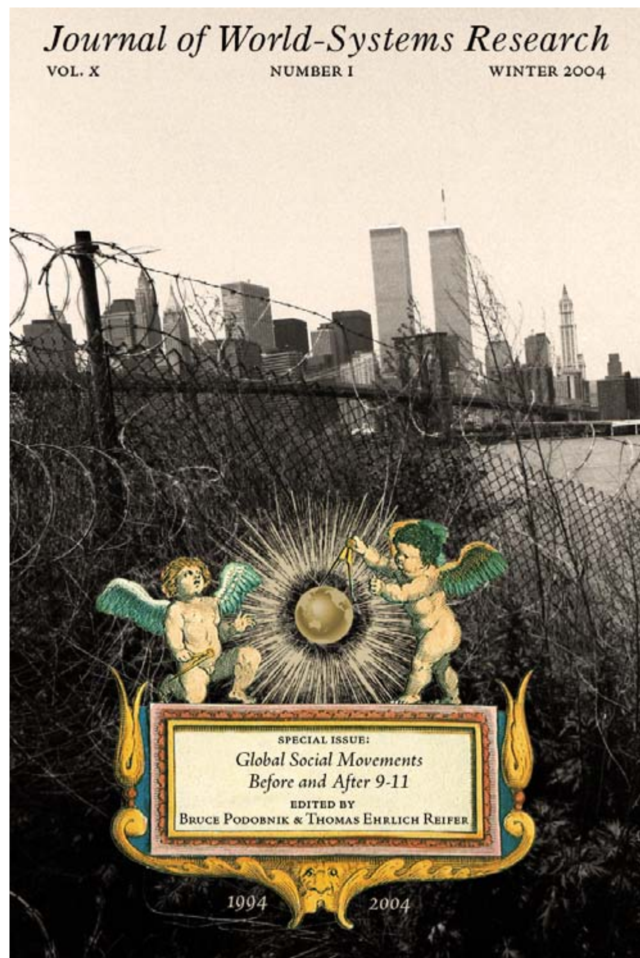

ABSTRACT

Workers and environmentalists in the United States have often found themselves on opposite sides of critical issues. Yet at the WTO meeting in Seattle in November 1999, they came together in a historic protest many see as a watershed in the formation of a new blue-green "Seattle Coalition." However the two camps are again in conflict over substantive issues, and in the changed political climate of post 9-11, the question arises of the coalition's durability. The paper first briefly reviews the history of labor-environment interactions in the United States. It then examines a series of problems and potential areas of promise for the movements: difficulties of coalition-building, expectations of reciprocation, local vs. national connections, and the question of differing class cultures and interests. Finally, three areas of potential research and action are suggested: new roles for the mainstream environmental groups, just transition alliances and climate justice alliances. We propose that the environmental justice and environmental health wings of the green movement are more suited to making long-term coalitions with labor than are habitat-oriented green groups.

Blue-Green Coalitions: Constraints and Possibilities in the Post 9-11 Political Environment

Kenneth A. Gould
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1. INTRODUCTION

There have been some high-profile cases of cooperation between environmentalists and labor unions in the United States, especially the Seattle protests against the WTO in November 1999. There was a key moment which was recounted in *The Nation* during the Seattle protest when police repression was especially intense. The media reported that protestors from the environmentalist Sierra Club, dressed in elaborate sea turtle costumes, looked up to see truck drivers from the Teamsters' Union, in their workers' clothes.

"Turtles love Teamsters," said the young environmentalist.

"Teamsters love Turtles," responded the tough truck driver.

These two groups make up two of the largest contingencies of the emerging movement against corporate-led globalization, if not its most radical ones. They represent a major potential expansion of that movement, posing a potential threat to the free trade (Neo-Liberal) project of global marketing, led by the international capitalist class of the IMF, World Bank, Wall Street, and the U.S. government.

The objectives of globalization in the short term were the global marketing of free trade, fast track negotiation of trade treaties, and the expansion of WTO powers. Both labor and environmentalists viewed these issues as extremely dan-

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gerous. Labor unions obviously feared a massive flow of jobs overseas as U.S. industries would be unable to compete with the rock-bottom wages in places like Mexico and China. Environmentalists feared a similar "race to the bottom" of regulations they had spent decades developing to control the behaviors of polluting firms.

However, in many ways forming a coalition at Seattle was easy: this was a short-term marriage of convenience on an issue both groups strongly opposed. Eighteen months later the picture had dramatically shifted, as the coalition faced deep divisions over energy policy changes proposed by Vice-President Dick Cheney. Cheney brought union leaders to the White House to gain their support of drilling for oil in the Artic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), and the Bush Administration's plan to build thousands of new power plants across the country. Fuel-efficiency standards were also on the agenda, since American automakers were saved from bankruptcy by the surge in sales of their guzzling SUVs. Finally, the Bush administration wanted support from labor on their position on the Kyoto Treaty on global warming, arguing that the mandatory reductions in carbon emissions would severely endanger jobs in America. On all four cases, labor lobbied successfully, effectively trouncing the environmental lobby. The environmental movement's largest "Big 10" lobbying groups have not done a lot of reaching out to labor. They appear to be returning to isolationist lobbying techniques. Although the ANWR has been temporarily spared, the coalition has been badly damaged by the split over this sacred cow of preservationists.

THE SEATTLE COALITION: MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE OR ONE NIGHT STAND?

Despite the claims of media commentators and some activists, the WTO protests in Seattle in November of 1999 were not the result of a close collaboration between the major mainstream environmental organizations and organized labor. In fact, the level of actual direct working relations between these two segments of a much larger "coalition" was quite minimal. The protest actions that received the most media attention were those organized through the Direct Action Network (DAN). DAN orchestrated the non-violent direct actions that included hard and soft lock downs[1] at key intersections and the blockading of the Seattle convention center where the Third Ministerial meetings of the WTO were to be held. Those participating in the DAN direct actions and the preceding non-violence trainings and spokescouncil[2] meetings represented a variety of organizations and interests, few of which were directed affiliated with organized labor or large environmental organizations. Instead, they represented many smaller student and other groups focused on sweatshops, poverty of the Global South, corporate power, human rights, indigenous rights and a variety of "anti-capitalist" ideologies. While many of those participants would have called themselves environmentalists, and some of them were union members, they did not act directly in the name of those larger organizations (Danaher and Burbach 2000).

