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Sand in the wheels

Weekly newsletter - n°100 – Wednesday 17 October 2001.

WAR AND TRADE

Content

1- War and Trade

The Liberalize This! saga is continuing. Despite bombing, anthrax, despair, death, trade must go on. In all the political tools used, war is in the forefront of further liberalization around the world. Colin Powell involved himself in the "fast track" for the US President and Robert Zoellick in the ongoing war.

2- The Fast Track Trade Jihad

Bin Laden, born with a silver Rolls in his mouth and a stock portfolio to rival any Rockefeller, hardly qualifies as a class warrior. Nevertheless, Earth Island Journal's opportunistic hijacking of the mass murder to promote its agenda is not exceptional. There's a horrific weirdness in hearing both Zoellick and an unforgivable number of European Leftists (friends who should know better) calling the twin towers symbols of American capitalism.

3- IMF tells starving Nicaraguans to tighten their belts, cuts off debt relief.

Despite the situation of the country, the IMF continues to demand that the Nicaraguan government slash spending, pull money out of circulation, and privatize public utilities. IMF documents released Oct 2 show that IMF staff have decided that Nicaragua has failed to comply with these demands, and the institution has suspended Nicaragua's debt relief program indefinitely.

4- Short Strike Wins for Mitsubishi Workers

Then the American management team that arrived in late 1998/early 1999 decided to attack job rotation as the great Satan against quality. They believed that if workers were restricted to a couple of jobs, they would become experts at those two jobs and quality would go up.

5- Global Justice in Geneva

Two had not yet struck on the clock and the sun-drenched 'place Neuve' was already filled with people, among whom one could find members of left-wing parties, trade-unionists, ATTAC activists, and many many pacifists. A significant delegation from France – some 500 people from near the border but also from Marseilles – had come to support the movement. Kurds and Palestinians unfolded banners that exposed the US collusion in the oppression of their peoples.

6- Global Justice in Washington

At the "Ending Global Apartheid" teach-in, which the 50 Years Is Enough Network co-sponsored with Essential Action, the Center for Economic Justice/World Bank Bond Boycott, Global Exchange, and the Jubilee USA Network from September 27 to September 29, leading activists from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Europe, and North America spoke about the prospective problems and potential they see in the new political era.

7- Meeting ATTAC worldwide

War and Trade

1- Colin Powell.

Secretary of State Colin Powell has thrown his weight behind the current effort in Congress to grant fast-track trade negotiating authority to President Bush.



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In an editorial in the Wall Street Journal today (October 16), Powell called fast-track legislation "essential" to U.S. foreign policy goals, and wrote that no other Administration priority, other than the war on terrorism, eclipsed the promotion of international trade in importance.

"For America to continue to lead today's world to security and greater prosperity, we need TPA [trade promotion authority]," Powell wrote.

In the article, Powell based his support for fast track on three principles.

First, he argued that international trade generates wealth on a global scale, leading to stable, peaceful states characterized by significant improvements in health, environment, education and working conditions.

Second, he pointed to trade as a means to promote individual freedom because it causes governments to set realistic rules dictated by the market and allow individuals to make their own decisions. Powell pointed to China as evidence of this, arguing that the dynamic of liberalized markets in China had resulted in Chinese citizens being able to exercise an unprecedented level of daily decision-making.

Finally, he argued that states which conclude multilateral trade agreements are more likely to avoid actions that might threaten an agreement or that states' place within it. Powell cited Mexico's ability to weather a significant economic crisis and its effort to modernize its economy after becoming part of the NAFTA.

2- Robert Zoellick

QUESTION: Hi, my name is Nurzin. I'm from NTV-7, the local media here. My question is, right now the U.S. is accused of maintaining a double standard and hypocrisy, especially because it lifted economic sanctions and technology transfers from Pakistan and India immediately after the two countries allowed the use of their airspace, when initially in 1998 the technology and economic sanctions were applied because the two countries at that moment did not adhere to America's nuclear proliferation [standards]. And now, the United States is taking military action against Afghanistan and also justifying this as a response to counter-terrorism, and categorizing countries that do not cooperate as rogues. Now do you think this is a bit unfair? It is rather difficult apparently not to be for America when America is attempting

unilaterally to create and apply sanctions on those who do not adhere to the American definition of terrorism.

ZOELLICK: There are a number of questions imbedded in there so let me try to take a few of the pieces. On September 11, my country was attacked by terrorists that killed over 5,000 people. But the attack was not only on my country because, as you probably know, there were individuals from over 60 countries who died in that attack. And as one of my counterparts pointed out again today, about 500 of those people were Muslims. So the attack that the United States suffered was an attack on civilization. It was an attack on tolerance. It was an attack on things that I know Malaysians, as well as Americans, believe in.

Now, as for the response -- I will just say that I was touched personally in the days after September 11th by the responses that I received from all over the world -- from Asia, from Latin America, from Europe, from Africa, from the Caribbean countries -- of people from inside and outside of government who felt the tremendous pain of that attack. So I think it is entirely appropriate that we and others together respond to that. Now, as President Bush has pointed out, there are different ways in which countries can provide support. We respect that countries have various constraints. We are very pleased with Pakistan's support. We're also pleased with the support of our allies around the world. We're very pleased with the support we have received from Malaysia. We respect that a country like Malaysia has internal challenges and tensions it must deal with, and therefore the help that we get is all that much more meaningful.

As for the question of sanctions, I will point out that I was in India in August at which point I was talking with Prime Minister Vajpayee and others about the process of lifting sanctions. So the process of lifting sanctions on India was actually -- and this was public knowledge -- well on its way before that, in part because the Bush Administration has taken a different stance towards those issues and those of regional stability than our predecessors had. As for Pakistan and the lifting of sanctions with Pakistan, frankly, we think that Mr. Musharaff has taken very difficult decisions. I have met with his Trade and Commerce Minister because, here again, we have a common cause in terms of trying to deal with some of the internal problems of



hopelessness and despair that fuel these types of groups.

I do not believe that it is a justification for terrorism and murdering innocent people, but we need to acknowledge that if we are going to deal with this issue over the long term we also have to deal with the economic and political components. And that is what the United States has been seeking to do, in combination with partners around the world.

Q: Ambassador, can you just clarify that the Doha meeting as of now is going on and will go on?

ZOELLICK: The plans and preparations are for it still to go on. But the point that a number of us made is that we live in an uncertain world, and it changes day by day. We get new reports about threats. And these are things that you obviously have to take into account. In my case, I am not only responsible for myself, but I am also responsible for my staff going. So, again, I have been impressed by the security efforts the Qataris have taken. There are issues in the region that are beyond anybody's control, and those are some of the issues that they and others will have to weigh as we decide what exactly to do.

Q: Zainuddin, Channel News Asia: Do you have any concern that the war in Afghanistan may spiral out of control?

