

**Gary Teeple**, *Globalization and the Decline of Social Reform*. Toronto: Garamond Press, 1995, 190pp. \$20.25 (softcover).

**Ken Collier**, *After the Welfare State*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1997, 199pp. \$20.00 (softcover).

Reviewed by Michael J. Prince  
*Faculty of Human and Social Development*  
*University of Victoria*

Social policy analysis, like so much else in our lives, is going global. Attention is increasingly devoted by various disciplines, professions and social movements to the globalization of markets, international trade agreements and the power of transnational corporations. These two books, by Canadian academics, are recent examples of this development in the field of social policy. Both authors examine, from a Marxist theoretical perspective, the implications of global economic processes for national sovereignty, the welfare state and the prospects for progressive reform. Both books are sobering to read because they emphasize the losses from the dismantling of social programs, and they stress the many barriers facing groups in mounting an alternative direction in social policy making. These characteristics, however, do not make the books any less important to read. Both authors examine social policy issues in First World and Third World states, and Ken Collier also discusses the Second World (former Soviet bloc) and Fourth World of aboriginal peoples.

In *Globalization and the Decline of Social Reform*, Gary Teeple outlines the Keynesian Welfare State (KWS), describes the nature of the global economy and neo-liberal policies, and then considers their consequences for the rationale and social role of the nation state. Teeple also addresses possibilities for creating an agenda of resistance and policy alternatives to market-driven globalization. Ken Collier, in *After the Welfare State*, has similar aims. Collier examines the forces attacking the welfare state, forecasts what may follow after the fall of the KWS, and discusses what avenues for advocacy and reform may be available. A strong point of Teeple's book is the comprehensive survey of the different programs and policies that comprise the neo-liberal agenda of promoting corporate profits and powers. A notable contribution of Collier's book is his use of centre-periphery theory in understanding regional disparities and politics.

Teeple's central argument is that we are now living between two historical periods - the era of national economies and nation states on the one side, and the emerging era of internationalized capital and supranational organizations on the other side. The economic and political conditions that the KWS rested on are rapidly passing away. Teeple claims that there is no longer a national working class linked to the domestic economy through trade unions,

consumerism and steady growth. Moreover, Teeple and Collier both claim that the powers of the nation state over economic policies and social reforms have been seriously eroded by the internationalization of finances and trade. The era of the welfare state in advanced industrial countries, therefore, has come to an end. Factors contributing to the demise of the KWS include the recessions of the 1980s and 1990s; the free trade agreements and broader internationalization of markets; the collapse of the Soviet system; the issue of deficits and public debt; the decline of influence by the labour movement and left wing political parties; the rise of the political right and adoption of neo-liberal programs of retrenchment.

While Collier downplays the integrative and coercive functions of the state, Teeple does use the concept of social citizenship and examines the regulatory and control activities of governments. Both writers, though, adopt a highly economic view of the purpose and role of the contemporary state. Both largely explain the origins and development of the KWS in terms of actual and potential class conflict as the driving force. The social welfare role of the state is conceptualized as serving the function of societal reproduction. There is much more to the state than class contradictions, class rule and capital accumulation, especially in a multiracial, multicultural, officially bilingual and constitutionally federalized country such as Canada. This class-oriented view of the state leads to the conclusion that the nation state is now impotent, a view questioned and challenged by others on the left.<sup>1</sup>

The future role of the nation state appears to be one of developing international agencies and agreements for the support of capital accumulation by corporate and private interests. Some functions of the nation state, Collier suggests, will be raised to the suprastate level of international organizations like the United Nations; others will be delegated or downloaded to lower levels of governments; still other functions will be privatized; and others still, in the Canadian context and perhaps some other countries, might eventually be recognized as part of the inherent right of Aboriginal governments. With the death of the Canada Assistance Plan and the creation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer fresh in his mind, Collier sees little future for federal-provincial cost sharing arrangements and national standards in social policy. There is, however, the entrenchment of the principle of equalization in the Canadian constitution and the continued strong support for the principles of medicare contained in the Canada Health Act.

If the KWS is dead, what lies ahead? Both authors are doubtful about social democratic parties and governments challenging neo-liberal agendas; and both identify numerous challenges facing social movements and human service professions in developing alternative agendas. Teeple is especially pessimistic, seeing no long-term prospects in using economic stimulus, deficit financing or higher taxation as policy instruments for maintaining the welfare state or pursuing social reform. What lies ahead is the "minimal state" with few

controls on private enterprise, fewer social and labour rights, most public services privatized or commercialized, greater reliance on charities, yet also more reliance on social controls and rules. Teeple predicts that counter-resistance efforts will continue, but within a larger, bleaker picture of economic tyranny and the triumph of capitalism.

Collier is not so pessimistic, but is still no Pollyanna about the future. One strategy is the expansion of civic engagement at the local, national and international levels by, among other groups, Aboriginal nations and alliances, environmentalists, the women's movement and trade unions. Another necessary strategy is to forge a closer connection between social security and environmental issues at the national and global levels. Perhaps the most daunting yet also most promising avenue to pursue is the establishment of democratic governance mechanisms, as well as social welfare programs, at the international level. Canadian social policy analysts and advocates need to look beyond the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in contemplating possibilities for human and social development. The NAFTA is among the least developed international instruments for advancing social policy and governance. The globalization of social policy and the socialization of global politics<sup>2</sup> are nascent trends and represent vital goals for policy analysis and reform in the new century. Though Teeple and Collier may only hint at these possibilities, they certainly highlight the urgency of this project for clients and practitioners, academics and advocates alike.

## NOTES

1. Gosta Esping-Andersen, ed. *Welfare States in Transitions: National Adaptation in Global Economies* (London: Sage, 1996); Marjorie Griffin Cohen, "What to do About Globalization" (Toronto/Vancouver: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives), available at [www.policyalternatives.ca/apec.html](http://www.policyalternatives.ca/apec.html); Linda McQuaig, *The Cult of Impotence: Selling the Myth of Powerlessness in the Global Economy* (Toronto: Viking Books, 1998).
  2. These terms are developed by Bob Deacon with Michelle Hulse and Paul Stubbs, *Global Social Policy: International Organizations and the Future of Welfare* (London: Sage, 1997).
- 
-