

ratitor's corner

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Lessons at the Edge of the World

Today, the Sun, appearing to travel along the ecliptic, reaches the point where it crosses the equator into the southern celestial hemisphere. Today day and night are of equal length.

Today rat haus reality completes its fifth revolution around SOL and begins its 6th cycle. This is the first ratitor's corner since the December 1999 Solstice, recounting my time in Seattle during the WTO "Millenium Round" Minsterial. i'd like to use this moment to share some thoughts about recent events and some of the latest additions.

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Learning from the Sea

Since July i have once again adopted the practice of walking in the surf on the ocean beach every day i can in the pre-dawn morning and while the sun is spun past the evening's horizon. What is taken in by the senses through the smells, sounds, temperature, color, water's force, foam, swishing sand, dancing light off the ocean's surface, pelicans and other seafaring birds, otters, seals and porpoises, kelp and other plants informs my being as only sensible awareness can impart.

A primary lesson received while immersed in this space at the edge of the world has come from taking in the water. It swirls up the sand over my feet and lower legs with each wave's advance and then exhausts its momentum and falls back into its infinitely replenishable source. When standing still, as the water recedes, sand is hollowed out beneath the "uphill" part of the feet, causing me to sink as much as 4 or 5 inches in a soft bowl of "liquid sand".

The dancing waves communicate many things. Each is a tapestry including the shape of its undulating form and utterly dynamic surface, painted with the texture and infinite figures

created by its foam as well as the secondary waves that move in other directions besides the primary vector. Especially entrancing is when two outside "arms" curve in to the center, creating curling, rising surges as they meet. Following the water's magnificent motion, especially in the surges as well as the final phase when what water is left rushes back into the next coming wave, i am transported by the motion and power of the dance occurring all around.

Much sand is lifted up and carried within each wave. At one point i was struck by this fact and how in each wave so much change occurs in each and every moment: sand moving all the time, constantly changing the very composition of the beach, including the hermit crabs and all that dwell within the sand, as well as all that is in the water that interacts with the sand and the dwellers there. And from this, the sense of how reflective of life this constant dance is. Everything within and without each of us is changing *all the time*.

Yet an underlying assumption of the manner in which we *think* presents being, and the world, as if things are static, fixed, stationary, unchanging. In our epoch, we confront enormous incoherence with our intellect and common sense wisdom every day. Part of the challenge we face is appreciating how fluid and "up for grabs" *everything* is.

If one chooses to rely primarily on corporate media for information about what is happening in the world, the outlook will appear grim. This reflects the fact that corporate media sources do not serve the general welfare and the common good. Like all corporate institutions, the purpose of corporate media is to financially serve and benefit their stockholders.

The following are just a few of the many, *many* situations requiring "grassroots sourcing" to better apprehend the facts concerning what is occurring and implications for positively addressing these circumstances. Check out the new "front-page" look at the top of *the ratville times* to see an experiment we're conducting, presenting some of the world's current events in such an associative format.

Hanging in the Balance . . . **U.S. Vietnamization of Columbia**

i received the Witness For Peace Summer/Fall Newsletter in August and was especially struck by two articles, "Columbia: A Call to Witness", and "An Urgent Message From Our Columbian Partners." i was touched very deeply by the evocation of our common, shared humanity and coherent acknowledgement of what people there are facing, communicated in these two pieces as well as throughout the newsletter.

The current situation is as follows:

On July 13th President Clinton signed Public Law 106-246, which included \$1.3 billion in aid to Colombia. The bulk of this aid is for Colombia's military. Section 3201 of the law establishes specific human rights conditions for military assistance to Colombia.

As required by law, the State Department held consultative meetings with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in both Washington, D.C. and Bogotá, Colombia. On August 17 and 18, various human rights organizations, including the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International, met with officials of the State Department and other US governmental departments and agencies in Washington, D.C. to discuss Colombia's

compliance with these conditions.

The following [Colombia Certification] document outlines the evidence presented jointly by WOLA, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. All three organizations concluded that there was overwhelming evidence demonstrating that Colombia has not met these conditions.

On August 22, 2000, President Clinton invoked Section 4 of the law, waiving the human rights conditions on the grounds of U.S. national security interests. We deplore this decision.

In this report, we set out each of the human rights conditions mandated by Congress and then review the record of the Colombian government and military.^[1]

Citing "national security interests" to justify discounting and ignoring documented human rights abuses and violations demonstrates anew the terrible incoherence of this all-too-common brand of "U.S. Foreign Policy." The rubric of "national security" serves more than anything else to euphemistically gloss over and cover up what it truly represents: protecting the financial investments of U.S. transnational corporate activities. The "Vision For 2020" document of the U.S. Military's United States Space Command does not engage in such mincing of words: "US Space Command -- dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment." Thus, translating the euphemistically glossy "national security" mantra, U.S. interests and U.S. investment are simply one-in-the-same. This process must change. It will change when enough people decide it is time to once again assert that human needs come before personal gain.

Last February Human Rights Watch released a report entitled, "The Ties That Bind: Colombia and Military-Paramilitary Links":

Human Rights Watch here presents detailed, abundant, and compelling evidence of continuing close ties between the Colombian Army and paramilitary groups responsible for gross human rights violations.

This information was compiled by Colombian government investigators and Human Rights Watch. Several of our sources, including eyewitnesses, requested anonymity because their lives have been under threat as a result of their testimony. . . .

Together, evidence collected so far by Human Rights Watch links half of Colombia's eighteen brigade-level army units (excluding military schools) to paramilitary activity. These units operate in all of Colombia's five divisions. In other words, military support for paramilitary activity remains national in scope and includes areas where units receiving or scheduled to receive U.S. military aid operate.^[2]

It was the "Columbia: A Call to Witness" piece that most affected me and galvanized my resolve to craft *some* sort of section in the *ratville times* to call attention to this terrible, murderous mis-use of tax dollars to support and further subsidize U.S. multinational corporate raping of that land and its people.

. . . Colombia is mired in a 40 year-old civil war with three factions. . . . Add to this entrenched conflict the production and marketing of drugs, the trade which funds both guerrilla and paramilitary activities.

Against this backdrop, the US Congress voted in late June to provide over \$ 1 billion in aid to Colombian President Andres Pastrana's national development plan, "Plan Colombia". . . .

In the context of the current situation in Colombia, the most important thing to understand about the US aid package is this: every single Colombian organization with which we met was certain that the aid would only escalate the conflict in the country. . . .

The "push into southern Colombia," a cornerstone of the US aid package, ignores the fact that an estimated 40% of the country's coca cultivation takes place under paramilitary control in northern Colombia. . . . Subsequent aerial spraying of the region will contaminate the land and water to the point of making present or future agricultural production impossible.

Combined, these tactics will force thousands from their land and their homes. NGO

estimates of displacement run as high as 300,000. The US government expects (and has budgeted for) the displacement of 15,000 people from the south. With southern Colombia thus deserted and desertified, the region will be ripe for "investment" by multinational corporations (MNCs).

In just what will MNCs invest? One needs only to look at a Colombian geography textbook for the answer. Southern Colombia is home to a sizable percentage of the country's undeveloped oil fields. If this were not evidence enough, consider this: one US company that we know of -- Occidental Petroleum -- has been playing a major role in shaping current US policy towards Colombia. In February the House Government Reform Committee convened a hearing on the Colombia aid package. The title of the hearing was "Colombia: Are we Sitting on our Assets?" and listed as a witness, along with government officials such as Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey, Commander Charles Wilhelm of the Southern Command, and Undersecretary of State Peter Romero, was Mr. Lawrence Meriage, Vice President of Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation.^[3]

In Columbia, *one* flashpoint of conflict directly being fueled by U.S. Foreign Policy as dictated by Occidental Oil and Gas concerns its attempt to forcibly expel the U'wa people from Kera Chikara, their Ancestral and Sacred Territory, so oil drilling can commence. As expressed in a September 11 U'wa Communique:

The U'wa people reject the despotic nature of the Andres Pastrana government, the lies and the deceit that he attempts to legalize by means of informing national and international citizens of a process of alleged respect for our rights, which in reality doesn't exist. While the government dialogues in Bogota, the machinery is arriving to the drilling site and the process of violence is growing stronger. For these reasons, we want to make clear that if in the future an U'wa leader or any U'wa person is attacked physically or morally, we will hold the Colombian government Occidental of Colombia Inc. directly responsible.

