

# Editorial

We are pleased to present in this issue the new format of the journal, which is the product of our experience in the publication of the on-line journal. As it was stated in our November statement, the present Journal (which succeeded *Society & Nature/Democracy & Nature*) and the accompanying Newsletter have just completed their first two years. The new online format has proved highly successful as shown by our visitor statistics, which indicate a fivefold increase in the number of visitors to our site since the launching of the online Journal. Today, thousands of visitors from all over the world read the Journal and its Newsletter—a fact which far exceeds our original expectations in an era of a huge decline in serious political thinking, particularly of the antisystemic type promoted by this journal. The same fact, however, also enhanced our sense of obligation to continuously improve it.

With this objective in mind, the Editorial Committee, having experimented in the last couple of years on the frequency of publication of the Journal and its highly successful Newsletter decided the following in order to offer our readers a greater choice of topics in an integrated format: a) to integrate the Newsletter into a new format Journal that would stop the present differentiation between articles of pure theoretical nature (Journal) and of theoretical analysis of topical issues (Newsletter) and, b) to convert it into a quarterly journal published in January, April, July and October, with the possibility of covering urgent topical issues by extra editions of the Journal, as part of the forthcoming quarterly issue. The aforementioned changes have been introduced retrospectively, and the main articles in the Newsletter have been integrated into the journal in the form of an extra issue per volume. We hope that these changes will meet the approval of our readers and we would be happy to hear their views on the new format journal.

The present issue which celebrates the completion of the first two years (and the first two volumes) of the Journal is particularly rich in content. It is divided into three sections.

The first section deals with the continuously deteriorating ecological crisis and a debate on the de-growth thesis. **Ted Trainer**, a frequent and valuable contributor to this journal, explodes the myth that the reproduction of the present growth economy is possible, as long as we discover some new technological fixes and we complement them with renewable sources of energy. His answer to the crucial question whether renewables can meet *the future* demand for energy in a society that is fiercely and blindly committed to limitless increases in “living standards” and economic output is a blatant no! His proposal is to move to what he calls “the simpler way” which “must involve non-affluent (but quite sufficient) material living standards, mostly small, highly self-sufficient local economies (and) economic systems under social control and not driven by market forces or the profit motive and highly cooperative and participatory systems”. In this sense, his thesis is very similar to the de-growth thesis proposed by Serge Latouche and others. The rest of this section deals with a very interesting debate on the de-growth thesis, which is presented by **Serge Latouche** and **Clement Homs** and with a rejoinder by **Takis Fotopoulos**.

The second section reports on present day social movements. **Steve Best**, a well known theorist and activist of the animal liberation movement, gives a systematic analysis of the general climate of state terrorism adopted after 9/11, in the context of which the attack against the most active movements of dissent – prominent among which is the animal liberation movement – was dramatically enhanced. Although one may raise some reservations about his conclusion that all that is needed for systemic social transformation is a “horizontal” alliance of movements incorporating a diversity of critiques and tactics that mobilize different communities, still, this conclusion is perfectly consistent with his – also controversial – premise that the dynamics that brought about global warming, rainforest destruction, species extinction, and poisoning of communities are not reducible to any single factor or cause—be it agricultural society, the rise of states, anthropocentrism, speciesism, patriarchy, racism, colonialism, industrialism, technocracy, or capitalism. **David Gabbard**, a well known educationalist, reports on a movement that has recently developed among educators, ranging from elementary school teachers to college professors, who have formed the *Educator* Roundtable, as the basis of an abolitionist movement aimed at eradicating the standards-based accountability model imposed under NCLB and its state-level predecessors that have made teachers and students slaves to high-stakes tests. As Gabbard aptly stresses, this new movement explicitly challenges the prevailing influence of the Business Roundtable and other neoliberal and neoconservative think tanks and institutes. In other words, the very political and economic elites which in a capitalist market economy and its political complement—representative democracy—shape educational policy, whilst teachers and students, i.e. those persons most directly impacted by educational policy, have no voice in shaping that policy!

Finally, the third section consists of four articles by **Takis Fotopoulos** dealing with two crucial geographical areas for the future of the present system of market economy and its political complement, representative “democracy”: the Middle East and Latin America. In the former, a generalised crisis has developed as a result of the systematic attempts by the transnational elite, headed by the Anglo-American part of it, to impose the New World Order in the area, and to secure out of the dwindling world energy resources the necessary supplies for the continuing expansion of the growth economy in the main capitalist blocs (NAFTA, EU) and the expanding dependent giants in the periphery: China and Russia. This crisis is expected to worsen further after the judicial assassination of Saddam Hussain by the New World Order and the transnational elite, although the latter clearly saw this abominable act as a significant instrument in achieving its aims and particularly in enhancing the civil war tendencies in Iraq, and the Middle East in general -- the only means left to it for the reproduction of its power in the area. The ideological aspect of this crisis is supposedly expressed through the ‘clash of civilisations’, a myth which is promoted by the elites and a side effect of which is the rising Islamophobia. On the other hand, in Latin America several centre-Left and populist regimes have taken over political power, introducing various sorts of social reforms characterised by the reformist Left as a kind of a new “Axis of Hope”, as against the “Axis of Evil” represented by the “Washington Consensus”.

**The Editorial Committee**