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Newsletter 83- page 1(1)  
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# Sand in the wheels

Weekly newsletter - n°83 – Wednesday 30 May 2001.

## THE RIGHT TO LIFE

### Content

#### 1- Funny Things

*The reality of corporate globalization is giving us a chance to laugh at our own expenses. At the same time the virtual world of magic and wonder of video games will allow the kids of suburban blocks to demonstrate in their room listening to one of the top ten rap music published by one of the major, let's say Universal Music which just bought MP3.com, the standard for free music on the net. Isn't this cool?*

#### 2- WTO Tidbits

*This week's Tidbits contains information on the GATS "Necessity test", on the pro's and con's of GMO labelling, on a dispute concerning lamb imports which opposes New Zealand and Australia to the US - and on what is intended as an epilogue to the EU-US banana dispute.*

#### 3- GATS & Democracy: an Australian viewpoint

*The GATS is a major assault on democratic processes around the world. Whereas the barriers to free trade in manufactured goods are largely tariffs, the barriers to trade in services are government laws and regulations. Existing laws and regulations will be open to challenge by any of our trading partners as 'being unnecessarily trade restrictive', and future laws and regulations will have to be framed in the 'least trade restrictive' way possible.*

#### 4- The Festival of Resistance in Ljubljana, Slovenia

*In two weeks Valdimir Putin and W Junior aka George Bush will meet in Slovenia. This event prepared with much enthusiasm by the government will be also an opportunity for some other type of demonstrations.*

#### 5- The Right to Life for all People

*Humanity is sharing some of the Earth wealth like water, air and so on. Nonetheless corporations are inventing new ways to make inequalities growth one of the main source of profit for themselves. It is time for us to realize our wealth and strike back. Life is not for sale and is not a simple gift, it is a right. This article analyzes this process*

### Funny things

By Laurent Jesover

Reality is often offering funnier example of a somewhat mad world than made-up jokes. As one of the temple of privatization and free market as the only way to the holly land, the London Stock Exchange, is going public finally in July 2001... at last you could say wandering why the priests didn't thought about this before, the English railroad companies are on a total different trip.

They have been privatized and made public already. They have cost the lives of few dozens

people. They have set the English commuters in a total different world, a bit like in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as far as punctuality is concerned and speed to reach the other city (London Liverpool train travel takes few seconds more than when the line opened a century ago, a study said). Their losses for the year in March are £307 millions. Well that's the complete opposite of last year £295 millions profit which has been shared among shareholders in the soon to be private Stock Exchange, meanwhile the public was fearing for its life. In fact the losses are due to track repairs after the October crash. But the company Railtrack is not going to ask its godly shareholders for efforts or patience but will simply ask the government, ie

the public as a whole, to pay the bill. They asked a £2.9 billion aid to pay a five-year program of repairs. Railtrack announced also to not infuriate its stock worshipers that it will help pay a dividend. Do not worry for the shares, invest in Railtrack and take the profit to buy a car.

Meanwhile in California the privatized energy system is making the bills go sky high and put some of the state cities in the dark from time to time. Well that is good for the shares also. The State and the Federal government are working on it to protect the value and maybe in the near future of 2005 reliable power to the people. And from the Silicon Valley or from one of its avatar, a new video game is to be released soon.

"In the game, the oppressive American Trade Organisation (ATO) has been trying to clamp down on the increasing resistance to their regime. The ATO has declared a state of emergency, and it is your job to ensure this goes on for as long as possible. Using your nose for violence, vandalism and disobedience, your character must smash his way through four cities, each containing 20 levels of mayhem.

The environment will be fully interactive, allowing you to loot stores and bomb cars. Your character will have access to weapons traditional and untraditional, including grenades, shotguns and flame-throwers as well as bricks, pipes, benches and, we are told, dismembered body parts. You may find yourself involved in brawls with up to 100 other people, and each character in the game is said to have their own reactions and behaviour in the face of violence."

Isn't this awesome? What a brave new world!...