The U'wa are not going to abandon our farms because this is our home and our land. We will continue to gather there and to make known to the Colombian community and the world each inhumane act that is committed by the military forces. We will communicate these events not to provoke pity, but to garner support for our people who fight to maintain our culture, our beliefs, our ancient laws; We are an example a community that seeks to live in peace and harmony with others and with nature. The Plan Colombia only benefits the multinationals who, in their efforts to seize and take control of our riches and of our wealth devastate all that is around them. We the U'wa people stand as a clear example of a community defending our right to live in peace, unity and harmony; to live within the territory that was created by Sira (God), and to care for and and coexist peacefully on this, our land.^[4]

This "Foreign Policy" situation becomes more sharply focused in its *domestic policy* dimension when one understands the relationship between the financial fortunes of such a U.S. transnational corporation as Occidental Petroleum and the political fortunes of Albert Gore Senior and Junior. Excerpted from the Center for Public Integrity (CPI)'s January 5, 2000 press conference on its new book, *The Buying of the President 2000*, by CPI founder Charles Lewis:

Today we released the results of an 18-month investigation of the major presidential candidates in the 2000 election with a particular focus on their personal and campaign ties to various economic interests with business before the government. . . .

This mutually beneficial relationship between a politician and his patrons is seldom acknowledged or discussed publicly. Indeed, none of the current presidential candidates would agree to be interviewed for *The Buying of the President 2000*. Yet these relationships between candidates and their sponsors can reveal a more accurate picture of the practical logistics and accommodations of achieving power in today's electoral process. It is a vision that extends beyond common political rhetoric. . . .

For example, in the Democratic Party, Vice President Al Gore has a long-time relationship with Occidental Petroleum that has been enormously beneficial to the company. Occidental's late chairman, the controversial Armand Hammer, liked to say that he had Gore's father, Senator

Albert Gore, Senior, quote, "in my back pocket", unquote. When the elder Gore left the Senate in 1970, Hammer hired him for \$500,000 a year. Personally and professionally the vice president has profited from Occidental largess. To this day he still draws \$20,000 a year from a land deal in Tennessee brokered between his father and Hammer. The total amount is more than \$300,000. The personal relationship between young Gore and Hammer was very close throughout the 1980's, including trips on Hammer's private jet and constant campaign contributions.^[5]

Abuse of human rights, including murder and toxification of the earth, to further the interests of U.S. Transnational Corporations, paid for by subsidization of much of our tax monies . . . , it's enough to cause anyone who cares about Doing The Right Thing to lose heart and feel powerless. However, just as people in places like Columbia are fighting back and attempting to rectify these abuses of imperial power levied from afar by subordinate legal fictions^[6], it is absolutely critical to keep in heart-and-mind that here in the United States, we truly have the *most power of any people on Earth* to address these abuses and change the processes and course of our government and of our society.

After receiving the Witness For Peace newsletter, mail came through from Andy Caffrey (whom i'd had the pleasure to meet at Carol Brouillet's second-of-three Strategies for Transforming the Global Economy Gathering in February 1999) inviting participation in a new eGroups list, created on September 3rd, called "colombiavigil", and described below. (Join this list at <http://www.egroups.com/group/colombiavigil/> by clicking on the Subscribe link.)

Because of the apparently pre-war escalation by the U.S. govt of militarism in Colombia, and because of its relationship to the War on Drugs, and the corporate power of the oil industry to displace U'wa and others in Colombia, and the relationship of perhaps the next U.S. president, Al Gore, to these companies, this list was created. It hopes to bring together all the stories (economic activity, the War on Drugs, attacks on the U'wa and other native peoples, Al Gore and the military buildup, and ecological and social activist efforts) to create a virtual movie and enduring archive of activities, and to allow concerned people to see the bigger picture as it plays out in Colombia. The purpose of this list is also to scrutinize and evaluate media coverage and spins of the communications corporations.

More than any other country on earth, the United States is the originator and primary perpetuator of these abuses of unaccountable corporate political power since it was here that the modern-day divergence between 'legal' and 'natural' person began^[7] which directly gave rise to the present day publicly-traded, limited liability corporation, and the ensuing system of corporate governance. This is why it is our special responsibility to work to change this form of unaccountable "leadership" that so negatively affects so many people throughout the world as well as the Earth and itself and *all* its children -- *all our* relatives.

Always remember that we have more power here than anywhere else on earth given the fact that today the U.S. is the supreme political power on the planet. And that we have the greatest responsibility and obligation to address and change the current form of corporate economic globalization driven by the present-day unaccountable system of corporate governance that has its historical roots in this nation-state. As Ricardo Esquivia Ballestas (Director of Justapaz, Director of the Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia -- CEDECOL, Member of the Mennonite Church of Colombia) and Peter Stucky (President, Mennonite Church of Colombia) write in An Urgent Message From Our Columbian Partners,"

We ask you for support to transform this vicious cycle of death and destruction that military

aid produces, into a virtuous cycle of abundant life and peace. In this way our people can receive an alternative message from the people of the north, sent by the churches there. This message would show that life, respect and solidarity can also come from the north.

Perhaps, brothers and sisters, it is precisely in order to support the Colombian churches in turning the governmental message of death from the North into life that God has placed you there in the nations of the North at this time, just as God did with Esther.^[8]

Democratic Global Governance Proposing -- Vital Counterpart to Opposing

Although i could not attend the events in Washington D.C. in the middle of April surrounding the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meeting there, i did obtain the recordings of the International Forum on Globalization Teach-In on April 14th entitled, "Beyond Seattle -- Globalization: Focus On The International Monetary Fund And The World Bank ." *Many* of the presentations were very informative. At present three transcriptions have been worked up and are included in co-globalizing gaia's children (in the coming months, transcriptions of more of these will be of these will be crafted and available at the above link).

With his consistent forward-looking perspective, tempered by his lifetime of professional experience with economics, David Korten once again provides invaluable observations and recommendations in his talk, "One World -- One World Government, Bretton Woods or The United Nations?." This talk was part of the Fourth Panel's focus on "The Casino Economy: The Anatomy of Global Control." He likewise emphasizes that corporations only can employ as much power as we give them:

A newly globalizing civil society is awakening to a basic insight. The institutions of global corporate tyranny have only the power that we yield to them. We can and we must withdraw that power.

Indeed, for the first time in human history, we the people of the world have the opportunity and the necessity to rethink and recreate our institutions to align them with a vision of a world built on a foundation of radical democracy that works for every person, every community and for the whole of life. We must make full use of that opportunity.

The police violence in Seattle against those who sought only to exercise their right of nonviolent political expression exposed the visible face of a more subtle tyranny that uses money as its instrument of political and social control. Tonight I will focus on one example, the use of the debt mechanism, in the name of development, to subordinate Southern countries to the interests of a small Northern elite.^[9]

He goes on to articulate what the nature of authentic development comprises, how such development offers little opportunities for colonial extraction, and how, "Whether from intent or from ignorance, the North mobilized after World War II through the Bretton Woods institutions to assure that authentic self-reliant development would gain no foothold in the newly liberated colonies."

Describing how the World Bank "has functioned ... as an export financing facility for Northern corporations" and providing an an analysis of how the IMF and World Bank "restructure[d] the economies of indebted nations, redirecting their resources to loan repayment and opening them further to foreign exploitation", he goes on to point out that today, global governance is divided between two competing systems -- the United Nations

and the Bretton Woods system (comprised of The World Bank, the IMF, and the World Trade Organization).

As with the fundamental necessity of changing the unaccountable system of American corporate governance, Korten calls us on to participate in manifesting "our hopes for democratic global governance responsive to the needs of people and planet" and describes mechanisms to help get us there. This kind of proposing is the essential counterpart to opposing such unaccountable systems of authority that we now face, much as people in the middle 1700s faced in the northeast of what is today called the United States.

The founders of the United Nations intended that responsibility for managing global economic affairs -- including the overall supervision and policy direction of the Bretton Woods institutions -- would fall under UN jurisdiction. In reality the Bretton Woods institutions separated themselves entirely from the United Nations. Though the United Nations has been starved of resources and is in desperate need of reform, it remains the appropriate focus of our hopes for democratic global governance responsive to the needs of people and planet. The challenge of building a strong, effective and accountable United Nations is now even greater than it was when the UN was founded after World War II, because now we must dismantle the Bretton Woods institutions and undo the enormous damage they have wrought, while simultaneously creating the institutional framework for a planetary system of locally rooted, globally *cooperative*, just, sustainable, and compassionate economies based on the principles of authentic development and responsive to the needs of all. The following are some specific recommendations.

