

# CHALLENGING NEW WORLD

SECOND EDITION

CCPA EDUCATION PROJECT



CCPA  
CANADIAN CENTRE  
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES  
CENTRE CANADIEN  
de POLITIQUES ALTERNATIVES

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SECOND EDITION



# CHALLENGING M@WORLD



**THINK**



**TALK**



**ACT**



**CCPA**  
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The second edition of *Challenging McWorld* builds on the work represented in the original edition by Tony Clarke and Sarah Dopp. In the true spirit of collaboration, we were able to incorporate the constantly evolving research, work and activities of the social justice movement and the contributions of countless individuals and organizations to make this important publication even more complete, up-to-date and accessible.

Tony Clarke, director of the Polaris Institute, updated the introduction to reflect the ongoing struggles, challenges and successes of the progressive movement. A number of individuals generously gave of their time and expertise to update chapters, or to add new sections: Ian Boyko (Canadian Federation of Students), Adam Davidson-Harden, Karl Flecker (Polaris Institute), Bernie Froese-Germain (Canadian Teachers' Federation), Kimiko Inouye (Polaris Institute), Lucy Sharratt (Polaris Institute), Steve Staples (Polaris Institute), Kathie Steinhoff (Canadian Union of Postal Workers) and Armine Yalnizyan. Pat McAdie, Larry Kuehn, Hugh Mackenzie, Marita Moll and Heather-jane Robertson are ongoing supporters of the Education Project and deserve special mention. The CCPA would also like to thank the countless other organizations and individuals quoted and referenced throughout this publication, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation for their financial support in helping make this second edition a reality.

Barry Smith, a teacher at Westdale Secondary School in Hamilton and member of OSSTF, helped provide the inspiration for the reworking and updating of *Challenging McWorld* by offering to develop an accompanying set of resource materials. We think you'll agree: these excellent supplements have made *Challenging McWorld* even more useful and relevant as a teaching and learning resource.

Special thanks to Greg Smith, our summer intern, who spent many hours sorting and updating the research in this publication. His contribution to this project was invaluable.

Dirk van Stralen is the genius behind the layout, design, and hilarious illustrations used throughout *Challenging McWorld*.

Thanks also to the excellent staff at the CCPA: Melanie Allison, Bruce Campbell, Anskia DeJong, Kerri-Anne Finn, Ed Finn, Christine Nesrallah, Ellen Russell and Diane Touchette.

While every effort has been made to update the research, the examples and scenarios presented have been selected because of their ongoing and, in some cases, timeless significance. Readers are also encouraged to find even more current examples of corporate globalization—and resistance to it—in becoming more aware of the impact of these forces in our schools, workplaces and communities, and around the world.