ZOELLICK: Well, wars are always dangerous things. I think that there is no doubt about that. But it is hard for me, having seen the destruction that was wreaked on September 11th, to say that things have not already spun out of control, in the sense that killing five to six thousand innocent people certainly strikes me as being out of control. So, as President Bush made clear, we have identified the people who perpetrated this, we have identified the network that is involved, and we believe that this network must be stopped. We have warned the governments who have been sponsoring or supporting or harboring those people that they cannot permit this to go forward. We gave them time and asked them to act. They did not. And so by supporting people who murder innocent women and children, they are part of that murder. And so they will pay a price as we try to stop this terrorism.

I will also say, as I said to the Prime Minister, that because we believe that the effort to root out terrorism will be one that takes a longer time, and it will certainly not be easy, that we all have the

responsibility to try to help those countries who have to deal with some of the fall-out, and that includes economically. And that is one reason why I have been very committed in trying to launch this global trade round because you combine the uncertainties of the international economy due to terrorism with the slowdown, and this will be particularly tough on developing nations. That is one reason we need to find ways to try to help those nations, in part through trade and through other economic arrangements.

From Press Conference
Renaissance Hotel, Kuala Lumpur
Monday, October 15, 2001 -- 6:00 p.m

More information: <http://attac.org/nonewround>
Calls, analysis, official documents. You'll find also information on mobilizations around Europe for November 9 and 10.
We can provide you also with a daily newsletter, just register to the mailing list on the website front-page.

The Fast Track Trade Jihad

by Greg Palast

After the attack on the World Trade Center, some enterprising hucksters here in New York tried to sell little bags of ashes to victims' families, supposedly of their missing kin.

The stomach-churning commercialization of mass murder didn't bottom out there. Barely had the towers hit the ground when U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick proclaimed the way to defeat Osama bin Laden was to grant George W. Bush extraordinary 'fast-track' trade treaty negotiating authority. Ambassador bin Zoellick, speaking from what looked like a cave on Capitol Hill, surrounded by unidentified Republicans, said Americans had to choose: for free trade or for terrorism.

You'd think Democrats would blast Zoellick for this crude, heartless and somewhat oddball maneuver to jam through Bush's big business agenda while a nation mourned. But this week, war-spooked Democrats in Congress are expected to vote to revive the moribund trade legislation. 'Fast-track' gives Bush carte blanche authority to bargain a big expansion of the World Trade Organization's powers in anticipation of the WTO confab scheduled for Qatar in three weeks. 'Fast-track' also greases approval for a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

The announcement was followed by a disturbing CNN video tape of corporate lobbyists dancing in the streets and handing out sweets to children.

In a September 24 speech before the Institute for International Economics, Trade Ambassador Zoellick laid the groundwork for a new McCarthyism aimed at anti-globalization dissidents. "Terrorists hate the ideas America has championed around the world," he said. "It is inevitable that people will wonder if there are intellectual connections with others who have turned to violence to attack international finance, globalization and the United States."

The implied evil link between opponents al-Qaeda and opponents of the WTO came to him, he said, from New Republic Magazine. This is the same journal, by the way, whose featured columnist suggested, "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity."

Exactly what are the particulars of the US trade agenda for the WTO that are supposed to make terrorists shake with fear? There are two holy grails in Zoellick's trade crusade which go by the benign names "national treatment in services" and "investor-to-state dispute resolution."

Want to keep the Royal Post - pardon me, Consignia - in government hands, or air traffic control? Not a chance, says John Howard of the US Chamber of Commerce. As Howard explained it to me, a WTO 'national treatment' clause will take that decision out of the hands of pesky parliaments, requiring government agencies to bid against foreign operators.

Which brings us to the Machiavellian side of these trade proposals (already promoted, by the way, by EU negotiators). Should Bechtel or any other foreign corporation challenge the continued public ownership of the London Underground, it will fall to Tony Blair to defend government ownership. If you suspect Blair's minions might not argue too forcefully before the disputes panel, you'll never find out. Unlike British and American court proceedings, WTO tribunals are closed and secretive.

A Blair or a Bush or any potentate hostile to state-owned enterprises can use a 'national treatment' rule as a sword in their jihad against their own government's agencies.

The other codicil sought by fast-track globalizers, "Investor-to-state dispute resolution," has already been deployed in the NAFTA zone. (NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, is where US industry uses Canada and Mexico for target practice to test trade weapons they will take international through WTO.)

Investor-to-state dispute resolution allows a foreign corporation wronged by violations of a trade pact to receive compensation from the miscreant nation's treasury. It all sounds quite fair. In practice under NAFTA, corporations have used the system to demolish local governments' environmental and consumer protections. In 1997, a state government in Mexico attempted to stop an American operator building a toxic waste dump in an ecological preservation zone. A NAFTA disputes panel ordered Mexico to pay \$15.6 million (£10.4 million) to Metalclad for delay of its polluting plan.

The most dangerous case comes before a NAFTA panel this week. Loewen Corp, a big Canadian funeral home chain, is deeply unhappy about American tort law. In 1996, a Mississippi jury ruled that Loewen breached a contract and bullied a small operator as part of a scheme to monopolize the industry and raise prices. Rather than appeal the verdict to a higher court, Loewen settled for \$150 million - then whipped around and demanded the US government refund the sum and then some -- \$725 million.

In *LOEWEN V. MISSISSIPPI JURY*, the Canadian operator demands that a NAFTA panel overturn basic procedures of the US civil justice system as an illegal barrier to trade. While the case is pending on the facts, the disputes panel has accepted jurisdiction. That ruling in effect makes NAFTA, not the US Supreme Court nor our Constitution, the ultimate legal authority of North America. Small wonder that American and European business chiefs are chanting "Disputes Resolution is Great!" outside the walls of Doha, Qatar, as the WTO prepares for the ministerial meeting.

If Zoellick's statements on terror and trade sound a bit over the top, he is only reflecting the Bush Administration's sense of panic over the Qatar confab which, even before September 11, was heading toward collapse and cancellation. WTO President Michael Moore failed to stampede less developed countries into putting a new round of comprehensive trade talks on the Qatar agenda.



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Add to that the US President's lack of authority to negotiate, and who would bother to fly to the Gulf state, especially now? Hence, Zoellick's whipping skeptical Democrats about the head and shoulders with the Stars and Stripes.

The Trade Representative had a second target in his trade-or-terrorism tirade: the alliance of greens, populists and unionists who beat back prior attempts at 'fast track' legislation even when Congress was in Republican hands. Zoellick hopes to discredit this effective coalition by wrapping the anti-globalization movement in bin Laden's turban.

Lamentably, Zoellick is getting a lot of help on his smear campaign from befuddled souls within the anti-globalization movement itself. Bush's trade chief quotes gleefully from an Earth Island Journal writer who took the ill line that the attack on the Trade Center was some kind of extension, if misguided and criminal, of the struggle against globalization.

