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# BLIND SPOT

A DAILY BULLETIN OF UNDERREPORTED ANTI-WTO ACTIVISM

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**Blind Spot** is published by the Independent Media Center, a grassroots organization committed to using media as a tool for promoting social and economic justice. It is our goal to further the self-determination of people underrepresented in both media production and content, and to illuminate and analyze local and global issues that impact ecosystems, communities, and individuals.

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## County jail surrounded

Five hundred activists, arrested Wednesday during non-violent protest, were moved yesterday to King County jail to await arraignment. Demonstrators responded by surrounding the jail and calling for the release of all those held without charge and a public apology for excessive police violence.

The demonstrators directed their protest by consensus, and made their demands known through the use of organized call-and-response. By 4 p.m., the crowd of demonstrators had swelled to 1500 as activists from adjacent protests arrived.

As dusk set in, a carnival-like atmosphere replaced the tension between activists and police. Drumming, banjo-playing, and good cheer followed. Inside the mayor met with city prosecutors and representatives from DAN to negotiate the demands. "We demand a public apology for the violent action taken against our nonviolent actions and an immediate release of all those held with no charges," the crowd pledged in unison.

Though police officers stood by, they were instructed not to interfere with the demonstrators. Larry Gosset, six-year member of the King County Council, expressed his solidarity. "I support the demands of these demonstrators here. The violence perpetrated by the multinational corporations is far more damaging and devastating than the impact (a few vandals have had) on local businesses. I don't condone (vandalism), but let's keep everything in perspective." Gosset said, himself a veteran of the civil rights movement and a former Black Panther.

Republican King County Council member Brian Dardowski also backed the demonstrators. "Everybody who cares about the U.S. constitution and free speech needs to be out on the street here in Seattle. The WTO is an unelected group of bureaucrats that are infringing on the rights of state and local governments around the world," he stated.



**Protesters at King County jail demand release of political prisoners and apology for police brutality.**

The District Attorney finally allowed Direct Action Network's legal representatives to enter the facility at 7 p.m. to provide counsel to those under arrest. It was expected that those under arrest would be processed through the night and released. Demonstrators committed to return on Friday morning if the authorities did not honor this commitment. "We'll give (the police) a chance to prove themselves. If it doesn't work, we'll be back!" stated one speaker.

At 10 p.m. Thursday, the first person under arrest was released from custody.

—David Kupfer

## Interview from jail

I spoke via telephone with a peaceful protester ("Anonymous") who is being held at the King County jail. Anonymous said she was arrested Wednesday morning downtown. The police told her peaceful group that if they didn't want to get arrested, they should go stand against a nearby wall. About 70 people did so, and the police arrested them all.

The group was put onto a bus with about 60–80 other people and taken to the Sand Point

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# Indigenous peoples against WTO



**Indigenous Mexicans in Mayan ceremonial dress.**

After a second day of militarized streets, the drumming circle of the Eagle Warriors of the Tulalip peoples reminded me that we are part of something much larger than the mayhem in Seattle. Over a dozen panelists from South and North America, gathered at the Indigenous People's Forum on Globalization: WTO on Wednesday night. The event was hosted by the Indigenous Environmental Network and the Seventh Generation Fund.

Indigenous representatives recounted the gross human rights violations to which they are subjected; assassinations, kidnappings, environmental racism be it through the nuclear industry, mining, or maquiladoras, and the disappearance of entire languages and cultures.

Infringement of indigenous territorial and property rights, and the critical need for implementation of the International Labor Organization's Convention 169 on the right for self-determination dominated the event. "For us, indigenous peoples, it is very important that our his-

torical rights be recognized. We are not sectors, nor only groups of people; we are nations. The recognition of our self-determination as nations is very important to be able to control this process of globalization," said Margarita Gutierrez, Vice President of the Abya Yala Fund for Self Development of Indigenous Peoples.

