

Globalization and Justice

Kai Nielsen



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Will globalization promote or hinder social justice throughout the world? In this cogent analysis philosopher Kai Nielsen argues that in its present form capitalist globalization will only ensure that the rich get richer and the poor poorer. Noting that the ratio of the richest countries to the poorest has steadily grown larger under capitalism in the 20th century and that the total dollar value of the world economy has increased fivefold while the number of people living in poverty has doubled, Nielsen clearly demonstrates that globalization has made and still is making a bad situation worse.

While inveighing against capitalist globalization, he makes the important point that a globalization based on "market socialism" — to ensure both needed efficiency and an egalitarian conception of justice — would be a trend that people in all nations would welcome. Democratic socialism, despite historical betrayals and recent setbacks, Nielsen contends, is still humanity's best hope for achieving a classless, nonracist, and nonsexist world community. He devotes a number of chapters to a discussion of the critical theory that is the basis of this vision of a completely egalitarian international society, and he compares and contrasts his own position with that of such thinkers as Richard Rorty, John Rawls, Juergen Habermas, G. A. Cohen, and others.

This well-argued critique of capitalist globalization and defense of democratic socialism as a viable alternative is essential reading for philosophers, political scientists, students of international relations, and anyone concerned about the future of democratic and egalitarian ideals.



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