Bin Laden, born with a silver Rolls in his mouth and a stock portfolio to rival any Rockefeller, hardly qualifies as a class warrior. Nevertheless, Earth Island Journal's opportunistic hijacking of the mass murder to promote its agenda is not exceptional. There's a horrific weirdness in hearing both Zoellick and an unforgivable number of European Leftists (friends who should know better) calling the twin towers symbols of American capitalism.

EXCUSE ME, but until I began scribbling for The Observer, I worked on Floor 50 of the North Tower - which stood, among New Yorkers, as a symbol of American SOCIALISM. These government-owned skyscrapers housed the Port Authority, proprietor of subways, bridges and more, America's first line of defense against the privatization jihad sweeping the rest of the planet.

It is eery, anguishing and vile to watch Bush's free-market fanatics join together with a self-absorbed element of the left to use this tragedy to sell us their phoney little bags of political ashes.

Special thanks to Mary Bottari of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch for expert explanation and nonpareil research material.

by Greg Palast
Inside Corporate America for the Observer,
London, Sunday October 14, 2001

At www.GregPalast.com you can read and subscribe to Greg Palast's Observer column, Inside Corporate America, and view his BBC television Newsnight broadcasts.

More information: <http://attac.org/nonewround>
Calls, analysis, official documents. You'll find also information on mobilizations around Europe for November 9 and 10.

We can provide you also with a daily newsletter, just register to the mailing list on the website front-page.

IMF tells starving Nicaraguans to tighten their belts, cuts off debt relief

By Derek MacCuish. Social Justice Committee

SJC asks for support in denouncing IMF behaviour.

The Social Justice Committee asks people to express their dismay that the IMF has stopped the debt relief program for Nicaragua in the midst of crisis. Here is a quick summary, with more information below:

There has been widespread, worsening hunger in Nicaragua since the beginning of the year, with flooding, drought, and collapsing coffee prices hitting the country with a series of devastating blows. A million-and-a-half Central Americans are suffering from hunger following the three-month drought. Floods on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast destroyed crops of rice, corn, yucca, and bananas, with some 1,400 families now eating the seeds that they used to give to pigs that were swept away by the floods. Their children dying of hunger, 10,000 families have left the coffee plantations where they lived, worked, and grew some of their food, because of the collapse of coffee prices.

Despite the situation of the country, the IMF continues to demand that the Nicaraguan government slash spending, pull money out of circulation, and privatize public utilities. IMF documents released Oct 2 show that IMF staff have decided that Nicaragua has failed to comply with these demands, and the institution has suspended Nicaragua's debt relief program indefinitely.

This means debt cancellation by rich countries is also put on hold by the IMF decision.

The IMF is refusing to negotiate new support until conditions are met. Without an IMF agreement,



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development assistance from other sources is endangered.

Please write or call your representative at the IMF, asking that the institution restore the debt reduction program for Nicaragua and de-link IMF structural adjustment conditions from the HIPC program.

>>>US Executive Director: Randal Quarles
rquarles@imf.org (202) 623-7759; fax: (202) 623-4940<<<

Supplemental information: >From the IMF "Article IV" consultation staff report, released 2 Oct:

"Because of recent slippages in the implementation of macroeconomic and structural policies, the establishment of a satisfactory track record is needed before the resumption of Fund assistance under the PRGF." "In addition to public expenditures restraint... implementation of a tight monetary policy would be crucial... proceed vigorously with public sector reforms... deepen trade liberalization" [PRGF is the IMF's "Poverty Reduction Strategy Program", the new name for the Structural Adjustment Facility] >From the IMF "Article IV" consultation Public Information Notice Oct 2: (reporting on IMF Board of Directors discussions) ""Directors emphasized the importance of establishing a track record in policy implementation as a necessary element for continued support for HIPC and PRGF participation... They stressed that the authorities should stand ready to further restrain government expenditure." ["HIPC" is the program of debt reduction for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries. All debt relief in this program is conditional on following IMF structural adjustment demands; about 1/3 of countries are falling behind schedule because of these]

>From the Nicaraguan government's Letter of Intent Aug 27 2001: "The fiscal stance remained weak in the first half of 2001 mainly because of high expenditures associated with wage increases (teachers, nurses, and police)" plus bank resolutions, election costs, and other domestic capital outlays.

>>>The SJC has been in touch with the Canadian office at the IMF, which confirmed that the HIPC debt relief program has indeed been stopped indefinitely. This means that debt cancellation by creditor countries is also now on hold, until the IMF allows it to proceed.<<<

From a USAID update 10 Oct. 2001

"Persistent dry conditions have caused serious crop damage and severe transitory food insecurity in Central America. According to the United Nations, drought conditions affecting Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala have created the worst crisis to hit the region since Hurricane Mitch in 1998."

"Central America is an area prone to natural disasters, as evidenced in recent years by such devastating calamities as Hurricane Mitch and the earthquakes in El Salvador. In addition, nearly two years of unrelenting dry conditions affecting Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala have reduced domestic food production, spurring an increase in internal and external migrations. Economic conditions have worsened at the same time, with low international coffee prices putting coffee farmers out of work and eliminating employment opportunities for many small farmers and landless poor. Emerging evidence from Guatemala indicates that levels of under-nutrition among children under five - already among the highest in the Western Hemisphere - are increasing. Decreased tax revenues resulting from the decline in coffee prices, and the general economic deceleration, which is linked to the economic slowdown in the United States, have limited the ability of national and local governments to respond to these problems."

"The Ministry of Agriculture has updated its estimate of losses of basic grains due to the drought. The new estimate is that 20.7 percent of basic grain crops were lost, compared to the 18.2 percent estimate in July, representing an increase from 63,466 hectares to 72,639 hectares. Assessments conducted by OFDA and USAID/Nicaragua from September 16 - 19, and by USAID on September 22 - 23 to the municipalities of El Viejo, Villanueva, Puerto Morazan, and Chinandega, in the Department of Chinandega confirmed that people in the area had very little food, the grain storage facilities were empty, and that there had been a near total crop loss in the Spring planting cycle. One of the most disadvantaged groups identified by USAID is landless farmers, who comprise between 10 and 20 percent of the rural population. These farmers are completely dependent on employment opportunities generated by other farmers and are among the poorest of the already highly vulnerable rural population."



From Envio magazine, August 2001

"By early August, the World Food Programme (WFP) was reporting that a drought had affected some 1.4 million people in the region, a million of them in Honduras, and that well over half of this number were suffering near-total crop losses and critical food shortages. Suddenly, starvation and humanitarian aid—two disquieting words that recall recent African tragedies—were overshadowing the election campaign in Nicaraguan public awareness.

The US government earmarked US\$6 million in food aid to be distributed through Nicaragua's NGOs—bypassing the government. WFP began distributing rations of maize, cooking oil and fortified cereal to Nicaragua's hungry as well as seeds to 40,000 small producers affected by the drought. It has been forced to make an urgent call to donor nations since it only has enough supplies to help half of those in the direst need region-wide make it through the next harvest. In July, the United Nations Development Program released its Human Development Report for 2001, which documents that one in every three Nicaraguans is undernourished. This figure—the worst in Central America—combined with the country's high infant malnutrition indices demonstrate that hunger not only exists right now but is chronic, and is putting the country's future at risk. Among the 162 countries analyzed, Nicaragua is in 106th place.