The participation of organized labor was large and significant in Seattle, but was also primarily separate from the actions taken by DAN and the few mainstream environmental organizations that participated in any significant way. Labor provided the bulk of the funding for the Seattle protests, but primarily participated in labor rallies and labor marches, which were joined by some non-union protestors. The most visible unions in Seattle were the USWA, ILWU, IAM, IBT, AFSCME, and AFL-CIO, all of whose presidents spoke at the major union rally. The ILWU provided perhaps the most powerful protest action in shutting down the port of Seattle and many other west coast ports. The labor rhetoric in Seattle was almost exclusively focused on wages, job loss, import surges, product dumping, child labor and sweatshops, with the overriding theme being corporate greed and corporate power. Rhetorical nods were made to the environment, but such issues never appeared as a high priority in labor's protests. Labor did participate in a symbolic "sit-down" along the labor union march route, intended to be simultaneous and in solidarity with the DAN direct action protestors who AFL-CIO President Sweeney referred to as "the students," but the integration of labor, "student" protestors from a variety of organizations, and mainstream environmental organizations that did occur was mainly as a result of the chaos that ensued when the police rioted, and various groups found themselves turning to each other for defensive support. The real meeting of organized labor and other protesters only occurred when the labor and DAN marches converged and were both violently attacked by the police. The convergence of

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1. A "soft" lock down involves a symbolic connecting of protesters to eachother and/or inanimate objects, usually through linking arms or string in conducting civil disobedience blockades of intersections and entrances. A "hard" lock down employs locks and chains, often with devices to prevent easy cutting by authorities, thus making such civil disobedience blockades more difficult to break up.

2. Spokescouncil is an organizational and decision-making structure through which various participating groups and organizations coordinate actions and generate consensus. Protesters send delegates to the meetings to represent the consensus reached by their groups and organizations. "Spokes" refers to each group representing a spoke on a wheel, and is intended to differentiate such an organizationsl structure from hierarchical decision-making structures.

marches did require some minimal coordination between environmental organizations and unions, but that relationship was mediated through DAN.

On the environmental organization side, only Greenpeace was highly visible in Seattle. Greenpeace has long been known as the odd member of the "Big 10" group of environmental organizations due to its use of non-violent direct action tactics and its focus on corporate power and the policies of international financial institutions, so it is no surprise that this organization was a key participant. The Sierra Club and other mainstream environmental latecomers to the anti-corporate globalization side were present in Seattle, and did participate in the non-direct action marches and rallies. The Rainforest Action Network, also known for endorsing direct action techniques, was present and visible. However, the direct contact between these environmentalists and organized labor prior to and during the Seattle actions were minimal. The rhetoric of the environmental groups in Seattle was nearly exclusively focused on issues of logging, endangered species, and genetically modified organisms, with occasional passing nods to labor and indigenous rights issues.

At no time in Seattle did a unified rhetoric connecting labor and environment emerge from either camp. That unifying rhetoric was provided by the organizations focused specifically on corporate globalization such as Public Interest Trade Watch and Global Exchange. What is clear from a review of the protests in Seattle is that organized labor and mainstream environmental organizations essentially protested the same institution and the same meetings for largely different reasons. Both camps participated to greater and lesser extents in a much broader coalition organized by DAN, and the bulk of the direct action protesters were affiliated with neither organized labor nor the mainstream environmental organizations. What drew all of the claims of a blue-green coalition emerging from Seattle was largely the simple fact that both groups simultaneously, and with some minimal coordination, protested the same institution and policy, and that other organizations were able to articulate some unfying critique of neoliberalism which included a focus on both labor and environmental concerns. That is not an insignificant step, and could certainly signal the potential for a unified opposition and an even more ambitious unifying ideology. However, Seattle was not a reliable indicator that a blue-green coalition existed, nor that such a coalition would be sustainable. The Seattle protests against the WTO simply represented the finding of some common ground between organization that had been pitted against each other by corporations and the state for three decades (Kazis and Grossman 1991). At best, it was a marriage of convenience that could be developed into a lasting, mutually supportive relationship. At worst, it was a one-night stand unlikely to be repeated until blues and greens met again on the streets of Cancun, Mexico and Miami, Florida.

There have been enduring conflicts between labor and environmentalist groups, based in part in the core need of unions to protect the jobs of their members. Unions have been called "productivists," seeking to expand jobs, while environmentalists question the future of the current economic model in which those jobs might be created: economic expansion threatens the sustainability of life on the planet, development needs to be entirely rethought. There of course is tremendous variation between wings of the environmental movement, from corporate and reformist groups on the one hand to radical anti-development groups on the other. The same can be said about labor, of course, with some groups accepting nearly all of the values of firms while others question the central tenets of capitalism in the United States. In both cases, the more moderate groups make up the majority of members in the USA.

Contributing to the divide between greens and blues is the impact of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The events of September 11th were initially devastating to the U.S. wing of the anti-corporate globalization movement which crystallized the new blue-green coalition. On the day of the attacks, some power holders (including members of Congress) speculated that anti-corporate globalization activists might be responsible for the attack on the World Trade Center, as the movement had planned a Wall Street action for later that month. While such speculation was quickly put to rest, the emerging hostile political context for domestic dissent was made quite clear. Organizations such as Mobilization for Global Justice, which had served as organizing vehicles for the mass protests associated with the movement, moved quickly to curtail active opposition to neoliberalism. It became quite difficult to appear loyal and patrotic to a government which actively opposed every goal of the movement. When active protest reemerged at the World Economic Forum (held for the first time in NYC for ideological and tactical reasons), protestors were encouraged to be subdued, law abiding, and consequently non-disruptive to corporate business as usual. A complete lack of media coverage was one outcome of the post 9-11 approach. Later protests at the IMF/WB meetings were similarly subdued and non-disruptive. We discuss below how this "anti-globalization lite" version of the current movement has marginalized precisely the wing of the movement whose structural analysis led them to most value and pursue a blue-green alliance. We briefly examine some insights from the world-system perspective in this regard.