- By its every action the **World Bank** increases the foreign indebtedness of low income countries. Let us replace it with a **United Nations International Insolvency Court** (that a number have recommended) to which indebted countries can turn for assistance in freeing themselves from the chains of international debt and from IMF conditions without sacrificing their ability to provide essential public services.
- The **International Monetary Fund** forces countries to give up control over the flow of money and goods across their borders, leading to massive trade imbalances, international indebtedness, exploitation, and financial instability. Let us replace that institution with a **United Nations International Finance Organization** responsible for:
 - Limiting the build up of international debt, monitoring national trade and current account balances, and facilitating negotiations toward agreement on corrective action where consequential and persistent imbalances between imports and exports are found.
 - Helping national governments establish capital controls that strengthen domestic employment, domestic investment, domestic ownership of productive resources, and domestic technical capabilities; and that discourage financial speculation.
 - Control money laundering by international and offshore banks and tax evasion by individuals and corporations using offshore tax havens.

You begin to get the pattern here. What we need are institutions that do *exactly the opposite* of what the Bretton Woods institutions are doing.

- Then we come to the **World Trade Organization**, which regulates national and local governments to prohibit them from regulating transnational corporations, trade, and finance in the public interest. Let us replace the World Trade Organization with a **United Nations Organization for Corporate Accountability**. This organization would:
 - Coordinate international anti-trust actions to break up global concentrations of corporate power, with special attention to banking, media, and agribusiness.

- Initiate dechartering procedures against transnational corporations with repeated convictions for criminal behavior.
- Enable those harmed by a corporate subsidiary in one country to sue the parent company based in another country for damages.
- Establish an internationally enforceable code of conduct covering all corporations with operations in more than one country, including a strict prohibition on corporate political participation of any kind.

There is a lot of work to be done at all levels to fix the damage created by more than fifty years of Bretton Woods and to set humanity on a more positive course, including serious political reforms at local and national levels to establish the democratic accountability of often badly corrupted governments. No where is this more important than here in the United States.

Regrettably for many of us who grew up loving our country and believing it to be the bastion of democracy and the defender of world freedom, it is a sad thing to come to the realization that the United States government has been the chief architect of the destructive policies of the Bretton Woods system and has time-after-time acted to undermine democracy and authentic development in Southern countries. It is the chief barrier to the reform of the destructive structures of corporate globalization.

For those of us who hold U.S. citizenship we have a special obligation to the world to end this travesty through the deep reform of our political system. We have for example, too long acquiesced in the ritual choice between two largely identical candidates both owned body-and-soul by corporate money. In our upcoming presidential election let us not waste our votes on Al Gore in the futile hope he might *eventually* actually get around to reading *Earth in the Balance*.

This year we have the opportunity to vote for a serious candidate who has proven time and time again over a long and productive life to be an uncorruptible champion of the issues we all care about so deeply -- a true modern hero. He will be joining us here tonight. His name is Ralph Nader. He is running under the banner of the Green Party. We must give him our support and our votes.^[10]

We'll come back to the Campaign of Ralph Nader and Winona LaDuke since it is such a vital feature of what can be done right now by the majority of people in the U.S. who feel powerless to participate and contribute helping positive change manifest in the world; to lend their voice to the renewed expression of humankind's hopes for a world that honors and serves life's needs.

U.S. Monopoly Militarism and the Global War System

Another transcript from the April IFG Teach-In is of Randall Forsberg, founder of The Institute of Defense and Disarmament Studies (IDDS). As a member of the Third Panel which focused on "The Technological Dimension: Globalization of Corporate Communications & Military Technologies," she spoke on the topic of "Monopoly Militarism and the U.S. Monopoly on the Militarization of the World."

In 1979 Randall Forsberg drafted "The Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race," a four-page statement outlining a bilateral nuclear weapons freeze strategy. Out of this arose the National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign which in the fall of 1982 resulted, "in the closest

equivalent to a national referendum in the history of American democracy[. Thirty percent of the American electorate voted on a bilateral freeze proposal put on local ballots through the efforts of the Freeze campaign. The proposal won by a 60 to 40 percent margin."^[11]

She opened her talk reflecting back to the grassroots energy that was so successful in mounting the disarmament campaign in the 1980s and how critically that energy is needed today to address the scope and reach of U.S. military technology supremacy.

It's good to be with such an enthusiastic audience. In the 1980s we had audiences like this for disarmament. I'd like to bring some of that back. The 19th and 20th centuries have been the centuries of monopoly capitalism. As we move into the 21st century, there is a new cultural and economic phenomenon arising: monopoly militarism. . . .

It starts with technology. The United States has a budget for military research and development, for developing new weapons and new military equipment for intelligence and control. The budget *just for developing* -- not for producing, not for the soldiers and training and putting them out in the field -- just for investigating, testing, engineering and developing new weapons, is as large as the next largest entire military budget of any country in the world. That is why the United States monopolizes the development of new military technology. . . .

In addition to controlling military technology, the United States gives an *enormous* amount of military aid. . . .

In all of these ways we not only recruit and solicit and consolidate and solidify a monopoly relationship with the military elites in countries around the world, but also with the foreign policy elites; the people who work at institutes for strategic studies and in the Foreign Service. . . .

How can the U.S. military have such power? It's because of the \$300 billion military budget. You may not realize that the military budget has gone down since the end of the Cold War. After you allow for inflation, it's gone down quite a lot. It has actually gone down enough to eliminate the 50% increase that Reagan brought in during the 1980s. So today, we are actually back to the "normal level" of Cold War military spending.

In today's dollars, the annual level of spending that prevailed in the United States from 1950 to 1980, except during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, was within 20 billion of \$300 billion. How can you have the Soviet Union disappear, the Warsaw Pact disappear -- there is no threat of major war, no threat of another World War II which justified \$300 billion in today's dollars -- \$300 billion a year for 50 years; how can you have these threats disappear and the money stays the same? How did that happen?

During the Cold War, the argument was made that we needed to spend this \$300 billion to protect democracy. By the way, let's recognize that if it's still the same today, and we have a growing economy, it *is* a smaller share of our economy. That is one of the ways that it happened. They say, 'See, it used to be 6% and now it is 3% -- so it's going down.' It's not going down. But the economy is going up. One of the unfortunate results of this is that people don't pay attention to it. I am going to come back to people paying more attention.

During the Cold War, the argument was made that we needed that higher percentage going to the military to protect democracy; to protect basic human freedoms; to protect against threats of totalitarianism. There was also the question of free markets and free capital, and so on. What about now? Are we protecting democracy? Are we protecting freedom? Are there people we are protecting against totalitarian threats? There are not.^[12]

There is, of course, much more that Randall Forsberg goes into, and everyone is urged to read the complete text. Near the end she urged people to learn about the proposal to dismantle this system called, *Global Action To Prevent War, A Coalition-Building Effort To Stop War, Genocide, & Internal Armed Conflict*.^[13] This Proposal and project is extremely worthy of close scrutiny. It is precisely the sort of *Proposing* we all must be part of as the essential counterpart of opposing further devastation being wrought by unaccountable systems of governance laying waste to our world and all we are now response able for.

Another new document is the transcript by the International Network on Disarmament and Globalization of the Proceedings from the "WTO and the Global War System Forum" held on November 28, 1999 in the Plymouth Congregational Church in Seattle. This was one of the most significant events I attended. As was the case throughout the week I was there, this gathering was filled with people deeply concerned about supporting human needs and the needs of all life on earth which we are now the *de facto* stewards for -- irrespective of whether or not we choose to accept this responsibility. They were also highly motivated to challenge the status quo and champion a vision of the world where the needs of all are met and where the staggering inequities we see everywhere -- of extreme opulence and devastating poverty -- are reconciled. From the Proceedings introduction:

The WTO and the Global War System was organized by American and Canadian peace groups as part of civil society activities surrounding the Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle in November, 1999.

The forum examined the links between economic globalization, the WTO and militarism. It looked at how the WTO's promotion of economic globalization undermines security, creates conflict and promotes militarism.

There were four speakers at the forum. Susan George opened the forum by discussing how the current economic system is creating economic and social strife around the world. Mark Ritchie then discussed the history of the Bretton Woods institutions and their original purpose to promote peace. Alice Slater discussed how nuclear weapons are defending American corporate interests, and how the U.S. Space Command envisions the militarization of space to defend American "interests and investments." And Steven Staples closed the afternoon by discussing how the WTO promotes war economies by protecting military spending and the arms industry. He also offered case studies showing how corporations have been able to use WTO rules and dispute panels to block peace-building economic strategies of peace activists.^[14]

At the end of this talk, Steve Staples emphasized the critical connection between transnational corporations and military power used on their behalf as well as the necessity to look at things holistically.

Transnational corporations need the power of the military behind them to enforce their domination. *New York Times* columnist Thomas L. Friedman put it well when he said that behind the hidden hand of the market is a hidden fist. McDonalds needs McDonnell Douglas, the maker of the F-15 warplane. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for corporations is the U.S. Air Force, Navy, Army and Marines.

