure the Mexican people on the direction of the nation as his ability, experience, or willingness to do so without mass violence. In his

⁹ See, for instance, the writing of Carlos Arriola and commentators in *Nexos*, *Vuelta*, and *Letra Libre*. See Arriola's *Los Enemigos de la Modernidad*, (Mexico City: M.A. Porrúa, 1994).

¹⁰ Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Política, Secretaría de Gobernación, "Avances y Retos en Cultura Política," Nov. 2000, 14-15, 24-25. Archives of INDESOL (the Institution of Social Development), Mexico City, Mex.

administration's post-election literature, Fox himself declares his "commitment" to make sure the government and indigenous people "create legal frameworks to guarantee inside the Nation-state [*sic*] the full exercise of [indigenous] autonomy and self-determination ... for national unity." "Never again," he declared, paralleling the oft-repeated slogan of the Zapatistas, "a Mexico without you all!" ¹¹

Fox's attention to threats to national unity suggests that those threats or opportunities loomed in the minds of many Mexicans, and CIPO's development occurred in a historical moment defined by apprehensions about the nation, especially regarding indigenous people. Fox rarely discusses direct threats to national sovereignty, which is no surprise. He was a former executive at Coca-Cola, and his party, the National Action Party (PAN), long advocated for market-centered, liberalized economies. PANistas strongly advocated "modernization" through increased interaction with the U.S., and rejected protections to what scholar Nestor García Canclini called the "several unequal and combined processes of modernization" that characterized the globalization of the neoliberal era.¹² In 2004, the anti-neoliberal but highly regarded magazine *Proceso* suggested that the three Mexican presidents of the 1980s and 1990s had downplayed popular anti-Americanism to pass NAFTA and similar reforms. That anti-Americanism, a building-block of twentieth-century Mexican nationalism, was based in defending national unity and sovereignty in the face of the U.S.

¹¹ Fox, Programa Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 2002), 2001-2006, 13. Archives of INDESOL (the Institution of Social Development), Mexico City, Mex.

¹² In Jorge Larraín, *Identity and Modernity in Latin America* (Oxford: Polity; Malden, MA, Blackwell, 2000), note 26.

For many Oaxacans, the asymmetrical forces of neoliberalism threatened to dissolve the little control they seemed to have over their lives, lands, and the products they sold. Between 1993 and 1999, the number of desperately poor Mexicans leapt from 17 to 26 million, and the minimum wage in Mexico purchased more in 1940 than it did in 1999.¹³ It wasn't all directly because of NAFTA, but the neoliberal economics of the 1980s and 1990s fundamentally changed the Mexican protectionist economy. The devaluation and crisis of 1995 – and its hemispheric Tequila effect – was partly due to the economic bubble that Carlos Salinas nourished to show that Mexico was already a First World economy, and therefore the perfect partner in a free trade effort. By the 2000s, Oaxacans became one of the largest groups of Mexican migrants to the U.S. As neoliberal politics forced Mexican corn, coffee, and other commodities to compete on the world market, indigenous Oaxacans, and especially the men, left their corn plots for the cities or distant factory farms of the emergent continental economic order.¹⁴

For some poor people's organizers, as pointed out in chapter two, the economic uncertainties of the day had everything to do with national sovereignty. They appealed to "the people" to rise up, and refuse to "live on [their] knees" as a nation. They relied on what writer Joseph Contreras referred to as the "handy cudgel" of economic nationalism.¹⁵ In the 1990s, various understandings of class and nation collided in the

¹³ Commission of Human Rights, United Nations Economic and Social Council, Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda, March 22, 1999.
[http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.1999.NGO.110](http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.1999.NGO.110), (accessed Dec. 6, 2008).

¹⁴ See chapter two for more on the expulsion of poor Mexicans following NAFTA.

¹⁵ For the "handy cudgel" quotation, see Joseph Contreras, 7. For more on economic nationalism, see Robert H. Swansbrough, *The Embattled Colossus: Economic Nationalism and United States Investors in*

volatile coalition mix of CIPO. CODECI, with much less of a role in CIPO after 1999, unified different identities in its activities by building solidarities as citizens. CODEP based its political vision on workers and their allies, and OIDHO on indigenous people and human rights. At the height of the global anti-globalization movement (2000-2003), CIPO-RFM changed dramatically as first CODECI, then CODEP, and then OIDHO split off from the coalition. The *Magonista* Social Movement (MSM), a faction within CIPO in its second phase (2000-2001) and at the forefront of CIPO in its third phase (2001-2003), increasingly conceptualized its political struggle as one of indigenous groups, and colonized people in general, facing new forms of corporate colonization.

As in the U.S. with Jobs with Justice, CIPO encountered, in the early 2000s, a local and national left with reconfigured kinds of non-governmental organizations, anarchist collectives, and anti-globalization ideas, all of which targeted a new tide of corporate power. CIPO-RFM, like Jobs with Justice, engaged in a kind of grassroots anti-neoliberal globalization activity. CIPO members and leaders re-shaped the ideological foundations established by the original CIPO coalition in 1997-98, and embraced and

Latin America (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1976). As chapter two suggested, in the 1990s groups like the National Coordinator of Education Workers (CNTE), the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the People (CODEP), the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), and other organizations appealed to national unity in response to what they saw as the encroachment of the U.S. and other countries. Ed McCaughan, *Reinventing Revolution: The Renovation of Left Discourse in Cuba and Mexico* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997). That continued in the 2000s, as the PAN-led federal government threatened to privatize oil production, electricity, and other industries long seen as the core of Mexico's independent development. The Promoter of National Unity Against Neoliberalism, an alliance formed in the early 2000s to which CIPO allies belonged, but which was also influenced by the FPR, Mexican Marxists, and NGOs, suggested that the sovereignty of the nation was in danger. See Arturo Luis Alonzo Padilla, "Attac Praxis México: El hermano Radical de Latinoamérica," *El Cotidiano*, 19, 125 (May-June 2004), 33-40. See page 38. The Popular Revolutionary Front, aligned with the Communist Party of Mexico (M-L), appealed to "the people" and denounced those who could betray them. In 2004, members of the Oaxacan teachers' union local (Section 22) wrote for the need of "an alternative project of the nation." Sección 22/CNTE, "Ponencias de la Sección XXII CNTE-SNTE," in the Dialogo Nacional 'Hacia un proyecto de nación alternativa al neoliberalismo,' Mexico City, Nov. 27-28, 2004, 1-27.

articulated them to key characteristics of the growing global movement. They attended major protests at economic summits, and they traveled to international *encuentros* to discuss neoliberal globalization. But CIPO's grassroots anti-globalization focused on understanding and confronting life-or-death local conflicts, in part by elaborating an understanding of the global nature of such problems. This chapter argues that increasingly acute anxieties about sovereignty and corporate colonization shaped how CIPO-RFM organizers understood local and global conflicts as the organization entered the sphere of the anti-neoliberal globalization movement. Those anxieties shaped how the MSM and MSM-CIPO de-centered class and nation between 2000 and 2003, appealing less to class- or citizens-based unity and more than to the collective power of the indigenous and colonized "peoples of the world."¹⁶

¹⁶ In doing so I am following the work by Jorge Hernández-Díaz and Benjamin Maldonado Alvarado, both of whom have written extensively on the development of indigenous-centered politics in Oaxaca in the last 30 years, and this chapter suggests that CIPO's development in the twenty-first century reflected the trend those scholars illuminated: the long-term shift from class to indigeneity in Oaxacan poor people's organizations. See Hernández-Díaz, *Reclamos de la Identidad: la formación de las organizaciones indígenas en Oaxaca* (Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca: M. A. Porrúa, 2001); Maldonado Alvarado, *Autonomía y Comunalidad India Enfoques y Propuestas Desde Oaxaca* (CONACULTA-INAH: CEDI; Movimiento Pedagógico Plan Piloto CMPIO: Secretaría de Asuntos Indígenas, 2002). For background reading on the themes of identity and indigenism, see the works of Gerardo Otero, Deborah Yashar, Jorge Larraín, and Courtney Jung. Jorge Larraín, like Hector Díaz Polanco, has suggested a "neo-indigenismo" emerged with the crisis of Marxism. See Larraín, *Identity and Modernity*, 142, for more. Various kinds of groups and parties tried to indigenize. Indigenous participation with government-linked parties and organizations led to the development of local-level clientelism, caciques, and co-optation, including with the left parties active in southern Mexico, and especially the PRD. See Rosalva Aída Hernández-Castillo, "The Indigenous Movement in Mexico: Between Electoral Politics and Local Resistance," translated by Victoria J. Furio, in *Latin American Perspectives*, 33, no. 2 (March 2006): 115-131. See especially 117-119.

“Beyond Unionism”: The *Magonista* Social Movement and Neoliberal Oaxaca

Leaders and organizers of in the first phase of CIPO, as chapter two shows, circulated between CIPO general meetings and the activities of their respective organizations, and in the process they created a diverse coalition, with everyone from *Mixtecan* taxi drivers aligned with the Marxist organization CODEP, to *Mixe* coffee farmers in the highlands of the eastern Oaxaca. A multitude of such coalitions helped create the volatile political landscape in Oaxaca at the time, when the *Zócalo* was a “place of great political effervescence.”¹⁷ Government crack-downs on that effervescence were frequent, and the 1998 imprisonment of over 100 CIPO members exacerbated the fissures between interests, identities and ideologies in the coalition.

The last two years of the twentieth century featured a few joint efforts and considerable in-fighting in CIPO. Leaders like Raul Gatica and Alejandro Cruz struggled for their freedom from prison. Gatica and CODEP, both with deep ties to Section 22, split in the process, and their break inflamed tensions about the meaning of solidarity. The PRI-government, as the teacher’s employer, was the union’s class adversary, but Section 22 had a long history of supporting many anti-PRI campaigns, electorally or otherwise.¹⁸ But that solidarity only went so far, and Gatica, a teacher and former union official, critically suggested that many union leaders saw little inherent relation with

¹⁷ Confidential interview, 2009. Confidential interview, 2010.

¹⁸ Some of the local union’s clientelism crept back in the early 1990s. See Isidoro Yescas Martínez, “Movimiento Magisterial,” *El Cotidiano*, online, 23 (March-April), 63-72. See page 65.

education workers and the struggles of peasants or the rural indigenous.¹⁹ Despite the union's reputation as one of the biggest, most-radical unions in Latin America, patronage and power-hoarding in both the local and the national union bureaucracy were common. Still, in many instances the class-based militancy that percolated inside Section 22 would play an important role in CIPO's development. In fact, as this section argues, some of the leaders who would lead CIPO to increasingly identify itself as an indigenous organization between 2001 and 2003 actually conceptualized *Magonista* struggle much more in terms of class and national sovereignty in 2000-2001 as leaders of the Magonista Social Movement.

Many of the original CIPO organizers had ties to the unions, or were teachers themselves. The early MSM, too, featured many whose political experience was primarily defined by their experience with the teachers' union and its class-based organizing. One of them joined the *Magonista* Social Movement in the first informal discussions that teachers organized in homes around Oaxaca City in 1999. At the time he "wasn't involved much in social questions," and was "simply an education worker" and union member, he said. New faces in and around Section 22's Executive Union Committee (CES) in 1995 brought many of these teachers together, or at least made

¹⁹ Gatica, interview with the author, Vancouver, British Columbia, November 2009. Men from Section 22 generated innumerable battles inside the union for leadership positions, and those battles had to do with politics, power, and personalities. The reasons why leaders from the CODEMO (Democratic Teachers' Coordination of Oaxaca) side of the union suggested it forego using resources to defend Gatica likely had something to do with inter-union struggles over resources as well as ideological questions about union support for peasants and the indigenous. As Gatica sat in prison, with broken ribs because of police torture, he was told that CODEMO leaders in Local 22 said that "[He has] been occupying land with peasant and Indians ... [so] [I]et his organization resolve this," suggesting that the wealthy and powerful union would abandon CIPO's efforts to liberate and protect him, and that teachers' unionism had little to do with peasant and indigenous organizations.

them aware of each others' presence, and many of them understood Oaxacan popular movements primarily through the union or other class-based organizations.²⁰ One early MSM-linked teacher, for instance, became a founding member of the board of directors of the Alliance of Oaxacan Workers in 2000, a group which sought to build alliances of workers "in the face of the neoliberalism."²¹

The first MSM meetings in 1999 hardly anticipated the power the group soon would have. In one house, about a 30-minute bus ride from the city's *Zócalo*, small groups – sometimes no more than two people – would gather on Saturday afternoons to talk about politics, and perhaps about Ricardo Flores Magón. But before long, "[t]here was a change in the leadership of the teachers, and a guy who worked in the mountains [and was now in the city, working for the union] well we started to talk to him." Soon after another teacher starting coming regularly. At one point in 1999 "we had a historic meeting. There were eight or nine of us." They decided to move the meeting to a schoolhouse down the road from the municipal city hall, and three quarters of the men there were members of the teacher's union.²²

²⁰ Confidential interview, 2007; Confidential interview, 2007. It was a time of change within the union. Some of the older organizations that had fought for control of the local were losing their influence, Gatica told me, which had grown considerably since the union had institutionalized much of the power it harnessed in its 15-year struggle for democracy. See also Osorno, *Oaxaca Sitiada: La Primera Insurrección del Siglo XXI* (México, D.F.; Grijalbo; Random House Mondadori, 2007), 35. Osorno cites how the union had many of its demands "attended by the government" after 1992's decentralization. One demand that never got met was for comprehensive re-zoning, to increase the cost-of-living allowance to teachers, particularly those who lived in increasingly expensive areas, such as tourist areas. See Osorno, 35-36.

²¹ Alliance of Oaxacan Workers, press release, 2000, CIPO organizational files.

²² There were no women in the early MSM.

In its earliest flyers, this new presence within CIPO-RFM elaborated a vision that reflected both the class-based organizing of their histories – whether in CODEP or through the teacher’s union and the CNTE – and the *Zapatismo* many of them had embraced after 1994. The pamphlet, published in April 2000, envisions an organization composed of “neo-Magonistas,” in which people “break the chains” in all the “pores of society: at the workplace, school, the countryside, the church, the temple, the arts, the home, [and] the family.”²³ The group’s lens, here, is primarily national. “The country is crossing through a crisis of credibility,” especially regarding the social organizations, many of which have leaders who “only look for power, money and glory.” “The social movement in the country and in the state of Oaxaca,” the MSM argued, needed a change.²⁴

The MSM distinguished itself from the organizations it denounced by emphasizing its participatory vision and by celebrating how a diversity of perspectives and experiences can bring strength, rather than conflict. Rather than propose a singular “only path” to social change, which CIPO’s women’s commission would critique more fully in the coming years, these early MSM organizers embraced the “free association” of different groups and perspectives, and they based their early commitment to diversity on the political approach of the Zapatistas and on the thought of Flores Magón. One early member later said Flores Magón appealed to them because his thought could speak to many social questions. “Magón took up land, the labor question, and the

²³ MSM, “Aquí estamos!,” 2000, 2.

