

Reviews: Reports and books

World Development Report (WDR) 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty
World Bank, New York,
Oxford University Press

This year's *World Development Report - Attacking Poverty* managed to generate much interest and major controversy even before it hit the shelves. A new departure in the preparation of the Report was an online consultation on an earlier draft in which 1,523 people from 80 countries took part. The openness of the Bank in carrying out the consultation was welcomed as were some of the shifts in emphasis in the Bank's focus, away from growth per se and towards growth with equity, as well as its recognition that voicelessness is a core dimension of poverty. However, in May 2000 the sudden resignation of Report team leader Ravi Kanbur, who alleged that there was editorial interference from the World Bank, soured the positive atmosphere which had surrounded the preparation of the Report.

There is something for everyone's interests in this year's volume. It includes debates on many of the central

issues on today's development agenda, from financial crises and intellectual property rights to core labour standards, debt, trade and environmental concerns. As such it may give the impression of being all things to all people with the pros and cons of everyone's viewpoint included. Thus a challenge for readers is to distil out the shape of the anti-poverty strategy being proposed by the World Bank within its highly publicised 3-prong approach of: promoting opportunity; facilitating empowerment; and enhancing security.

The Report recognises that inequality can both hold back growth and decrease the poverty reducing effects of growth. Hence growth with equity replaces the focus on labour intensive growth which was an over-riding message of the 1990 *World Development Report*, also on the theme of poverty. Although this shift gives the impression of significant changes in policy thinking, a more careful reading suggests that the World Bank may in reality be renaming key elements of its old programme as "pro-poor" rather than developing a new anti-poverty paradigm.

In spite of more nuanced thinking on a number of issues, for instance, on deregulation of labour markets, the Bank's "pro-poor growth" approach does not appear to call for a fundamental rethink of the neoliberal model. Growth, based primarily on private sector forces, remains very much the main engine for poverty reduction. While recognising that growth in developing countries has been disappointing, the liberalisation of markets is immediately exonerated from blame. Instead failure is attributed primarily to a lack of effective policy implementation. This is disappointing as the less than impressive record of the policy reforms promoted by the Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) calls for a serious review of their content, pace and sequencing. For instance, agricultural reforms have had very mixed outcomes for poor people, fiscal reforms have largely worked against them and trade liberalisation has often resulted in greater inequalities. But, whereas the draft Report, which was the basis of consultations, argued that if reforms significantly hurt poor people, their pace should be regulated, the final version emphasises that there is no need to slow down reform.

The Report continues the Washington consensus' bias against developing country

governments playing a greater role in economic policy, albeit doing so in fairly measured tones. Governments and public servants are the only actors who are consistently criticised: for bribery and corruption, for harassing poor people, for failing to deliver effective services, for destroying the environment. The devastation wrought by private sector profiteering is discreetly hidden behind the term "market failure". But such failures have been so spectacular as to question whether generating a strong private sector should be the main thrust of economic reforms, as stated in the Report, particularly if these reforms are now to be dubbed "pro-poor". A few examples illustrate the shortcomings of an overemphasis on the private sector's capacity to catalyse development. Only 10% of annual global expenditure on health research is dedicated to diseases which affect 90% of the world's people. Rapid liberalisation of financial markets contributed to the 1997 Asian financial crisis and in turn led to escalating poverty, while at the same time a section of the private sector, i.e. financial speculators, pocketed much of the massive IMF led bail out package. This raises an old question as to which mixture of public-private sector activity will

maximise human well being. Clearly a mix is needed but the relationship posed in this year's Report is a far from equal one as governments are still likely to have to continue to pick up the pieces where there is private sector failure.

A new element in the Report is empowerment through enabling poor people to participate in the decisions which affect them. Empowerment as outlined in the Report sounds like a rehash of a governance agenda centred on the creation of a business friendly environment. Is it aimed at empowering poor people so that they receive a fairer share of resources? Or is its purpose to mobilise people to police implementation of Bretton Woods Institutions and donor programmes by their own governments? This is not to deny that groups who are participating in project development or in national anti-poverty plans can use the new space provided to challenge government corruption and to achieve accountability.

