

The Anti-Globalization Movement: From The WTO to the World Social Forum

February 1, 2005

Introduction

World Economic Forum (Davos, Switzerland)
World Social Forum (Porto Alegre, Brazil)

I. Social Movement Construction

1. Aldon Morris, Origins of the Civil Rights Movement
Indigenous perspective: (charismatic and resource)
When C and R come into effect – movement often dies.

Civil Rights Movement
WPPSS/ public power ownership/ratepayer movement
2. **Activists operating through a well developed base**
Social organizations, organized groups, experienced leaders, & social resources
Internal organization of indigenous resources that enables movement to build
With Indigenous financing and internal communication.
3. **Task:** Transformation of existing resources into power instruments
4. **Methodology: Autonomous space for social analysis**
Half way houses (skills, tactical knowledge, media, history, vision)
Cross Cultures for vision
5. **New organization forms with political voice:**
A local movement center with recruitment capacity and
Group centered leadership and new decision making.

II. Prelude to Seattle (Where Did the 50,000 come from?) A ten year incubation or ten years of momentum.

1. **Almost Defeated NAFTA in 1993.** US labor, environmental and community opposition. Inter-movement understanding. International linkages.
Diminution of racist explanations for industrial job loss.

2. **Zapatista Call. NAFTA death knell. Call to civil society to organize new social order based on cooperation and social justice, not competition and inequality. Introduction of centrality of civil society as agent, indigenous voice, autonomous communities/cultures, politics of armed defense.**

3. **US Renewal and victory.** Denial of Fast Track Authority to Clinton in 1996. Derailed the FTAA negotiations. Established power of the new alliance of Labor (USWA), environmental and public interest (Public Citizen).

4. **Local Government Inclusion** with victory over MAI secret negotiations in Paris 1998.. Above alliance exposes MAI negotiations. Canada and France pull out. local governments pass resolutions to protect sovereignty from a Chapter 11 assault..

5. **Radical environmental activists** linked to labor to defend the forests and skilled in direct action tactics, symbolized by alliance of Earth First and Kaiser steelworkers locked out for over a year just prior to WTO Ministerial.

III. **The Anti-globalization Movement at Seattle WTO Ministerial**

The Enemy Landed. After 10 years of struggle against free trade, the Organizational representation of it all came to Seattle

In a Particular Place. The Seattle Labor Movement led by indigenous leader Attached to a social base and a history (Seattle General Strike).

After Training in Direct action and Legal Resistance by the Direct Action Network and recruitment by Art and Revolution for seven months

A preparatory half-way house in October, 1999 at Evergreen to facilitate social analysis, face to face interaction and allow for parallel organizing.

With Massive Issue Education. Preparatory Forums and workshops.

New organizational forms. DAN, Convergence centers, spokes-councils, Affinity groups, strategic pies and innovative tactics protected by a broader parallel movement.

IV. Assessment of Anti-Globalization Movement Post Seattle

Strengths

Exposed the World Trade Organization to the public
Stopped new round of negotiations (“inevitability” challenged)
Showed strength of parallel organizing & local/international coordination
Developed independent media (Indy Media) to counter commercial media
Sparked other mobilizations (in US and Europe: Building on Seattle)
Facilitated internal revolt within WTO members (Green Room Consensus)
Nation State revolt continued over service deal and agriculture (Cancun 2003)

Difficulties

No After-Action Assessment (unlike Seattle Police Department)
Confusion of direct action tactics and new forms with strategic alliance
No strategic response to target isolation, pre-emptive arrests and infrastructure attacks by police state.
FTAA in Miami – riot porn vs community based alliances. (Immokalee)

V. World Social Forum in Porto Alegre

Counter to World Economic Forum/Another World is Possible
January 2001 to 2005 (2004 in India)
French Le Monde and European (ATTAC) aligned with Brazilian NGOs
A space for civil society (no political parties)
Showcase Porto Alegre, Participatory Budget, PT control
Sparked numerous preparatory forums over the years.
Highlighted Lula’s eventual presidential victory in Brazil.
2005: 120,000 delegates, 100 countries, 2000 workshops
A forum, not deliberative, no decisions by body, horizontal, etc
Political action should be taken by organizations, not forum itself.

Internal Tensions

Mecca for utopias or instrument of action (Jose Saramago)?
Porto Alegre Manifesto – 19 intellectuals and 12 proposals (IC)
Bernard Cassen, Samir Amin, Immanuel Wallerstein, Tariq Ali
Specific Proposals for “another world is possible.”
Next Forum in Venezuela (?) with President Chavez Frias (?)

Value Interaction/Conflict