²⁴ Ibid., 4.

defense of women,” he said.²⁵ Others had recognized his respect for indigenous forms of organizing and governance. Regardless of the influence behind it, in two early pamphlets MSM organizers repeatedly fill whole paragraphs with “who we are,” occasionally listing indigenous groups in Oaxaca but more often identifying differences through class, culture, age, and sexuality. They are, they suggest, “workers,” “youth,” “punks,” “professionals,” and a “rainbow” of indigenous groups.²⁶ The MSM’s free association was based on both embracing difference and a horizontalism in which no one could “impose” a view or structure on others. In “Here We Are!,” the main political statement of the MSM, organizers assert that even as they don’t want to “look down” on “the efforts of some organizations at the heart of peasant, teacher’s, student and other social movements,” they “haven’t found a political expression” because of their beliefs in “the free association of workers,” “participatory democracy” rather than “centralized democracy,” and the “debate” around “diverse political positions and ideologies.”²⁷

As its inclusion of “workers” in the sentence above indicates, class was an important category for the MSM, even as it tried to diversify the idea of the worker in the decade when Mexican Marxists and other radicals distanced themselves from the idea of the proletariat, or even the proletarian-peasant alliance, as the historical subject

²⁵ Confidential interview, 2007. “Free association” is an important idea in Flores Magón’s anarcho-communism. He advocated, like many anarchists, voluntary participation – with a party or a community, for instance – instead of organizations or states that oblige participation or impose ideologies.

²⁶ CIPO-RFM, “Muchas Historias,” 1999. Gatica wrote the pamphlet; and “Aquí Estamos!”

²⁷ “Aquí,” 4, 5.

of social change. The MSM embraced, at least in its written materials, the various ways sexuality, age, culture, ethnicity, and gender, overlapped with working-class identity. Still, the baseline, for the MSM, was class.²⁸ Raul Gatica, in the “One of Many Stories” pamphlet, suggests that it was through “the free association of workers, the unity of communities and organizations, the efforts of fellow workers and organizational members (*compañer@s*), the coexistence and complement of different people, that we will arrive soonest at the achievement of our objectives.”²⁹ The MSM, in “Here We Are!,” suggested that its ultimate goal was “for a country led by the workers.”³⁰

“Country” was also relatively prominent in MSM literature, whether as a space to be led by workers or as a national community that could generate unity and solidarity. “To be *magonistas*,” they asserted, was “an honor, an obligation, a duty and above all a challenge.[*sic*]” It was a “responsibility ... to not lose hopes of a better country.”³¹ The cover photo of one of the early pamphlets features a CIPO march with three women carrying a large Mexican flag, while men spray-paint political messages on nearby walls. In another flyer, indigenous men in CIPO claim, in their banner, that they

²⁸ Gatica, telephone interview with the author, July 15, 2010.

²⁹ “Muchas Historias,” 3.

³⁰ “Aquí,” 4, 3.

³¹ “Aquí,” 3.

“fight for a [better] homeland.”³² In the first MSM pamphlet, MSM identifies itself as “a group of [male and female] Mexicans” also fighting “for a better homeland.”³³

The MSM’s ideological labor, here, reflected its willingness to avoid any doctrine which claimed to foresee a single path to liberation. It spoke of class, race, age, sexuality, and to many of the ways that Oaxacans identified themselves, even though class and nation were often the fundamental categories of its world vision. As CIPO did in its first campaigns in 1997 and 1998, the MSM stressed the importance of uniting – but not imposing a framework on – many kinds of people. One way it began to explain the commonalities between them was to define a common adversary. That shared antagonist, as other chapters of this dissertation have shown, had emerged as a target in the U.S. as well: neoliberalism.

Of the pamphlets the MSM members wrote in this period – either as MSM or as CIPO – the one that most broadly captures the group’s understanding of its political environment was “How Does Neoliberalism Affect All Women?” Neoliberalism, it explains, is an “idea” that creates societies in which “the rich are always enriching themselves, in place of sharing their resources with everyone else. The poor remain with nothing, and the rich enjoy the fruits from their work.” Its logic manifests itself locally as well, because it steers people away from collective work and communal celebration and

³² MSM, “Como el neoliberalismo,” circa 2000-2001, 1; “Nuestros Derechos,” circa 2001, 7. “Aquí,” 3, 2.

³³ “Aquí,” 2.

pushes “each person [to make] the most money possible and [save] it.”³⁴ In one MSM example of local neoliberalism,

Two women have fruit and want to exchange but one has very little fruit. So the other says “If you want fruit take care of my tree and I will give you an apple every day.” The woman who has a lot of fruit plants a tree in her yard. The next year it has more, bigger fruit and she sells them. Now she doesn’t need them all to eat. Meanwhile, the other woman remains always with an apple and she has to work more in the yard of the other woman to take care of all her trees.³⁵

In addition to asserting a larger framework for readers to understand the world, the MSM also suggest that class, not race or gender, is the central social category around which oppression, and neoliberalism, revolves. The pamphlet is addressed to “peasant women,” and nowhere in the pamphlet does the MSM mention race, racism, mestizos, or whites. The pamphlet speaks to the injustices in Oaxacan homes, where women always ate meals after men finished, where young girls often worked rather than went to school, and where women only sometimes got to vote in local assemblies. The ideology of neoliberalism is so pervasive, the pamphlet suggests, that women’s subjugation in Oaxacan communities is less because of the way men reinforce gender hierarchies in everyday life, and more about economic exploitation in general. Neoliberalism, the pamphlet answers, “affects all women” by maintaining these and other structures.³⁶

³⁴ “Como el Neoliberalismo,” 2, 3.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

As much as the MSM defines reality in terms of economics and class, the pamphlet only rarely addresses intra-community class differences – as in the story about the women growing apples – and more frequently discuss global economic actors. These actors, and especially multinational corporations, may exploit workers, but the MSM primarily portrays them as threatening the sovereignty of Oaxacan communities. “With neoliberalism, natural [resources] are in the hands of big companies, the rich,” and poor people can’t afford their marked-up prices for gas, water, or electricity. This neoliberal “free trade” allows “the companies of the rich ... to go wherever they want to buy and sell, in order to exploit the work of the people and natural resources.”³⁷ Land markets and poverty wrench people from communal land, and corporate domination threatens all public services, including the privatization of schools, hospitals, and the like.”³⁸ Commodities and resources that Oaxacans – and especially Oaxacan men – controlled, like corn and coffee, were endangered by global speculators.

The threat of privatizing services that the MSM alluded to here ran deep in the Oaxacan indigenous and popular organizations that allied themselves to CIPO. Such was the case of dissidents in the state government workers’ union.³⁹ Federal neoliberal reforms that institutionalized the decentralization of government entities created a two-tier labor structure in Oaxaca, where the state government shifted work to new, decentralized agencies where unionized government workers had fewer rights. In a deal

³⁷ Ibid., 4, 2.

³⁸ Ibid., 7, 3.

³⁹ These dissidents would soon be CIPO allies. The union was the Sindicato de Trabajadores y Empleados de los Tres Poderes e Instituciones Descentralizadas de Carácter Estatal de Oaxaca.

with the state government, the official unionists (*charros*) supported the outsourcing. When the emerging Democratic Current in the union noted that workers in decentralized agencies still deserved housing credits, the state government argued that it was too deeply in debt to provide them. Many of the workers, one Democratic Current leader said, were from rural communities and indigenous villages, and many only had primary school educations. Discussions about NAFTA and the Puebla-Panama Plan, a neoliberal commercial development program, surfaced in the group's activities because the plans were widely considered to hurt the countryside by allowing big multinationals to compete with poor Oaxaca peasants.⁴⁰

The MSM, as early as 2000, carried out most of its labor in indigenous communities in the Mixteca and Zapotec *Sierra Norte*. Despite the ways it invoked Mexico as its homeland, followed the flag at marches, and saw Oaxaca in class terms, the MSM hardly adhered to a national-populist program or to proletariat-based Marxism. In many ways it mirrored the ideas and efforts of the Zapatistas, albeit without the army. In the face of the colonizing forces of neoliberal globalization, the MSM regularly demanded the implementation of the San Andres Accords of indigenous autonomy, not national unity in the face of imperialism from the north. Before the EZLN uprising, indigenous Mexicans were often looked at with shame (*lastima*), paternalism, or were simply ignored. The EZLN first posited indigenous people as a global peoples,

⁴⁰ Confidential interview, 2010. Joseph Contreras, *In the Shadow of the Giant*, 13. The magazine *Marca* carried several multi-paged spreads on the current in 2000 and 2001. CIPO allied itself with the union when its leader, Oliverio Neri, was jailed by the state government.

and that sentiment emerged in the MSM but later pervaded the MSM-CIPO's political approach.⁴¹

The primary focus of both MSM and, later, MSM-CIPO was local in scope, and the way the organizations would later link views of corporate colonization to isolated Oaxacan villages played on deeply sedimented Oaxacan views about local and communally held land. The struggle in the village of San Isidro Aloapam embodied much of what shaped the MSM and CIPO in the 2000s. As the original CIPO debated popular organizing and Flores Magón on the streets of Oaxaca City in 1997, the community of San Isidro increasingly endured the threats to sovereignty and institutionalized racism that CIPO organizers denounced. For decades, San Isidro residents had witnessed who they called "strange people," or *Beni Ditu*, pass through the area, some of whom came with machines and installed a sawmill there in the 1940s.⁴² PRI officials had negotiated leases on local timber to Mexican companies without consulting residents, and excluded hundreds of communal landholders in San Isidro from the leases, forcing many residents to work at mills processing the timber rather than administering or owning the trees and mills themselves. In the 1980s, the government sponsored the creation of a Community Forest Enterprise to manage the forest, and residents charged that corrupt agrarian courts maintained San Isidro outside of the agreement.

⁴¹ Gatica reinforced this point in a telephone interview on July 15, 2010. Many of the early MSM-linked villages were those where MSM members had worked as teachers or as *campesinos*.

⁴² No author, "San Isidro. In their own words," Indymedia UK, circa 2007, <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2008/04/396944.html>, (accessed July 20, 2010).

San Miguel Aloapam, the nearby municipality that, the MSM and CIPO claimed, had long facilitated government and corporate exploitation of the land, suddenly decided to restrict use of the forest altogether for San Isidro residents, not only for logging but also for all kinds of domestic use. As Javier stated, “They bought justice, like always in Mexico,” and got a sympathetic agrarian court ruling. In doing so the PRI officials linked to San Miguel robbed their neighbors of essential products.⁴³ San Isidro residents cooked and heated with firewood. Every evening women boiled dry corn for hours over wood-stoked fires to prepare the *masa* for the tortillas the next day. Plants, herbs, and wildlife were important parts of the local diet. Sticks and wood from the forest supplied residents with materials for tools or cages, and logging – and especially unsustainable logging – threatened the ecosystem, including the water supply.⁴⁴

This was no isolated struggle. Paper production was exploding at the time, and all kinds of global interests collided in its production. Armed with new contracts from the paper producer Kimberly Clark and other corporations, the PRI worked to expand production. It tripled between 1982 and 1997, and President Fox enlarged the agencies who defined who administered Mexican logging after 2000.⁴⁵ In 1997 the World Bank

⁴³ Confidential interview, 2007. One interviewee said the struggle really started in 1995.

⁴⁴ David Barton Bray and Leticia Merino-Pérez, “The Rise of Community Forestry in Mexico: History, Concepts, and Lessons Learned from Twenty-Five Years of Community Timber Production,” Ford Foundation Report, for Grant 1010-0595, Sept. 2002, 55. The authors and Klooster also show the corruption in these communities. See 64. For historical background, see World Resources Institute, “La Organización Comunal Indígena como Alternativa en la Protección, Fomento y Aprovechamiento Forestal de los Bosques en Oaxaca,” México / El Caso de la Unión de Comunidades y Ejidos Forestales del Estado de Oaxaca, S.C. (UCEFO), (Oaxaca, México: 1991). Available at the INSO library, Oaxaca City, Mexico.

⁴⁵ Silvia Chavela Rivas, “Genera grave contaminación industria de celulosa y papel,” *Noticias*, Dec. 17, 1997, 3A.

poured money into Oaxaca through the federal Secretary for the Environment and Natural Resources [SEMARNAT], granting 28 million pesos for what it called the “protection” and “exploitation” of forests.⁴⁶

The area was home to a special kind of forest – one certified by the Forest Stewardship Council as sustainably managed. The FSC, as detailed in chapter 3, was one of the many corporate partnerships that liberal environmentalists in the U.S. helped create in the 1990s. The council brought together timber customers, corporations, and environmental groups, and the Canada-based group had chosen Oaxaca for its one and only office, and Oaxacan lumber certified by the FSC rapidly increased in importance in the world timber trade.⁴⁷ By 2002 Home Depot’s sales of wood certified as sustainable by the Forest Stewardship Council hit \$250 million. It only made \$10 million for the company in 1999. San Miguel – likely because of its own indigenous identity – was one of only nine communities in the country who were FSC sponsored.⁴⁸

Everyone except San Isidro, it seemed, had a say. As Home Depot pocketed the profits, San Isidro residents increasingly, after the mid-1990s, fled to work in New York,

⁴⁶ No author, “SEMARNAP: Plantaciones comerciales, opción vs desforestación,” *El Imparcial*, Nov. 20, 1997, 1.

⁴⁷ FSC lumber came from other forests as well, outside of Mexico. Timber had been a major issue for groups like the Rainforest Action Network in the 1990s. See chapter three.

⁴⁸ In 2003 the office moved to Germany. See <http://www.fsccanada.org/history.htm>; The World Wildlife Foundation’s newsletter for Oaxaca covered some of these developments in the 1990s. The newsletter, *Programa Oaxaca*, was funded as well by the European Commission and the Department for International Development. Some copies are available at the INSO archives, Oaxaca City, Oaxaca. *Grupo Mesofilo*, a Oaxaca City-based non-governmental organization armed with Oaxacan forest engineers and money from the World Bank and the World Wildlife Federation, broadcast over the main indigenous radio station of the area, *Radio Guelatao*, about the benefits of sustainability and “conservation.” No author, “Grupo Mesofilo y Radio Guelatao Renuevan Convenio de Colaboración,” *Programa Oaxaca*, January / March 1998, 2, INSO archives, Oaxaca City, Oaxaca.

