

LIFE IS NOT FOR SALE

**Women, children and nature – an
alternative to the policies of the World
Bank, International Monetary Fund
and World Trade Organization**

**Prague, 27 September
2000**

Collected Contributions

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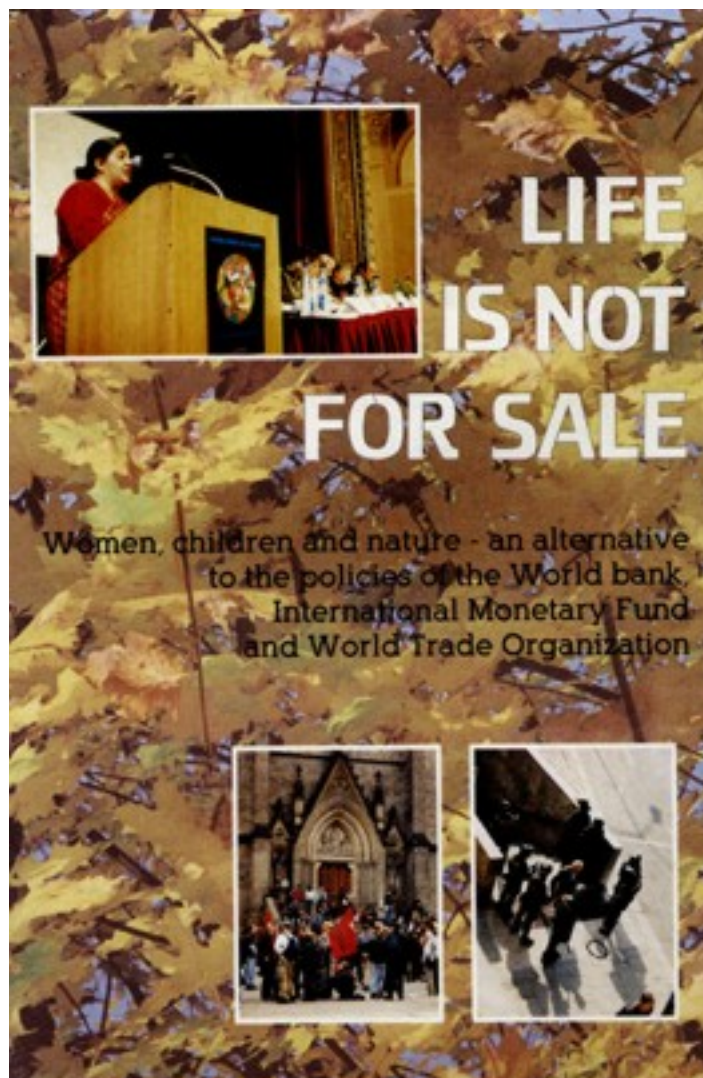
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Acknowledgements



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Marie Haisová, Agentura GAIA, Organizer of Conference "Life is not for Sale" on behalf of the Czech Republic

On 27.9.2000 Agentura GAIA and Diverse Women for Diversity held a conference in Prague on the theme "Life is not for Sale", concerning women children and nature, as an alternative to the policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Purpose of the Conference

The purpose of the Conference was to draw attention to the negative impact of the global financial institutions' policies through the eyes of people who have first hand experience of their consequences in everyday life in diverse parts of the world.

Main topics presented:

The main topics discussed were the following:

- 1. "The Unholy Trinity policy" – (WTO,WB and IMF) as the "war on women, nature and democracy"**
- 2. The role of multinational corporations in this "war"**
- 3. The EU expansion eastwards and its influence on women, nature and democracy**
- 4. Economic globalization and militarism**
- 5. The threat of genetically modified organisms (GMO) on biological and clean water resources**
- 6. What can we learn from "the South"?**
- 7. Towards a new, living democracy.**

Conference organizers:

Agentura GAIA was founded in 1997. Its mission is to look for new forms of interpersonal communication in the field of environmental concerns, education and culture. Within the framework of this mission, it develops projects such as "Green is Life" (putting trees back in the streets of towns and cities), "Women and the Environment" (promoting of the feminine principle) and alternatives to the consumerist way of life under the title "Money or Life" (search for solutions of the world environmental crisis). Since 1998, Agentura GAIA has been a member of the international women's network Diverse Women for Diversity (DWD). Agentura GAIA organizes seminars, workshops and conferences. The conference "Life is not for Sale" was one of them.

