

Disarming the New World Order

Seattle and Beyond

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In preparing the Seattle Millennium meetings, Washington in consultation with Brussels and the World Trade Organisation in Geneva, is set on weakening and dividing social movements and citizens' groups which have converged on Seattle from all over the World. Meanwhile, local organisers are busy – together with the FBI and the Seattle Police Department – in carefully planning 'security arrangements' for the official venue. An extensive police apparatus has been set in motion. Special Forces from the FBI, the CIA and other federal agencies will be on the scene. 'Trouble-makers' are to be held at bay, well equipped riot police are on hand including Gang Squads and teams of the Tactical Operations Divisions which constitute the 'more militarized components' of the police force.¹

Everything has been put in place to keep the Citizens' Summit physically removed from the Ministerial Conference. As in previous counter-summits (Rio de Janeiro, Madrid, Copenhagen, Beijing, etc.), the intent is to ensure that the numerous protest meetings, teach-ins and mass rallies do not obstruct or in any way threaten the legitimacy of the official venue. In Seattle, the holding of parallel sessions by non-governmental organisations requires formal 'accreditation' with the Seattle Host Committee chaired by Microsoft's Bill Gates and Philip Condit of The Boeing Company.

Several months ahead of time, the World Trade Organisation and Western governments had called for a 'dialogue' with selected civil society organisations in setting the agenda for the Millennium Round. 'Partner NGOs', namely those 'we can trust', were provided with funds to travel and organise their respective 'teach-ins' in Seattle. Already in 1998, the World Trade Organisation had announced a plan for 'an on-going collaboration with partner NGOs' while emphasising that the World Trade Organisation 'recognises the role non-governmental

organisations can play to increase the awareness of the public in respect of World Trade Organisation activities'.² Similarly, the European Commission had underscored its 'commitment to transparency and openness in trade policy-making'.³

Carefully screened 'partner NGOs' were invited to participate in a number of preparatory 'issue-specific' events. The European Commission held several rounds of consultations with selected consumer, labour, environmental and development organisations with a view 'to improve the transparency of World Trade Organisation meetings' including public access to World Trade Organisation documents and the creation of a World Trade Organisation 'information ombudsman'.⁴ In the words of (former) European Trade Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan:

'A Millennium round of trade talks should not just benefit business. We can and should ensure that consumers and the environment also gain. The Commission has today opened a dialogue with a wide cross-section of NGOs as it believes transparency and openness are essential if a new round is to reap its full benefits. NGOs are crucial partners in preparing for the negotiations that lie ahead.'⁵

The counter summit

Controlled and financed by official donors and research foundations, the hidden agenda is to install a 'politically correct' Citizens' Summit, namely to ensure that the various teach-ins and public rallies in the streets of Seattle conform to the dominant 'counter discourse'. The latter consists in pressing for the inclusion of token environmental, labour and human rights clauses, 'poverty alleviation' schemes as well as 'institutional reforms' without defying the central role of trade liberalisation.

The partner non-governmental organisations have, in this regard, already committed themselves not to question 'the legality' or legitimacy of the World Trade Organisation as an institution. Accredited non-governmental organisation participants have been invited to mingle in a friendly environment with ambassadors, trade ministers and Wall Street tycoons at several of the official events including the numerous cocktail parties and receptions. In turn, an (official) 'WTO Sponsored NGO Symposium' is to be held for chosen non-governmental organisation participants one day before the launching of the Ministerial Conference, with carefully worded opening statements by World Trade Organisation Director General Mike Moore and US Trade Secretary Charlene Barshefsky.

In other words, the ploy in Seattle (supported by a lavish public relations campaign) is to carefully diffuse an international mass movement directed against the World Trade Organisation and the powerful business syndicates which lie discreetly in the background. 'Criticism yes, that's democratic', but the 'free market' system must prevail, the legitimacy of the institutions – including their Geneva and Washington based bureaucracies – must not be challenged. In return, the official conference will accept to embody on behalf of the 'accredited'

labour and civil society organisations, various token environmental and other concessions in their main resolutions with a view to providing a much needed 'human face' to the World Trade Organisation.