While I'm a pessimist about tomorrow, I am an optimist about the day after. There are three things that we need to do, beginning right now. Firstly, the peace movement must educate itself and others about the relationship between militarism and globalization. We need to encourage our writers and researchers to investigate the military-corporate complex, and to provide activists with the information they need. Secondly, we cannot treat the arms industry and military spending as separate issues. We have to deal with globalization as a whole, recognizing that the international corporate agenda is itself a form of warfare against peace, human rights and democracy. Thirdly, we need to develop our own positive alternatives to economic globalization and the WTO.^[15]

In July the Seattle National Lawyers Guild released a Draft Report on the WTO Ministerial in which was noted the "thinning lines between law enforcement and the military":

The Seattle Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild has just released its report on the World Trade Organization Ministerial. The report examines what took place in Seattle as an example of larger trends brought about by destructive economic policies. The report pays particular attention to the thinning lines between law enforcement and the military and the adverse effects this loss of delineation is having on civil liberties. The report begins with an overview of the WTO. It

provides the historical framework of the WTO as an institution born of the think tanks which were themselves created by the illicit fortunes of the robber barons. It provides concrete examples of the way the WTO has subverted democratic institutions, and had detrimental effects on human rights, the environment, safety and labor laws.^[16]

Disseminating the sort of information described above is necessary to inform and educate about what is happening and, based upon this, what can and must be expressed as appropriate responses and actions. Police brutality during the demonstrations in Seattle, in Washington this April, as well as during both Democrat and Republican Conventions indicates further significant breakdown in constitutional protection of First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and to peaceably assemble.^[17] We'll come back to people putting their bodies on the line to express their unwillingness to permit continued despoliation of the Earth for the benefit of the few at the expense of all life on this single, irreplaceable home of ours.

The Dark Side of Genetics and Human Fallibility

In Seattle, Dr. David Suzuki was the first speaker at the IFG Teach-In's Panel on "The Last Invasion: Biotechnology, Patents on Life, Frankenfoods -- The Role of the WTO in the Corporate Takeover of the Structures of Life". It gives me great pleasure to announce the availability of the transcript of his talk, "The Dark Side of Genetics and The Implications of the Biotechnology Revolution."

He began by describing his own background: by training and by inclination, a geneticist, having graduated in 1961 with a Ph.D. in genetics from the University of Chicago. He went on to articulate some of the history of this very young science, the nature of scientific study and how this has been impacted by the opportunity to make large amounts of money.

I knew from personal experience what most geneticists either don't acknowledge or don't even know about. And that is the dark side of this very young science.

I am a third generation Canadian. Like my Canadian-born parents, I too was born in Vancouver. In 1942, shortly after Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, my family was deprived of all rights of citizenship. Our property was confiscated and we were shipped to internment camps deep in the Rocky Mountains for a period of three years. When the war came to an end we were given a choice of taking a free, one-way ticket to Japan, or going east of the Rocky Mountains. And so as Canadians, we had no choice. Canada was our home. We ended up in central Canada.

The crime for which we were punished was the possession of genes that had come from the country of our enemies, three generations before. What had determined our fate had been set in motion many decades before -- unknown to me.

In the exuberance of the excitement over the discovery of new principles of heredity -- that seemed to apply across the plant and animal kingdoms -- geneticists began to make wonderful, wild statements about the implications of their discoveries. I'm sure most of you know that it ultimately led to what was considered a *legitimate area* of science called Eugenics. . . .

I would like to quote just one of these eminent geneticists, a professor at Harvard University. He became president of the Genetics Society of America, Edward East, who wrote in his textbook on Eugenics, "In reality the Negro is inferior to the white. This is not conjecture or speculation. It is a crude statement of scientific fact."

Now, inferior and superior are words that are value-laden terms. They have nothing to do with the science. But in their intoxication with their discoveries, geneticists very easily confused their beliefs and their own values with what were scientifically confirmed truths.

Our incarceration as Japanese-Canadians was a result of the kind of thinking reflected by

one of the members of Parliament from British Columbia who said and I quote, "Nine times out of ten, a cross between an Asian and a White results in mongrel wastrel with none of the redeeming qualities of either race." Now, this is not a 3-to-1 ration in a Mendelian cross. But he actually tried to set a number to it: a 9-to-1 ratio.

He went on at a later time to say, "We in British Columbia are firmly convinced, once a Jap, always a Jap." That statement reflected General John DeWitt's thinking, the man in charge of the Japanese-American evacuation, when he said, "It doesn't matter where a Japanese is born. They're sneaky and can't be trusted."

Now, these are all statements of a hereditarian belief; that things like deceit or treachery in fact, can be related to hereditary makeup. Scientists, we have found very clearly from history, have been quite willing to extrapolate the wonders of their discoveries and the implications for humankind.

Because the kind of thinking that resulted in the incarceration of Japanese-Canadians and Japanese-Americans was reflected as well in the very progressive policies of the NAZI Party in Germany that led to the race purification acts and ultimately to the horror of the holocaust. I want to remind you that Josef Mengele, the infamous scientist at Auschwitz, was a geneticist who at the time he was doing his twin studies at Auschwitz, was carrying two peer-reviewed grants.

That is something, I think, that if geneticists don't know -- and even though I had gone to an undergraduate liberal arts college, I never knew about this history of genetics -- then, it is very easy to overlook the possible dangers and continue to ride the bandwagon of excitement and exuberance over what is truly a revolutionary, new stage in this infant field that is biotechnology.

...

Today I go into a laboratory and I tell students, the *models*, the *ideas* that we believed were so hot in 1961, and they fall on the floor laughing. Because seen in 1999, the ideas of 1961 seem *absurd* and they *are*. But the very *nature of science*, is that *most* of our ideas at the cutting edge of knowledge *are wrong*. *That's how science progresses*. I tell these young students, 'When you're a hotshot professor 20 years from now, and you tell your students what you believed in 1999, they'll be just as amused by those old-fashioned ideas.

So then what is the *rush* to apply these incremental gains of knowledge that we have as we publish? They are trumpeted as "breakthroughs" -- one of the most *overused* and *wrong* words that I can imagine, in the media; "breakthroughs." These incremental acquisitions of knowledge, now because of the grand hopes and claims, we feel are opportunities that must be exploited immediately. And yet as I say, the vast bulk of what we currently believe is true, will ultimately be shown to be wrong.

This is not in any way, a denigration of *science*. It is the very *way* that science *progresses*. You get a set of observations; you try to make sense of them by constructing an hypothesis. You test the hypothesis and chances are, you go, 'Oh man, was *that* ever wrong. We better do something else.' Or you modify it and change it around. That is how science progresses. But we forget that.

As Rachel Carson pointed out so presciently in 1962, -- in her case it was pesticides, but it can be said to be for all technologies -- technology has enormous benefits but they always have costs. Because our knowledge base is so *limited*, about how the world around us operates, it is almost impossible for us to anticipate or predict what the long-term consequences are going to be. I feel in biotechnology, if it is a revolutionary technology (and it is), all the more reason then to heed the kinds of warnings that Rachel Carson made about another technology generations before.

Biotechnologists -- it seems to me -- want to have it both ways. They want to get lots of people to invest in it, because it is a growth area on the stock market, by saying that it is a revolutionary science with enormous potential. But when critics then suggested that there may be equally dangerous possibilities, they say, 'No no no -- this isn't revolutionary stuff at all. It happens in nature. It is just DNA. We are just moving DNA around and that happens in nature all the time.'

I don't think you can have it both ways. It can't be revolutionary on the one hand, but not on the other. *It is* revolutionary. And it *is* revolutionary because in nature, genes don't normally transfer laterally, or horizontally, across species boundaries. We know genes are not selected by evolution, or natural selection, on an *individual* basis. The *entire genome* is an *integrated entity* in which the sum total of those genes and their expression in the phenotype *is* what is selected.

When you transfer a gene horizontally from one species to another, you alter completely the

context within which that gene finds itself. And we simply haven't had the time to work out what the basic principles are when we do this *lateral transfer*. All of our concepts of the inheritance of genes and the behavior of genes is based on the study within a species. You cross a male and a female, you look at their offspring, cross them, and you follow down in a vertical fashion within a species.

Now we do it horizontally and there geneticists make, what I believe, is a fundamental mistake. They assume that the principles governing heredity vertically are going to apply equally, horizontally. There is simply *no* reason to make that assumption. . . .

. . . We learned very expensively that research experiments were done with members of the general public in the '50s and '60s without their being informed and without getting consent. We know today that informed consent is an absolute minimum before people become a part of any kind of experiment. *We are part of an experiment with no informed consent.*

So I come to you as a geneticist. I apologize for most of my colleagues who seem so anxious to ignore the kinds of concerns that I have. And say that for the sake of *genetics* for heavens sake, we had better inform them about the history of their discipline and inform them about the *tentative nature* of the kind of ideas that we have and, therefore, the need for extreme caution.^[18]

The above serves to remind us that, given the way Western Science progresses -- as a long, continuous succession of incremental gains and acquisitions of knowledge, and that "the vast bulk of what we currently believe is true, will ultimately be shown to be wrong" --, we must be extremely vigilant towards those who clamor for the commercial adoption of biotech applications before adequate controlled testing in the lab can verify the long-term effects of such a young and revolutionary science as genetics.