In Solidarity,

Erika Shaker

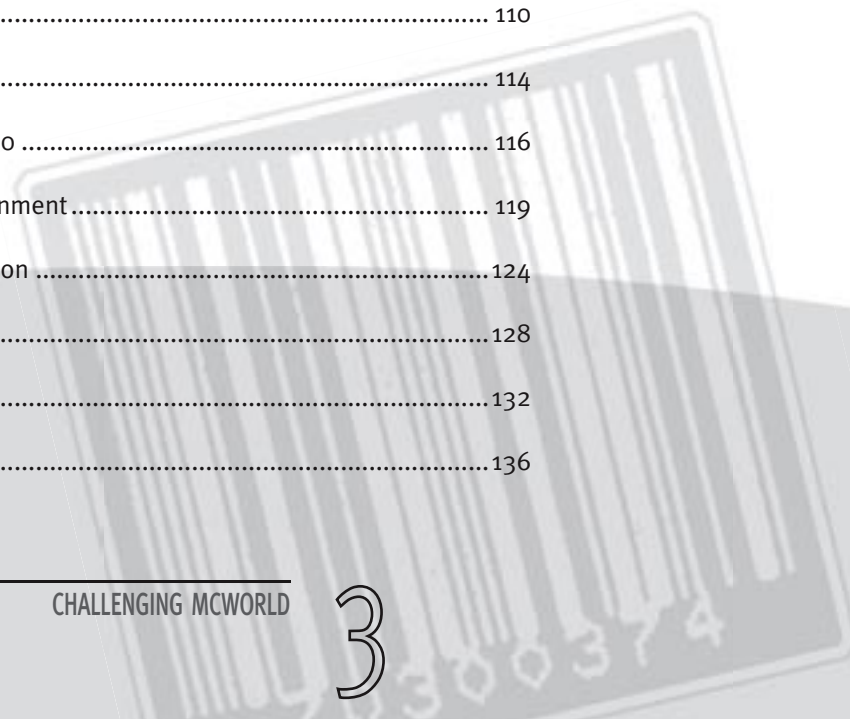
Director, CCPA Education Project



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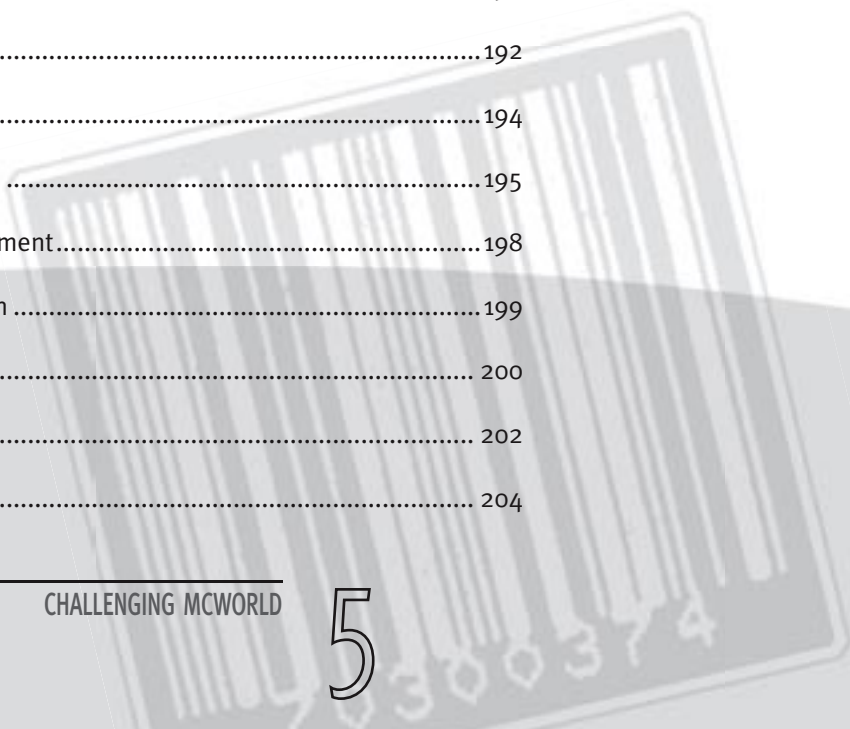
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In the spirit of John Lennon’s lyrics, who would have imagined it? Ten years ago, there was hardly a speckle of youth awareness about economic justice and global peace issues to be found on college campuses, in high school classrooms, or within the workplace. For most of the 1990s, “youth activism” in response to world-shaking events and forces was largely considered to be a distant memory or a relic of the 1960s. But, by the end of the decade, there was a sudden explosion of youth consciousness about the issues of globalization, which was manifested by the youth-led protests on the streets of Seattle where the 3rd summit meeting of the World Trade Organization took place and then collapsed in the last month of 1999.



Indeed, the “Battle of Seattle” became the spark-plug for a new wave of youth activism at the dawn of 21st century. Over the following 18 months, at every major global event where the economic and political élites gathered to make decisions about the distribution of resources and power affecting the future of the planet, growing numbers of young people were on the streets, mobilizing resistance and demanding alternatives. From the World Bank meetings in Washington and Prague in April and September of 2000 to the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City and the European Union leaders summit in Genoa in April and August of 2001, young people were at the forefront of the protests calling for fundamental changes in the “new world order.”

Here in Canada, we saw clear signs of this emerging youth consciousness as early as 1997. In November of that year, the Council of Canadians and the Polaris Institute, together with the International Forum on Globalization, organized a Global Teach-In on Corporate Rule at the University of Toronto. Of the nearly 2,000 participants, 30% were between the ages of 14 and 25. Remember now, this was two full years before Seattle and three-and-a-half years before Quebec City. Inspired by the strong participation by youth in the 1997 Toronto teach-in, the Polaris Institute put together a three-year follow-up program called Operation 2000. This program was designed to focus on three main constituencies of youth: university and college students, young workers, and high school youth. Through Operation 2000, a series of teach-ins, conferences, and workshops were organized, along with the development of several tools for popular education and action.

