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Bill Gates as Social Engineer: Introducing the World's Largest Liberal Philanthropist

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Abstract

Recent critical scholarship has drawn attention to the antidemocratic influence of conservative philanthropists on the evolution of global civil society, but few researchers have focused on the similarly antidemocratic trends that have resulted from the influence of Left-leaning capitalist funders. Indeed while many people may think that the pro-free market doctrine of Right leaning philanthropoids may receive better funding than liberal (progressive) foundations this is not necessarily the case. Instead, the Right has simply acted with more cohesion, and consciously worked at influencing policy makers and politicians at an ideological level, while the Left has adopted a more haphazard reactive approach to tempering the excesses of our capitalist society. In most cases researchers have also tended to assume that liberal funders have only had noble (progressive) intentions to strengthen democracy, and while this may be true to a point, this paper will demonstrate that this charity is ultimately given to sustain capitalism (albeit a less harsh version compared to that proposed by their fellow Right-wing philanthropists). This paper will furnish a detailed overview of the Bill Gates' philanthropic foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates foundation is currently the largest liberal foundation in the world, and distributes over \$2 billion worth of grants a year to ostensibly progressive causes. By providing the first comprehensive outline of the contours of the people and groups associated with the Gates Foundations work, this paper will critically investigate Bill Gates role as a global social engineer. It is hoped that by delineating the Gates Foundations massive yet so far undocumented impact on global civil society, that critical scholars will begin to think more seriously about how alternative more democratic funding systems for progressive activism and research might be launched and sustained in the future.

Like many of the world's richest businessmen Bill Gates believes in a special form of democracy, otherwise known as plutocracy, that is, 'socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor' (Pilger 2008). Following in the footsteps of the robber barons, like John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie (Josephson 1934), who founded two of America's most influential liberal foundations (e.g. the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation), Gates, like most capitalists, relies upon the government to help regulate and protect his business interests from competition, but is less keen on the idea of a government that acts to redistribute wealth to the wider populous. Baker (2006, 47) surmises this idea when he writes that Bill Gates is after all 'one of the heroes of the conservative nanny state.' In the minds of such massively powerful would-be capitalists, the State is merely a tool to be harnessed for profit maximization, and they themselves, the ones who have acquired their wealth by exploiting and manipulating the economic system then take it upon their own shoulders to help relieve global inequality and escalating poverty – the modern day's white man's burden. As one might expect, the definitions of the appropriate solutions to the capitalist-driven inequality that are generated by the world's most successful capitalists neglect to seriously challenge the primary driver of global poverty, capitalism (Chossudovsky 2003). For the most part the incompatibility of democracy and capitalism remains anathema to all (Street, 2000), instead liberal philanthropists industriously fund all manner of 'solutions' that help provide a much needed outlet valve for rising resistance and dissent (Crozier et al. 1975), while still enabling business-as-usual, albeit with a band-aid stuck over some of the most glaring inequities (Roelofs 2003).

With huge government-aided financial empires resting in the hands of a small power elite (Mills 1956), the ability of the richest individual philanthropists to shape global society is increasing all the time, while the power of governments to influence society is being continuously undermined by many of the powerful philanthropists (Guilhot 2005). This situation is problematic on a number of levels least of not which is that existing theories of democratic governance find no legitimate role for liberal philanthropists acting as extra-constitutional planners (Roelofs 2003, 5). Democratic governments rely on taxes to stabilize existing structures of governance; however, by exploiting specifically designed legislation, billionaire capitalists are able to create massive tax-free endowments to satisfy their own particular whims or interests, but not necessarily those of the wider public. This process in effect means that vast amounts of money is regularly 'stolen' from the democratic citizenry, whereupon is redistributed by unaccountable elites, who then cynically use this display of generosity to win over more supporters to free-market principles that they themselves do their utmost to protect themselves from (Baker 2006).

Bill Gates' Microsoft Corporation and his associated liberal foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation – which is the largest of its kind in the world – are only one of the more visible displays of capitalism's hypocrisy. However, to date within the scholarly literature no attention has been paid to the activities of this powerful philanthropist, thus this paper will provide the first critical overview of Bill Gates' global social engineering. Given the paucity of studies that have incorporated critiques of liberal philanthropy many readers may not be familiar with the numerous critiques of liberal philanthropy (e.g. Arnove 1980), however, these will not be reviewed here as Barker (2008a, 2008b) has reviewed this literature elsewhere. Instead using a Gramscian conceptual framework (Gramsci 1971), supported by Roelofs (2003) critical insights into the democracy manipulating activities of liberal foundations, this article will concentrate on providing much needed historical context to Bill Gates' philanthropy. Subsequently, the paper will provide a brief overview of the business

that generated Bill Gates' fortune, the Microsoft Corporation, and will then examine some of the people and projects that are links to his global philanthropic activities.

