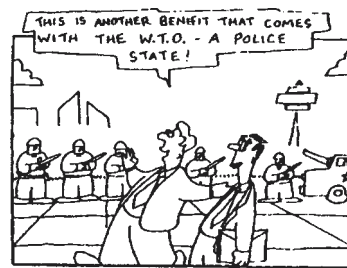




WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER CHUFFED TO BITS!

SchNEWS

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BARE BREASTS & RUBBER BULLETS

"They never knew what hit them. They had assumed it would be business as usual, the way it had been for decades. Rich men gather, meet, decide the fate of the world, then return home to amass more wealth. It's the way it's always been. Until Seattle."

Michael Moore, U.S comedian (not director general of the WTO)

*"The very fact that the World Trade Organisation is global headline news is a sign of our power, for the high priests of capital fully expected their summit to be convened in the usual frat*boy secrecy. We have done our part to help blow away both their cover and their aura of invincibility. Never again will the economists and technocrats be able to decide the fate of the world...in anonymous tranquility."*

The Aggressive Panhandlers**

"They are worried about a few windows being smashed. They should come and see the violence being done to our communities in the name of liberalisation of trade." A Philippino leader

As the gas cleared over Seattle after another uneasy stand-off with the black clad robocops, word on the street last Friday was that the talks had collapsed. There would be no millennium round agreement by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The people on the streets had won a stunning victory.

And what a victory it was. Who would have thought, even a year ago, that sixty thousand people would turn to greet delegates of the World Trade Organisation. Who'd have thought that trade unionists would be marching with environmentalists - people dressed as turtles marching with sacked steelworkers, the topless lesbian avengers mingling with farmers. Churchgoers with the anarchist black-block.

The mass protests helped focus worldwide attention on what the WTO really stands for - and it crumbled under the pressure.

Forget all their talk about 'free trade', the WTO is nothing more than a nasty little organisation fighting for the rights of multinational organisations to dismantle every country's labour and environmental laws (see inside for more details).

Groups like SchNEWS have been shouting from the rooftops for ages about this,

but no one seemed really bothered cos let's face it economics is hardly the sexiest subject in the universe. But last week's event changed all that, with seven days of protest that shook the corporate world.

"It is important to acknowledge the fact that we made history this week. No amount of corporate spin doctoring or liberal hand wringing can diminish this reality." The Aggressive Panhandlers

WHERE'S THE ORGANISATION ?

"My mother's a member of the Women's Institute and they organise their fetes better than this." UK Trade Minister Steven Byers who went to the WTO and got hit with pepper spray for his trouble.

It started quietly enough on the **Sunday** with a few hundred people demonstrating outside The Gap over the sweatshop conditions workers have to endure to produce the company's clothes. Then on the **Monday** there was a demonstration by the turtle posse pointing out how the WTO had ruled America's Endangered Species Act illegal. Later, French national hero Jose Bove, who recently demolished McDonalds, demonstrated outside his favourite store as a protest against U.S sanctions on French cheese. Things were hotting up. The last thing the U.S President must have expected was to be flying into a city under a state of emergency with the National Guard on the streets?

"If you were alive, the police gassed you. People coming back from work, kids, women, everyone. People would go out of their houses to see what was happening because these tear gas guns sound like a cannon - and they would get gassed."

Eyewitness account from Jim Desyllas

Tuesday morning and already thousands are on the streets blocking roads and stopping delegates from getting into the WTO Conference centre. The opening ceremony is abandoned and talks delayed for more than five hours.

Around 10 a.m we have a taste of what's to come as riot cops, with 3 foot clubs & dressed like Darth Vader, start spraying CS gas into the faces of people peacefully blocking the roads. One man commented, "When the gas masks came out we knew they were planning to use pepper spray on the people sitting down. The crowd was pleading with them.

We locked legs and arms and I pulled a bandana over my face, covering my mouth and eyes. People began screaming in pain. I felt a blow from a club, the cops were beating people as well. A police officer pulled my hand away from my face and pepper-sprayed me in the eyes. The rest of the crowd pulled people to safety and began washing their eyes with a solution of baking soda and water to counter the effects of the blinding pepper spray."