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Diverse Women for Diversity (DWD) is an international women's network which formulated its fundamental declaration in Bratislava in 1998. It attempts to provide information to the whole world on the consequences of neoliberal policies, on biological and cultural diversity, denounces the patenting of new life forms (GMO) by the multinational corporations. It works towards preserving the diversity of local communities, towards a new international democracy, based on non-violence, which naturally involves compassion for other living creatures. In Prague, members of DWD participated in world protests against WB, IMF and WTO.

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The "Unholy Trinity" Meeting in Prague

From 26. to 28.9.2000, the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) held their 55th annual conference in Prague, Czech Republic. Together with the World Trade Organization (WTO), these two institutions form the "Unholy Trinity" which spreads the dogma of neoliberal economic globalization throughout the world. The WB and IMF are notorious for their "Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)", which they have forced on indebted countries of the South as "medicine" for their economies. This "medicine" implies opening these countries for foreign investors and speculators, cutting down government spending for the poor, primary health care, education, small farmers and artisans and forcing the governments to accept the neoliberal Policy of Globalization, Liberalization and Privatization (the so-called GLP policy) for the benefit of the multinationals.

The results of this GLP policy have been disastrous everywhere. Small farmers and small local industries were ruined by strong international competitors; in many cases, the whole economy broke down. Women and children were the main victims, because public health, education and social services were abandoned and millions of jobs, particularly of poor women, were destroyed. A consequence of the economic crisis was an increase of social polarization and violence particularly against women, both in private as well as in public. International sex trade and new forms of sexual slavery are a direct result of this neoliberal policy. Further consequences are an increase in illegal arms- and drug-trade, social tensions, wars, migration and a dramatic devastation of nature everywhere (see Africa, ex-Yugoslavia, Russia, Asia).

Although the "Unholy Trinity" is aware of these negative results of their policy, they will not only continue with it in the South, but, through their Prague conference, want to spread the gospel of global "Free Trade" further to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEEs). But this policy for the CEEs is not only pursued by the WB, IMF and WTO, but also by the European Union. Particularly Germany and France are keen to promote the EU expansion towards the East. The European Commission in Brussels, as undemocratic an institution as the WTO, will guarantee that this EU-Expansion will take place under neoliberal conditionalities. If CEE countries want to join the club of the rich in Western Europe, they will have to accept austerity programs similar to the SAPs for the South with similar consequences.

Small farmers, women and indigenous people in the South understood very early that they had nothing to gain from the neoliberal economic "reforms". They launched many local, national and international campaigns against this policy, particularly against GATT, WTO, TRIPs, GMOs and the multinationals. They saw that this policy would undermine their livelihood, their control over their resources, their democracy and their dignity. The Women's Movement in Europe has so far not yet responded adequately to the threats of the GLP policy for women, nature, democracy and peace.

In September 2000, we had an opportunity in Prague to learn from the experience of indigenous people, women, small farmers and tradespeople from the "South". It is high time to give consideration to the environment, which constitutes the framework of our lives, and to take care of the victims. It is high time to understand the consequences of an economy driven and motivated purely by profit, which offers the whole world FOR SALE, and brand it as criminal, hostile to nature and women and undermining democracy.

... as a relief to such an arid topic, permit me to present you a reprint of a poll we have received by e-mail from our friends at the time these strategic meetings took place:

A company operating in public opinion surveys attempted to ask respondents all over the world the following question: "What is your opinion, please, on the lack of food in the rest of the world?"

The result was a total failure:

In Africa, nobody knew the meaning of "food".

In Western Europe, nobody knew the meaning of "lack".

In Eastern Europe, nobody knew the meaning of "opinion".

In Argentina, nobody knew the meaning of "please".

In the USA, nobody knew the meaning of "rest of the world".

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GLOBALIZATION AND POVERTY

Vandana Shiva, India

"Within the framework of globalization, the freedom of our basic rights is defined by being labeled terrorism. In those twenty years I have been participating in diverse demonstrations, I saw for the first time the new phenomenon of force dressed in uniform, that is, the anti-terrorist units which, however, do not fight terrorists, but are supposed to maintain protests and civil commotions within bounds."

I thank all those brave people who have overcome the obstacles and, on the 27th of September – when the IMF and WB meeting was held - and found their way to the Vinohrady National House and came to the conference. All those who dared to resist or to fight against the economic policy of the "Unholy Trinity": the World Bank, the international Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization and their impact must have always live in such a state of siege as here in Prague. From Seattle on, it is ever more

evident that the alternative possibility to face the pressure of the "Unholy Trinity" is the need to participate, that is to react.

