



# **SAME ENEMY SAME FIGHT**

**[NO to APEC = No to GLOBAL CAPITALISM]**

by Eating in Public @ [nomoola.com](http://nomoola.com) (2011)

# THE BACK STORY

At the very onset of capitalism in England (sometime in the 16th century) the Commons was stolen. In every period of capitalist expansion since then, people's access to self-sufficiency and to subsistence has been destroyed.

**Why?** So that dispossessed commoners could be made to work for those claiming the wealth of our planet (land, water, forests, food, labour, fuel etc.) as their own private property. This new ruling class of capitalists has used any violent means necessary to hang onto this stolen wealth and the power it gives them over others. Colonialism has been part and parcel of this expansion of capitalism, as has been patriarchy, poverty, slavery, indentured servitude, and the destruction of our collective environment. The legacy of this centuries-long regime of global capitalism is a world of deep inequalities, gross injustices, intense divisions, perpetual war and environmental devastation that threatens the very existence of our planet itself.



**In November of 2011, government leaders, some of the most powerful business people in the world and representatives of the World Bank and the World Trade Organization will meet in Hawai'i for the official Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) summit.**

**Who is APEC?** The *official face of APEC* is the political representatives of **21 national states** (or “member economies” as they like to call themselves): Australia, Brunei, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea (South Korea), Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United States, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), Hong Kong (China), People’s Republic of China, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Chile, Peru, Russia and Vietnam. Together, about 40% of the world’s population lives within APEC “member economies” which represent almost 50% of world trade.

The *real face of APEC, however, is Big Business*. Corporate heads meet alongside government leaders to “guide” them on the kinds of “voluntary” policies they want to see.

Sweat shop owners, employers paying starvation-wages, destroyers of tropical rainforests, polluters of the world’s water, media monopolists and propagandists, will meet in Hawai’i to plot ways to increase their profits at the expense of people and our planet. Working through national state representatives willing to subscribe to this capitalist agenda, APEC has become a driving force for capitalist expansion and intensification. Indeed, “free traders” cite it as a “model” for other “regions” and for the WTO itself.

**APEC** [**ey**-peck] *noun*, a lying, cheating, thieving outfit intent on destroying people and the planet. *Verb*, intensification of the process of capitalist globalization

**APEC•ed** [**ey**-peckd] *verb*, to be duped by APEC propoganda into thinking that APEC exists for any other reason than to increase private corporate profits that benefit only a very few.



## **APEC's goals**

APEC's main goal is to remove all "barriers" to the movement of capital, goods and services by 2020 and, ultimately, to impose throughout the region the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO - the "most undemocratic organization in the world").

The litmus test of APEC lies in the kinds of things it identifies as "barriers." For APEC, small-scale and sustainable farmers, environmental protections (of forests, water, air), labor rights and protections (such as minimum wage standards, health and safety standards and unionization), equality rights, social services, such as food stamps, unemployment insurance, non-private health care and public education are "barriers."

Barriers to what? To more corporate profits.

In a deregulated, market economy where more and more goods and services are commoditized and privatized, global corporations are accountable only to a rogue financial system with only one incessant demand - keep your stock price as high as possible by maximizing short-term returns.

# APEC

**= THE CONTINUATION  
AND INTENSIFICATION  
OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM**

# APEC

**= GREED  
≠ NEED**

**APEC**  
♥ **CORPORATIONS**

**COULDN'T GIVE** ♠  
**SHIT** ♠ **ABOUT YOU**

APEC leaders (corporate and state) will tell you that only “economic growth” will “solve” poverty.

**They are lying.**

Since 1950 the world's total economic output has increased five-fold while the number of people living in absolute deprivation has doubled. That growth has also pushed demands on the ecosystem beyond what the planet can sustain. More capitalist growth has resulted in more poverty, more injustices, more toxins and more garbage.

**APEC = C =**  
**land-theft**

**APEC is not a trade agreement.**

Unlike the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the US, Mexico and Canada, the policies agreed to by APEC leaders can be implemented piecemeal by national (or sub-national) governments without any political scrutiny. In fact, the kinds of policies the leaders of APEC can implement through their control over state policies are the kinds of things they have not been able to achieve through “free trade” agreements or through formal, binding negotiations in international bodies like the World Trade Organization (WTO). In this sense, APEC is even more undemocratic than the WTO !!



**APEC is profoundly undemocratic and secretive.**

Not in one “member economy” has there been a democratic process to discuss, debate and decide upon the content of the policies being negotiated and adopted. APEC sees such debate and democratic decision making as another “barrier” to its goals. The secrecy surrounding APEC discussions give officials and ministers, who, for the most part, hold office only in the short term, enormous power. The policies they enact lock future governments into pursuing the global capitalist agenda.