By mid-day 30,000 trade unionists joined the demonstrations, "I'm not a trade barrier" reads the marching turtles' banner; giant puppets weave their way down the streets, superheroes slide round corners, cloaks flying, a group of Father Christmases march along waving at the crowd, doubling over with laughter, "WTO? Ho, ho, ho." A Reclaim The Streets sound system blasts out funk, rappers rhyming "WTO, it's gotta go". SchNEWS meet Mexican, Indian and French farmers, Tibetan refugees, steelworkers, striking cabbies, anti logging and deforestation protesters, all experts on the WTO, its power and its direct repercussions on their lives. These people are no random mob, they have gathered from all over the world to be heard and no matter how many issues are at stake here they speak with one voice, united in their opposition to an institution which has no respect for the ordinary people of the world. They are calling for an end to sweatshops, to child labour and the erosion of environmental laws and the third world debt. These people are well informed, well organised and determined.

As one Labour correspondent put it, "Ten years ago, who would have thought that Teamsters and kids in dreadlocks would be marching together, let alone under the banner of 'fair trade'?" "I never got on with environmentalists until I realised we were all fighting for the same thing," said Dan Petrowski, a Michigan steelworker who was made redundant four months ago. Still, what did that matter to the police who lost patience with the crowd spraying them with jets of gas like water cannons again and again?

SCHNEWS US-UK VOCAB WATCH
* Frat - fraternity, secret student society.
* * Panhandlers - beggars.

Meanwhile, groups of anarchists went shopping. McDonalds, Niketown, Gap, Starbucks and the American Bank all had their windows smashed. One man from the U.K told SchNEWS, *“Even as a pacifist I was pleased. No-one was hurt. It seemed trivial in comparison to the scenes I had witnessed earlier. This wasn’t violence against people it was violence against the property of some of the world’s most hated multinationals.”*

As early evening approached with the crowds remaining on the streets, and the Clinton administration leaning on the mayor to do something quick, the National Guard were called out for the first time in Seattle in modern times. A no-protest zone and a 12 hour curfew placed in the downtown area - the first time since the second world war. This seemed to be the signal for the robo-cops to unleash an arsenal of weapons against anyone who got in their way for the next 24 hours. SchNEWS is used to a bit of argy-bargy with the police but this was something else.

BUTT-PLUGGIN’ IN THE USA

“Hey! Check it out - these motherfuckers are firing butt-plugs at us,” called out one grinning member of the crowd brandishing a two by four inch rubber bullet.

As night drew in the forces of darkness began pushing people into the the city’s bohemian/gay district, the Capitol Hill residential area. This was way out of the no-protest zone, and it infuriated locals who came out of the streets in their hundreds. Seattle Gay News takes up the story. “Numerous accounts from witnesses all describe excessive force by police who appeared to have no real reason to be on Capitol Hill. The area is outside of the curfew and no-protest zones. One resident told us, “I haven’t been marching, but when the cops turn your neighbourhood into a war zone, it’s time to get involved.”

WEDNESDAY *“The intolerance of democratic dissent, which is a hallmark of dictatorship was unleashed in full force.”* Vandana Shiva, director of Research Foundation New Delhi.

Early morning and the mass arrests begin. If yesterday’s show of force by the authorities was meant to scare people from demonstrating then they were mistaken. Thousands of people are regrouping at a steelworkers rally. People grow restless at the speeches and start leaving for the no-protest zone. “Whose streets? Our streets” everyone chants. One man explained to SchNEWS what happened next, *“Eventually we were pushed onto the main road with shoppers, protesters, cars, buses. They’re not going to gas us here, are they? I thought. A second later an explosion followed by a barrage of plastic bullets, gas, pepper spray, concussion grenades. Mental. People sitting in their cars were gassed, people leaving work. Everyone.”*

The police say they are using non-lethal weapons but one man reports listening to a local radion station when a man calls in weeping - his wife had been attacked by the police while leaving work and she lost their child - she was 4 months pregnant. A doctor blamed this on the gas.

SO THIS IS FREE TRADE?

Many western multi-nationals hop and skip between the North and South, relocating to discourage unionisation or to keep wages low. Nike first started to manufacture its trainers in Taiwan and South Korea. When workers attempted to organise for better wages in the 1970’s, Nike pulled out and started production in the Peoples Republic of China and Vietnam, where the workers can be paid 19 cents or less an hour to produce \$100 trainers.