There have been considerable demonstrations in India lately against the influence of multinational monopolies on the growing indebtedness of the Indian farmers. Over 50 000 farmers participated, protesting against the intentions of seed companies to exploit the Asian markets, driving them into poverty. There have been cases of farmers who had to sell a kidney or, if they were so deep in debt that they could not pay, they committed suicide.

Maybe you will know that one of the very important elements of globalization is the globalization of food production and distribution network. This means that food is no longer in the hands of women, but fall into the hands of multinational monopolies. Two of the key actors in the field of world-wide trade are: on one hand, Cargill which controls 70 % of the volume of seed trade and wrote down the agricultural policy for the WTO, on the other hand, number one in agricultural biotechnology is Monsanto. I would like now to explain briefly how the WB and IMF succeeded in imposing on the world the capacity to control the issues of biodiversity both in the case of foodstuffs and other commodities.

The UN found out in the sixties of the twentieth century, when it wanted to export seeds and chemicals to poor countries, that these do not have the means to buy them and prefer to practice organic, that is ecological, agriculture. The WB stepped in and promised India money to buy agricultural chemicals and sprays for their application etc. ...

In India globalization has been gestating for the past thirty years.

Eleven years ago, here in this country you fought against one type of dictatorship; we have been fighting more that fifty years ago against one type of colonialism, but, I think, now the time has arrived when we all will have to repeat these efforts to keep our freedom. This struggle is no luxury, for on its success depend the lives of more than two thirds of humanity.

...and establish a very costly production and processing of foodstuffs which was to be run by the state. Of course, they did not say it exactly in these words, but in this spirit. Moreover, investment in new seeds and sprays requires a considerable amount of water, for much irrigation is needed and the WB again promised to build reservoirs, dams and irrigation systems. This led to the uprooting and transfer of millions of people in India. Then, in the nineties, after more than ninety billions had been spent for an unsustainable development of agriculture, the WB came again on the scene and began to ask – though, in the sixties, the WB itself had insisted on the involvement of governments - in the nineties, it began to ask why did the government of any given country meddle. In the sixties they had forced India to begin to distribute new varieties of seeds through local seed companies.

Suddenly in the nineties, they now come asking why does not India allow multinationals to take care of the distribution of seeds and begin to proclaim that private entities should also enter the sector of water management, privatize and by some miracle save the situation. By promoting their previous policy, they were responsible for breaking the biological equilibrium and bringing drought to whole regions. Of course, after they had plunged India into debt, now they proclaim globalization, managed by the big corporations, and use again the stabilization loans to subsidy and support multinational corporations by other means.

The process is clear. The first step is to give money to third-world countries and thus plunge them into debt. Afterwards the multinational corporations use the loans or credits to concentrate power or control over certain sectors of the economy or industry and then the WB offers loans to service the debt; these are the stabilization loans for structural adjustments.

Globalization in India has been gestating practically for the past thirty years. Those debts for which many people have to pay with their own lives are in fact subventions or subsidies to corporations. At present, Punjab farmers cannot sell their cereals because our markets are on one hand swamped by subsidized cereals and imports from the North and on the other hand because certain limits to imports have been removed.

In 1965, India was forced to accept a program of cooperation in the field of food production with the aim of distributing or supplying food within the enormous country with many millions of inhabitants. Now the situation is such that Cargill can buy cereal supplies cheaper than the production costs of the original producers: this means their elimination. Under these conditions, understandably, people complain and protest, and the wave of protests looms ever higher. The role of the state used to be such, that when any large and powerful entity began to molest innocent people, the state would intervene. Globalization, of course, changed the role of the state completely. We could witness the results here in Prague. Now, the states, having been transformed into police units, allow corporate terrorism. There are the issues of intellectual property, issues of patents and then we get to the case of the man whose field was contaminated by chemicals and, instead of a redress, he himself was dragged into court. Free societies built on the foundation of free sources of livelihood and economic safety and security should exercise the rights of political freedoms provided they do not undermine the rights of others.

Within the framework of globalization, the freedom of our basic rights is defined by being labeled terrorism. In those twenty years I have been participating in diverse demonstrations, I saw for the first time the new phenomenon of force dressed in uniform, that is, the anti-terrorist units which, however, do not fight terrorists, but are supposed to maintain protests and civil commotions within bounds.

Antiglobalization actions in the whole world, after what has happened in Seattle, are

marked and repressed under the label of terrorism. Eleven years ago, here in this country you fought against one type of dictatorship; more that fifty years ago, we had been fighting against one type of colonialism, but, I think, now the time has come when we all will have to repeat these efforts to keep our freedom.