The Millennium Round meetings also purport to replicate the habitual parallel 'People's Summit' which now constitutes an integral component of successive world venues. Repeated almost annually since the 1992 Rio Environment Conference, the People's Summit while providing a forum for critical debate, has over the years mainly become 'a ritual of dissent' which largely leaves the official Summit unscathed.

The parallel 'People's P7 Summit' at the G7 meetings in Cologne in June 1999, for instance, was put together in consultation with the host organisers of the official Summit, generously funded by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, which is an arm of the German Green Party controlled by Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer. The structure of the Cologne P7 was geared towards deflecting debate on controversial issues including the 'humanitarian bombings' of Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, more than 20,000 people from all parts of Europe had gathered in the streets of Cologne under the umbrella of the Jubilee Campaign. Their petition to unconditionally erase Third World debt had been signed by more than 17 million people. World leaders respectfully paid tribute to the Jubilee initiative, responding with empty rhetorical commitments on debt reduction for the world's poorest countries. The substantive proposal of the Campaign had been casually dismissed.

In Seattle, many of the accredited non-governmental organisations representing specific interests (eg. environmental, labour, human rights, women's organisations, etc) will be putting forth separate demands. There is evidence that several of the key non-governmental organisations have been infiltrated by Western intelligence agencies. The counter summit is to be fragmented into a 'mosaic' of secluded events focusing on separate and distinct policy issues. The hidden agenda is to enable each of these separate venues 'to do their own thing' in a semblance of 'people's participation': the goal of the Seattle organisers is to mask the truth, prevent the development of a mass movement, suppress real democracy and uphold the authority of the institutions of the New World Order.

In turn, the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) joined by trade union bosses from around the world, has called upon the World Trade Organisation to 'enforce minimum labour standards... in the global market'. Caving in to Washington's demands, labour's buzz-word is to 'make the global economy work for working families'.⁶ A carefully drafted petition urges the Ministerial Conference to adopt 'trade and investment rules [which] protect workers' rights and the environment'.⁷ The overall legitimacy of the World Trade Organisation and of United States trade policy is not in question. In turn, the AFL-CIO has been put in charge of the organisation of a mass rally which usefully serves the purpose of deflecting the international protest movement on the streets of Seattle.

In Seattle, the big divide will be between those who are genuinely opposed to

the New World Order and those ‘partner’ civil society organisations which have all the appearances of being ‘progressive’ but which in fact are creatures of the system. Often funded by their respective governments, they form part of a politically correct ‘opposition’ which acts as ‘a spokesperson for civil society’. But who do they represent? Many of the ‘partner non-governmental organisations’ and lobby groups which frequently mingle with bureaucrats and politicians, have few contacts with grass-roots social movements and people’s organisations. In the meantime, they serve to deflect the articulation of ‘real’ social movements against the New World Order.

This does not mean that ‘dialogue’ with the World Trade Organisation and the governments should be ruled out as a means of negotiation. On the contrary, ‘lobbying’ must be applied vigorously in close liaison with constituent social movements. The underlying results and information of these negotiations, however, must be channelled with a view to reinforcing rather than weakening grass roots actions. In other words, we should not allow ‘lobbying’ to be conducted in an isolated and secretive fashion by organisations which are ‘hand picked’ by the governments and the World Trade Organisation.

A moratorium on liberalisation negotiations

More than 1200 groups and organisations from more than 85 countries have called for a ‘moratorium’ on further liberalisation under World Trade Organisation auspices including the holding of an ‘audit’ to be undertaken on the impacts of globalisation. Their consensus statement (‘Statement from Members of International Civil Society Opposing A Millennium Round’):

‘oppose[s] any further liberalisation negotiations, especially those which will bring new areas under the WTO regime, such as investment, competition policy and government procurement. We commit ourselves to campaign to reject any such proposals. We also oppose the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. We call for a moratorium on any new issues or further negotiations that expand the scope and power of the WTO. During this moratorium there should be a comprehensive and in-depth review and assessment of the existing agreements. Effective steps should then be taken to change the agreements. Such a review should address the WTO’s impact on marginalised communities, development, democracy, environment, health, human rights, labour rights and the rights of women and children. The review must be conducted with civil society’s full participation’.

