

On Friday night and Saturday, November 26th and 27th the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) held a Teach-In at Benaroya Symphony Hall in Seattle on the subject of Economic Globalization and the Role of the WTO. The following is a hypertext transcript of Vandana Shiva, seventh speaker in Friday night's event discussing "The Multiple Impacts of Economic Globalization". She was introduced by the Acting Director of the IFG, Jerry Mander. In the real player recording of this available on the web, the following begins at 2 hours, 34 minutes, 42 seconds and runs up to 3 hours, 3 minutes, 29 seconds.

The ratitor *urges one-and-all* to join the IFG. It's Board of Directors and Associates comprise a unique and unparalleled-in-the-life-of-our-time collaboration of research, intelligence, and concern, magnificently articulated by scholars, writers, academics, scientists, farmers, geneticists, businesspeople, and lawyers. By joining this collective, we support the further expansion of life's needs and thus become more infused with the energy to serve and honor all the life expressing itself throughout our planetary home.

The order form for the cassette tape recordings of this entire Teach-In is available at <http://www.ifg.org/tof4.html>. **They are magnificent.** Vandana Shiva's essay, "War Against Nature and the People of the South" from the new publication by the IFG, *Views from the South*, is also highly recommended. *Everyone* is urged to purchase these resources from the IFG. Listen to the tapes multiple times, study and scrutinize *Views From the South*, learn what they articulate, share with your friends. The information in these publications is *extremely valuable!!!*

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## The Global Campaign Against Biopiracy and Changing the Paradigm of Agriculture

Vandana Shiva speaking at the Seattle IFG Teach-In  
11/26/99

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Next we have Vandana Shiva. Vandana is a physicist, and a philosopher of science. But the most amazing thing about Vandana is that she is in so many places of the world at exactly the same time. Her energy is astounding and she is a leading figure in *so many movements* that I can barely keep track. She's a leading battler against biotechnology, especially in its dire uses in the Third World, she's a leading battler for agricultural rights and for the rights of small farmers and for the survival of indigenous farmers in India, she's also a leading feminist, and she has written a dozen books while flying around in airplanes, also. On top of that she's a co-director of the International Forum on Food and Agriculture, which is part of the IFG and her books include *Monoculture of the Mind*, *Biotechnology and the Environment* and *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*. She's the head of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology in New Delhi, and Science Advisor to the Third World Network and she's great.

I have a very simple thesis about globalization. That it's come in three waves: the first time it lasted 500 years, the next time, as "development" or maldevelopment, it lasted fifty years, and *this* phase has lasted just five. And it couldn't have lasted longer because it was not about free trade. When the WTO was institutionalized -- and they keep calling it a natural phenomena -- it was only after having to bully and bully and bully for seven years culminating in the Uruguay Round, the WTO is about forced trade, and we live it *every day*.

It's forced trade rules written in the area of Agriculture by Cargill and in the area of Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) by Monsanto and its fellow corporations. They even admitted -- a Monsanto spokesman said after the Uruguay Round was completed -- "We've achieved something unprecedented in history. We defined the problem. We took it to our government. We then took it to the Secretariats in Geneva" -- which then pushed it on other governments -- "We were the patient, the diagnostician and the physician all-in-one."

And that's the reason the rules of WTO keep ruling against people and the environment and *always* ruling for corporations and for commerce.

The costs to us have been huge in these five years. We were forced to open our seed supply to the global seed business, the global seed merchants. They're not seed producers -- they make the farmers produce seed. They just package it and patent it. And in five years we have seen Indian peasants, the most resilient of people in the world, pushed into suicides because of debts caused by purchasing hybrid seeds every year, the pesticides that are linked to them, and credit that comes from the same companies that sell the seeds and the pesticides.

It's also often said that the WTO is about "competitiveness." [Listener far away from the podium bursts out with laughter.] We can laugh even louder. Because it seems to be a strange kind of competition in which the biggest corporations of the world want to compete-out the smallest peasant, every butterfly and every bee and every element of biodiversity. And I'm not joking about this. In 1992, when we had protests against the entry of Cargill in India, John Hamilton who used to head Cargill-India said, "These Indians are foolish. They don't understand. We are preventing the bees from usurping the pollen."