Coffee crisis

The WFP described Nicaragua, where starvation threatened an estimated 32,600 families, as the most complex case in Central America because it is caused by three separate factors: the coffee crisis in the north-central area, the drought in the north and northwest and, perversely, flooding due to non-stop rains on the Caribbean side of the country. In all cases, the few grain reserves that peasant farmers had once set aside for either eating or the next planting cycle are gone. Two years of drought from El Niño, followed by Hurricane Mitch, followed by two more years of drought have seen to that.

The roughly 10,000 Nicaraguan families that WFP estimates are affected by the coffee crisis have no work and thus no wages with which to buy food. Their starvation has nothing to do with the production of foodstuffs or any rise in food prices, but with an absolute lack of income. Their problem is aggravated by the fact that they have also had to abandon their former living quarters on farms that no longer produce coffee or plant basic grains

for the workers, and where even the fruit on the trees has been stripped and devoured. The exodus to the city by some of these families—even if there they are living in indigence—is justified.

Drought on top of dryness

WFP calculates that another 22,000 families are starving because of the drought in 47 municipalities of the dry zones in the western, northern and central regions of the country. Surveys show that between half and all of the first-cycle planting of maize and beans—the peasants' daily staple—has been lost together with other crops in these municipalities, while the livestock herds have also been severely damaged. Lacking job alternatives, these subsistence farmers literally have nothing to eat."

Derek MacCuish Program Coordinator
Social Justice Committee, Montreal. Tel: 514-933-6797 Visit our web site: www.s-j-c.net

Short Strike Wins for Mitsubishi Workers

by Justin Z. West

Twenty-nine hundred UAW members at Mitsubishi's Bloomington, Illinois assembly plant walked out and won a contract of gains and maintains—a contract we would not have had if our membership had not stood up.

We build the Mitsubishi Eclipse and Galant sedan and the Chrysler Sebring and Dodge Stratus. Back when the plant opened—at that time a joint venture between Chrysler and Mitsubishi—management talked a lot about worker input on the assembly process, being able to stop the line to maintain quality and repair a defect, and QC circles where workers would meet on company time to analyze problems on the job or with quality and come up with alternative methods or tools or parts.

We all learned early on that this was just company ca-ca. Workers' suggestions certainly were not given much consideration and to stop a line was a big no-no. That did not stop the company from bleating that it was real...or the workers from arguing about problems on quality or defects if allowed to pass.

Almost three years ago, a new management team came in and proceeded to reduce or eliminate some of the Japanese work practices that much of the workforce had gotten used to. Over the last



two years, the company had experienced record sales and profits, while increasing quality, productivity, and efficiency. In the meantime, the company reduced the amount of manpower via a voluntary buyout while increasing production for those who remained. Those workers who remained had had enough!

In this set of negotiations, the company did not recognize how serious the union membership was until after the contract expired. At 1:30 am on August 24, the UAW walked out. Take-aways were the roadblocks--the company's demands to cut benefits and rules we already had earned and owned and were not about to give up.

JOB ROTATION & ERGONOMICS

When the UAW first organized the plant, the International demanded that each worker only have to perform a single job. The Japanese managers insisted, however, on job rotation because of the flexibility it provided. The union agreed, and as time went along, workers got used to rotating among 5 to 10+ jobs, with a different job roughly every two hours.

Then the American management team that arrived in late 1998/early 1999 decided to attack job rotation as the great Satan against quality. They believed that if workers were restricted to a couple of jobs, they would become experts at those two jobs and quality would go up.

The problem was that full rotation had masked the bad ergonomics of the jobs; limited rotation magnified those same bad ergonomics. Injuries rose.

The union fought the limited rotation to arbitration and lost. Rotation was limited to the same two jobs every day. This is why ergonomics was high on the union's list of demands.

SPONTANEOUS VACATION

The company's demands would have restricted the ability to use "spontaneous vacation" (SPTO) as well as scheduled vacation time. In our contract, 32 hours each year can be taken as "spontaneous" wherein the worker can call in as late as 30 minutes before the start of his shift and tell the boss he is not coming in that day. Half that time can be used in increments of four hours, even to take off the second half of a shift.

Workers have always demanded SPTO because it is their only avenue for dealing with emergencies (car break down, family need) without being disciplined under the company's "no-fault" attendance policy. And workers appreciate being able to deal with a foreman who's over the line simply by going home—or threatening to.

Another Japanese institution, the "Quality-Check" station, was eliminated (and more of that responsibility stolen by the supervisors). Management combined units of workers into larger groups, putting more people under one supervisor and therefore more people under one vacation-day scheduling chart, effectively reducing the ability to schedule time off.

Injuries and job-related stress skyrocketed as working conditions became more hostile. Corporate threats of discipline for work-performance issues only fueled the fire. Outsourced work and seniority rights were also at issue.

WALK-OUT

Within a few hours of our walking out, the company contacted the union to seek a reopening of talks. Meantime, that morning's first shift was arriving. Many second-shift people who had awaited word in the parking lots were there, and they started manning the gates along with the third-shifters who had walked out.

Tremendous solidarity was shown as over a thousand members lined the highway in front of the plant, blocking entrances, slowing traffic, and attracting state and local police (who, other than one particular trooper, were neutral, if not openly supportive).

The scene was something to behold: our first strike, our largest showing of workers banding and bonding together for the betterment of all. The brothers and sisters of our contracted-out cleaning unit walked out in support, as well as the Machinists who grease the machines.

Building trades members refused to cross the picket lines, causing plant expansion work to grind to a halt. Teamster drivers simply parked their transports on the highway, choosing not to pick up any cars for shipment. Unionists from various other locals stopped and offered support.

It was a display of unity across all union labels, one that certainly opened the eyes of the



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membership as to the true meaning of SOLIDARITY.

Thirty hours later, management agreed to a contract. Now we have a good agreement to work under for the next four years. We gained in wages and benefits, maintaining parity with Chrysler workers, and kept SPTO.

On ergonomics, the UAW and top management will be required to immediately investigate on-the-job injuries and the problem jobs are to be corrected a.s.a.p. The bad jobs in the limited rotations will be given priority attention and all jobs must be re-evaluated every two years.