An extraordinary statement in the Report about the Jubilee 2000 campaign would appear to confirm the worst fears of the Bank's efforts to co-opt civil society groups. According to the Report, Jubilee 2000 worked closely with the international financial institutions and the G7 to

forge a consensus for deeper debt relief. This makes Jubilee sound like part of the international financial architecture rather than an alliance of grassroots and civil society groups campaigning *against* current global power structures. The inclusion of such a distorted perspective can only reduce confidence in the accuracy of other positions reflected in the Report. And the Bank's participation agenda has another sting in the tail: to get people to pay for services. This is significant in the light of the growing controversy over the promotion of user fees for health and education within World Bank and IMF programmes.

So who is going to transfer their power to poor people? Not, the World Bank or other international institutions. Thus there is an implicitly undemocratic thread running through the Report's empowerment agenda. Only elected governments are called upon to transfer power. Surely the same standards of democracy should operate at global level as well as at national level. It appears, however, that feudalism still reigns within global financial bodies who continue to allow participation in the spirit of *noblesse oblige* rather than as a right.

According to the draft *World Development Report*

used in consultations, the Washington consensus has failed and there is now little international consensus on what constitutes the most appropriate development strategy. Although this lesson is not explicitly mentioned in the published version, the absence of an international strategy emerging from the Report provides evidence of this. The Report can only outline the various ways in which rich countries and elements of the private sector - but not international financial institutions - disadvantage developing countries. But it does not identify any clear proposals for change. Given that the space available to developing countries to tackle poverty is limited by an unfair and unequal international context, this is a critical weakness in the Report.

Private investors and speculators can continue to browbeat the international community into acquiescing to their refusal to submit themselves to global regulation; rich countries can refuse to open their markets to developing country exports and so forth. While selectivity (i.e., targeting aid to countries with "good policies") may be one of the new buzzwords in aid circles, there is no similar instrument of leverage to bring about required changes at the level of international

policymaking. Nor is there any recognition in the Report that failures within international governance reduce the legitimacy and credibility of the Bank's and others' demands for good governance on the part of developing country governments.

Overall there is a contradiction at the core of the *World Development Report* which mirrors one at the heart of the World Bank's approach. While Bank officials claim that their main objective is to reduce poverty, when pressed hard, they admit that at the end of the day they are responsible to their major shareholders. Likewise, the Report veers between trying to provide an objective assessment of current poverty reduction policies and at the same time reflecting the vested interests of its major shareholders. The controversy over editorial interference served to put a spotlight on this faultline. As a result the Report writers sometimes appears to speak with forked tongues. Certainly the World Bank as a major actor and as a recipient of public funding should put its views on the table. But it should acknowledge that these reflect the views and interests of the G7 and as such they are not akin to fully objective social research and policy analyses.

Jean Somers

Human Development Report 2000, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Oxford University Press, New York/Oxford, 2000, 290 pages

For eleven years now, the UNDP's *Human Development Reports* have been cataloguing progress and the lack of it across the world's nations. This progress is not measured in terms of income or GNP alone. This year's report on the theme "Human Rights and Human Development" is an enormously valuable resource book. It presents detailed data across different countries on such questions as nutrition standards, health, education, the environment, foreign debt, foreign aid, access to information and communication and women's role and political participation.

States are ranked according to a human development index (HDI) which is a composite measure of life expectancy, education and per capita income. For example some Gulf states which have high per capita incomes score much lower on this HDI because of poor scores on school enrolments and adult literacy. Ireland ranks eighteenth in the world on this measure. Amartya Sen has argued that although the HDI measure is fairly simplistic, it has been

effective in directing attention at the more complex aspects of human development and not simply at crude GNP scores. The Report notes the significantly higher achievements in Vietnam, with a far lower per capita income, in achieving access to education and health care compared to India.

Other indices present a poverty ranking and rank progress in the empowerment and development of women. Relatively high overall school enrolment rates may hide far lower access to education for girls compared to boys. Universal human rights are meant to apply equally to all human persons, men or women, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender or nationality.