**APEC =  
plantations**

**APEC actively silences discussion on the issues that are most important to people around the world.**

At the official APEC summit, there will be no discussions (and certainly no action) on protecting free speech, about ending torture and executions, not a word to ensure that workers have decent incomes and the freedom to join unions to protect themselves from employers, nothing about people's access to decent and dignified livelihoods, about environmental sustainability or providing safe, nutritious food, not a peep about eliminating poverty, ending discrimination, nothing about protecting migrants. And most certainly, any discussion about re-distributing land, resources and wealth equally and equitably will be banned. Discussion of these, and other crucial aspects of a good life and a healthy planet are thought by APEC leaders to impede the progress it can make on furthering the agenda established by corporations.

The past “success” of national governments implementing the global capitalist agenda has devastated people, our social ties to one another and our collective environment. Perhaps the clearest consequence of “neo-liberal” policies has been the obscene growth in the gap between rich and poor and between labor and executive management. Today, the richest 10 percent of the world’s population’s income is roughly 117 times higher than the poorest 10 percent. This is a huge jump from 1980, when the income of the richest 10 percent was about 79 times higher than the poorest 10 percent. Instead of wealth “trickling down,” as was claimed by neo-liberal propagandists, wealth has, in fact, gushed upwards. The 400 highest income earners in the US make as much money in a year as the entire population of 20 African nations - more than 300 million people.

The causes of this growing wealth gap are two-fold: the actions taken by employers and by national governments. In the US, tax rates have fallen on upper income citizens and corporations worldwide. The 2001 and 2003 tax cuts slashed an estimated \$175 billion in corporate taxes. Corporate taxes as a percentage of the U.S. economy have shrunk from 4.1 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1965 to just 1.5 percent in 2002. Meanwhile, U.S. billionaires Bill Gates, Paul Allen and

Steve Ballmer of Microsoft, and Larry Ellison of Oracle would not be in Forbes top 20 billionaires had the U.S. government not invested tens of billions of public dollars developing computers and the Internet. Moreover, over \$700 billion were given in government bailouts in the US alone to the banks and financial firms responsible for the burst in the real-estate bubble in 2008.

Billionaires’ fortunes depend upon paying a large number of their (often sub-contracted) employees poverty-level wages. The billionaire Walton family own Wal-Mart, the largest private employer in the world. Many of its employees in the U.S. are so poorly paid that they must rely on food stamps and other forms of public assistance to get by. Such forms of government aid represent an indirect government subsidy to corporations whose business model does not include paying employees enough to live on.

# WHY IS APEC MEETING IN HAWAII?

Although the official line is that President Barack Obama simply wants to “welcome” Big Business and government leaders to his hometown in order to provide “a big economic boost and huge publicity benefits for Hawai‘i,” the main reason APEC is meeting in Hawai‘i is to try and avoid large-scale and spirited protests.

APEC has met intense opposition almost everywhere else it has met. Scenes of police brutalizing protesters are a regular feature of APEC summits. In 2010, thousands of protesters marched and rallied under the banner of No to APEC! and were met by over 20,000 police armed to the max.

Such protests get in way of APEC’s propaganda machine that tells us that “everyone benefits from APEC.”

WELCOME  
**APEC**

WELCOME  
**OIL SPILLS &  
DEFORESTATION**

APEC believes that people in Hawai'i will welcome it (and its destructive agenda) with open arms. This is not true. People in Hawai'i have been devastated by capitalist globalization for hundreds of years and continues to be held captive because of its strategic position for US military operations in the Pacific, particularly against targets in Asia.

The strategy of holding meetings where it is hoped there will be few protesters has been tried before. After the 1999 "Battle of Seattle" when direct action protesters shut down the meetings of the World Trade Organization, the next WTO meetings were held in Doha, Qatar. Not only was it very costly for protestors to get to Qatar, it was (and remains) infamous for its one-party national state, for illegalizing dissent, making arbitrary arrests and restricting people's freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, and workers' rights.

WELCOME  
**APEC**

WELCOME  
**UNEMPLOYMENT  
& POVERTY**

To say “**No to APEC**” is to fight for social, economic and environmental justice. It is to demand our Commons so that we can be free: free from hunger, from repression and from exploitation.

WELCOME  
APEC

WELCOME  
PIILAU

Opposing the global capitalist agenda of APEC need not be a retreat into nationalism. Nationalism calls only for strengthening existing “nations” or creating new ones.

Nationalists (of all political stripes, Left and Right) refuse to account for the close relationship between capital and national states. They try to delude us into thinking that national leaders have our best interests at heart. Nationalists pretend that having a national states will make us independent from global capitalism. This is not the case.

Nation states the world over work hand-in-hand with capitalists to exploit people and the planet. Nationalism delivers us to the global capitalist system.

To refuse global capitalism we must refuse the equally global system of national states.

We need to counter global capitalism with a global movement for peace and justice.

