Hawai‘i: From Globalization to Full Democracy

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The article’s objective is to look at “globalization” (corporate-driven global economic integration)\(^1\) and the roles that residual anarchism, strong-but-waning corporatism, and insurgent democracy play in the larger globalism.\(^2\) It furthermore looks at the role that neoliberalism and neoliberalism play in globalization and how these paradigms affect Hawai‘i’s contemporary politics.

A fundamental argument here is that “full democracy”\(^3\) is the real answer to the central problem of global integration in the twenty-first century (Parenti 1996). This struggle for democracy pulls together those who fight for labor rights, the environment, indigenous and “local” rights, and many other people-issues, against the antidemocratic forces of corporate-driven globalization.

Beginnings of Globalization

It is difficult to agree on when “globalization” began. Some would say it has always existed; how is today’s “globalization,” for instance, different from the long-term processes involving Viking pillagers and plunderers, Spanish conquistadors, marauding Mongol hordes, Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders charging up San Juan Hill, and “humanitarian intervention” by NATO stealth bombers and fighter planes over Kosovo and Serbia (Burkholder 1999)? And how about British, Dutch, US and other forms of imperialism (Parenti 1995)?

Globalization’s corporate-driven contemporary form, for the purposes of this article has its roots in the linking of “Reaganism” (Dugger 1983) in the 1980s with Great Britain’s “Thatcherism” (Graves 1999). It then became “Mulroneyism” in Canada and finally ricocheted to Hawai‘i, most noticeably during the Cayetano administration in the last half of the 1990s. This was a period of major change in international relations involving socialism versus capitalism and the full political spectrum of “isms” in-between, East-West and North-South relations, the Cold War, nonaligned nations, and decolonization and national liberation. Led by US foreign policy, “Reaganism,” the stage or step immediately preceding globalization, was critical in building up the present push by transnational corporate traders and financiers for political-economic preeminence in the world – called “globalization.”

There was more than just a struggle among libertarian (individual “liberty” at all costs), corporatist, and democratic interests going on in the US during the two-decade period, 1980-2000. Major intensification and “extensification” of economic productivity also occurred due to revolutionary developments in science and technology – the “sci-tech revolution.” Major productivity gains resulted from momentous advances in biotechnology and information, communication, computer technologies, and more. And globalization is to the globalizers, as much as anything, the struggle over expanding the utilization and the distribution of the fruits of this increased productivity.
globalized, it is about the accompanying global and local changes in politics, social relations, culture, and the environment.

Upon taking office after the 1980 election, President Ronald Reagan used the presidential bully-pulpit to continue an incessant seemingly (but actually even more rightwing) libertarian rant, begun at least as early as the Goldwater-for-President campaign (Reagan n.d.[1964]). This political trend continues today against: 1) government (public works and services) and government workers (public employees); 2) unions and employee rights; 3) social safety nets for the poor and the human service programs that arose from Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s “New Deal” (FERI 2000) and President Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society” programs (Johnson 2000a,b[1964, 1965]); 4) the environment; and 5) the civil rights movement and affirmative action (see Kangas 1996a,b,c).

Neoconservative Reagan began a two-decades-long intense offensive against all the gains made by the US working class in the twentieth century. Reaganism was a very active, vocal, and well-financed, big-spending alliance between libertarians (anarchists), conservative, small-business “free-enterprisers,” and big corporate interests. Ultra-conservatives and radical rightwingers like President Ronald Reagan (Dugger 1983:453-56) and then-former US Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, took the lead. But the libertarian “laissez-faire” capitalism rant was just rhetoric, because the Reagan-turned-Gingrich-“Contract with America” (Fallows 1994) package was not to benefit America’s small businesses and family farmers. Actually, it was designed to benefit corporate America.

As a result, many small businesses, including family farmers, increasingly aligned themselves with employees, workers’ unions, environmentalists, and other democratic forces as they saw the fruits of the Reagan-Gingrich alliance mainly accruing to benefit corporate interests, professionals, and small and medium businesses whose activities are tied to big business. *Trickledown* (Dugger 1983) was one side of the coin called “Reaganomics.” The other side was *takeaways*, as noted throughout this article.

Reaganism/Reaganomics was an agenda to create a “new economy” of low-wages, long work hours with minimal benefits, unfair tax burdens, and stripped-down government services for employees, the unemployed, and retired employees. To this end, Reaganism/Reaganomics initiated a vigorous push against unions and employees in general, and for privatization, deregulation, tax cuts, and big government subsidies to the wealthy (Dugger 1983). Its general strategy was to weaken the position of employees relative to their employers. It supported strengthening the corporate private sector and weakening the public sector – government – insofar as government requires taxes from the corporations and the wealthy to support the quality-of-life needs of the people, and insofar as government-of-by-and-for-the-people requires regulations that impose environmental protection, consumer protection, and other cost-incurring requirements on corporate employers (see Kangas 1996b).