Capitalists cum Philanthropists: the roots of Gates philanthropy

At this present historical juncture, neoclassical free-market economic doctrines – in theory at least – are the favored means of promoting capitalism by business and political elites. Unfortunately, in many respects this neoliberal dogma has been adopted, arguably against their own best interests, by a sizable proportion of the citizenry of the world's most powerful countries (e.g. in the United States and UK). This widespread internalization (but not necessarily acceptance) by the broader populous of the economic theories that consolidate capitalist hegemony over the global market did not happen naturally, but actually required a massive ongoing propaganda campaign to embed itself in the masses minds (Miller and Dinan 2007). The contours of this propaganda offensive have been well described by Carey (1995, 18) who fittingly observed that: 'The twentieth century has been characterised by three developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy.'

There are many reasons why corporate giants engage in liberal philanthropic endeavors: one is to have a direct influence on political decisions through what has been termed political philanthropy (Sims 2003),¹ but another important reason is that such charitable efforts help cultivate a positive image in the public's mind that serves to deflect often much warranted criticism, while also helping them expand their market share. However, although liberal foundations like the Gates Foundation may engage in such ostensibly progressive activities this does not mean that the capitalist enterprises from which their endowments arise (i.e. Microsoft) refrain from engaging in normal antidemocratic business practices. So while the Gates Foundation directs some of its resources to progressive grassroots initiatives, its corporate benefactor actually works to create fake grassroots organizations (otherwise known as astroturf groups, see Beder 2000) to actively lobby through covert means to protect corporate power. For example, Astroturf groups that have been linked to Microsoft include Americans for Technology Leadership, the Association for Competitive Technology, Citizens Against Government Waste, and Citizens for a Sound Economy (now known as FreedomWorks) (Menn and Sanders 2001; Miller and Helm 1998; Morgan 2000),

Like what were formerly known as the 'big three' liberal foundations – the Carnegie Corporation, the Ford Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation – whom exhibited a long history of working closely with the US government's Central Intelligence Agency (Saunders 1999), Microsoft also has its own ties to the shadowy intelligence community, as in 1999 it was revealed that Microsoft has direct ties to the intelligence community as 'special access codes for use by the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) ha[d] been secretly built into all versions of the Windows operating system' (Blum 2007; Campbell 1999).

This CIA-connection should be expected as one of Microsoft's main clients is after all the Pentagon. Furthermore, Microsoft's board of directors itself is also home to a key member of the 'defense' establishment, as in November 2003 Charles Noski joined their board. Shortly thereafter, in December 2003, Noski joined the Northrop Grumman Corporation – which

¹ Sims (2003: 167-8) estimated that the 'corporate outlay on political philanthropy in the 2000 election cycle [in the US] was... a minimum of \$1-2 billion. This compares to roughly \$200 million on PAC contributions and \$400 million on soft money contributions.'

happens to be the third largest arms manufacturer in the world – as their corporate vice president, a position he retained until March 2005 (he also served on their board of directors during these years). Another Microsoft director, James Cash, Jr., also serves on the board of General Electric, yet another major military contractor; while Noski also serves as a director of the Rockefeller-linked investment banking giant, Morgan Stanley, and fellow Microsoft board member Dina Dublon is the former chief financial officer for the Rockefellers' financial services company JPMorgan Chase. Finally last but not least the CEO of Microsoft, Steven Ballmer, who has served in this position since 2000, also serves on the Jewish National Fund's (JNF) World Chairman's Council - a group that has been described as the 'principal Zionist tool for the colonization of Palestine' (Pappe 2006, 228, 17). This is a very controversial link for a corporation that created the Gates Foundation: however, having provided a critical overview of the corporation that allowed Bill Gates' philanthropic work to thrive, the concluding part of this paper will introduce some of the people and projects that have been supported by the various Gates foundations.

Microsoft's Charitable Ventures

Although Bill Gates now runs only has one philanthropic foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, this foundation has its roots in two of Gates' earlier philanthropic projects: the first of these foundations, the William H. Gates Foundation was formed in 1994, while the second, the Gates Library Foundation was formed in 1997. These two initially separate foundations were then merged in 1999 to create the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Understanding the complete backgrounds of the Gates Foundations' is critical to comprehending the political nature of their work, thus the following sections will briefly introduce Bill Gates' two initial philanthropic forays before moving on to study the Gates Foundation proper.