In the many many years of negotiations that have gone on during the Biosafety Protocol (in which Tewolde of course has played such a leading role) Monsanto put out a document in which it said, "The reason the world needs Roundup-Ready crops is because herbicide tolerance prevents the weeds" -- which for us is biodiversity -- "from stealing the sunshine."

They are building a world in which every diversity of life is a thief from *some source* of making profit for them. Biodiversity "steals" the sunshine, the bees "usurp" the pollen and the farmers "steal" when they save seed.

There's a letter that's going around among your farmers. We've had protests for five years. I'm waiting for the year 2000 when similar protests will start in this country. Because we would never allow a corporation to send letters like this to our farmers. It says 'Dear Mr. So-and-so Farmer somewhere in the U.S., You may have heard about recent investigation in your area concerning farmers, or others helping farmers, to illegally save and re-plant seed. Saving and replant seed is seed piracy.' In India, to *not save seed*, and to *not* replant seed, is sin. To save seed is our highest moral duty. And it has been for *every* agricultural society.

Monsanto's letter goes on to say, 'We recognize the vast majority of farmers, retailers, and other agriculture professionals, are honest business people.' They wouldn't be able to apply that categorization to themselves because we know how *they* function. It says, 'However in an effort to maintain a level playing field we invite you' basically, 'to tell on your neighbors. Ring up 1-800-Roundup.'

And then they give a list, including a grower in Iowa who was fined \$16,000 for saving seed, two Indiana growers, a David Shanie (sp?). And just yesterday I met Percy Schmyser (sp?), a Saskatchewan farmer who hadn't even *bought* seed from Monsanto. Monsanto's herbicide-resistant genes had invaded his field as a *pollutant*. Monsanto came to him and said, 'You're a thief, you're stealing our genes.' He said, 'No, you're the polluters. I'll sue you back.'

*Everything* in globalization and trade liberalization *could have been achieved* by the kind of coercion that's built into the IMF and the World Bank. I believe the *one aspect* that the IMF and World Bank could never have achieved is establishing this new form of empire-over-life through genetic engineering and patenting.

The Chief of Dupont recently said that 'In the 20th century chemical companies made most of their products with non-living systems. In the next century we will make many of them with living systems.' That doesn't mean they'll stop using chemicals. It just means they'll make the chemicals *and* they'll start manipulating living systems.

The possibility to turn this into a monopoly started with an error in 1980. An error that has been quoted by the United States in trying to kill the review of the Aspects of the World Trade Organization Treaty on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) that India, Africa and the Central American countries are saying should be totally reformed. TRIPs should be totally reformed to exclude patents on life forms and to stop biopiracy. The patenting of the Neem, that gives pesticide, Aromatic Rice, Basmati, and if I started to read out the names of our pirated plants and the knowledge of our mothers and grandmothers, I'd make you drop off to sleep.

In 1980 the first patent on life was given and it's been quoted as a "momentous decision" in changing the understanding of what is patentable and what is not. When a scientist at General Electric put genes from four bacteria together he said he just "shuffled genes around". The first time around the U.S. Patent Office turned that application down. But the Supreme Court ruled that this could be treated as a new manufacture and a new constitution of matter.

The economies of the 21st century were being built on a metaphysics that has died in the 17th: That matter is dead, and life forms are merely atomistic constitutions of dead matter. It is not an accident that there is constant regression in this period where the *one reference*, where the *one phrase* that is *constantly* used in debates on genetic engineering, particularly from the U.S., is the need for "Sound Science".

Their sound science is imagining that life forms are machines and dead matter; imagining that when you put scorpion genes into cabbage, or you make Roundup-Ready crops, or you put Bt toxin into crops that start to kill the Monarch butterfly, that you are making *absolutely natural* products.

This of course, to me is *very, very basic and very fundamental* ontological schizophrenia. Because when it comes to taking a patent claim on that same entity, they say, 'Absolutely novel, never existed before, not like nature, nature couldn't have made it.' And when it comes to taking responsibility and *owning* the pollution and the hazards that *result* from that manipulation, they say, 'Exactly like nature made it.'