On the flip-side of that agenda were high interest payments to bankers, fabulous returns on investment for stock market investors, super profits for owners/employers, mega-salaries and golden parachutes for CEOs (Minow 2000; Weidner 2000), and corporate welfare (Corporate Welfare Information Center 1999) from a government co-opted by big-money campaign contributions and highly paid lobbyists, expensive think-tanks and public relations campaigns – aided and abetted by a corporate-subdued news
(Parenti 1993) and entertainment media (Puette 1993). All this was ripped from downsizing and merging small- and medium-sized corporations into large corporations, and large corporations and super-corporations into mega-corporations. It also meant outsourcing to subcontractors and moving factories and headquarters to low-wage, union-free, or weak-union localities (Short n.d.; Gibbs 1996). The main buzzwords of this onslaught against the people and democracy were “deregulation” and “privatization.” Then later, as post-Cold War globalization began to emerge, “free trade” was added to the list of neoliberal/neocorporate buzzwords.

Deregulation led to increased profits. Privatization threw public assets and services into the hands of private businesses. This two-pronged attack resulted in an overall strategic redistribution of wealth from the working class and from small businesses and family farms to corporate interests, and the widening of the rich-poor gap – the widest it has ever been.

For instance, the deregulation of the savings and loan industry and the resultant government bail-out cost the US taxpayer between a quarter to half a trillion dollars. The privatization of the US Social Security insurance and pension system has been a constant objective of the “conservative” agenda since Reagan – although it would re-impoverish millions of elderly – mostly elderly women. Over a decade or two, this would possibly yield trillions of dollars to Wall Street interests. These class struggles over the distribution of daily wealth will always be part of a global neoconservative/neoliberal agenda; today, they are the main components of globalization. But thus far, there has been a strong fight-back against the onslaught on Social Security by, for instance, the newly energized US labor movement (AFL-CIO 2000) and by senior citizen organizations (Labor Party 1996a; National Council of Senior Citizens 2000).

However, the ultra-conservative ingredients of Thatcherism/Reaganism – taken in the aggregate – are not enough to adequately describe the full-blown, corporate-driven “globalization” that we know today. The so-called “end of the Cold War” (Longworth 1999) and the so-called “end of history” (Fukuyama 1992) where capitalism has allegedly defeated socialism, were the precipitating factors causing “globalization” to occur. That period from “the end of the Cold War” to the present is roughly the period of “globalization” (as the term is presently used). Let us now digress to discuss the theoretical aspects of this transformation.

Which Golden Rule Shall Rule

There are three “golden rules.” One version says: “Do unto others before they do unto you.” The second colloquial golden rule is: “He who has the gold, rules.” And the third “golden rule” is: “Do unto others as you would have them do to you.” In a very real sense, these represent three old and fundamental coping or survival strategies.

The first golden rule promote chaotic and individualistic “might is right” anarchism – where everybody is “free” to cannibalize even their own members in the pursuit of their individual economic survival. Then, fast-forwarding to early man, we see the second corporatist “might-is-right” version of the golden rule developing. Economic survival then became social, with our early ancestors fragmented into hunting and gathering, competing “corporate” bands. After that, with the further development of the
human brain and the concomitant social accumulation of knowledge to produce greater material and economic surplus, came the development of “political economy.” Thus, today, we see greater possibilities for democratic, community-minded cooperation – as opposed to individualistic “might-is-right” competition (anarchism) or group-related, “might-is-right” competition (corporatism).

This now brings us to something we hear a lot of today, “community.” The problem is that the quest for “community,” so far, has had a nostalgic, atavistic, edge to it. We look for answers in the not so good, “good ol’ days,” when community meant pulling people together into exclusive groupings of peoples based on race, nation, region, tribe, or clan. Looking backwards to the old ways instead of forward to an everybody-is-in, inclusive, full democracy, in which – no matter where you go in the human universe – you will be welcome, and have equal democratic rights to one equal voice, to one equal vote, and to equal responsibility of everybody, including oneself. In the coming, fully developed, democratic global village, democracy will represent “the highest form of human community” (Brewer 2000a).