Of particular concern is article 27.3.b proposed for the new round of trade negotiation, related to intellectual property. "Through TRIPS and the liberalized traffic of traditional medicines and genetic resources, large pharmaceutical and bioengineering companies will be allowed to appropriate themselves of Mother Earth's raw materials, and we will not receive anything in return," said Thomas Alacun, an Ayamara from Bolivia. "But we don't want anything from them. We only want ... our right to control our own resources. ... This is the only way to guarantee that the traditional knowledge and genetic resources accumulated in our territories be sustainable, lasting forever." Their claims were presented in an official statement from the Indigenous People's Caucus in Geneva, Nov. 2.

Asked about protesters wearing clothing with brand names associated with exploitation, Margarita replied: "The issue is not the clothes we wear, but the conscience we carry within."

—Natalie Paravicini

## Jail interview *(continued from front page)*

holding facility. They were there for 14 hours with only one bathroom break; some had no bathroom break at all. The group found a hole in the "accordion" part of the bus (where buses bend) and used that for a makeshift toilet. Around midnight they were taken off the bus.

Hours later, the group was separated into smaller groups and taken to differ-

ent facilities. Early Thursday morning, this detainee arrived at the King County jail. She is in a small, cold holding cell with about 15 others. In solidarity, none of the group is giving their identities. Anonymous says she has gotten pepper sprayed while being detained. The group is demanding a mass arraignment on the same court date, and want all their charges dropped. —Kristine Wong

# International voices against globalization

International voices took center stage at a public forum focused on the effects of globalization and the WTO in the global South, sponsored by the Committee In Solidarity With the People in El Salvador (CISPES) and the Seattle-based Workers' Voices Coalition.

Sanjay Mangala Gopal of India stated, "Colonization has destroyed our natural resources and made us poor."

South Korea's Kim Je-Nam, of Green Korean United, linked WTO policies to destruction of the public interest sector. He blamed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for South Korean famine, the unemployment of 4 million people, and mass depression and suicides. Kim also linked the IMF to destruction of South Korea's greenbelt and the proliferation of industries emitting carcinogenic chemicals.

"The privatization of Mexico gives up the revolutionary ideas that have allowed people to have resources and education," Martin Rodriguez said. A leader in a University Faculty Union, Rodriguez was fired from his job. He spoke of students and faculty were beaten by the police. "The student movement is one of the most important movements in this country," he said. "Their strikes have gone beyond where labor have traditionally been."

Patricia Burticia, an organizer of women workers, cited loss of funding for social services due to international debt, the loss of over one million Colombian jobs, and the persecution of thousands of union leaders, referred to as "terrorists," who have been assassinated, exiled, or jailed.

In El Salvador, globalization has similar effects. Manuel Vasquez, an organizer of public sector workers, said that since his country's entry into the WTO in 1996, 27,000 jobs have been lost. For the year 2000, he predicted the privatization of education and health care systems, the drinking water system, and the ports. There have been five countrywide strikes. However, government has threatened workers' right to organize by targeting union leaders for assassinations, death threats, kidnapping, and torture. Judges have been shot as well.

"We would rather die than live on our knees at the feet of the World Trade Organization," Vasquez stated. —Kristine Wong

## City council defers ratification of civil emergency proclamation

An emergency meeting of the Seattle City Council, to ratify the Mayoral Proclamation of Civil Emergency, that was scheduled for Thursday at 1:30pm was canceled shortly before it was to start. The office of Council President Sue Donaldson said that "security concerns," prompted the cancellation.

The Mayor declared the emergency under authority of Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 10.02, which requires that "at the earliest practicable time [the proclamation] be presented to the City Council for ratification and confirmation, modification or rejection, and if rejected, shall be void." So long as the council can postpone meeting, due to safety concerns prompted by the state of emergency, it appears that the emergency can continue indefinitely.

The council has announced that the emergency proclamation will be put on the agenda for Monday's regular meeting, effectively ratifying the measure which is set to expire at midnight December 3rd.