The statement constitutes an important step in challenging the official agenda. It is based on a carefully worded consensus of a large number of individual organisations.

Illegality of the World Trade Organisation

Yet this important statement in demanding a ‘moratorium’ on further liberalisation negotiations, fails to question the legitimacy of the World Trade Organisation as an institution. And indeed this issue should have been included explicitly in the statement.

The Marrakesh Agreement of 1994 constitutes a blatant violation of fundamental social, economic and cultural rights. The stakes in Seattle are fundamental and cannot be addressed with a compromise statement which tacitly accepts the legitimacy of the World Trade Organisation as an institution. The World Trade Organisation was put in place following the signing of a ‘technical agreement’ negotiated behind closed doors by bureaucrats. Even the heads of country-level delegations to Marrakesh in 1994 were not informed regarding the statutes of the World Trade Organisation, which were drafted in separate closed sessions by technocrats.

‘The Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations’ was signed by ministers in Marrakesh on 15 April 1994. The Final Act is a ‘technical agreement’ which instates the World Trade Organisation as a world body. ‘The World Trade Organisation framework ensures a ‘single undertaking approach’ to the results of the Uruguay Round – thus, membership in the World Trade Organisation entails accepting all the results of the Round without exception.’

Following the Marrakesh meeting, the 550 page Agreement (plus its numerous appendices) was either rubber-stamped in a hurry or never formally ratified by national parliaments. The articles of agreement of the World Trade Organisation resulting from this ‘technical agreement’ were casually entrenched in international law. In other words, the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement which instates the World Trade Organisation as a multilateral body, bypasses the democratic process in each of the member countries. It blatantly derogates national laws and constitutions while providing extensive powers to global banks and multinational corporations. These powers have in fact become entrenched in the articles of agreement of the World Trade Organisation.

In other words, the process of actual creation of the World Trade Organisation following the Final Act of the Uruguay Round is blatantly ‘illegal’. Namely a ‘totalitarian’ intergovernmental body has been casually installed in Geneva, empowered under international law with the mandate to ‘police’ country-level economic and social policies, derogating the sovereign rights of national governments. Similarly, the World Trade Organisation almost neutralises ‘with a stroke of the pen’ the authority and activities of several agencies of the United Nations including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Moreover, the articles of the World Trade Organisation are not only in contradiction with pre-existing national and international laws, they are also at variance with ‘The Universal Declaration of Human Rights’. Acceptance of the World Trade Organisation as a legitimate organisation is tantamount to an ‘indefinite moratorium’ or repeal of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Furthermore, apart from the blatant violation of international law, World Trade Organisation rules provide legitimacy to trade practices which border on criminality, including ‘intellectual piracy’ by multinational companies, the derogation of plant breeders rights, not to mention genetic manipulation by the

biotechnology giants, the patenting of life forms including plants, animals, micro-organisms, genetic material and human life forms under the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights agreement.

In the sphere of financial services, the provisions of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) provide legitimacy to large scale financial and speculative manipulations directed against developing countries which are often conducive to the demise of country-level monetary policy.

And the World Trade Organisation Dispute Settlement Procedures upholds the legitimacy of these various manipulative procedures.

The balance sheet of economic and social destruction

Amply documented, humanity is undergoing in the post-Cold War era an economic and social crisis of unprecedented scale leading to the rapid impoverishment of large sectors of the world population. National economies are collapsing, unemployment is rampant; Wall Street banks are 'taking over countries' one after the other; regional wars have erupted along strategic gas-oil pipelines, and often behind the various 'insurgencies' are powerful corporate interests which coincidentally are also lobbying for trade reform. In most countries the standard of living has collapsed.

This worldwide crisis of the late twentieth century is more devastating than the Great Depression of the 1930s. It has far-reaching geo-political implications; economic dislocation has also been accompanied by the outbreak of regional conflicts, the fracturing of national societies and in some cases the destruction of entire countries. This crisis is by no means limited to the developing countries. In Europe and North America the Welfare State is being dismantled, schools and hospitals are being closed down creating conditions for the outright privatisation of social services. By far, this is the most serious economic crisis in modern history.

