

**Interviewee: Nadine Bloch**

**Affiliation: Direct Action Network / Ruckus Society**

**Interviewer: April Eaton**

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**Interview Summary:**

Longtime activist, puppet maker and artist Nadine Bloch worked with the Direct Action Network (DAN) and the Ruckus Society in organizing WTO protests. DAN was an instigating force in making the WTO protests a global and national call to action. The Ruckus Society organized a pre-WTO action camp to train activists in the skills such as non-violent civil disobedience and street theater. DAN's key role in organizing the protests, Bloch says, was to provide the framework to connect people and build strength in numbers, often using the Internet. Bloch notes that DAN's non-hierarchical approach teaches people that they can take their future in their own hands by being creative and proactive. Bloch outlines her involvement in organizing non-violent protests, the over-reaction of Seattle police, and attempts by DAN and the Ruckus Society to draw attention to the WTO's corporate agenda.



**AE** The first thing I want to ask you is, could you describe, just in your own perception, what the Direct Action Network did in connection with the WTO protest?

**NB** What they did?

**AE** Yes. What did you do, what did they do? What did the group do? And then what did you personally do?

**NB** Well, I was in Seattle as a part of the Ruckus Society, who I work with doing lots of different trainings, everything from non-violence to street theater and such. And I was there, also, because I've been involved in direct action things for over 20 years. So I guess I would have been there no matter what. And I've worked on global trade issues for a number of years, as well. Direct Action Network was, and some particular individuals in that group, were the instigating forces behind making it a global call to action, national call to action, certainly, and for putting in place a group of people in Seattle who could do logistical work of setting up a convergence space -- I'm sure you know what that is by now -- and pulling together a legal team, and all the other pieces that would support a mass action.

**AE** Then, what was your specific role in that?

**NB** I came in from D.C., where I live, pretty late. I didn't come in until the beginning of November. We had other big actions happening here. So I was just there for about a month before the actions happened, and I had to go back for court dates later. And my piece of it was on the ground. I didn't do, basically, any advance organizing beyond that month.

**AE** Okay.

**NB** We organized some people in D.C., basically, for support actions, and we organized other people to go out there. But in essence, not that many people from the East Coast really ended up going out West. So mostly it was, once you got there, we did work up there organizing. I'm a puppet maker and I do lots of political theater, so I stepped in to help with that. I also do a lot of facilitation and consensus work and I stepped in with that. I do trainings on a number of subjects, everything from climbing, to non-violence, to communications, to media, whatever, so I stepped in to work on some of that also.

**AE** How did you, I was reading another interview a couple of days ago about how DAN, as things got organized, needed to develop somewhat more of a hierarchical structure or organizational chart, you might say, in order to get things done. Yet you just described about five to ten roles that you played in this process. How did you know what to do when?

**NB** Well, there's a couple things too. Since I was a part of Ruckus, in Ruckus we had an action camp before November 30, in Arlington, yes, it was in September, I believe, right?

**AE** I think. I don't . . .

**NB** Oh, I'm so bad with dates right now. But anyway, a couple months beforehand we had an action camp, planning camp. And that camp was focused on globalization and the issues around N30. And at that time, we had a spokescouncil meeting even then to talk about how to organize the structure of DAN. It had already been in operation for months, but there were more specifics about what are we going to call ourselves for fund-raising? Who's going to help out with fund-raising? Who's going to do specifics of staffing office? The CAN folks were organized up there as well. All kinds of pieces of it were being worked on for months already, but were also being elaborated on, I guess, at that meeting. I helped out there. People know that I do a lot of consensus and facilitation work, and so I was asked to facilitate one of the big meetings there. So, I guess, from over the years, I mean, there's not, it's an interesting piece. There's a lot of people, I worked for Greenpeace for a long time, and we did a lot of action-team type actions, where there was a small

group of individuals, hierarchically based mostly. Sometimes within the action people itself you made decisions on a consensus basis. But there was always somebody in charge. Whereas the DAN structure and the structure we used in April here, was really non-hierarchically based. It was based on working groups and spokespeople from each of the groups coming in to use a very formal consensus process. I don't know if people have talked about that, but there's, in our culture today, people use the word consensus really loosely, but there is an actual process that we use.

**AE**

Yeah!

**NB**

And it's extremely effective when you use it well and when you have good facilitation. And I've been very committed to that process, because I believe we can model the future that we want, and if we want to be inclusive and empowering and creative, then the consensus process is one way to start that. So I stepped into that. Also, I've worked in anti-nuclear movements and done some stuff, a lot of the different test sites all over the place, and it's a process that we used. So to step into... I'm old, right? I just turned 39. And I've been a part of this mess, this wonderful mess for 20 years or so. So I do have a big picture sense of how things work. To be able to just look at something and say, oh, the media, there's a hole in the media group, maybe someone needs to fill in there. There's a hole here, somebody needs to fill in there. That's something I can help with.

**AE**

Yeah.

**NB**

And having done a lot of different pieces, that's what happens. And I mean, that's part of this, for me, the big piece of the N30 and moving into April and all the other protests is the emphasis on education. And for me that's really important -- passing on the information that you have. Because there haven't been, until now, over the past ten years or so, a lot of people who had exposure to mass actions and, therefore, there haven't been a lot of people who have training or the facilities to handle some of these roles. So we're building that up again, and that's very exciting.

**AE**

That is. And it sounds like you fell into action in appropriate places, almost naturally, based on your own experience.

**NB**

Yeah, and also what I wanted to do. I'm a climb trainer, I used to teach people to climb buildings and stuff. But I actually don't do much of that anymore, because there are other people who can do the technical pieces.

**AE**

Yeah, right.

**NB**

And I help more with non-violence trainings or the strategy pieces, or whatever it is.