It’s getting scary, the town centre is emptying of people as the curfew approaches. The police are roaming around everywhere, kitted-out in the most bizarre Stormtrooper meets Ninja Turtle outfits and riding everything from bicycles to a huge tank-like thing, inappropriately named the ‘Peacekeeper’. If you aren’t falling head over heels with laughter, your legs are being shot out from under you by rubber bullets!

Still, if it’s scary for the demonstrators at least the WTO delegates aren’t having much fun. One New Zealand delegate confides in us that there is confusion inside the conference, and in the evening everyone is holed up in their hotels unable to leave.

THURSDAY

Residents and students march, chanting, from Capitol Hill to join a farmers rally, “Ain’t no power like the power of the people ‘cos the power of the people don’t stop”. Thousands then march towards the County Jail where hundreds of protestors are being held, most not giving even their names. The jail is surrounded by people holding hands. A temporary autonomous zone is established as people keep vigil, sleeping, eating, making music and speeches demanding the release of our brothers and sistas. A party evolves outside the jail as people drum, sing, juggle and dance, chanting “This is what democracy looks like”. At the windows we can see the silhouettes of prisoners arms waving as they dance in solidarity.

FRIDAY EVENING

These people just don’t give up. A couple of hundred have gathered at the Westin Hotel to support some people who have d-locked themselves to the hotel’s entrance.

It’s here that SchNEWS hears the news - the talks have collapsed. There will be no millennium round. It doesn’t quite sink in.

Inside the Conference centre, the delegates from the poorer countries complained that they were being sidelined, while the world’s elite held secret ‘green room discussions’. Most of the world’s poorest countries have neither the capacity nor the means to implement even the previous round of talks which finished five years ago, let alone take on board a whole new round of negotiations, and couldn’t even afford to have a permanent representative in Geneva where the rolling talks are held. (30 countries couldn’t even afford to send delegates to Seattle!).

One high-level U.S. journalist said, “The talks failed because of the protests. They failed because of the chaos. They failed because Clinton pushed the labour working group. And they failed because the Southern hemisphere rebelled.” The U.S. labour movement forced the Clinton Administration to ensure a working group on labour, which would, in particular, seek to eliminate all global child labour and encourage unionisation. Clinton’s speech served to enhance the irony when the Mayor of Seattle declared a “no protest zone” around the Niketown and Nordstrom department stores but encouraged people to keep shopping there. The citizens of Seattle were free to shop for merchandise made in sweatshops, they just couldn’t complain about sweatshops.

WE WON YOU BASTARDS

“We want a new millennium based on economic democracy, not economic totalitarianism. The future is possible for humans and other species only if the principles of competition, organised greed, commodification of all life, monocultures, monopolies and centralised global corporate control of our daily lives enshrined in the WTO are replaced by the principles of protection of people and nature, the obligation of giving and sharing diversity, and the decentralisation and self-organisation enshrined in our diverse cultures and national constitutions.” Vandana Shiva

What SchNEWS did see last week was how the thin veil of democracy so easily falls away when those in power are really threatened. That the Chief of Police has since resigned gives some indication of how out of control the robo-cops were.

But what was far more important was that ordinary people made history last week. The thousands of diverse groups that had come together to challenge the corporate power that is taking over our world. And for a week at least, we won.

ACTS OF SOLIDARITY

* The Longshore and Warehouse Union shut down the Port of Seattle and dozens of ports along the West Coast.

* Seattle taxi-drivers chose November 30th to strike over worsening pay and conditions. When SchNEWS asked one taxi-driver about Starbucks he told us, “I don’t drink there - they’re capatalist bastards.” And what if other taxi-drivers break the strike? “They’ll get shot buddy!” Just like English cabbies eh?

* The Firebrigade Union refused to turn their fire hoses upon the protesters despite repeated requests from the police.

* One delivery boy handed over his pizzas to the demonstrators outside the Westin Hotel, rather than give them to the right-wing talk radio station presenters who had ordered them.

SOME OF THE BEST BANNERS

‘If you think the WTO is bad you should hear about capitalism’; ‘Eat pussy, not cows’ (that one courtesy of the Lesbian Avengers).

‘WTO - practice safe trade’ (on a massive green condom made of 30 foods)

WTO LUCKY DIP

After riots in Geneva and Seattle SchNEWS asks what city will be the lucky winners for the next WTO bash?