Laurent Jesover  
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## WTO Tidbits

By the ATTAC work group on International Treaties

1)The European Union wants the GATS "necessity test" redefined

The necessity test is considered to be one of the key themes of the Work Group on Domestic Regulation, which is endeavouring to make progress on the "unfinished work" of the Uruguay Round as concerns establishing GATS rulings. The requirement contained in Art.VI/4 of the GATS, on

domestic regulation, has been the subject of an EU communiqué which expresses the need to redefine this clause. Art.VI/4(c) demands that where internal rulings covering requests for licences, technical norms and qualification requirements are concerned, disciplines should be introduced so that these internal rulings do not constitute "non-necessary" obstacles to trade in services. This concept is horizontal in nature, meaning that it can be applied to all sectors. To evaluate the trade impact of a domestic regulation coming under Art.VI/4, the EU brings in the concept of "proportionality", which it already uses in other fields. According to this principle, a particular measure should not be considered 'more than necessarily restrictive to trade' so long as it is proportionate to the long-term aim. It follows that, while the authorized degree of trade restriction depends on the importance of the particular aim pursued, the validity or otherwise of this political objective should not enter into consideration. In the language of the text, the description of a "necessity", according to the EU, should be: "no more cumbersome than necessary" or "no more restrictive than necessary", rather than "the least restrictive to trade". This last formula, according to the EU, "sets inconsiderate limits on the choice of available regulatory instruments."

2) Little progress on GMOs at the Codex

Meeting in Ottawa early in May, delegates made little progress on GMO labelling. In particular, they were unable to agree on whether the primary aim of labelling should be to help consumers make their choice (the position of the EU). Certain countries are opposed to labelling obligations that are based on the process of production (as is explained in a passage of the text which requires labelling of non-GMO foodstuffs when GMOs have been used in the process of production.) This lack of progress can be looked on as a US victory (the decision to suspend the debate was welcomed by the GMA – Grocery Manufacturers of America – and the food and agriculture industry.)

3)The EU prepares to make GMO labelling rules more stringent

Account will no longer be taken of exceptions made in the past for "substantially equivalent" GMOs (i.e. GMOs which do not differ significantly from their conventional counterparts in composition, nutritive value and use). Their ingredients must be clearly specified. The labelling of GMOs which are not substantially



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equivalent must contain information on their, possible impact on health, such as allergy risks, and take into account ethical and religious aspects. These rules will be completed by clauses on traceability.

#### 4) The US-EU banana dispute : epilogue

The Commission has just adopted a set of rules which attempts to apply the agreements concluded between the EU and the US, and the EU and Ecuador, bringing the banana dispute to a full stop. The new system provides for three types of quota : 83 % of licences will be delivered on the basis of the reference period 1994-96, while 17 % will be reserved for the newcomers to the European banana market. "This decision shows the Commission's determination to bring to a conclusion this matter which has dragged on and on." (F. Fischler, Agriculture Commissioner.) Meanwhile, EU officials met with Caribbean Prime Ministers from the Windward Isles to discuss reduction of production levels in the 4 states, Granada, Santa Lucia, Dominica, St Vincent. The Caribbean States consider the period of transition (until 2006) too short to prepare for a new system.

#### 5) The Dispute Settlement Body (DSB): New Zealand and Australia versus the US

The dispute concerns American safeguard measures against imported lambs from these two countries. The Appeal Chamber rejected a US appeal against the panel's decisions, the most important of which is based on the fact that the US has been unable to prove the existence of "unforeseen developments" (according to Art. XIX/1 (a) of the GATT). According to the Chamber, this existence is a premise which must be proven to justify the measure of safeguard. This measure consisted in a 3-year tariff quota, imposed after a 50 % rise in lamb imports between 1993 and 97. It had caused a surplus in the producer countries (which export 90 % of their production to the USA) and led to a 20 % drop in the market rate.