Justin Z. West. President, UAW Local 2488
Published in collaboration with Labor Notes. 'Labor Notes' is a monthly magazine based in Detroit, USA. We are committed to reforming and revitalizing the labor movement. We report news about the labor movement that you won't find anywhere else. News about grassroots labor activity, innovative organizing tactics, international labor struggles, immigrant workers, and problems that some union leaders would rather keep quiet. Subscribe and receive a copy of 'Labor Notes' in your mailbox! Subscription information can be found at our website at www.labornotes.org

Global Justice in Geneva

by Benito Pérez & Gabriele Fontana

1- "No world peace without global justice "
by Benito Pérez

In Geneva (Sept 30) the pacifist tradition is alive and kicking. Some 4,000 demonstrators were evidence enough when they marched against the treat of military revenge in Central Asia, thus responding to the call of the Swiss branch of the Bangkok Appeal (CSAB). While the terrorist attacks against New York and Washington were resolutely condemned, demonstrators demanded that the spiral of violence be broken and that we devote our energy to build a fairer and better world.

Two had not yet struck on the clock and the sun-drenched 'place Neuve' was already filled with people, among whom one could find members of left-wing parties, trade-unionists, ATTAC activists, and many many pacifists. A significant delegation from France – some 500 people from near the border but also from Marseilles – had come to

support the movement. Kurds and Palestinians unfolded banners that exposed the US collusion in the oppression of their peoples. More unexpectedly a handful of adepts of the Rael sect joined the meeting and handed out leaflets. A efficient team of stewards would see to it that they did not stay in the march.

A TERRORIST FRANKENSTEIN

Speaking in the microphone, Jean Batou determined the tenor of the march: "We resolutely condemn the terrorist attacks. But we cannot accept either that every day thousands of people should fall victims of an unfair world." The CSAB activist went on to place responsibility with the poverty, racism, sexism and exploitation that pervade our society. Such plagues can only be cured through solidarity and a fair distribution of wealth. He insisted: "We stand with the American people as with all peoples anywhere, but we cannot stand behind the American government or its policies."

RATHER RIMBAUD THAN RAMBO

Referring again to the tragedy of September 11 Jean Batou denounced probable collusions: "We don't know who was responsible for the attacks, but we suspect that they are CIA creatures." He called up the image a "Frankenstein who turns on its creators" as illustrative of the consequences of US support to fundamentalist networks. From the applause it seemed that his approach was widely shared.

The gravity of circumstances did not prevent the demonstration (which started moving towards place du Bel-Air around 2.30) from displaying a lot of good humour and inventiveness. "Rather Rimbaud than Rambo" claimed a banner in front of a cheerful Carnival band. Another slogan posted on the back of a huge white clown summed up the spirit of the march: "For a justice that gives us back our smiles" ("Pour une justice qui nous redonne le sourire").

Chants were not forgotten. A genuine choir would repeat slogans such as: "To those who want to bomb the world the world's answer is resistance!" To the organisers' delight pacifists and so-called antiglobalisation activists merged without any hitch. A young ATTAC activist who came over from the Département de l'Isère with some friends stated: "You cannot build a fairer world by attacking populations"; she adds that there are ready and obvious solutions to insecurity:

"Terrorists are bred by an unjust political and economic system. This is what has to be changed. The debt of poor countries ought to be cancelled and speculation ruled out." An activist from ATTAC-Marseilles continued: "In the name of some holy free market the United States will not ban tax havens. Traffickers and terrorists are thankful. This goes to show that a change in the system is even more urgently needed than ever before."

WITH THE AFGHANI WOMEN

But today the priority is to prevent some irreparable foolish action. "Afghani women need you," Abdullah Kahn pleaded in front of thousands of demonstrators in front of the improvised podium on 'place des Nations.' Perceptibly moved the representative of the Association of Afghani women went on: "Here you enjoy freedom and democracy. There we have nothing. Millions of women live in utter poverty. In refugee camps they have no roof, no medical care, no water, no electricity. They are cold. Children die in the hundred. We have to help them!"

This call for help is relayed by trade unionist Eric Decarro: "According to humanitarian organisations, five million of Afghanis receive food supplies. In case of a military intervention seven and a half million people will be cut off from any means of subsistence. This is where a war logic has taken us. Instead of bringing terrorists to trial we play with the lives of millions."

Workers' solidarity is the way out of this blind alley claims the president of the Swiss trade union for public services: "We refuse this new crusade, we won't be dragged into some war of civilisation. We must be on the side of all wage-earners and small producers, of all those who suffer because of the unfairness of the world, that is of the vast majority of people. We do not stand on the side of those who want to buttress the system."

He too exposed the US policies when he said that state terrorism had been extensively used to impose the interests of finance capital through coups, military interventions and support to dictatorships.

Another more underhand kind of war was the target of speakers, namely limitations of civil liberties. On the pretext of fighting terrorism "they are legitimising violations of democratic rights and criminalising whoever fight the system." This development can also be noted in Switzerland pace Tobia Schnebli, of the Group for a

Switzerland without an army, who quotes funding texts of 'Armée XXI' in which terrorism and antiglobalisation movements are mentioned side by side as new dangers the country has to face. "The invisible hand of the market will need an iron glove to maintain this unfair system," such was the image with which he concluded his speech.

No doubt about it, pacifists and activists of another globalisation have a lot in common.

2- "It is even more urgent to change the world!"

OPINIONS COLLECTED BY GABRIELE FONTANA

A debate organised by the Swiss Committee of the Bangkok Appeal (CSAB) brought together quite a crowd in the Saint Boniface theater room. On this occasion we asked a number of questions to Christophe Aguiton, who is in charge of international relations within Attac-France.

Le Courrier: Do the terrorist attacks in the United States change anything for the movement against neoliberal globalisation?

Christophe Aguiton: It is obvious that some 7,000 dead, among whom many NGO workers and trade unionists who were close to us prompt a response of total and immediate solidarity. Later we have to start thinking about the deep-seated causes of events. Not to establish some mechanical connections between poverty in the third world and the attacks. But it seems clear that they would not have been possible outside a context of unresolved issues – the Palestinian situation, but more widely the way whole civilisations have been humiliated. I'm thinking of Berlusconi's words about Islam and the superiority of the Western world. Though this statement was officially condemned he was saying aloud what was on the minds of many!

Where should solutions be looked for ?

- Make the world more human, this is the recurrent answer. So fight against inequalities, do away with the gap between North and South, respect cultures and the environment, fight against poverty and precarious living conditions in every society, preserve democracy from the encroachment of globalisation. This takes us back to our main themes from before the ruthless killing in New York and Washington and confirms how urgently we should mobilise. We cannot say that there are changes within the movement and the number of demonstrators in Europe is beyond



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expectations. Moreover people are more serious, more concerned, and this results in more peaceful demonstrations, as could be seen in Liège and Naples.

In the United States there have been a first batch of demonstration against a possible war while some trade unions distanced themselves from the movement because of a nationalist sensitivity. Yet I think and hope that this is a short-term thing.

Where then is the fundamental change ?

- There is an actual danger that repression should be strengthened in the United States and in a number of countries that will use the new situation to settle domestic or regional accounts. This will not always please the United States, as can be seen in Israel with Sharon, and as will probably happen in Chechenya with Poutine or in China with the government suppressing ethnic minorities. Even though the United States do not launch a large-scale war – this is at least what can be hoped for considering the mounting pressure – there will clearly be greater diffidence towards all dissidents. We just have to think of Bush's terrible statement "Those who are not for us are against us" to understand that liberties are threatened.