Internationally, there are some early developments at coalition building. Union leadership is shifting in the United States. With Sweeney leading the AFL-CIO, the group is attempting to become a social movement again, recruiting new members, undertaking strategic campaigns, and forging alliances with other groups. It is also reaching out internationally, such as in Brazil with new connections between the Sindicato de Petroleiros and Quimicos and the PACE union in the U.S.

The environmental movement has with certain difficulties transformed itself from US-centric to globally-minded in just a decade. Jackie Smith reports that organizations that ally along North-South lines are the global organizations that are most likely to survive and achieve legitimacy (Smith 2001). But there is little evidence of labor-environmental linkages internationally. We will argue these are the key to supporting a longer-term "Seattle Coalition." Locally, grassroots groups such as those doing environmental justice work *are* reaching out and working with labor and social justice groups. This is true of both the enviro and labor sides.

We will argue that to understand the potential of these two popular movements to create a viable "anti-systemic movement," we need to examine their ability to work together on tough issues, and to see how they do so at all levels: local, national, and international. Each level presents very different opportunities and pitfalls. In the end, to be effective in this globalizing epoch, the movement has to function globally, but this depends, we will argue, on the quality of relations that are forged at the other levels.

In this paper, we focus on four problems of an enduring blue-green coalition. They are (1) the problem of reciprocation and unbalanced expectations by environmentalists for unionists; (2) the problem of extending short-term marriages of convenience into longer-term coalitions; (3) the debate over whether local or national levels are better places to make these coalitions; and (4) the class issue. By class issue, we mean that these two movements come from different class cultures and sets of structural interests, raising conflicting identities, styles of interaction, and short- and longer-term needs and desires. Based on these challenges, we propose a series of issues that we believe must be addressed for the blue-green alliance to move forward, which we believe it can. We begin with a brief historical review of the social origins and interactions between the movements.

2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT[3]

There is a long history of environmental political mobilization in the U.S. that is rooted in labor struggles. While labor has a history of environmental concern, mainstream U.S. environmentalism has little history of direct involvement in labor concerns, at least prior to the Third Ministerial Meetings of the WTO in Seattle in November of 1999. There are many streams of environmentalism in the U.S., including those originating in upper-class preservation concerns, industrial conservation concerns, labor health and safety concerns, civil rights concerns, and many others. In terms of the real and potential labor-environmentalist coalition, these separate histories have produced both obstacles to, and opportunities for various types of blue-green coalitions. At the heart of the obstacles to coalition formation lies the ever-widening class divide which has lead labor and mainstream environmentalists to operate on different conceptualizations of "environment", to form different analyses of power and structure, and make different choices in political tactics and strategies. A brief examination of these divergent environmental histories helps to illuminate the origin of current conflicts between potentially powerful coalition partners.

[3] The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Andrew D. Van Alstyne in helping to frame the historical context of the movements.

Elite Conservation and Preservation

Economic and leisure issues spawned upper-class interest in environmental protection. Up until the mid-1800s, the environment did not exist as an issue on the American political agenda. It was only when the finite nature of environmental resources for industrial exploitation became obvious that conservation began to emerge as an issue for some Americans. The industrial leaders who did begin to promote mildly conservationist thought did not do so in response to the public health threats stemming from air and water pollution. Instead, they were concerned about access to key economic resources that were growing scarce, hence threatening future profitability (Hays 1980). The logic that emerged from the limited environmental actions of wealthy and powerful individuals clearly dictated that economic affairs trumped concerns in other areas of human life (Schnaiberg and Gould 2000).

Other economically privileged groups became concerned about pollution when recreational areas they used began to suffer from environmental degradation. Polluted air and water could reduce fish and game prospects. Many of these original environmentalists emerged from private hunting and fishing clubs, and sought to preserve natural areas for elite recreation (Dowie 1995). At the same time that the wealthy fought to protect wilderness areas from depletion and pollution, they also sought to exclude poor and non-white citizens (Dowie 1995). This helped to set up an environmental conflict between some segments of the working class and the upper class.

Urban and Labor Environmentalism

Contemporaneously with elite conservation emerged an urban public health movement focused in part on the negative ecological effects of industrialization on the lower and working classes. This "municipal housekeeping" movement, lead primarily by women such as Jane Adams and Florence Kelley, sought to remediate urban air and water pollution that disproportionately impacted the health of

the poor (Foster 1999). These public health related environmental concerns were well integrated with a larger political agenda aimed at improving the living conditions of industrial workers and the unemployed. The demands of these activists would shortly be echoed by those of organized labor, which initially sought to reduce workers exposure to hazardous pollution within the workplace, but eventually expanded to address industrial emissions outside the workplace where the health of workers and their families were disproportionately placed at risk.

Early in the 20th century the champions of child labor laws were actively pursuing anti-smoke and clean water ordinances, drawing the connections between worker exploitation and ecological degradation. Both issues required a critical analysis of corporate power and the activation of democratic processes to curtail industrial abuses. Both worker rights and ecological responsibility were fiercely opposed by corporate leaders, many of whom enjoyed the elite recreation domains established by the conservationists and preservationists. Interestingly, throughout the early and mid 20th century, concessions to labor on wages and benefits appeared to have bought some labor silence on many of the environmental health and safety concerns that were central in the early U.S. labor movement. Nevertheless, steelworkers demanded investigation of deadly air inversions in 1948. The United Auto Workers prioritized worker safety and health issues prior to World War II, and opposed breeder reactor construction in the post-World War II period. A Gas, Coke and Chemical workers local made important contributions to the effort to place strontium 90 contamination on the public agenda. In 1967 the United Auto Workers created a Conservation and Resource Development Department. In 1970 UAW locals produced roughly 750 environmental protection demands, many of which focused beyond in-plant exposure issues. In fact, throughout the 1970s, organized labor consistently placed environmental and health issues on the negotiating agenda across a wide range of industries.

