



FROM PAGE 3

include disarming nuclear warheads and disposing of chemical weapons) are driving nails in existing and proposed social programs — environmental protection, medicare, medicaid, education, and the carrot Bill Clinton waved before the voters, a national health insurance.

(Did you know of all the industrial countries only the United States and South Africa do not have national health care programs? How strange. Gore Vidal, among others, called our so-called "free enterprise" health care system "socialism for the wealthy and free enterprise for the poor.")

How can this be? We live in one of the richest societies in the world yet for some peculiar reason it is our last priority to ensure the health and education of the common people. The frightening truth is that our society has reached a previously unheard of degree of financial stratification. The financial profile of the United States mirrors that of the most radically totalitarian countries of the third world. One percent of the population holds 40% of the property. And the trend is only getting worse as demonstrated in this age of industry "downsizing." The headlines continue to scream of increasing corporate profits and a booming stockmarket while whispering of the declining "real" wages and job cutbacks. During the 1950s corporations paid 40% of the taxes. Today, though larger and more successful dollar-wise, they deign to a quarter of that.

In light of the preceding it cannot be overlooked that despite all criticism there are few better places in the world to live than the United States. We live in a land of luxury and freedom as few cultures in the broad timescape of all civilization have enjoyed. What is necessary to understand, however, is that things will not remain this way if present trends continue. Life and liberty are always libel to attack or erosion. Today we need not defend our inalienable rights so much from forces on the outside as from those within — specifically the inherent tendencies of capitalism accelerated by human greed. One might argue that capitalism is the most efficient form of free-flowing government that civilization has yet to devise. Yet, much like fascism, it is amoral. It will be the death of our society if we do not keep a close eye on the tyrannies of corporate power. If the overriding tendency of our system is to concentrate money into the hands of the few, it is the tantamount responsibility of those few to take care of the less fortunate. Sadly, history shows that benevolence and power make exceedingly rare bedmates.

The example of the 1996 Presidential campaign exposes the extreme state our capitalist democracy has reached. No candidate can expect to have the slightest chance of being nominated by either of the two major political parties, much less win the election, without spending at least \$40-\$50 million. With the exception of someone personally wealthy like Steve Forbes or the independent Ross Perot, no candidate can do this without tremendous support by large corporations. This means the victor will inevitably enter the White House with many favors to grant his corporate constituents. (On the local scene Oregon's most progressive politician, Peter DeFazio, has been priced out of the running for the Senate seat opened by Mark Hatfield's retirement.) There is no reason to expect the present defacto government to change its regressive ways unless the people become informed and intervene at the ballot box.

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## PART 2

## THE GLOBAL VILLAGE VS THE NEW WORLD ORDER

*"The new phenomenon of our age is the emergence of transnational corporations with the ability to move production at will anywhere in the world in order to systematically benefit from lower wages wherever they are to be found. Transnational corporations now account for one-third of global output; their global annual sales have reached \$4.8 trillion, which is greater than total international trade. The largest 100 multinational corporations control about one-third of all foreign direct investment. The globalization of the market is vital to them, both to produce cheaply and to sell universally. Because they do not necessarily owe allegiance to the countries where they operate, there is a divorce between the interests of the transnational corporations and those of society."*

—Sir James Goldsmith, author of *The Trap*, speaking to the Senate Commerce Committee on GATT, Oct. 5, 1994

With the advent of the "space age" in the late 1950s and on its tail the new age of electronics —communications satellites, computers and worldwide webs — Marshall McLuhan coined the term "Global Village." Within this concept was the hope that with the aid of electronic communications uniting all the crew members of our spaceship earth at the speed of light we might create a tranquil round village of many races, cultures and religions coexisting without barriers to travel, trade or belief. Perhaps this dream still persists in some of the same youthful optimism that graced the pipe-(smoking)dreaming '60s flower children. Perhaps within the global movements for the protection of human rights and the environment there is still a way to bring a unifying purpose to all God's living things. More likely, as the present millennium spends to a close, it appears we are headed for something more like worldwide corporate tyranny instead of a peaceful global village.

In the twelve years of the Reagan/Bush administrations something quietly transpired in this country. In that era of behind the scenes intelligence manipulation and covert action — both military and economic — it may have been something that was long in the works; but in the time between 1981 and 1992 the vision for a deregulated world economy gradually worked its way into the front page news. We have been properly prepared. Now it is time to let the GATT out of the bag.

There was something both hopeful and Orwellian about the way President Bush would smile and pronounce his three favorite words, *New-World-Order*. But now in the summer of 1996 as the latest General Agreement on Tariffs & Trade (GATT) — the constitution for this New World Order — becomes international law for its 128 members (representing 90% of world trade) it is possible to inspect and evaluate exactly what they have in mind for us.

