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¡VENCEREMOS!

Die andere Globalisierung



EDITION BRAUS

I am a woman with convictions. I am convinced of the future, convinced of life, convinced of people – but I think there are millions of people who can't express their feelings, their opinions and their knowledge. And therefore I believe it is so important to be a socially active person: someone who can make suggestions, who can listen to others and also who can give a little energy to those persons who in some moments feel abandoned or who have lost their self-esteem.

I am also in the movement because of the youth, because I think that young people have a very big task: to preserve our planet, to show human empathy, to appreciate the family as well as human dignity and identity. They may not become hypocritical or corrupt, or especially not murderers. Recently there were many massacres. And I believe that when we as human beings, already from youth on, show that we can live with each other in peace, but also in peace with ourselves, we can be an example for others. Hopefully the future generations, that come much later after us, will be able to sing again, will be able to feel like dignified people again and to have a place in humanity.

I consider myself as an ambassador with full authority, a special envoy of the indigenous peo-

ple. I am an ambassador who was not elected by an assembly or by a nation, but rather I believe that fate, the magic of the cultures, the magic of the times and the people have helped me to take my place here. I'm not an ambassador according to the rules of western elections, but I consider myself an ambassador because I have a dose of spirituality, because I have a life practice that has a lot to do with the culture, with the dead, with those people who didn't fulfil their mission on this earth. So I have spiritual leaders, Mayas. My spiritual leaders help me with ceremonies, with energies. I believe in the energies, in the rising of the sun that shines on us, and I also believe in the setting of the sun that unites us with our ancestors. I believe in the air that cleanses our way, as well as in the energy of the earth that gives us the strength to live in a harmonious environment. I'm not a spiritual leader, but I certainly have a practice in indigenous spirituality. I characterise my role as nothing other than as the ambassador of this culture. So will I always live.

Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Maya-Quiché Indian, born 1959, Guatemala



Over forty years ago I went into economics. I switched from studying mathematics and physics into studying economics because of my concern about social and economic issues like poverty, unemployment, and the lack of growth. At that time I was interested both in the problems of the developing countries and the problem of poverty in the United States. In the last few years, particularly since I've been at the World Bank, it's been clear that the central issues of the day are the issues of globalisation, and equity within the global community.

I suppose I could trace my awareness for these issues back to where I grew up – in Gary, Indiana, a steel town which was very marked by periodic unemployment, high levels of inequality, poverty and discrimination. But I think that I

had other telling experiences while I was at the World Bank. There I got a chance to see both the inequality and the poverty around the world, and also the inadequacies of the way the issues were being approached in many circles. Under the name of economics, ideas were pushed that were not good economics, that were based on theories that were outdated, on invented assumptions, like for instance perfect information and perfect markets, that were completely inappropriate for developing countries. And the lack of concern for these developing countries, combined with the arrogance with which they asserted their solutions, obviously gave rise to a reaction to try to do something about it.

Joseph Stiglitz, economist, born 1943, USA



I'm engaged because I feel, as a journalist, we are 'watchdogs', and I'm engaged so I can help women, especially at the grassroots, to understand what is going on. My main mission as part of the movement is to gather information and disseminate it to the local people. Our paper speaks for the grassroots. I want to assist these people, so at least they know what's happening, and also to make their views known to the other people and the policy makers.

What I would like to communicate, especially to the journalists out there: in whatever we do, as writers and as watchdogs, we have the right to freedom of expression. And we have to use that to the fullest, to air the issues, especially for those

without a voice, the people at the grassroots. Because they're the ones who are the most affected. And they are left out of most of the decision-making processes at an international, national, and regional level. So I feel that as female journalists we owe it to them to disseminate information particularly to the marginalised, who are mostly women and children. We are privileged, in that in most countries we have community radio stations, and I would urge all the journalists to utilise their means to communicate, to disseminate the right information to their people.