This struggle is no luxury, for the lives of more than two thirds of humanity depend on its success. And I, to conclude, would like to say in the name of DWD, that we shall not drop our guard in our struggle and we shall convince all those old men in their sixties that money does not mean everything.

INTERNATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND THE GROWTH OF THEIR INFLUENCE ON NATURAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Jean Grossholtz, USA

“We must not let the people from IMF or WB to persuade us that the main problem of humanity is poverty; the main problem is the uncontrolled political and economic power of a handful of people who today govern this world.”

Allow me to present you what I understand by the concept of globalization in so far as I use this term. Globalization is the trend of total domination over all natural resources, labor forces and all other resources by corporations which are set up for one single purpose, that of increasing profit. This system of trading which they are imposing on us at present is a global attempt or effort to force on us a global political, cultural and economic structure which will control everything for the benefit of multinational corporations and those – on a world scale – few people who are these corporations’ shareholders.

This system is built by a series of steps or measures, one of which is called privatization. It sounds so simple to say that privatization is the transfer of property into private ownership. We all would like, of course, to own some property, but privatization is basically a theft. The creation of systems such as utilities, water management, telecommunications has been carried out for many years as the national effort of people in a given country and now suddenly the fruit of their efforts, this system, is sold to any bidder who pledges more. That is r why I am speaking of a theft – national wealth is bought by someone else. And no doubt you know well who has the money to buy all of these local, national systems or industrial and service sectors – again, the multinational corporations.

Another such terms which the WB likes to use is – deregulation. This means that national governments must eliminate all restrictions, i.e. standard limitations of commerce etc. Recently the independent tribunal of NAFTA, which is the American free trade

association, ordered Mexican government to pay 16.7 m USD because a foreign company that wanted to build a waste dump in Mexico was not allowed to do so, because the dump would also contain dangerous waste. The multinational company claimed that the Mexican government standards were too restrictive and did not allow any room for the needs of free enterprise and free trade.

We in the United States are taught a credo, which we are supposed to believe in, that a good life is a material life, secured with money. In the world of a consumerist society, this credo attacks you from all sides. It is for example very difficult not to notice advertisements. However, if we want to live in a human, decent world, then we must try to overcome the commercialization of everything that surrounds us.

And just a few words to conclude: in my streetwise experience of seventy years, the aim of a political movement should never be unity. The aim must be justice. If you insist on unity, there always will be people left "outside". We shall never succeed if we insist on a social system in which everybody has the same opinions; if we want justice for all, we may disagree and fight, but we shall win, even with all our diversity.

In addition to deregulation, the multinational corporations are working on the removal of customs duties. Indeed, customs were the instrument poorer countries used to defend their local enterprises and national economies, while in the rich, industrialized states, the government subsidizes various sectors of their production. By removing the obstacles of custom duties, the poorer countries of the South and East open their flood gates to the goods from rich countries and the sphere of local enterprises will thus be destroyed. Probably I am not saying anything new, at present it is a process going on in your country too.

"Globalization is the trend of total domination over all natural resources, labor forces and all other resources by corporations which are set up for one single purpose, that of increasing profit."

Meanwhile the subsidy programs in rich countries continue operating. For example, the U.S. government subsidizes, that is grants subventions to the production of cereals. The multinational corporations then produce cereals in the U.S. with considerable support. Then the U.S. government buys these cereals produced as a result of subsidies and, under the guise of aid program, it sells them cheap for example to the Philippines, India etc., thus destroying local producers. As a result there are for ex. at present five multinational corporations controlling the cereal production all over the world.

The costs of mistakes and errors committed by the global multinational corporations, whether due to speculation or to a mistaken assessment of a given situation, are costs which must be paid by the people who live in those states in which the corporations

operate. I will give one example only, which may not have found its way here to Central Europe. Westinghouse and First City Bank built a nuclear power plant in the Philippines. Westinghouse built it and FCB granted the Philippines a huge credit. Only when the power plant was completed did Westinghouse confess that "by mistake" they had built it on a tectonic fault, so that, for safety reasons, the Philippine government never allowed it to operate. However, the credit from First City Bank still had to be repaid.

What is the moral of this story? We must not let the people from IMF or WB to persuade us that the main problem of humanity is poverty; the main problem is the uncontrolled political and economic power of a handful of people who today govern this world.

THE GLOBAL SYSTEM OF FREE TRADE IS A NEOCOLONIALIST WORLD WAR SYSTEM

Maria Mies, Germany

"The economic progress in Europe is to a large extent the result of colonial looting."