From what we see in contemporary economic politics, we can conclude that corporate Hawai‘i – and by extension, multinational transnational corporations, as well as those small-business persons who prescribe to “libertarian” anarchistic “laissez-faire capitalism” – share the premise that economics is primary. They say that private enterprises are the economy, and that anything that benefit them is “good for the economy.” Thus, everything that employees need and demand must be put on hold “for the good of the economy.” During a time of unprecedented productivity gains from the sci-tech revolution and its consequent wealth production, the widest ever gap between rich and poor is occurring. In the United States today, employees and their families are held hostage to “the economy,” because those who have the gold do rule. Along with corporate economic hostage-holding comes wedge-issue politics; together, these are called “racing to the bottom,” where globalization’s mobile factories, for instance, pit local workers and communities in competition against other workers and communities everywhere.

Coming back to the present day: persistent residual anarchism, strong-but-waning factional corporatism and developing insurgent democracy play powerful roles in the ongoing integrative process called “globalism.” This is the essence of class struggle today; it is the struggle to determine which of the three golden rules will finally triumph in human society.

“Globalization” is the contemporary political-economic restructuring of the planet – from the local to the global. This restructuring is done according to the interests of multinational, transnational free traders and exporters of investment-capital. In the case of the United States, this restructuring is supported by two anti-people, antidemocratic pillars – “one-dollar, one-vote” pseudo “democracy” and militarization for globalization.

The systematic breakup of Yugoslavia and the extension and role-change of NATO are prime examples of the phenomenon of “militarization for globalization” (Burkholder 1999). Two underlying fundamental premises of this article are that “under globalization, all roads lead to war,” and that under democracy-driven globalism, “all roads lead to peace.” Due to the heavy presence of the military in Hawai‘i, there are many ramifications here for Hawai‘i’s future as globalism plays itself out.
Class Analysis as an Alternative

Put into useful local, national, international, and socioeconomic perspectives, “globalization” seems driven by two versions of the same basic ideology working in tandem. Internationally, one version – neoliberalism – is about liberating global free traders and international big bankers from any cross-border constraints. In asserting corporate dominance in today’s global integration, this source of globalization runs afoul of employees and trade unions, environmentalists, and others negatively impacted by “free trade.” These democratic forces perceive that they have been, and will continue to be, adversely affected by globalization policies that seek to free international traders, bankers, and other capital investors from any and all environmental, social, and cultural constraints, globally. That was what the multinational gathering of 50,000 demonstrators against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in December of 1999 was about. The main slogan of the big march was “Fair Trade not Free Trade” (Labor Party 1996b). This struggle between “global village” and “global pillage” epitomizes the struggle between democracy and plutocratic and autocratic “globalization.”

The national and local half of the ideology of globalization – neoconservatism – is generally about big money maintaining dominance within a particular country through economic policy, political power, social status, ideology, and culture. Here, globalization runs into resistance from national, provincial, state, county, and local unionized workforces, community organizations, environmentalists, consumer protectionists, “local” and ethnic traditionalists, etc. These are much the same faces that we see protesting “free trade.” This shows the international identity of interests held by these democratic forces calling for “fair trade.” Theirs are the faces of the developing, democracy-driven “global village.”

People must be empowered with an alternative analytical perspective to further develop and extend democracy. Underlying the overall struggle between the two ongoing, parallel processes of global integration – one, corporate/big-bank capitalism-driven, and the other, democracy-driven – is the innate, centuries-old struggle between employer and employee over the relative allocation of wealth produced by their joint economic endeavors. This is simply classic economic “class struggle.” Inextricably intertwined with this economic struggle are the political struggles over which class of people will control politics and exercise ideological and cultural dominance. The democracy side of this struggle involves the environmental, labor, indigenous, civil rights, and women’s movements as well as the G-77 nations in a struggle against transnational, multinational, corporate economic interests (Group of 77 2000).

Another population to consider, complicating socio-political-economic analyses of the ongoing struggle between employees and employers, are people caught in between, or lying outside, these two main classes – the “people in-between” and “the loners.” These strata of people in the layers lying between workers and owners (for instance, some small farmers, businessmen, and professionals), identify in some ways and in varying degrees with both the neoconservatives/neoliberals on one side, and with the everybody-is-in, democracy-minded people on the other. Then there are those who identify with neither – the anarchists. Anarchists’ identification with others is strictly situational and can change from moment to moment, depending on which suits their
narrow self-interests. Rightwing anarchists have values similar to those of the microscopic pond predators. Left anarchists are often alienated people who think in terms of non-social, Robinson Crusoe solutions to problems. Many of them eventually become frustrated and cynical when their individualistic coping solutions do not solve problems which are social in nature. Mix this group with a bunch of identity-searching teenagers and young adults, regardless of class – for instance in the Seattle demonstrations against the WTO – and democratic-minded activist organizers can have real public relations problems in their attempts to win the hearts and minds of the public at large.