Donaldson offered assurances that the council is concerned by a number of police activities associated with the protests and the emergency decree, and would begin addressing them next week. She declined to offer an opinion as to the necessity or propriety of the Mayor's proclamation, but did say that the council is "actively seeking answers" to their questions and concerns. —Troy Skeels

# WTO effects on agriculture

Farmers, NGO activists, anti-WTO protesters, and environmentalists showed up at the United Methodist Church on 5th Avenue Thursday in one of the more impassioned forums this week. Small farmers from across the globe shared their experiences and called for further resistance to globalization of the food industry.

Jose Bove, the internationally renowned French activist and small-scale farmer, spoke about the need for local producers to maintain their skills and feed their immediate populations without selling out their interests to multinational corporations. "Ninety-five percent of agriculture is transformed and eaten as food in the place where it's grown," said Bove.

Arguing that Western states are benefiting from the current economic situation in agriculture Bove maintained that the system allows wealthier states to dump produce on developing nations. "It's a joke to talk about 'free trade' — the US and Europe are killing the South countries with free trade."

His sentiments were echoed by Vandana Shiva, Mark Ritchie, and a panel of other experts who reiterated the need to redefine the codes of trade around issues of genuine fairness rather than simply profits.

A small farm holder from the cash-strapped rural Northwestern U.S. described how she had rescued her farm from ruin by turning to organic solutions — a market which she described as growing by 20 percent a year. "We have an expression where I come from," she told the captivated audience. "We do not inherit the land from our ancestors we borrow it from our children."

Participants made their way out of the building at noon and there was a tangible feeling of fear as people marched towards Pike Market — motorcycle police fraternized with marchers, but the sense of distrust remained.

As the crowd ambled along the thoroughfare a couple of local market stall holders tossed organic apples into the air. "They're for us and we're for them — we're small farmers," said Forgiven, the owner of Jordan's Village Farm which operates out of the Pike Street facility.

"The WTO's a blueprint for a world-wide caste system," said a farmer with a strong southern drawl. Later on, in a simple and moving few minutes another southern farmer summed up his feelings: "I don't know if any of you ever been called a 'nigger'? I have, a lot, but I think Monsanto wants to call a lot more people niggers." —Sam Wild

## Ralph Nader & Erroll Maitland



EMMY RAINWALKER



*On Thursday, Ralph Nader of Public Citizen and Erroll Maitland of Democracy Now were interviewed at the Independent Media Center. Here are a few excerpted quotes for their interviews.*

### Nader on the Internet:

When radio came out everyone said "aha ... it will be forever in the public trust, it will never be commercialized" ... then along came television ... "this is going to be an era of great enlightenment because now people can see what's really happening" ... well,

we all know what happened.

And the same with cable: "Look we're going to be different. ... We're not going to ignore the local community. ... Students and workers can have their own channels."

So now we have this medium. ... You can see a lot of things happening, but they're not going to happen by thinking that the technology itself will have its own imperative toward democracy. It won't. Again and again ... the technology offered the options to open up the system, have a democratic communication process and they

were closed down by concentrated corporate power and its influence over our government. ...

(Citizen groups) have got to see you as more than just an outlet for their press releases that the commercial media ignores. ... They've got to see you as pioneering their democratic voice ...

### Maitland on media and the WTO:

We need to begin to tell our own story and tell it in our own way and to amass the power of the media. ...

Let the voice of the people be heard. If it's in a different language, get a translator. If they stutter and stammer, let them speak. If they have a foreign accent and they talk "funny," let them speak. ...

I did not come here pissed and angry, but I've tasted pepper in the streets of Seattle and I'm pissed and angry now. I say shut it down. Shut it down. Shut it down.

# Protesters decry police brutality

Thursday's 7 a.m. press conference at Seattle Central Community College gave WTO protest leaders the opportunity to decry the second night of police aggression, and Capitol Hill residents a forum to express their resentment and outrage. All told stories of police brutality and broken promises.