Trade is usually considered to be a peaceful occupation. Those who promote the global system of free trade even promise that the globalization of a neo-liberally interpreted trade will bring the world eternal peace. They speak of the so-called "level playing field" as a system guaranteeing equality to all the "players" involved. However, just by looking at the past century, we will realize that homilies about a peace-loving free trade are a myth. World trade was everywhere promoted and constantly accompanied by piracy, war, conquest, slavery and colonialism.

The economic progress in Europe is to a large extent the result of colonial looting. Nowadays large groupings (NAFTA, EU, MERCOSUR etc.) supposedly removed the causes of wars among rich countries; however, the global system of world trade promoted by WB, IMF and WTO ignites all over the world a new type of wars, particularly in third-world countries, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and, unfortunately, even in Europe.

Since 1990, inequality among the nations and within individual nations has been growing more than ever before. As Michel Chossudovsky and Silvia Federici showed – the new wars constitute the direct result of structural adjustments, as carried out by the WB together with the IMF. When such wars broke out in Africa (Somalia, Rwanda, Congo, Mozambique), they were labeled as civil wars due to old tribal dissensions, when they broke out in Russia (Chechnya) or Bosnia and Yugoslavia (Kosovo) they were labeled as the result of ethnic or religious conflicts and the efforts of minorities to become independent. Chossudovsky demonstrated convincingly how the policy of the WB and IMF really prepared the ground for these wars: it imposed neoliberal reforms which did not

respect the identity of given countries, applied pressure to reduce government spending on social, health or educational programs. Moreover, a massive support for the import of goods from the West and devaluation of the currency led to the increase of prices of the bare necessities of life, the fall of real wages and the ruin of agricultural production in these countries. No wonder that the most affected states being ethnically mixed, instead of distinguishing their real enemies, turned against their neighbors and began to murder one another.

”Similarly, the last war in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo showed that the nationalist conflict between Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs had nothing in common with an honest effort aimed at national independence.”

Similarly, the last war in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo showed that the nationalist conflict between Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs had nothing in common with an honest effort aimed at national independence. This war was previously prepared by the destabilization of the Yugoslav economy by means of all kinds of economic embargoes justified politically. It was done to set up globalized free trade in Kosovo under the protectorate controlled by the EU and USA. Chossudowsky called that the re-colonizing of the Balkans.

Such neocolonial wars may break out wherever the neoliberal global system has the upper hand. Parallel to the present phase of the WB, IMF and WTO policy, the next phase is being prepared - the so-called ongoing primitive accumulation. This phase provides the economies of EU and NATO member countries with new markets, cheap labor, possibilities to export advantageously environmentally unsuitable technologies and productions. This leads to the growth of the military-industrial complex which has a particular interest in igniting ethnic unrest and, in return, further enrichment of the already wealthy member states.

In this sense we must interpret the words of Hazel Henderson in connection with the Persian Gulf war that war is good for the economy. Women, children and nature are always the main victims of neocolonial wars. That is why we, women, must ask whether it is enough to care for the war victims and organize humanitarian help or whether we should challenge the global system of the so-called free trade which evidently brings about wars. Women from EU countries must work together with the women from Central and Eastern Europe to ensure that the expansion of EU eastwards will not be carried out under the dictate of the neocolonial and neoliberal global war system.

Sermons about peaceful free trade are a myth.

”Women, children and nature are always the main victims of neocolonial wars”

BOLIVIAN FARMERS: THIS WATER IS OURS, DAMN IT”

Privatization of water resources and popular resistance in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Carlos Crespo, Bolivia

”What the WB, IMF and similar institutions, as well as the multinational monopolies, are most afraid of, is that the people will lose their fear and stand up to them.”

Since 1985, Bolivia has had to endure structural adjustments recommended by the WB. With the help of structural adjustments, the ruling sectors succeeded first in weakening the importance of the trade unions, particularly the Union of Bolivian Workers (Central Obrera Boliviana). In the Cochabamba valley, there have been rural movements of resistance against the irresponsible exploitation of water resources. This valley, with its approximately 700 000 inhabitants, is a zone ecologically considered as semi-desert; therefore an excessive water consumption brought about great difficulties in the countryside.

A monstrous project, the purpose of which was to build a dam 115 meters high and transfer the water through a 19 km long tunnel was proposed as a solution. This project denominated Misicuni was meant to ensure that the political elite would win the elections and gain other advantages. However, it generated resistance, which eventually led to a public debate on water management in general.