To underscore the warning made by David Suzuki about the hazards of this young science, a new story is just now breaking about the Yanomami people of Venezuela and how they have been subjected to a nightmarish experiment -- "a real anthropological heart of darkness story beyond the imagining of even a Josef Conrad (though not, perhaps, a Josef Mengele)" at the hands of noted geneticist James Neel who died last February.

Reproduced on ratical is a copy of the letter from Professor Terry Turner of Cornell University, and Head of the Special Commission of the American Anthropological Association to Investigate the Situation of the Brazilian Yanomami, 1990-91, addressed to Leslie Sponsel, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, and Chair of the American Anthropology Association Committee for Human Rights 1992-1996. This letter cites the new book *Darkness in El Dorado*, scheduled for publication on October 1st, by investigative journalist Patrick Tierney.

One of Tierney's more startling revelations is that the whole Yanomami project was an outgrowth and continuation of the Atomic Energy Commission's secret program of experiments on human subjects. James Neel, the originator and director of the project, was part of the medical and genetic research team attached to the Atomic Energy Commission since the days of the Manhattan Project. . . There is thus a genealogical connection between the human experiments carried out by the AEC, and Neel's and Chagnon's Yanomami project, which was from the outset funded by the AEC.

Tierney presents convincing evidence that Neel and Chagnon, on their trip to the Yanomami in 1968, greatly exacerbated, and probably started, the epidemic of measles that killed "hundreds, perhaps thousands" (Tierney's language -- the exact figure will never be known) of Yanomami. .

.. All this is bad enough, but the probable truth that emerges, by implication, from Tierney's documentation is more chilling. There was, it turns out, a compelling theoretical motive for Neel to want to observe an epidemic of measles, or comparable "contact" disease, or at least an outbreak virtually indistinguishable from the real thing -- precisely the effect that the vaccine he chose was known to cause -- and to produce one for this purpose if necessary. This motive

emerges from Tierney's documentation of Neel's extreme eugenic theories and his documented statements about what he was hoping to find among the Yanomami, interpreted against the background of his long association with the Atomic Energy Commission's secret experiments on human subjects. . . .

. . . This book should shake anthropology to its very foundations. It should cause the field to understand how the corrupt and depraved protagonists could have spread their poison for so long while they were accorded great respect throughout the Western World and generations of undergraduates received their lies as the introductory substance of anthropology. This should never be allowed to happen again. [19]

The horrific facts regarding the such an absence of ethical behaviour on the part of scientists held in high esteem by their colleagues, underscores the fallibility of human nature and the depravity that can result from the intrusion of a person's pernicious personal beliefs into the conduct and practice of their professional lives. This story provides the most potent reminder of how important it is for each of us to consistently engage our critical thinking faculties and avoid giving any purported expert -- whether it be in the field of science, economics, politics, religion, education, etc. -- undue authority or credibility. In the final analysis, each of us has to find out the truth of things by our own explorations and study.

There were many people who would try to prove to Francois that this kind of thinking was nonsense. Their condemnation would be all the more convincing because the world was full of know-all who knew only what they knew and no longer what they did not know. To them, that there could be proof of any relationship between the mind and spirit of civilised man and the mind of the natural world, would be ridiculous. But this, Mopani said, was in his view the sickness in so-called civilised people. In the final analysis one had to stand by one's own experience of life and refuse to allow any one-sided specialist to discredit it.

--Laurens van der Post, "The Birds Change Their Tune,"
in *A Story Like The Wind*, p.277

To this writer, a magnificent example of a scientist practicing their craft with their ethics fully intact and flowering is that of microbiologist Dr. Mae-Wan Ho, Reader in Biology at the Open University, U.K. On May 12th we were able to begin mirroring some of her papers on ratical. As she wrote me at the time, "We must actively connect the genetic engineering debate with holistic, ecological sciences. It is the most effective way to recapture the agenda from the corporations."

Many remarkable individuals and local communities are indeed changing their own lives and the world around them for the better. They all do so by learning from nature and recognizing that it is the *symbiotic*, *mutualistic* relationships which sustain ecosystems and make all life prosper, including the human beings who are active, sensitive participants in the ecosystem as a whole(44).

The same organic revolution has been happening in western science over the past thirty years. Jim Lovelock's Gaia theory, for example, invites us to see the earth as one super-organism(45). Even more remarkable is the message from quantum theory: that we are inseparably entangled with one another and with all nature, which we participate in co-creating(46). It is this holistic, organic perspective that can enable us to negotiate our path out of the moral maze of genetic engineering biotechnology. It provides the basis of a new ethic of science that can reshape society and transform the very texture and meaning of our lives. Seattle has shown us that things can be different. Society does not have to be ruled by the dominant culture. Science can transcend the dominant *status quo* to reshape society for the public good, which is also the private good. We begin to appreciate how the purpose of each organism and species is entangled with that of every other. Our humanity is a function of this entangled whole, and we cannot do arbitrary violence to one another, nor to the nature of other species without violating our own. The ethic of science is no different from that of being human. [20]

Like Dr. John Gofman, she has unconditionally committed herself to champion, honor and serve life's needs. Like Laurens van der Post she values Carl Jung's contributions to seeing our selves and our modern world wholistically and thus to apprehend the formidable forces of light *and dark* that make us both what we are and what we can be. We collectively owe a debt of gratitude to those like Mae-Wan Ho who employ their wisdom and intelligence to make science once more accountable to life. It is only in this way that we can, as a species, grow beyond our adolescent reductionist and mechanistic phase that promotes commercial gain as a paramount goal of scientific study of our world and universe.

The Jungian ideal of the whole person is one whose cell and psyche, body and mind, inner and outer, are fully integrated, and hence completely in tune with nature. Jung's ideas on psychical development show many parallels to those relating to the organism. Similarly, Laszlo's theory of the quantum holographic universe views the universe effectively as a kind of superorganism, constantly becoming, being created through the activities of its constituent organisms at every level. The organism is thus the most universal archetype. I describe a theory of the organism, based on quantum coherence, which is, in some respects, a microcosm of Laszlo's universe. It involves key notions of the maximization of local autonomy and global cohesion, of universal participation, of sensitivity and responsiveness, which have profound implications for our global future. [21]

Voting For Change Devotion to a Long-Term Life-Serving Vision

Finally i'd like to emphasize the new section on Ralph Nader and the Ralph Nader/Winona LaDuke Green Party Presidential Ticket. At this point to me, the times we are in are every bit as significant as what people of European descent, living on the eastern portion of this continent, faced in the 1700s, before, during and after 1776.

There is much in elementary and high school civics textbooks about the courage, bravery and valour of people alive then who stood for -- and many times died for -- their principles, fighting against Monarchistic tyranny. The stakes we face today are even more significant. The course-changes we must make -- though they may seem as impossible to people today as independence from British rule must have appeared to people living 250 years ago -- are every bit as necessary *and possible* as the battles fought then for liberation from that brand of colonial rule.

Today we struggle against a very contemporary form of such colonialism, what Ward Morehouse and Richard Grossman call "the colonization of our minds." [22] We are confronting nothing less than ending this age of *corporate* colonial rule. In his talk in Seattle on December 3, 1999 -- "Taking on the Corporate and Financial Rulers: Our Goal is Political and Economic Democracy" -- David Korten's concluding words crystalize this point:

I suggest we be clear that our goal is not to reform global corporate and financial rule -- it is to end it. The publicly traded, limited liability corporation is a pathological institutional form and financial speculation is inherently predatory. As a first step both must be regulated. The appropriate longer term goal is to rid our economic affairs of these institutional pathologies -- much as our ancestors eliminated the institution of monarchy. [23]

Concerning the Green Party candidacy of Ralph Nader and Winona LaDuke for President

and Vice-President, i am vigorously excited that such luminous spirits, with their lifetime records of achievement fighting for a better world, are running on a platform of ethical and moral -- as well as common-sense -- values that were the very basis for the founding of this country. Combine this with the fact that, as Michael Moore points out, the majority of adults in the United States feel so disenfranchised that they do not vote,^[24] one starts to better appreciate just how much this system *is truly up-for-grabs!*

And we must act now -- organizing as many of our friends, family, co-workers and acquaintances as we can -- to join this battle for the Earth and all its creatures, including our fragile, single human family. We must be willing to put our bodies and hearts on-the-line as so many have done in Seattle and since then, to tangibly express our commitment to changing the way the human world conducts business.