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### **GATS & Democracy: an Australian viewpoint**

by CloudCatcher

Now I know that most of us find all this stuff about the mechanics of trade unbelievably boring. But please bear with me, because it is important that we understand how the system works if we are to have any chance of changing it. Those of you who are following the trade debate closely will know that George W in the US is pushing very hard for 'fast track'. This fast-track authority, now re-named ``trade promotion authority" allows the president to negotiate trade agreements with foreign governments without their being subject to amendments by Congress. Congress' role is limited to a final yes-or-no vote. President Bush, Snr. had fast track at his disposal as did his predecessor, and this was of enormous assistance to the US in its negotiations on the setting up of the WTO in 1995. In 1997-98 (prior to the Seattle Ministerial) Fast Track was defeated by grassroots opposition, and getting it re-instated will be very difficult for the same reason.

Here in Australia, guess what? We have gone one better than the Americans and here in Australia, we have (and always have had) SUPER FAST TRACK. The trade negotiations here are carried out by bureaucrats in the Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Presumably, there is input into this process by the Minister of Trade, though details about this are sketchy. (And remember that it is the function of officials in DFAT to advise the relevant Minister) Those of you who were involved in the fight against the MAI will remember that when the MAI document was leaked and an inquiry was held, it was discovered that officials from the Treasury had been working on this MAI Treaty at the OECD for some years (which, incidentally, involved regular overseas travel to exotic European locations), and no-one in Government, from the Treasurer down, knew anything about it.

How true this is of trade negotiations at the WTO, we do not know. So DFAT does the negotiating and at the end of the negotiating process, the Trade Treaty must be tabled in Parliament for 15 sitting days. This does not mean that anyone in the Parliament actually READS the document...just that it is tabled. The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties examines all Treaties, including trade treaties, and can make recommendations. However the government is under no obligation to act on any of these recommendations. The Treaty then goes to Cabinet and is rubber stamped. At no time is there any Parliamentary debate on the contents of the Treaty, and the Parliament is not even given any opportunity to vote yes or no, never mind suggesting any amendments.



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Thus, here in Australia, the democratic process is by-passed and this may help to explain why there is so little public and media debate about these free trade Treaties which have such an enormous impact on the way we live and work in this country. It also helps to explain why successive governments have been able to take Australia further down the path of trade deregulation than almost any other country.

If you think that this is unacceptable, please think about contacting your Federal member and saying so.

But democracy is under threat (both here and around the world) from another source.

As you will see from the following article, the GATS is a major assault on democratic processes around the world. Whereas the barriers to free trade in manufactured goods are largely tariffs (and here I must note that Australia has cut tariffs more deeply than any other developed country...SUPER FAST TRACK in action), the barriers to trade in services are government laws and regulations. Existing laws and regulations will be open to challenge by any of our trading partners as 'being unnecessarily trade restrictive', and future laws and regulations will have to be framed in the 'least trade restrictive' way possible. Thus the GATS will shrink the legislative choices available to democratically elected governments around the world. (And remember this will apply to legislation at all levels of government--local, state and federal)

The following is from the UK, but is equally applicable here. Read on....

OBSERVER (London) Sunday April 15, 2001  
by Gregory Palast

Necessity test is mother of Gats intervention

The World Trade Organisation has plans to replace that outmoded political idea: democracy

Trade Minister Dick Caborn says 'nothing' all day, and this keeps him very, very busy. Caborn is busy reassuring the nation that nothing in the proposed General Agreement on Trade in Services (Gats) threatens Britain's environmental regulations. Nothing in Gats permits American corporate powers to overturn UK health and safety regulations. Nothing in Gats, which is part of the World Trade Organisation regime, threatens public

control of the National Health Service. The official statement of what Gats doesn't do goes on for pages and pages. So I've been perplexed by Caborn and his EU sidekick, Pascal Lamy, rushing to Geneva and Washington and God knows where else to argue over the wording of rules that do nothing, change nothing and mean nothing.

But then last week 'something' came through on my fax machine. And this confidential document from the WTO Secretariat, dated 19 March, is something indeed: a plan to create an international agency with veto power over parliamentary and regulatory decisions.

When Winston Churchill said that 'democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time' he simply lacked the vision to see that in March 2001, the WTO would design a system to replace democracy with something much better: Article VI.4 of Gats. And this unassuming six-page memo, now modestly hidden away in secrecy, may one day be seen as the post-democratic Magna Carta.

