

Civilian-Based Defense

Exploring a Nonviolent Strategy
for Deterrence and Defense

Inside This Issue. . .

WTO Protests in Seattle

Notes on 11-30-99 WTO Protest Actions 3

Peter Bergel

No More Free Ride for Free Trade 10

Norman Solomon

Demonstrators Show Clinton the Way..... 13

Ralph Nader

For Now, Street Heat Has Stifled
Corporate Elite 16

Russell Mokhiber and Robert Weissman

Bought-and-Paid For World Trade 19

Jim Hightower

Make Trade Work for Workers..... 20

William Lucy

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Civilian-Based Defense is published quarterly by the Civilian-Based Defense Association (CBDA) to provide information about civilian-based defense (CBD) as an alternative policy for national defense and to make available international news, opinion and research about CBD. The Association is a nonprofit membership organization founded in 1982 to promote widespread consideration of CBD and to engage in educational activities to bring CBD to public attention. CBD means protecting a nation against invasions or *coups d'etat* by preparing its citizens to resist aggression or usurpation by withholding cooperation and by active noncooperation rather than military force. Tactics include strikes, encouraging invading forces to desert, encouraging other countries to use sanctions against the invader, etc. Citizens would learn how to use CBD before aggression starts, which distinguishes it from spontaneous resistance. Prior preparation and publicity would enhance its effectiveness and also make it a deterrent to attack.

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Notes on 11-30-99 WTO Protest Actions

Peter Bergel

Overall Impressions

The protests today represented a new beginning of cooperation between labor, environmental, peace, human rights and other groups. Many were represented and worked together very well.

The direct action was carried out by mainly young activists who had been trained for the week before and handled themselves superbly, by and large. They were disciplined, radical, well-educated and had a good grasp of the value of nonviolence, at least as a tactic. I found that they knew a remarkable amount about WTO, free trade, capitalism and related topics.

The City of Seattle's downtown area was completely shut down. The people took over the streets and the police were not able to exercise more than token control over them.

For the most part, the police behaved well. They were seriously outnumbered, stressed, provoked at times and probably felt frightened. Nevertheless, they used force sparingly and overstepped the need infrequently.

The protesters did a magnificent job of policing themselves. The minor outbreaks of violent anger were contained by the demonstrators with surprising skill and commitment.

The WTO meetings were seriously impacted. The opening was delayed, many delegates were prevented from attending at all, and those who did could not get to their meetings without running the gantlet of angry protesters making their message

Civilian-Based Defense

clear in both mass and individual ways.

It was probably a very significant day in the history of people's power, "free" trade evolution and defense of democracy.

Personal Experiences

After gathering at Steinbrueck Park at 7:00 AM today, we marched downtown in a huge march which stretched for many blocks. How many I couldn't tell from my position within it, but we were only half of the total since another march started from another location, converging on the WTO meeting place from another direction.

Once downtown, we split into different sub-groups to occupy different parts of downtown. The area around the WTO had been divided into thirteen sectors with clusters of affinity groups (small autonomous action groups) responsible for deciding upon - and carrying out - a blockade of their sector. My group marched around downtown a bit and wound up in front of the Sheraton Hotel, where many delegates were staying. Human blockades were set up by dedicated affinity groups at every entrance, including the parking garage. Protesters lined up across the entrances, linked arms and stood their ground. At several points there were face-to-face standoffs between protesters and police. The police wore face shields, gas masks (at times) and body armor and carried long sticks, sidearms, pepper spray and sometimes plastic riot shields. The protesters wore old clothes, rain protection and bandannas against tear gas. Some were wildly costumed and a few had gas masks.

There was some pushing and rough stuff now and then when delegates tried to get out of the hotel or get back in. Protesters tried to prevent any entry or egress and sometimes the delegates tried to push through. When they did, police interfered, if they were close by.

About 10:00 AM tear gas was used by the police to clear the immediate area. By that time I had moved up the street and was not gassed. When the gas dispersed, I went back down to

find out what had occasioned the use of the gas. It had been used to clear the intersection along Union to afford meeting access to some WTO delegates. However, rather few of them appeared to be using it. The police lined both sides of the intersection to keep it clear. As the delegates walked through, the crowd booed them loudly and then began shouting "shame, shame." A few minutes later, another tear gas attack back up the street drove people down toward my position and the gas followed them. I was gassed slightly.

