

In July of 1944 as World War II wreaked havoc across Europe and Asia, representatives from England and the United States convened a conference in the quiet solitude of Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. It was there that the building blocks for a new world order based on the free movement of international capital was established. In order to facilitate such a liberal capitalist world economy, two new multilateral financial institutions were established that would put a stranglehold on the global economy for the next fifty years.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) were created in concert to ensure the continuous flow of capital into the world markets and guarantee a secured and profitable means of private foreign investment for the future. Despite allusions to the alleviation of global poverty, the unwritten goal of the IMF/World Bank's "free market" capitalism was the creation and enforcement of a transnational corporate hegemony.

So, as the World Bank prepares to celebrate fifty years of unparalleled global economic plunder, it seems an opportune moment to introduce the commemorative *Worlddebt* edition. With a current membership of 165 debtor nations to choose from, each fully illustrated *Worlddebt* card contains all the vital information necessary to insure the kind of lifestyle we all seek.

John Knight, 1994

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