Is Europe more open?

- Some European countries have proved less manichean in their response, which may be connected to the strength of our movement. After the brutal repression in Genoa even Britain stood up to defend its citizens. Then the Tobin tax was taken into consideration in France and Germany: in some cases we can dismiss the politicians' statements as empty speechifying, but it is nonetheless a success. Moreover, at two major international conferences – in Bonn, on the follow-up of the Kyoto protocol and in Durban, on racism – we saw how aggravated Europeans were by a self-seeking US policy. Even after the terrorist attacks the general climate in Europe has little to do with what happened during the Gulf War or the war in Kosovo, when only the radical left was opposing the war.

What conclusions can be drawn as social movement ?

- First we have to get more strongly involved in the field of pacifist struggles, as can be seen here in Geneva where activists from countries of the South and of movements such as ATTAC are marching side by side with those who demand a

Switzerland without an army. Second, we have to take into account the anti-imperialist aspect which is everywhere present, from Palestine to Chechenya, where the left and local Islamic movements may be forcibly suppressed. We have to look at more general political issues, even if they are associated with local situations.

Third we have to stick to our agenda, from the WTO meeting in Doha (Qatar) to the World Social Summit at Porto Alegre through the several mobilisations against the world economic Forum at Davos. We can play an even more important part than what we thought if we all mobilise feeling that there is an even greater urgency in our wish to change the world.

Can such issues find a response in the Middle East, where the WTO has been looking for asylum?

- I think that the key to the movement is its ability to defend specific identities and to emphasise its universal nature. It must thus be able to connect classical forms of social movements – whether they come from peasants, trade unionists or radical leftists – with new forms of mobilisation. Its spreading to various parts of the world is linked to its capacity to connect with local movements. The same thing can happen in the Arab world. When I was in Beyrouth I was impressed by the proximity between activists from the social elite, who had been trained in US universities, and those who belonged to workers' movements, to Arabic nationalism or even to Islam. The Doha conference will also be an opportunity for us to be present in a number of Arab countries to establish a link between globalisation issues and democracy (as happens with a movement like RAID in Tunisia, in spite of repression).

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Global Justice in Washington

by Soren Ambrose & Njoli Njoroge Njehu

The Promise of Cleveland

We were in Cleveland for the Jobs with Justice annual conference from September 7 to September 9. Jobs with Justice, a national coalition of labor union activists, religious



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organizations, and community groups, has been a close ally and partner of the 50 Years Is Enough Network since the April 2000 mobilization at the spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank. The conference drew nearly a thousand people from around the country, plus several international activists. We facilitated the participation of Jonah Gokova from the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development, Molly Dhlamini from the Student Union for Christian Action in South Africa, and Harry Clerveau from the Federation of Unions of Electrical Workers of Haiti.

Jobs with Justice has become a key meeting point for the messages of the anti-corporate-globalization movement and the domestic struggles for the right to organize and a living wage, and against privatization and corporate greed. At the Jobs with Justice national conferences one sees the energy that has renewed labor's role in the left, and propelled the AFL-CIO toward more progressive positions and more genuine international solidarity.

The buzz at this conference, a very loud buzz, was eager anticipation of the upcoming mobilization at the IMF/World Bank annual meetings in Washington. We left Cleveland with re-invigorated optimism, feeling that the fall mobilization would not only raise public awareness of corporate globalization to unprecedented levels and garner more substantial attention in the media, but also that we just might win concrete changes in the way the IMF and World Bank do business, and thus in the structure of the global economy.

A World Suddenly Changed

Thirty-six hours after getting home, we, along with the rest of the world, turned on our televisions to see the World Trade Center, and then the Pentagon, in flames. For us, as for many Kenyans and Tanzanians, it was an experience terrifyingly reminiscent of the August 1998 bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, watching live footage of fires and bleeding injured people, especially in downtown Nairobi, as people mounted desperate rescue missions.

It is already a cliché to say that what happened on September 11 changed the world. Yet because it is still so recent and because so many of us had the unusual, terrifying and, for most of us, unique experience of watching what was at once a world-historical event and an action so outlandish as to make it seem like a fever dream or a Godzilla

movie, it is probably not surprising that we need to remind ourselves of it frequently.

As it began to sink in and we started to match up the new reality with the more familiar one, we felt certain that the IMF and World Bank would cancel their meetings. They had already drastically cut the length of the meeting, and it was becoming apparent that they were not relishing the public relations battle they seemed poised to lose. The meetings themselves are little more than ceremonial obligations; why not take the new high road so suddenly in view and avoid a lot of potholes at the same time?

Because the U.S. Treasury Department is the official host of the meetings, it took a while for the obvious to become official. In the meantime we, along with other organizers and in the different coalitions we were working with, especially in Washington, considered what to do about the events and activities we had been planning for months. For the 50 Years Is Enough Network, with a well-defined mission and scope which preclude shifting our focus to, say, anti-militarism, it was very clear that the prospect of delivering our critique of the international financial institutions was neither possible nor appropriate in the face of this massive catastrophe. Three Teach-In Tours to 25 cities with over 70 events were already under way and the "Ending Global Apartheid" Teach-In planned for the end of the month in Washington, DC was coming along well. Most of the communities hosting the Teach-In Tours clearly wanted to continue and our colleagues from Haiti, Panama, India, the Philippines, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Brazil were also comfortable with continuing.

Despite all the conversations and all the essays, it is still impossible to know the real, or the lasting, meaning of September 11. One possible positive outcome would be a puncturing of the myth of U.S. "exceptionalism," a deeper sense in the U.S. that it is a country like any other; it is not exempted from the anger and violence everywhere in evidence. The most similar events, and arguably the most recent single events that could claim a significance comparable to September 11, are the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Those attacks may have ended the last world war, but they also heralded a new political era - a Cold War marked by intense paranoia, the massive waste of resources on military technology, overblown claims of virtue and evil, the frequent refrain of "patriotism" and "security" as cover for gross



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abuses of the government's coercive and investigative powers, and the subordination of the principles of democracy and justice to the imperatives of geopolitical power dynamics, in which virtually any conflict could quickly become a U.S.- Soviet proxy war.

September 11 could become the start of another cold war, at least in how values and facts are distorted. We could be embarking on an era in which the stated principles of the wealthy countries are even more blatantly at odds with their behavior. Between the fall of the Berlin Wall and this moment, the distance between official rhetoric and actual reality has been substantial, but the rhetoric at least provided an opportunity for opponents to expose the hypocrisy of the institutions which claim to assist impoverished people but in fact prioritize safeguarding the profits of corporations.