This week in Seattle we're going to see *every one* of these contradictions played out. I think our strength is the fact that we have truth on our side, we have science on our side, we have other beings on our side and we have our selves on our side.

The other great myth about the World Trade Organization is that it's supposed to end

protectionism. For me, the rules of WTO are the *highest form* of protectionism because they are giving protection to activities and entities that should not exist. In fact the one thing that has been achieved through the WTO is the protection of the *biotech* corporations, which now call themselves the "life sciences" corporations -- though every thing they do is anti-life. The entire empire over life that the life sciences corporations are building is based on a protectionism in the form of monopoly rights of ownership through patenting and intellectual property rights over life. It's also protectionism in the form of protecting the corporations from bearing the responsibility and liability of the costs they generate for people and the environment.

Americans citizens have always taken pride in being the most informed and having the right to information laws and having a democracy, but for the last decade you've really been had. Because they've managed to plant 60% of your acreage with genetically-engineered crops and you didn't even know. They managed to feed you GMOs that the Europeans are refusing to eat, and you didn't know.

You didn't know because in 1992 after years of work, when we were finalizing elements in the Convention on Biological Diversity that would ensure that the biotechnology industry would be made accountable, President Bush refused to sign this convention, came back and introduced this fascinating policy that said, Treat genetically-engineered foods exactly like normal, natural foods.

This policy of not *looking* for ecological hazards and health hazards generated wonderful ignorance. Then that ignorance was used to say, There's no hazard. It was treated as proof of safety. *That* is now being called the "sound science" which the rest of the world is supposed to follow. In fact I read in the newspapers that President Clinton was giving a speech in Arkansas where he said, 'We're going to convince those Europeans that they should practice sound science and then this GMO thing will go away.' Well, we'd like to inform President Clinton -- who is *absolutely identical* in terms of his decisions to President Bush before him -- that this GMO thing isn't going to go away. It's not going to go away until the *GMOs* go away from our farms and our food-chains.

In small villages across the length and breadth of India now you see little placards, placards that the WTO negotiators will never get to see, which say "This village is a GE-free, patent-free, chemical-free zone." And in fact those are the *kinds* of villages where *aren't* committing suicide.

We also have a tremendous movement for the reclamation of democracy in terms of a Living Democracy. Embracing all life forms based on *our* everyday life in the situations where we live. Not on the basis of decisions made by invisible bureaucrats whose names you never know, whose decisions are made *only* on the logic of how to help the corporations expand their markets.

This movement for Living Democracy -- the last count I had when I was home was 2,500 villages -- they've been sending letters to all the companies that have engaged in biopiracy. To Grace that patented Neem, to RiceTec that patented Basmati, to Monsanto which has brought species patents on crops that it didn't evolve though it claims to have created them. We also sent letters to Mike Moore.

Mike Moore actually started to send letters back to the villagers. They're very interesting because these letters were written on 28th October -- very soon after the negotiation on the TRIPs review (the review of the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights agreement). Mr Moore was basically saying, 'You know I'm really a nobody in this game because *125 countries* decided to adopt TRIPs, democratically.' I know, because *every one* of our negotiators who *resisted* the Intellectual Property Rights enforcement on the U.S. model was basically removed through pressure.

It was not even a U.S. *administration* decision. It was the decision of the Intellectual Property Rights committee, that coalition of corporations, who then imposed it on the U.S. government which then imposed it down the chain. That is *not a collective, democratic decision*. It was corporate dictatorship. And it's corporate dictatorship which is now trying to enclose the very freedom-of-life on this planet. In generating scarcity, it sees growth. In making it impossible for peasants to save seed, for farmers to save seed, it sees the \$750 billion additional markets in seed-supply.

This is not an economy based on growth. It's an economy based on theft; theft from nature, theft from the poor, theft from women, theft from indigenous people, theft from ordinary people around the world. *And we have to stop this theft.*

While Mr. Mike Moore was writing to us and telling us WTO was a *member-driven, democratic organization*, he was having a Green-room discussion with the U.S. and Europe to try and block the demands of the African region, India and Central America, to exclude patents on life and to stop biopiracy.