New Jersey, or Florida. Even San Isidro's lawyers cheated them, residents claimed. In 2000, San Miguel, ready for San Isidro's increasing anger, allied with the PRI-linked organization, *Antorcha Campesina*, and simply arrested the San Isidro authorities and others, claiming they had downed trees to block the main road between the *municipio* and San Isidro. Two of the men remained in jail for more than a year, and when the community decided to join CIPO in 2001, the forest conflict and the political prisoners were the two main issues.⁴⁹ The MSM, in its first political statement, argued that it hoped to spur people to organize against injustice in all the "pores of society." MSM organizers, in 2000 and after, began to see that the most-active pore was rural, indigenous Oaxaca.⁵⁰

As argued in chapter 2, anxieties about national sovereignty and unity wove through much of Mexican society in the 1990s. The MSM and CIPO were hardly alone in recognizing the effects of economic globalization, and early MSM organizers harnessed concerns about it and articulated them to their backgrounds in union, class-based, and indigenous organizing. As the MSM gathered steam in 2000 and 2001, it was shifting

⁴⁹ Confidential interview, 2007.

⁵⁰ Unwarranted arrests and surveillance continue in San Isidro in 2010. *Comunero* Pablo Lopez Alavez was arrested in August 2010. After an attack in June 2007, a caravan of 23 San Isidro supporters arrived the night after the morning confrontation, and rumors spread through the government linked indigenous radio station that foreigners in San Isidro were training guerrilla fighters in San Isidro. Natives of the area called into the station even from the U.S., threatening San Isidro or San Miguel, depending on their affiliation. The radio station broadcasts in Zapotec, so I owe my understandings of the radio broadcasts San Isidro authorities.

poor people's politics "beyond unionism," by relying on union contacts and addressing class issues, but at the same time situating them in a broader context.⁵¹

Some of the organizers, for instance, had served in the Sectional Executive Committee (CES) of the teacher's union in the late 1990s. There, CODEP-CIPO organizers made major strides recruiting union delegates, and others who collaborated with CIPO belonged to the CES's pro-Zapatista faction. As the MSM grew, it modeled its recruitment and educational workshops on the "Union-Political Education Workshops" (*escuelas políticas sindicales*) that many, as CES members, designed and pushed to expand in the union.⁵² These MSM members and others, without established organizations like CODEP or OIDHO, scrounged for money and resources in the first two years. For a short period of time they tried to set up a communal kitchen in the city to save costs, and one young member remembers sitting in the cramped office, often hungry, hoping one of the teachers would stop by, maybe with some beans, vegetables, or coins to buy three-peso tamales from the *señora* down the street. In some cases OIDHO lent them trucks to drive out to communities, but the teachers could sometimes find a family member or friend with an available vehicle. The MSM shared gas costs, often only eating if the communities gave them meals, and usually they did. One organizer claims he earned communities trust by trudging on dirt roads between communities, often for hours at a time, braving steep inclines and wild dogs.⁵³

⁵¹ Confidential interview, 2007.

⁵² Confidential interview, 2007; Confidential interview, 2007.

⁵³ Confidential interview, 2007; Confidential interview, 2009; Confidential interview, 2009.

It was all a slow process. MSM organizers developed an array of workshops designed to build consensus in communities around the problems they faced and the role collective direct action could play in generating a response. Organizers didn't ask communities to align with the MSM or CIPO at first, because, they claimed, they didn't want to seem like they were manipulating people by making big promises – as politicians were often charged with doing.⁵⁴ Indeed, many Mexicans thought of the indigenous as “ignorant,” the people “who wore sandals, [and] didn't bathe,” and could easily be tricked.⁵⁵ In the first workshop, MSM organizers would talk about the ideas and history of Flores Magón. In the second, community members would talk about the problems in the area. In some cases, organizers would repeat the stories village elders told about life the region a century earlier, in the years Flores Magón lived. In some of those cases, elders would relate how the community lacked schools and roads. What does it mean, organizers would ask the gathered villagers, that the community continues to face the same problems? Finally, at the third workshop organizers would have community members engage in a role-playing exercise with balloons and other props. The “police,” armed with push pins, tried to pop the community members' balloons. The latter had to figure out how to protect their inflated balloons, and the answer was through collective action. If they huddled together with their balloons in the middle, the police couldn't pop the multicolored globes. If the three workshops went

⁵⁴ Confidential interview, 2007.

⁵⁵ Confidential interview, 2009.

well the MSM would ask communities members to propose affiliating with CIPO in their next community assembly.⁵⁶

Many of the MSM's early links to communities surfaced from personal connections that developed when MSM teachers worked in schools in rural communities. In other cases, as with San Isidro, organizers had family or were even born and raised in the area. One organizer in San Isidro grew up in the region and had worked on an indigenous education project in the area schools in the 1980s. In many cases the personal relationships were what started organizing drives, and in almost all cases the home communities of the MSM founders developed at least a small MSM or CIPO presence. For teachers in indigenous communities, PRI loyalists in areas like in the *Sierra Norte* made life difficult. One teacher claims that PRI locals put a price on his head.⁵⁷ The work of MSM, and CIPO, was based on the kinds of grassroots organizing that often gets lost in the media reports, testimonies, and even scholarly work about the global justice movement.

The MSM and CIPO's work in organizing the poor against the local effects of neoliberal re-organization, though, were the means through which the poorest and most oppressed peoples of the continental free trade area contested the forces that shaped their lives. That was indeed the case in San Isidro Aloapam, where anxieties about economic colonization were exacerbated by San Miguel's aggression and its transnational backing from North American corporate interests and the logging

⁵⁶ CIPO-RFM, "Cuestionario Sobre Primer Taller," circa 2001-04.

⁵⁷ Confidential interview, 2007.

programs in Mexico's Secretary of Natural Resources (SEMARNAT). The MSM's work had all the characteristics of a political organization that was part of a larger social movement: its action was contentious, confronting the powerful and giving voice to those who are usually silenced. And it mobilized – increasingly in the 2000s – a view of internationalism and globalization that served as a “common frame of reference” for them and global justice organizations internationally.⁵⁸ It wasn't just the ideological tendencies or framing choices of organizers (or the organic intellectuals in MSM teachers' circles) that helped build a shared social vision for this small, but highly diverse, alliance. Many of the problems communities like San Isidro faced paralleled those of Oaxacan unions and urban residents. The broader structure of national neoliberal reform forged the everyday conditions that drove what would soon become the MSM/CIPO's anti-corporate colonization vision.

CIPO, Civil Society, and the “Globalphobes”

CIPO was one of many kinds of groups that emerged with the public appearance of the Zapatistas. The MSM was one of those that developed within CIPO at the time of the global crystallization of what many scholars identify as the anti-globalization movement: the coalitions and collectives that lobbied and protested wherever economic leaders and their governmental representatives gathered. At one of them, the

⁵⁸ Catherine Eschle expands on Alberto Melucci's “common frame of reference” idea in her *Critical Theories, International Relations, and ‘the Anti-Globalisation Movement’: The Politics of Global Resistance* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005).

World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in 2000, ex-president of Mexico Ernesto Zedillo called the anti-globalization protesters there “globalphobes” (*globalfóbicos*), and CIPO indeed had a place among the anarchists, direct action-oriented peasants, and summit-hoppers at the protests that took place in Mexico, and especially at the biggest one, the World Trade Organization meeting in Cancun in 2003. As this section suggests, though, the MSM and CIPO’s role was mainly in contesting globalization on a local level, and navigating the changing Oaxacan popular left that developed in part through the economic and political globalization sponsored by international development foundations. The transnational ties between groups in Oaxaca in the early 2000s developed through foundation funding, the NGO and development circuit, and, in very different way, through the global flows of anarchist punk rock and the international solidarity of indigenous groups like CIPO and solidarity activists from First World countries.

Though the literature on the global justice movement usually focuses on protest-oriented groups who frequented international summits but who engaged in little local organizing, groups like CIPO worked with peoples whose transnational links came mostly from the migratory routes of their family members working in the U.S. For MSM/CIPO members, getting visas to the U.S. was extremely difficult because it entailed personalized letters of invitation from First World institutions, and many Oaxacan indigenous people lacked basic identification documents. International travel, of course, was considerably more expensive than the usual truck ride down the mountains to Oaxaca City, and required considerable cultural and social capital. Some of these

obstacles were evident in Seattle for the World Trade Organization protests. Two weeks before the ministerial meetings, two indigenous representatives from the Oaxacan indigenous producers' association AZACHIS (Assembly of Zapotec and Chinantec (Municipal) Authorities), were denied visas to travel to Seattle by the U.S. embassy in Mexico City. In response, the small U.S. Labor Party and the University of Washington Human Rights Education Research Network sent a flurry of emails, one noting the contradiction that "[w]hile U.S. trade representatives and businesses are touting the 'liberalization' of trade as a means of encouraging democracy ... in undeveloped and poor areas like the mountains of Oaxaca, the U.S. State Department is blocking the flow of information and dialog that one expects in a democratic society."⁵⁹

CIPO and indigenous and popular organizations from Oaxaca were also ambivalent about international meetings, tours, and even protests because of the NGOs and civil organizations that often coordinated the "civil society" circuit. The idea of civil society was mobilized by many kinds of actors in 1990s-era Mexico. The influence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or, "civil organizations," as they were often called in Oaxaca, exploded in 1990s-era Mexico, and the rapid growth was part of the

⁵⁹ "Visas denied, ACTION needed immediately," Email, forwarded message from Bill Clifford, who wrote that he was writing on behalf of AZACHIS and the Labor Party – Seattle Chapter, forwarded by Letitia Reason, Nov. 17, 1999. Archived at http://mailman2.u.washington.edu/pipermail/nat_issues/1999-November/003242.html. It seems as though the representatives or others did indeed arrive in Seattle. See Darrell A. Posey and Graham Dutfield, *Beyond Intellectual Property: Toward Traditional Resource Rights for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1996). The U.S. Labor Party was one of several progressive, labor-oriented parties that formed in the mid and late 1990s. Jobs with Justice had a significant presence in the Working Families Party. Rand Wilson, one of the founders (and first staff member) of Massachusetts JwJ ran for the position of State Auditor on the Massachusetts Working Family Party ticket in 2006.

worldwide “quiet” revolution of NGOs, which was funded in part by the World Bank.⁶⁰

The Zapatistas, especially in the first year after their uprising, staked their claim on being democratic by calling on civil society to defend them and define their priorities. Some indigenous organizations, however, immediately complained about the language of civil society in the Zapatista solidarity movement. As early as 1994, FIPI argued that “civil society” would more accurately be called “mestizo society.” It did so as it described how most participants in the first, momentous Zapatista international gathering in 1994 – the National Democratic Convention, which was organized to set the agenda for the future of the movement – treated indigenous people as tokens there, just as they were usually treated by the mestizo, educated, male NGO leaders who claimed to represent the civil society sector.⁶¹ In November 2000, after MSM members launched protests on the revolution of the beginning of the Mexican revolution and created possibly the first pirate radio station in the city of Oaxaca, CIPO sarcastically addressed its press release to, among others, “Madame civil society who sometimes cares.”⁶²

⁶⁰ One scholar suggested that the breadth of the rise of the NGO sector in the 1990s was comparable to the rise of the nation-state. See L.M. Salamon, *The Global Associational Revolution: The Rise of the Third Sector on the World Scene*. Occas. Pap. 15. Baltimore: Institute Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins University.

⁶¹ Scholar and indigenous activist Araceli Burguete noted the racial power discrepancies in the convention in her article from *Abya Yala News*, 8, 3, (Fall 1994). Available online <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/46/032.html>. Accessed July 30, 2010. FIPI was based in Chiapas but had a following in Oaxaca as well, partly through an alliance with CODREMICHU, whose Tuxtepec-based leaders knew CODECI well. Personal communication, CODECI, June 2010, Tuxtepec, Oaxaca. FIPI-CODREMICHU had dubbed Mexican society as a “mestizocracia” in 1994. See Jorge Hernández-Díaz, *Reclamos de la Identidad* for more on FIPI. CODREMICHU and its leader, Juan Rojas, faded in the years after the Zapatista uprising. Confidential interview, 2010.

⁶² The Spanish original is “A Doña sociedad civil que a veces le vale.” The comunicado, titled “No Nos Callarán,” (They Will Not Silence Us) was signed by CIPO, the communications-oriented, youth-sponsored Center of Community Accompaniment (CEAC), which was run by young CIPO members, and other

The growth of this civil society sector stemmed in part from the way neoliberalism shaped societies in the 1990s. The World Bank initiated “second generation” reforms at the time, which led the bank to concentrate its funding on strengthening “participation” in its programming. It did so by decentralizing programs and finding, or creating, local civil organizations to administer money and help forge regional development by developing individuals’ entrepreneurial “social capital.” Neoliberal economic reforms increased the numbers of the ultra-rich in the Americas, many of whom enjoyed tax incentives or political motivations to fund non-profit organizations and foundations. In Mexico, business associations created new institutions to paternalistically redistribute wealth. In 1996 a group of businesses, readied with a grant from the Inter-American Foundation, formed the Mexican Center for Philanthropy (CEMEFI), and by the late 1990s their efforts had surpassed traditional charity work (for street children, for example) by advocating “socially responsible” business models, which claimed to provide for societal needs in addition to generating private profit.⁶³

The language of partnership pervaded this “institutionalization of private governance” by corporate interests in Mexico. “Fair trade” coffee outfits and

indigenous and community radios. The release is archived at <http://www.nodo50.org/cipo/documentos/cipo.htm>.

⁶³ Socially responsible business grew in popularity between the mid and late 1990s. The shift was noticeable in the CEMEFI papers and newsletters from the time, which I noticed while researching in the CEMEFI library in 2007. CEMEFI got an \$192,360 grant from the Inter-American Foundation in 1999, for example, “to mobilize \$500,000 for social development programs” with a corporate tax, as well as “train 48 key leaders of the Mexican business, public, and civil society in social responsible business and cross-sectoral partnership building,” in part through the Prince of Wales Business Leaders forum. See Inter-American Foundation, Awards by Year, accessed 2007. CEMEFI was given over a million dollars by the IAF between 1996 and 2002. See http://www.iaf.gov/links/links_en.asp?seclink=grantee#C.

sustainable tourism businesses embodied the joining of justice and private gain, and corporate partnerships like the Forest Stewardship Council, the association run by paper corporations and environmentalists mentioned in chapter three in the section on San Isidro Aloapam, operated throughout the region.⁶⁴ Instead of public deliberation, state regulation, or, as CIPO would have it, popular and democratic decision-making in community institutions autonomous from the Mexican government, First World consumer tastes, U.S.-owned timber companies, and World Bank-funded NGOs developed *de facto* power to influence local standards social ethics and justice.