As I walked around downtown, I found that practically every intersection was filled with people dancing, drumming and blockading and the numbers were truly amazing. The police were mostly holding various lines and not letting people through them. Then periodically they would use tear gas to clear an area. People would leave the area, circle around to another block and come back when the gas dispersed. The police would shortly abandon the intersection they had just secured and move to another one and the process would begin again. The upshot of this was that the police were unable to protect much of anything at all, yet they could not spare the manpower to arrest demonstrators without losing control of the areas they were trying to protect. The downtown was firmly in the protesters' hands and it was clear that without the consent of the governed not much could be accomplished, if enough of the governed decided to resist.

Some of the signs that impressed me included:

- ◆ The Senators who ratified the WTO Treaty should be tried for treason.
- ◆ Do YOU remember voting for the WTO?
- ◆ Keep the sweatshop in the sauna.
- ◆ More health, less wealth.
- ◆ I hope you can eat your money.
- ◆ No legislation without representation.

I saw two police cars parked in the street as part of a police counter blockade. One had a flat rear tire and both had such graffiti as "Pig" and "F--- cops" spray-painted on them. There was also some glass breakage, overturning of dumpsters

Civilian-Based Defense

and paper boxes and defacing of buildings, but the damage was trivial considering the huge numbers of people in the area, the anger that the tear-gassing triggered and the wealth of those against which the property damage was directed. More important, though, was the response of the demonstrators to virtually every outbreak of property damage or hot-headedness. Demonstrators moved immediately to quell property damage and equally determinedly to break up conflicts. Others immediately began to chant "Nonviolent protest! Nonviolent protest!" The effect was to put the rowdier elements on notice that their tactics were not appreciated by the vast majority of those present. I even saw a line of demonstrators link arms to successfully protect the windows of a VoiceStream Wireless store from window-breakers.

The favorite chant of the day was "Hey, hey! Ho, ho! WTO has got to go!" Not too imaginative, perhaps, but easy to learn and it had a good rhythm. At one point, a group sang the "Star Spangled Banner." When they got to the line about the land of the free, people stopped singing and went into wild applause. Another favorite chant was "Whose streets? Our streets! Whose streets? Our streets!"

Crowd size estimates on the news seem to have been characteristically small: one early report said there were 5,000 downtown in the morning. I would guess the number at four to six times that, though that is only a guess. All I can say is that all the streets I went to were full of people and I would guess that a tightly packed block would probably hold about 1,000 people. Even a loosely packed block would have to have 300 - 400 in it. And there were blocks like that up and down many streets. I can't imagine there were less than 10,000 - 20,000 downtown in the morning and possibly as many as 30,000. Then there must have been a good 40,000 - 50,000 in the "Big" labor march which came downtown in the afternoon. That would boost the count to 50,000 - 60,000, maybe even as high as 70,000. Honest estimates based on helicopter pictures could be made, but I don't know if they will be.

In many intersections, protesters "locked down." They

connected themselves to each other and to heavy blocks or concrete-filled pipes to make it impossible for the police to move them. This was another reason the cops didn't arrest people. They just couldn't. Some of those locked down were still in the intersections when the police used tear gas in the area and they just had to endure it.

I spoke briefly to a WTO delegate from Trinidad and Tobago - a small country of less than 2,000 square miles - which has what he called "manageable debt." He seemed to understand what we were protesting about quite well. Especially he understood the trade-offs forced by the requirements of debt repayment.

People on the streets were often very helpful towards one another, sharing water, helping them out of areas in which they didn't want to be, washing each others' eyes and so on. A few medical types are carrying saline solution for severe tear gas victims. There are also legal observers wearing specially printed white T-shirts and taking notes on what they see going on.

Two kinds of tear gas seemed to be in use. One was whitish-grey and seemed to remain relatively local where it was shot. The other was dark, almost black, and seemed to blanket much larger areas quickly. It obscures vision like smoke even if you don't get anywhere near it.

I heard many fascinating conversations about the relative power of violence and nonviolence. It was wonderful to hear so many people who weren't me carrying the defense of nonviolence in these circumstances.

In some places there was plastic yellow tape marked "Police crime scene. Do not cross." In many others there was identical looking tape which said instead, "Unseen crimes."