In a large number of developing countries, the service economy and banking are already in the hands of foreign capital. Peasant economies have been devastated as a result of the dumping of European Union and United States grain surpluses. Genetically modified seeds (together with carefully engineered farm inputs produced by the same agribusiness conglomerates) have been forced upon farmers throughout the world, often leading to mass poverty and the fracture of rural economies, not to mention the contamination of the food chain, derogating the rights of consumers worldwide.

In turn, international agribusiness is intent upon driving the family farm into bankruptcy. This process is by no means limited to developing countries: up to 30 percent of grain farmers in Western Canada are on the verge of bankruptcy specifically as a result of the enforcement of World Trade Organisation provisions concerning farm subsidies by the Canadian government. And if this is happening in Western Canada, which constitutes one of the World's most resourceful 'bread baskets', what will be the fate of farmers in other regions of world?

China's accession to the World Trade Organisation

The terms of China's accession to the World Trade Organisation, agreed upon in bilateral negotiations with the United States barely a few weeks before the Ministerial Conference in Seattle, spells havoc in a country of more than one billion population. It will devastate China's agriculture; it will trigger a deadly wave of bankruptcies of state enterprises leading to mass unemployment. The provision of 'national treatment' to Western banks could potentially precipitate the fracture of the entire structure of Chinese state banking.

The Chinese authorities, fully aware of the ramifications, have attempted in a publicity stunt to convince Chinese public opinion that 'the benefits from the agreement would justify the job losses and bankruptcies it will cause'.⁸ In the words of China's chief World Trade Organisation negotiator, Mr Long Yongtu, 'a nation cannot develop and become strong without a sense of urgency and a sense of crisis.'⁹

Analysing and evaluating the new world order

In the face of global economic and social devastation, is an (official) 'audit' really required, as put forth in the 'Statement from Members of International Civil Society', to ascertain what is happening? Some of the non-governmental organisation critics – including the trade unions – involved in the dialogue with the World Trade Organisation argue that there are both 'positive' and 'negative' impacts of trade liberalisation. This position is ambiguous: the devastating impacts of 'globalisation' are already known and documented, the non-governmental organisation community has already produced a wealth of critical analysis and research. Moreover, the audit proposal accepts the legitimacy of the World Trade Organisation, it presupposes that there are mistakes and 'lets talk and put this system on hold' for a few years 'while we re-evaluate'.

Do we need an audit to ascertain 'whether or not' the world is in crisis? And by whom will this audit be performed and for whom? The key 'partner non-governmental organisations' have already positioned themselves to undertake the relevant commissioned background studies. Many of the organisations which signed and endorsed the 'statement' were unaware that the audit with part of the 'dialogue' with the World Trade Organisation and Western governments. And these research contracts, performed 'sector by sector' in a 'politically correct' fashion according to pre-established guidelines set by the funding agencies, will take several years to complete.

The conduct of an audit has already been accepted by the European Union in its consultations with the non-governmental organisations. Former European Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan, on behalf of the European Union, had in fact proposed in 1998, 'the commissioning of a study on the impact of the new Round on sustainable development' (European Commission, *op. cit.*). In other words, the audit is also part of the official agenda of the Seattle Round. In the meantime, while the audit is being conducted, economic, social and environmental destruction will continue unabated.

The Millennium Round is already *de facto*

What happens to the world system does not depend solely on the results of the Millennium Round. We must understand that in many developing countries, many of the clauses of the Millennium Round are already a *fait accompli*. They are part of the 'conditionalities contained in *ad hoc* loan agreements with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Under the structural adjustment programme, as well as in the context of the International Monetary Fund sponsored 'bailout agreements' (eg. Indonesia, Thailand, Korea, Brazil), developing countries have already committed themselves to many of the propositions contained in the Millennium Round.

Moreover, the hands of Third World delegates to Seattle are tied. The vote of most of the trade ministers from developing countries at the Seattle Ministerial Conference is controlled by Western creditors. It is unlikely that much opposition will be voiced from the official delegations from developing countries.