The William H. Gates Foundation

Formed in 1994 by Bill Gates and his wife Melinda Gates, with an initial stock gift of about \$94 million, the William H. Gates Foundation was managed as the name of the foundation suggests by Bill Gates father, William H. Gates Sr. Presently acting as the co-chairman of the Gates Foundation, Gates Sr., has independently of his son, had a successful career establishing one of Seattle's leading law firms, Preston Gates and Ellis (which in 2007 became K&L Gates), whose work is closely tied to Bill Gates' corporate/philanthropic network. Gates Sr. is also a director of the food giant Costco where he sits on their board of directors alongside Charles Munger, the former vice chairman of Berkshire Hathaway Inc. (see later). In 2003, Gates Sr. cofounded the Initiative for Global Development, which is a national network of business leaders that ostensibly champion 'effective solutions to global poverty.' The dubious level of commitment this group has to truly solving global poverty can perhaps be best ascertained by the fact that the two co-chairs of the Initiatives leadership council are the two former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, and Colin Powell (for critical commentary on their political careers see, de Rooij 2004). Albright, Powell, and Gates Sr. also serve as honorary chairs of another arguably misnamed 'democracy' promoting project called the World Justice Project which happens to obtain financial backing from two key weapons manufacturers, Boeing and General Electric: this project also receives support from Microsoft and the Gates Foundation amongst others.

Gates Sr. is also involved in other charitable ventures as he serves as a director of the United Way of America; while his late wife Mary Gates was also linked to the United Way as she

formerly served as chair of United Way International. Similarly, Microsoft's former executive vice president of Law and Corporate Affairs, William Neukom, chairs the Gates Challenge Endowment Campaign of the United Way of King County.² Neukom who is president-elect of the American Bar Association, also serves alongside Gates Sr. on the advisory board of the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, and when he retired from Microsoft (in 2002) he joined Preston Gates and Ellis as a partner – where he now chairs K&L Gates' board of directors.

In 1995, with the William H. Gates Foundation's offices located in Bill Gates Sr.'s basement, Gates Sr. invited the longstanding birth control/population activist Suzanne Cluett to help him distribute his foundations resources, and she then remained with the Gates' philanthropies, as associate director of global health strategies, until her death in 2006. (Here it is important to note that the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations' have a long history of promoting population control research around the world in line with U.S. imperial interests – for more on this see later.) Prior to joining the Gates' philanthropies, Cluett had obtained much experience in population control related programming as she had spent 16 years as administrative vice president for the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) – a group that was founded by Gordon Perkin in 1977, and had retained her as their first ever employee (Paulson 2006).

Describing itself as an 'international, nonprofit organization that creates sustainable, culturally relevant solutions, enabling communities worldwide to break longstanding cycles of poor health', PATH had in 2006 a total income of just over \$130 million, of which 65 percent was derived from foundations – most of which it obtained from its major funding partner the Gates Foundation. In 1995, PATH's president, Gordon Perkin, was first approached by Gates Sr. for his advice on family planning issues: this relationship then blossomed over the years and eventually, in late 1999, Perkin's stepped down as PATH's president and became the head of the Gates Foundations new global health program. However, this was not the first time that Perkins had directly worked on population control issues for liberal foundations, as in 1964 he joined the Planned Parenthood Federation of America as an associate medical director (a group that was well supported by Ford and Rockefeller monies), and just two years later he moved to the Ford Foundation to work on population issues in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Mexico and Brazil, where he stayed until he created PATH in 1977 (Paulson 2001).

Given that the two key policy advisors recruited by the William H. Gates Foundation first worked with the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH), it is interesting to note that another PATH board member, Steve Davis, formerly practiced law with Preston Gates and Ellis, is a former chair of United Way of King County, and presently serves as a director of Global Partnerships. The latter group, Global Partnerships, is yet another group that says it is dedicated to 'fight[ing] against global poverty' through capitalist friendly microfinance schemes (Feiner and Barker 2007), and has recently begun working closely with the Grameen Foundation (another microfinance group that receives major funding from the Gates Foundation).

² The president of United Way of King County, Jon Fine, also serves a director of Alliance for Education (see later). The Gates Challenge Endowment Campaign was initiated in 1999, when the Gates Foundation gave a special \$30 million grant to United Way's endowment fund. The Gates Foundation has noted that it aims to further bolster this endowment as it has pledged to match Gates Challenge donations dollar for dollar.

The Gates Learning Foundation

Founded in 1997 as the Gates Library Foundation, this philanthropic endeavor was formed in the foundations own words, to ‘bring computers and Internet access to public libraries in low-income communities in the United States and Canada.’ In 1999, the foundation then changed its name to the Gates Learning Foundation.

Prior to its merger into the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Gates Learning Foundation was headed by Patricia Stonesifer, who is presently the CEO of the Gates Foundation: however, prior to joining the philanthropic world, Stonesifer worked for Microsoft Corporation (1988-1997), and also ran her own management consulting firm. Stonesifer currently sits on the board of regents of the Smithsonian Institution, alongside other notable elites like Alan Spoon (the former president of *Newsweek*), Walter E. Massey (who is a trustee of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation), Bill Frist (who is a director of the National Endowment for Democracy), and the vice-president of the US, Dick Cheney. Stonesifer was also formerly a director of the Seattle Foundation, the Alaska Air Group (1998-2000), and the CBS Corporation (1999 -2005), and presently sits of the board of directors of Amazon.com. At Amazon, Stonesifer is joined by fellow board member John Seely Brown, who also serves as a director of the MacArthur Foundation, and as a founding trustee of the CIA venture fund In-Q-It, Inc.