A very disciplined drum corps with drums, cymbals, flags and a whistle-blowing majorette dressed in dark, revolutionary-looking clothing showed up from time to time throughout the day. They would march in tight formation along the street, playing and responding to the whistled commands of the majorette. Then, at a whistled signal, they would begin to deploy in various patterns. They were entertaining, clever, humorous and good at what they

Civilian-Based Defense

do. At one point, as they marched down a street, they suddenly veered sharply left and walked right into Starbucks, playing and marching around several times to the shock of the customers, some of whom left at once.

The vanguard of the "Big" march arrived downtown about 1:30 PM, occupying the whole street. Although it came in fits and starts, it flowed past my vantage point for 50 minutes before I found my Salem friends and joined them. We looped through a number of blocks of downtown and then began to head out of downtown a block over from where the march came in. To my amazement, we could see a steady stream still coming in! It was 2:45 PM. I left the march and stood on the corner to view the rest of the march. By 3:00 PM the march's end had passed the point at which I could see it entering downtown a block up the street. However, it was still another 20 minutes before the end passed my vantage point. This means that a march that often filled the entire street took about an hour and a half to pass one point. Could that be less than 50,000?

I saw signs for at least these unions: steelworkers, electrical workers, teachers, bricklayers, ILWU (Longshoremen), painters, Stanford workers, service employees, teamsters, sheet metal workers, marine engineers, transit workers, boilermakers, plumbers steamfitters and refrigeration workers, public service workers of Canada, cement masons, pulp paper and woodworkers, nurses, Canadian airways workers and carpenters.

When the march had left, I went back to one of the lockdowns on Sixth Avenue right next to the Sheraton Hotel. There were still a lot of people downtown. There were clearly less than before, but they still filled many blocks and the occupation continued. At one point there was a disturbance as two men appeared to be trying to break through a line of protesters which was linked to prevent delegates from getting past. Behind them was a line of police. There was a scuffle and I went right over there to see if I could help maintain the peace. One of the two fell down and immediately got up, very freaked out. I began to calm him only to have my attention drawn to the other who was a few feet away. His suit coat was open and he had a sidearm

holster from which he had already removed the gun. It was pointing down, but I had a moment of serious fear as I realized that - should he raise the weapon - I would be right in his immediate line of fire.

However, he did not raise it. Rather, he and the other man crossed through the police line and were gone. The crowd had responded at once, shouting, "He's got a gun. He's got a gun," and pointing. The police responded by spraying the entire scene, including me, with pepper spray. Although I have seen tear gas a number of times before, I had never confronted pepper spray before. It's pretty painful just to have on your skin. It must be really awful to have in your eyes.

At 5:00 PM, the police moved to clear the entire area. They began firing off large amounts of tear gas and people began to run down Sixth. A number of us shouted for them to walk to prevent panic and stampede. Then we moved slowly out of the area. The tear gas overtook us and I was gassed more heavily this time. The stuff isn't as nasty as what they used to use in the 1960's, but it's bad enough. Shortly after that I left. I later heard that the police used gas to clear most of the protesters out, but some remained and the day's first arrests took place that evening. I heard numbers like 22 and 25 - a tiny number considering how many had been there during the day.

Taken as a whole, the day was an unquestioned success. The WTO could not help but get the message about how they were viewed by the many thousands present. Moreover, they had not been able to agree on their agenda before they arrived for this meeting and then they lost a good deal of yesterday because the downtown area was so congested and even more of today due to delays and absence of delegates.

Peter Bergel edits The Oregon Peacemaker in Salem OR. He is also a nonviolence trainer who often helps prepare people to demonstrate responsibly. He was formerly editor of Civilian-Based Defense.

No More Free Ride for Free Trade

Norman Solomon

For the World Trade Organization, five years of a free ride in US mass media came to a crashing halt on the last day of November 1999.

The WTO was fully accustomed to operating with scant media scrutiny in this country. Even for alert consumers of mainstream news, the WTO was apt to seem distant, aloof and fully protected from the intervention of mere mortals. No more.

Midway through this historic week, it is clear that mere mortals have thrown themselves onto the gears of global trade designed by the rich and powerful. The Oz-like curtain shielding the operators of corporate machinery has gone up in smoke - symbolized by the tear gas and pepper spray wafting over Seattle. And December has begun with the acrid smell of illusions turning to ash.

Bretton Woods Is Burning Down

Bretton Woods is burning down. For North America and the rest of the world, the WTO will never be the same. And while the hotshots running the WTO struggle with this predictable but abrupt crisis in Seattle, the parallel activities of global loan sharks like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are also sliding into further disrepute.

