

## **INDUSTRIAL HYDRAS**

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Featureless antinational nature of the transnational capital, which through transnational corporations keeps sucking the life-giving juices of economies in transition, has been best expressed by Robert Stephenson, Ford's vice-chairman: "When we contact a Government disliking the USA, we always ask: Which do you prefer – the Great Britain, Germany, or France? We dispose of many flags, you may choose."

From the words of Robert Stephenson, a transnational company vice-chairman, we can understand why such companies are, among other things, called "industrial hydras", by some qualified people. In any case, we are talking about a high degree of all kinds of "adaptability", as is the case with the real hydras, where everything serves to answering the ultimate purpose. The hydra metaphor is absolutely illustrative. Just like a hydra as an animal adapts itself to a new environment, sucking with its stinging tentacles the life-giving juices of its victims, in the same way these "industrial hydras" suck the resources, manpower, and other life-giving juices of host countries' national economies. Namely, in various ways they "buy" individuals occupying high posts in governments (and even governments entirely), they operate through lobby groups in parliaments, making in that way loopholes in laws which are important to their business running. In a similar fashion they create in media a positive picture about themselves through publicity, propaganda, public relations, aggressive marketing; they have "their own" journalists in editorial boards etc. That is to say, they make use of their "impact" on levers of power and on the public, thus taking an active part in preventing the adoption of antimonopoly laws, in making decisions on introducing lower taxes for the foreign capital, and in passing environmental protection laws. . . Disorganized trade unions and political instability play into their hands. Further, in a single sentence Mr Stephenson discloses not only his business approach, which is clear, but much more than that, his life philosophy and worldview as well. In the following lines we are going to try to present the interconnectedness and mutual dependence of their business approaches and life philosophies, as well as their combined impact on all life spheres of all mankind.

Not only in this example, but in countless similar examples, both in literature and in practice, we can see that the new globalist élites, in fact, do

not have their own homlands. This fact is important not so much because of the critical approach to such worldview (for everybody chooses their own ways by their free will), but because of the fact that they want to impose such worldview on the rest of mankind, making use of all allowed and unallowed means. (Here, of course, we do not think of homeland only in a geographical sense, but in all other senses, of homeland as part of identity, of cultural heritage, of origins, of national and religious affiliations of the ethnic group one descends from etc.). It means that here we have simultaneous activities of political pressures and economic conditionings as ways of persuasion of disobedient nations, peoples, and governments in regard to the correctness of their worldview, always ending with the armed forces. Through such distorted worldview and through the actual activities of its inserting into the conscience of the post-Christian mankind, the true nature of what is really happening in all segments of human life all over the World is disclosed to us. The nature and aims of the globalization process are clearly disclosed to us. We are witnessing that together with the invasion of transnational corporations there appear the characteristic by-products of their activities, the radical changes in social, cultural, ideological, and even in spiritual essence of the population being subject to colonization. These changes, apart from impoverishment of large masses of population, manifest themselves through the consumer mentality, through the fluid system of moral norms and values being established, through materialism with no alternative, through hedonism, individualism etc.

What are, in fact, transnational companies as an economic phenomenon (in further text TNC's), where did they emerge, and what is their true impact on economies and populations, and who are their "strategic partners"? The answers to these questions will shed more light on this not only economic, but social, cultural, and psychological phenomenon of today as well. This is especially important for a better understanding of the position of the Serbian society and state at the moment, bearing in mind the processes of transition and ownership restructuring, which are underway. TNCs are the most powerful lever of globalization, their dominance being best shown by the following figures:

they materialize 25% of the total world production, 66% of the total world trade exchange, and 75% of the total world technological exchange (these data become even more striking when we know that all TNCs in the world are owned by a few hundred people, gathered around semisecret and secret societies, among which the most influential are: the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderberg Group, and the Council of Foreign Relations.

A TNC is a company running business in many national economies through its foreign subsidiaries. The essence of such successful activities (as is seen in the above figures) and the spreading of TNCs are basically very simple: namely, they disperse their production in search of low costs (cheap labour, resources etc.) and then they efficiently integrate it due to low transport costs and telecommunications. Efficient logistic support and any other help are provided by institutions under their direct control, which are: in financial sector International Monetary Fund, World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and European Investment Bank; in the field of turnover – World Trade Organization.

Just like cancerogenic cells spread at the cost of a host's health, killing healthy cells one by one, so these cancerogenic mutants spread and make profits at the cost of economies and populations of the host countries. The origins of modern TNCs date back to the early XX century, when such "industrial hydras" shook the USA to the very constitutional roots as a result of their unrestricted and unrestrained activities. This led to the adoption of Sherman's and Clayton's Decrees, two acts against the unrestrained activities of trusts, which are still in force. Why is this piece of information important? Because the same people who are promoters of liberal economic developments, i.e. the ruling world political oligarchy, operating through IMF, World Bank, TNCs, and other financial institutions (favouring, among other things, the unrestrained market even where it does not have self-regulating control, favouring the state non-interfering even where there are natural monopolies, favouring the abolition of customs duties, the reduction of taxes for the foreign capital etc.) are guided by completely different economic logic and principles in their own yards. Here we have the notorious double standards of the "happiness makers" of the new age, whose consequences we as a people have experienced many times in recent 15 years in a "transparent" way (a favourite expression of the new age ideologists in Serbia).