In Oaxaca, the story of the Communitarian Foundation, conceptualized in 1995 and formalized in 1997, reflects well the national picture of neoliberalized civil society. Born from the brainstorming of Mexico City business leaders interested “in the development of Oaxaca” after the Zapatista uprising, they found it difficult in the mid-1990s “to mobilize the support of all sectors of Oaxacan society behind a common vision, particularly as there was no strong tradition of inter-sectoral collaboration.” Civil society leaders in particular were reluctant to actively participate in an organization they saw as dominated by business leaders,” one scholar wrote in a study of the

⁶⁴ As I noted in Chapter 3, one of these partnerships from its world headquarters in Oaxaca City. Fair trade coffee NGOs like “Coffee Kids” had a presence in Oaxaca since the 1990s as well. One scholar called the 1990s “an era of partnership.” Philipp Pattberg, “The Institutionalization of Private Governance: How Business and Nonprofit Organizations Agree on Transnational Rules,” *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, 18, 4 (Oct. 2005): 589-610. They established partnerships with government agencies or claimed to itself paralleled the neoliberal “institutionalization of private regulation” over society through business. International institutions generated new regulations to monitor, or facilitate, the partnerships. For instance, the U.N., with its U.N. Global Compact, and the CERES-created Global Reporting Initiative, born in 1997 with United Nations support to advocate for, and provide a blueprint for, corporate reporting of their ecological impacts. See Pattberg, 591.

Foundation.⁶⁵ Indeed, almost all of the organization's funding through the early 2000s came from international sources, and its programming in the early 2000s revolved around partnerships between the state government, corporations, civil organizations, and the "marginalized" populations they serviced.⁶⁶

With their international funding, civil society participation (including by progressive NGOs like Eduardo Navarette of CAMPO, Francisco Toledo of the IAGO, and intellectuals Sofia Robles Hernandez and Salomon Nahmad Sitton), this form of foundation globalization blurred the many differences between corporate interests and public good, even as CIPO and the Zapatistas struggled to highlight those differences in the name of indigenous autonomy and popular democracy. The themes of "community participation" through "Civil Society" and promoting "social responsibility" dominated the foundation's seven major program areas in the early 2000s.⁶⁷ A month after helping create a bakery run by an orphanage (*albergue infantil*) the foundation helped carry out a consultation with the World Bank in Mexico to talk about "the design of the strategy" of the bank for Oaxaca.⁶⁸ In Oaxaca, the leaders of the relatively independent

⁶⁵ David Winder, "Mexico," Helmut K. Anheier, Adele Simmon, and David Winder, *Innovation in Strategic Philanthropy: Local and Global Perspectives*, 37-56, 2007. See p. 49.

⁶⁶ The Fundación's publication "'Nuestros Aprendizajes: Un Ejercicio de Ciudadanía,'" provides information on the sources of its funding. See "Nuestros Aprendizajes," (Fundación Comunitaria Oaxaca, n.d.) I got the publication in the Fundación offices.

⁶⁷ "Estrategias y Actividades," on an early-2000s web site with archives of the Fundación's program areas. <http://homepages.nyu.edu/~jog206/fco/fund/estrats.html>. Accessed June 16, 2010. For more on the dynamic between civil organizations and early CIPO, see chapter two, which mentions how CIPO distinguished itself from the FOCO alliance of civil organizations in the wake of the hurricanes of November 1997.

⁶⁸ "Eventos y Actividades – 2002," <http://homepages.nyu.edu/~jog206/fco/eventos/eventos.html>. Accessed June 16, 2010. The *albergue* was the San Jose de la Montana Albergue Infantil Josefino, A.C.

and socially progressive civil society sector – the slice of this new “civil society” that also encompassed many PRI or party-directed front groups – cited the late 1990s as being a period of plentiful international funding and organizational growth.⁶⁹

While the civil society organizations concentrated on advocacy, the MSM and CIPO focused on autonomy. The development of the pirate radio station in 2000 reflected how CIPO was positioning itself in the larger global justice movement in the years to come: closer to the anarchist-influenced, direct-action, pro-Zapatista wing, and farther from the local NGOs and international advocacy alliances, like the Continental Social Alliance, which was created in 1999 to work on trade-related globalization issues.⁷⁰ As was clear from the MSM’s early publications, *punks* and all those who believed in *autogestión*, or self-management, and autonomy formed part of – or at least were welcome – in its efforts. A pirate radio – perhaps the epitome of the “Be the Media,” direct-action ethic of the global justice radicals – linked young urban *anarko-punks* in Oaxaca with the MSM indigenous communities, many of whom also pushed for community-controlled, indigenous-language, independent radio. In short, both agreed on the development of autonomous institutions.⁷¹

⁶⁹ I conducted nearly a dozen interviews with such leaders in 2007.

⁷⁰ The alliance was supported (and perhaps dependent on) the AFL-CIO, which set up its own events for the Cancun World Economic Forum in 2001. The other large, but peasant-based, trade-oriented organization in Mexico was *La Vía Campesina*, which brought together Mexican peasant organizations and farm-related groups throughout the continent, including Jobs with Justice ally the National Family Farms Coalition.

⁷¹ The indigenous radio stations it developed never requested state permits to operate, unlike most of the indigenous and community stations developed through the INI, NGOs, or other community efforts. Confidential interview, 2010.

MSM, OIDHO, and CODEP organizers all played a part in developing the radios. The idea was probably first brought into CIPO circles through the anarchist *Magonistas* from the Mexico-City based CAMA.⁷² The MSM created its first radio for protests on the government's celebration of the beginning of the Mexican Revolution, and to do so they secretly worked with equipment from the teacher's union and the know-how from teacher's union members. For a while they secretly broadcast from the center of the city, inside the teacher's union building two blocks from the central plaza. The state government desperately searched for the source of the illegal transmissions as the protests got started, and one Oaxaca newspaper declared as its lead story that "CIPO INTERFERES WITH RADIO."⁷³ One MSM teacher said the government surveillance and aggression made the efforts "very difficult" (*muy encabronado*).⁷⁴ But in the process of developing the radio, other CIPO organizers saw this teacher's "way of thinking, [and that he] was more than a unionist," and was not simply concerned with narrow wage-and-hour demands for union members.⁷⁵ The CIPO occupation in the central plaza, in which members from groups like the MSM, OIDHO, and CODEP pushed demands for their own affiliate communities, featured, then, the entertainment of the radio. Some of the pirate deejays read children's stories, and others brought recordings of political

⁷² Confidential interview, 2010.

⁷³ This headline was noted by anarchists writing for the Mexico City-based CAMA collective, and was reported in the CAMA newspaper. Lousteria Kroffey, "'Los Magoneros' Y la mera-mera pistolera del cuadrante: Radio R.F.M. 102.9 MHz," *Autonomía: Periodice Independiente de Combate*, 2, 13, Dec., 2000: 3. See also Octavio Vélez Ascencio, "Inédito: policía impide plantón en el Zócalo," *Las Noticias*, Nov. 19; and no author, editorial, *Radarr: Enlace*, Nov. 21, 4.

⁷⁴ <http://www.nodo50.org/cipo/documentos/cipo.htm>.

⁷⁵ Confidential interview, 2007.

punk rock and indigenous brass band music. The radio was more important for its news function, because people could turn to it for updates on the police and the multi-day *jornada* of protests.⁷⁶ These autonomous and indigenous radios, like Radio Comunal “Ricardo Flores Magón,” in 2001 or Radio Guetza, later, continued to be a big part of CIPO practice, and especially in indigenous communities like San Isidro Reforma. The radios and print media like the anarchist Magonista newspaper that covered the protests served as an important part of an organizational, left-oriented, and youth-oriented autonomous media scene that many saw as important in a country where a few private and government-run monopolies had long controlled most mass communication.⁷⁷

Autonomous media, do-it-yourself politics, and autonomous communities were all themes that spurred anarko-punks to work with groups like CIPO. The anarko-punk community in Oaxaca was relatively important in the Mexican Zapatista and global justice scene, though its biggest conglomeration was certainly in Mexico City. For the protests at the World Economic Forum in Cancun in 2001, the collective that organized through a network of direct action groups, in part through the *Global Fobia* web site, was mainly alumni from the national university in Mexico City. The year-long strike at

⁷⁶ Kroffey, 3. At one point in the crowded *Zócalo*, the CAMA reporter noted that the Secretary of Public Security shouted to police in the *Zócalo* to “Rómpanos la Madre,” but regardless of scattered police repression and a stand-off on Nov. 19 outside the *Zócalo*, protests were a multi-day affair.

⁷⁷ The MSM and CIPO also saw these “communitarian radios,” and especially the ones in indigenous communities like Jen Poj in the Mixe region (Tlahuitoltepec), as a kind of democratic and grassroots way to break the media monopoly in Mexico, different from government-sponsored efforts to “citizenize the media” as part of its democratic reforms. See CIPO-RFM, “No nos callarán,” Nov. 2002. In the MSM-CIPO village San Isidro Reforma, Procoro Pascual and other longtime indigenous leaders were also active with CIPO-linked radios. The moderate UNOSJO organization, with heavy ties to the National Indigenist Institute, also worked with indigenous radio there. See chapter 2 for more.

the school that many helped defend, and which was brought on by IMF-mandated budget cuts, resulted in occupied anarchist spaces on campus (one of which remains in place in 2010) and press attention worldwide. Globaphobe direct actionists participated in the strike either directly or through solidarity efforts, and one commentator suggested Oaxaca and Queretaro were the two areas outside of major cities that featured hotbeds of other anarchist or radical direct actionists.⁷⁸

In Oaxaca, the *anarko-punk* community formed through punk rock shows, or *tocadas*, in houses and other small spaces throughout the city, and many of the young punks were children of indigenous migrants from Oaxacan villages. In several moments small punk collectives and social networks formed important anarchist federations in Oaxaca City in the 1990s, the decade when, according to one veteran of the scene, punk anarchism arrived in Oaxaca, spurred from influence from Mexico City punk and, later, the Zapatista insurgency. Some self-published zines, whose content ranged from original stories about animal liberation to photocopied stories about Oaxacan indigenous politics. Others led marches, as with the Oct. 2, 1998 march to commemorate the victims of the Tlatelolco Massacre of 1968. But most federations or coordinating bodies, like the Revolutionary Anarchist Youth, fell apart due to police repression or to drug and

⁷⁸ Fabrizio Mejía Madrid - Masiosare, "Globalfobia a la mexicana," Feb. 26, 2001, http://www.rebelion.org/hemeroteca/sociales/globalif_mexicana260201.htm. Accessed Aug. 1, 2010. For more on the nature of the student strike, see R.A. Rhoads and L. Mina, "The Student Strike at the National Autonomous University of Mexico: A Political Analysis," *Comparative Education Review* 45 (3): 334-353.

alcohol abuse inside the scene. Still other activists went to the U.S. to work, to states like Arizona.⁷⁹

A number of punks integrated into the social organizations that made up CIPO. The CAMA from Mexico City developed a long-term relationship with CIPO, and especially OIDHO, from the late 1990s onwards, and others filtered into the MSM/CIPO and CODEP. One of the important early punks in the MSM/CIPO, whose nickname was Panda, faced arrest and police repression many times with the organization. Panda and others linked to CIPO were almost certainly part of Oaxaca's National Meeting of Punk Culture (*Encuentro Nacional de Cultura Punk*) in early 2002, where anarko-punks gathered to discuss "Self-management, Social Responsibility, [and] Self-Organization" and their relations to punk culture and *Zapatismo*. The gathering was actually the southern *Encuentro* (the northern was held in Guadalajara), and the international gatherings were coordinated by the Libertarian Coordination, a coordinating body whose member collectives identified themselves as self-managing (*autogestivos*), internationalist, recreational (*ludico*), anti-sexist, multicultural, and libertarian. At the gathering, small groups like the Anarchist Punk Resistance Guerrero, an indigenous collective whose members spoke Náhuatl or Mixteco, distributed their zine "Read and Struggle" (*Lee y Lucha*) about anti-imperialism, transgenics, and punk.⁸⁰

⁷⁹Confidential interview, 2007. The government's response to the rise of the EPR in 1996, which was part of the reason the diverse founding organizations of CIPO started the coalition in 1997, also led the anarchist left to dampen its activities. A few anarchist *chavos* were detained and charged with aiding the EPR.

⁸⁰ "Propuesta Inicial: La Cultural Punk," circa 2002, CIPO files, quotation from cover page. For more on the *Coordinadora Libertaria*, see archived Internet postings on the activist server Nodo50. (For instance, http://www.nodo50.org/coordinadoralibertaria/que_es/1.html .) The *Centro Social Libertario*, in Oaxaca

Though direct action in Oaxaca City was an integral part of MSM and CIPO forms of struggle, the basis for their direct action was their social base in indigenous communities. One of the reasons for the MSM and CIPO's gradual shift to an indigenous identity was the increased involvement of indigenous people and communities in the heart of the organization, the organizing committee. One indigenous peasant joined the MSM after he left CIPO-affiliate OIDHO, because, he claimed, he saw an OIDHO leader negotiate with politicians alone, suggesting that the government paid him on the side, perhaps to control the organization's membership.⁸¹ One of the relatively few women in early MSM activity also came from the Zapotec mountains, who began "to participate in full" with the MSM and CIPO by 2000.⁸² Oaxaca, as many have shown, has both a rebellious reputation in general, but indigenous struggle for land and autonomy has been a regular feature of Oaxacan life. In Huatulco, the base of Oaxaca's tourist industry, several indigenous people had developed, through communal work called *tequio*, a "humble house" that could serve as a safe space for people displaced by the

City, was a rich resource for me for Oaxacan *anarko-punk* publications. See also Jaime García Leyva, "El Rock de la Montaña," *Ojarasca* 67, Nov. 2002, supplement to *La Jornada*. Available online at <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2002/11/18/oja67-mixtecopunk.html>. According to García Leyva, since at least the late 1980s some punk bands have dedicated their music to indigenous struggle. One early band was *Mugre y Miseria* (Filth and Misery) who also went by a Mixtecan name: *Yakua Nda 'vi*. One of their influences was the *Amor y Rabia* zine. *Amor y Rabia* was the Mexico branch of the Love and Rage Federation, perhaps the biggest anarchist federation in the U.S. (with support groups in Mexico) in the late 1980s and 1990s. Many Love and Rage members undoubtedly were involved in the early anti-globalization protests in the U.S. Panda left the movement in the late 2000s and became an evangelical Christian.

⁸¹ Confidential interview, 2007. OIDHO stands for Indian Organization for Human Rights in Oaxaca.