Full Democracy – The Alternative with Hope

The hope lies in more democracy. Democracy, among many other things, is a number game. Neoliberal/neoconservative forces simply cannot muster the necessary ballot-box numbers to win out against democratic forces. Not where there is a politics of one-person, one-voice, and one-person, one-vote – where each person has full access to complete information about the issues, and is willing to stand up for the policies and the political personalities selected by their votes. Neoliberal/neoconservative forces simply cannot win on the issues in a true “full democracy,” because corporate-profits-driven “globalization” runs counter to the objective interests of the employee-family 80%-plus majority, and of their allies concerned with, among other things, the environment, indigenous peoples, and nonaligned nations. This bodes well for the international forces of democracy and for the emerging “global village.” It also foretells the eventual winning of “fair trade” over “free trade,” of the coming victory of the global village over global pillage, and of the eventual triumph of peace over war. Hawai‘i is already deeply entangled with globalization. Let us now look at recent local public policies implemented within the ideological dynamics of “globalization.”

Whither Hawai‘i – Alignment with Corporate Globalism, or with Democratic Global Integration?

In November, 1994, Ben Cayetano was elected governor of the state of Hawai‘i. To him fell the task of politically guiding Hawai‘i through a period of economic downturn precipitated by a combination of things associated with “globalization.” Governor Cayetano was immediately confronted by a political-economic traffic interchange. One choice was the on-ramp to join the traffic flow of corporate-driven “globalization.” Another on-ramp led back onto the renewal of the spirit of a great tradition in Hawai‘i, the spirit of the great “democratic revolution of 1954” (CLEAR 2000).

In 1954, the corporate, colonial forces dominated by Hawai‘i’s “Big-Five” corporations (Castle and Cooke, Alexander and Baldwin, C. Brewer, American Factors, and Theo H. Davies), and represented politically by the Republican Party, were overthrown at the ballot box by a labor-led people’s movement united under the umbrella of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i. Former Governor John Burns is tied with the myth that gives him and the faction of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i he led credit as the only movers and shakers of the 1954 revolution (Stauffer 2000). But regardless of what
political faction gets credit, the revolution was no myth. It actually happened. The real heroes were the people of Hawai‘i’s multiethnic working class. Credit must be given to the International Longshore and Warehouseman’s Union (ILWU), which had brought together the working class backbone of the 1954 ballot box revolution (Mast and Mast 1996:313). Out of this came an “ideal” held by Hawai‘i’s working class that the hopes, aspirations, and expectations of Hawai‘i’s people for a better life for all people will come about in a democracy. At the US federal level, this same democratic high-road has been symbolized by the traditions of the New Deal brought about during the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, under the banner of the national Democratic Party. To this day greater, or “fuller,” democracy of meeting the needs and demands of “the people” is the progressive track of forces for global integration.

**Fuller Democracy Was Never an Option in Solving Hawai‘i’s Economic Slowdown**

Of course, it will never be known what might have been achieved in getting Hawai‘i through the economic hard times if the newly elected governor, Ben Cayetano, had immediately engaged Hawai‘i’s people in statewide fora to brainstorm over solutions and then mobilized us to carry out those democratically arrived-at solutions. It would have been even better if he had led such an effort during the last year or two of his tenure as lieutenant governor. It is abundantly clear now from the crisis management mode which prevailed during the first half of his administration that Cayetano had not prepared to be governor – even though he had sat directly across from the governor’s office on the top floor of the state capitol for eight years. He had at least two years of foreknowledge that the Japanese investment bubble had burst. And that westbound tourism was down, with shorter stays and less money spent per person. He was also aware of the impact of serious cutbacks in sugar and pineapple, the resultant structural unemployment, these cutbacks’ effect on the overall economy, the serious economic impacts of both the mobilization of troops from Hawai‘i for the Persian Gulf War, and of hurricane ‘Iniki on Kaua‘i.

He must have been aware that big-box retailers were continuing to come into Hawai‘i and paying non-union, low wages, hiring part-timers, giving manini (tiny) benefits, driving traditional, local, small businesses out of business and sending big profits out of the local economy overnight.