THE BATTLE OF SEATTLE’

Wednesday 15th December 8pm

Film and talk by the SchNEWS crew at the Cultures of Resistance squat 168 Tower Bridge Road, London, SE1. Opens daily 2pm-9pm. During the evening a programme of events. Squat opens **Mon** 13th - till 18th, **Tue** Expose Cinema, **Wed** Experimental music **Fri** Caberet and **Sat**? Cheap cafe every evening. Space available for workshops/groups call 0958 765151

WORLD TYRANNY ORDER

"The rules set by the secretive WTO violate principles of human rights and ecological survival. They violate rules of justice and sustainability. They are rules of warfare against the people and the planet. Changing these rules is the most important democratic and human rights struggle of our times. It is a matter of survival." Vandana Shiva, Director of the Research Foundation for Science and Ecology

The World Trade Organization isn't familiar to most people, but it should be. It is, essentially, our unelected global government. Again and again we hear homage to the 'free market'. 'Liberalisation' is the mantra of global decision making. Reduce government rules and the free market will bring about economic growth which benefits us all, we are promised.

But reality is very different. For most of the world, we are anything but free. The giant multinationals are concentrating power and wealth at an alarming rate. Just one man, **Bill Gates, has as much money as 450 million of the world's poorest people.** The WTO has become the vehicle for liberalisation, with the multinationals at the wheel. It has the power to punish governments who 'interfere' with free trade, leaving the field wide open for multinationals in pursuit of profit.

WHAT'S THE SCORE, CORPORATE WHORE?

The WTO came into existence on the 1st January 1995 promising the world enormous economic gains. Instead its rulings have produced a "race to the bottom" in labour, social and environmental laws. Since it was created, every environmental, health or safety policy it has had to rule on, has been deemed an illegal trade barrier.

In fact the very threat of being taken to the WTO court has made countries water down legislation. And who makes these rulings? The majority of the tribunals are made up of men that meet in secret in Geneva, relying on documents never made public and on anonymous "experts" to make decisions and issue reports that the public cannot see until the hearing. There is no appeal procedure. Once a tribunal has declared a country's law WTO illegal, the country must change its law or facetradesanctions.

Developing countries generally do not have the money and expertise either to bring cases to the WTO or defend themselves before the WTO, thus enabling powerful companies and countries to flex their muscles, make threats and generally act like bully boys.

"In its short five years of existence, the WTO has had wide-ranging impacts on jobs, wages and livelihoods and on international and domestic environmental, health and food safety laws as well as economic development, human rights, global trade and investment. These impacts have not been systematically studied nor have they been well covered in the press. As a consequence, most people around the globe lack an awareness that their lives, livelihoods, food and environment - indeed, their very futures - are being shaped by a powerful new institution." Vandana Shiva

Public Citizen

DON'T BELIEVE US?

"Free trade is not leading to freedom; it is leading to slavery. Diverse life forms are being enslaved through patents on life, farmers are being enslaved into hi-tech slavery, and countries are being enslaved into debt and dependence and destruction of their domestic economies."

Vandana Shiva

Here are just some of the lesser known examples in the WTO's 'Race To The Bottom'

U.S. Weakens Clean Air Act

The first attack on environmental laws came just a few months after the WTO was introduced. Venezuela challenged a US Clean Air Act regulation that required gas refiners to produce cleaner petrol. Venezuela claimed it was biased against foreign refiners who could not meet the high standards. Despite getting no-where by lobbying Congress or by appealing through the state courts, the usual democratic and judicial systems, they finally went to the newly established, unelected, unaccountable WTO.

A WTO panel ruled against the US law as it was a barrier to Venezuelan trade, allowing countries to now export dirty petrol which results in ozone depletion, smog, health problems, etc.

Child labour

In WTO rulings, there is no discrimination (good so far.) between products on the basis of *where* or *how* they are produced (Oh.) It is the final product to be traded that counts, at the minimum possible cost, rather than the conditions under which the product is made. Child labour, forced labour and sweat-shops all help to bring the cost of trading down and keep the WTO bully-boys happy.

Voluntary eco-labelling could be illegal

Eco-labelling is a hot and sweaty subject in the WTO, with many far reaching consequences if they ever reach a final verdict. Labelling gives a consumer choice between ethical and non ethical products. It doesn't mean that companies must abide by certain ecologically sound standards, rather it is an incentive for certain companies to make their products more appealing to the ethical consumer. The WTO is pushing to forbid such distinctions as it discriminates products on the basis of where and how particular goods are made (see 'child labour example'), which is WTO illegal. The choice for ethical consumption therefore becomes a barrier to trade. In the case of "dolphin safe" labelling on tuna in the US, despite much publicity over the issue, fisherfolk are still allowed to use the large nets that kill dolphins, and use the dolphin safe labels, as long as they return to shore claiming that no dolphins were caught in their net.