⁸² Confidential interview, 2007.

hotel industry. It was evicted in the early 2000s, but by 2002, a group – that later became part of CIPO – would take the land again.⁸³

Most of the new organizers were youth from indigenous communities who, as with so many indigenous Oaxacans in the last half-century, have sought better opportunities in Oaxaca City. In the Mixteca region, a few young organizers came from a county that featured heated struggles over land in its distant *agencias*, or villages. In one, Yosotatu, nearly half the population had fled in the last fifteen years because of the conflicts.⁸⁴ Another came from the Mixe region, another from the Isthmus, and another, who had worked extensively with indigenous organizations in the 1990s, came from a Zapotec region north of the city.⁸⁵

These indigenous organizers, whether in social organizations or in their indigenous communities, were influenced by the defense of indigenous rights in the face of affronts to local sovereignty. A few had come to live in Oaxaca City, some to take classes at the state university (UABJO), which is one of the poorest universities in the country. There, they started to work with the University Workshop of Human Rights (TUDHO), where they organized human rights workshops in indigenous communities, participated in forums, and released publications about rural and indigenous issues. In

⁸³ CIPO-RFM, “Represión, Encarcelamiento Y Tortura Para el CIPO-RFM Como Festejo en la Guelaguetza,” July 22, 2002. Document also available online at <http://www.nodo50.org/cipo/documentos/cipo5.htm>. Accessed August 5, 2010.

⁸⁴ Personal communication, CIPO member, 2009. For background on conflicts in the village, see Francisco López Bárcenas and Guadalupe Espinoza Saucedo, *Derechos Territoriales y Conflictos Agrarios en la Mixteca: El Caso de San Pedro Yosotatu* (Mexico: Red Es, 2003). One interviewee in 2010 suggested that CIPO tried to lure Yosotatu into the organization by offering them money payments.

⁸⁵ These organizers, for instance, were still active when I first arrived in Oaxaca in 2006.

2000, for instance, it sponsored Reyna Perez Hernandez, who one longtime CIPO member called Raul Gatica's "right hand" for the important role she played in the early MSM-CIPO organizing committee, to go to the Second Meeting of the National Coordination of Indigenous Women in the neighboring state of Guerrero.⁸⁶ At least three had worked or even continued to work with Services of the Mixe People (SER), including writing or taking photos for pay. SER organizers also saw indigenous life in Oaxaca as threatened by a new kind of colonization, and had been especially involved in the *usos y costumbres* debates in Oaxaca in the 1990s. But the organization rarely confronted the state as the MSM did. One member said that despite his SER work, CIPO was his "real" political project.⁸⁷

Underneath the MSMS's youth movement and its ties to newly organized communities like Plan de Zaragoza in the Mixteca, tensions brewed and were exacerbated by government repression, isolation, surveillance, and infiltrators. The biggest shock was undoubtedly the one that dramatically changed the composition of the organization in 2001 – the departure of CODEP and OIDHO. Indeed, part of the reason for the increased focus on indigeneity after 2002 was the departure of the Marxist CODEP in the middle of 2001. When OIDHO left later in the year, the MSM of 2000 and 2001 became the CIPO of 2002 and after.

⁸⁶ TUDHO to Raynel Ramirez Mijangos, P.R.D., request for support, 2000. CIPO organizational files. One of TUDHO's pamphlets was an instructional pamphlet that described the neoliberal land reforms, and particularly the reform of Article 27 of the Mexican constitution in 1992, to a peasant audience. "La Ley del Campo" (México, D.F.: TUDHO, 1993). CIPO organizational files; Confidential interview, 2008.

⁸⁷ Confidential interview, 2008.

As with many coalitions of the era, tensions over ideology, representation, and power broke up the coalition. CODEP's departure year was based on its desire to have another, national alliance it belonged to – the Proletarian Forces Bloc – merge into CIPO. OIDHO, the MSM, and others rejected that proposal.⁸⁸ Others from OIDHO, by far the biggest organization in CIPO at the time, charged that “some individual members” of the MSM took over CIPO, claiming its name and the financial resources that itself could generate.⁸⁹ OIDHO argued that its departure was due to the *protagonismo* of Gatica and the MSM. As “Magonistas,” OIDHO wrote, we were “building a just world for all,” not out of self-interest, while the opportunistic MSM operated through “the old ways of doing politics,” building alliances only to enrich and empower itself.⁹⁰ In response, MSM members charged that its communities thought of themselves as CIPO, not MSM, and in a series of grassroots consultations, the membership decided that it wanted the CIPO name. OIDHO never bothered to consult its bases about the question of representation, the MSM claimed, and had created its new “Magonista-Zapatista Alliance” (AMZ) before the argument had even concluded. It simply deserted CIPO, the MSM said.⁹¹

In an incendiary statement it sent to international activist listserves, OIDHO (as well as other small organizations) said that “we are desisting from confronting unnecessarily this small group,” which it said was “led by Raul Gatica” and a “caricature

⁸⁸ OIDHO, “Vision de OIDHO Sobre el CIPO-RFM,” circa 2001-2002. OIDHO files.

⁸⁹ OIDHO, “Lo indígena en el magonismo o el magonismo en lo indígena,” paper presented at the third Jornadas Magonistas en the National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH), May 8, 2003. (Reprinted in the CAMA newspaper *Viva Tierra y Libertad*, 1 (March 2005), 4-5.

⁹⁰ Ibid; OIDHO, “Breve Historia del CIPO,” circa 2002.

⁹¹ Confidential interview, 2007; Confidential interview, 2010.

of the real CIPO-RFM that made history in the state of Oaxaca.”⁹² Meanwhile, the new MSM-CIPO, now a network of MSM-organized workers and indigenous communities rather than “an alliance of organizations,” immediately went about its business. It organized a Christmas march, awkwardly on the same day the AMZ led their own to the *Zocálo*. Soon after, CIPO developed its “Principles” statement, and declared that some organizations had “tried to destroy CIPO-RFM” but that “we respect all organizations that one day were part of CIPO-RFM and for us continue being brothers and sisters.”⁹³ In the years that followed, founding CIPO organizations like OIDHO, CODECI, and CODEP continued to charge CIPO, and Gatica, with *protagonismo*.

CIPO, OIDHO, and CODEP continued to support the same causes and join the same temporary alliances and campaigns in the coming years, but their relationships – especially between the veteran organizers most involved in the 2001 rupture – were forever frayed. Regardless, the MSM’s network of communities, workers, and youth began to grow as CIPO entered a new period. In fact, CIPO’s growth between 2002 and 2004 led it to levels of influence comparable to its power in 1998. It was also the period when CIPO most fully embraced an indigenous identity, further deepening its multi-ethnic character and shaping its politics through dominant metaphor of colonization. CIPO, drawing on the Zapatistas but also the deeply held anxieties about U.S. empire in

⁹² Alianza Magonista-Zapatista, “Por que Nos Deslindamos del CIPO,” Feb. 18, 2002. Document sent to activist list serves and archived at the Alianza web site: http://espora.org/amz/article.php3?id_article=28. Accessed July 12, 2010.

⁹³ One of the reasons for the continued tensions between the MSM-CIPO and CODEP and OIDHO stemmed from how CIPO continued to illegitimately claim to be the inheritor of CIPO’s entire post-1997 history, though OIDHO and others claimed that the new CIPO was no longer CIPO – it was its own small group that appropriated the CIPO name and history for itself.

the hemisphere, increasingly appealed for solidarity and justice by conceptualizing its nuts-and-bolts struggles as confronting the illegitimate, invasive order of corporate-dominated colonization. While in the same years “globalization” in the U.S. meant preoccupations with the degradation of America, its racial and moral essence, and its environmental and citizen’s democracy, CIPO’s anxiety about America centered on its colonizing influence through neoliberal globalization. This period, characterized by the departure of founding organizations like OIDHO and CODEP, was also a period that featured the quiet development of some of the same tensions about personal influence and community representation that burst the old CIPO coalition.⁹⁴

Colonization and Global Indigeneity

The period that followed the split in the CIPO featured the MSM-CIPO’s re-assertion of its indigenous-oriented political perspective, a perspective that was closely tied to its larger idea that Oaxaca and the *pueblos* of the world were facing new waves of colonization through neoliberalism. Grassroots forms of global justice organizing, as I noted in chapter three, featured the local efforts through which those who bore the

⁹⁴ The Zapatistas, in fact, had been talking about globalization, and equating it with neoliberalism, since at least 1995. The EZLN, as one MSM-CIPO member said, “set the agenda” for other social organizations, and as we saw in Chapter Two, in the first major CIPO campaign, one of the organization’s demands was always the implementation of the San Andres Accords for indigenous autonomy. The group’s world vision, though, applied to CIPO allies and its future allies in diverse ways. As neoliberal reforms worked themselves into Oaxacan society, for instance, the Democratic Current of the Union of Workers at the Service of the Powers of the State and Institutions (STSPEIDCEO) began to counter the rigid, patronage-based hierarchy of the “official” leadership and the deals it made with the state government to allow, for the first time, the outsourcing and subcontracting of high-wage government jobs. Confidential interview, 2010.

brunt of neoliberalism's effects defined, and defended, their rights and self-determination. Those who bore the brunt in Oaxaca were the people in indigenous villages, and the way MSM-CIPO increasingly de-centered class and nationalism from its political perspective played out in the way it centered the idea of the revolutionary capacity of the indigenous communities in the face of new waves of colonization.

One of the best examples of the MSM-CIPO's grassroots anti-globalization was its activities in Yaviche, a village near Tanetze de Zaragoza in the Rincón district of the Sierra Norte. There, like the Zapotecs in San Isidro who were threatened with the loss of their water, forest, and way of life, indigenous Zapotecs in the Tanetze region confronted another kind of attack on what had been a collectively controlled public good – community-run transportation services.

Conflicts had been developing in the area through the 1990s, and the MSM entered in 2000 through MSM men and women who were teaching in the communities around Tanetze, about 75 miles northeast of Oaxaca City.⁹⁵ Most indigenous communities were run through rotating, unpaid *cargos*. Even professionals who worked outside the village, or migrants in the United States, were obliged to fulfill them if the community assembly so desired. Women were usually seen as unfit for the *cargos*, and if men failed to comply with their *cargo* their rights to live in the village were rescinded.⁹⁶ Some Oaxacan writers and journalists of the day saw the conflicts that emerged in areas like Yaviche-Tanetze as results of the *usos y costumbres* law that

⁹⁵ Two were in Yaviche and San Isidro Reforma at the time.

⁹⁶ Confidential interview, 2007. Tanetze had enacted a special law for its land use in the 1990s.

legalized indigenous forms of governance. Indeed, many communities of the day featured bitter post-election conflicts, but those conflicts happened in both indigenous-rule county seats and in party-centered ones.⁹⁷ Even the MSM and CIPO's *cacique* adversary in Tanetze, Jacobo Yescas Chavez, the local mayor, agreed publicly that the political parties, and their money interests, divided Oaxacan counties, perhaps as part of a strategy to control its constituents.⁹⁸ Chavez himself had been part of the indigenous coffee-turned-transportation cooperative Villages United (*Pueblos Unidos*), which emerged in the 1980s. But he turned against it, seeking, the MSM claimed, to monopolize transportation in the region with help from his newfound access to state money as municipal leader. He tried to privatize transport in the area, including Villages United, the transportation cooperative run by and for indigenous inhabitants of the area.⁹⁹

Chavez refused to allow Villages United to run, despite the fact that the state government had granted the necessary permission. But this was a larger story, also common in CIPO struggles: conflicts between municipal authorities, often who had ties to state and federal resources, and small villages, or *agencias*, in the hinterlands of the countryside. Tensions also revolved around class, as Tanetze historically was a town of

⁹⁷ Confidential interview, 2007. For more information see Matilde Perez U., "Exigen la Liberación de Zapotecos Secuestrados," *La Jornada*, Jan. 4, 2002. Article available at <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2002/01/04/007n1pol.html>.

⁹⁸ Carlos Alberto Hernández, "Realizan pobladores de Tanetze inusual manifestación," *La Marca*, March 6, 2002.

⁹⁹ Confidential interview, 2010; <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2002/01/04/007n1pol.html>; Crisanto Manzano directed a documentary about the area. Manzano, *Don Chendo* (Oaxaca, Mexico: INI Centro de Video y Posproducción, 1993).

merchants, and most peasants in the surrounding villages had few options other than Tanetze for markets and buyers.¹⁰⁰ Simmering questions about Tanetze's withholding of federally mandated funds to the Yaviche, its alliance with the PRI-linked CROCUT organization (with known ties to paramilitaries), as well as minor skirmishes over things like monthly fees for light posts, led Yaviche to declare itself a "free village" in late 2000, autonomous from its county government.¹⁰¹

In May 2001, the village authorities traveled to the MSM-CIPO office near, ironically, a major state prison in Oaxaca City. At the office, then, they signed on with CIPO after talking to Raul Gatica and others, MSM organizers helped them get the funding for a variety of projects.¹⁰² By the turn of the next year, agents of the municipality had stolen three *Pueblos Unidos* busses, and residents and members of *Pueblos Unidos*, including MSM members, blockaded all the roads leading from the municipality for three weeks, demanding the state government settle the conflict with Tanetze. Police repeatedly smashed their barricades, and many received death threats.

¹⁰⁰ *The Communal* documents their withholding of Law 28 and 33 funds out of the area. See <http://www.nodo50.org/cipo/comunal/sierranorte.htm>. Confidential interview, 2010.

¹⁰¹ Confidential interview, 2009. *The Communal*. The state government also rejected the "free village" decision.

¹⁰² Confidential interview, 2009. Confidential interview, 2010. The *anarko-punks* had created several small networks (and one federation) of collectives in late 1990s and early 2000s Oaxaca City. Flores Magón is a major inspiration in their zines and writings of the time. Many of the young anarchists moved from indigenous villages, or had parents who did. Confidential interview, 2007; documents from the archive of the Libertarian Social Center.