Many developing countries have accepted, in the context of agreements signed with the Bretton Woods institutions, to liberalise trade, deregulate capital movements, privatise state public utilities, dismantle social programmes and provide 'national treatment' to foreign investors in a large number of economic activities including services, banking, procurement, etc. These provisions are often coupled with a 'bankruptcy programme' under the supervision of the World Bank, with a view to 'triggering' the liquidation of competing national enterprises. An 'enabling free market environment' is implanted (without recourse to World Trade Organisation clauses pertaining to 'effective access to markets'), national producers are brutally displaced and destroyed, countries are casually recolonised.

Wall Street bankers and the heads of the world's largest business conglomerates are indelibly behind this process. They interface regularly with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organisation officials in closed sessions as well as in numerous international venues. Moreover, participating in these meetings and consultations are the representatives of powerful global business lobbies including the International Chamber of Commerce, The Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue (which brings together in its annual venues the leaders of the largest Western business conglomerates with politicians and World Trade Organisation officials), the United States Council for International Business, the Davos World Economic Forum, the Institute of International Finance representing the World's largest banks and financial institutions, etc. Other 'semi-secret' organisations – which play an important role in shaping the institutions of the New World Order – include the Trilateral Commission, the Bildebergers and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Financial deregulation

To top it off, 'perfect timing': the deregulation of the United States banking system was approved by the United States Senate barely six weeks before the Millennium Round meetings in Seattle. The new legislation favours an

unprecedented concentration of global financial power. In the wake of lengthy negotiations which concluded in the early hours of October 22nd, all regulatory restraints on Wall Street's powerful banking conglomerates were revoked 'with a stroke of the pen'. Under the new rules ratified by the United States Senate and approved by President Clinton, commercial banks, brokerage firms, hedge funds, institutional investors, pension funds and insurance companies can freely invest in each others businesses as well as fully integrate their financial operations. The legislation has repealed the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, a pillar of President Roosevelt's 'New Deal' which was put in place in response to the climate of corruption, financial manipulation and 'insider trading' which led to more than 5,000 bank failures in the years following the 1929 Wall Street crash.¹⁰

In other words, a handful of financial conglomerates will gain effective control over the entire United States financial services industry. Coincidentally, these same Wall Street financial giants are also the main beneficiaries of financial services' deregulation under the General Agreement on Trade in Services which provides 'national treatment' to Wall Street's giants in banking, insurance, brokerage services, actuarial services, etc. The General Agreement on Trade in Services is almost 'tailor-made' to meet the standards set under the new United States financial services legislation. The financial giants oversee the real economy worldwide, they are creditors and shareholders of high tech manufacturing, the defence industry, major oil and mining consortia, etc. Moreover, as underwriters of the public debt, they also have a stranglehold on national governments and politicians. Ultimately, they also call the shots on trade reform in Seattle.

Moreover, the clauses of the defunct Multilateral Agreement on Investment, which was to provide 'national treatment' to foreign banks and multinational companies (leading to the dislocation of municipalities and local governments), is also in the process of becoming a *fait accompli*. The financial conglomerates are now fully integrated with the insurance companies. In turn, the latter oversee and control the multinational health care providers which are actively lobbying in Seattle for the deregulation of public health care under the General Agreement on Trade in Services. The institutions of the Welfare State are to be scrapped. The struggles of the entire post-war period are to be erased.

The worldwide scramble to appropriate wealth through 'financial manipulation' is the driving force behind this restructuring of the global financial architecture of which the new United States banking legislation and the 'Seattle Round' are an integral part. In concert with the World Trade Organisation, the United States legislation favours the elimination of remaining barriers to the free movement of finance capital. In practice it empowers Wall Street's key players including Merrill Lynch, Citigroup, J. P. Morgan, Deutsche Bank-Bankers Trust, etc. to develop a hegemonic position in global banking overshadowing, and ultimately destabilising, financial systems in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe, and this process is ongoing irrespective of the actual outcome of the Millennium Round.

The speculative onslaught

In turn, financial deregulation in the United States allows speculative trade to prosper worldwide in a totally permissive environment. In turn, the Millennium Round, by calling for the deregulation of capital movements, will provide greater legitimacy to speculative trade, thereby empowering Wall Street to extend its global financial domain.