Work is in progress transcribing a recording received last week of Winona speaking in Santa Fe, New Mexico on August 28th. She is *magnificent* in her breadth and depth of background, experience, wisdom, and intelligence about what the issues we face really boil down to, what we must do to address these problems and alter the mis-guided dead-end course-heading being pursued. We are present day "earth-patriots" fighting for all we cherish, are intimately related to and interdependent with. To ignore this fact-of-life is to collude in our collective suicide.

One of the new Ralph Nader transcripts is his address as the final speaker in the 12-plus hour April 14th IFG Washington Teach-In on the subject of "Challenging Autocratic Governance That Serves The Interests Of Global Corporations".^[25] His articulation of what we must be about is incisively stated and an enlivening antidote to the Democrat and Republican corporate candidates steadfast avoidance of these fundamental issues. In reading the following excerpts, ask yourself, When was the last time you heard someone running for the office of President of the United States who addressed the issues in the manner being done here?

All of this increasing critique of corporate globalization -- we should always use the adjective -- comes from a long overdue pattern of research to discern the systems of control. Make no mistake about it. Although the shibboleths of free trade are tossed in front of an often misinformed media, the issue with the IMF and World Trade Organization and World Bank is governance. It's the governance systems for global corporations that we're really dealing with.

The fundamental issue we face is the autocratic systems of governance that undermine democracy, that subordinate human rights and the rights of people for decent standards of living and for decent standards of justice. This is what is at stake here: Challenging international systems of autocratic governance that serve, overwhelmingly, the interests of giant global corporations who dominate and seek to dominate everything in their path.

They want to dominate governments. They want to dominate the workplace. They want to dominate the marketplace. They want to dominate the universities by corporatizing them. They want to dominate the very concept of childhood with their brazen commercial exploitation of small children. They want to dominate the shaping of the environment. They want to control the genes of the natural world. They want to control the human genes. They want to control the seeds. They want to control the future.

We have to make sure that this relentless drive for control by the commercial instinct -- which every major religion in the world has warned us about for two thousand years -- should never be given excessive power. Because in its singular focus and drive and lack of respect for other values, it destroys these other values in a paroxysm of greed that implodes on itself.^[26]

Isn't it interesting regarding this *giant* profitable pharmaceutical industry? They are not

interested in drugs and vaccines for alleviating the tremendous world mortality and morbidity rates. Malaria itself takes two million lives a year including one million African children.

We see this with the arms traffic. Who is fueling the arms traffic? The giant military arms producers -- with your tax dollars. In this country \$6 billion of tax subsidies a year for private exports of jets and tanks and ammunition, etc., to countries that aren't exactly governments of, by, and for their people. We see this situation in every area.

Now, when are these companies ever going to lose their credibility? Every major social movement in United States history was opposed by the dominant business firms. Whether it was the abolition of slavery, the trade union movement, the farmer progressive populist movement, even the women's suffrage movement, the environmental consumer movements (the more recent vintage) -- all were opposed by the dominant business community. When are these people in the business community going to lose their credibility?

Corporations are chartered by us. We give them the charter. They don't exist without the charter by state and federal governments. We can condition the charter, suspend the charter, pull the charter for corporate recidivism and other misbehaving corporations and throw them into trusteeships and reorganize them so that they behave. We must remember that.^[27]

There are a lot of things we all can do about this, obviously. I want to suggest, especially to the young people here -- and whoever watches this very wonderful long day event -- that, first of all, it is not enough just to be concerned and informed. It is not enough just to be concerned, informed and serious. It is not enough to be concerned, informed, serious with a sense of urgency. You have got to reach out to other people. You have got to organize your acquaintances, relatives, friends, co-workers all over the country.

And stop feeling sorry for your selves. Oh! Those overwhelming odds -- the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, the corporations, what can we do, oh-me oh-my, que sera sera. When you see what your forebears were up against for two hundred years and the advanced social justice which you benefit from; when you see what our brother from Bolivia has just gone through with his co-workers and friends -- how can you feel sorry for yourself? If you do you're a jerk!^[28]

Giant projects funded on the western model do not work in third world countries. Poverty can be alleviated only by *cottage-level* projects. For example, look what happened in our country at its best -- and why don't we project that for models of economic development with proper indigenous inputs, of course. We had land reform -- it's called the Homestead Act of 1863. It broke up the potential for giant plantations as occurred in the south. What people in the third world need is land reform -- fundamental land reform. They need systems that encourages land used to grow food for needy and hungry people. Not to grow cash crops to be exported to the west to earn hard currency to pay debts to foreign banks.

The second is microcredit. The democratization of credit which occurred in our country with credit unions, agricultural credit banks, producer credit banks in the farm area. They don't need these giant loans to oligarchs and governments that misuse them and only entrenches the oligarchs and the dictatorial regimes. They need the democratization of credit. It goes right to people -- \$200, \$300, \$100 like the Grameen Bank has shown -- which by the way, was not an IMF idea, was it?

People need technical assistance and not just western science and not corporate science. When are we going to realize the value of indigenous science and technology? It doesn't come in fancy names and publications and fancy journals. It simply is the result of thousands of years of knowledge. Look at the Neem tree in India, for example. Look at the great Egyptian architect, Hassenfatei (sp?) who developed systems for building homes made from the soil underneath the feet of the Egyptian peasants. And whose teachings are spreading around the world. That was not an IMF or World Bank or a consulting firm idea.^[29]

But I hope you'll go back so metabolized that you will multiply your efforts in church basements and union local halls and university auditoriums and through your e-mail, so that *this* time it is not just a surge. It's not just a movement. Not just a demonstration. It is a permanent transformation of the way we use our time and our knowledge and our estimate of our own significance. Estimate of our own significance.

You are in the top percent or two of people around the world in terms of health, education, and the ability to make a difference. That gives you a moral imperative to do so. You have even a

higher responsibility to do so. We are blessed in this country. We have to make sure we stop the reverse slide that is occurring even here. We have to go back home and develop our own systems of influence, our own compelling networks, whether through the Internet or through person-to-person contact.

Remember, over two thousand years ago, it was the Roman lawyer, Marcus Cicero, who defined freedom for the ages. He defined it this way: "Freedom is participation in power."

Everything else is just the symbolism of the oppressors over the oppressed when they talk about liberty and freedom, etc. Freedom is participation in power.^[30]

On August 28th Ralph spoke in Santa Cruz on the subject of "Wasting Your Vote, Wasting Our Democracy"^[31]. In addition to the following excerpts, he covered a large field of issues including industrial hemp, voting for the least of the worst, abortion, the military budget, the missile defense system, corporate subsidies, handouts, giveaways and bailouts, the permanent corporate government in Washington, corporate crime, fraud and abuse, repealing the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, the WTO and NAFTA, agriculture and rural America, the biotechnology industry, universal health insurance, civil rights law, sanctions against Iraq, energy policy, the presidential debates, further concentration of mass/corporate media and the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the increasingly massive financial disparity between the haves and have nots, and the benefits of federal regulation.

Let's take an area where the rhetoric [between the Democrats and Republicans] is different: Campaign Finance Reform. How many times have you heard Slick Willie and Al Gore talk about Campaign Finance Reform? They don't miss a day, as they have their hands out in front of these corporate slush funds; as they fly Airforce One and Airforce Two to all these fat cat salons and corporate hideaways in order to raise millions of dollars. They talk "campaign finance reform." Every State of the Union Address of Clinton to Congress, "campaign finance reform." And guess what? Although it had a war room of lobbying for China Permanent Trade Relations for GATT/NAFTA, they never assigned one person in the White House full-time to getting campaign finance reform through Congress.

It's a fraud and a farce. They are not going to take the lead. Because when you really press the Democrats to set an example by refusing to take soft money or by refusing to take PAC money, they all have the same refrain: 'We're for campaign finance reform but we don't want to unilaterally disarm *vis-a-vis* the Republicans.' Well, isn't that a stand of vigorous leadership? Isn't that political courage: That you will allow our democracy to be highjacked and our government to be corrupted against the interests of the American people because you don't want to take the first step and set a moral and political example for the corrupt Republican Party.^[32]

Do you want to waste your vote? You can waste your vote by voting for two political parties that are wasting our democracy and the great opportunities of our country. If you want to waste your vote -- if you don't like the two party politics and their being beholden to corporate power, which has resulted in a sovereignty of corporations over the sovereignty of people in this country -- and you go to the polling booths and vote for either a Republican or a Democrat, you are basically saying, 'We don't like where you going, but we're going to vote for you anyway.' What do you think they are going to say to you, implicitly? They are going to say, 'You're a sucker.' They are going to say, 'You have got no where to go. We're taking you for granted.' And therefore, *you're taken*.^[33]

We have *plenty* of these ideas and many, many more. But *only* if we strengthen the roots of our democracy by our mind, our spirit, and our resolve never to allow a brief, euphoric moment of civic enthusiasm to wither away. But to fuel a steadfast sense of determination, day-after-day, week-after-week, until we not only have a higher estimate of our own significance but until we say to future generations, 'We are the generation that did not refuse to carry the cudgels and to assume the responsibility to bequeath to you a society that you can be proud of and one that uplifts the rest of the world.'