Surely he was aware that an immediate appointment of a new Tax Review Commission was constitutionally due and in this lay the possibility of developing a tax policy that could raise revenues to really invest in Hawai‘i’s public schools and state university system, as well as to save human services. At the 1996 Hawai‘i Democratic Party convention, a package of revenue-raising tax reform resolutions were introduced by Renee Ing representing EmployeesToday (see Appendix A). It had an income surtax on high incomes, a progressive general excise tax that would have fallen only on tourists and high-income earners, and a stocks-and-bonds transaction tax for Hawai‘i residents doing business on a booming stock market. In the end, the squandering of this opportunity to raise revenues left almost no other option than to commit wholesale slashing and burning of vitally important quality-of-life and aloha-spirit human service programs during the first year or two of Cayetano’s attending to the economic downturn.
The forces of “globalization” wreaked havoc here in Hawai‘i (Kent 1994:183-84). Did Cayetano’s solution involve the practice of fuller democracy and protect the people of Hawai‘i from globalization? Or did his solution become even more a part of the problem through deeper engagement in “globalization?”

This question was answered for many when in early 1995, Cayetano, shortly after becoming governor and returning from a trip to Washington, D.C., said of his meeting with Newt Gingrich, then the ultra-conservative US Speaker of the House of Representatives, “He has a lot of good ideas.”

Given its special history, Hawai‘i in the 1990s had the reigns of political power held by the Democratic Party. Therefore, this party was to become the vehicle with which to deliver corporate neoconservative/neoliberal “globalization” to Hawai‘i. Cayetano became its lead person.

It is now amply clear from the record that Cayetano chose the on-ramp to profits-before-people “globalization” (Kent 1999). Little diversions along side streets gave lip-service to traditional-liberal-democratic forces within the Democratic Party’s political base of support at re-election time. At other times, minimal concessions were made to the direct-action democratic demands of “the people” – through mass lobbying, testimonies at hearings at the state legislature, as well as rallies and demonstrations at the capitol and at the University of Hawai‘i.

No analysis of this period can ignore the main neoconservative personalities and organizations around Cayetano, in the Republican Party and, first and foremost, among the power brokers representing Bishop Street and Wall Street, nor the roles these groups played in the struggle for the steering wheel in choosing the road to corporate “globalization,” over the road to the people’s democracy-driven “global village.” The various democratic forces in Hawai‘i who fought back and offered alternatives to caving in to globalization need also to be noted (Aoudé 1999).

Phase I: Crisis Management and “Slash-and-Burn”

Crisis management is one of the main characteristics of Cayetano’s first phase in addressing the economic traffic problem presented by Hawai‘i’s globalization-induced, sudden, freeway, bottleneck economic slowdown. “Slash and burn” was the other main characteristic. As Cayetano’s governorship developed, various people came to the fore as members of his crisis management team. There was Charles Toguchi, his chief-of-staff, a well-respected former state legislator and superintendent of education, with ties to the traditions of the 1954 democratic revolution. He seemed in charge of the crisis management aspect of Cayetano’s general approach to Hawai‘i’s economic problems. There was Earl Anzai, the then-state Director of the Department of Budget and Finance. Cayetano and Anzai played the type of role demanded by the International Monetary Fund/World Bank, at the international level, of elites in countries who run into debt problems and are required to do political-economic “structural adjustment.” Just as those international, neoliberal, structural adjustment programs typically call for severe measures involving cuts in health and human services, education, union and employee rights, employee health and safety regulations which protect the environment, consumers, etc. – so did the neoconservative Democrat, Ben Cayetano.
“Slash and burn” austerity measures of Cayetano’s agenda for solving Hawai‘i’s economic problems included: 1) tax hikes for families earning less than $30,000 a year in the form of cutting tax credits which were originally enacted into law to compensate lower-income persons and families for the regressive nature of the 4% general excise tax; 2) completely cutting off General Assistance to unemployed, older workers from age 55 until social security retirement age (which amounted to a “get a job or be homeless” law for persons with muscular-skeletal problems and marginal immune systems); 3) cuts in state general assistance to persons with disabilities; 4) elimination of Project Mālama, a program to help frail elderly to live at home instead of having to go into nursing homes and to also monitor them against elder abuse; 5) healthcare cuts to lower-income working families, contributing to a general downward spiral of Hawai‘i’s reputation as “the health state”; 6) raises in the prices of school lunches; 7) exporting prisoners away from their home state of Hawai‘i to private prisons in other states; 8) serious cuts to public library hours and services, including an expensive, failed attempt at privatization; and 9) deep and very damaging cuts at Hawai‘i’s state university system and then in Phase II, political abdication in the name of “autonomy.”