Other than Patricia Stonesifer’s own excellent media connections it is also worth mentioning that her husband, Michael Kinsley, was the founding editor of *Slate* (a position he held for six years). *Slate* is an online magazine that used to be published by Microsoft, and was subsequently sold to the *Washington Post* in 2004. This change of ownership is particularly noteworthy because Melinda Gates presently serves on the *Washington Post Company’s* board of directors, as does Warren Buffett – a powerful individual who now helps direct the Gates Foundation alongside Melinda and Bill (see later). Like his wife, Kinsley is also well connected within media circles as he formerly edited *The New Republic*, and in 2006 he was recruited by the British-based *Guardian* newspaper to ‘spearhead’ their expansion in America (Busfield 2006). Also worth adding is that in 2003, the present editor of *Slate*, Jacob Weisberg, co-authored a book with Robert Rubin titled *In an Uncertain World*: this is significant because the current president of the Gates Foundations global development program, Sylvia Burwell had formerly acted as Chief of Staff to Robert Rubin while he served as President Clinton’s treasury secretary.

Prior to the 2000 merger directors of the Gates Learning Foundation, other than Patricia Stonesifer and Bill and Melinda Gates, board members included Gilbert Anderson (who at the time served a trustee of the Seattle Public Library), Vartan Gregorian (who was, and still is, the president of the Carnegie Corporation), and William H. Gray III (who was the president of the United Negro College Fund from 1991 until 2004, and presently sits on the public advisory committee of the Population Institute, and as a director of the Rockefellers’ JPMorgan Chase since 1992). Considering the extensive links that exist between Gray’s United Negro College Fund and various liberal philanthropists, it is important to briefly consider the history of the Fund’s work.

Founded in 1944, with critical aid provided by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (Gasman 2004, 74), the United Negro College Fund describes itself as America’s ‘largest and most successful minority higher education assistance organization’ having distributed over \$2.5 billion of grants since its creation. Crucially, the Fund has obtained massive support from liberal

foundations and in 1999 alone they received over \$1 billion from the Gates Foundation. It is also perhaps strange that in 2000 UNCF received \$1 million from the world's leading military contractor, Lockheed Martin Corporation (Standifer, 2000), while recently retired chairman of Lockheed Martin, Vance D. Coffman, has also served on the board of directors of the Fund.³

Returning to the Gates Learning Foundation, their former director of strategy and operations, Christopher Hedrick, formerly managed the national philanthropic programs for Microsoft, and was 'responsible for developing the growth of the company's partnership with the United Negro College Fund', and also happens to be a former treasurer of the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health. In 1999, Hedrick founded the consulting firm, Intrepid Learning Solutions, and it is significant that Nelson A. Rockefeller, Jr. (the son of Governor Nelson Rockefeller) acts as their executive vice president, while their board of directors includes amongst their members Steve Davis (see earlier).

Finally in late 1998 Terry Meersman worked for the Gates Learning Foundation as director of finance and administration. Meersman had worked in philanthropy for many years, and amongst his many jobs he formerly served as the venture fund program officer for the Pew Charitable Trusts – a major funder of environmental projects which has been heavily critiqued by progressive commentators.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Guiding Principles

In 2000, Bill and Melinda Gates created the sensibly named Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Based on the stated belief that 'every life has equal value' the Washington-based Foundation was established, in its own words, to 'help reduce inequities in the United States and around the world.' The Gates Foundation points out that 15 guiding principles 'reflect the Gates family's beliefs about the role of philanthropy and the impact they want this foundation to have', thus it is important to briefly examine these principles to get an idea of the type of the work that the foundation believes it is engaged in.

Many of the Gates Foundations 15 guiding principles suggest that the foundation respects the role of the community in dealing with social problems, thus they observe that: 'We treat our grantees as valued partners, and we treat the ultimate beneficiaries of our work with respect'; 'We treat each other as valued colleagues'; 'We must be humble and mindful in our actions and words'; and crucially they note that 'Philanthropy plays an important but limited role.' Yet as one might expect of the world's largest foundation there are limits on the respect they have for the beneficiaries of their work, as although they suggest that philanthropy should play a 'limited role' this is not borne out by the fact they in 2007 alone the Gates Foundation distributed over \$2 billion. Indeed other principles that guide the foundations work which suggest their acknowledgement of a social engineering role for the foundation include: the foundation will be 'driven by the interests and passions of the Gates family'; 'We are funders and shapers'; 'Our focus is clear'; 'We advocate—vigorously but responsibly—in our areas of focus'; and 'Meeting our mission... requires great stewardship of the money we have available.' Thus given the huge amounts of money involved it is hard to reconcile the

³ The late Christopher F. Edley Sr., who served as the president of the United Negro College Fund from 1973 to 1990, had prior to this appointment acted as a Ford Foundation program officer.

foundations vision of itself as ‘funders and shapers’ with their final guiding principle, which is ‘[w]e leave room for growth and change.’ Clearly the Gates Foundation is a powerful force for change, and judging by the previous historical achievements of the major liberal foundations, it is likely to be a rather antidemocratic and elitist force for change.