GMO labelling is WTO-illegal

Likewise, potentially damaging foodstuffs are not allowed to be distinguished from definitely safe alternatives. Hazards such as allergies to hidden ingredients, and the ethical choices of vegetarians and religious believers are entirely overlooked. US delegates are hell bent on protecting industry at any costs. This is despite polls showing 93% of Americans favour labelling of gmo products.

WTO limits access to medicines in poor nations

Patents are the ultimate in corporate ownership, giving pharmaceutical companies exclusive rights on particular medication, taking control of local markets and resources. After 7 years of US pressure and threats, Thailand finally gave in and amended its 1992 Patent law by disbanding their Pharmaceutical Review Board (PRB), which controlled medical prices in the country, as it went against WTO rules.

Infant Formula Law weakened

Guatemala passed a law, based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) code, restricting the promotion of infant baby milk formula over breast milk for infants. This included banning packaging and advertising that may mislead illiterate parents into associating the formula with the good health

of their child. This infuriated Gerber Foods, multinational baby food manufacturers, whose trademark depicts a fat healthy baby. Gerber threatened Guatemala with WTO action under its Trademark Protection laws. The mere threat of WTO action was taken seriously by the Guatemalan Government who subsequently changed their law in favour of Gerber! Milk substitutes have been responsible for the deaths of 1.5 million infants a year according to UNICEF.

Small business over megastores

The WTO pampers to the needs of multinational companies rather than small localised businesses. Many of the trading rules implemented actually work adversely for smaller companies; chartering banks in foreign countries, relocating factories, acquiring foreign firms and global marketing campaigns.

Burmese dictatorship law challenged

Massachusetts stopped contracts with companies that have links with Burma, a nation renowned for human rights abuses through its military regime. This action protects the tax-payer from supporting the dictatorship. Yet by considering human rights issues, the WTO claims that Burma is at a disadvantage. Military dictatorship is, after all, irrelevant to trade (Hmmm.)

CANADA GROVELLING TO WTO

Canada has been one of the leading advocates in asking other nations to rethink their environmental laws in accordance with WTO standards. Canada is intent on selling off its old growth forests and natural resources, reducing their own environmental protection budgets by more than 40%, in the drive for economic profit. Canada is concerned over the EU's decision to restrict both the consumption of seal pelts and the purchases of furs from animals trapped in inhumane ways. Canada wants to continue and expand the sales of seal skins and wild animal furs trapped in the north. Canadian lumber industries are also concerned at some European countries' decisions to restrict purchases of wood and paper products that are clear cut or come from old growth forests. Canadian industries are challenging these environmental decisions using the under WTO to try to force the countries to buy Canada's wood and paper clear cut from their last old growth forests.

Canadian agricultural officials are also using the WTO to challenge the US food and school lunch vouchers system. If the vouchers are defined as "domestic agricultural subsidies" then the whole welfare system may be come under the tyrannical boot of the WTO. And don't forget Asbestos-the French have banned the substance. So Canada, one of the world's largest exporters of the lovely substance cried out for their trade chums in the WTO to sort out the French. Canada has claimed that even if the ban doesn't violate any WTO rules, then they are at least eligible for compensation as it impairs the expected trade benefits promised to them in the last Round of WTO negotiations.

According to the United Nations, in almost all developing countries that have undertaken rapid trade liberalisation, wage inequality has increased, most often in the context of declining industrial employment of unskilled workers and large absolute falls in their real wages, in the order of 20-30% in Latin American countries.