Drawing on this material, these reports counterpoise the realities in the developed and developing world in thought provoking ways. The world's richest 225 people earn the same combined income as the poorest 47% of the world's people (2.5 billion). What Europe spends on ice cream or pet foods would pay for safe clean water and sanitation for all in the world who lack these basic services.

As well as offering a unique compendium of world statistics across key measures of human well being, each year the *Human Development Report* explores a particular theme in

some depth. Recent issues have looked at gender inequality, at the pursuit of growth for its own sake without broader human development, at poverty, at imbalances in consumption of the world's resources and at globalisation. This year's theme is human rights and the interdependence between human rights objectives and human development.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) covers economic and social rights as well as civil and political rights. It places the right to an adequate income, to health, to housing and education alongside the rights to liberty, to freedom of expression and to a fair trial. Mary Robinson, in a special contribution to the Report, emphasises the indivisibility of civil and political rights from economic and social rights.

The Report draws close links between human development in the sense of the development of human functioning, capabilities and choices and human rights. Both the promotion of human development and the fulfilment of human rights reflect a fundamental commitment to promoting the freedom, well being and dignity of the individual. Democratic freedoms and civil rights are extremely important in enhancing the capacity of

people who are poor, enabling them to build a political voice to secure change.

Unlike the traditional approach to development, the notion of duties is central to the human rights perspective. A right to education implies a duty on the state to ensure that right is realised. Accountability, culpability and responsibility are extensions of duties. The Report lays a special emphasis on the importance of data collection and monitoring in order to identify where rights are not being realised, where differential outcomes arise for minorities or where any group experiences discrimination. The world community is rightly outraged by torture, but the human suffering inflicted by hunger and malnutrition may provoke a lesser sense of outrage, as there may be less consensus on who is responsible or culpable. Through its emphasis on duties and on accountability, the human rights perspective can enhance and enrich the traditional development approach.

Some developing countries have been suspicious of the emphasis by the West on civil liberties and human rights in countries experiencing extreme poverty. Some see these human rights concerns as a thinly veiled cover for protectionist policies, a debate that has been particularly polarised in

relation to trade sanctions against child labour. I recall an Indian delegate to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) making the point with great passion that India's concern for the welfare of her own children was a stronger and more immediate one than that of other countries around the globe. The Report argues for a more complex response to the child labour issue than the crude instrument of trade sanctions. It emphasises the need for corporations to be held accountable, with independent monitoring of corporate codes of conduct. It calls for the ILO to be given teeth to enforce core labour standards and praises the ILO's education programmes in terms of their offering alternatives to child labour.

The twentieth century saw great advances in human rights - political freedom and universal suffrage, enjoyed by a bare few at the start of the twentieth century are today enjoyed in a majority of countries. Over this last century there were major advances in access to education, in standards of health and life expectancy. But the century also saw genocide on a scale never before experienced in the world's history and an ongoing problem of gross human rights violations with ethnic conflict.

The Report draws attention to the silent violations of human rights - 790 million of the world's people not adequately nourished, 250 million children used as child labour, 1.2 million women and girls trafficked into prostitution each year.

Freedom of expression and of the press, guaranteed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is an important safeguard against hidden violations of human rights, whether through torture, hunger or other evils. But freedom from government restraint does not in itself guarantee an inquiring press - news as entertainment and dominated by giant media corporations can limit the news we receive to where it has been profitable to send the cameras. Some conflicts, as in Algeria, and the poverty which is a form of violence against the world's poor and the result of global economic injustice, occur off camera and out of sight of the affluent world. The Western community acted in Kosovo where it had failed to act in Rwanda.

The UNDP's *Development Reports* have consistently called for a switching of resources from military expenditures to investment in health and education programmes. The world's very poorest countries have seen an increase in military spending, from \$36

billion to \$43 billion in the last three years. A key message in this Report, as in many others, is that by itself economic growth does not secure human development, unless the additional resources generated are directed towards improving the lives of the poor and developing their full human potential.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been followed by a further six conventions, on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination; on civil and political rights; on economic, social and cultural rights; on eliminating discrimination against women; on eliminating torture; and on the rights of the child. Ireland's cross-examination in Geneva on our compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has led directly to the recently announced National Children's Strategy, thus showing how rights-based instruments and international monitoring can be a powerful tool in effecting change.