Diana Mulilo-Mwilwa, journalist and graphic designer, born 1973, Zambia



I am very angry with all the governments of the world. From the United States to all the Arab governments in our region. We are living in a jungle. This is not a civilised world. The UN is a very conservative organisation. It's a governmental organisation. And I don't believe in it. I'm calling for a new UN for the people. But George Bush has challenged even the UN. The UN was against the Gulf War. The Security Council was against the Gulf War. France and Germany were against the Gulf War. But George Bush went and invaded Iraq and killed people, unilaterally, just like that. Without respecting the opinion of the international community. Nothing. So this is a jungle. And nobody punished him. Of course we are having a tribunal in Brussels – and I am among those people who are going to condemn George Bush as a war criminal – but we are a people's tribunal. We don't have power. We are dominated by military power, by economic power. The American superpower can go and kill people militarily, and they can commit economic genocide through the World Bank and the IMF, and nobody punishes them. Israel is killing the Palestinians, and nobody punishes it. Nobody punished Sharon¹. But they call the young girl who killed herself in Palestine a terrorist. And they call Sharon a man of peace, so everything is reversed. It drives me crazy. That's why I'm engaged in the movement. Because I want people who speak the same language as I do, who are fighting against this jungle, what they call international capitalism, what they call globalisation, what they call new imperialism. Or these neo-conservatives, neo-liberals, all these words. So we are fighting. I'm ready to go even to hell if we can really create a new world. That's why.

I am a writer, I am a novelist, I am a medical doctor, a psychiatrist, and it's part of my work. If I do not act – it is because I do not separate

between acting and thinking – if I am not among the people, I cannot write. I am inspired by the people. And they are the current new superpower that is going to fight the American superpower. That's why I'm here.

I have been aware of injustice since I was a child. I was born female, in a poor family in the village. And I was brought up between two classes: The poor family of my father, and the bourgeois family of my mother. So I was conscious of class oppression. And I was conscious of gender as a girl, because they circumcised me. I had to divorce two husbands to write. I went to prison. I lost my job. The fundamentalists tried to divorce me from my husband two years ago. So I am oppressed. I'm fighting for my own liberation. My country, Egypt, is colonised by the Americans and by the World Bank. We are becoming poorer and poorer, more and more oppressed. Islamic fundamentalism was encouraged by the Americans and the government in Egypt. And they are veiling women, circumcising them, and oppressing them. So it would be unnatural if I didn't speak. It would be very unnatural.

The most dangerous is the veil of the mind. Millions of people are unaware, or have a pseudo-awareness, because of the American media. Our Arabic media follows the American. All of the media brainwash the people. So the people are unaware. Even women go against themselves. You find demonstrations in Paris, and in Cairo – the veiled women, who are asking for the veil – against the French government! And they have the veil, and miniskirts, and makeup, – which I call the postmodern veil. It's ridiculous when women act against themselves. That's the veil of the mind. It's dangerous.

**Nawal El Saadawi, writer, psychiatrist,
born 1931, Egypt**



For me, to be involved against globalisation means to stand up for another world politics. The point of departure is the inclusion of agriculture in the GATT² negotiations. As farmers, as members of a trade union, it has become clear to us that the inner logic of agriculture, which has already existed for millions of years, to feed people where they really live, will be destroyed by the inclusion of agriculture in the negotiations of the World Trade Organisation. For me that is the starting point, a kind of break in human history. This is not a problem of the twentieth century; it's the first stage of an irrevocable disturbance in the survival of humanity on our planet. For me it began with the inclusion of patents on living material in these negotiations – with the fact that genetically manipulated material is forced on the farmers of this earth, that the seeds are controlled by a few international co-operations. And this is exactly the symbol for our involvement, that the peasants no longer have their own seeds at their disposal, although seeds have always been exchanged

between the farmers of this earth. That a few businesses privatise the seeds in order to decide what the farmers will plant, is the terminal stage in the financial control of the future of the earth.

I believe that this struggle today is not only the struggle of those who have already been involved in it for years, but that of each citizen, and that everybody can participate in this struggle in his or her everyday life, through daily decisions in the way and manner of consuming, of eating, of clothing oneself, of travelling.

My dream is that this planet will survive the insanity of humanity and the nuclear threat. But also the daily madness that consists in destroying water, soil, air, biodiversity, in order to make a profit. I hope that nevertheless our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will still experience birds in the trees and fish in the ocean.