The U.S. submission on this issue within the WTO is fascinating. The United States basically says, We don't agree that there should be exclusion of patents on life because we've made lots of money through this and other countries should learn. It goes on to refer to that very very fallacious step in 1980 when the first patent on life was given on the basis of gene shuffling.

Now that's like, tomorrow when you go away for your panel discussion at the Seattle Arts Museum you carry a chair with you. And then you claim that carrying the chair made you the architect of the building, and therefore the owner. We don't allow movers to be treated as architects and owners of property. But in the case of the most *fundamental dimensions of life*, we have *allowed* those fallacious steps. *Nobody* in this country reacted with the scale in which we could have stopped it *before* the Uruguay Round was completed. But it is time for us *now* to start the work.

On the issue of stopping biopiracy the United States says, This idea that every time there's a patent claim that we should provide information of where the genetic material came from or where the *knowledge* came from is going to be *very very* difficult. For them to create rules and police individual farmers for seed-saving, *that* is not difficult. But to just to *acknowledge* prior innovation is a very difficult process.

Then the U.S. government continues to suggest that the best thing to do for Third World countries is to sign *contracts* with those who take their material. To me it's like, your house is being burgled and you ring up the police and the police says, Just write a contract with the

burglar. Let him take 90% -- let him give you 1% of what he burgled. That's good benefit sharing!

Or even worse, it's like a woman who's been raped being told, Write a contract with the rapist. Biopiracy is the rape of our biodiversity, our intellectual and cultural heritage. It is a rape of a *very very* fundamental kind that goes back into the past, exists in the present and goes into the future. The WTO *rules* legitimize this rape. And the current negotiations, standing where they are, protect that rape. They're protecting the rapist.

The present rules are basically high-tech rules for slavery. It's just new kinds of slavery. But it is *worse* than the slavery on which this nation's prosperity was built. It is worse because *this* time it is enslaving *all* life -- not just human.

We have to put an end to this slavery like we put an end to that last one. For the liberation of all species, for the liberation of all producers, for all the liberation of all consumers, rich and poor, who are being force-fed foods they don't know production processes of, we need to start changing fundamentally both the rules and the structure of this institution that meets here and that has brought us together here. We need to liberate food and agriculture from the Agreement on Agriculture. We need to liberate *life-forms* from the Intellectual Property Rights Agreement.

That is why this wonderful team that has come together through the IFG has taken on the challenge through the International Forum on Agriculture to start, not just changing the *rules* within the WTO, but starting to change the *paradigm* of agriculture. Because our actions have taught us, it is the extent to which we are effective in our everyday lives we are effective in changing the rules of the game.

This is why we must also start to change the laws of this country that are the model laws for the WTO and are being forced on the rest of us. In this week we will together launch the Global Campaign Against Biopiracy. I invite everyone of you to be an active citizen to change the U.S. patent laws, particularly Article 102 that *allows* that piracy. For you to dismantle Special 301 of your Trade Act that *allows your government* to constantly threaten *our governments* to force us to implement laws that are still under negotiation.

Even while the fate of TRIPs is being negotiated through the review, *every one* of our countries is being forced by the United States government to ensure that the TRIPs, that *should be changed and reformed*, is implemented by the end of December 1999.

Our call during this week should be for a freeze on *any* liberalization of agriculture while we work on methods to *reclaim* our control over our food and agriculture systems. We should have a freeze on all commercialization of GMOs and if *you* can begin your work here we will all be saved.

We need a freeze on the *implementation* of TRIPs even while we get rid of the deep perversions in the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement that is claiming that corporations that steal are the new creators of this beautiful planet and its beautiful richness. Thank you.

Tape recordings of IFG Teach-Ins are produced by Maria Gilardin's TUC Radio. As Maria explains, "When looking for a name, I came across a pilot's handbook and found the acronym TUC, an aeronautical term. 'Time of Useful Consciousness' is the time between the onset of oxygen deficiency and the loss of consciousness. These are the brief moments in which a pilot may save the troubled plane."

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