Rice Baker-Yeboah, a student leader at SCCC claimed that student leaders had been singled out for arrest. Kevin Bundy, representative of the protesters' legal teams said, "The violations of human and civil rights are continuing now. This includes the denial of food, water, and medical attention to those arrested, as well as continued police violence to those in custody. This is the grossest violation of free speech I've ever witnessed."

Coordinator Djennifer Whitney and Dr. Kirk Murphy of DAN's medical team related statistics and specific incidents. According to DAN's medical team, 800 people were treated in the clinics and 2,000-3,000 on the street for police-inflicted injuries.

"Medics are being targeted by police," said Murphy. "Medical equipment is being confiscated and destroyed by the po-



MATT A. ENRICH

lice. There is no medicine being provided for people in custody who need it. The police at one point blocked off Swedish Medical Center, telling an RN they were doing this to prevent care for protesters."

John Goodman of the United Steel Workers summarized, "I have never seen such a disgusting demonstration of police brutality. ... I could not believe that this is happening in America."

Don Alexander, a member of Seattle's voluntary Human Rights Commission and former bodyguard for Malcolm X also

attended, though in an unofficial capacity. Alexander stated that he'd unsuccessfully attempted to obtain a copy of the regulations from the mayor's office that permitted a "no-protest zone." A commission member for the past five years, he said he believed police abuse and civil liberties violations were not new to Seattle.

"Unfortunately," said Alexander, "the commission's review of complaints generally resulted in no action."

—Nevdon Jamgochian with

Rosalie Hoffman, WBAI Pacifica Radio

## ACLU responds to police brutality

The American Civil Liberties Union of Washington is currently collecting accounts by those who have experienced or witnessed the excessive use of force by police.

Please give your story to them and support their efforts: ACLU of Washington, 705 Second Avenue, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98104; 206-624-2180; www.aclu-wa.org.

## Questions raised about chemical agents used

Among the hundreds of odd and alarming stories from this tumultuous week in Seattle, a doctor reported yesterday seeing symptoms of "nerve gas damage" among embattled activists.

Dr. Kirk Murphy, a physician from UCLA Medical Center and medic for Direct Action Network (DAN), claimed to have treated two victims who suffered from abnormal mental agitation, gastrointestinal discomfort, and heart irregularities directly following confrontations with riot police deploying gas irritants. Unlike tear gas or pepper spray, which act on the body's wet and dry surfaces and induce intense burning and coughing, Dr. Murphy described how "nerve gas directly effects neurological

transmissions, or acetylcholines which effect the body's functions." He continued to allege that these disruptions could cause the kinds of symptoms that began appearing among activists following the December 1 melee at Pike Street and 1st Avenue.

Dr. Murphy further cited approximately one dozen second-hand reports of similar symptoms by other DAN medics.

Djennifer Whitney, medic coordinator for DAN, stated that "without exception" each of the 10-15 medics she consulted with as of yesterday had treated activists complaining of mental confusion and gastrointestinal pain.

Supervising nurses at Harborview and the University

of Washington Hospitals reported treating no such symptoms.

Incapacitating agents which may produce these symptoms, as described by a US Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense handbook, are the following:

- CS & CR gas—These cause a large flow of tears and intense (temporary) eye pain and skin irritation. CS is the most commonly used irritant for riot control purposes, and is the gas used in the action on the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas. These agents also promote other effects such as bronchoconstriction and vomiting, and are sometimes referred to as vomiting agents.

- CNS agents cause physiological or mental effects lead-

ing to temporary disability lasting from hours to days after exposure. They are depressants, interfering with transmission of information across central synapses. In the central nervous system, anticholinergic compounds disrupt the high integrative functions of memory, problem solving, attention and comprehension.

CS gas is defined as "a fine particulate chemical weapon banned from the Chemical Weapons Convention" by attorney Albert K. Bates and the staff of the Natural Rights Center.

The Seattle City Council's website has confirmed the deployment of CS gas on citizens this week.

—David Whedbee, Janet Berkow, and other sources