**One way of framing our responses could be by considering the struggle for the global commons.**

There are four key principles historically evident in the practice of commoning and in the rights held by commoners, rights that differ substantially from those meted out by the modern regime of citizenship or even of human rights.

**First**, common rights are “embedded in a particular ecology,” one that is reliant on local knowledge of sustainable practices. In this sense common rights are neither abstract nor based on false ideas of the existence of separate “races” and “nations” but are, instead, based on one’s actions.

**Secondly**, “commoning is embedded in a labor process” and is “entered into by labor.” Hence, commoning, by definition, rejects the exploitation of other people’s labor.

**Third**, “commoning is collective.” It is a social practice.

**Fourth**, commoning is “independent of the state” and the law. There are no sovereigns in the commons.

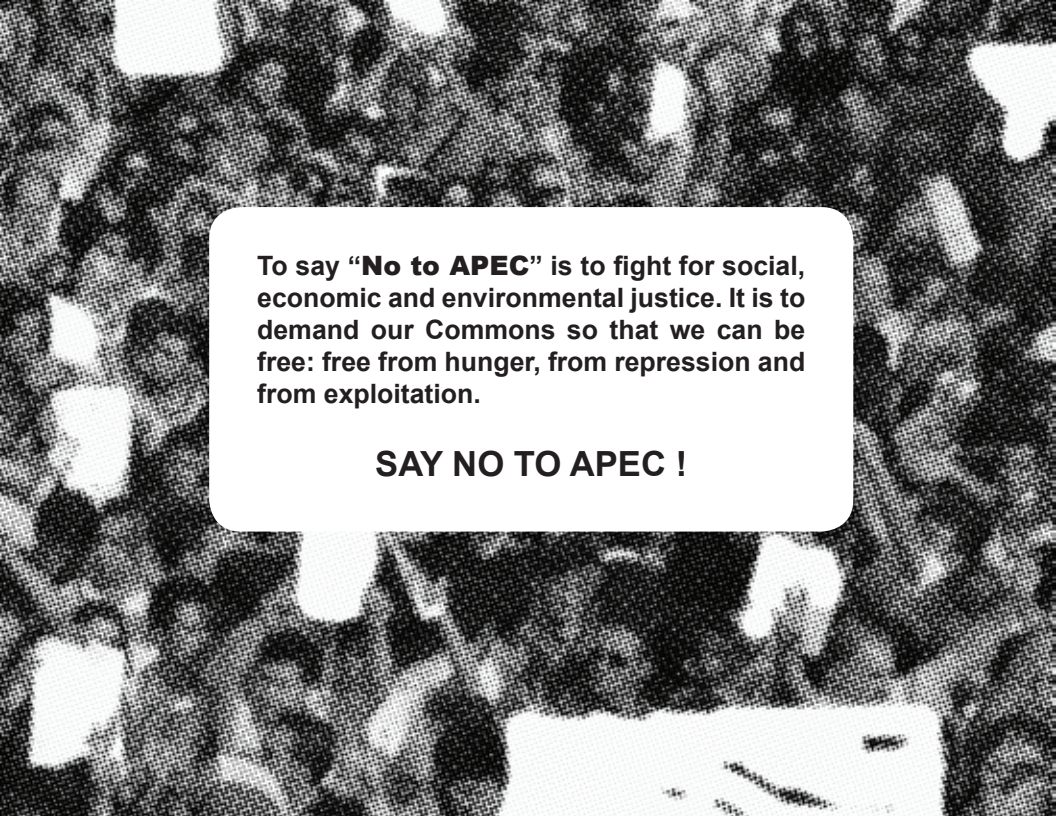
In sum, commoning is the realization of not only political rights but also the social and economic rights of the commoners. Common rights have historically included the principles of: neighborhood; subsistence; travel; anti-enclosure; and reparations.

Key to the realization of a commons is the nurturing of relationships of community with fellow commoners. The rights held by commoners are the rights of persons. In contrast to the rights of property (which is, ultimately, the right to exclude others from enjoying that which has been privatized), the right of persons consists of the right to not be excluded. Thus, the right of persons is not something that is granted by the powerful. Instead, it is an entitlement that each person carries in her/himself.

Today's commons is only realizable at a global scale and, therefore, against the nation (e.g. citizenship) or even the region or the continent (e.g. "Asia Pacific"). From an ecological perspective, we have long known that destructive (or helpful) practices in one part of the globe have effects, sometimes immediate, on all others. From a social perspective, creating restrictions on the movement of people, plants, animals, food, fuel, medicines, ideas, and more, is tantamount to accepting the imposition of inequalities of one sort or another.

Thus, the commons for which a No to APEC politics struggles is a global one. A **No to APEC** politics redefines equality and social justice as a relationship among co-members of a global society, and not merely one among national citizens.





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**SAY NO TO APEC !**