As Ireland takes its seat on the Security Council at the heart of UN decision making, it is embarrassing that we are only now in the process of legislating to ratify two of the six core UN human rights conventions: the 1965 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of

Racial Discrimination, and the 1984 Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

This Report, as with previous *Human Development Reports*, is thoughtful, provocative and encyclopaedic. Most of it is written in an easy accessible style. It is a vital sourcebook in raising awareness on development issues. It should be a prescribed handbook in every civic, social and political education course, for every NGO working in the field and for every campaigning journalist.

It throws down a challenge to governments, to world business, to international organisations and to NGOs. Our world is far richer than it was a century ago, but its resources are far more unequally distributed. Significant human progress may mask the persistence of long term and large scale poverty. Growth for growth's sake is a partial answer at best. If we were to reallocate the world's resources and reorder the world's spending priorities, the elimination of world poverty would become a feasible objective.

Eithne Fitzgerald

Trade, Environment and Sustainable Development – Views from sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America: A Reader

Peider Koenz ed., ICTSD / United Nations University / Institute for Advanced Studies (UNU / IAS), Geneva, 2000, paperback, 445 pages

Trade, Investment and the Environment

Halina Ward and Duncan Brack, eds, Earthscan / Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 2000, paperback, 298 pages

The global trade - environment interface presents complex policy and political issues for all countries. The questions asked in these volumes are at the heart of the current debate on trade, investment and the environment. How can trade and environmental imperatives, which not only intersect but frequently clash, be reconciled? What are the effects of environmental policy on competitiveness and growth for developing countries? Can a multilateral trading system isolate trade from power politics and prevent unilateral action and protectionism? How are the policy formulation processes around world trade run and for whose benefit? What is the role of civil society in the policy formulation process? When is it legitimate

to use trade-related measures to achieve environmental goals? Whose priorities feature in environmental agreements – those of richer or developing countries?

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) oversees a rule-based system which binds all member governments with respect to most aspects of world trade, including trade in goods, services, agriculture, textiles and intellectual property rights. These contractual and enforceable agreements have a considerable impact on policy orientation, on economic growth, on the achievement of social policy agendas and on the environment, both in developing and industrialised countries. Much of the debate around trade and the environment necessarily focuses on the role of the WTO, given its unique enforcement and dispute settlement mechanisms.

Concurrent with increasingly complex trade negotiations in the WTO, a global regime of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) has emerged with the objective of fostering a shared vision and public policy goals on how to achieve equity and sustainability in the use, disposal and conservation of the earth's resources.

Of the 180 environment-specific multilateral treaties and

international conventions, some contain provisions which relate to international trade and which appear to clash with WTO norms prohibiting trade restraints. Yet there is no counterpart body to the WTO in the environmental domain which could oversee the implementation of these MEAs and deal with the interface between trade and environment. Nor is there an international mechanism to decide which priorities of which international trade and environment agreements take precedence.

Institutional imbalances on trade and environment issues are only one of the critical areas dealt with in both of these publications, which derive from separate conferences. *Trade, Environment and Sustainable Development* contains mostly papers presented at two regional seminars organised by the ICTSD for representatives of civil society and government officials. These seminars, held in Santiago for Latin America (September 1998) and Harare for sub-Saharan Africa (February 1999), were held back-to-back with WTO seminars on technical cooperation for delegates from ministries of trade and environment.

Trade, Investment and the Environment is based on a conference held in the UK in

late October 1998. The conference took place a fortnight after the collapse of the OECD's Multilateral Agreement on Investment and the WTO's Appellate Body report on the shrimp/turtle dispute. The contributions reflect these two possibly key moments, giving them a sharper edge perhaps, but also meaning that the volume becomes quickly dated.

Trade, Environment and Sustainable Development aims to build knowledge and further dialogue in relation to Southern sustainable development priorities. The volume combines a mixture of scholarly analysis and more emotive advocacy from policy makers and members of civil society, with its authors coming primarily from developing countries. It is divided into three parts. Part one addresses the trade and environment interface, covering policy issues, the role of civil society and the interlinkages between multilateral trade and environmental regimes. Part two addresses perspectives from sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America as well as examining sectoral perspectives. Part three attempts to verify some basic assumptions underlying the trade and environment debate.