GATT has been around since 1948 and came into being on the heels of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank at a time when the world was settling into its new post-World War II image. In the 48 years of its existence there have been eight rounds of adjustment to GATT. The most recent round of closed-door debate was held in Uruguay and concluded in the Spring of 1994 after eight years of difficult negotiation. This last round was pressed into convening by forces in the United States during President Reagan's first term. Generally, this new GATT legislation push could be considered the first big step in implementing the framework for President Bush's New World Order, a deregulated global "Free Market." As this 500-page document was written in secret, only in its implementation has it been made public and criticism has been widespread. Further comments on GATT by the philosopher and writer (and former corporate raider) Sir James Goldsmith show exactly where things are headed:

*"The winners will be those who can benefit from an almost inexhaustible supply of very cheap labor. They will be the companies who move their production offshore to low-cost*

*areas, the companies who can pay lower salaries at home; and those who have capital to invest where labor is cheapest, and who as a result will receive larger dividends. But they will be like winners of a poker game on the Titanic. The wounds inflicted on their societies will be too deep, and brutal consequences could follow."*

The instance of the Beaverton based Nike corporation tells this tale clearly. Nike once had five manufacturing plants in the United States. Now it has none and is wealthy enough to chase cheap labor all across Asia, subcontracting to manufacturing plants first in Korea — at \$1 an hour, then in Indonesia — at 15 cents per hour. By doing this they benefit from paying wages vastly lower than those they would pay in the U.S. and from the fact Asian workplace standards are considerably lax in both employee and environmental protection. To consumer chagrin these savings are not passed directly on the shoe buyer in the United States. As the market still supports the onshore production price of the product this kind of "free market" practice results essentially in major corporate profits — not buyer bonuses or trickledown benefits. Of course this is perfectly legal and really sound business. The problem is that moving American money offshore takes jobs from our marketplace and capital from prospective onshore consumers' pockets. This means somewhere down the line Nike will lose its affluent U.S. shoe-product buyers, turning malls into ghost towns and thus cutting their own corporate throat.

But the situation dives even deeper into the fabric of national sovereignty. The GATT text is actually more powerful than any member country's constitution — including ours. Ralph Nader had this to say in April 1994 as the procedure of GATT ratification was about to begin:

*"Right now environmental policy is set in our country at the local, state and federal levels of government. Under these proposed trade agreements the decisions will increasingly be made outside the country by private tribunal. Under the GATT and NAFTA arrangements they'll be made without any of our democratic rights. We won't be able to elect these people. We won't be able to dis-elect them. We won't be able to get freedom of information. We won't be able to participate in the proposed draft of these decisions in any way whatsoever."*

The World Trade Organization, the tribunal of decision-makers for GATT, will literally supersede our Supreme Court and Congress. Decisions of trade will be entirely out of our hands. In the realm of environment, of all countries the United States will feel this most. Our standards of product safety, pesticide control and ingredient labeling are far in excess of most of the world's yet when it come to GATT's wonderful world "Harmonization," as it is so diabolically named, these same high U.S. standards are reduced to the world's lowest common denominator. Not only will products be imported to the U.S. with dangerous DDT levels (in some cases 5000% greater than our laws allow), but U.S. companies like Nike may go to these same countries to manufacture their products within the bounds of less stringent regulations, all to the advantage of big business everywhere — in the short term.

The example of asbestos products serves a perfect example. The United States bans products that include any level of asbestos. Yet our neighbor to the north Canada has no such limitation. Under the guidelines of GATT this U.S. ban would represent a non-tariff trade barrier to Canadian asbestos products. In fact, under a previous and similar U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement, Canada is presently suing the U.S. to open its market to asbestos products. Who's in charge here, anyway?

Certainly not Canada. The short-term effect of NAFTA (essentially a three-country GATT) has been to decrease manufacturing jobs in Canada by 25%, to increase unemployment from 7% to something creeping up to 15%, and to place 50% more children into poverty level incomes.

Closer to home recent labor protecting relations in the Northwest banned the export of raw timber cut from state and national forests. Under the sweeping manifesto of GATT this will represent an illegal barrier to free trade and could be circumvented. If a country was once a recipient of raw Northwest lumber it cannot be cut off regardless of what our local government has to say.

These laws contribute to a far-reaching international corporate totalitarianism. Capital, products, services, insurance and manufacturing are free to move from one market to the next. Labor, however, is not. To whose advantage is this?

Companies with enough money to do so are free to move all around the world seeking cheaper and cheaper labor, clearly reducing wages and jobs at home. The worker, however, is subject to immigration laws and is thus restricted. Under the guidelines of NAFTA, U.S. and Canadian manufacturers are free to build plants wherever they like in Mexico (that is, their cash allows) to take advantage of eased environmental and safety standards and a vastly low wage scale. In this way these companies are recipients of tremendous windfall profits at the