The broad base of the protests in this city has compelled media attention. It was not just numbers that were so impressive. The unions, religious groups, civic alliances, NGOs, activist coalitions and other organizations represented in the streets were clearly and deeply rooted in communities across North

America and every other continent. We are discovering and strengthening our common interests. One sign in the big march Tuesday afternoon read: "Turtles and Teamsters: United At Last."

Get Ready for the Counterattacks

The emerging coalitions that have literally and figuratively disrupted the best-laid plans of the WTO this week are, for corporate media, somewhat odd – and at worst, nothing short of ominous. Get ready for the counterattacks in the news media.

When you go home—wherever that is—don't forget that your voice must be heard. You were a co-creator and a witness to history, moving with the best of our hope. Of course, the obstacles to challenging the current global economic system of privilege and injustice remain huge. But they can be overcome.

For the guardians of systemic inequities on a global scale, the expectations for a ministerial gathering have turned nightmarish. The host figurehead, President Clinton, was to have arrived to help officiate at a triumphant moment. Instead, he faced a range of distasteful choices.

Automatic Assumptions

The default position of US news coverage has always been implicit: When government leaders and top corporate officials reach agreement on economic rules for the planet to live (and die) by, those rules are basically sound. Such assumptions are so automatic that few journalists give them a second thought.

But as the smoke clears here, there are bound to be some second thoughts. Whether they will be transient or transformational is up to people at the grassroots in communities all over the world. Painstaking efforts have brought us this far. But unless we sustain and increase the pressure brought to bear on the WTO this week, the corporate globalizers and their kindred media spirits will find ways to revert to business as usual.

One of the most progressive members of the US

Civilian-Based Defense

Congress, Dennis Kucinich, made a crucial point a couple of days ago when he warned against "sacrificing human existence on the altar of the great dollar bill." Labor rights, economic equity, environmental protection, human rights, and social justice are concentric values that must withstand assault from monetary worship that proliferates in the mass media every day.

Enter Bill Clinton

Now comes Bill Clinton, doing his best to clean up the mess. The rhetoric is likely to fly high. As usual, many reporters and pundits will give him credit for lofty intent. One way or another, we can expect Clinton to put himself forward as a healer who is seeking to strengthen what he has called "a vital American center where there is cooperation across lines of party and philosophy." But Clinton's fervent support for the WTO remains centered on power and wealth.

*Norman Solomon is author of **The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media**, and writes a syndicated column. In addition, he is Executive Director of the Institute for Public Accuracy, and co-hosted the daily one-hour program **World Trade Watch Radio**, which was heard on more than 100 public radio stations during the Seattle actions. Commentary reprinted by permission.*

WTO Websites

www.wto.org

The official World Trade Organization site.

www.wtowatch.org

Regularly updated, with links to other sites.

www.citizen.org/press/pr-wto3.htm

www.citizen.org/pctrade/tradehome.html

Includes useful print resources, also regularly updated.

www.ictsd.org/html/seattlecalendar.htm

The International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development. Dated, but includes e-mail addresses for organizations involved in Seattle demonstrations.

www.worldtradeobserver.org

Daily newspaper during the action.

Demonstrators Show Clinton the Way

Ralph Nader

The media called it "the battle of Seattle" last week.

Certainly it was clear once again that the media often waits for street demonstrations before conveying the message of the demonstrators - in this case composed of labor, church groups, environmental and consumer organizations, family farm delegations, human rights advocates, students against overseas sweat-shops and others never before so united behind a common cause.

President Bill Clinton also read the political and civic strength behind the demonstrators and their intense workshops and press briefings during that exciting week.

After ignoring the articulate please of these groups back in 1994 when he was ramming the latest version of the GATT trade agreement and its World Trade Organization (WTO) through Congress, Mr. Clinton started repeating their concerns. He came out for openness, instead of the secrecy of the WTO that he pushed through Congress. He came out for more consideration of labor and environmental rights by the WTO, after brushing them off five years ago.

Finally, after condemning some window-smashers, he praised overwhelmingly peaceful marchers and activists for compelling the world's nations to consider whether they are going in "the direction we all want to go."

Well, well, well, Mr. Clinton - a WTO reborn! What's the old saying about "when the people lead, the leaders will follow!" Even right-wing columnist Bill Safire, writing in the *New York Times*, said it "was Clinton's finest hour." Safire noted that trade should be about more than money. Other values counted.