Radio Guelatao, the indigenous but government-linked radio station of the area, refused to air the political nature of the conflict.¹⁰³

When the CIPO members, local villagers, and Villages United members defied Tanetze threats and made their way through the mountain roads of the district on Jan. 1, Yescas Chavez and a band of followers – armed with sticks, knives, tear gas, and even guns – forced the vehicle off the road, and a dusty chaos ensued. With clubs and fists, those from Tanetze lurched for the passengers. Carmen Perez Chavez, one of the MSM organizers, escaped, but 46 didn't. According to CIPO, these passengers-turned-prisoners were forced to walk barefoot to the Tanetze city hall, where they were stuffed in a cell with no room to lay down for five days. Some were taken to the tiny jails in surrounding communities.¹⁰⁴ With bare feet, no blankets, and rotten food, these "rats" and "Sons and Daughters of CIPO," as Tanetze authorities called them, endured the cold nights of the January *sierra*. Some of the spouses of the jailed men were able to deliver fresh snacks to the political prisoners, with paper messages from the community hidden between thick tortillas.¹⁰⁵ Threatened with death and with more jail time, upon their release they signed papers saying they would turn in all vehicles to Tanetze by January 15th. After their release, the MSM and CIPO organized press conferences in Oaxaca City, and Chavez demanded money that he claimed the autonomous village had taken from

¹⁰³ For the theft of the busses, see Raciél Martínez, "Retienen a 46 militantes del CIPO en Tanetze de Zaragoza," *Las Noticias*, Jan. 3, 2002, 3A. For the blockade, see Laurel Catherine Smith, *Mediating Indigenous Identity: Video, Advocacy, and Knowledge in Oaxaca, Mexico*, Ph.D. diss., 2005, 242-243.

¹⁰⁴ Confidential interview, 2010; Confidential interview, 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Osvaldo Carrillo, "Libres los del CIPO; Denunciarán lesiones ante la Procuraduría," *Tiempo*, Jan. 7, 2002; Víctor Ruíz and Guadalupe López, "Zafarrancho de Zapotecas que Disputan Una Empresa Comunitaria de Transporte," *La Jornada*, Jan. 3, 2002.

the federal government without the municipality getting its share. NGO activists who had developed indigenous film projects inside Tanetze had steadily opposed Chavez's rule, but according to one of the prisoners, the indigenous filmmaker Crisanto Mendoza, a native of the region who shot video in Tanetze as part of his work in the civil organization Ojo de Agua Video, didn't take action to oppose the attack and kidnapping. The war of words continued.¹⁰⁶

The villages in the area had been riven with conflicts for years, and the MSM propelled itself to the center. In 1996, future CIPO member Gonzalo Garcia Santiago wrote that the government accused one of the multi-ethnic indigenous organizations in the area with having ties to the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), using the trumped-up charge to force the organization to its knees. The government also induced townspeople from Tanetze to introduce funds from the Secretary of Social Development, the National Indigenist Institute, and the state government in order to "co-opt" the indigenous discontent that had catalyzed the organization's non-violent organizing and advocacy.¹⁰⁷ In March, Chavez and 400 from Tanetze circled the streets of Oaxaca City "to the beat of a brass band," and the black casket they carried on their shoulders was as black as the humor that animated their fake funeral. They scrawled, on the side of the casket, the name "Raul Gatica." If Gatica doesn't stop "dividing the

¹⁰⁶ Confidential interview, 2010. Maldonado suggests that the *Sierra Norte* in general has been the scene of conflict – including with protestants who belong to U.S.-based churches and whose teachings reject much of the *usos y costumbres* collectivism. Other conflicts have revolved, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, around forests and natural resources. Miguel Ángel Vásquez, "Sierra Norte: disputa forestal mundial," *Las Noticias*, Nov. 25, 1999.

¹⁰⁷ Adelfo Regino Montes and Gonzalo García-Santiago, "Oaxaca Bajo Régimen Militar," *La Jornada*, Informe Especial, March 13, 2000. Available online at <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2000/03/13/oja-oaxaca.html> (accessed May 5, 2010).

communities” of the area, they “will take justice into their own hands,” they declared.¹⁰⁸ In 2003, they did.

CIPO at several moments asserted that autonomy – a combination of indigenous self-determination and popular democracy – hung in the balance with the Yaviche struggle against Tanetze and in the larger struggle for the means of transportation. Indigenous, community-run transportation to them was a form of autonomy, and it had been taken by actors and forces hardly new to Mexican history, like *caciques*, class tensions, and inter-community battles spurred by money and managed by the state. Though this and others took the form of community struggles, they tended to overlap with class, as in the classed dynamic between Tanetze merchants and village producers, the peasants versus the hotel industrialists in Huatulco, or the timber merchant versus peasant and mill workers in San Miguel/San Isidro.

The Tanetze campaign, however, reflected CIPO’s reassertion and redefinition of its ideological focus on the defense and organization of indigenous communities and their sovereignty or, in CIPO’s terms, “autonomy.” CIPO in this era forcefully reasserted its agent of change, its collective subject, as the indigenous community, and in the process re-defined the global system that served as communities’ larger adversary. The MSM, after all, had in many ways centered its vision on class, and defined neoliberalism very much in class terms, as with the conflict between the woman with no apples and the woman with an apple tree. Between 2002 and 2004, neoliberalism was, for CIPO, a new wave of U.S.-sponsored colonization. CIPO, in its anti-colonial conceptualization,

¹⁰⁸ Carlos Alberto Hernández, “Realizan Pobladores de Tanetze Inusual Manifestación,” *La Marca*, March 6, 2002.

also redefined its understanding of race and ethnicity. Unlike most of the organizations labeled as “indigenous organizations” in Oaxaca after the 1970s, CIPO didn’t organize around the demands of one ethnic group, as did the COCEI in 1980s. Nor was CIPO’s embrace of indigeneity based on a frame that revolved around racial discrimination of the indigenous by mestizo Mexico. Instead, CIPO’s indigenous identity was forged in its larger understandings of the need for the *pueblos* of the world to organize against the globalized colonization created by neoliberalism.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the politics of identity over indigeneity – about who was indigenous and who wasn’t inside or outside the organization – was almost entirely absent.¹¹⁰

CIPO, between 2002 and 2004, led members to major continental *encuentros* and protests, testified at human rights conventions in Europe, developed ties in Western Europe with students, human rights groups, and anarchists who wanted to support a seemingly powerful indigenous organization with an anarcho-communist as a namesake. At one point it even accepted human rights funding from the government of San Marino. Few members, though, ever went farther than Oaxaca City for CIPO activities, and ties to the First World countries, especially for funding, publicity, or

¹⁰⁹ Many members and former members of CIPO’s organizing committee reiterated in interviews that conversations about racial identity between members almost never happened. Following the “Todos somos indios!” logic developed early in the Zapatista solidarity campaign, CIPO campaigns revolved not around the benefits, rights, or power of one racial or ethnic group – like Mixtecos or indigenous people – but rather around the category of “justice.” As one veteran of Oaxacan political organizing said of the 1990s, very few organizations that became known in the era as indigenous groups – like the COCEI or MULT – organized as “indigenous people.” The COCEI embraced “lo juchiteco,” what they claimed to be the distinctive Zapotec make-up of the area around their home city of Juchitán. See also Sergio Zermeño, “COCEI: Narodniks of Southern Mexico?” In Howard Campbell, Leigh Binford, Miguel Bartolomé, and Alicia Barabas, eds. *Zapotec Struggles: Histories, Politics, and Representations from Juchitán, Oaxaca* (Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington and London, 1993), 191-202.

¹¹⁰ Many CIPO and former CIPO members made that point in interviews. None of the written materials of the organization, to my knowledge, deal with the question, either.

human rights legal work, were the norm rather than the exception for many Oaxacan popular organizations of the day, even as rival organizations often charged each other with outright dependence on rich international donors and development agencies.¹¹¹

The idea of the *pueblos* of the world uniting to confront a new wave of colonization was hardly unique to CIPO. It was, in fact, a common frame of reference in much of the Mexican popular left and part of what made CIPO's organizing part of a larger anti-neoliberal globalization movement. As the twenty-first century broke, CIPO and the Oaxacan left acknowledged itself as part of a global movement. In the pirate-radio actions in 2000, CIPO called for "rebellion and solidarity to globalize themselves," and addressed its press release – not only to "Madame civil society," but to "the communitarian radios of planet earth."¹¹² A year later, it was like Seattle all over again in the Oaxaca *Zócalo*, as "Magonista youngsters" from CIPO joined protesters who, one left-wing magazine wrote, centered their messages on "the terrorism of the yankee [sic] state." They responded, the article said, to the U.S. government's "anti-terrorism" outcry in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, by tuning their "national and local demands [with] global resistance." At the marches and protests, protestors burned U.S. flags and spray painted slogans on the government palace. As night set, and with "black attire" and "hair gelled upward," the protestors demanded the release of indigenous prisoners

¹¹¹ In 2007 I did nearly a dozen interviews with civil organization leaders, and many of them told me about their funding, and organizational documents and publications I saw in their offices or on the Internet often listed funders. CIPO in its prime had one of the biggest First World solidarity networks of any Oaxacan organization, though it is extremely unlikely it ever got money the World Bank or the usual international foundations, like the Kellogg, MacArthur, or Inter-American, which regularly funded Oaxacan civil organizations that claimed to form the civil society sector.

¹¹² CIPO-RFM, "No Nos Callarán," 2002.

as they moved amidst the food carts and rock-music cassette vendors of the bustling plaza. Zedillo dubbed these kinds of crowds, most of whom wore Zapatista-style bandanas over their faces, as globophobes, but their ranks were actually multifaceted, and included the (Marxist-Leninist) Popular Revolutionary Front, a bigger group from the “anarchist-pacifist bloc,” and still others from CIPO and its *Magonistas*.¹¹³

Though the U.S.-led wars after 911 were deeply unpopular in Mexico, CIPO-RFM’s main target in defining its anti-neoliberal politics was the global business interests that states increasingly served. Particularly after Vicente Fox took power in Mexico, anxieties about colonization turned specifically to the Puebla Panama Plan (PPP), an all-encompassing, market-based development plan that echoed the efforts of Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz in the late nineteenth century, whose friendliness with U.S. mining and industrials interests helped spur the Mexican Revolution. The “base document” of the plan was released in March 2001, and, to buffer against the certain grassroots resistance to the plan, included offerings to the public of consultations and the participation of “communities, peoples, civil organizations, businesspeople, and the different levels of government.”¹¹⁴ The plan in general provoked so much ire in Mexico

¹¹³ “Dos de Octubre no se Olvida,” 4, *Vientos Rebeldes*, CIPO organizational files.

¹¹⁴ I spent an afternoon at the Secretary of Foreign Relations in Mexico City in 2007 talking with several of the staff members about their part in the creation of a “participation mechanism” for “civil society” at economic summits. They told me that the government wanted to respond to the massive protests that had happened in Cancun in 2001 and elsewhere. In a strategy similar to that in Seattle, authorities could use moderates – like the AFL-CIO in Seattle, or civil organizations in Mexico – to divide the movement over whether these consultations were legitimate. CIPO and a wide variety of organizations in May 2001 denounced government initiatives around citizen participation, which CIPO called the “pretense of public consultation.” They did so at the First Forum of Information, Analysis and Proposals, “The People Come First, Before Globalization,” convened in Tapachula, Chiapas, by the diocese of Tapachula, the Mexican Network of Action Against Free Trade (RMALC) and CIEPAC. CIEPAC Boletín, posted at

that the president soon stopped referring to it by its name, and instead sought to implement elements of it piecemeal. In a meeting of CIPO and a wide variety of civil organizations from Mexico and Central America, the representatives rejected the PPP as a “savage colonization” of the region that “gives guarantees to big capital, transnational corporations, and the national and local oligarchies.” Unlike in much of the early U.S. global justice movement, the group that got the most attention in the short document was immigrant workers.¹¹⁵ Immigration, they made clear, was certainly a globalization issue.

The plan proposed nothing less than to connect North America to South America through road, rail, and sea passages. The proposed super-highway connecting the Mexican city of Puebla and Panama would pass through the center of Oaxaca, and it proposed to create a “dry canal” across the Isthmus of Oaxaca, so that U.S. and European capital could bypass the Panama Canal.¹¹⁶ Civil and social organizations in the Isthmus region, which would be most affected, had since at least 1997 resisted the

<http://www.globalexchange.org/countries/americas/mexico/ppp/ciepac051601.html>. Accessed July 1, 2010.

¹¹⁵ The text reads: “We energetically condemn the reproductions of the infamous conduct of anti-immigrant policies that the Mexican government uses against its Central American brothers, like the U.S. government does against Mexican immigrants and Latino immigrants in general. Therefore we demand that any integration policy combats the roots of expulsion of our compatriots and in all cases guarantees legitimate human rights. We demand the decriminalization of migration, taking into account the diversity of groups by gender, age and race, which require special attention. The Central Americans who have migrated to the U.S. are part of the Mesoamerican peoples, and at the same time defending their rights as people and migrants, we should foster their participation in the development of their countries of origin.” The rights of indigenous people also featured prominently in the text. CIEPEC document, <http://www.globalexchange.org/countries/americas/mexico/ppp/ciepac051601.html>. CIEPEC bulletins are archived on its website.

¹¹⁶ Eduardo Andrés, Sandoval Forero, Robinson Salazar Pérez, *Lectura Crítica del Plan Puebla Panamá*, (Buenos Aires: Libros en Red, 2003).

antecedents of these development projects, as did UCIZONI, whose communities would be especially vulnerable to the implementation of the project.¹¹⁷ After one conference, UCIZONI and other groups argued that the PPP, as a form of “neoliberal globalization, “threatened the “free determination” of the area, and the conference participants created a print document detailing the activities of all the foreign-owned corporations in the area.¹¹⁸ ¹¹⁹ ¹²⁰

The rejection of the PPP became one of the most prominent demands of civil and social organizations in Oaxaca after 2000. By 2001 the PPP and its colonizing current would be a permanent feature in CIPO’s workshops and literature, opposition to

¹¹⁷ They didn’t all, resist. In fact, NGOs were one of the primary implementers of the plan. One NGO got a grant for 305,300 in 1996 from the Inter-American Foundation to work “with a Mexican commercial bank and a private Mexican foundation for the development of agriculture projects for ‘indigenous peoples in Oaxaca and Chiapas’ who would be affected with the displacements of the plan. (CT) See http://www.iaf.gov/grants/awards_year_text_en.asp?country_id=14&gr_year=1996. Accessed Oct. 24, 2007.

¹¹⁸ “Second Meeting About the Socio-Environmental Impacts of Development in Southeastern Mexico and Central America,” where groups worked to define how “Development” molded the spaces indigenous people inhabited. In the summary of the meeting, the organizations included a six-page detail of all the foreign companies working in the area, characterizing them as the “expansion of big capital after the so-called commercial opening” with “Agreements and Free Trade Treaties.” Intended to show the looming threats and hidden machinations of “big capital,” the summary showed several transnational corporations mapping and searching for gold and silver in the Oaxaca mountains, for instance. Other companies were developing tourism and energy production projects in Oaxaca. The conference was part of a network of organizations and academics who, funded by universities or by international foundations like the Kellogg Foundation or Oaxaca’s own Communitarian Foundation, raised awareness, in meetings and publications, about a free trade agreement with the European Union. CIPO attended other such summits, like the March 2004 III *Encuentro Chiapaneco Contra el Neoliberalismo in Hauitiupan*, Chiapas. At least some of the CIPO attendees participated in the *Mesa de Derechos de las Mujeres*. “Mesa de Derechos de Las Mujeres,” Announcement for the III Encuentro, circa 2004. CIPO organizational files.