Already U.S. government officials and officers of the IMF and World Bank have spoken openly of using the institutions' resources to reward countries, such as Pakistan, for cooperating with U.S. demands, and denying funds to those which do not join the U.S. coalition. This use of the international financial institutions as instruments of the U.S. political agenda has been going on for decades, but since the end of the Cold War there has been a reluctance to acknowledge the fact publicly, which has itself acted as a valuable restraint on the U.S. government's inclination to use the institutions to serve its own narrow purposes.

Should such an atmosphere descend on the U.S., the organizing priorities of the movement for global justice would likely have to change. Engagement in dialogue with the IMF and World Bank, an exercise the 50 Years Is Enough Network generally finds of limited value, would become pointless, since political imperatives would explicitly outweigh humanitarian or developmental priorities. Mass mobilizations of the type we were planning for the last week of September would likely become more difficult to organize as authorities worry even less about safeguarding constitutional rights.

If this sort of forecast proves true, we suspect our work would place a relatively greater emphasis on organizing and educating on the local level, working to make people see the links between their economic circumstances and the perverse structure of the global economy - exactly the sort of work that Jobs with Justice helps us accomplish.

We would also encourage Congress to continue questioning the institutions, and challenge the media to continue unraveling the power dynamics under-girding the global economic system. The need for activists in the U.S. to work in conscious solidarity with progressive forces throughout the Global South will only become more critical, both with regard to IMF/World Bank issues and with regard to the overall policies of the U.S. government.

At the "Ending Global Apartheid" teach-in, which the 50 Years Is Enough Network co-sponsored with Essential Action, the Center for Economic Justice/World Bank Bond Boycott, Global Exchange, and the Jubilee USA Network from September 27 to September 29, leading activists from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Europe, and North America spoke about the prospective problems and potential they see in the new political era. Focus on the Global South, a 50 Years Is Enough Network South Council member with offices in Bangkok, Mumbai (Bombay), and Manila, has already proposed that an international strategy session take place in about a month's time, when the new political climate will probably be clearer. The international organizations present in Washington for the teach-in considered the possibility of making such a session part of the World Social Forum preparatory meeting in Dakar, Senegal in late October, and will be contacting the organizers there shortly.

What Might Have Been

The mobilization planned for Washington for September 23 - October 3, 2001 would likely have attracted more people than the April 2000 events, which drew between 20,000 and 30,000 protesters. The Washington DC police, who generated a lot of "hype" for the event, claimed to be expecting over 100,000 demonstrators - a number no organizer for the Mobilization for Global Justice, the local coalition coordinating many of the events, ever claimed.

One of the reasons we might have seen a significantly larger turnout than last April was the deeper involvement of the AFL-CIO. Last year, the AFL-CIO endorsed the rally in the last few days, and wasn't able to devote many resources. This year, it got involved over the summer and committed significant resources and staff time to the rally. In addition, the Mobilization coordinated more consciously with the religious community, and, along with the 50 Years Is Enough Network, was strongly supporting a prayer service and vigil



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on the evening of Saturday, September 29. Although the rally was cancelled, the prayer service took place, with the theme adjusted from a unified focus on the IMF and World Bank to the issues of violence, economic and otherwise.

In comparison to the April 2000 mobilization, we had more time to organize educational events this year, and as a consequence were able to co-sponsor three speaking tours in the eastern half of the United States, each with two or three speakers from the Global South. "Ending Global Apartheid: A Teach-In for Action on the World Bank and IMF" also went forward, albeit with a slightly revised and abbreviated schedule due to cancellations by speakers who could not arrange alternate travel plans from the South. But even with some sixty speaking slots, we confronted an over-abundance of high-quality speakers rather than a shortage.

The week of actions, far more varied than last year's, was slated to begin with a rally for immigrants' rights at the Capitol on September 25, an event that has now been postponed. The ensuing days included a "clean energy march" (exposing the World Bank's support for fossil fuel energy projects), a series of labor actions targeting retailers selling sweatshop products, Taco Bell (a leading buyer of tomatoes from Florida union-busters), and one of the city's major parking lot empires (which seeks to deny fair wages and organizing rights to immigrant workers fleeing structural adjustment in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Central America), a protest targeting Citicorp, cited as the world's most destructive financial services company, and a rally and march opposing the militarization of Latin America.

The IMF and World Bank took far more notice of our efforts this year than last. Over the summer they announced their decision to re-locate their meetings from their usual venue, the city's largest convention hotel (the Marriott Wardman Park), to their own buildings in downtown Washington. While they cited the surrounding community's apprehensions about massive crowds and potential turbulence as their reason for moving, the residents were at least as upset about the annual influx of limousines into their streets and driveways - a source of bitter complaint for many years. The Metropolitan Police Department of Washington launched a vigorous effort to portray the protesters as a mob of unruly, violent, and under-informed young people. The police campaign, unburdened by fidelity to facts or propriety, encouraged the media to focus on the question of "violence," despite the fact that the

reporters who were in Washington for last April's demonstrations knew that there were no incidents of protester violence then. When the police announced in August their probable intention of building a nine-foot fence around the IMF, the World Bank, the White House, and the Treasury Department, the 50 Years Is Enough Network joined other organizers in a lawsuit seeking to preserve the right to assemble and protest in an effective manner consistent with our constitutional rights (i.e., within eyeshot and earshot of the targets).

In response to the police department's fear-mongering, and its outrageous request for \$50 million (ultimately whittled down to \$29 million) from the federal government to provide security, the institutions decided to compress all of their meetings into two days, a decision which would have had the effect of making the institutions even less transparent than they already are.

The 50 Years Is Enough Network joined with Global Exchange, Jobs with Justice, and Essential Action to challenge the institutions to a public debate - something that was arranged quite easily in April 2000, but which seemed to get more complex this year. The IMF and World Bank took the very unusual step of replying via a joint letter prominently displayed on each institution's website, a step which inspired a brief frenzy of media attention and a front-page story in the Financial Times. We never did finalize details of the debate, which is now on hold. We do intend to make sure that debate, and others, take place in public soon.

Media coverage, in general, was even heavier than last year, or at least was present earlier. Some of it did focus on our issues (e.g. structural adjustment, institutional transparency, debt cancellation, etc.). Our success in turning some reporters away from the "violence question" was greatly assisted by the fact that the organizing coalition, the Mobilization for Global Justice, agreed to a set of four demands of the institutions, which were largely drawn from the 50 Years Is Enough Network's list of eight demands, worked out in consultation over many months with the members of our South Council. The demands included a call for comprehensive debt cancellation, an end to structural adjustment programs, the opening of Board meetings to the media and public, and an end to support for environmentally and socially destructive projects. By the time of the attacks, we had been interviewed and quoted by the Washington Post,



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the New York Times, NBC, the Financial Times, the Boston Globe, the BBC, Institutional Investor, L.A. Weekly, O Estado do São Paulo, and various radio and television programs around the country. On September 11 itself, the Financial Times published the first of a series of articles on the international movement for economic justice, and they used Soren as the poster-child for showing that the movement has become a "mainstream" rather than a "fringe" phenomenon. The rest of the series, alas, was postponed indefinitely.