Phase II: More Trickledown and Takeaways

In the second phase of Cayetano’s administration, two prominent faces appear: Seiji Naya and Thomas Leppert. It is here that the intertwined connections between internationally applied neoliberalism and nationally and locally applied neoconservatism became not only obvious, but actually high-profile. Naya, a professor of international economics at the University of Hawai‘i, serves as the State’s Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). Leppert seemed to appear from nowhere to rescue corporate Hawai‘i. Just as quietly, he disappeared back to the continental US.

Leppert was politically active and influential in high corporate-political circles, before and after coming to Hawai‘i. He enjoyed high-paying positions while here; first with high-level jobs at Larry Johnson’s Bank of Hawai‘i and Robert Murdock’s Castle and Cooke. Then he became a mega-salaried member of the board of directors of the Campbell Estate. Johnson has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for Cayetano’s campaign coffers. Murdock picked up part of the tab for Cayetano’s trip to Minnesota in pursuit of a Mayo Clinic for Hawai‘i; is this the new face of Hawai‘i as the “health state” (Kent 1999)? There can be little doubt that Leppert was well familiar with the strategies and tactics of the neoconservative restructuring that had occurred on the national scene under Reagan and Bush. Leppert was a Reagan White House Fellow in 1984 at the Office of Policy Development (Vandeveire 1997).

So, this pair, Naya and Leppert, kicked off Phase II of Cayetano’s Republican-style neoconservative policies through the “Economic Revitalization Task Force” (ERTF).

ERTF – Restructuring with a Vengeance
Looking at the trickledowns and takeaways during Phase I and II, one can see the horrific close-encounter Hawai‘i has missed in the form of a Hawai‘i-look-alike of Newt Gingrich’s “Contract with America.” ERTF was restructuring with a vengeance.

But Newt Gingrich and rightwing neoconservatism did not only arrive in Hawai‘i through Ben Cayetano. Other rightwing forces also were at work. The Honolulu Star-Bulletin, traditionally Hawai‘i’s Republican newspaper, continually espoused a neoconservative ideology, on and off the editorial pages. The Honolulu Advertiser under the leadership of Larry Fuller (now publisher of the Pacific Business News) became “chief cheerleader” for the ERTF. Republican-aligned, religious-right, anti-gay-marriage forces mounted an almost-successful campaign for a constitutional convention (Con-Con). This was a close call with many possible disasters – for Hawaiians, environmentalists, farmers, affordable housing advocates, employees, unions and other sectors of the population that the neoconservative agenda always has in its rifle sights (Adamski 1998).

The austerity measures of Cayetano’s Phase II agenda for solving Hawai‘i’s economic problems – many of which came from the recommendations of his Economic Revitalization Task Force – included: 1) disabling the 60-40 affordable housing requirement for the big-estates/developers here in affordable-housing-poor Hawai‘i (the scrapping of 60-40 gives Hawai‘i’s big landowners huge windfalls from the up-zoning of agricultural lands to develop residential housing without having to share anymore that windfall in the public interest); 2) tax reform for the wealthy; 3) implementation of “workfare,” the Republican-instigated welfare reform to which President Clinton had caved-in; 4) attempts to destroy government jobs and the important public services that they provide, and attempts to destroy collective bargaining for Hawai‘i’s unionized workers, all done under the deceptive name, “civil service reform.”

Confusion at the State Capitol

House Speaker Joe Souki and Senate President Norman Mizuguchi were nominal co-partners with Cayetano in convening the Economic Revitalization Task Force (ERTF). It is important to note that in the 1990s the Democratic Party was and continues to be in deep crisis. Souki and Mizuguchi presided over a legislature of senators and representatives who were falling apart ideologically and splintering organizationally, and therefore had no unified political will, nor the ability to do a comprehensive and constructive analysis of what was happening. For the same reasons, they had no productive guidance from where leadership had traditionally come – the governor. The most common statement at the state capitol was: “I’m sorry, but there’s just no money.”

The only guidance came by default from the neoconservative ideology from the continental US which had reached its apex during this period. Although numerically weak, Republicans in the Hawai‘i state legislature were able, with some effect, to echo the two-decades-old, rightwing, Republican rant begun by former President Ronald Reagan against “government,” government workers, employees and unions in general, environmentalists, consumer protectionists, the poor, and the homeless.

The watchword during the formative stages of the ERTF was economic “recovery.” Then it turned into the more positive and pro-active-sounding “revitalization.” It was an attempt to get beyond crisis management to develop an action plan for economic restructuring, which would hopefully lead to “recovery.” This would
have been the right thing to do – if it were done by the right people for the right reasons. But in the end, the most obvious thing was, as one observer said: “A bunch of rich guys got together and gave themselves one whopping big tax break” (Perez 1997).