1. Under equivocal terms, the municipal water supply company (SEMAPA) transferred its concession to an international consortium Aguas de Tunari (Tunari Waters) supposed to implement the Misicuni project (September 1999).
2. The Parliament approved the new Water Supply and Sanitation Law (October 1999) without the consent of the interested parties.

Since June 1999, a group of professionals has been meeting to analyze the potential consequences of the aforementioned Law, setting up a Committee for the Defense of Water and the Family Economy. Meanwhile the WB completed a confidential report on public spending in Bolivia. This report emphasizes the importance of the Law to guarantee the privatization of water supply services, suggests concrete private concessions, highlights the role of the superintendence and proposes to end the subsidies for basic water services.

The company Aguas del Tunari (Tunari Waters) was granted the concession from the government in September 1999, the only bidder. This company was set up with a capital of hardly 2 500 USD in the Caiman Isles, a tax haven country. Its shareholders are

International Water UK, a Bechtel's corporation affiliate with 55 % of the shares, Abengoa of Spain with 30 % and the rest are Bolivian companies, one of them linked to the current government

Some weeks later, in October, the Water Supply and Sanitation Law was passed.

Citizen's organizations of Cochabamba made the following observations to government decisions:

- The Law does not respect the access to natural resources and their traditional use in Bolivia
- Non-profit suppliers (municipal companies, committees, and cooperatives) are forbidden in areas granted as private concessions.
- The competencies and responsibilities of municipalities to fix rates and grant concessions are reduced.
- Monopoly of private companies in concession areas.
- Communities are forbidden to do their own well-drilling or to look for new sources.
- Excessive power is given to Water Superintendence.
- Water rates are fixed without consulting the population.
- Economic approach to determine rates and concessions is put before social and environmental criteria.

In November 1999, the first road blockades were built by peasants and farmers from areas dependent on irrigation. These actions were supported also by the Coordinadora Departamental del Agua y la Vida (Coalition for the Defense of Water and Life). In January 2000 Aguas del Tunari raised the water rates by 35 % without improving the service. On February 4th, the Coalition organized the "symbolic taking of the city of Cochabamba" to demand, peacefully, five points:

- Repeal of the Drinking Water and Sanitary Sewer Services Law.
- Annulment of all measures that made the concession possible.
- Rescinding of the contract with Aguas del Tunari.
- Resignation of the Water Superintendent.
- New legislation in these matters only after reaching a consensus.

In the course of the protest action, 22 persons were wounded and 135 arrested. But, under the mediation of the Catholic Church and the Ombudsman, it was agreed that the contract with Aguas del Tunari would be revised and the controversial Law would be amended with the participation of peasants, irrigators and social organizations involved in water supply. During the negotiations, the original rates would apply.

LESSONS FROM THE BOLIVIAN WATER WAR

1. Privatization in water management, promoted by the WB, leads to the reduction or complete elimination of the influence of municipalities and the public in general on the control of private companies' activities. These are then free to make authoritarian decisions through vertically controlled structures. Local democracy is severely repressed.
2. Water management privatization leads to the weakening or exclusion of administration based on "uses and customs" under community and associative forms.
3. By such privatization imposed without consulting the population, the WB affects their conditions of life and thus promotes social conflicts. Most of the current conflicts in Bolivia arise from claims to equal access to and use of natural resources such as water.
4. Water, for the farmers of Cochabamba, is a sacred good, associated with the Mother Earth, that cannot be marketed and sold - access should be public and equitable.
5. Oscar Olivera, one of the leaders of the Coalition, said that 15 years of neoliberalism made the Cochabamba people lose their fear, so that now they do not hesitate to fight against the perverse effects of privatization. It is an important moral result of the War of the Water in Cochabamba.
6. It is possible to win when fighting the multinationals: we have succeeded in expelling an elsewhere-victorious monopoly. What the WB, IMF and similar institutions, as well as the multinational monopolies, are most afraid of, is that the people will lose their fear and stand up to them.
7. A key element is the alliance of urban and rural populations, as documented by the decisive battle of Cochabamba citizens, gained precisely thanks to their united efforts.
8. The public wants to take part in decision taking. Our experience shows that people want a true democratic participation in the administration of natural resources. They want to participate in the shaping of policies and not only to be their victims. They want to exercise their right of control over their rulers in order to avoid corruption and guarantee the transparency in public management.

INEQUALITY IN CONSUMPTION: THE SURFEITED AGAINST THE STARVING

Ursula Oswald Spring, Mexico

"Women represent 70 % of the poorest population of the world."