However, the spate of environmental legislation in the 1960s and 1970s combined with the corporate strategy of moving union jobs to non-union locations nationally and transnationally, allowed industrial leaders and their political clients to increasingly pin job losses on environmentalist agendas, effectively driving a wedge between groups that shared many concerns (Kazis and Grossman 1991). While this strategy was largely rejected by unions prior to 1974, the oil price spikes that followed provided more effective grist for the corporate argument. What greens and blues had shared was a critique of corporate power. Finding a common enemy may be the key to successful coalition formation, thus it became a necessary corporate political strategy to pit these groups against each other to both divide and conquer opposition to corporate power and deflect attention from the corporate abandonment of the U.S. economy. While simultaneously

launching a lobbying-legislative assault on organized labor, corporations chose to employ the tactic of projected job losses in their propaganda campaigns against new environmental regulation. In the midst of the debates on the 1977 Clean Water Act amendments, Ford Motor Company released a study stating that new fuel economy standards would result in the lay-off of 75,000 auto workers. These job blackmail studies were quickly picked up by the news media and echoed by studies produced by corporate dominated think tanks. By the late 1970s many unions had reversed their positions on environmental protection. However, siding with corporate elites in the post-oil crises economy did not buy unions much good will among corporate decision-makers. By 1981 the anti-environmental union-busting regime of Ronald Reagan was launching a full-scale assault on U.S. workers and the environment. Having seen in the 1980s that massive job loss, wage stagnation, benefits give backs and union busting are fully consistent with accelerated ecological destruction, by the 1990s union leaders and the rank and file had begun to return to a more activist stance opposing corporate power. The painful lessons of the 1980s made the emergence of a green-blue coalition in the 1990s possible. When critical analysis of trade liberalization regimes revealed the dual threat of massive job loss and greatly accelerated environmental destruction, the stage was set for a convergence of green and blue interests in Seattle (Kazis and Grossman 1991)

Thus, a lower and working class environmental activism rooted in public health concerns emerged separately, but simultaneously with, upper class conservationism and preservationism rooted in economic and leisure concerns. This urban environmental agenda differed from the upper class movement by incorporating people into its definition of the environment. Whereas the wealthy were concerned with "wilderness" areas that were needed for economic or recreational exploitation, the urban environmental movement focused upon the effects of the environment on the day-to-day lives of people who lived within a particular area.

Mainstream Environmentalism

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a mainstream, national ecology movement emerged in the US, rooted in the new suburban middle class. This movement drew upon earlier conservation and preservation oriented social movements that grew out of upper class concerns and experiences, and swelled the ranks of earlier conservation and preservation groups as well as spawning new movement organizations. In a sense this movement sought to extend concerns for protection of the environmental amenities that made suburban living attractive to a more global set of ecological concerns (Hurley 1995). The mainstream U.S. ecology movement combined an awareness of the earth as a finite and fragile biosphere

with a moral obligation of ecological stewardship. However, it failed to identify or address the unequal distribution of ecological costs and benefits by race and class. This movement placed broad environmental issues such as municipal waste, population, pollution, and extinction on the U.S. political agenda. At the same time, it largely ignored the impacts that specific local environmental disruptions had on peoples' lives and health.

Working class environmentalism stemmed from other issues and addressed other environmental concerns. Laborers did not articulate their displeasure in terms of "the environment," per se. Instead, working and living conditions were seen as part of a general threat to the workers' (and their families') well being. Workers addressed pollution issues precisely because they suffered from direct exposure at work and home, since they tended to live downwind/downstream of the direct release of poisons. Additionally, workers whose outdoor recreational activities were undermined by industrial effluent lead calls for environmental remediation (Gould 1991).

Environmental Justice and Anti-Toxics Movements

As the civil rights movement expanded its focus beyond traditional segregation and political rights issues, a new stream of U.S. environmental activism emerged. By defining access to a safe and healthy environment as a basic citizenship right, and noting the disproportionate share of the ecological burden of industrialism borne by communities of color, environmental concerns came to be framed as civil rights issues. By the early 1980's, a distinct environmental justice movement emerged demanding equal environmental protection for communities of color. This environmental justice movement is an extension of the civil rights movement, and one that has challenged mainstream environmental activists to integrate social justice concerns in the environmental agenda (Bullard 1990; Bryant and Mohai 1992).

The environmental justice movement emerged simultaneously, and in dialogue with an anti-toxics movement, rooted in white working class communities. The anti-toxics movement developed out of local contamination episodes such as that at Love Canal, New York (Levine 1982). Like the labor and environmental justice movements, the anti-toxics movement is rooted in public health concerns (Brown and Mikkelson 1990). Here the focus is on disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards as a result of socioeconomic class. Like the environmental justice movement, the anti-toxics movement seeks to move the distributional dimensions of environmental contamination and remediation to the forefront of the environmentalist agenda, thus challenging mainstream environmental movement organizations (Szasz 1994). These locally organized environmental groups have sometimes employed the civil disobedience and direct action tactics used

effectively by civil rights organizations and organized labor in earlier struggles, drawing on a tradition of working class political activism.

3. PROBLEMS AND PROMISE IN THE COALITION

Coalition-Building in the Social Movements Literature

Social movement scholars analyze coalition building and coalition success. Under what conditions do social movement organizations form coalitions? This question necessarily precedes the question of whether coalitions succeed in creating social change. While little empirical work has addressed this question, the literature suggests that alliances, in general, contribute to greater chances for achieving political goals from state and/or industry. However, forming a coalition is no easy task. A number of conditions at the political, organizational, and inter-organization level must come together to make it work.

Whether or not coalitions form depends largely on the external political environment. Analyses of peace, pro-life, and labor-community movements, for examples, suggest that coalitions are more likely to form when there is a political threat or a political opportunity, not under "business-as-usual" conditions (Estabrook et al 2000; Hathaway and Meyer 1993/4; Staggenborg 1986). In many of the recent labor-environment cases, external events precipitated attempts at coalition building; for example political threats (a lock out at a BASF plant in Geismer, Louisiana) and political opportunities (the Kyoto Protocol). Estabrook et al (2000: 143) suggest that the group that is better organized and that has the most to lose or gain typically spearheads the coalition building.

At the organizational level, the two greatest obstacles to coalition formation are limited resources and differing ideologies (Hathaway and Meyer 1993/4: 160). For an organization to consider becoming a coalition partner, it first must be able to maintain itself, in terms of both members and funds. If an organization is losing members, it must focus on its own survival. For example, "The 1980s brought an anti-union president, corporate union-busting and concession demands, recession, and job flight overseas. Concerned with their own survival, many unions saw environmental issues as luxuries" (Moberg 1999: 3). While the 1980s characterized a serious threat, an ideal political condition for coalitions to form, the organizational needs of unions during that time made coalition building difficult.