People and Projects

As noted previously, in 1999, the William H. Gates Foundation and the Gates Learning Foundation were consolidated into the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. At this critical time in their development the Gates Foundation was co-chaired by William H. Gates, Sr. and the foundations CEO Patty Stonesifer. Other executive committee members included Jack Faris (who is a former member of the steering committee for the Initiative for Global Development and serves on the board of United Way of King County), Richard Akeroyd (who had been with the Gates Learning Foundation since 1997), Allan Golston (who joined the foundation in 1999 and is now their U.S. program president), Tom Vander Ark (who joined the foundation as their executive director for education), Terry Meersman, and Gordon Perkin (see earlier),

Since the formal consolidation of the Gates philanthropies in late 1999 the most significant change at the Gates Foundation has been the massive influx of capital that they received from Warren Buffett. So the important question to ask is: ‘who is Warren Buffett, and what his connections to the Gates’ family are?’

Warren Buffett is the CEO of the investment company Berkshire Hathaway Inc. (a position he has held since 1970), and as mentioned earlier he presently serves alongside Melinda Gates on the board of directors of the Washington Post Company.⁴ This Gates/Hathaway/media connection is further bolstered by the presence of Thomas Murphy and Donald Keough on Berkshire Hathaway’s board, as until he retired in 1996 Murphy was the CEO of Capital Cities/ABC (which was bought by the media Disney that year), while Keough presently serves as a director of IAC/InterActiveCorp. Bill Gates also joined Berkshire Hathaway board of directors in 2004, while former Microsoft employee, Charlotte Guyman, presently serves on Hathaway’s board as well. Finally, Charles Munger, who has been the vice chair of Berkshire Hathaway since 1978, currently sits alongside William H. Gates, Sr. on Costco’s board of directors.

In part, the close working relationship that exists between the Gates’ family and Warren Buffett helps explain why in 2006 Buffett announced that he was going to leave most of his substantial personal earnings from Berkshire Hathaway – that is, \$31 billion – to the Gates Foundation (McNeil and Lyman 2006). To put this donation in perspective, at the time of the announcement, the Gates Foundations – which was already the largest liberal foundation in the world – had an endowment that was worth just under \$30 billion. Thus as one might expect Buffett now plays an important role in helping direct the work of the Gates Foundation (although to date he has not been officially designated any specific position).

Other critical people, other than actual members of the Gates family or their CEO Patty Stonesifer, that currently fulfill what are referred to as ‘leadership’ positions at the Gates Foundation include the three presidents of the foundations major programs, Allan Golston (U.S. programs), Tadataka Yamada (global health programs), and Sylvia Burwell (global

⁴ Ronald Olson also serves on the boards of both the Washington Post Company and Berkshire Hathaway.

development programs), their chief financial officer Alex Friedman, Connie Collingsworth (who serves as their general counsel), Martha Choe (who is the chief administrative officer), Heidi Sinclair (who is the chief communications officer), and Geoff Lamb (who is the managing director of public policy).

Another Green Revolution?

In late 2003 the Gates Foundation was strongly criticized by ‘international charities, farmers’ groups and academics’ as a result of a \$25 million grant it had given to ‘GM [genetically modified] research to develop vitamin and protein-enriched seeds for the world’s poor’ (Vidal 2003). This money supported research being undertaken by two groups, the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture and the International Food Policy Research Institute, two groups which played an integral role in the first Ford and Rockefeller Foundation-funded (so-called) Green Revolution (see later). Both of these organizations are also part of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), a group of global public institutes that is ‘widely accused of being a creature of its two major funders – the US and the World Bank’ (Vidal 2003). However, although linked to the World Bank what most critical commentators fail to comment on is the fact that CGIAR was formed as a result of a ‘series of private conferences held at the Rockefeller Foundation’s conference center in Bellagio, Italy’ and its work has been strongly supported by all manner of liberal foundations (Engdahl 2007a, 2007b). Thus while a good case can be made that the Gates Foundation has been highly influenced by other liberal foundations, like the Rockefeller Foundation, Vidal (2003) points out that there are also ‘reasons to believe that the Gates food agenda is now being shaped by US corporate and government interests’. This is because in regard to their support for CGIAR the Gates Foundation chose to partner with the US Department of Agriculture and USAID – ‘two of the most active pro-GM organisations in the world.’ (Tokar (2004) provides a critical overview of the US involvements in GM developments.)