Today, one hundred years after the adoption of the two acts in the USA Congress, these industrial concerns have mutated into the above mentioned "industrial hydras", whose activities often oppose macroeconomic policies of countries subject to this kind of colonization. I will state a few "standard" examples of such activities.

In 1999, for example, Latin America received 90 billion dollars of foreign investments (read: foreign takeover of local companies). At the same time this region declared the deficit of 56 billion dollars. The explanation of this economic "paradox" lies in the fact that this figure represents the outflow

based on dividends and profits "sucked" by the foreign owners who skimmed the cream and carried it off from the host countries.

Another example shows that the main "harvest" finished during the last decade of the XX century. In the golden time for plundering the Russian natural resources, during the 8-year quisling Yeltsin regime, over 500 billion dollars were "skimmed" in Russia by TNCs and carried off to the West, both legally and illegally. In contrast, the West invested fewer than 5 billion dollaes before Yeltsin was reelected President in 1996! This is to say 5 billion dollars IN, 500 hundred billion dollars OUT. This is probably an extreme example of "benefits" provided by this kind of globalization.

The following two examples explain not only the economic essence, but include socilogical, ethical, cultural, and other aspects of this kind of globalization.

In 1997 there were demonstrations before the Disney shops on Manhatten. Demonstrators prevented the purchase of the Disney Company products. The reason for this was the information that teddy toys produced by the Disney Company, whose retail price was between 20 and 200 dollars, were made by children on Tahiti paid 16 cents per hour in working conditions onappropriate to human beings, while the Disney genaral manager earned 91 000 dollars per hour! This means that the issue here is not only the lack of the basic economic logic (making unimagined extraprofits), but the lack of the basic morality and humanity with the protagonists of this story.

The culmination of horror darkening all other cases is a story of a Nigerian Ogoni tribe, whose entire habitat, Arcadia, with the lush vegetation covering 1050 square kilometers, has been devastated as a result of the work of the Shell Oil Company (known to the Serbian public as one of pretenders to buying NIS). The consequences of this sort of economic support provided by this company are: dying of people on a massive scale, mass migrations, and fighting the guerrilla war against the Shell. The leader of the Ogoni Survival Movement. Ken Saroviva, the winner of the Goldman Prize for the environment protection in 1995, was killed under mysterious circumstances soon after his successful internationalization of the Ogoni land issue. And what was the reaction of the Nigerian Government to this environmental carastrophy, to the dying and migrating of their own population? The Nigerian Government offered legal protection to their "straregic partner" against the disturbance and against all costs, even against the costs which would be paid as a compensation to the victims of pollution. These are only some among so many examples of the subversive activities of TNCs against the "peripheral" countries and against their socio-economic systems. About

some of them we will never learn because the industry of the removal of traces which "stink with inhumanity", as was said by Prince-Bishop Njegoš, has reached such a high degree that only a fundamental error in a few "screws" simultaneously can for a while confuse a well-tuned "mechanism" of merciless plutocrats of the New World Order. Even when this occurs, like in the above mentioned examples, everything ends with the promises that the error will be corrected, and that in future the rules of social responsibility will be obeyed to, that human rights will be respected etc. Unfortunately, in practice we often witness the mockery of all norms of human rights and values, declaratively established as civilizational norms by these very people through their political exponents. On the other side there is no mechanism strong enough which would bring such behaviour to the "acknowledgement of rights" about which the above mentioned Prince-Bishop also spoke. The minor the sovereignty of a State, the greater the impact of these industrial hydras, and the other way round.

Well, the era of merciless plutocrats has begun. All of us should wonder and decide before which flag in this "new era" to bow down, and to serve with our hearts and lives. Whether to bow down before those numerous flags, i.e. before the World supra-flag without homeland or soul, before the icily cold blackjack of the New World Order, before the worthlessness being imposed on us (about which Ford's vice-chairman, Robert Stephenson, spoke in the introduction to the text)? Or to try to serve the flag of truth, justice, humanitarianism, which has been hearn as an invisible call "from above" in the form of conscience in every human heart. Here I do not think of armies of those who are forced to struggle for bare existence working in these companies, but of those who accept the World by the monstrous ethical principles of the new "Paradise on Earth", founding on them their relations to their neighbours and to other people. It is up to our free choice and will before which flag we will bow down.