One of these tools was *Challenging McWorld*. As Naomi Klein showed with her worldwide best seller, *No Logo*, today’s youth increasingly live, communicate, and act in a wired world of corporate logos, symbols, and branding. Obviously, the term “McWorld” is a take-off on the successful marketing of the U.S. fast-food chain, McDonald’s, and its golden arch, which has become a worldwide symbol recognizable in cities and towns of almost every country. Yet, as an organizing metaphor, it embodies various meanings. To some youth activists, “McWorld” refers to the realities of “corporate globalization” whereby the world is increasingly organized and dominated by for-profit transnational corporations. To others, the term signifies the rise of “global capitalism” wherein the economies of virtually all countries on this planet are now dominated by capitalism as a totalitarian system. And, for still others, “McWorld” means the spread of the “American Empire” to the four corners of the Earth.

Whatever its particular meanings, “McWorld” provides a common symbol and language for both critically understanding the world we live in and building

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alternatives to it. Whether young people are engaged in educational events such as teach-ins and workshops on global justice issues or direct-action confrontations in the streets; whether their main targets are transnational corporations or national governments or global institutions like the World Bank and the World Trade Organization; or whether they are organizing campaigns around specific issues like workers' rights or safe foods or military invasions or a host of other social struggles —there is an underlying common resistance to the vision and values symbolized by “McWorld.” By the same token, this new generation of youth activists also insist that “another world” is possible, and that bold steps must be taken to create a “better world” now, not only for the sake of humanity, but for the future of the planet itself.

Although this new youth movement burst forth five years ago, the events of September 11, 2001 generated a major setback. The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington unleashed a worldwide war on terrorism. Not only in the U.S., but governments in Canada and elsewhere in the world responded with major increases in military spending and the build-up of anti-terrorism security measures. Based in the new homeland security agency in Washington, DC, a continental security perimeter was established, encompassing the borders, airspace, and shorelines of all three countries in North America. As a result, the emergent youth movement in North America, committed to challenging McWorld, found themselves caught in this new continental security dragnet.

In short, the events of 9/11 had a major dampening effect on the resistance activities of this vibrant new movement. The anti-terrorism laws enacted immediately after 9/11 provided governments with all the laws and tools needed to criminalize dissent. Especially here in North America, a climate of fear was generated, making it difficult for movement organizers to maintain the momentum ignited by the Battle of Seattle. Increasingly, protest activities against corporate globalization ran the risk of being viewed as a criminal offence. While some youth energies shifted to mounting anti-war demonstrations, it is generally agreed that the new anti-terrorism security measures have been effective in containing the numbers of protesters at World Bank meetings in Washington, the recent WTO summit in Cancun, and the FTAA ministerial in Miami.

Nevertheless, youth activists continued to challenge McWorld and demand alternatives. Even at the November 2003 FTAA meetings in Miami, where heavy police security measures contained the numbers of protestors at less than 15% of what they had been two-and-a-half years earlier at the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, the resistance of young people was a significant factor. Take, for example, the presence of several hundred young workers from diverse communities of colour who were part of the Jobs With Justice delegation that helped organize a major rally and march through the streets of Miami. Or take the contingent of 10 graduate students from the venerable ivy league institution of Harvard University, who came to Miami hungry to learn more about the failures of neoliberalism and



free trade and ended-up discovering the criminalization of dissent when four of them were arrested and put in jail.

However, if this burgeoning youth movement is to going to survive in these dark times, conscious efforts must be made to nurture and sustain it. *Challenging McWorld* is meant to make a contribution to this process. As a workbook, it is designed to help young people develop the tools and skills needed for increasing one's critical awareness of the world we now live in and building creative alternatives for a better world in the future. As a toolbox, it is meant to be used by both youth and teachers for developing new learning opportunities — in our public school system, plus our colleges and universities — and also in our workplaces and our local communities. By using these tools, young people will hopefully be in a better position to confront and change the realities of McWorld in their daily lives for the sake of a better world.

The workbook itself is divided into several major parts. Part 1 takes up some of the issues of globalization facing young people in both high schools and in colleges and universities. Part 2 deals with some of the issues facing youth today in the workplace and in their communities. Part 3 addresses some of the major issues of corporate globalization affecting youth in both Canada and the world at large. The second half of this edition of *Challenging McWorld* is comprised of teaching units based on each chapter of the book – a set of lesson plans that may be particularly useful for teachers. In our view, teachers can play a very important role in nurturing this youth movement by making creative use of the contents and tools in this workbook. In doing so, however, teachers need to find ways of relating this material to the official curriculum. Thanks to the contributions of Barry Smith, a teacher in the Hamilton Wentworth Public School District, this edition of the workbook contains lesson plans designed to help teachers make use of these materials in relation to the high school curriculum requirements laid down by government education ministries. Although these lesson plans were initially prepared to assist teachers operating under the Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines, they can easily be adapted for use by teachers in other provinces to meet their curriculum requirements.