Given this accusation of corporate influence it is poignant to reflect on the large number of ties that the Gates Foundation’s current leadership has to various biotechnology ventures. Thus Melinda Gates has served on the board of directors of drugstore.com; the president of the Gates Foundations global health programs, Tachi Yamada, formerly acted as the chairman of research and development at the global drug company, GlaxoSmithKline (2001-6); the president of the Gates Foundations global development program, Sylvia Burwell, is a director of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (discussed later); their chief financial officer, Alexander Friedman, was the founder and president of Accelerated Clinical, a ‘biotechnology services company dedicated to accelerating the clinical trial process for biotechnology firms’; the Gates Foundations managing director of public policy, Geoffrey Lamb, formerly held several senior development positions at the World Bank, and is the chair of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative; while finally, Jack Faris who formerly served as the Gates Foundations director of community strategies has, since February 2005, been the president of the corporate lobby group the Washington Biotechnology and Biomedical Association.

In addition, given the key role played by liberal philanthropy, most notably the Rockefeller Foundation, in promoting the initial Green Revolution, it is noteworthy that many important people at the Gates Foundation are directly connected to the Rockefeller philanthropies: Tachi Yamada is a former trustee of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund; the two chairs for the Gates Foundations advisory panels for their U.S. program and their global development

program both serve as Rockefeller Foundation trustees (these are Ann Fudge and Rajat Gupta respectively); while Henry Cisneros, a former Rockefeller Foundation trustee sits on the Gates Foundations U.S. programs advisory panel.

This paper has already demonstrated the Gates philanthropies (like many liberal foundations) have an affinity for funding population control programs, so the aforementioned connections to both the Rockefeller philanthropies and to the biotechnology industry cast an ominous shadow over the Gates Foundation's activities in this area. To fully understand this statement one must look critically at the history of the first Green Revolution, as the whole idea of the Green Revolution is problematic because although the "chief public rationale" for it was supposedly humanitarianism, a good case can be made that the logic undergirding this revolution was Malthusian not humanitarianism (Barker 2008a). Moreover as critical scholars like Ross (1999, 448) have pointed out, the Green Revolution should be considered to be an 'integral part of the constellation of strategies including limited and carefully managed land reform, counterinsurgency, CIA-backed coups, and international birth control programs that aimed to ensure the security of U.S. interests.' This little-known critique of the Green Revolution is supported by the work of other writers (e.g. George 1976; Shiva 1991), who have demonstrated that the so-called revolutionary changes promoted by the Green Revolution actually increased inequality, and in some cases even hunger itself.

Former Rockefeller Foundation president, George Harrar, has been credited as being the 'architect of the Foundation's agricultural programs, beginning in Mexico during the 1940s, and was in large part responsible for the so-called Green Revolution' (Rockefeller Foundation 1982, 14). Harrar also played a key role in the founding of the aforementioned Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. Ross (1996, 24) concluded that support for the 'new' Green Revolution – now currently very much in vogue at the Gates Foundation – only serves to 'accelerate the emergence of a globalized food system' which will ultimately 'only enhance a world economy in which the rural poor already have too little voice or power.'

Bearing this history in mind, it is consistent – but alarming nevertheless – that the president of the Gates Foundations global development program, Sylvia Burwell, is a director of a group called the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa – an Alliance that was founded in 2006 by the Rockefeller and Gates Foundations'. Using similar humanitarian rhetoric to that initially used to promote the original Green Revolution, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (whose offices are based in Kenya and Ghana) describes itself as a 'dynamic, African-led partnership working across the African continent to help millions of small-scale farmers and their families lift themselves out of poverty and hunger.' Yet in a manner eerily reminiscent of critiques of the initial Green Revolution, Holt-Gimenez et al. (2006, 1) observe that: 'Because this new philanthropic effort ignores, misinterprets, and misrepresents the harsh lessons of the first Green Revolution's multiple failures, it will likely worsen the problem' it is supposedly trying to address.

Other than Burwell, another Gates Foundation representative serves on the Alliance's board of directors is Rajiv Shah, who is deputy director for policy and finance for global health at the Foundation. Furthermore, other Rockefeller-linked directors of the Alliance include Rockefeller Foundation trustees Strive Masiyiwa and Mamphela Ramphele (who also happens to be a director of the world's second-biggest mining company, Anglo American); Nadya Shmavonian who is vice president for foundation initiatives at the Rockefeller Foundation, and had formerly worked for twelve years at the aforementioned Pew Charitable

Trusts; Monty Jones who began his career (in 1975) at the Rockefeller-funded West Africa Rice Development Association; and Moise Mensah, who is a member of the 2020 Vision international advisory committee for the International Food Policy Research Institute – a Rockefeller funded group that was involved with promoting the original Green Revolution. Like many of the other groups involved in the Alliance, the latter group is a member of the aforementioned Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