In other social movements, individual organizations are often competing for the same group of members and funds. For example, peace movement organizations that might consider working together draw members from the same sources and must essentially compete with each other. This is less of a problem for labor-environmental coalitions since the two movements have historically had differ-

ent membership bases. Nonetheless, organizational resources are limited and coalition building requires staff time to manage communication and to create and hold together networks. This takes away from organizations' other work. Some of the leaders in labor-environmental organizations are very aware of this. For example, Friends of the Earth has an on-line guide for organizing complete with a section on building coalitions. It notes, "Building a coalition can increase the impact of an individual organization's efforts. There are also disadvantages… Being a member of a coalition can divert time and resources from your other work. Frequently, compromises have to be made…Disputes over money and staff time might occur…Sometimes it is easier to form an ad-hoc alliance that rallies behind a campaign's goals, but takes no further positions…An assemblage of like-minded groups with even less encumbrance (and less influence) is a network where members work toward common goals and sometimes rally behind a specific event or short-term goal" (Friends of the Earth, n.d.).

Another challenge to coalition building is that potentially allied organizations must have shared, or at least overlapping ideologies. This is a difficulty for the organizations in labor-environment coalitions, especially for mainstream groups. As Sierra Club participants express in a series of quotes in the following section, dues paying members and corporate donors may not agree with "radical" actions of coalition partners. Coalitions between labor unions and environmental justice organizations may be less plagued by ideological differences, but labor representatives and members may feel uncomfortable with the focus of the environmental justice movement on race.

A final piece of the coalition-formation puzzle is the work that must be done between organizations. McAdam (1982) and others have documented the importance of pre-existing networks for the mobilization of social movements. Fred Rose's (2000) work on coalitions among the peace, labor, and environmental movements has argued that bridge builders, "people who are comfortable and competent to act within diverse social [classes]" (167) are critical for the development of coalitions. These individuals understand the positions of both groups. Rose argues that the labor and environmental movements have different class bases that result in different organizational cultures. Labor organizations operate in a hierarchical model that is goal-oriented whereas environmentalists and peace organizations operate in a consensus model that is process-oriented. As a result, individuals in these groups have difficulty communicating. Bridge-builders ease the communications between these two classes/styles.

New social movement theorists argue that movements such as the peace, feminist, and ecology movements are beyond class and that people relate to and bond on the basis of identity and shared values. To the contrary, we would argue, in line with Rose's reasoning, that these are class-based movements that have

shielded the class differences with "identity or culture." What the new social movement theorists consider unifying to individuals based on "identity" needs to be examined as a "class-based" identity.[4]

For some organizations, the political timing, organizational resources, overlapping ideologies and successful communication come together to form coalitions. Whether or not coalitions are short-lived or durable depends on external and internal factors. Speaking of the pro-life movement, Suzanne Staggenborg argues,

> Once exceptional environmental conditions subside, ideological conflicts and the organizational maintenance needs of individual movement organizations are likely to cause conflicts within coalitions which may lead to their dissolution. However, such tensions can be alleviated…First, if coalitions can be maintained without forming a formal coalition organization…resource strains…can be minimized. If a coalition organization is necessary, the coalition is more likely to succeed if external funding from foundations or other sources can be secured… (Staggenborg 1986: 388).

Social movement organizations are attentive to the tensions that Staggenborg outlines. Some, like Friends of the Earth, suggest forming temporary alliances or flexible "networks" instead of coalitions. Other organizations are taking the long-term view and creating umbrella coalition organizations. The Just Transition Alliance, a coalition organization discussed in the final section of the paper, succeeded in attaining foundation funding to foster its work in building coalitions between labor, environmental justice groups, and community associations.

In looking at the globalization of movements, social movement scholars have demonstrated that transnational movements, movements with centers in more than one country, are often very effective at changing states' behaviors. Nation states appear to be vulnerable to movement campaigns that work at the level of "global civil society" (Lipschutz 1996). There are numerous examples of national-level environmental campaigns succeeding when the campaign becomes internationalized; for example the creation of extractive reserves in Brazil (Keck and Sikkink 1998) and the success of the anti-dam movement in Brazil (Rothman and Oliver 1999). In both cases, when movement activists from Brazil joined forces with Northern movement organizations, the Brazilian government responded. In these examples, the main strategy was for Northern NGOs to exert leverage

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4. While much of the analysis of coalitions take a rational approach to political interests following resource mobilization theory (i.e. organizations maximize interests based on analysis of costs and benefits), Rose and others add an important dimension by pointing out that interpretation plays a large role in making choices.

on international actors, such as the United States Appropriation Committee, the Inter American Development Bank, and the World Bank, who then played a role in the Brazilian government's decision-making. Similar cases have been made in regard to the international human rights movement (Brysk 1993, Sikkink 1993).

Such coalitions or alliances raise important questions for world-system research and theory. First, we need to remain aware of the wide range of reformist and revolutionary ideologies within these alliances, and their differing campaign targets (the reform or abolition of global institutions and corporations or simply the push for more governmental protections against the negative impacts of globalization). This range suggests that lumping them all as "Anti-Globalization" is to commit a potentially monumental error, which may lead to our misjudging their durability, intent, and likely direction. Similarly, the mistake by some world-system scholars of lumping such groups within the category of "anti-systemic movements" risks these same errors. World-System research therefore needs to pay close attention to social movement theory and the empirics of the current evolution of these movements. Leslie Sklair forcefully argues for this attention to new social movements, saying flatly that "globalizing capitalism has all but defeated labor" (Sklair 2000). Because of the ability of international companies to shift production or sourcing from any particular factory, strikes by labor unions are only capable of being an "irritation than a real weapon of labour against capital" (2000: 345–6). Sklair goes on to argue that any struggle against globalizing capitalism must therefore focus on subverting consumption rather than production. And he says, more people are likely to join that struggle for environmental than for anti-corporate globalization reasons, and for local rather than global reasons. This suggests the importance of alliances and coalitions across ideologies and scales, and attention to their frequent difficulties.