¹¹⁹ CIPO organizational files. This is where “neoliberal globalization” and “free determination” comes from.

¹²⁰ UCIZONI, a founding organization of CIPO in 1997, argued that the plan, like so many trade agreements and development plans of the neoliberal era, would “eliminate the obstacles that have inhibited [land’s] productive potential” for corporations, like indigenous landholding. “With that,” UCIZONI continued, it would “propel their development and favor their integration with national and international markets, not only with North American but with Central America as well.” See Andrés, et al.

neoliberalism, and especially the mega-project called the Plan Puebla Panama, became CIPO's barometer in deciding how to approach other organizations and its own members.¹²¹ Neoliberalism, for instance, was a major subject in CIPO's women's workshops of the day. When Oliverio Neri, the leader of the Democratic Current in the state employee's union, asked CIPO for help, Gatica and the organization wanted more information on the group's "political antecedents," and specifically about the current's ideas about neoliberalism and the PPP.¹²²

In documents and chants, CIPO reinforced the idea that its indigenous politics were closely tied to a global economic system and its corporations. One CIPO *campesino*, wearing a typical white cowboy hat to block the sun during the march he prepared for, carried a scrawled sign in 2002 that read "against the exploitation and death that the transnationals provoke." Before another march, sometime after 2002, organizers suggested that marchers spray paint signs or even street-side walls with "Against the Free Trade Area of the Americas, (FTAA), the self management of the peoples/villages CIPO-RFM [*sic*]."¹²³ The FTAA was proposed in the early 2000s as a "NAFTA for the Americas," and CIPO related this and other free trade agreements to older forms of colonization. For the protest during the Oct. 12, 2002 anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas, CIPO asserted that the Fox

¹²¹ As the materials of both CIPO and many social and civil organizations, such as the Collective of Peace, a pro-Zapatista NGO alliance in Oaxaca in early 2001.

¹²² CIPO-RFM, "Cuestionario Sobre Primer Taller," Confidential interview, 2010.

¹²³ CIPO photos, CIPO organizational files.

administration and its mega-projects was leaving “open the door so that the big rich businesses of foreigners, mainly gringos, will come and rob us just like or worse than the Spanish did.[sic]”¹²⁴

Not unlike the portrayal of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, neoliberalism, for CIPO, was a total system, responsible for all kinds of privatizations, displacements, and cost increases. Unlike in Seattle, CIPO foregrounded the people who suffered most from the machinations of the global economy, and CIPO’s re-assertion of the indigenous community as the historical subject of anti-neoliberal Magonismo re-defined the structure and everyday relations within the organization.

As this new CIPO emerged in 2002 and 2003 it honed its organizational structure, emulating the aspects of indigenous collective life, or *comunalidad*, most applicable to a *Magonista* social organization. The most prominent were collective work, through *tequio*, and collective governance, through the *asamblea*. CIPO’s mobilizations often ended with negotiations with the state officials of governor Jose Murat’s administration, and the strategy of using direct action to pressure government negotiators led to CIPO wins, through which it secured funds for agriculture, housing, school, and work projects for indigenous people and other workers. Autonomy, for CIPO, did not mean separation from the nation or the state. Like the Zapatistas and the “autonomous” movements in Argentina and Brazil that emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, CIPO saw winning state funds as an exercise in reclaiming wealth that had been taken from the poor and

¹²⁴ The Oct. 12 was an annual protest not only for CIPO but for the unions and popular and indigenous organizations of Oaxaca.

the indigenous through the exploitation of natural resources and labor.¹²⁵ In an organization as diverse as CIPO, with taxi workers in Puerto Escondido, Mixtecs in the municipio of Nuyoo, Zapotecs from various regions of the Sierra Norte, and alliances with unions, popular organizations, and anarko youth (*chavos*) in the Isthmus and the Oaxaca City, understandings of the role of negotiations, CIPO's relationships to other organizations, and its gender politics all varied. Though the anarko-punks distanced themselves from any negotiation with the government or management (*gestion*) of resources, some CIPO affiliates, like the taxi workers, seemed to desert CIPO as soon as it helped them secure their demands.¹²⁶ The indigenous communities who wrote lengthy testimonies and political statements in the CIPO book, *The Communal (El Comunal)*, emphasized the theme of the indigenous communities' relation to the state government. The central goal that emerged for most of the communities, was not for independence or autonomy, but rather that the government attend to them (*nos atiende*).¹²⁷

Though it accepted state funds for community projects, its *tequio* work structure allowed CIPO to gain a degree of independence from the PRI and its construction and engineering contractors. CIPO, in one negotiation with the governor, reached an agreement to run its projects itself, with the collective labor of indigenous members, villagers, and other *Magonistas*. Instead of paying overpriced, often PRI-

¹²⁵ Confidential interview, 2007. For Argentina and Uruguay, see the work of Raúl Zebiche.

¹²⁶ Confidential interview, 2007. In my time with CIPO in 2006 and 2007 they never, to my knowledge, participated in CIPO activities.

¹²⁷ CIPO-RFM, *El Comunal*, circa 2003.

linked contractors, CIPO did the work itself, and saved significant amounts of money in the process. Each village assembly, then, whose members the village elected, would then decide how much of the extra cash to keep for the village, and how much to give to CIPO's organizing group, based in the city.¹²⁸ The organization's biggest share of resources, CIPO reported, came from the donations from communities themselves, whether tied to state projects or not. Often the donations were of food or supplies for the urban organizers or to sell. "Yaviche," CIPO wrote, "supports with [homemade] Panela (a kind of sweetener) Yosonotu, Wood, Plan de Zaragoza Totopos and Huipiles .. [and in the city] where several are Teachers they help with a little of their salary.[sic]"¹²⁹

The diversity of the growing coalition, and the many kinds of knowledge that came from the mix of members, allowed its model of collective labor to work. For instance, CIPO demonstrations helped pressure the government to hand over funds to build a much-needed bridge in the Mixtecan community of Plan de Zaragoza. But it needed engineering expertise to build a bridge, and organizers identified CIPO members in the state employee's union who could help.¹³⁰ CIPO organizers focused on full participation and collective self-management, advocating that "we are all leaders," and suggesting the diversity of experiences and forms of knowledge in the organization led to its accomplishments. It sought to harness the skills and knowledge of its base. Indigenous villages knew how to handle rural rodents, and CIPO organizers converted

¹²⁸ Confidential interview, 2007.

¹²⁹ Confidential interview, 2007.

¹³⁰ Confidential interview, 2007.

that knowledge into political potency, as described in the introduction to this chapter. In another instance CIPO grilled chili peppers outside a government building and used fans to push the burning smoke into the windows and rooms.¹³¹ Urban CIPO organizers and teachers used their experiences, too, in the organization's campaigns. It was through CIPO that many young indigenous organizers learned to use a computer, understand basic legal terms, speak in public, and even negotiate with government officials.

At the office in the evenings – where almost all organizers slept at night – the organizing committee engaged in self-critique sessions, with each one examining her or his accomplishments and failures of the day. One young Mixtecan, after being elected to the committee in the First General Assembly (2003), was too nervous to speak at first. But he eventually became a committed orator and engaged organizer. All organizers had cubby holes on the ground floor of the brick house, and there they could stack the many notebooks they filled by taking notes in meetings and critiques.¹³² Negotiations would provoke intense discussions about strategy among committee members, and they would often involve members from individual grassroots councils, since most negotiations were carried out with representatives from communities to ensure transparency and participation. The debates spanned from long-term strategy – indeed, CIPO discussed a five-year plan at the General Assembly – to the minutiae of speaking to

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Confidential interview, 2007.

the governor himself. In one case, “we were debating what we should call the governor: Mr.? Or Mr. governor? By his name?”¹³³

Organizers used ideas of collectively shared labor through *tequio* to structure work at the CIPO house, itself won through mobilizations and negotiations with the state government.¹³⁴ Positions in the organizing committee were treated as village *cargos*. Those elected (or, in some cases, who volunteered) for positions in the organizing committee served without the expectation of remuneration, which made the work difficult, and almost impossible for women with children.¹³⁵ Like the CODEP space in which many contentious early CIPO meetings were held, people from the communities did, or shared in, the maintenance of the organizational center. The grassroots councils organized to send pairs of villagers to help with the house upkeep for one-week terms, and the councils organized villages to send in beans, coffee, tortillas, money, and other supplies to feed the committee and to pay for transportation, phone, internet, and other costs. In the city, members would sometimes go to the biggest market in the city, asking for food donations for CIPO. By the early 2000s most Oaxacans in the city knew who it was.¹³⁶

Despite the way it reclaimed and re-invented certain forms of Oaxacan indigenous life, CIPO’s organizational culture was not based on the *usos y costumbres*

¹³³ Confidential interview, 2007.

¹³⁴ Confidential interview, 2009.

¹³⁵ Women usually only had rights to land if their husbands or others were absent, whether in the U.S. or elsewhere working, or dead.

¹³⁶ Confidential interview, 2008.

governance of many communities. Since 2001 the women's commission was one of the most active in the organization, and CIPO members decided at the First General Assembly that men would make up no more than half of the grassroots councils, the work delegations to the city, and the organizing committee. Before that decision, many male members made women stay in villages to take care of the animals and the house while men did the work of the organization in the city. CIPO rules that made men do the cooking and cleaning, though, grated on many Oaxacan men. "Cooking," one longtime member of the women's commission said, "was part of being a *Magonista*." Many men learned to cook in the CIPO house – and for many new members tasting the burnt beans or watery tomato soup could be an experience in itself.¹³⁷ CIPO's emphasis on "everyone is equal" meant equal opportunity to work in the kitchen, clean the bucket-flush toilets, tend to the garden, and answer the door.

From the beginning, CIPO's reclaiming of indigenous *comunalidad* was not about indigenous particularism, but was rather part of a broader, anti-neoliberal globalization vision based on claims to autonomy and democracy. That vision focused on the plight of the flexible, racially subjugated labor force that increasingly bore the brunt of the free trade regime. Between 2002 and 2004, CIPO-RFM shifted its focus on indigeneity to the center of its political identity, as demonstrated by its evolving structure and by its growing base of indigenous communities. CIPO here "used its affiliation with localit[ies] and communit[ies] to justify its demands," and to imagine its place in a larger network

¹³⁷ Confidential interviews, 2009, 2008.

of organizations and movements.¹³⁸ It didn't see indigeneity in a context of cultural rejuvenation or even racial particularism, but as impacted by free trade mega-projects and attacks on cultural and economic sovereignty.

The women's commission's momentum and ideological labor helped establish the connection between indigenous politics, corporate control, and sovereignty. The commission organized two major women's meetings in late 2001 and 2002, in which the men did the cooking and childcare. In a march the commission organized for Mother's Day in May 2002, these women organized sit-ins for rights for women and political prisoners at the Government Palace, and the House of Congress, and the Attorney General's. There, some of the more than 1000 women splattered the blood they extracted with syringes on the doors of the building, and children painted shapes and scribbled with red paint on the towering stucco walls. The fourth stop was the U.S. consulate, where marchers demanded the U.S. government stop its "terrorism" and attacks against Iraqis "and the peoples of the world"; to condemn the "discriminatory and racist politics of the bosses of capital"; and "to demand that emigrant brothers and sisters be treated with respect and dignity." Later, the march passed by the Secretary of Indigenous Affairs, where demonstrators demanded an end "to arrest warrants that exist against our male and female companions," who have been persecuted "only for

¹³⁸ Jorge Hernández-Díaz, *Reclamos de la Identidad*, 9.

defending the land, the forest and demanding the end of the plunder of our resources.”¹³⁹

The women’s actions and demands reflected the unease about sovereignty and economic globalization in Oaxaca, and the commission also highlighted the anxieties that women faced in a globalizing economic order. As more men were forced to migrate, power relations shifted in villages, in some cases opening up opportunities for women to vote in village assemblies (in place of their husbands or fathers). Many women, though, were forced to take on more work, either on the land, in the house, or through informal labor that likely paid them a few dollars a day. They continued to be economically dependent on men. One CIPO woman, in *El Comunal*, related the following:

Five years ago the husband [of another woman] went to the north with the aims of having a better life. But he met another woman and forgot about his family including his children. He only helped them for a year and now doesn’t send them anything. They named him for a *cargo* but he doesn’t want to return.¹⁴⁰

Women initiated a number of projects with CIPO to break their dependence from men. They educated themselves, working through political analyses by original *Magonistas* like Praxedis Guerrero, and they founded, in 2002, a women’s cooperative

¹³⁹ CIPO flyer, circa 2002. Part of the shift away from national strategies meant internationalization and appeals to global solidarity. See Alison Brysk, “Turning Weakness into Strength: The Internationalization of Indian Rights,” *Latin American Perspectives*, 23, 2 (Spring 1996): 38-57.

¹⁴⁰ *The Communal*, 9. Also available online. <http://www.nodo50.org/cipo/comunal/migracion.htm>. Accessed May 5, 2010.

designed to get better prices for textiles and other artisanal goods they produced.¹⁴¹

They demanded men engage in gender workshops, and in a youth workshop in Juchatengo, CIPO organizers presented videos not only about indigeneity or economics but also about sexuality. Women demanded that girls be allowed to attend school as much as boys, be able to choose their own spouses, and decide how many children they want to have.¹⁴² By the late 2000s, former members in at least two communities mentioned a distinct change in local gender relations, as increasing numbers of women went to school (likely with help from the government's *Oportunidades* program), held *cargos*, and voted in assemblies.¹⁴³

Despite these successes, gender tensions at times strained life on CIPO's organizing committee. One man's intimate relations with at least two women in the committee led to conflicts and muted tensions. Another man was widely known as a womanizer, and his multiple relations with women brought domestic conflicts and tensions into the CIPO house in distracting ways and that often contradicted the women's-liberation discourse of the organization.¹⁴⁴ For one indigenous CIPO organizer, the heartbreak of splitting up with a girlfriend in a community, along with economic pressures to earn money, led him to distance himself from the group. In one case, OIDHO, CODEP, and other organizations complained publicly about what they saw as

¹⁴¹ Confidential interview, 2009.

¹⁴² Introducción, Taller. CIPO organizational files, 2002.

¹⁴³ Interviews, 2007, 2008.

