

Anti-free market anger killed the WTO summit

by Jeffrey Steinberg, Marcia Merry Baker, and Harley Schlanger

Not the much-publicized riots, but the growing hatred of “free-market” destruction of nations, defeated the World Trade Organization attempt for a new round of economic globalization. The Nov. 30-Dec. 3 summit in Seattle, which was intended to set a framework for a three-year round of negotiations for more trade liberalization, ended without even a face-saver communiqué of “agreement-to-disagree.” Right from the opening day, the mood among many of the delegations of the 100 nations present, particularly from the developing sector, was as pointedly anti-free trade as the policies being voiced outside on the streets by the AFL-CIO’s 30,000 person march. On site for the WTO Seattle week, *EIR* correspondents Marcia Merry Baker and Harley Schlanger will have an in-depth report in the next issue.

All of the repeated praise for the benefits of “rules-based trade,” the latest pitch-phrase for more globalization, by WTO Director-General Mike Moore and U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshevsky, the conference chairman, went nowhere. The underlying reality of the proceedings was that globalization is on the way out: Developing nations reject the wholesale looting of their raw materials and the enslavement of their workers; western Europe rejects the pressures to end the right to domestic farm support programs; and in the United States, a groundswell of Americans is building against the loss of productive jobs and decline in real purchasing power.

“I don’t know if there is a chance of restarting the negotiations in weeks or even in months,” said Gregor Kreuzhabeer, a spokesman for the European Union. At a plenary late on the final day, representatives of African nations booed Barshevsky. Moore ended as a laughing-stock. As the Dec. 4 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported, “WTO Director-General Mike Moore described the Seattle meeting as ‘a remarkable meeting. Much was done. That will not be lost.’ And then in re-

marks that provoked derisive laughter from the delegates, some of whom had been mauled on Tuesday trying to get into the convention center, he said, ‘This city, what a magnificent place. If only the world could be like Seattle.’ ”

‘Battle in Seattle’ called a tragedy

What truly did give the Third World delegates happiness in Seattle, they said, was to see the large protest on U.S. streets, especially the labor march, because it showed that not everyone in the United States is behind globalization. On Dec. 2, a group of nations, led by Guyana Foreign Minister Clement Rohee and Caribbean Community negotiator Dr. Shridath Ramphal (former Secretary of the British Commonwealth), held a press conference to say that all the talk of “transparency” has proven to be “hypocrisy and poppycock,” as they were excluded from playing a meaningful role in negotiations.

What the delegates stressed was the *impoverishment* of their nations from the recent years of globalization. In particular, they rejected as a sop, a look-good proposal, pushed especially hard by British Trade Minister Stephen Byers, for a WTO “LDC Initiative”—the idea that 48 least-developed nations could have duty-free access to industrialized nations’ markets for their exports.

On Dec. 2, Minister Rohee said that the talk of aid to the poorest 48 nations makes little sense, if those nations are excluded from working out agreements. He said that rather than the title of “Battle of Seattle”—the name the press has given to the WTO conference, referring to the eco-fascist/police riots on the streets—the conference should be called the “Tragedy of Seattle.” Rohee told *EIR* that pressure to collect unpayable debt is one area they wish to discuss, adding that there will be no development of the poorest nations unless there is debt relief and new credit. Selling agricultural prod-

ucts cheaply to open markets will not provide income to the poorest nations to develop, he stressed.

Just who does support free trade?

On their own account, officers of some of the cartel companies now dominating world trade were prominent at events held at hotels alongside the WTO sessions in the Seattle Convention Center. Their very presence further served to expose the Big Lie underlying the entire WTO free-trade agenda. Chief among the globalization boosters on hand were Ernest Micek, the chairman of Cargill, the world's biggest grain cartel, who demurred, "We control only 25% of the world grain trade"; and Ken Lay, chairman and CEO of Texas-based Enron, an aggressor-company in U.S. energy futures speculation.