Civilian-Based Defense

Other conservatives agreed and marched along with liberal groups in Seattle.

Seattle was a fork in the road, and as Yogi Berra once said: "When you reach a fork in the road, take it." Quo vadis? The global corporatists preach a model of economic growth that rests on the flow of trade and finance between nations dominated by the giant multinationals - drugs, tobacco, chemical, oil, nuclear, munitions, biotechnology, autos, textile, banking, insurance and other services.

For third world nations, export-dependent economies become too dependent on international finance and its speculative instability, on non-sustainable or seriously polluting technologies and on cash crops instead of growing food for their own people.

The global corporate model is premised on the concentration of power over markets, governments, mass media, patent monopolies over critical drugs and seeds, the workplace and corporate culture. All these and other power concentrates, homogenize the globe and undermine democratic processes and their benefits.

Far better for countries to focus on building domestic markets through land reform, microcredit for small businesses, use of local materials for housing and renewable energy solar-style. For developing countries, it is far better for bottom-up capital formation to encourage activities that are more job intensive - generating purchasing power - than adopting highly capitalized and chemical plantation type agribusiness with destructive technologies. Just look at American economic history and recall the enormous multiplier effect of growing more food and fiber by small farms following the great Homestead Act of 1863.

Obviously, the domestic markets' priority requires more democracy while the global corporatist approach is quite congenial with dictatorial regimes.

The very successful financier and civil society supporter, George Soros, wrote that the major threat to democracy in the world today - post- Soviet Union - is what he called "the market fundamentalism" of the multinational corporations.

That "market fundamentalism" dominates the commercial mandates and autocratic procedures of the World Trade Organization. With about 134 countries that are members, the domestic environmental, consumer and workplace health and safety regulations have to prove they are "least trade restrictive."

What that omnipresent phrase means is that one country's ban challenges another country's safety laws or standards for allegedly obstructing imports. So far these cases brought before the WTO's secret tribunals in Geneva, Switzerland usually have been decided against health and safety under the tribunal judges' yardstick of "trade uber alles."

When this practice is combined with the harmonization (downward so far) of health and safety standards worldwide, which is WTO's objective, what country can lead first in safety as the U.S. did in auto crash protection years ago? Now our country's auto safety officials first go for harmonization meetings under WTO - that are secret - instead of pioneering the lifesaving frontiers for its people first.

On November 20, 1994, *New York Times* reporter David Sanger wrote, "Over the past year, the Administration tried desperately to keep anyone from noticing GATT." That arrogance by the Clintonites then presents the president with vast redemptive opportunities now. It is in the hands of the people to show him the way.

Well-known consumer advocate Ralph Nader is founder of the Public Interest Research Group, and Green Party candidate for U.S. President. © 1999 Ralph Nader 12-8, reprinted by permission.

Contributors

All of our contributors for this issue were themselves present and participating in Seattle. All of these contributors have also been very kind in allowing us to print or reprint their accounts and commentary without charge. Very special thanks are in order for each of these activists, from all of us in the Civilian-Based Defense Association.

For Now, Street Heat Has Stifled Corporate Elite

Russell Mokhiber and Robert Weissman

Democracy was certainly in the streets of Seattle last week, and a whiff - perhaps carried by teargas - even made it into the convention center where trade ministers from the World Trade Organization (WTO) member states met.

Many factors contributed to the collapse of the WTO talks - an effort to expand the scope of the trade agency's authority - but there is no question that popular protests played a central role.

Tuesday saw at least 40,000 people take to the streets to protest the corporate tilt of the WTO. A stunning coalition of teamsters, consumers, sea turtle protection activists, religious people, women's groups, environmentalists, students and anti-corporate youth and many, many others joined to "Just Say No to the WTO."

Approximately 10,000 people - primarily students and youth - joined together in an extraordinarily well organized and highly disciplined direct action to block every access way to the convention center, stopping most of the official and negotiating activities scheduled for the WTO meeting's first working day.

Notwithstanding city efforts to clamp down on all public dissent in the downtown area, protests continued throughout the week, with thousands demonstrating at separate environmental, farmer, steel worker and women's marches and rallies. Always on display were focused attacks on the WTO and strident criticism of the corporations that have drafted and lobbied for its anti-people rules.

