

Seattle and beyond: disarming the New World Order

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The World Socialist Web Site is presenting here the following article concerning the WTO meeting last year in Seattle, written by Michel Chossudovsky, Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and author of The Globalization of Poverty, Impacts of IMF and World Bank Reforms, Third World Network, Penang and Zed Books, London, 1997.

"Seattle and beyond: disarming the New World Order" does not reflect the views of the WSWS. We intend to publish a reply to Professor Chossudovsky's article, taking up his analysis of globalization and the political perspective which he advances.

Despite our principled differences with the article, we are posting it as a service to our readers. The policy of the WSWS is to publish serious articles submitted to our site on political events as well as on questions of history, philosophy, culture and other topics. We encourage those who follow our site to submit their contributions as part of a continuing discussion and debate on an international scale. The WSWS does not necessarily endorse all of the political views of the authors, and we reserve the right to state our differences with those who submit articles for publication.

For analysis by the WSWS on the WTO meeting see: Thousands protest at World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle: Political first principles for a movement against global capitalism [30 November 1999] and The social meaning of the anti-WTO protests in Seattle [6 December 1999]

In preparing the Seattle Millennium meetings, Washington in consultation with Brussels and the WTO 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 (SPD)—in carefully planning "security arrangements" for the official venue. An extensive police apparatus has been set motion. Special Forces from the FBI, the CIA and other federal agencies will be on the scene. "Troublemakers" are to be held at bay, well equipped riot police are on hand including Gang Squads and SWAT 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 NGOs 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 WTO 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 organize their respective "teach-ins" in Seattle. Already last year, the WTO had announced a plan for "an on-going collaboration with partner NGOs" while emphasising

that the WTO "recognizes the role NGOs can play to increase the awareness of the public in respect of WTO 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 "to improve the transparency of WTO meetings" including public access to WTO documents and the creation of an WTO "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]

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 WTO as an institution. Accredited NGO 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 NGO participants one day before the launching of the Ministerial Conference, with carefully worded opening statements by WTO Director General Mike Moore and US Trade Representative 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 WTO and the powerful business syndicates which lie discretely 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 WTO.

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 largely become "a ritual of dissent" which largely leaves the official Summit unscathed.

The parallel P7 ("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 Boell Foundation which is an arm of the German Green party controlled by Foreign Minister Joschka Fisher. 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 NGOs representing specific interests (e.g., environmental, labour, human rights, women's organisations, etc.) will be putting forth separate demands. There is evidence that several of the key NGOs have been infiltrated by Western intelligence agencies. The Counter-Summit is to be fragmented into a "mosaic" of secluded events focussing 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 AFL-CIO joined by trade union bosses from around the World, has called upon the WTO 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 WTO and of US 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 NGOs" 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 WTO 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 WTO.

More than 1,200 groups and organisations from more than 85 countries have called for a "Moratorium" on further liberalisation under WTO 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.

Yet this important Statement in demanding a "Moratorium" on further liberalisation negotiations, fails to question the legitimacy of the WTO 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 WTO as an institution. The WTO 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 WTO as a World body. "The WTO framework ensures a "single undertaking approach" to the results of the Uruguay Round—thus, membership in the WTO 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 WTO resulting from this "technical agreement" were casually entrenched in international law. In other words, the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement which instates the WTO 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 WTO.

In other words, the process of actual creation of the WTO following the Final Act of 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 WTO almost neutralises "with the 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 WTO are not only in contradiction with pre-existing national and international laws, they are also in at variance with "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights". Acceptance of the WTO as a legitimate organisation is tantamount to an "indefinite moratorium" or repeal of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Moreover, apart from the blatant violation of international law, WTO

rules provide legitimacy to trade practices which border on criminality, including "intellectual piracy" by MNCs, 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 TRIPs agreement.

In the sphere of financial services, the provisions of the 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 WTO Dispute Settlement Procedures upholds the legitimacy of these various manipulative procedures....

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 services economy and banking are already in the hands of foreign capital, peasant economies have been devastated as a result of the dumping of EU and US grain surpluses. Genetically modified seeds produced among others by Cargill and Monsanto (together with carefully engineered farm inputs produced by these 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 WTO 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?

The terms of China's accession to the WTO 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 WTO negotiator Mr. Long Yongtu "a nation cannot develop and become strong without a sense of urgency and a sense of crisis." [9]

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 NGO critics—including the trade unions—involved in the dialogue with the WTO 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 NGO community has already produced a wealth of critical analysis and research. Moreover, the audit proposal accepts the legitimacy of the WTO, 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 NGOs" 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 WTO 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 NGOs. 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.

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 IMF and the World Bank. Under the structural adjustment programme as well as in the context of the IMF sponsored "bailout agreements" (e.g., 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 WTO 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 IMF, World Bank and WTO 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 (ICC), The Trans Atlantic Business Dialogue (TABD) (which brings together in its annual venues the leaders of the largest Western business conglomerates with politicians and WTO officials), the United States Council for International Business (USCIB), 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.

To top it off, "perfect timing": the deregulation of the US banking system was approved by the US 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 22, 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 US 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 US 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 (GATS) which provides "national treatment" to Wall Street's giants in banking, insurance, brokerage services, actuarial services, etc. The GATS is almost "tailor-made" to meet the standards set under the new US 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 MAI which was to provide "national treatment" to foreign banks and MNCs (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 GATS. 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 US banking legislation and the "Seattle Round" are an integral part. In concert with the WTO, the US 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.

In turn, financial deregulation in the US 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 US and EU 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 was 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 IMF 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 (GATS) in the immediate wake of the Asian crisis. Totally disregarding the impending dangers, the GATS protocol negotiations coincided chronologically (October 1997) with the climactic meltdown of stock markets all over the World.

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 MNCs? The Western military-intelligence apparatus and its various bureaucracies routinely interface with the financial establishment. The IMF, the World Bank and the WTO—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 (i.e., an MAI) entrenched in international law: "War is the MAI 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 MNCs in all sectors of activity. "Missile diplomacy" replicates and emulates the "gunboat diplomacy" used to enforce "free trade" in the nineteenth century. The US 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,—i.e., 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 WTO must be integrated with the anti-war movement against the bombing of sovereign countries by the US and its European allies.

The WTO 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 WTO rules, the banks and MNCs can legitimately manipulate market forces to their advantage leading to the outright recolonisation of national economies. In other words, the WTO articles provide legitimacy to global banks and MNCs 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 WTO, and its sister organisations the IMF and the World Bank in a system of "global surveillance" of developing countries' economic and social policies. This means that enforcement of IMF-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 IMF'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 WTO 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 WTO as a "totalitarian" organisation. **There can be no other alternative but to reject the WTO as an international institution, to imprint the WTO 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 with the WTO. 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, 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 WTO 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 distorts 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 WTO and the IMF 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 on 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 coordination 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 Cooperation 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 financial system", *World Socialist Web Site*, 1 November 1999,
11. Quoted in Michel Chossudovsky, *Towards Capitalist Restoration, Chinese socialism after Mao*, Macmillan, London, 1986, p. 134).

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