– Tony Clarke



## 2-C BUSINESS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

  
 **QUICK FACTS**

- Cola Wars have in recent years spilled over into secondary schools. Maple Ridge school district was the first district in B.C. to sign an exclusive, secretive deal with Coke in December 1999. In the U.S., a school principal received a letter from a Coke official, urging that products be made available for purchase throughout the day, and that vending machines be placed in accessible spots to ensure the sales quota can be met.
- Terry Fox Secondary School in Port Coquitlam, B.C., became the first school in B.C. to contract with various fast-food companies in September 1999. Over 1,600 students and staff can now buy their junk-food lunches in a food court that includes Subway, Pizza Hut, Great Canadian Bagel, and Burgers and Fries. Not only do fast-food restaurants operating in school cafeterias sound the alarm one more time about the role of corporations in schools, but it also raises questions about the schools' commitment to good nutrition and health.

In recent years, business-school partnerships have mushroomed in the public education system across Canada. According to the National Business and Education Centre of the Conference Board of Canada, there are more than 20,000 of them in place across Canada.

These business-school partnerships have emerged to fill the void created by government cutbacks. The question that must be asked, however, is: whose interests are ultimately served by these partnerships? The students? School boards? Or the private sector? The evidence to date shows that students are not the main beneficiaries. Indeed, students who protest against these partnerships are often punished.

In the U.S., for example, a student in Georgia was suspended from school in 1998 for wearing a Pepsi shirt on "Coke Day." In New England, a high school student was forced to apologize to McDonald's and his fellow students after criticizing the corporation at a mandatory school assembly where McDonald's reps talked to students about filling out job applications, handed out coupons for free food, and explained how great it was to work under the Golden Arches. And, closer to home, in Mississauga, during "Meadowstock," the Battle of the Bands contest, a member of one band, wearing a "YNN stinks" T-shirt, engaged the audience in a dialogue about YNN, asking what they thought of it. The audience booed. The performance was stopped and the band was informed that they had been disqualified.

These corporations may provide financially-starved schools with a variety of costly supplies, equipment and services, but they also get an enormous bargain in return: a captive audience, a market, considerable public recognition for their "social philanthropy," and free use of teachers as credible corporate spokespersons — not to mention legitimizing a corporate presence in the school environment.

Take, for example, the Campbell Soup Company's nutrition program, "Feeding our Future," which was launched in partnership with the Toronto District School Board. The company began its program by offering soup to students at



lunch to supplement the lunches students bring from home. Campbell's also helped to set up the Toronto Foundation for Student Success, a foundation that provides nutritional programs in Toronto schools, as well as free equipment and financial support.

The rate at which business/education partnerships are being established with public schools, and the terms and conditions of the contracts, are deeply disconcerting. In the fall of 1999, Wal-Mart Canada announced its Adopt-a-School program. Under the program, Wal-Mart stores sponsor or "adopt" a local elementary or secondary school in the community. The "adoption" lasts for a one-year period, after which the stores have the option of renewing their adoption. Wal-Mart boasts that all of its stores are participating in the program. In so doing, 163 schools across Canada can benefit from donations, fund-raising events, and volunteers for school events.

The money fundraised by Wal-Mart from the public is matched "to a set amount" by Wal-Mart's Canadian head office. Given Wal-Mart's profit in 2000 of nearly \$5.4 billion, such contributions to schools are a drop in the bucket.

"In recent market studies, Canadians have said that improving education at the elementary and secondary school levels in Canada is one of their top 10 social concerns," said Dave Ferguson, President and CEO of Wal-Mart Canada. "Our Adopt-a-School Program makes it easy for our stores — our associates — to give back to their communities in a way that's meaningful to Canadians." (Wal-Mart has been regularly targeted with bad press for accusations of child labour, union-busting, and poor treatment of employees. The school "adoptions," however, are a public relations dream for projecting an image of good corporate citizenship, contributing to the community, and boosting customer loyalty.)

Not all responses to Wal-Mart's "strategic philanthropy" have been positive, however. In January 2003, parents at a school near Wolfville, N.S., managed to oust a Wal-Mart poster from the school's library — in return for a \$10,000 donation from the store that had just been built across the street.