José Bové, farmer, activist and trade unionist, born 1953, France



The first time I searched the internet and already knew how to work with it, and went to the chat rooms, everybody there asked me, where are you from? When I told them, 'I'm from Afghanistan,' they left the chat room. Why? Because Afghans are terrorists. No, we are not terrorists. We are people like you!

Before the wars started, my parents left Afghanistan. So all my brothers and sisters were born in Iran. When we came back to Afghanistan during the rule of the Taliban, especially in the Bamiyan Province, I was faced with lots of problems. I found a new life there. It was completely different from Iran. When the Taliban got to Bamiyan, they killed all the people from the youth groups. Because of that I left my parents and went with my brother to Pakistan. One thing which was very unbelievable for me is that everybody in Afghanistan told me: 'If you tell others you are Sheeah (this is my religion, which is a part of Islam) they will kill you. They will not allow you to go to school, or you will not be able to pass your exams.' Why? I'm from Afghanistan, so why can I not declare my religion publicly? Why can I not say: 'I am this and that?' These are the moments when I recognise that I have to start to work with others on changing their minds.

Six months after the Taliban left Afghanistan I came back to Kabul again without my parents and started to work there. At first it was difficult for me to join the youth groups, because the situation in Afghanistan made me completely quiet. I wanted just to sit in a corner and think by myself. The Taliban killed all my relatives in Bamiyan. I just saw terror there. When I looked at my mother,

she was just crying, nothing else. I saw my sister's terror. She was only five and just cried for food. All these things changed me completely. So I was just sitting in a corner and thought about what had happened in the past, who I was and what was going to happen in the future. Then I studied literature. I had a professor called Ahmadshah who was my best teacher and best friend. He invited me to a conference. 'You have to get out there. Maybe this will help you,' he said. After only two seminars, I started to work with other groups. Then I went to the Afghan Youth Civil Society conference. It was the first big conference in Kabul, just for youth. There I could say to everyone: 'I am an Afghan. Yeah, my religion is Sheeah.' I understood that something changed in my home, started to work with the Afghan Youth Centre group, and went to lots of conferences. Then my friends told me I could go to the radio station and start to work there. And that's what I did. My job in Good Morning Afghanistan is going to web sites to find scientific news and political jokes. In Afghanistan, we make political jokes about what is happening and announce them on the radio. And now I'm so happy that the world is seeing Afghanistan. They are going to know Afghanistan, and I hope they never forget Afghanistan again.

I want to say: 'I'm Afghan, I'm a girl from Afghanistan. Really. You should believe me.' And the one thing which we don't need are guns, we Afghans don't need guns, we need pens, nothing else.

**Fatima Hussaini, student, born 1982, Iran/
Afghanistan**



In my life I have, above all, only experienced struggle. I lived through the Second World War with much awareness and I couldn't study what I really wanted to. Then when I got married, our first child was spastically paralysed, which stuck me in 14 years of extreme isolation. And when that was over, my husband became ill with cancer. After the death of my husband, for the first time I had the feeling: now I have the space to really do what I want. And, on the other hand, precisely because of this long isolation, I experienced how crucial it is not only to be occupied with oneself and one's own affairs, but rather to look for something in which one can grow, that goes beyond oneself. What we understand today about globalisation is a collection of power and egoism. Through a conversation I had the idea that one has to say, in contrast to that: There is a globalisation of responsibility. And this expansion of globalisation through the whole Earth-organism, not just merely through the geographical earth globe, that would be my goal!

During the war in Bosnia I and a friend made aid deliveries, around 30 aid transports, and in this way it resulted in my simply doing what is offered to me. First of all there was the local agenda, and then the question of globalisation. And what I experience through this development is that I said to myself, I really deserve a spanking if I don't take

advantage of this opportunity that I have now. Besides, as a result now I'm always surprised that the other people go around with such long faces down to their belly because I'm constantly happy. That's it!