It begins by considering the difficult matter of how to punish nations that violate 'a balance between two potentially conflicting priorities: promoting trade expansion versus protecting the regulatory rights of governments'.

Think about that. For centuries Britain, and now almost all nations, has relied on elected parliaments, congresses, prime ministers and presidents to set the rules. It is these ungainly deliberative bodies that 'balance' the interests of citizens and businesses

Now kiss that obsolete system goodbye. Once Britain and the EU sign the Gats treaty, Article VI.4 of that treaty, the Necessity Test, will kick in. Then, as per the Secretariat's secret programme outlined in the 19 March memo, national parliaments and regulatory agencies will be demoted, in effect, to advisory bodies.

Final authority will rest with the Gats Disputes Panel to determine whether a law or regulation is, in the memo's language, 'more burdensome than necessary'. And Gats, not Parliament, will decide what is 'necessary'.

As a practical matter, this means nations will have to shape laws protecting the air you breathe, the trains you travel in and the food you chew by picking not the best or safest means for the



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nation, but the cheapest methods for foreign investors and merchants.

Let's get down to concrete examples. The Necessity Test has already had a trial run in North America via inclusion in Nafta, the region's free trade agreement. Recently, the state of California banned a petrol additive, MBTE, which has contaminated water supplies. A Canadian seller of the 'M' chemical in MBTE filed a complaint saying the rule failed the Necessity Test.

The Canadians assert that California could simply require all petrol stations to dig up their storage tanks and reseal them - and hire a swarm of inspectors to make sure it's done perfectly. The Canadian proposal might cost Californians a bundle and would be impossible to police.

That's just too bad. The Canadian proposal is the least trade-restrictive method for protecting the water supply. 'Least trade-restrictive' is Nafta's Necessity Test.

If California does not knuckle under, the US Treasury may have to fork out \$976 million in compensation to the Canadians.

The Gats' version of the the Necessity Test is Nafta on steroids. Under Gats, as proposed in the memo, national laws and regulations will be struck down if they are 'more burdensome than necessary' to business.

Notice the subtle change. Suddenly the Gats treaty is not about trade at all, but a sly means to wipe away restrictions on business and industry, foreign and local. So what 'burdensome' restrictions are sitting in the corporate cross-hairs? The US trade representative has already floated proposals on retail distribution. Want to preserve Britain's green belts? If some trees stand in the way of a Wal-Mart superstore, forget it. Even under the current, weaker, Gats, Japan was forced to tear up its own planning rules to let in the retail monster boxes.

The Government assures us that nothing threatens its right to enforce laws in the nation's public interest. Not according to the 19 March memo. The WTO reports that, in the course of the secretive multilateral negotiations, trade ministers agreed that a Gats tribunal would not accept a defence of 'safeguarding the public interest'.

In place of a public interest standard, the Secretariat proposes a deliciously Machiavellian

'efficiency principle': 'It may well be politically more acceptable to countries to accept international obligations which give primacy to economic efficiency.' This is an unsubtle invitation to load the Gats with requirements that rulers know their democratic parliaments could not otherwise accept. This would be supremely dangerous if, one day, the US elected a president who wanted to shred air pollution rules or, say, Britain elected a prime minister who had a mad desire to sell off the rest of his nation's air traffic control system.

How convenient for embattled chief executives. What elected congresses and parliaments dare not do, Gats would require. Under the post-democratic Gats regime, the Disputes Panel, those Grand Inquisitors of the free market, will decide whether a nation's law or a regulation serves what the memo calls a 'legitimate objective'.

While parliaments are lumbered with dated constitutional requirements to debate a law's legitimacy in public, with public evidence, and hearings open to citizen comment, Gats panels are far more efficient. Hearings are closed. Unions, as well as consumer, environmental and human rights groups, are barred from participating - or even knowing what is said before the panel.

Is the 19 March memo just a bit of wool-gathering by the WTO Secretariat?

Hardly. The WTO was working from the proposals suggested in yet another confidential document also sent to me by my good friend, Unnamable Source.

The secret memo, 'Domestic Regulation: Necessity and Transparency', dated 24 February, was drafted by the European Commission's own 'working party', in which the UK ministry claims a leading role.