Institutional control over the channels of speculative trade provides the United States and European Union financial giants with the tools to manipulate currency and stock markets and impair the role of central banks. The ultimate objective is to take control over the reigns of monetary policy and oversee financial markets all over the world. In the 1997 Asian crisis alone, more than 100 billion dollars were confiscated in a matter of months from the vaults of Asia's central banks; similar speculative assaults were carried out in Russia in 1998 and in Brazil in 1999. Derivative and option trade including the 'short selling' of national currencies were behind these assaults, leading to massive debt default and financial collapse. Well documented, the International Monetary Fund played a key role in facilitating the speculative onslaught on behalf of Western and Japanese financial institutions.

In a cruel irony, the use of these deadly speculative instruments was formally legitimised in the Fifth Protocol of the General Agreement on Trade in Services in the immediate wake of the Asian crisis. Totally disregarding the impending dangers, the General Agreement on Trade in Services protocol negotiations coincided chronologically (October 1997) with the climactic meltdown of stock markets all over the world.

War and globalisation

And war is also part of the Millennium Round. What happens to countries which refuse to deregulate trade and foreign investment and provide 'national treatment' to Western banks and multinational companies? The Western military-intelligence apparatus and its various bureaucracies routinely interface with the financial establishment. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation – which 'police' country level economic reforms – also collaborate with NATO in its various 'peacekeeping' endeavours, not to mention the financing of 'post-conflict' reconstruction under the auspices of the Bretton Woods institutions.

At the dawn of the Third Millennium, war and the 'free market' go hand in hand. War does not require a multilateral investment treaty entrenched in international law: 'war is the Multilateral Agreement on Investment of last resort.' War physically destroys what has not been dismantled through deregulation, privatisation and the imposition of 'free market' reforms. Outright colonisation through war and the installation of Western protectorates is tantamount to providing 'national treatment' to Western banks and multinational companies in all sectors of activity. 'Missile diplomacy' replicates and emulates the 'gunboat diplomacy' used to enforce 'free trade' in the Nineteenth Century. The United States Cushing Mission to China in 1844 (in the wake of the Opium

Wars) had forewarned the Chinese imperial government ‘that refusal to grant American demands might be regarded as an invitation to war.’¹¹

The ‘Seattle Round’ purports to ‘peacefully’ recolonise countries through the manipulation of market forces, – ie. through the ‘invisible hand’. It nonetheless constitutes a form of warfare.

More generally, the dangers of war must be understood. War and globalisation are not separate issues. The citizens’ campaign against the World Trade Organisation must be integrated with the anti-war movement against the bombing of sovereign countries by the United States and its European allies.

Disarming the new world order

The World Trade Organisation created from a ‘technical agreement’ (Final Act of the Uruguay Round) provides entrenched ‘legal’ rights to banks and global corporations. In turn the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement sets up procedures – including manipulative dispute settlements – which are now conveniently embodied in international law but which blatantly violate the rights of citizens all over the world.

Under World Trade Organisation rules, the banks and multinational companies can legitimately manipulate market forces to their advantage, leading to the outright recolonisation of national economies. In other words, the World Trade Organisation articles provide legitimacy to global banks and multinational companies in their quest to destabilise institutions, drive national producers into bankruptcy, and ultimately take control of entire countries.

Moreover, the Agreement formally instates a ‘triangular division of authority’ between the World Trade Organisation, and its sister organisations the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in a system of ‘global surveillance’ of developing countries’ economic and social policies. This means that enforcement of International Monetary Fund-World Bank policy prescriptions will no longer hinge upon *ad hoc* country-level loan agreements (which are not ‘legally binding’ documents). All the main clauses of the International Monetary Fund’s deadly ‘economic medicine’ will eventually become permanently entrenched under the Seattle Millennium Round. Countries will not only be ‘bonded’ by external debt, they will be permanently ‘enslaved’ by an international body controlled by the world’s largest business syndicates. These World Trade Organisation articles will set the foundations for ‘policing’ countries (and enforcing ‘conditionalities’) according to international law.