I want to conclude on this note. I didn't talk much about the rest of the world. We are

witnessing some enormously tragic trends in the world. Global infectious diseases; starvation; enormous devastation to the environment like land erosion, ozone depletion, depletion of the oceans, and the cutting of equatorial forests. Undermining the very sustenance of poor people around the world. This is where environmental devastation really comes home to people.

Global corporations like tobacco companies, spreading cancer around the world trying to hook millions of youngsters in Asia, Africa and South America the way they did in this country now that they have to back off a little here. Their ferociousness is spreading around the world.

Drug companies that have the wherewithal to research vaccines and drugs against tuberculosis, malaria, AIDS, and others, saying 'There's not much money in it. We'd rather conduct research for lifestyle drugs like anti-balding drugs, or viagra drugs, etc.'

Dictatorships in name, dictatorships in reality if not in form. Corporations selling weapons to dictatorships and oligarchies who use it against their own people. Our corporations -- with \$6 billion a year of your tax subsidies -- selling napalm, landmines and jet planes to these authoritarian regimes.

Companies that are depleting the ozone and feeding global warming. The fossil fuel companies lobby against solar energy start-ups and try to turn government policy away from solar energy.

There are a lot of the problems we are witnessing that our corporations are deeply involved in. We have to create a very different foreign policy. It is now 10 years after the Soviet Union has ended -- where there is not even a shred of a pretext for continuing our government and your tax dollar support of dictatorship and oligarchies abroad. We have to have a foreign policy, with all the creative ideas that we can muster, that wholeheartedly sides with and supports the workers and peasants of the world.

I hope you leave this wonderful convocation with a renewed sense of fighting the defeatism that is confronting a new third party. To tell these doubters that Jesse Ventura had 8% before he got on to the debates, and he got on to the debates, and he is governor of Minnesota. I went to see him a few weeks ago and we had a press conference. I asked him, 'What is it that caused you to win?' He said number one: the debates, number two: state public financing, and number three: same-day voter registration. And pretty soon we'll put a number four up there very visible: proportional representation.

I suggest that when the doubters and the defeatists and the least-of-the-two-evil enthusiasts confront you with their arguments, that you tell them, "How could nature every regenerate itself if it squelched seeds and made them unable to sprout? How can the business marketplace ever regenerate itself if it stifled innovators and entrepreneurs? Why do you think that the two party duopoly, this corporate party with two heads wearing different make-up, could possibly regenerate itself as long as it continues to squelch -- through all kinds of legal barriers and other obstacles -- new political parties?' It can't and it won't. We are going to start this new movement from the grassroots all over the country and show in November that the pundits were way off and that we are going to surprise people in many, many other ways.^[34]

The development of a true multi-party system in this country will be instrumental in establishing a political system that truly responds to and addresses people's interests and concerns. Another key element will be changing the voting system to promote greater participation in elections and governance.^[35] And just in from the Nader 2000 Campaign newsletter:

Date: Tue, 26 Sep 2000 18:49:54 -0400
From: Nader 2000 Campaign <campaign@votnader.com>
Subject: Nader 2000 Action Alert

Dear Citizen Activist:

Our campaign is continuing to build momentum. We had over 12,000 people for our super rally in Minneapolis on Friday and over 10,000 in Seattle on Saturday. The protests and letters about our exclusion from the debates are having an impact so keep it up. We are now focused on the Super-Rally scheduled for Boston on October 1, just two days before the first scheduled debate.

Direct Action Mission: The debate chickens have appeared with great fanfare at protests all across the country. This week we would broaden the protest message to include the Issue Ducks. Let everyone know how you feel about the way Bush and Gore duck all the important issues. Wave signs: "Universal Health Care: Ducking the Issue" or "Death Penalty: Ducking the Issue" or "Living Wage: Ducking the Issue" or other issues that matter to you. A chorus of duck calls complements a "let Ralph debate" chant quite nicely. Remember: always civil, always peaceful, always polite, but let's get the point across, let's get the cameras' attention, and let's get Ralph into the debates!

Outreach Mission: The mission this week is to register 10 friends or family members to vote. Although there are more than six weeks until Election Day, important deadlines are fast approaching: Nevada and Rhode Island have the earliest deadlines on October 7, but by October 13, any remaining unregistered voters in most states will be shut out of the November election entirely.

The Nader2000 website, <http://votenader.com/>, now features a chart that spells out voter registration deadlines in each state (and DC). It can be found at <http://votenader.com/deadlinechart.html>. Keep in mind, in most cases new forms have to be received by these deadlines, so now is the time to put all voter-registration efforts into high gear. New voters can also register through the home page of our site, by clicking "Register to Vote" under the "What You Can Do Today" heading.

Print Mission: Our topic for this week's letter-to-the-editor is the revenge of the non-voter. The following are talking points for such a letter:

Over half of the eligible voters in the United States, particularly young people, do not vote. Politicians depend on this low voter turnout to maintain the status quo. As Ralph Nader often says, "If you don't turn on to politics, politics will turn on you."

Ralph Nader has proposed the following solutions help reduce the number of non-voters in the United States:

- Publicly financed campaigns to take special interest money out of elections and make politicians more responsive to the public interest
- Free airtime for ballot qualified candidates
- Proportional representation so that everyone's votes would count
- Same-day voter registration
- Instant runoff voting to ensure that candidates cannot win with less than a majority and allow people to rank candidates, eliminating the "spoiler" argument against third parties.
- Open the Presidential debates to candidates who have achieved ballot access in enough states to win the election
- Implementing a "None of the Above" option in elections to force a new election if only one candidate is running with little support or if there is no real difference between two or more candidates

We must all register to vote, so that as Michael Moore has said, November 7 will be "Payback Time -- the revenge of the Non-Voters!" Be sure in your letter-to-the-editor to include your state's voter registration qualifications and deadlines and local places where people can register.

Contrast of the Week: "In the last three years alone, the IMF has: contributed to and worsened financial crises in Asia and elsewhere; watched as billions of dollars of its money was stolen in Russia; failed to respond in meaningful ways to the growing global demand for debt cancellation

for poor countries; bailed out big banks while impoverishing the poor; and continued to push its environmentally destructive export-led development model." --Ralph Nader

This week, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will hold their semi-annual meeting in Prague, Czech Republic. While these organizations claim to promote economic growth and create jobs by bailing poor and developing countries, they actually force countries pay off their debts while ignoring their own people. In other words, they illustrate the trend of reckless globalization promoted by multinational corporations and their friends in the Democratic and Republican parties. The policies of the Fund and the Bank encourage free trade and lax labor laws, perpetuating labor abuses in developing countries. In turn, corporations take advantage of the policies by paying low wages, ignoring workplace safety standards, and firing workers that try to organize unions.

Ralph Nader has a profoundly different take on the IMF, World Bank, and corporate globalization than the other candidates for President. Unlike Al Gore and George Bush, Nader is not beholden to corporate interests and will not remain silent on the corporate globalization promoted by these institutions. In contrast to Gore and Bush:

- Ralph Nader believes that the IMF and World Bank have led to poverty, deepening economic inequality, and environmental degradation all over the world
- Ralph Nader would fight the unfettered corporate globalization like those promoted by the IMF and World Bank, and demand that these institutions focus on people ahead of profit
- Ralph Nader would negotiate trade agreements that would force multinational corporations operating abroad to respect labor laws and environmental standards in debt-ridden nations
- Ralph Nader would support trade agreements making it more difficult for corporations to close factories in the United States

Ralph Nader has a different position from Gore and Bush on globalization. He can stand up to multinational corporations because, he is not owned by them. As the media covers the IMF and World Bank meeting in Prague from September 26-28, use it as an opportunity to tell your friends and colleagues how Ralph Nader differs from Gore and Bush and puts people before corporations when it comes to globalization issues.

To subscribe, unsubscribe, or change options: <http://votenader.org/newsletter.html>. Through this weekly newsletter you will get updates about the latest happenings in the Nader 2000 campaign: you can find out how you can volunteer (<http://votenader.org/volunteer.html>), how you and your friends can make contributions (<http://votenader.org/donate.html>) and how to **encourage others to volunteer and work to transform this year's race into an open debate on corporate control of our democracy and our lives.**

If you haven't registered to vote, go to <http://www.beavoter.com/register.html>.