How many old people waste this happiness that I experience, because they don't have the courage to go from the subjective to the objective. It's simply a waste of resources when old people only busy themselves with their travels and their tennis and their health. I'm so healthy because I'm doing something. When I saw my doctor recently, I said, 'Well, I'm sorry, but you don't interest me whatsoever, because since the death of my husband, maybe I've had a cold once, but otherwise I feel so chipper that, for the life of me, I don't need you!' And I think that it's connected together with an inner attitude. When people are constantly sick, then I always think that it's connected with the fact that they take themselves far too seriously. And if I suggested a possibility of being happy and being healthy, it would be not to take oneself so seriously and, instead, take others more seriously. After all, I'm already 76 now – and maybe that's a sign that this attitude isn't so bad for one's self, right?!

**Doris Henrichsen, retired social worker,
born 1926, Germany**



I come from an Ashkenaz family, that means European Jews. And we live in a very good neighbourhood in Jerusalem. So I never really had the chance to meet people from other classes of society. In the army I met pretty much all of them. I understood what this society is composed of. And how difficult it is to maintain it together. The Jewish factor, as a uniting factor, doesn't really work. Everybody hates everybody: The Russian immigrants hate the Moroccan immigrants, the German immigrants hate the Polish and so on. And when I finished the army – I had never done any operational work. That means, I haven't really been among the Palestinians.

In 1997 my sister died in a bombing attack. This launched us in the discussion. Even if we didn't want to. In Israel you have that large privilege, not to be included in this debate. You can organise your life thinking that the main issue is 'secular' and 'religious'. Or white and not-white. You can think this is the only problem, and base your theory upon it. But, we couldn't, because she died in a bombing attack. In Israel there is the Organisation of Victims of Terror, funded by the government. They addressed us immediately, offered us pamphlets and help and social security and lots of stuff like that. We immediately comprehended that they were trying to shut us up. And to make us drown in our pain and in our misery. We saw families in this situation, and we refused to take part in that. Independently we decided that my sister's not a victim of what is usually called terror, she's a victim of the Prime Minister at that time, Benjamin Netanyahu. What he did led, and he knew it, to the bombing attack. He just didn't think it would hit someone he knew. My mom went to school with him. When he came to present his condolences, my mom refused to see him. She said, 'I don't speak to the other side.' Journalists asked, 'What do you mean, the other side? You accept Palestinians in your house!' And she said, 'In Israel, there are two sides: people who want peace, and people who want war, who profit from war. It's not a psychological, evil thing. It's about money. It's about career, that is very clear.' From

that moment on, journalists were everywhere. I was a soldier at that time. I was just starting my three years' service and it touched me wherever I was. My commander was a national religious Jew and when my mom and dad were in the journals and in the newspapers, I had a very hard time. But somehow I succeeded in staying there. That was what I wanted, so nobody could complain. I was a tank driver, and was supposed to do operational work in Lebanon. I was about to go there, when my mom used her right, as a bereaved parent, to refuse my entrance to Lebanon or to any other so-called dangerous area. Therefore I was transferred to another unit. My refusal was so not really mine, it was my mom's. And I think this is probably the only way that people can refuse: with support from their family. They can't refuse all alone. Refusal in the Israeli army is a very difficult task. I am grateful to my mother because she saved my humanity. I don't think I could have lived with that very well if I had taken part in what was done there.

The Israeli majority is not religious. The Israeli majority wants a Palestinian state in the frontiers of '67. Seventy percent have declared that. We didn't dream that up. We, today, are 1 600 political Refuseniks out of five million Jews who are supposed to serve in the army. The army is a holy cow. It's untouchable. You don't question it. It's what built the country. It's where the best of the people came from. Only after the occupation in Lebanon, in '82, the people started questioning. There was the first known, politically declared refusal by a brigadier. From that moment on there were big demonstrations to get out of Lebanon, etc. And I know that actually the movement I am part of, the Courage to Refuse, has a very strong political effect on the Israeli consensus. It is breaking it apart. Dov Wiesglass, a high advisor of Mr. Sharon's¹, recently said that the whole plan of withdrawal from Gaza is largely because of the refusals. And he said it right out in the open. This is a very historical moment and I'm proud to be part of it.

**Guy Elhanan, theatre studies student,
born 1979, Israel**