In other words, we must act in relation to the original ‘iniquity’ and ‘illegality’ of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round which creates the World Trade Organisation as a ‘totalitarian’ organisation. There can be no other alternative but to reject the World Trade Organisation as an international institution, to imprint the World Trade Organisation as an illegal organisation. In other words, the entire process must be rejected outright.

And this means that citizens’ movements around the world must pressure their governments to withdraw without delay and cancel their membership of the

World Trade Organisation. Legal proceedings must also be initiated in national courts against the governments of member countries, underscoring the blatant violation of domestic laws and national constitutions.

In other words, the citizens' platform in Seattle and around the world must be geared towards disarming this economic system and dismantling its institutions. We cannot postpone our struggle and 'wait a few years' in the context of an 'audit' and meanwhile the world is consumed and destroyed. We must act now. We must question the legitimacy of a system which ultimately destroys people's lives.

We must challenge politicians and international officials, we must unmask their insidious links to powerful financial interests and, eventually, we must overhaul and transform state institutions, removing them from the clutch of the financial establishment. In turn, we must 'democratise' the economic system and its management structure, challenge the blatant concentration of ownership and private wealth, disarm financial markets, freeze speculative trade, arrest the laundering of dirty money, dismantle the system of offshore banking, redistribute income and wealth, restore the rights of direct producers, and rebuild the Welfare State.

Concurrently, we must also build the conditions for a lasting world peace. The military-industrial and security apparatus which sustains these financial interests must eventually be dismantled, which also means that we must abolish NATO and phase out the arms industry.

We must combat the 'media lies' and 'global falsehoods' which uphold the World Trade Organisation and the powerful business interests which it supports. We must combat the 'false consensus' of Washington and Wall Street which ordains the 'free market system' as the only possible choice on the fated road to a 'global prosperity'. This consensus is now shared by all political parties including Social Democrats.

To achieve these objectives we must restore a meaningful freedom of the press. The global media giants fabricate the news and overtly distort the course of world events. In turn, we must break the 'false consciousness' which pervades our societies, prevents critical debate and masks the truth. Ultimately, it precludes a collective understanding of the workings of an economic system which destroys people's lives. The only promise of the 'free market' is a world of landless farmers, shuttered factories, jobless workers and gutted social programmes, with 'bitter economic medicine' under the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund constituting the only prescription. We must restore the truth, we must reinstate sovereignty to our countries and to the people of our countries.

The struggle must be broad-based and democratic, encompassing all sectors of society at all levels, in all countries, uniting in a major thrust workers, farmers, independent producers, small businesses, professionals, artists, civil servants, members of the clergy, students and intellectuals. People must be united across sectors, 'single issue' groups must join hands in a common and collective understanding of how this economic system destroys and impoverishes. The 'globalisation' of this struggle is fundamental, requiring a degree of solidarity

and internationalism unprecedented in world history. The global economic system feeds on social divisiveness between and within countries. Beyond Seattle, unity of purpose and worldwide co-ordination among diverse groups and social movements is crucial. A major thrust is required which brings together social movements in all major regions of the world in a common pursuit and commitment to the elimination of poverty and a lasting world peace.

Notes

- 1 The latter frequently position snipers at key positions. See Paul Richmond, 'An Assessment of the Police, What to expect during the Seattle Ministerial Conference', <http://forward.to/walkout>, September 1999.
 - 2 WTO Press Release, 'Ruggiero Announces Enhanced WTO Plan for Co-operation With NGOs', 17 July 1998.
 - 3 European Commission Press Release, 'Commission and NGOs hold dialogue on the Millennium Round', Brussels, 17 November 1998.
 - 4 Ibid.
 - 5 Ibid.
 - 6 See AFL-CIO, Make the Global Economy Work for Working Families, <http://www.wslc.org/wto/index.htm>, October 1999.
 - 7 Ibid.
 - 8 *Financial Times*, London, 17 November 1999.
 - 9 Quoted in *Financial Times*, op cit.
 - 10 See Martin McLaughlin, 'Clinton Republicans agree to Deregulation of US Banking System', World Socialist website, 1 November 1999.
 - 11 Quoted in Michel Chossudovsky, *Towards Capitalist Restoration, Chinese Socialism after Mao*, Macmillan, London, 1986, p.134.
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