Removing corporate influence from the election process is an essential component of the work to end global corporate and financial rule. As stated so accurately by Ralph above, "We have to make sure that this relentless drive for control by the commercial instinct -- which every major religion in the world has warned us about for two thousand years -- should never be given excessive power. Because in its singular focus and drive and lack of respect for other values, it destroys these other values in a paroxysm of greed that implodes on itself."

This is the essential work before us. It is what we must do for the children, the earth, and all that follows us here. In Seattle, Kevin Danaher of Global Exchange likened the task of

creating a global expression of civil society that serves the needs of all to what occurred during the Middle Ages in the construction of the great cathedrals in Europe. Some of these edifices took upwards of hundreds of years to build. The people who laid the foundations for those towering structures knew they would not live to see their completion *and* they knew the foundations had to be extremely well-conceived and well-layed to support all the weight they would carry. The tribute to those people's intelligence and methodicalness is the fact that hundreds of years later those superstructures still stand.

This sort of dedication to a long-term vision and the devotion to carrying it out meticulously can serve as a useful guide to all of us today. Ending corporate rule and manifesting a global civil society that works for all will not occur overnight. All people who vote Green or vote alternative in November will help increase the momentum away from corporate dominance and control and towards global democratic governance.

Personally, i see our current representative system of governance as deeply flawed and limited. i want to see and be part of a global *participatory* democratic system. There are precedents. We can learn *so much* from the Hau de no sau nee (Iroquois) who to this day continue practicing the oldest living *participatory* system of democracy on earth.^[36] This endeavor, to serve and honor life's needs, requires from all of us who are willing to devote ourselves, the task of effecting a permanent transformation of the way we use our time, our knowledge and our estimate of our own significance.

Footnotes

1. **Colombia Certification** "The following document was prepared by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) as part of the certification process mandated by U.S. law."
Mirrored on ratical in its entirety at <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/Columbia/certification.html>. See also August 28th Press Release that sets the context for the Certification document.
2. *COLOMBIA The Ties That Bind: Colombia and Military-Paramilitary Links*, Human Rights Watch, February 2000, Vol. 12, No. 1 (B). Mirrored on ratical in its entirety at <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/Columbia/TiesThatBind.html>.
3. "Columbia: A Call to Witness", *Witness for Peace Newsletter*, Summer/Fall 2000 · Volume 17. Available on ratical in its entirety at <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/Columbia/CallToWitness.html>.
4. U'wa Communique, September 11, 2000, <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/Columbia/Uwa091100.html>.
5. *The Buying of the President 2000*, Footnotes. "Center for Public Integrity Holds News Conference on High-Dollar Contributions to Presidential Candidates; Washington, D.C.," Charles Lewis - Speaker, January 5, 2000. Excerpt mirrored on ratical at <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/Columbia/Gore+Oxy.html>.
6. The term used by Ward Morehouse and Richard Grossman, of the Program on Law, Corporations and Democracy (www.poclad.org). See <http://www.ratical.org/corporations/RevokingCorp.html#SLF>.
7. See Gordon Welty's Notes concerning 'legal' versus 'natural' person issues of corporate gigantism at <http://www.ratical.org/corporations/TransNCnotes.html>.
8. An Urgent Message From Our Colombian Partners, July 1, 2000, <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/Columbia/BogotaUC.html>.

9. "One World--One World Government Bretton Woods or The United Nations?" by David C. Korten, IFG Washington - World Bank/IMF Teach-In, 4/14/00. Available on ratical in its entirety at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/ifg041400DK.html>.
10. *Ibid.*
11. See the document, "sl 454, National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign Records, 1980-1986, 242 Folders, Western Historical Manuscript collection, University Of Missouri-St. Louis", mirrored at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/whm0454.html>.
12. "Monopoly Militarism and the U.S. Monopoly on the Militarization of the World," by Randall Caroline Forsberg, IFG Washington - World Bank/IMF Teach-In, 4/14/00. Available on ratical in its entirety at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/ifg041400RF.html>.
13. *Global Action To Prevent War, A Coalition-Building Effort To Stop War, Genocide, & Internal Armed Conflict*
GLOBAL ACTION TO PREVENT WAR is a comprehensive program for moving to a world in which deadly conflict is rare and brief -- in other words, a program for abolishing war. The means for doing this already exist. What **GLOBAL ACTION** adds is an integrated program and a timeline for progress in conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peace enforcement, disarmament, and the implementation of criminal law regarding genocide and crimes against humanity.
www.globalactionpw.org
14. *The WTO and the Global War System*. Mirrored on ratical in its entirety at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/WTOandGWSfp.html>.
15. *Ibid.*
16. "Seattle National Lawyers Guild Releases Draft Report on WTO Ministerial". Available on ratical at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/nlg070700.html>.
17. See Paul Hawkin's description of the methodical pepperspray applications by Police to the eyes of peaceful demonstrators in his on-the-scene account, N30, What Skeleton Woman Told the WTO in Seattle (<http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/PaulHawken.html>). See also many on-the-scene accounts describing such events available at Independent Media Center sites (www.indymedia.org).
18. "The Dark Side of Genetics and The Implications of the Biotechnology Revolution" by David Suzuki, IFG Seattle Teach-In, 11/27/99. Available on ratical in its entirety at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/ifg112799DS.html>.
19. "*Darkness in El Dorado*, The Yanomami People, Anthropology and Eugenics." Letter from Terry Turner, Professor of Anthropology, Cornell University to Leslie Sponsel, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. Available on ratical at <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/Yanomami.html>.
 See also: "Scientist 'killed Amazon indians to test race theory', Geneticist accused of letting thousands die in rainforest" by Paul Brown, Environment correspondent, September 23, 2000, *GuardianUnlimited* (UK)
20. "Towards a New Ethic of Science", Mae-Wan Ho, Institute of Science in Society and Biology Department, Open University, Spring 2000, at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/MaeWanHo/newethic.html#organicRev>
21. "Organism and Psyche in a Participatory Universe" from *The Evolutionary Outrider. The Impact of the Human Agent on Evolution, Essays in Honour of Ervin Laszlo* (D. Loye, ed.), pp. 49-65, Praeger, 1998 at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/MaeWanHo/organis.html#p1>
22. See "Asserting Democratic Control Over Corporations: A Call To Lawyers," by Richard Grossman and Ward Morehouse, *The National Lawyers Guild Practitioner - Current Problems Law and Practice*, vol. 52, no. 4, fall 1995, at <http://www.ratical.org/corporations/Call2Lawyers.html>.
23. "Taking on the Corporate and Financial Rulers: Our Goal is Political and Economic Democracy", by

David Korten, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Seattle, December 3, 1999 - WTO Week, Available on ratical at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/afterSeattle.html>.

24. "Bush and Gore Make Me Wanna Ralph: A Letter from Michael Moore to the Non-Voters of America, July 19, 2000 at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/MMooreNader.html>.
25. "Challenging Autocratic Governance That Serves The Interests Of Global Corporations," by Ralph Nader, IFG Washington - World Bank/IMF Teach-In, 4/14/00. Available on ratical in its entirety at <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/ifg041400RN.html>.
26. *Ibid.*, <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/ifg041400RN.html#challengeAutocraticGuv>
27. *Ibid.*, <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/ifg041400RN.html#credibility>
28. *Ibid.*, <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/ifg041400RN.html#organize>
29. *Ibid.*, <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/ifg041400RN.html#realDevelopment>
30. *Ibid.*, <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/ifg041400RN.html#moralImperative>
31. "Wasting Your Vote, Wasting Our Democracy", Ralph Nader speaking in Santa Cruz, August 23, 2000, <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/082300.html>
32. *Ibid.*, <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/082300.html#CFR>
33. *Ibid.*, <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/082300.html#wastingDemocracy>
34. *Ibid.*, <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/RalphNader/082300.html#ideas>
35. For more on voting systems see The Center for Voting and Democracy (www.fairvote.org):
"The Center for Voting and Democracy studies how voting systems affect participation, representation and governance and disseminates its findings to civic organizations, elected officials, journalists and the general public. We are particularly knowledgeable about:
 1. redistricting alternatives;
 2. the range of proportional representation and semi-proportional voting systems for legislative elections; and
 3. the option of instant runoff voting for elections with a single winner.We believe it is essential to consider voting system reforms that could reinvigorate American politics, decrease the impact of money in elections, promote greater participation in elections and governance and provide for majority rule, fair representation of political minorities and more inclusive representation of women and racial and ethnic minorities."
36. See The Six Nations: Oldest Living Participatory Democracy on Earth at http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/6Nations/