In a letter to MPs, Trade Minister Caborn swears that, through the EC working party, he will ensure that Gats recognises the 'sovereign right of government to regulate services' to meet 'national policy objectives'.

Yet the 24 February memo, representing the UK's official (though hidden) proposals, rejects a nation's right to remove its rules from Gats jurisdiction once a service industry is joined to the treaty.





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Indeed, the EC document contains contemptuous attacks on nations claiming 'legitimate objectives' as potential 'disguised barriers' to trade liberalisation. Moreover, there is a codicil that regulation must not be 'more trade restrictive than necessary', ready for harvesting by the WTO Secretariat's free market fanatics.

Not knowing I had these documents in hand, Caborn's office this week maintained that Gats permitted nations a 'right to regulate to meet national policy objectives'.

I was not permitted to question the Trade Minister himself. However, the Caborn letter to MPs admits that his pleasant interpretation of Gats has not been 'tested in WTO jurisprudence'. This is, after all, the Minister who, with his EU counterparts, just lost a \$194 million judgment to the US over the sale of bananas.

Now, I can understand how Caborn goofed that one. Europe argued that bananas were a product, but the US successfully proved that bananas were a service - try not to think about that - and therefore fall under Gats.

And that illustrates the key issue. No one in Britain should bother with what Caborn thinks. The only thing that counts is what George W Bush thinks. Or, at least, what the people who think for Bush think. Presumably, Caborn won't sue the UK for violating the treaty. But the US may. In a way it already has. Forget Caborn's assurance - we need assurance from President Bush that he won't use Gats to help out Wal-Mart - or Citibank or Chevron Oil.

The odd thing is, despite getting serviced in the bananas case, Caborn and the Blair government have not demanded explicit language barring commerce-first decisions by a Gats panel. Instead, the secret 14 February EC paper encourages the WTO's Secretariat to use the punitive form of the Necessity Test sought by the US.

So there you have it. Rather than attack the rules by which America whipped Europe, Caborn and the EC are effectively handing George Bush a bigger whip.

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(ED: It should also be noted in this context that the Australian negotiators have supported a strengthening of the 'necessity' test.)

## The Festival of Resistance in Ljubljana, Slovenia

by Globala

16th of June, Ljubljana, Slovenia is going to host the American-Russian summit. The meeting of the president of the USA George Bush and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin is going to take place.

Slovene economical-political elite is greeting the decision to have the American-Russian summit in Ljubljana. For them this is an opportunity for Slovenia to show its achievements in the face of the whole world.

We also think that the summit is an ideal opportunity to show the achievements of their rule in Slovenia. These are:

- violations of the basic rights of foreigners and immigrants in Slovenia (concentration camps for illegal immigrants, shooting on immigrants at the border)
- system and police repression on subcultures and others minorities (sexual, cultural, ethnical)
- destruction of the social state and gradual diminution of labour rights in favour of the parasitic capital and its management
- acts that are aiming at preventing any possible resistance through corporative feudalism, through repressive measures in legislation and through strengthening of the police
- the establishment of the police state in the border areas which are becoming the impassable wall of the Europe-fortress
- aggressive ideological polarization of the society on the patriarchic-catholic camp and liberal camp. Latter proclaimed rights on the declarative level and denies them on the capillar level by the fascist administrative mechanisms and measures
- violent, backed by media, pushing into so called Euro-Atlantic integrations (NATO and EU), which has the aim to militarize the country, final destruction of the mechanism of the social state, liberalization of the labour market, restructuration of the agriculture into big complexes with the proletarianization of small peasants.

Particular episodes of repression are connected. We have to link singular struggles against



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domination and repression to bind them into the mosaic of refusal and collective desire for alternative meaning and aim of individual and collective existence. Against the power that organizes our experiences and relations in the direction of exclusion, inequality and hierarchy, we fight for experiences and relations that are going to live in potentiality, plurality and creativity.

