

meet again, there will be attention on it, it won't take place in secret. Most of the WTO's meetings take place behind closed doors and even at the meeting in Seattle only the most industrialized countries were at the table, whereas many of the other countries of the World were completely excluded from the deliberations that were taking place. But now, I think, there is a new focus on what policies they are building and their impact. The impact has been pretty wide as well, for example, the Canadian government, this time, had a policy to put social programs on the table. The fact is they want to put education and health programs on the table as considered to be areas of trade. This is a major problem - for profit corporations south of the border who do want to muscle in on our health care and education, and see them not as delivering programs to citizens or programs that we have some control over, (Canada) is basically a market, where they can make money. Which is a completely different way of looking at these things.

**KB:** It has always been that way though. Those things have always been seen by multi-national corporations, and always will be seen, as trade barriers. You will never change that from the corporate perspective.

**LC:** No, you're right, but I don't think we have ever had the size of health corporations, or more profit at the same level and the same size, with the same predatory aspect,

looking at Canada as a market for themselves, as opposed to Canadians seeing it as 'our health care system' one we have built and should be proud of. And one we need to maintain as one that is public and accessible and affordable and all those other things and we do not see that as a place to make money. Even in terms of efficiencies, our health care system is a lot cheaper with 100% coverage than the American system.

**KB:** I suppose then you run into the question of relative taxation, and, are we, as Canadians, over-taxed?

**LC:** No, not for what we are getting in return. We do need to examine fair taxation and who pays what share.

**KB:** Is it possible to incorporate these issues, environmental and the like, into the discussions with the WTO, to make them issues for discussion for what they are, rather than for what they are purported to, be barriers to trade?

**AK:** Well, they can talk about having labor standards or whatever, but it is just contrary to what the WTO is all about. You have things like the "Bio-Safety Protocol" which is being worked on to protect people from trans-boundary shipments of genetically engineered food and other things like that but Canada and the U.S. and countries like that have invested heavily in genetically engineered food. So now they are saying that these "Bio-

Safety Protocols" have to be subservient to the WTO and we (the WTO) are not going to make any rules about the shipping of genetically engineered food so we can try to make these agreements through other organizations.

**KB:** But if they are simply superseded by the WTO it makes no difference.

**AK:** Exactly. Another of the successes in Seattle was people coming together from vastly different groups and learning. Learning how to protest, and how to do it better, and how to use our solidarity, and use our numbers.

**KB:** Personally I think that's brilliant, I think you can never have too many protesters, we will certainly not run out of corporations or Evil Empires, but people willing to protest and be arrested, well they are sometimes hard to find.

**AK:** Particularly in the last thirty years corporations have become richer and richer and more and more powerful but particularly in those last thirty years corporations have begun to exert more influence, and to strategize more about how to exert more influence over government and government policies. So you have the Business Council on National Issues, the Fraser Institute and other institutes and policy think tanks to spout off this standard pro-industry philosophy, and to cut government spending, and to lower taxes for corpo-

rations, they don't say *that* but that is what they want. So through all these different means, through advertising, through hiring Public Relations companies, through all these different campaigns, and through hiring relatives of politicians, or indeed from paying of politicians they have been able to exert more influence. And at the same time there is more of a crossover between industry and government, you know practically all of Jean Chretien's cabinet are business people, so they are all of this frame of mind that business is the answer, and if we have more business then everything will be okay.

**LC:** Well, I guess it shows when you look at the record amounts of money in the economy.

**KB:** There is, of course, a certain section of the population that agrees with that, that believes that better and more business is the savior.

**AK:** But how much of that is because of what has been told to us, and sold to us?

**LC:** If you are looking at people, not as consumers but as citizens, then it is a much different thing. But even as consumers I think there has been a failure for the majority of people. What you are doing is looking at a vary narrow range of things. If you are only defining yourself by growth of the economy, as opposed to by the quality of life that people lead, then you are really diminishing your world as a whole. If you look at

Canada, we do have this so-called 'growth', even with free trade we have a record amount of money in the economy, and a record amount of U.S. investment. But when you really analyze it you see that record U.S. investment means that more U.S. companies have bought out more Canadian resources than ever before and we have lost more control over our resources than ever before. At the very same time, the living standards for the majority of Canadians has actually gone down. The distribution of wealth in this country has become magnified in that the poor have gotten very much more poor, and some people have gotten a lot richer. And along those lines we have become a much more inequitable country. We have a higher degree of child poverty, a higher number of food banks and soup kitchens than we ever had before, they are becoming a permanent fixture in many Canadians lives. At the very same time, very few Canadians, who have gotten richer, are the ones putting pressure to try to erode social programs that all of us must share in, to have a two-tiered health care program, and, in effect to buy out of Canada, to lose what we have built together. When you look at who has benefited and who has lost you see that the pressure on social programs... for example the Employment Insurance (EI) system. We have gutted the EI system so now less than 30% of unemployed

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