On Friday, perhaps ten thousand joined in a labor-led march - organized on about 24-hours notice - to again protest

the WTO and the city's infringements on civil liberties through the creation of a "no protest" zone.

Meanwhile, students and others in an overwhelmingly young crowd continued civil disobedience and direct actions throughout the week.

Inside the convention center, where negotiations began on Wednesday after riot-gear-equipped police and national guard forces cordoned off the downtown from most protesters, turmoil was building as well.

When separate working groups negotiating over a wide array of sectors failed to produce compromise agreements, the United States sought to forge a deal through the WTO's heavy-handed old-style tactics.

Charlene Barshefsky, the U.S. Trade Representative, and the rest of the U.S. negotiating team picked a handful of countries to commence negotiations in a closed "Green Room." The idea was for the arbitrarily selected bunch to work out a comprehensive deal, and then present it to the entire WTO membership as a *fait accompli* for adoption. But even the Green Room gambit failed, and the talks ended in complete disarray.

The complexity of trade negotiations - with compromises made in one sector dependent on unrelated compromises in another - means no single factor can explain the talks' failure. But it is possible to identify many of the key negotiating reasons for the collapse:

- ◆ The European Union and the United States could not work out an agricultural accommodation, with the EU's commitment to export subsidies a critical stumbling block.

- ◆ Many Third World countries revolted against the negotiating process, and their complete exclusion from the Green Room discussions. More than 70 developing countries, primarily from Africa and the Caribbean, declared on Thursday that they would not sign a final declaration negotiated in a process from which they had been excluded.

- ◆ A compromise deal that was floated early Friday morning would have entailed politically unacceptable compro-

Civilian-Based Defense

mises on the key issues of concern to U.S. labor unions - anti-dumping (rules permitting countries to block the import of below-market-cost imports) and some progress on rules to promote adherence to core labor standards.

On each of these issues, the street protests helped heighten contradictions and conflicts. The simple fact of preventing negotiations on Tuesday helped impede agreement in the agricultural sector. As a delegate from Zimbabwe explained, the street demonstrations emboldened the Third World negotiators to object to the exclusionary processes inside the WTO. And the demands from the U.S. labor movement - backed by mobilized rank-and-file members - stiffened the U.S. negotiators so that they at least refused to cave in on their minimalist labor rights demands.

For now, street heat has stifled the corporate elite. Just as they blocked delegates from entering the convention center, so they blocked the corporations' attempt to extend the WTO's reach even further into the nation's economies and societies.

But as spectacular as was the Seattle victory, achieving the second half of one of the week's primary slogans - "No New Round, Turn Around" - will be even more daunting. Launching a new WTO negotiating round is nowhere near as important to corporate interests as maintaining the existing WTO rules and the prevailing model of corporate globalization.

Still, a little bit of democratic empowerment can be a dangerous thing. If the broad coalition that came together in Seattle can stay together - a big "if" - it may eventually be able to force new rules for the global economy, so that trade is finally subordinated to the humane values of health, safety, ecological sustainability and respect for human rights, rather than the reverse.

Russell Mokhiber is editor of the Washington DC-based Corporate Crime Reporter. Robert Weissman is editor of the Washington DC-based Multinational Monitor. They are co-authors of Corporate Predators: The Hunt for MegaProfits and the attack on Democracy. © 1999 Russell Mokhiber & Robert Weissman 12-8, reprinted by permission.

Bought-and-Paid-For World Trade

Jim Hightower

If the founding fathers were to gather today at Philadelphia's Independence Hall for the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, the atmosphere of the meeting would be quite different than in 1776.

This is because no powerhouse governmental gathering occurs these days without an overbearing corporate presence - with logos and CEO's outnumbering the official delegates. In Philadelphia, there would have been a corporate host committee to sponsor the meeting. Sponsors would be entitled to attend special receptions to schmooze with the founders, get daily briefings on the drafting of the document, and be allowed to have private consultations with Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin, and all the rest. The meeting itself would in the "Microsoft Independence Hall," and Budweiser would buy the rights to call itself the "Official Adult Beverage of the Founders."

If you happen to doubt this would happen, check out the gathering in Seattle last month of the World Trade Organization (WTO) where ministers from 134 nations, along with Bill Clinton and other heads of state were meeting. The public itself was not allowed inside. But the "WTO Seattle Host Organization" is side-by-side with the official delegates.