Recent international concern about youth health and obesity have led to an examination of exclusive marketing

- The International Business Technology program at Gordon Graydon Memorial Secondary School in Mississauga trains students for work in various industries through partnerships with corporations, including Astra Pharma Inc., Bank of Nova Scotia, CIBC, Wood Gundy Securities Inc., Ontario Power Generation Inc., and Packard Bell NEC Inc. Corporate partners offer equipment and sponsor events, as well as interviewing job applicants and acting as mentors to students and advisors to the program. Students can participate in the Cisco Networking Project and earn themselves a Cisco Certified Network Associate 1 Networking Basics certificate upon graduation, or pursue a program in Flexography (printing), "funded completely through industry support."
- In spring 2004, the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board in Nova Scotia voted to allow Critical Mass Promotions to install sponsored message boards in school washrooms — although the board's own policy does not allow advertising where students would be considered a "captive audience," such as in a washroom stall. The board's policy on corporate sponsorship is currently being reviewed.



deals in schools, particularly with beverage and junk food companies. A number of American states and several Canadian provinces are currently reviewing what is sold in schools, and some governments have legislated against the sale of junk food in schools — particularly at the elementary level — altogether.

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## RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Barlow, Maude and Heather-jane Robertson, *Class Warfare: The Assault on Canada's Schools*, Key Porter, Toronto, 1994.

*Kids for Sale: Taking a Stand Against Advertising in Our Schools*. The Center for Commercial Free Public Education, California 1999.

Dunsmore, Diane. "Twelve Reasons to say 'No' to Corporate Partnerships." *CCPA Education Monitor*, Volume 4 Number 2, Spring 2000.

Maser, Michael. "Failing Kids with Fast Foods in the Cafeteria." *The Georgia Straight*, Vancouver, February 2000.

Robertson, Heather-jane. *No More Teachers, No More Books: The Commercialization of Canada's Schools*. McLelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1998.

Shaker, Erika. "Adopt a What?" *Our Times Magazine*, Vol. 20, No. 2, April/May 2001.



The Anti-Corporate Rule Action Group of OPIRG Toronto began the Corporate-Free Campus project in 1998 to expose, challenge, and build alternatives to corporate connections at U of T. As part of the project, tours of campus examine corporate involvement within particular buildings, and the campus was put "under construction" to work toward corporate-free zones. In 1998, students at York University launched a lengthy campaign to expose the corporate connections to the Board of Governors, and conflicts of interest within the university.

Access to Information requests filed in 2001 by 15-year-old Aurora, Ontario student Nicholas Dodds and his father Jack forced the York and Peel Regional School Boards to reveal their exclusive agreements with Pepsi and Coke (respectively) in 2003 — after a two-year legal battle. Schools in the York Region District School Board participating in a five-year contract with Pepsi receive \$3.7-million over the term, about 30% of total sales. This is on top of almost \$700,000 that the board receives for installing the vending machines, and thousands of dollars in incentives for selling soft drinks in high-school cafeterias. Peel board schools receive \$5.5-million from their 10-year contract with Coke, with more cash flowing in through the remainder of their contract term — \$1.4 million in 2002.



## 2-C. BUSINESS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS



THINK

What kinds of business partnerships have been formed in schools within your community? What corporations are involved? What educational benefits do the schools and students get from these “partnerships”?

Construct an organizer that outlines the costs and benefits to both the public and private sectors of these partnerships. What is your conclusion? Write a paragraph that is designed to convince the reader of your perspective.

Research, by way of interview, the effect on local small businesses when a Wal-Mart opens up. Check out: <http://rogueimc.org/2003/08/1226.shtml> and Naomi Klein’s *No Logo* p. 133 - 135 for some perspectives.



TALK

The CEO of Wal-Mart Canada remarks, “Our Adopt-A-School Program makes it easy for our stores — and our associates — to give back to their communities in a way that is meaningful to Canadians.” Consider how ethical it is for schools to accept money from a corporation that is responsible for destroying the small businesses in the very communities the school serves.

What is the effect of commercialization on the school and the students? Where should policy-makers, educators, and families draw the line?

What, if any, kinds of policies or guidelines exist within the school or school board to manage commercialization and “partnerships”? What are some key demands or conditions that should be included in these guidelines?





Craft at least five (5) questions to ask at a local Wal-Mart and inquire after their support for the “Adopt-a-School” program regarding what they perceive to be the direct, tangible benefits of this program locally. If they don’t have answers, ask why. Do they think they get more shoppers as a result? Report back to class what you found.

Write a clause in your Youth Manifesto.