Coalition and Reciprocation

The question of a blue-green coalition must then be framed in terms of what streams of U.S. environmentalism offer the greatest potential for a sustainable coalition with organized labor. As structured class interests make upper class environmentalism largely incompatible with labor goals of increased job security, wages, benefits, working conditions and community health, perhaps the most viable long-term coalitions can be formed between labor and the environmental justice/anti-toxics streams of U.S. environmentalism (Gould, Schnaiberg and Weinberg 1996). At least historically, these groups share similar structural positions in the political economy, similar analyses of power and the responsiveness of elite dominated quasi-democratic governance structures, leading them to similar tactical choices, especially at the local level (Pellow and Park 2002). It is worth remembering that Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated

while actively supporting striking sanitation workers, fusing civil rights, labor and environmental concerns in a people centered struggle.

The hallmark event of the contemporary Green-Blue coalition was the protests at the 1999 WTO ministerial meeting, later dubbed the "Seattle Coalition." However, this hallmark event may not herald the dawning of a new collaborative sustained resistance to corporate power. First, it is worth noting that many greens are latecomers to the critique of trade liberalization. Greens were far more split over support for NAFTA than was organized labor (Hogenboom 1998; Roberts and Thanos 2003). Second, while blues and greens protested together, it is not at all clear that they protested for similar reasons. Having a common enemy in corporate devised trade liberalization initiatives is a positive step toward coalition. But greens and blues would have protested without each other, for different reasons. It is not clear that blues protested environmental threats and greens protested union busting and job loss.

A confluence of interests on specific issues is not the same as a commitment to reciprocal mobilization in support of the key issues of coalition partners. On this score, blues may in fact have a *stronger* record of reciprocation. While labor participation in environmental causes has been fairly common, especially at the local level, environmentalists have not been terribly visible in support of labor causes. Without green opposition to plant closings, downsizing, benefits take backs, and wage stagnation, one can hardly expect blue support for alternative energy initiatives, wilderness preservation and endangered species protection, especially when those issues may threaten the economic livelihoods of workers. Unions like the United Brotherhood of Teamsters were chastised by environmentalists for supporting the Bush-Cheney-Enron energy policy, with accusations of abandoning the Seattle coalition. Certainly energy issues are a tough litmus test for truckers. But where is the litmus test for greens? Many argue that the Green Party bears much responsibility for placing the Bush-Cheney administration in office, which is a disastrous outcome for organized labor. In short, greens have been silent on most issues central to organized labor concerns while expecting unflinching support of their environmental agenda. That makes greens a poor coalition partner, unwilling to compromise their agenda to support most labor, or even lend support where the environment is not central to the conflict. Only when greens overtly and actively support labor in its efforts to keep polluting facilities in the U.S., only when they follow words about just transitions and sustainable economies with deeds that produce real employment options, and only when sustainable working landscapes replace wilderness preservation as ecological priorities will greens be actively pursuing and supporting a genuine alliance with organized labor in opposition to corporate power.

National Versus Local

There are broadly differing opinions on which strategy works better for blue-green coalitions: organizing at the local or the national level. Fred Rose's book *Coalitions Across the Class Divide*, focusing on the case of forestry, argues that local coalitions are the most likely and promising. There are a series of examples of environmentalists reaching out to their local neighbors in striking factories or other sectors to acheive important local goals.

In Louisiana in the mid-1980s, BASF chemicals locked out its workers from the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (Minchin 2003). Facing a strike which dragged on for months and then years, the workers then started looking for ways to create pressure on the firm to negotiate with them. They discovered several environmental and human rights issues and pressed them locally, in their North America office in New Jersey, and in BASF headquarters in Germany. The OCAW set up the Labor Neighbor project to work with local environmental justice groups in the famed "cancer alley" between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The project has had lasting impacts on the labor and environmental movement in the state (Roberts and Toffolon-Weiss 2001, Minchin 2003).

On the other hand, Brian Obach (1999, 2000) argues that coalitions can be more effectively made on the national level, in Washington DC, by union and environmental staff members, who are living very similar lives. Supporting his argument is the idea that staffers often have broader knowledge of issues than local membership, and may be able to think beyond the rough "transition" times if some jobs will have to be eliminated for the environmental good. Obach argues that these staffers in DC are in overlapping social circles, share other affinities, support each other in lobbying, and so on. They may also share similar class status.

An argument can be made here that local coalitions are not so easy as is suggested by Rose's work, and as is often true, we lack documentation of negative cases. Local environmentalists may have a certain squeamishness when it comes to such alliances. Here are some revealing statements from a Sierra Club listserver in one of our communities, with identifiers removed for confidentiality. These also illustrate the lack of overlapping ideologies:

> "Without being adequately informed, many view these 'anti' issues as being nothing but radical extremist positions. When the Sierra Club aligns too closely with what are viewed as 'radicals,' or issues that are larger than many of it's membership can grapple with, it loses environmental activists (and even supporters)."

> "Some valid points however that this organization needs to be careful of is to not become too involved in the 'social environmental' movement. The radicalization of environmental issues by combining pure environmental issues with social changes (general leaning to a socialistic philosophy or anti-capitalistic, anti establishment view) has given the entire environmental movement a bad name to many middle of the road and right wing members of our society."

> "If the purpose is to get local environmental issues solved it needs broad support and pragmatic solutions and not turn off potential supporters because of the wrong (political view point) reasons. A pure environmental approach on local or state issues will work best. Even the most narrow minded folks will support environmental issues if their immediate houses, neighborhoods etc. are threatened by development or other intrusive environmental issues."

The Class Divide

The divergent foci and origins of the environmentalism of the working class and the upper and middle class dominated mainstream environmental organizations presents major obstacles to the emergence of a successful blue-green coalition. Labor environmentalism has always been rooted in concern for the health and well being of people. This stems from the necessity of struggle to maintain health and well being at the lower ranks of the social stratification hierarchy. Much of mainstream environmentalism is rooted in concern for "wilderness" preservation and the health and well being of ecosystems and non-human species. Because their socioeconomic class position makes maintenance of their own health and well being less problematic, many environmentalists are structurally more free to focus on more abstract and distant concerns.