¹⁴⁴ Confidential interviews, 2007, 2010.

CIPO's *protagonismo* in the Oaxacan popular left, and mocked CIPO's "feminist" politics because of "the way they treat women." They were referring to rumors that one leader hit a woman in a domestic dispute. One claimed to witness Gatica striking his wife in the late 1990s.¹⁴⁵

Other men in the organizing committee viewed direct-action politics as, in essence, men's work. One commented that the Mother's Day march with women and children was effective, but was a mere antecedent to the men who followed the march – ready with sticks or rocks to defend against a police attack. Their duty, he suggested, was the "real" work of a demonstration.¹⁴⁶ CIPO organizers also called the civil organizations "*chilindrin*as," suggesting that they were effeminate for their lack of willingness to confront authorities. *La chilindrina*, after all, was a character on a widely known children's television show, and she was a little girl, known for her incessant crying, helplessness, and timid femininity. Few could effectively argue, though, that women lacked the capacity to pull off exactly the kinds of direct action at the heart of the organization's tactical repertoire. CIPO women the same month as the Mother's Day march took over a set of highway toll booths, occupying them and letting vehicles pass freely for hours, depriving the state government of toll funds to pressure it to meet CIPO demands.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Confidential interviews, 2008, 2008. It seems as though that rumor was created by rival political organizations.

¹⁴⁶ Confidential interview, 2010.

¹⁴⁷ *La Chilindrina* is from the TV show *El Chavo del Ocho*.

By the early and mid 2000s, the effects of the NAFTA era could increasingly be felt in Oaxaca, and the popular left in Oaxaca and in Mexico increasingly understood the changes as emblematic of the global forces of free trade. In March 2002 CIPO went to Monterrey to protest with farmers, the Union of Revolutionary Youth, and other globalphobes, some of whom burned U.S. flags outside the Forum of Monterrey economic meetings, which included U.S. President George W. Bush. In September 2003, CIPO sent around 20 members to the Cancun meetings of the World Trade Organization.¹⁴⁸ There, a Korean farmer killed himself outside the meeting hall to protest exactly what Mexican farmers had come to protest – rich countries dumping their heavily subsidized farm products on poor countries, making it impossible for small producers to compete.¹⁴⁹ As one CIPO member said, “[a]bout 8-10 years ago coffee gave us the green light to work” because “the kilogram of coffee ... got to be 25 pesos. But it didn’t last.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ CIPO-RFM, et al. Jornadas de Resistencia Frente a la Cumbre de la OMC, letter to the editor, *La Jornada*, Sept. 6, 2003. <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/09/06/correo.php?fly=2>. See also Arze Glip, et al. “Agreement about Agriculture and Food Sovereignty: Perspectives from Mesoamerica and Asia,” Hbf Policy Paper for Cancún, August 2003.

¹⁴⁹ Daniel Jaffee, *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), xii-xiii.

¹⁵⁰ *El Comunal*, 8. Today, coffee producers make only a fraction of the final retail price of the beans, regardless of the considerable risk involved in its cultivation. In Mexico more generally, by the 2000s foreign commercial goods became more available and U.S. movies and television shows flooded the country. Between 1993 and 2005, U.S. exports to Mexico tripled, and Citigroup bought what had been the richest bank in the country. See Joseph Contreras, 7.

Conclusion

CIPO's anti-colonial conceptualization of neoliberal globalization shaped its understanding of the global economy, and in doing so CIPO defined itself, through its grassroots work with the subjugated peoples of that economy, as an organizing group with global ties. As CIPO evolved and changed in the Oaxacan pro-Zapatista and anti-globalization networks, several of the tensions long building inside the organization – around questions of *protagonismo*, in particular – helped lead to eventual ruptures in the late 2000s. More than anything, though, it was violent repression that led to CIPO's near-collapse.

Before 2003, however, CIPO mobilized popular anxieties about colonization and neoliberalism in ways that helped it grow to an organization with 24 affiliated communities, solidarity groups in four European countries, and the regular attention of the José Murat administration. By 2003 and 2004, CIPO's public statements reflected the sharpening of anxieties about colonization from the north, not only through standing armies but through market manipulation and foreign investment. The statement below, for example, reflects CIPO's anxieties about the global economy, and it reflects how those anxieties had deepened to encompass not only investment policy or commodity distribution networks but the stuff, like water and seed, of everyday life. We knew how (the corn disease) *el chahuistle* came, but today modern crop calamities have the face of foundations, investigators, NGOs, environmentalists, of development or, more brazenly, of world financial organizations. They all go throughout the world

robbing and tricking to improve food crops, to use technical skill, and farm technology, convincing people that our forms of production don't work, making it so we forget our culture of food, healing, and life. After this step they start to sell us their technology to squeeze everything out of the land, its mode of sustaining us, in a world they sell us their mode of killing the land.

We must make clear that we're not against technology, since we think that it serves and helps when it's used with wisdom and respect, and the failure of modern technology comes because it is imposed, it scorns what our *pueblos* know. We're not against technology but rather against the forms of applying it, since it destroys *criollo* [corn] varieties, hurts our land, scrapes clean the mountains, leaves us without work, causes emigration, exacerbates discrimination, lessens what they pay us to work, births new illnesses and worse, kills our forms of production and living together through the various stages of farm work.

Understandings of neoliberalism as a colonizing force shaped how CIPO organizers viewed indigeneity. CIPO found, in the desperation and militancy of indigenous villages, subjects for a pro-Zapatista, grassroots kind of global justice politics. Anti-neoliberal globalization surfaced not only in international protests, but in the *pueblos*, plazas, and poor workers' communities in the Americas.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has argued that anxieties about empire – anxieties that gave form to how grassroots organizations understood class, race, and nationalism in the neoliberal era – shaped the politics of Jobs with Justice and the Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca – Ricardo Flores Magón. In doing so, they contoured the development of the anti-neoliberal globalization movement in the U.S. and Mexico. Jobs with Justice and CIPO-RFM were important grassroots players as the movement emerged in the mid-1990s, and this dissertation suggests that the interplay of dynamics of race, class, nation, and empire should be given a renewed consideration in the emerging literature on “anti-globalization” political agitation, particularly in the Americas.

Nearly a decade has passed since the height of the anti-neoliberal globalization movement in the early 2000s, when this narrative ends. Much has changed in the U.S. and Mexico in that time, but the themes and challenges addressed by CIPO-RFM and Jobs with Justice remain prominent in the Americas of 2010.

In the U.S., the tensions between the different 1990s-era understandings of class and nation – through the various nationalist populisms of the neoliberal era, for instance, or through the emergent labor internationalism of Jobs with Justice – sharpened in the 2000s. In 2000, some Portland (Ore.) unions proposed to the Central

Labor Council that Portland Jobs with Justice be banned from all city union halls after the *Portland Tribune* printed a photo of a person with a Jobs with Justice sign burning a U.S. flag at the local May Day demonstrations. Staff organizer Margaret Butler wrote a letter to the editor arguing that Jobs with Justice as an organization did not advocate flag-burning, and that the main issue at the protests – immigrants’ rights – was lost in the sensationalism of the *Tribune* reporting. After other union figures demanded that she explain the situation on behalf of JwJ and recite the Pledge of Allegiance, around a dozen supportive union officers accompanied her to the next CLC meeting and spoke on behalf of the organization.¹

In the early 2000s, the 9/11 attacks led most unions to amplify the nationalist hum inside their organizations. In Sept. 2001, JwJ national staffers, volunteers, and union supporters were helping organize what promised to be the global justice demonstration with the biggest working-class turnout of the era – the 2001 IMF/World Bank meetings in Washington, D.C., in mid-September. But 9/11 led the AFL-CIO leadership and many unions to withdraw from the demonstration altogether. As Bill Fletcher suggests in his book *Solidarity Divided*, many union leaders in the post-1995 John Sweeney era targeted multinational corporations as enemies, but not the states and imperial histories that often supported those global enterprises. Perhaps because of the lack of critical debates about empire and military intervention in the 1990s, the Bush administration’s war efforts successfully fractured pre-9/11 unity against the neoliberal world economy. Unions and Jobs with Justice battled over which side to take on the war

¹ Margaret Butler, telephone interview with the author, May 1, 2010.

question, and whether to support the new coalition United States Labor Against the War.² Still, Jobs with Justice maintained global justice as one of its key program areas, and most of its efforts went in to what it called “localizing” global justice. Several staffers, ex-staffers, and JwJ leaders formed an organization called “Grassroots Global Justice” in 2003, and those leaders helped Jobs with Justice take a lead role in the development of the U.S. Social Forum in 2003 and after. Jobs with Justice was one of the lead organizations of the last major anti-globalization protests in the U.S., the 2003 anti-FTAA protests in Miami. Reflecting the grassroots focus of the coalition, Jobs with Justice prepared for the demonstrations by focusing on mobilizing local communities of color for the events.³

The trajectory of CIPO-RFM differed considerably from JwJ after its main collaboration with the larger anti-neoliberal movement faded. The group’s increasing isolation from state government negotiators reflected changes in social organizations’ relationships with the state’s PRI party in the 2000s. The party, by 2005, had ruled Oaxaca for 75 years. First, founder Raul Gatica went into exile in Canada because of constant harassment from authorities, and CIPO’s major 2003-4 campaign – its support of the dissident government workers’ union leader who was jailed for much of the time – ended in failure as the government imprisoned more than a dozen CIPO-RFM

² Simon Greer, telephone interview with the author, June 20, 2010; Fred Azcarate, telephone interview with the author, July 17, 2010. Jobs with Justice did end up supporting USLAW, but only after a thaw in the tensions between pro-war and anti-war unionist camps.

³ Azcarate, telephone interview with the author, June 19, 2010. Fletcher, *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path Toward Social Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

members after violently removing them from their *plantón* in Sept. 2004.⁴ The governor who took office in December 2004, Ulises Ruíz Ortiz, refused to negotiate demands with most of the militant popular-indigenous organizations of the area, including CIPO-RFM. At the same time, the Zapatistas re-emerged in early 2005 with their Sixth Declaration from the Lacandón Jungle, in which they announced the formation of “The Other Campaign,” a formal rejection of the presidential campaign already underway for the 2006 elections. The rejection meant a rejection of the corrupt, patronage-based social-democratic party, the PRD, a move which alienated many Zapatista supporters in the NGO sector and the many social organizations who occasionally supported PRD political candidates. CIPO-RFM, in contrast, remained one of the Zapatistas’ loyal supporters in Oaxaca and has avoided supporting political candidates since then.

CIPO-RFM’s legacy will be defined by how it brought together class-based and indigenous groups, helped catalyze and channel global solidarities, and oriented a generation of indigenous and non-indigenous youth to direct-action struggle. Though popular organizers in Oaxaca had been inflecting peasant collective identities with emphases on ethnic identity since the late 1970s, they organized based on local ethnic identities, not around pan-ethnic indigenous claims. These broader indigenous claims emerged in the Americas in the 1970s, and gained new momentum in Mexico in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as indigenous groups united to battle over constitutional reforms, such as the reform of Article 4 in Mexico in 1992 that defined the country as a pluri-ethnic nation. The 1992 mobilizations against governments’ celebrations of the

⁴ See the beginning of Osorno’s *Oaxaca Sitiada* for a vivid portrait of Gatica’s last days in Oaxaca.

500-year anniversary of the arrival of Spanish conquerors in 1492 also led to hemispheric coordination, and built new pan-ethnic indigenous political identities that the Zapatistas helped articulate to global resistance to neoliberalism in the 1990s.⁵ Still, neither pan-ethnic indigenous claims nor global solidarities were common in Oaxaca. CIPO helped give them practical form in local contexts in the 1990s and early 2000s, and it steered Oaxacan youth to direct-action politics that many would employ, with unprecedented power, in the Oaxacan insurgency of 2006. Though CIPO-RFM itself was fractured and repressed by the Ortiz regime by mid-2006, former CIPO members played important roles in the movement's assemblies, occupations of radio stations and public spaces, and barricades, which lasted, to varying degrees, until early December.⁶

Though Jobs with Justice has maintained its presence and CIPO-RFM has declined, the politics of the Great Recession speak to their current or former importance and the political dynamics this dissertation traces. Several decades of neoliberal reform lubricated speculators' maneuvering in the global economy, the same maneuvering that led to the economic crisis that afflicts not only the U.S. and Mexico but the world. In the U.S., the populism that developed in the 1980s and cohered in the 1990s surged again after the 2008 election of Barack Obama. The Tea Party movement, itself heterogeneous, has gained significant political traction by rejuvenating the populist

⁵ See the work of Saúl Velasco Cruz and Andrés Iván López Moreno Chapoy for overviews of indigenous politics in Mexico and the Americas. Velasco Cruz, *El Movimiento Indígena y la Autonomía en México* (México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2003); López Moreno Chapoy, *La Construcción de los Pueblos Indígenas de México*, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas: Centro Estatal de Lenguas, Arte y Literatura Indígenas: Gobierno Estado de Chiapas, 2007.

⁶ I was in Oaxaca from September - December 2006 and witnessed that participation.

Americanism of family and country and re-articulating it to the rhetoric of laissez-faire economics. Union leaders are already fretting about losing to the right the very union member votes that elected Barack Obama, the U.S. president most dedicated to governmental buffering of the local effects of neoliberal economics since Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s.⁷

Mexico's economy has suffered more than that of the U.S. in the Great Recession. As in the U.S., the political prospects of the era are mixed. In Oaxaca, a non-PRI candidate for governor won the July elections, ending the PRI's 80-year run in state power. The victory of Gabino Cué, who ran on a ticket of the PRD and the right-wing PAN, reflected the popular discontent with the PRI generated in the 2006 insurgency. Though many, including CIPO-RFM, doubt Cué's election will fundamentally challenge the clientelism of the state government or its pandering to foreign investors, perhaps the only constant element in the indigenous and popular organizing of CIPO-RFM between 1997 and 2010 was its opposition to the PRI. Cué's election speaks, then, to the influence of the anti-PRI, anti-neoliberal organizing of groups like CIPO-RFM in the 1990s and 2000s. The popular insurgency in 2006 and Cue's election, like the Obama election in the U.S. and the continued presence of Jobs with Justice and vibrancy of projects like the U.S. Social Forum, all suggest that the invigoration of popular organizing in the context of anti-neoliberal globalization was not limited to the years of major protests and worldwide media buzz. Rather, that invigoration continues to affect the

⁷ Steven Greenhouse, "Unions Find Members Slow to Rally Behind Democrats," New York Times, Sept. 18, 2010, online edition. Story available at http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/18/us/18labor.html?_r=1&hp.

politics of the Americas, despite the mix of victories and defeats that have characterized the era.

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