WHAT HAPPENED IN JAIL

Up to 600 people were arrested herded onto buses and taken to a nearby naval base. Most refused to get off the buses after being denied solicitors and went for over 13 hours without food or water. The next day people were taken to the County jail where many were tortured. One man Bistrot said he was denied phone calls for 50 hours and had his glasses removed which were never returned to him. He was in leg irons and handcuffs for fourteen hours. During the tear gassing session downtown (the day before he was arrested), he decided to lie down until the police had run past him. When he thought they had run past, he lifted his hat off his face, and at that moment two officers held him down, took out canisters of tear gas, unscrewed the tops, and then poured the tear gas directly into his eyes. The medics who treated him were afraid that he would suffer permanent eye damage and poured water into his eyes for two hours. But this was nothing compared to what he and 47 other prisoners experienced in the downtown jail. Prisoners were attacked by "henchmen" who locked the protesters together in a circle with handcuffs and leg irons. The prisoners were then separated. Bistrot witnessed guards spinning men with dreadlocks around in circles above the ground by their hair. "The guards continued to assert that [they had developed] a new science and that there will never be a wound." Then he related this 'new science', which was a form of torture that involved bending the arm back and twisting the fingers.

EYE WITNESS REPORT

"There was an old lady there. She had gone downtown by bus to buy something. This lady was in her 70s and I saw her trying to run, but she couldn't breathe. She was in shock. I carried her to a building entryway. She was gasping, terrified. She had been in Germany, and it was like she was having flashbacks. The tear gas sounds like gunfire and there were helicopters overhead, sirens, cops on horses, everything. So anyway there I was with her in this building and she wanted to go to the hospital but there was tear gas everywhere and I was afraid if I tried to move her she'd be gassed again. I went to this line of cops and begged - I mean begged - these riot police

to help her. They ignored me. They shot rubber bullets from four feet away into the face of a guy next to me, broke all his front teeth. I want to emphasise, these protesters were NOT violent people. They were the most non-violent people I have ever seen. Even when I was screaming at the cop, this girl came up to me and said, "Do not scream. This is non-violent." These people were too much to believe. They must meditate all the time."

EYEWITNESS REPORT

"The local news stations were reporting on the broken windows of businesses and not the broken bones of protesters. They reported on things like 'police fatigue.' Which I assume is when your arms get tired after you beat people for hours. They talked - and continue to talk about - the extreme 'restraint, open mindedness, and gentleness' displayed by police."

VIOLENCE BY THE NUMBERS

Estimated number of people shot with rubber bullets by police: 500 +

Estimated number of people shot with rubber bullets by protesters: 0

Estimated number of people gassed and pepper-sprayed by police: 1,000 - 3,000

Estimated number of people gassed and pepper-sprayed by protesters: 0

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AND IT WASN'T JUST SEATTLE

UK London: Euston station: Readers probably know the score. 2000 demonstrators turned up to protest against the privatisation of the underground. An unmarked cop van was overturned who then took over half an hour and several attempts to set the van on fire! Finally the van caught and was surrounded by around 30 photographers, at which moment police decided to clear the station. Lots of good media-riot shots, and - well SchNEWS is not one to get all conspiratorial and paranoid but the very next day the papers are full of stuff about the new Prevention of Terrorism Act (if you're interested in this campaign email news@bigissue.com) The Construction Safety Campaign held a demonstration outside the **Canadian Embassy**, because Canada are presently trying to get the WTO to overturn a decision to ban asbestos.

The **Lewisham** branch of Citibank was picketed by students. The bank is one of the major holders of student loan debt. This follows the global trend to underfund and privatise services, such as education, as part of the expansion of free trade with student grants being scrapped in favour of personal loans. **Covent Garden** magistrates court: The President of Nigeria, and Shell were put on trial by Nigerian exiles and British environmental activists. President Obasanjo, and Mark Moody-Stuart (of Royal-Dutch/Shell) faced a people's court to answer a number of charges relating to human rights abuses and environmental devastation in the Niger Delta. Unfortunately this was only street theatre and not the real thing. In **Leeds** city centre, around 50 protesters were faced by over 300 while they handed leaflets outside scummy companies. In **Halifax** a Nestle factory was occupied and a banner dropped outside. A procession marched through the centre of **Cardiff** calling for the WTO to be scrapped. A disused garage and an old toll house, soon to be "luxury flats" were squatted in **Totnes, South Devon**.

Holland: Amsterdam: Wot no plane ticket? No problem, 100 cheeky Dutch activists turned up at Schiphol Airport where official WTO sponsors Lufthansa, Northwest Airways and United Airlines had planes going to Seattle. Unable to blag tickets for this year's party in Seattle the protesters held a sit down in the check-in hall.

Italy: Padua: A peaceful demo in front of the genetics Exhibition "Bionova" attended by the top managers of GMO companies was attacked by the police. **Milan:** A group of 'White Coveralls' occupied a McDonald's, locking themselves on the building front and hanging enormous banners denouncing neo-liberism and its effects. **Rome:** Another group of White Coveralls occupied the HQ of the "National Committee for Biosafety", hanging banners against GMOs and the WTO.