We do not attack singular anomalies of the system. Through the engagement in the particular and local problems we are fighting against global logic of power, which works on micro and macro level. Bush and Putin are its most exposed representatives. Our desire is to open the new space for all those that are excluded from the existing power, to give them visibility and to start the process that is going to define new space of alternative relations and communications through the struggle against existing organisation and codification of flows and experiences.

We propose you to join us on the 16th of June in Ljubljana, to build a Festival of Resistance and to compose this mosaic of desire, creativity and freedom.

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## **The right to life for all people**

by Riccardo Petrella

Water, food and health

The unbearable

It is extraordinary that, at the beginning of the 21st century, and in spite of extraordinary growth of material richness, especially during the last 50 years, (the world's gross product has more than quadrupled) our societies are still confronted with the same problem as those of the end of the 19th century, namely how to guarantee human beings the right to drinkable water, a nutritious diet, access to health care and access to dwellings and education.

However, the difference from the 19th century is not lack of or insufficiency of resources but the inequality of distribution of the available resources and this is due to the structural, unsolidaric redistribution of the resources produced. In fact the more the distribution of the products is unequal and unsolidaric the more the access to

the production of riches is unequal. In the year 2001, the key figure of the human condition is: 2,7 milliard people out of 6 milliard "live" on less than 90 Belgian Francs income per day. Compare this with the fact that the income of the three richest people in the world is more than the income of the 47 poorest countries of the planet with their population of 6 million human beings. This is astonishing, and intolerable.

If one looks at the politics driven since the beginning of the 80's by the ruling classes of the so-called "developed" countries, and by the local rulers of most of the so-called "under developed" or "developing" countries, the level of tolerance for the intolerable by these élites is particularly high. Whether the question is access to drinking water, agricultural production for local consumption, health, these élites act according to their own interests ( economic well-fare, political power, military power of their state.) They have become accustomed to the growth of inequalities throughout the world these last 15 years.

If there hadn't been a strong reaction of the "victims" and of public opinion in the world, the 39 main pharmaceutical industries in the world would not have abandoned their claim that protection of intellectual property rights is more important than the right to health. As it is, on the basis of these claims, they managed for four years to prevent the application of a law passed in South Africa in 1997. None of the developed countries rose up and took legal or political measures to condemn the absurdity and the immorality of the interests defended by the pharmaceutical companies. The same with the most prestigious universities of the western world; no university authority made any public statement of censure.

How the powers that be respond to the unbearable  
Water

Water, like air, is the most fundamental natural element, indispensable for life. That is why water has such a fundamental importance for all life's manifestations of – even the most sophisticated computers require the purest of pure water for their production. There is no need to dwell on the links between water and food, water and health, food and health.

It is intolerable that 1,4 milliard people do not have access to drinking water; more than 2 milliards do not have access to sanitary services;



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more than 3 milliards do not benefit from any treatment of used water. It is intolerable that more than 15 million human beings die every year because of the lack of drinking water, among them three or four million children under the age of 12. It is intolerable that millions of young girls in Africa, Latin America and Asia don't go to school because they must fetch water for their families. It is intolerable that everywhere water tables are pillaged, devastated, polluted, contaminated by industry, mining and the too liberal use of water resulting from large dams. The state of health of streams, rivers and lakes is extremely poor – the Colorado River doesn't reach the sea any more. Neither does the Yangtze some parts of the year or a number of Indian rivers, which are also among the most polluted in the world.

The gravity of the global water situation was realised in 1977 at the first world conference on water at Mar del Plata by the UN. The World Water Decade (1981-90) proclaimed by the UN was a disappointment.

What was the response of the rulers of the developed countries and their followers the poor countries?