Food production has improved over the last years, but poverty, hunger and preventable illnesses have also increased. Overall global consumption has grown at an unprecedented rate, reaching 24 bn USD in 1998. However, the richest fifth of the world population consumes 86 %, while the poorest fifth is left with a mere 1.3 %; the remaining three fifths only consume 12.7 %. Africa today consumes 20 % less than 25 years ago while per capita consumption is rising in the industrialized countries (UNDP 1998.1999).

Yet the overall volume of food is sufficient and the quantity per person a day is fairly high: 2.1 kg of foodstuffs (i.e. 1/2 kg of meat, milk and eggs, 1/2 kg of fruit and vegetables, the rest as cereals and pulse). However, the increased production of foodstuffs with the help of new technologies and genetically modified products is targeting profit, not need. The poor go hungry because they do not have the money to buy food. This situation is particularly desperate in the third world countries.

Food security is measured by the gap between actual consumption and consumption targets (i.e. minimal daily consumption of proteins and calories in accordance with age and activities); this is the "nutritional index". The actual consumption increases and the nutritional index is positive in the developed countries, while in the developing countries both the indexes are falling (the consumption of proteins was for ex. lower by 4 % in 1997 in comparison with 1976).

Food aid is not enough. For instance, 65 developing countries received 85 m tons of grain in 1996-1997. However the aid to developing countries is not sufficient and the gap in food consumption will increase in the years to come. Even now, according to the 2000 FAO statistics, 3.7 bn people suffer from iron deficiency and every day, 24 000 people die of hunger; the most affected are women and children.

"The increased production of foodstuffs with the help of new technologies and genetically modified products is targeting profit, not need."

Hunger and malnutrition are the result of many factors. In poor countries, these include high indebtedness and the substitution of local food cultivation with export commodities, such as tropical fruit, vegetables and flowers. Furthermore, price increases in case of agrochemical products and falling prices of their produce, added to the high interest rates, drive small farmers into bankruptcy.

Policy changes can overcome food insecurity in a sustainable way. The old philosophy, based on the efficiency of capital and profit-driven interest, has to be substituted by a new policy, based on human needs, life quality for everybody and environmental care.

HARMFUL CONSEQUENCES OF GLOBALIZATION

Analysis reveals a series of conflictive elements in the process of globalization, for instance:

- National economies depend on world economy.
- The global network of financial markets produces speculation, harmful short-term investments and leads to periodical economic crises.
- Multinational corporations decide on investments.
- International financial organizations, such as WB and IMF, force the aid-receiving less developed states to implement unbearable measures of restriction.
- Subsidies benefit primarily corporate agribusiness and wholesalers, ignoring environmental and health costs.
- Globalization promotes consumerist culture and society.
- National states do not have the means of compensating the negative effects of globalization; on the contrary international agreements oblige them to support the corporations.
- Corporate agriculture affects human health and environment.
- Deforestation, increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the destruction of the ozone layer lead to global warming and, together with the contamination of sweet water and the seas, erosion and salinization, desertification etc., bring about major natural disasters and avoidable deaths.

”Even now, according to the 2000 FAO statistics, 3.7 bn people suffer from iron deficiency and every day, 24 000 people die of hunger.”

What can be done

Enough food could be provided for everyone while protecting the environment, if certain measures were to be taken. The following would be necessary:

1. The WB and IMF to introduce a new credit policy. Such strategy would guarantee the basic needs even of the weakest.
2. To cancel poor countries’ debts. Most of them already paid up interests amounting to multiples of the sum borrowed.
3. To guarantee equal access to natural resources and raw materials for all; see to the renewal and sustainability of the environment and ensure clean air, drinking water and good quality of food.

4. To support small farmers.
5. To improve the status of women. Women represent 70 % of the poorest population of the world. Yet, in poor countries, women produce 60 – 80 % of foodstuffs and on a worldwide scale, they contribute with 50 % to food production. It is necessary to instruct them of their rights and work towards a full equality for all.
6. To eliminate the chronic malnutrition of mothers and children; above all, to ensure sufficient food for children in the prenatal period and the first year of life, when malnutrition has been proved to damage the development of the brain. Supplying the indispensable nutrients, vitamins, iron, iodine and trace elements and a timely vaccination would prevent illness at an insignificant cost per child.
7. To manage the natural resources of raw materials and energy responsibly. A diligent management can result in saving energy and limiting the contamination of air, water and soils. This would include for ex. using solar and geothermal energy, reducing waste and recycling it preserve soil fertility etc.

It is extremely important to protect biodiversity, maintain variety in nature, different cultures and democratic plurality. The key to a sustainable development and an acceptable globalization is to promote justice and humaneness in our societies. The first step will be to provide sufficient food for every human being in every country in the world.