A succession of technical articles provide a background to the policy issues. Soares gives a legal account of the

various trade and environment instruments which have been multilaterally adopted and outlines areas of potential conflict. Biggs outlines how the concept of sustainable development has been interpreted in WTO documents and in some notorious dispute cases (e.g. the tuna/dolphin and shrimp/turtle rulings). The shrimp/turtle case is the subject of much analysis throughout this volume and the second publication due to its contentious findings, which include: a rejection of unilateral trade measures and an onus on countries to exhaust all non-trade related measures to resolve an environmental dispute before resorting to trade barriers.

Next follows a series of articles of varying style and content, the most enlightening being "A case for updating special and differential treatment in the WTO" by Ricardo Mélendez-Ortiz and Ali Dehlavi, both of the ICTSD. The authors argue that the current special and differential treatment (SDT) arrangement in the WTO is anachronistic and fails to recognise the structural issues facing developing countries and the linkages between poverty, equity, access to social services, employment and trade policy. SDT inappropriately assigns *time* as the main factor affecting development. The

authors offer several proposals for reform of SDT, in an essay which displays vision and makes change seem not just necessary but possible.

Part two should provide the heart of the matter but unfortunately many of the essays are tedious and disappointing. One outstanding exception in the sub-Saharan African section however, is Nicholas Kitikiti's article: "The use of trade measures for environmental purposes: an African view". Kitikiti argues that trade related environmental measures (TREM)s oblige developing countries to take part in and bear the costs of conservation efforts which are neither of their own design nor greatly to their benefit. The policy priorities of African countries, such as desertification, soil degradation, sanitation and water supplies differ greatly to those covered by TREMs. Kitikiti challenges the imposition of arbitrary standards on developing countries and advocates resistance to such policies and greater African involvement in the WTO's Committee on Trade and the Environment as a forum which examines these issues.

The essays on Latin America focus on the experience of economic liberalisation and growth and its impact on the

environment. The participation of civil society in the negotiation of several multi- or plurilateral trade agreements such as NAFTA or the Free Trade Association of the Americas (FTAA) is a recurring theme. Frustration with the weak legislative and institutional frameworks responsible for ensuring and promoting environmental protection and sustainable development is apparent in several essays, including that of Larraín. A lucid and empirically-based essay by Marianne Schaper on "The environmental impact of changes in the export structure in Latin America and the Caribbean" shows the region engaging in increasingly unsustainable economic activity, as evidenced by its concentration on natural resource exploitation. Governments are urged in this as in most other essays to make the best use of advanced technology as well as to both internalise environmental costs and diversify into higher value-added industries with lesser environmental impact.

Finally, a most useful postscript added after the collapse of the Seattle negotiations which took place in December 1999, is the chapter on "Issues raised in proposals submitted to the WTO Council during the Seattle process and their

possible implications for developing countries". From a policy perspective, this chapter and several others in this commendable volume, make invaluable reference reading.

The second book, *Trade, Investment and the Environment*, is presented as a readable guide to the policies and politics of the relationship between trade liberalisation, foreign direct investment and environmental protection. It differs from the volume edited by Koenz in several respects. The perspectives of developing countries are notably missing, bar a few contributions. On the other hand, the voice of industry is included, with contributions from representatives of corporations such as ICI, Rio Tinto and the Body Shop as well as from the Union of Industrial Employers Confederation of Europe, UNICE, adding a fresh dimension to the debate.

The publication is divided in four parts: part one provides an overview of the issues covered; part two aims to identify "win-win" solutions in trade and environment; part three addresses substantive issues in the WTO and part four focuses on the role of foreign direct investment with commentary on the failed Multilateral Agreement on Investment.