To further the pretense that free trade has "popular support," U.S. Secretary of State "Mad" Madeleine Albright had a frenzied round of meetings Nov. 29 and 30 (when the tear gas cleared), in order to say she had backing from labor, farm, business, and local governments. She even did a whistle-stop-over in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to meet with farmers, and workers at Rockwell Collins, in order to lie, "Americans love free trade." In Seattle, she saw officials from Bethlehem Steel, General Motors, United Parcel Service, Chubb Insurance, and others of the Business Roundtable. She met the governors of Utah, Idaho, Iowa, and North Dakota. She met with AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and with George Becker, the president of the United Steelworkers of America—both of whom are decidedly anti-WTO.

Albright was made to look particularly foolish, when, after her scheduled opening speech to the WTO meeting was cancelled due to the street mayhem which trapped her in her hotel suite, the State Department nevertheless circulated the text of the speech she intended to give, featuring such phrases as, "As I look into all your eyes. . . ."

The truth is, that the WTO agenda aims to write out sovereign nation-state governments from any meaningful role in defending the conditions of life—the general welfare—of the working populations of their countries. Instead, greater power is handed to the mythical "global marketplace"—a euphemism for the growing power of a handful of strategic raw materials cartels and mega-financial houses bent on new forms of colonialism.

President Clinton spent 30 hours in Seattle, as the apostle of free trade, but left the convention with the unmistakable impression that the United States cannot politically survive another round of globalization deregulation. AFL-CIO President Sweeney, in a Dec. 1 statement, proclaimed, "Working families won a significant victory on the streets of Seattle yesterday when union members joined human rights advocates, students and young workers, environmental activists, and religious leaders in the largest public protest in the history of this great working-class city." Sweeney said that President Clinton "understood that the terms of the debate over trade have changed," and he quoted Machinists president Tom

Buffenbarger, who said, "We've never had this kind of reaction from any government agency before, especially the White House." Sweeney concluded, "Clearly, there is no popular support for the policies of the WTO, and we will continue to press and to protest for change."

Terrorism unleashed

The repudiation of globalization would have been far more evident, were it not for the fact that a small, but highly organized terrorist apparatus conducted a string of premeditated actions. By the end of the first day of the conference, the downtown area around the convention center had been trashed, police had responded with tear gas, and Seattle Mayor Schell had imposed a dawn-to-dusk curfew, and established a 24-hour "no protest zone" perimeter. By the end of the week, more than 600 were arrested.

EIR's investigation into the pre-planned riots revealed tight coordination between London-based eco-terrorists from "Reclaim the Streets" and U.S. and Canadian eco-terrorists from Earth First! and allied organizations. For one month prior to the WTO event, terrorists from all three countries had been running training camps in Arlington, Washington. Bloody riots in the City of London in June, and in Eugene, Oregon later during the summer, had been dry runs for Seattle.

As *EIR* has documented, these eco-terrorists are controlled from the top down by the upper echelons of the British financial oligarchy and the British Crown. Royal Consort Prince Philip was one of the founders of the eco-terrorist movement, and Imperial Chemical Industries heir Lord Melchor is a chief money-bags for the eco-terrorists who appeared in Seattle.

That the highest levels of the British oligarchy are simultaneously peddling free trade and globalization, and bankrolling and deploying legions of eco-terrorists, is neither contradictory nor surprising. WTO Director-General Moore, who came into office on Sept. 1, is a member of the British Privy Council. The actions of the trained terrorists aimed to discredit all those legitimate constituency groups that came to Seattle to peacefully protest the devastating consequences of globalization.

U.S. political blowback

The fiasco in Seattle will have big consequences for the 2000 Presidential elections. Vice President Al Gore, whose endorsement by the AFL-CIO was rammed through by Sweeney and other labor leaders, did not dare show his face at the WTO. But he will likely be one of the big losers of the week. A Sweeney lieutenant is reported as saying, "John went out on a limb for them with that letter of endorsement [of the Clinton stand on WTO], and they sawed it off on him. . . ." And the worse it looks for Al Gore, the worse things look for George "Dubya" Bush. Seattle may prove to have been an historic watershed, but not the watershed for the new globalization that the WTO planners had envisioned.