What this implies is that the problem of finding common ground between the concerns of labor and those of environmentalists may not be a lack of working class environmentalism. More likely, the difficulty arises from the gap between two distinct forms of environmentalism; an anthropocentric environmentalism among those less economically secure, and a biocentric conceptualization of environmentalism more common among those who are relieved of more immediate survival concerns. Greens therefore may not need to infuse labor with environmental consciousness as much as they need to recognize an environmentalism that is already present, but in some ways different from their own.

Forging a lasting coalition between blues and mainstream greens will require that green organizations place the environmental health of people more centrally in their ideological constructs. Similarly, blues will need to recognize the necessity of preserving ecosystemic health to maintain human health and sustainable employment. Unfortunately, the core funding constituency (members and foundations) for most mainstream green organizations is firmly committed to more traditional preservation and conservation issues as a result of class position and the historical origins of many of these organizations. Mainstream green leadership can ill afford to alienate more economically privileged funding members by

emphasizing environmental justice and public health concerns over the preservation of favored species and vistas (see Brulle 2000). In this instance, greens and blues are not competing over limited resources, as is the problem in other social movement coalitions. Instead, aligning with each other threatens their existing sources of resources.

The structural difficulties stemming from the class positions of funding members of mainstream green organizations are numerous. Many of the members of the boards of directors of mainstream green organizations are in fact corporate executives (Dowie 1995). Funding members are often also corporate shareholders whose ability and willingness to provide funding to green organizations is largely dependent on the returns of their corporate investments. Corporate downsizing, mass lay-offs, relocating facilities offshore and other cost-cutting measures usually provide returns to shareholders in increased stock values. Supporting labor in efforts to prevent corporations from downsizing and relocating means directly opposing their own economic interests, at least as commonly conceived in the short-term. For labor this means they are asked to forge political alliances with their traditional political adversaries.

Mainstream green leaders are then faced with a choice between potential organizational contraction in terms of both membership and funding, or a continued alienation from organized labor. Only if mainstream green organizations can be convinced that they cannot win the important environmental political battles of the 21st century without the support of labor and the working class would such a trade off be possible. Alternatively and more likely, a blue-green alliance with the environmental justice and anti-toxics movements present fewer ideological obstacles, as the people-centered environmentalism, structural position, and origins of these groups are closer to those of organized labor than they are to those of the mainstream green organizations. In many ways the tensions between labor and mainstream greens echo the tensions between the environmental justice movement and mainstream greens. That the environmental justice movement has had only limited success in forging a lasting alliance with many mainstream green organizations does not bode well for the potential that those organizations will shift foci to accommodate an alliance with labor.

9-11 and Anti-Globalization Lite

In response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, the "anti-globalization" movement has shifted strategies to not appear unpatriotic. In part, this anti-corporate globalization movement "lite" represents a reasonable short-term adjustment to a unique political crisis. All forms of domestic dissent since 9-11 have simultaneously been more repressed by an increasingly authoritarian state, as well as self-policed by activists afraid of having their cause

viewed as unpatriotic. All dissent runs the risk of being cast as treason in times of political crisis. However, the combination of state repression and movement self-policing may have severe long-term consequences for the fate of the movement and its blue-green coalition.

Conservatizing the rhetoric and tactics of the movement has served to marginalize the more "radical" elements within it which have traditionally promoted the clearest structural critique of neo-liberalism. And it has been these more radical anti-captialist elements within the movement which have championed the significance of sustaining a strong coalition between organized labor and environmentalists, drawing the underlying unity of these groups' interests from the structural analysis. So again/still in 2004, those environmentalists arguing for the need for coalition with labor are viewed by mainstream greens as "radicals." Those within the labor movement rejecting the jobs vs. environment frame are similarly viewed as more radical within labor circles. The post-9-11 conservatization of U.S. movement politics has served to marginalize those elements within their respective movements, and within the anti-corporate globalization movement, as well. The result has been that efforts to rebuild and sustain a blue-green coalition which challenges the current global development trajectory have been weakened to the point of near invisibility. The dual threat of Bush-Cheney divide and conquer strategies and post-9-11 movement self-policing has made the climate for a sustained blue-green coalition far more problematic than it had been at the WTO protests in November of 1999.

4. PROPOSALS FOR ACTION AND RESEARCH: THE ROLE OF THE "BIG 10"

Will mainstream "Big 10" environmental groups be interested in these long-term coalitions that force them to pay real attention to the needs of workers? It would be too easy to summarily dismiss this group, but it is in fact deeply split in this regard. More conservative groups like the National Wildlife Federation, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Nature Conservancy *appear to have* all been uninterested in such coalitions. On the other end of this spectrum, some have already said yes, including the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth. The proof, of course, will be in their long-term commitment to them, especially if they start losing members for the reasons mentioned in the Sierra emails quoted above. The Sierra Club ran a major piece "Green + Blue = Powerful Alliance" in its activist newsletter *The Planet* in June 2002.

The piece appears to be the national staff attempting to educate local activists and encourage them to consider and develop these coalitions. "Developing relationships with unions can be tricky," the piece reads, "Who do you talk to? …The best way to get access is through another labor leader.…Face time mat-

ters. Don't just e-mail them or phone them" (Sierra Club 2002). At the bottom of the article is a notice that "Sierra Club staff are represented by two unions…" one a UAW affiliate and the other the John Muir Local 100. It concludes with the union label: "The Planet is printed by Howard Quinn, a union printer." So they can say that "working with union labor isn't just something the Sierra Club does outside the Club." Although FOE-U.S. President Brent Blackwelder reported to us on decades of specific issues on which his group had worked with unions (personal communication, March 2002), we have seen nothing like Sierra's high-profile position in the other mainstream environmental groups.