LETTER FROM PRAGUE

To Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Anan; Director General of FAO Mr. Diouf; Director General of ILO Mr. Juan Somavia, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Mr Kohler; President of World Bank Mr. Wolfensohn; Director General of World Trade Organization Mr Moore, President of the Czech Republic Mr. Havel, all other international organizations and all concerned citizens of the world.

We, diverse women from diverse societies, gathered in Prague to share experiences of the impact of the globalization policies promoted by the Bretton Woods institutions GATT/WTO, IMF and WB – the "Unholy Trinity". The theme of our meeting was "LIFE IS NOT FOR SALE: Women, Children and Nature's Alternatives to the WTO, WB and IMF Policies".

Large police barricades surrounded the National House and attempted to prevent our scheduled annual meeting from taking place. Riot police blockaded the entrance and turned our invited members away. This blockade is another symbol of how economic globalization is increasingly becoming warfare against citizens. The Bretton Woods institutions are using the police forces of different countries in order to repress people's democratic rights to free expression and peaceful gathering.

Diverse Women for Diversity have always perceived the UN as a democratic alternative to the Unholy Trinity. We are troubled to see the corporate hijacking of this global institution, meant to belong to "We, the people".

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) stated mission is to protect the interests of the small farmers in the Third World. Instead, the FAO Chief publicly supported the biotechnology industry to influence the decisions of the G-8 Summit at Okinawa, where genetically engineered food was an issue. In addition a leaked internal document of Monsanto, the largest biotech corporation, reveals how it has systematically influenced FAO and WHO, confirming the corporate hijacking of the UN.

Furthermore, the FAO World Food Program (WFP) set up to feed the hungry, is being used to dump GE foods rejected by Northern consumers, on women and children in the Third World. The financial resources meant for providing the poor with safe, adequate and culturally appropriate food are being transformed into a subsidy for the biotech industry. **We call on the FAO to commit itself by World Food Day, October 16, 2000, to stop using WFP money to buy and distribute unlabeled, unsegregated and untested GE foods.**

Committed to the protection of biological and cultural diversity, economic and political pluralism, peace and democracy, we Diverse Women for Diversity **call on the UN to stop this corporate hijacking and to take the lead in restructuring the IMF, WB and WTO in order to ensure that they serve the purpose of equitable and peaceful cohabitation of all people on this planet – the future planet of friendship.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Agentura GAIA, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to organize the conference under the title of "Life is not for sale" in Prague on 27 September 2000. For the contents, my thanks go to the organization Diverse Women for Diversity, particularly to Shalini Bhutani, without whose magnificent cooperation I could not even imagine any such event. My thanks for the help in organizing and translating here in Prague go to Jan Ěepek, Marta Hrabáková, Marie Kovárnová, Jan Křížek, Jaromír Manhart, Adéla Purschová, Hana Smejtková, Helena Vostradovská, Sue Wolf and Jjõina Zelená. For their cooperation in preparing this booklet, I thank Dana Oujezdská and Veronika Vašková. I thank Lenka Bíláková for her good will in securing accommodation for the participants at the conference during the "hot" September days in Prague of the year 2000.

For the videodocument, I thank Marina Galimberti from France and Hana Synková for the photodocumentation. I brought the pictures from Seattle we use, because I was able to participate in the DWD conference in Seattle thanks to the financial support contributed by the ROS Foundation. The Prague conference could be held thanks to the Heinrich Boll Foundation. Within the framework of the 5th program of Equal Opportunities for Women, launched by the European Commission in the year 2000, Agentura GAIA could include its conference "Life is not for Sale" in its long-term program entitled "Time is Life", the implementation of which has also received support from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Further, I thank all the organizations and individuals who offered us their paid services, even when such cooperation required a good dose of daring, given the enduring and ever present media hysterics. For the organization of the conference demonstrated again in practice the relevance of the Orwellian theory that "all people are equal, but some are more equal than others". The Czech Republic Police and the FBI provided a maximum protection and security for the "more equal"; the others, among whom were the participants at the conference, could consider themselves lucky if they could reach the conference venue at all. The complaint about the undemocratically privileged protection granted to the rich and powerful, addressed to the International Court in The Hague, lies in my drawer, because we were not able to find a lawyer willing to take up the defense of the rights of the merely "equal".

For their moral support, I thank all the members of Agentura GAIA, who generously contribute to our activities not only morally, but very often materially too.

Prague, 1.8.2001 Marie Haisová

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