Having now elaborated the links between biotech companies, population control research, and the new Green Revolution, it is critical to acknowledge that in large part, the modern day environmental movement grew out of the highly successful population control movement in the late 1960s (Barker 2008a), and so environmental organizations are also well enmeshed in this web of philanthropic causes and democracy manipulators. These links are best represented through the person of Walter Falcon. From 1979 until 1983 Falcon chaired the board of trustees of the Agricultural Development Council – a group that was established in 1953 by the influential population control activist John D. Rockefeller 3rd – and when this group merged with two other Rockefeller-related agricultural programs to form what is now known as Winrock International, Falcon continued to serve on their board of trustees.⁵ In 1987 Falcon also became a trustee of the International Rice Research Institute, and thereafter went on to serve as the chair of their board. The Falcon-environmental connection, however, comes through his presence on the board of trustees (from 2001 until 2007) of the Centre for International Forestry (CIFOR), a CGIAR member organization whose mission suggests that they are ‘committed to conserving forests and improving the livelihoods of people in the tropics.’ In 2006, this group had a budget of just over \$14 million, of which just over nine percent came from the World Bank (their largest single donor), while in the same year the Ford Foundation provided them with just under \$0.4 million in restricted funds (CIFOR 2006, 45).

Considering these connections it then seems appropriate that since 2006 CIFOR’s director general has been Frances Seymour, an individual who is a member of the elite planning group, the Council on Foreign Relations, and prior to heading CIFOR had been responsible for providing leadership for the World Resources Institute’s engagement with international financial institutions (like the World Bank).⁶ Earlier still, Frances had spent five years working in Indonesia with the Ford Foundation, and had also worked on USAID-funded agroforestry projects in the Philippines. In addition, another notable trustee of CIFOR is Eugene Terry, who was formerly the director general of the West Africa Rice Development Association (for nine years) before going on to work at the World Bank – see earlier, for details of Monty Jones link to this World Bank/CGIAR/Rockefeller funded group. Terry is also chair of another CGIAR member organization called the World Agroforestry Centre that was founded in 1978 and obtains funding from the World Bank/Ford/Rockefeller/USAID/World Resources Institute funding consortium. Moreover,

⁵ From 1991 until 1998, Falcon directed Stanford University’s Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, and although he only presently serves on their executive committee, the Institute’s current deputy director, Michael McFaul, is presently involved with two well known democracy manipulating organizations, Freedom House (where he is a trustee), and the National Endowment for Democracy’s International Forum for Democratic Studies (where is a board member) (for critiques of these two groups, see Barahona 2007; Barker 2006).

⁶ The World Resources Institute is a corporate-styled environmental group (Noble 2007), whose founders included Jessica Mathews who served as their vice president from 1982 through to 1993, and is now the president of the misnamed Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Parmar 2000), and is a member of both the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission (Sklar 2000). Tuchman also served on the editorial board of *The Washington Post* in the early 1980s.

Terry is now the implementing director of the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), a Nairobi-based group that was formed in 2002 with Rockefeller and USAID funding to lobby for greater uptake of GM crops in Africa. Although not advertised on their website the Foundation receives support from the four of the world's largest agricultural companies – Monsanto, Syngenta, Dow AgroSciences, and DuPont (Gillis 2003). AATC chair, Jennifer Thomson, who published the aptly named book *Genes for Africa* (2002) also sits on the board of GM lobby group AfricaBio (GM Watch 2008). Furthermore, William Niebur, who is vice president of crop genetics research and development at DuPont serves on the design advisory committee of AATF, and on CGIAR's private sector committee.

Other than via Eugene Terry, the Centre for International Forestry can be connected to agribusiness giant Syngenta through CIFOR trustee Andrew Bennett who is the former executive director (now just board member) of the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture. Terry joins Bennett on the Syngenta Foundation board of directors; while the Foundation is now headed by Marco Ferroni, who is a former World Bank advisor, and a former executive at the Inter-American Development Bank. Another notable director of the Syngenta Foundation is the president and CEO of the Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development, Klaus Leisinger. This is particularly interesting because the Novartis Foundation joins the Gates Foundation and World Bank/Ford/USAID types in funding the work of a key population control group, the Population Reference Bureau; a US-based group that was founded in 1929 (during a period in history that fully embraced the necessity for eugenics) and is now headed by William Butz, who had previously served as a senior economist at the imperial think tank, the RAND Corporation (Abella 2008).

Last but not least, Syngenta, and their Syngenta Foundation, along with USAID, Dupont, and the Gates and Rockefeller Foundations' support a global project called the Global Crop Diversity Trust which aims to 'ensure the conservation and availability of crop diversity for food security worldwide.' The aims of this project are somewhat contradictory, because the attempts of the aforementioned groups to foist a GM monoculture upon the world are already working to endanger the regular supply of adequate food resources into the future, and are threatening the livelihoods of the majority world's farming communities (Magdoff et al. 2000; Tokar 2004). Thus it is clear that the main reason why this project aims to safeguard genetic diversity – by safeguarding seeds in an underground vault buried beneath a mountain on the island of Svalbard (Norway) – is first and foremost to protect the profits of the agribusinesses that are forcing GM crops upon the world.