Some of the most challenging and insightful

articles in this volume come not from the high level trade officials such as former WTO Director Renato Ruggiero, but from industry representatives such as Professor Tom Burke, Policy Advisor to Rio Tinto. Burke challenges the reader with predictions of trade and environmental issues rapidly heading for collision. He cites the possibility of 30 new members joining the WTO, including China, and political resistance in OECD countries to free trade on health, environmental or moral grounds. He argues that trade decisions are not just a matter of policy but also of politics and that trade negotiators must pay attention to both.

Controversially, he argues that some companies, such as those involved in extractive industry (Rio Tinto, a mining company fits within this category), are good investors for a developing country to have as their investment will lead to a transfer of technology. The reasoning behind this argument being that any company which has sunk vast amounts of capital into a hole in the ground has vested interests in remaining in that country, unlike footloose capital. The counter-argument, of course, is that they cannot leave easily as they cannot take the natural resources with them. Burke states that such companies

implement the same standards overseas as they do in their own home countries for reasons of technical efficiency, environmental responsibility and fear of adverse publicity. This point is disputed in later essays by Veena Jha and Pradeep S. Mehta, who both cite a case of American company Du Pont attempting to locate a plant in Goa, India, using outdated equipment and dangerous chemicals.

Burke is sharply critical of the culture of secrecy in the WTO and states that the only reason there is not greater outrage at the activities of the dispute settlement mechanism is that people do not know what it is doing. This would surely have been disputed at the conference by Renato Ruggiero, then Director General and Gary Sampson also of the WTO. Unfortunately the dynamics of live debate are missed in print.

A commendable feature of this volume is its efforts to offer proposals for change rather than mere analysis. This is the objective of part two: "Towards 'win-win' solutions". Several authors highlight areas which would provide both environmental and economic or trade gains. One area would be the elimination of subsidies on fishing which has led to near depletion of some global stocks and to developing country participants being

squeezed out of the market as they cannot compete with subsidised OECD fleets (Batt). Nick Robins in his essay advocates moving from micro to macro solutions in sustainable trade through trade policy reform and the building of North – South partnerships in business.

Part three entitled “Resolving key WTO issues” offers perspectives and recommendations which span the polarities of the current debate. Damien Geradin, a lawyer, suggests that potential conflict can be avoided through regulatory convergence across nations; this point ignores the political reality facing countries as highlighted by Burke in Part One. Magda Shahin, Egypt’s Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, presents developing country concerns in one of the most interesting essays in this volume. Her approach is firmly pro-free trade but she insists that developing country concerns in relation to the environment and trade be dealt with in the WTO in a fair and exhaustive manner. Duncan Brack adopts another approach by advocating that a new WTO agreement on MEAs be negotiated. Reinhard Quick of UNICE sets out measures which must be taken into account before a trade action can take place under MEAs. These include scientific

evidence of harmfulness to humans, animals, plants or the environment, a perspective which is diametrically opposed to the environmental lobby’s concern and approach based as it is on the primacy of the precautionary principle.

The final section gives a fascinating insight from the perspective of all stakeholders – negotiators, industry, developing countries and NGOs – into the OECD’s failed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). It covers the reasons for its inception and ultimate failure. The internet-based campaign against the MAI was perhaps a harbinger of growing civil society mobilisation in protest at the perceived domination by corporate and vested interests over the needs of the majority of the earth’s population and the protection of its natural resources, as evidenced by protests at Seattle, Washington, Prague and other meetings of international economic bodies.

While Ward and Brack succeed in offering a stimulating volume, the book requires significant time and mental agility on the part of the reader to identify the strands of arguments and counter-arguments. Ideally, an editorial voice would have summarised the debates in the volume, allowing the reader to quickly identify areas of interest. Nonetheless, this work

provides a useful contribution to the rapidly moving debate around trade, investment and sustainable development.