**What’s the Problem?**

For a time, few fully understood just what it was that Hawai‘i’s economy was recovering from. People were also confused because Bishop Street big money came up with a laughably ill-conceived media campaign called “Thumbs Up!” (Some folks even got to calling the ERTF, “son of thumbs up”). “Thumbs Up!” may have helped the banks hold up property values for a little while to secure some of the inflated home loans made during the Japanese investment bubble. However, it undermined the credibility of the ERTF (Byrne 1997; Daysog 1997). It also undermined the efforts to have a constitutional convention. People were in no mood to fall for anymore half-baked schemes from leading light CEOs and professional elites representing Hawai‘i’s big-money interests (Adamski 1998).

After a while, it was the generally shared perception that Hawai‘i was feeling the delayed impact of structural unemployment as a partial after-effect of the earlier demise of the sugar and pineapple industry. The effects of the job loss from these industries have been somewhat masked and delayed by the flood of money from Japanese, direct, foreign investment in Hawai‘i real estate, tourism, insurance, and retail, which was going on at the time.

Then, the huge Japanese investment bubble burst. That, coupled with the accompanying fall-off of Japanese tourism, and in Asian tourism in general (in tourist numbers, days stayed, and money spent), was devastating to Hawai‘i’s economy.

These factors plus the long-term residual effects of the mobilization and deployment of troops to the Persian Gulf War, and the effects of Hurricane ‘Iniki, collected to have significant negative impact on Hawai‘i’s economy.

**Rise and Fall of the ERTF**

Naya provided prestige, and legitimacy, and staff for the ERTF. He also brought an international perspective with concrete connections to the Asian economies which were experiencing serious economic turmoil and recession at that time. Evidently, he either advocated the free-trade ideology of neoliberalism, or simply went with the flow of its seeming “inevitability.” The latter seems the case with many Democratic politicians who acquiesced to mainland, Republican, and neoconservative policies instead of rallying to the defense of traditional liberal and working-class values.

Leppert brought enthusiasm and experience to the Task Force and pushed for Reaganesque neoconservative recipes for economic restructuring. Interestingly though, despite all their advantages, Cayetano’s ERTF did not enjoy the overwhelming victory that had been expected.

This was in spite of Tom Leppert’s high-energy efforts aided by the hundreds of thousands of publicity dollars, and the expertise and assistance given by Naya’s DBEDT staff, along with his international economic credentials. Not even the participation of some of Hawai‘i’s most influential elite on the Task Force gave these people the victory they wanted.
In fact, there was a tremendous fight-back by democratic forces against this massive offensive against the people, partly through vigorous lobbying and demonstrations, and some through low-key lobbying and behind-the-scenes getting the word out, “local style,” generally doing damage control against these intrusive corporate forces for “globalization.” One group that did extensive fight-back work as an alternative and advocacy media source was the EmployeesToday working group and its public-access television program, EmployeesToday (see Appendix A). One has to wonder, did those ERTF folks not even recognize some older local guys sitting the observation gallery – guys who used to be movers in Hawai‘i politics during and after the 1954 revolution?

During the ERTF debates, Hawai‘i advocates for emulating New Zealand’s version of Thatcherism were active; a former New Zealand deputy prime minister, for instance, had been a featured speaker at state-sponsored functions. However, a university professor in the social sciences at a New Zealand university, formerly from Hawai‘i and married to a local person, made a convincing rebuttal at the ERTF report fora and in letters to the editor. He pointed out, essentially, that neoconservative trickledowns and takeaways resulted in devastating effects upon unions, employees in general, the indigenous Maori people, and the other poor in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Perry 1997a,b; Smyser 1997).

Global-Village Democracy and Hawaiian Sovereignty

For the previously stated reasons, in Hawai‘i, full democracy is the only stable, and most powerful, basis for uniting the successors to the maka‘āinana (people) of the Hawaiian nation. By joining with the multiethnic-employee class of Hawai‘i and its allies among family business operators, family farmers, family fishermen, women, and professionals, majority support can thus be achieved in order to finally win justice that indigenous Hawaiians – Kānaka Maoli – seek. After that, Hawai‘i’s indigenous and “local” working classes’ fullest strength can only be realized through working in solidarity with the workers of the US and the developing democracy-driven “global village.” It is within this context that the question of Hawaiian “sovereignty,” with authentic “selfdetermination,” will finally and justly be accomplished (Aoudé 1999). Recognition of this important consideration will clear up the stalled condition of the sovereignty/selfdetermination movement, and deliver badly needed answers to the “losing home and heritage” problems of the citizens of the Hawaiian Nation and the multiethnic employee class in Hawai‘i – coming from neoliberal/neoconservative forces of economic, social, and cultural domination mainly from the “mainland,” or the “continent,” as others correctly prefer.