The person who currently chairs the Global Crop Diversity Trust's board of directors is none other than the former president of the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations' Population Council, Margaret Catley-Carlson (for more on this group, see Barker 2008a); but other interesting directors include Lewis Coleman (who since 2001 has been a director of one of the world's largest military contractors, Northrop Grumman, and is vice-chair of the controversial GM-linked environmental group Conservation International (Choudry 2003)); Ambassador Jorio Dauster who is the board chairman of Brasil Ecodiesel (see Holleman and Clausen 2008); Adel El-Beltagy who serves on the executive council of CGIAR; and Mangala Rai (who is a trustee of the International Rice Research Institute, a former member of CGIAR's executive council, and a former trustee of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center); while the Global Crop Diversity Trusts' executive director, Cary Fowler, is also a former board member of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center.

Here it is interesting to point out that the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center is yet another key group that pushed along the last Green Revolution as it was established in the 1940s in cooperation with the Mexican government by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations'. Critically one of the central people of the Green Revolution, Norman Borlaug, was director of this Centers International Wheat Improvement Program, and in reward for his 'revolutionary' work Borlaug received the Nobel Peace Prize 1970.⁷ Just three years later Henry Kissinger – a notorious figure in America's imperial adventures (Hitchens 2001) – received the same prize. This is significant because in mid 1970, while acting as President Nixon's National Security Advisor, Kissinger had issued a classified National Security Council memorandum that 'elevated population control to a "top priority item" on the multilateral agenda' (Information Project for Africa 1995, 111). Returning to Borlaug, other than his involvement in being one of the main proponents of the Green Revolution, he has long been connected to the population lobby as from 1971 onwards he served as the Director of the US's Population Crisis Committee (now known as Population Action International),⁸ and he presently serves on the international advisory committee of the Population Institute. Also of interest, around this important time for population issues, Joe Speidel, served as chief of the research division of USAID's Office of Population (1969-83), and then he went on to become vice-president of Population Action International (only retiring from his role as their president in 1994). Subsequently, Spiedel made a smooth transition to head the Population program at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation where he remained for almost ten years.⁹

Conclusion

Social engineering by elite philanthropists – be they conservative or liberal – is not a phenomena that is compatible with democracy, particularly the more participatory variants of democracy being promoted by progressive activists worldwide. In fact, a good case can be made that the ongoing, and escalating, philanthropic colonization of civil society by philanthropists poses a clear and present danger to the sustainability of democratic forms of governance. Unfortunately, the Gates Foundation only represents the tip of the iceberg of the world of liberal philanthropy, and thousands of other foundations pursue similar agendas across the globe, albeit on a smaller scale. For example in 2006, in the U.S. alone, there were over 71,000 grant making foundations which together distributed just under \$41 billion: this massive figure also represents the greatest amount of money ever distributed by foundations, a figure that has been rising steadily over the years, and had just ten year earlier only amounted to some \$14 billion (Lawrence et al. 2007, 1).

Consequently, given the longstanding influence that all manner of philanthropic foundations have had on global politics (Faber and McCarthy 2005), it is concerning that most political scientists have downplayed their importance in shaping the global polity, while others sometimes admit to the power they exert but simply consider it to be a good thing (e.g. Karl

⁷ Borlaug is connected to various other groups including the International Food Policy Research Institute (where he served as a trustee between 1976 and 1982), Winrock International (where he as a trustee between 1982 and 1990), and Population Communications International (where is he was the director between 1984 and 1994).

⁸ Borlaug presently serves on the Population Action International's council alongside Robert McNamara, an individual who in 1968, while serving as a Ford Foundation trustee Robert S. McNamara "emphasized the central importance of curbing population growth" in his inaugural speech as the World Bank's new president (Barker 2008).

⁹ Many of the people presently affiliated to Population Action International (PAI) can be linked to the broader democracy manipulating community: for example, PAI board member Moises Naím is also a director of the National Endowment for Democracy.

and Katz 1981). By examining the backgrounds of many the people involved with the Gates Foundation, and by demonstrating the Foundations involvement in promoting the new Green Revolution, this paper has clearly illustrated how the world's most powerful liberal foundation while professing to promote solution to global poverty is arguably pursuing an agenda that will aggravate such systemic problems.

Solutions to the problems raised for discussion in the article do exist, and the social engineering of elites is not always all pervasive. Indeed, one important way in which concerned citizens may begin to counter the insidious influence of liberal elites over civil society is to work to dissociate their progressive activism from liberal foundations. At the same time however it is critical that they also work to create sustainable democratic revenue streams to enable their work to continue. This of course will be the hardest part for progressive activists who have long relied upon the largess of liberal philanthropists, but it is a necessary step if they are to contribute towards an emancipatory project that is separated from, and opposed to, the corrosive social engineering of liberal elites.

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