This corporate host group, co-chaired by Bill Gates of Microsoft and Phil Condit of Boeing, kicked in some \$9 million to defray costs of the WTO confab. This "host organization" proudly proclaimed that it has worked with "WTO officials every step of the way . . . to maximize interaction between the officials and the private sector."

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For sponsorships of up to \$250,000 each, such giants as IBM, AT&T, GM and Bank of America, have bought their way inside. They get to attend an exclusive dinner with the WTO ministers, receive briefings and updates on the drafting of new WTO rules, and grab private conferences with the ministers.

If you wonder why the WTO is such a servant of global corporate power, it's because the corporations are inside the WTO . . . and you're not.

Jim Hightower is host of Chat & Chew, a daily radio talk show on the United Broadcasting Network and author of There's Nothing in the Middle of the Road But Yellow Lines and Dead Armadillos. Reprinted by permission from Metro Detroit Labor News.

Make Trade Work for Workers

William Lucy

As we approach the Twenty-first Century, the reality of economic globalization is one we must all recognize. Though globalization is occurring on every level of commerce, it should not progress unchecked without the scrutiny of the labor movement and others who care about justice for workers.

Without our careful input, the rush to embrace global capitalism could sacrifice worker rights that we have struggled long and hard to achieve.

The new world order of the recent past has created an alphabet soup of entities charged with bringing about economic globalization. Chief among these is the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The WTO has a tremendous effect on domestic policy in

the United States because of the tribunal process it uses to adjudicate disputes. A government that loses such a dispute is bound to amend their own domestic legislation or face heavy fines.

Even many who supported formation of the WTO in 1995 have been appalled by the extent of the tribunal's reach into U.S. domestic policy. Here are a few examples:

- ◆ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was forced to weaken its Clean Air Act regulations to comply with a WTO ruling barring U.S. limits on contaminants in imported foreign gasoline. Venezuela claimed that the limits, which affected California and eight other states, acted as an unfair trade barrier.

- ◆ In September 1999, U.S. supermarkets began again to sell tuna that is caught using mile-long nets blamed for snaring and killing thousands of dolphins each year. This is a direct result of the WTO forcing Congress to weaken the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

- ◆ The state of Massachusetts had passed a law banning state contracts with firms doing business with the oppressive military dictatorship of Burma. The European Union and Japan filed a complaint to the WTO and a federal court used that complaint as evidence that the state's law constituted a trade barrier and an intrusion on the federal government's foreign policy powers.

When the WTO ministerial conference was held in Seattle in November, AFSCME was out in full to let them know that workers will not be denied in the quest for international trade agreements. Along with other unions and groups that represent environmental and human rights causes, we held teach-ins to educate the public about the destructive policies of the WTO.

Since the ministers were doing their best to dodge us and the issue of worker rights, we filled a stadium in Seattle for a rally to get our message across. They understand now that we will not be ignored.

Specifically, we demanded core workers' rights and environmental protections with strong enforcement procedures, including:

Civilian-Based Defense

- ◆ the right to organize and bargain collectively;
- ◆ prohibition on the use of forced or compulsory labor;
- ◆ a minimum age for child labor; and
- ◆ prohibition on discrimination in employment.

Above all, we demand that workers be at the negotiating table. We have suffered the consequences long enough of agreements drawn up by academics and trade ministers alone.

Fortunately, we are far from alone in our fight for worker justice in the global economy. Vice President Al Gore's first speech after he received the AFL-CIO's endorsement for president was to the Democratic Leadership Council. He told them, "We need new rules for the global marketplace. Globalization should be a tide that lifts all boats, not a wave that overwhelms the most vulnerable. . . . As president, I will insist on the authority to enforce workers' rights, human rights and environmental protections in trade agreements."

Our efforts have paid off as the U.S. government recently indicated - over the staunch opposition of the business community - that it is asking the WTO to form a working group on labor. This is an important first step for workers.

The world is changing at the close of this century, and the way we do business will change accordingly. It is time for policy-makers, unions and citizens to ensure that these changes do no harm to workers who will be charged with making the global economy a reality through their labors.

William Lucy is International Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), AFL-CIO, and National President of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). Reprinted from The Public Employee magazine.

To Be Continued Next Issue . . .

Seriously, we have received and obtained such a body of top notch reportage and commentary on the Seattle actions that it has not been possible to fit it all into one issue. We'll have more from Norman Solomon, Peter Bergel and others next time!

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