Germany: Berlin: A parade was held in the city with demonstrators carrying banners with mock slogans and banners demanding more order, more security and 'wealth for eels' (a pun on 'wealth for all') confusing the local police who busied themselves protecting luxurious restaurants and expensive shops. **France:** Altogether 80,000 people joined protests across the country. **Paris:** 20,000 gathered to express a range of complaints, for example some made the link between the WTO and Mumia Abu Jamal, the black activist currently facing the death sentence in the US. The week before 5,000 French farmers with their sheep, ducks and goats feasted on regional products under the Eiffel Tower. **Toulouse:** Small groups invaded the main commercial street of the town with a sound-system and hung big anti-WTO signs on Christmas decorations with long sticks as subversive Father Christmases were busy giving capitalist rotten fruits to passer-by. **Dijon:** 40 activists occupied the Dijon Industry and Business Institute and a bank agency in the financial district. While 10 of them wearing D.I.Y. "Enslaved By Money?" shirts were block-

ing off the entrances of the two buildings using D-locks and arm-tubes, other groups threw fake blood and money on the pavements, glued posters on the walls and shops around, put up banners, played loud metallic drums, screamed in megaphones, gave out free tea, coffee and flyers about capitalism, anarchism and sustainable D.I.Y alternatives. 800 miners clashed with cops, ransacking a tax office and burning cars in 2 towns in eastern France.

Iceland: Anti-american protests targeted a military base and the US embassy demanding "Yanks out" (a promise still unkept since WWII).

Czech Republic: Prague: Food Not Bombs served up, and supermarkets were leafleted.

Turkey: The Working Group of Turkey Against the MAI (that's the ill-fated Multinational Agreement On Investment, folks) and Globalisation held a nine day 3,500 km march from Nov. 22nd-30th against the WTO and global capitalism. In Bergamo, there were protests against the Eurogold Corporation, which plans to operate a gold mine there using cyanide-based extraction methods and against seplanned thermal and nuclear power plants.

Switzerland: Geneva: At the home of the WTO, 5,000 people demonstrated, farmers gathered at the UN building and city folk marching on the international banking district. Meanwhile, electricity was cut at the WTO HQ for 2 hours.

India: Bangalore: Several thousand farmers from the district of Karnataka gathered to protest at the central train station before heading towards Mahatma Gandhi's statue. At the end of the demo they issued a 'Quit India' notice to Monsanto, telling them to leave the country or face direct action. Another notice was issued to the Indian Institute of Science, which has permitted Monsanto to do its research work in its premises. **Anjar (Narmada Valley):** A demonstration with bullock-carts took place, with more than 1000 people from around 60 villages participating in a colourful procession. **New Delhi:** 500 participated in a 3-day Dharna (sit-in) at Raj Ghat, where Mahatma Gandhi's ashes are buried, to protest against a proposed dam in Maheshwar. The following day 11,000 protest postcards were delivered to the German embassy while a demo took place outside asking them to pull out of the project. Later a statue symbolising the WTO was burned at Raj Ghat, and the 500 activists committed themselves to Gandhi's vision of a self-reliant, sustainable, solidarity-based India composed of village republics. The week before, 300 scaled the fence of the World Bank building, covering it with posters, graffiti, cow shit and mud, while others sang slogans and traditional songs at the gate. **The Philippines: Manila:** 8,000 union members and activists attended rallies in front of the US Embassy and near the Presidential palace to protest Philippine membership of the WTO.

Central Philippines: Thousands attended rallies against the 1995 Mining Act, which allows 100 percent foreign equity in local projects but has been challenged by tribespeople who say natural resources are a heritage that should not be exploited by overseas companies. There were actions in loads more countries but we don't know what they were. So there! * There's a meeting to discuss further tactics in the light of the failure of the Seattle WTO Ministerial meeting on Sat 15 Jan, 2pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

...and finally...

After the protests comes a shopping plea "Downtown merchants say the best way to help now is to shop" reports the Seattle Post-Intelligencer "Boy, if they want to help us, come down and shop."

disclaimer May the force be with you, readers. And we don't mean the fucking police force Cor blimley: last week SchNEWS said we want a safe and privatised railway system. We meant nationalised.