Apparently as a result of all the attention being paid to our work, the head of the IMF's office of External Affairs decided to go on the offensive. Thomas Dawson responded to a letter by Soren appearing in the Washington Post which detailed how much the IMF and World Bank would owe if they were taxed as a normal profit-making enterprise. Dawson accused him of being "disingenuous" for not highlighting his link to the 50 Years Is Enough Network (one of the organizations ostensibly provoking these expenditures). A week later, he attacked Soren again on the same score, but this time at a press briefing. His harshest words, however, were reserved for 50 Years Is Enough Steering Committee member Robert Naiman; he even accused Naiman's employer, the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), of stealing its name from a British organization. That the IMF had chosen to respond to CEPR's studies demonstrating the failure of globalization policies by critiquing its name, and to the 50 Years Is Enough Network's argument that the institutions should contribute to their host city by assailing Soren on a point of etiquette, assured us that we had the institutions on the defensive.

Congressional Victory Signals Continued Momentum

While the events of September 11 have interrupted, at least in the U.S., the sense of momentum the movement for global justice had established with street protests around the world, there is every reason to think that in the institutions themselves, in the op-ed pages, and in the legislatures of the world, our message has penetrated sufficiently that we will not be thrown backward.

The first concrete indication that the spirit of unity that has made headlines will not be extended to the IMF and the World Bank came on Friday, September 21. The U.S. House Subcommittee on International Monetary Policy met that day and

approved by a wide margin legislation that would demand of the regional development banks - surrogates and mirror-images of the World Bank - that they release far more information, on an earlier timetable and to a wider audience, than what the World Bank had announced earlier in the month would be its new practice on information disclosure.

While Congress alone cannot change the rules of the banks, and while this bill is not yet law, it is clear that the move has bipartisan support in the U.S., and that there is substantial backing for meaningful change at the institutions. But even beyond those requirements, the bill also demands that the institutions open their Board meetings to the media and public observation - a demand hardly anyone dared to voice even a year ago. These provisions clearly put the World Bank on notice that similar demands could, and probably will, be made of them when it next requests funds from the U.S.

The same legislation also took the important step of building on our victory last year in passing legislation requiring the U.S. to oppose "user fees" - financial charges - from the most impoverished people in the most impoverished countries for the most basic services, such as primary health care and primary education. The Treasury Department had opened a loophole in last year's legislation to avoid implementing the provision; a bipartisan Congressional coalition came together to repair the wording.

Finally, an amendment proposed by Rep. Barbara Lee (who gained recent fame as the lone member of Congress to oppose President Bush's request for a "blank check" authorization of military force, to require the U.S. to oppose projects at the regional development banks which include any dam not adhering to the recommendations made by the World Commission on Dams, a blue-ribbon panel formed in part by the World Bank and including corporate executives. The Commission made surprisingly strong, far-reaching suggestions about curtailing large dams and building them only under very specific conditions. After the unveiling of its report, the World Bank announced it would not abide by the Commission's findings. Rep. Lee's amendment passed, but not before being "watered down" somewhat. Despite the changes, the resulting legislation, if it becomes law, would be an unprecedented restriction on development loans for environmental reasons. This provision, too, is a significant warning sign for the World Bank.



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Final Thoughts . . .

Through all the organizing for the September mobilization and all the agony and turmoil of the September 11 attacks, we have tried to bear in mind at all times the need to stay the course. We know that children are dying of preventable and curable diseases at a pace hardly any different from when UNICEF estimated 19,000 such deaths every day. We know that environmental devastation grows daily in the service of quick profits for corporations. We know that debt servicing and the austerity programs it inspires continue to deny millions basic services, sustainable livelihoods, basic labor rights, and dignity.

We know, finally, that the commitment to, the thirst for, global justice has not been quenched, in the U.S. or anywhere else. Indeed, people in the U.S. can now more readily see the meaning and value of true solidarity. Just as people around the world have offered those in the U.S. their unreserved solidarity - despite all the harm done by the U.S. government and corporations - so, in turn, we believe that the extension of solidarity to others by people in the U.S. should become easier. Feeling more vulnerable than ever, people in the U.S., particularly those in the more privileged classes, may see more deeply into what

a life without security is like. We in the U.S. can, and must, expand our capacity to see people not as reflections of particular governments or as demographic statistics, but as individuals. We have new opportunities to look honestly at the injustice of the global economy, how we are implicated, and what we can do to make this world less unjust and less insane. U.S. activists too can now take the time to examine where they fit in the global movement for economic justice. Our role may for a time be less to attract the spotlight and more to support the movement in other countries, particularly the activists of the Global South. The movement for global justice that has been gaining momentum through protests, lobbying, and grassroots organizing did not die on September 11. It opened a new chapter, and one we will have to work hard to write, so that the moment's potential for progress is not sacrificed as the heat of war, of violence, threatens us all.

Njoki Njoroge Njehu and Soren Ambrose. 50 Years Is Enough Network staff

The October issue of the 50 Years Is Enough Network's newsletter, Economic Justice News, is now being mailed to subscribers. The articles are also on our website, at <http://www.50years.org/ejn/v4n3/>. If you would like to subscribe to the hard copy, please send \$25 for one year to:

Meeting ATTAC worldwide.

If you are interested in one of these rendezvous please click on <http://attac.org/rdv/>. Then select the country in which it will take place to find further information.

Wednesday 17 : France : PARIS 11 – PAU – ATTAC SORBONNE – LA CIOTAT – MARSEILLE – NICE – ORLEANS – MONTREUIL – CLERMONT FERRAND

Thursday 18 : France : CAEN – LILLE – MARSEILLE – RENNES – BORDEAUX – PARIS 13 – CLERMONT FERRAND

Friday 19 : AUSTRIA : WIEN / BELGIUM: GHENT / DEUTSCHLAND : BEWEGUNG / France : LILLE – LYON – TARBES

Saturday 20: AUSTRIA: WIEN / DEUTSCHLAND: BEWEGUNG / FRANCE: PARIS 11 – GORCY – FOIX – PARIS CENTRE – PERIGUEUX – ANGOULEME – CLERMONT FERRAND – LYON – AUBENAS – VINSOBRES / CANADA QUEBEC: MONTREAL / SVERIGE: UPPSALA

Sunday 21: DEUTSCHLAND: BEWEGUNG – BERLIN / FRANCE: PARIS 11 – GORCY – LYON - SAURIER

Monday 22: FRANCE: LA ROCHELLE – LYON – BURES SUR YVETTE - ORTHEZ

Tuesday 23: BELGIUM: BRUXELLES / FRANCE: PARIS 11 – LAVAL – MACON – LYON / SVERIGE: UPPSALA - NORRKOPING

Wednesday 24: AUSTRIA: WIEN / FRANCE: PARIS 11 – TOULOUSE – RENNES – LYON – CLERMONT FERRAND - AUCH