Another layer of the question, then, is whether the different levels and factions within these environmental and labor organizations will be interested in doing the difficult work of developing and sustaining these coalitions. Within the Sierra Club there are already many factions, including those who work on and care most about preservation issues, like the "Stop Commercial Logging" campaign for National Forests and other rural, "green" issues. On the other hand, the club has undergone some changes to boost its presence and legitimacy on the environmental justice and toxics issue, including hiring staffers and committing to fundraising on the issue at its 2000 annual meeting of the Board of Directors. The meeting, held in New Orleans, included a Toxic Tour and press conference at environmental justice sites along the river. They also held their 2001 annual meeting at the Mexican border, looking largely at urban environmental issues and justice. But if one were to do a survey one would probably find a fairly deep split between green and brown agenda factions among the club's staff, directors, volunteers, and the mass of non-active members. The green faction would probably be much larger. On environmental justice, the national staff appears to have been "slapped" by environmental justice groups for excluding minorities in their agendas and hiring, and are now aware of the difficulty of moving forward without people of color in their staff and in their projects. We are arguing that the same should now be said about labor: the environmental movement needs to pay them mind. So now the question is whether people of collar-color will be paid mind. There is some important overlap between environmentalists and workers, but because of the sometimes racist history of unions, minorities and unions are not the same thing.

Going in New Directions Together: Just Transition

What might the future hold for joint labor-environment actions? One idea that has arisen from blue-green dialogue is the concept of a "just transition" to a more sustainable economy. According to the Public Health Institute, a leader in promoting the just transition,

> "Just transition is a process to ameliorate the conflict between jobs and the environment. It brings organized labor, the traditional environmental community and the people of color environmental justice movement together to develop policies and relationships to avert clashes. Through a process of dialogue and common projects these groups are defining a policy of Just Transition that calls for financing a fair and equitable transition for workers and communities in environmentally sensitive industries as we necessarily move forwards towards more sustainable production." http://www.justtransition.org

Two parts of this characterization of just transition are key to its potential success. First is the inclusion of both the "traditional environmental community" and the "environmental justice community," which recognizes that these two groups of environmentalists have different interests. The second important point is the emphasis on an *equitable* transition for workers. Transition to greater environmental sustainability, be it through environmental regulations, new technologies, changing production processes, or some other methods, are going to have economic costs and benefits. While the public will benefit from the environmental changes, workers should not pay all of the costs. The just transition concept assures that if there's going to be a green transition, the costs should be shared.

Thinkers in the just transition movement consciously attempt to bypass industry's "jobs vs. environment" framing that can divide and conquer labor and environmentalists (Young 1998:1). Organizations supporting just transition propose a sort of GI Bill for workers, or perhaps more aptly, a "Superfund" for workers (Moberg 1999: 4). This fund would be generated through taxes on toxic-related products that would be used to support workers (unemployment insurance, retraining) whose jobs are lost because of environmental regulations and/or transitions to environmentally friendly production process.

Leaders in the just transition movement have come mostly from labor. A key organization has been the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (now joined with paper workers and called the PACE International Union). This group has made connections with the "public health" side of environmentalism, and some ties with the environmental justice side. The Public Health Institute, a non-profit educational organization with ties to the environmental justice movement, has facilitated education and dialogue around just transition.

While a "Just Transition G.I. Bill" is still a ways off, just transition advocates are building alliances at the local level. The Just Transition Alliance (JTA) is a national alliance with a number of projects bringing together environmental justice organizations and labor unions for education, training and organizing. For example, in Rillito, Arizona, JTA worked with PACE Local 8-296 workers at Arizona Portland Cement (APC), the local community, and an environmental

justice group (Tucsonians for a Clean Environment). Workers had not had a contract for four years. People living in the community were suffering from the effects of air pollution. With the help of educational workshops held by JTA, the union now has a new contract and the company was fined $82 thousand for nickel and cobalt air releases (Just Transition Alliance 2002). Other important groups include the Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment and the Blue-Green Working Group. JTA is a coalition organization supported by foundations, including Ford and Jessie Smith Noyes. The successful formation of umbrella groups like this is considered to be one of the essential components to coalition success (Staggenborg 1986).

At the national level, there are also promising developments. In February 2002, the Center for a Sustainable Economy and the Economic Policy Institute produced a report, "Clean Energy and Jobs: A Comprehensive Approach to Climate Change," that forecasted the effects of proposed policies for a "just transition;" policies designed to promote energy efficiency, decrease carbon dioxide emission, tax energy use, and provide assistance to dislocated workers. The modeling suggests that these policies would have the desired effect (increase efficiency, decrease pollution, and generate sufficient taxes to aid workers). Environmentalists and labor unions endorsed the report, including the Sierra Club and Service Employees International Union (Hoerner and Phelps 2002).

Whither the Blue-Green Coalition?

The 9-11 attacks resulted in both state and movement curtailment of active dissent in the U.S. at a time when corporate libertarianism and neo-liberalism became insurgent under an ideologically driven corporate dominated federal regime. While an emergent anti-war movement may help to re-legitimize overt political dissent, it has yet to do so. Labor and environmental movements, responding to the growing authoritarianism of the state, chose to marginalize red greens and red blues, those elements within each movement with the deepest and most coherent structural critique of the current global development trajectory. Those greens with an affinity for labor struggles have often been marginalized so that environmentalism can be presented as more acceptable to corporate libertarian power holders and an American public rallying around those power holders in time of crisis. Those blues who reject the jobs vs. quality of life tactics of capital and its client state have been similarly sometimes marginalized as union leaders seek common ground with capital and an anti-union administration. We would argue that it is precisely those elements within each movement that represent the potential for lasting coalition. As both labor and environmentalism conservatize, they move ideologically further away from an analysis that would illuminate their confluence of interests, and ground is lost in the effort to rebuild

a blue-green coalition. As "anti-systemic" critiques are more easily cast as anti-American in the post-9-11 political climate, each movement has drifted further away from an ideological basis for collaborative effort. The case of blue-green alliances and non-alliances could be seen as an object lesson in the difficulty of building and sustaining potent and durable anti-systemic movements.

What is the solution to make these coalitions more sustainable? We certainly don't have an answer to make the problems we've identified go away magically. There will be difficulties between national and local levels of organizations, and even factionalism at each level. It may be necessary for smaller, new organizations to lead the way: we see promising efforts like the Climate Justice and Just Transition movements, being built by labor unions and/or Global Exchange and Corporate Watch using the U.S. Environmental Justice movement as something of a model and base. New coalitions with some of the bigger groups like the Sierra Club and FOE look promising. We believe for these coalitions to be sustainable that greens will have to be put to standards as tough as blues.

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