Caoimhe de Barra

Localization: A Global Manifesto

Colin Hines, Earthscan, Stg£10.99

Vanishing Borders: Protecting the Planet in the Age of Globalisation

Hilary French, Worldwatch Environmental Alert Series/ Earthscan, 2000, Stg£12.95

In November 1999 trade ministers from 135 countries met in Seattle for a new round of international trade talks under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation. They were greeted by tens of thousands of protesters who demonstrated in the streets and caused a delay in the start of the proceedings. The police sprayed tear gas and fired rubber bullets at the demonstrators. The "Battle of Seattle" as it came to be known was followed in September 2000 by another mass protest at the annual general meeting of the IMF and World Bank held in Prague. On both occasions most media described the protesters as "anti-capitalist"! It may have been more appropriate to call

them "anti-globalisationist". Writing in the *Washington Post* during the Seattle rioting Steven Pearlstein clearly expressed this view: "It is no longer a debate about trade at all, but rather a debate about globalisation, a process that many now understand affects not only traditional economic factors such as jobs and incomes but also the food people eat, the air they breathe...and the social and cultural milieu in which they live".

Many others are now articulating their opposition to and concerns about globalisation in writing. In *Localisation: A Global Manifesto*, Colin Hines leaves the reader in no doubt about his opposition to globalisation. He calls it a "modern construct, elevated to a theology". His book is about offering an alternative construct: localisation whereby communities and nation states gain increased control of their economies leading to greater community cohesion and a reduction in poverty. He makes it clear that he is not advocating a return to overpowering state control but instead argues that the state should provide the policy framework for localisation and act as a facilitator.

Hines is critical of the anti-globalisation lobby which sets out to tame the process thereby

accepting its inevitability. His is a more radical analysis which has as its premise the total abandonment of globalisation. It is a radical overhaul of the world as we know it. He suggests changing the name of GATT to GAST (General Agreement for Sustainable Trade) to be administered by the WLO (World Localisation Organisation). It is at stages such as this that the book takes on an Alice in Wonderland quality. Although Hines denies throughout that he is trying to put the clock back, you cannot help but feel it is a book written ten years too late. It is like George Orwell's *1984* in reverse. When Tony Blair said that "globalisation is irreversible and irresistible" he may have been just stating a fact and not an opinion.

The fundamental flaw of this book lies in its failure to propose a rational transition from globalisation to localisation. There is no timeframe given. Does the author seriously think that it is possible to dismantle the infrastructure which supports globalisation without massive fallout? The book is also weak in its failure to address the input of technology and the power of the internet in the localisation debate. Another weakness is its failure to properly confront the issue of global financial markets and the move to localisation.

Hilary French has written a more conventional book which deals comprehensively with the adverse affects of globalisation on the environment. In addition to highlighting the problems, the author also puts forward strategies to tackle them. There is an excellent chapter called "Strengthening global environmental governance" in which French acknowledges the importance of environmental diplomacy which has led to many important environmental accords and treaties in the last two decades. The difficulty has been in the implementation of such accords and the increasing role of civil society as a watchdog offers hope for the future.

The book is strengthened by the constant citing of examples to illustrate each point. The WTO comes under attack especially for the loopholes which allow legal challenges to specific trade policies aimed at environmental conservation. The case in 1998 of the USA's attempts to curb sea turtle mortality as a byproduct of shellfish trawling by closing their market to shrimp exporting countries which do not use turtle excluder devices is a case in point. The WTO ruled that this breached its rules following a challenge by India, Malaysia and Pakistan.

Unlike Colin Hines, Hilary French has hope for the future,

wherein the environment can be protected by a global compact between governments, business and civil society. French highlights the potential benefits of big business investing in development and the environment. She recognises that globalisation need not always be owned by the corporate sector and that there is huge potential for civil society to become mobilised as a result of globalisation.

The debate on globalisation has taken on a new momentum following Seattle and Prague. Governments around the world have begun to realise that it is now politic to be seen to be questioning certain elements of globalisation. Prime Minister Vajpayee of India, having entered office as an unapologetic globalisation supporter, recently stated in response to a growing anti-globalisation movement in India that globalisation will be “universally acceptable” only if it is “universally beneficial”. Grassroots opposition to the unregulated globalisation of the Indian economy is based on the feeling that a decade of rapid growth has benefited some more than others.

The debate on globalisation will continue in print and on the streets for years to come. Colin Hines and Hilary French have made useful contributions to this debate. While we may

not agree with everything Colin Hines has written, it is still worth reading his book for a glimpse of what might have been if history had taken a different course.

Niall Toibin