The response was founded on and still revolves around three linked and inseparable choices:

a) Priority is given to technological innovation. Technology is seen as the source of solutions: for instance, automation of the services for distribution and control, the chemistry of purification, the building of stations for purifying used water, improvement of irrigation techniques, big dams, desalination of sea water.

b) Commercialisation of water: Water is transformed into an economic resource that must be given an economic value, determined by the exchange on liberal markets and based on a function of so-called "fair price", established on the principal of recovering all the costs, including the risk of investments. This choice has been formally consecrated and accepted by the leading classes of the developed world in the famous Dublin Declaration of 1992. It is part of foundations of present water politics. Control over price fixing by the market is considered to be a strategic element in water politics. It will allow – we are assured – the prevention of waste and non-sustainable use in agriculture and industry, plus the struggle against pollution by detergents and other sources of pollution in domestic use.

c) Privatisation of the whole range of water services according to the predominant culture in the western world, and imposed on the rest of the world. According to this cultural supposition the administration of water services by private companies is necessarily more "efficient" than administration by a public service or company. Public authorities, both central and local, it is believed, are no longer financially capable of meeting the growing needs in this area. The future of public finances is of necessity to become more and more limited, and aimed at activities that neither private nor civil society can guarantee. The "real" problem is not to decide whether water services are guaranteed by the public or the private sphere, and by who decides such things as tariffs, prices, choice of investments by the water-using sector. These, it is claimed, will be effectively guaranteed in the most efficient manner... etc.

Obviously there are several positive elements in the solutions mentioned. On a global scale however, they end up either causing more harm than good, or they shift the costs onto the poorest and future generations. A clear example of the former is the privatisation of water in Great Britain and France, another is big dams. An example of the latter is the commercialisation and financing of water services by consumers, which favours the rich; this is contrary to the principle that water is a common good and the financing of the costs of services by the whole tax-paying base, which favours the poor.

The response to the intolerable, according to the principles and propositions of "The Water Declaration"

It must be articulated around two principle groups of measures and solutions. The first group concerns the area of principles, the second the field of action.

Principles are of fundamental importance because it is values, ideas, discussions, beliefs and objectives that stimulate action. It is urgent and indispensable to work for an agreement for an international plan for a global contract for water, affirming the following principles:

Water –as the fundamental and irreplaceable source of life - is a common good, the patrimony of humanity and all other forms of life in the Earth's ecosystem;



Access to water in sufficient quality and quantity is an unalienable social, individual and collective human right.

It is the duty of every person and every human community to use water in real solidarity with other persons and human communities on the planet and with future generations by putting into practice an effective intra-planetary and inter-generational democracy.

Every human being has the right to access to water. Financing the costs necessary for guaranteeing this right should be the responsibility of the collective, at the local, national international and global levels. It should not be left to market forces.

Water policy is not limited to the politics of managing an increasingly scarce resource. It is above all a policy of life, of living together, a policy of solidarity and of sustainable development.

Global water policy will be participatory, solidaric and durable or it won't exist at all. In this negative case it will be an instrument put into the service of a global market that is competitive, exclusive and that confiscates the right to life of the majority of human beings.

As for the field of action, the following points are urgent and indispensable:

Abandon the industrial system of agriculture, with its high intensity of chemicals and technology, since this system is the principal cause of the devastation of soil, water and rural life that we have seen the last 40 years. This system is causing a profound crisis in life systems, specifically the system soil-water-food –health. Linked to this is the question of redefining irrigation systems throughout the world;

Redirect the modes of consumption of the developed countries and the system of production and administration of losses by coherent policies. Change the energy system for better prevention of

wastage and non-sustainable uses. This will require, among other things, water tariffs inspired by the principles of "forbidden uses of water", a principle that is, contradiction to the principle "polluter pays", which is inadequate and mystifying;

Oppose the present movement towards privatisation of water services; these should remain within the public domain. The British and French experiences shows that, privatisation, though not quite the devil in person, is not a good response. It is not a response that favours the development of the will and the search for "living together" and for a durable basis for the right to life of every human being. In this perspective it is also important and wise to call into question the marketing/privatisation of mineral waters. It would be a good thing to put into practise the rules, the institutions and the means to share water between those human communities that lack water resources, by non-market systems of transport.

-Show a capacity for innovation on the level of engineering policies, principally on the global level by

+ The creation of a world water authority with legal and "juridical" authority ( a sort of authority for the resolution of conflicts):

+The establishment of a global fiscal system (system of global taxation) capable of guaranteeing an adequate financial base for financing the above objectives, that is, guaranteeing access to water for the life of every human being.

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First published in the Courriel d'information 235  
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