In order to do this, “We the People” – the people of Hawai‘i – need to get involved in a new multiethnic, truly democratic, political party (Brewer 2000b) centered around the needs and just demands of the employee eighty percent-plus majority of Hawai‘i’s people, and take the lead ... as other peoples are doing in places all around the globe.

Notes
1. For a definition of globalization, see Hilary 2000. See also Bourdieu 1998; Neoconservatism.Com 2000; Peters 2000; Treanor n.d.

As the writer of this article, I wish to make certain things known. First, I am not an academic as most writers for this journal are. I am self-educated, largely from working full-time all my life and trying to make sense of the world – then for more than twenty-five years, working full-time as an activist, trying to make the world make sense.

Secondly, I am unaccustomed to writing scholarly pieces. The references given are largely websites which I believe will address the issues in ways that will widen the perspectives of readers beyond the conventional wisdom and/or the popular understanding of current events and issues. (For example, I have given a website for “neoconservatism,” where neoconservatives define themselves. You will almost always find links at these sites that take you further. If you want to know how those other than neoconservatives, for instance, define themselves, do a search with any search engine using the topic at hand as the search word).

Thirdly, I do not try to put forward positions and arguments provided by the mainstream corporate/commercial news and entertainment media. Those positions are already out there – in spades. Further, I never try to be the “devil’s advocate.” The devil can be his own advocate.

Fourthly, I am a believer in science and full democracy. There is a definition of democracy, as I see it, in this article. I do not define myself according to left or right; rather I believe that there are two opposing political camps in this world – democratic and non-democratic. I put myself on the side of democracy. The only label I will accept is that of a democrat with a small “d.” Finally, because I refer to the working group EmployeesToday, I disclose here that I am a member of that group. I am the executive producer of the EmployeesToday television program at ‘Ōlelo, O‘ahu’s cable public access station. I am also the chairperson of the EmployeesToday Party of Hawai‘i Originating Committee, an effort to build a new majority party that will give representation proportional to the 80%-plus of the population in employee families, independent of big-money and corporate influences within our new party. This is not about class warfare; it is a simple matter of demanding and achieving democratic representation. It is, however, about class struggle. We are presently the marginalized majority based on our class, outsiders in our own democracy. We seek to change that. It is not our intention to be a “third party,” or a second party in a “two-party system.” We intend to become the first party in a multiparty system. For more information, see Brewer 2000c; and Mast and Mast, 1996.

2. As used here, the term “residual anarchism” refers to a human asocial or antisocial condition that has its origins in the behavior of predatory, pond microorganisms. “Corporatism” refers to something that occurs higher-up the evolutionary ladder, beyond totally self-centered individualistic lives. Here we find social – corporate – bodies or groupings of higher organisms living in wolf packs, hunter-gatherer groups, and later, in tribes, clans, and nations. In that vein, strong-but-waning-corporatism refers to the perception by this writer that corporate groupings are still strong, but that they are giving way on the world stage to everybody-is-in, full democracy which will be the highest form of community in the developing global village.

3. The sociopolitical platform for “full” democracy stands on four legs. One leg is “one-person, one-accessor” to full information; but absolutely predicated upon one full liberal education that can turn that full information into the full power of knowledge about contemporary human issues. A second leg is “one-person, one-voice,” as exemplified, for instance, by public-access cable television, where any person can come, stand upon an electronic soapbox, and speak their piece. The third leg is “one-person, one-vote.” The final leg is “one-person, one-responsible participant in a democratic process,” made up of persons who proactively accept the disciplines and duties that flow from democratic decisionmaking, as well as taking for themselves the rights and prerogatives enjoyed before decisions are made through voting. Political anarchists are notorious for taking the rights and prerogatives side of democracy, but balking when it comes to the responsibilities, duties, and discipline side. They therefore often stand in the way of implementing the will of the people. Corporatists, whose most underlying value is “might is right,” behave like the anarchists, just corporately instead of individually.

With everybody’s-in, full democracy, there are no second-class citizens – only first class ones. Full democracy accords every person full and equal human respect and dignity. That is why full democracy is the highest form of human community. It has often been said, “No justice, no peace.”
Full democracy yields justice moment-to-moment, day-to-day, and year-in-year-out. That is why all roads lead to peace with full democracy.

References