**AE** So, DAN was a resource for a lot of groups coming in and being involved in the protest in various ways.

**NB** The local groups.

**AE** Yeah. How would you describe the mission of DAN in Seattle?

**NB** Without getting in trouble?

**AE** Yeah.

**NB** I only say that, because I'm assuming you read, there's a mission statement up on the web.

**AE** Yeah, I read that.

**NB** The Continental DAN Mission Statement.

**AE** Yeah, it's about performance art and consensus building and being a resource, I guess that's the biggest thing I got from that.

**NB** You know, being a way to connect people, I think that's really important. One of the pieces is if you're going to build a network of people, then you need to be able to support that network. I think that's what DAN's trying to do. And in Seattle it was local. With the picture now, there's a continental DAN, there are conference calls that happen every three weeks or so. I must say I'm completely out of it. I haven't been on one in a few months. Been real busy. So I guess the mission is, yeah, to provide this framework to connect people so that we have the strength or the power in numbers that we can actually do global work. Talk about corporations whose reach is insidious. We don't want to be insidious, we want to be out there though. We want to be able to meet them wherever they are, and I think that's going to take an international network. One of the exciting things about organizing these things is that we have the potential to do more international work. Not only because the airline flights are cheaper, but the Internet's better, and connection, and phone lines work, and things like that. That's a big piece of it. I won't even try to prattle off the mission statement. But the underlying piece of that is to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

**AE** Well, and then also seeing that, and correct me if I'm wrong, but it's about providing support for a network rather than building a network, per se.

**NB** Well, this is the crux of the issue. How does one become a non-hierarchical structure that functions effectively, without, at the same time, you want to build it, but you don't want to dictate. And that's one of the benefits. One of the things that happened in Seattle and in April is that we didn't tell people

what to do, we coordinated. And so there's a fine line between that. That's how spokescouncils become really important and how the structure is difficult to manage. And you know, we had lots of national groups in the 70s and 80s, and they've all basically disappeared or become ineffective for one reason or another. And some of that is just the structural nature of it. People didn't want to be in a hierarchical group, but yet we have a need now to be connected, because we want to fight this, global magnates of the corporation. So I think that's a challenge. We have to work that out. That's what continental DAN is trying to do.

**AE** I guess you're also touching on another question that is about this strategy of definitely putting efforts into mobilizations of protest rather than more conventional forms of political activism, like lobbying, sign advertising, etc. Is that correct? And what do you think motivated that strategy?

**NB** You said that there's now more emphasis on . . .

**AE** I'm saying, in terms of the groups involved in the WTO protest, for some that was just a little thing that they did. But for, I think, a group like DAN, your resources are generally supporting folks who are taking a different walk toward political involvement.

**NB** A different path. Sure. Those of us who have been involved for a long time have done all these things. We've lobbied, we've written letters, we've done this, we've done that, whatever. We've organized demonstrations, we've sat down in dances where we organized with the police -- we'll sit here, you arrest us ten minutes later, we'll all walk away, blah, blah, blah. We've all done these things. And I think, not to say that they shouldn't be done again, or that we don't support them, but there's a huge spectrum of action people can take. And there's lots of support for people who want to lobby. There's lots of support for people who want to do the more structured forms of "civil obedience or disobedience." So part of DAN's mission statement, part of the groups that I work with, is to teach people that they can take their future in their own hands, and that it doesn't necessarily mean following or breaking laws, but that you need to be very creative and proactive and energetic -- active about the decisions you make and what pieces you take, what action to take. And in this day and age of, you know, it's so hard to break into the news, it's so hard to break into the media. You have to do something that really challenges people's perception of the plant. Direct action, and all the forms of it, is very effective in that. To incorporate visions of the future is also critical, I think, at this point, and to make it a celebration, to make it fun. Anybody who has done any organizing on any issue will tell you that's important.

**AE** Yeah.

**NB**

I think that's what's happening. There's an ebb and flow in this. It comes and goes. We see an upsurge in interest in activism and dives in and out, comes in and out. So we see right now, it's very exciting to have a surge of activism. Over the past ten years, for example, we've had, when we got to Seattle, there was a little crisis. We didn't have enough non-violence trainers, basically. And that was because there hadn't really been a demand, and we hadn't been pushing it. There wasn't that big of an interest. So now it's very exciting. We have to step to the plate and train these people and get it out there. It's proliferating, and that's wonderful, and that will, you know, this is part of the flow, and sometime it will ebb, as well. But, hopefully, more people will be on board by then. So some of us are just committed to using these alternate forms of demonstration.

**AE**

Well, and I think that raising people's level of awareness and also, getting more folks out there and trained as facilitators, would you list those among some of the successes of DAN's involvement in Seattle.

**NB**

Yeah. And I wouldn't say it's just DAN either; although, DAN is a network, so maybe it encompasses everybody. Yeah, maybe it encompasses everybody. Okay, we'll just say DAN.

**AE**

I'm not going to label you. It doesn't really matter.

**NB**

No, that's fine. But, yeah, that's one of the big pieces.

**AE**

What are some of the other big successes, as you see them?

**NB**

Yeah. I wrote a whole thing out, I did a whole, actually, you might be interested in this. That just reminded me that I haven't gotten a copy yet.

**AE**

I'd love to see it.

**NB**

Z Magazine, I actually don't know if they printed what I wrote or not, but they have a media institute in the summer in Woods Hole. And they invited me to come up there and teach a couple of classes on globalization and talk about April 16, and they videotaped it. So you could probably get a hold of it.

**AE**

I would like that very much.

**NB**

Lydia Sargent is the woman who kind of runs the office there, and her partner Michael Albert. So I was up there this summer. Anyway, God, we did tons of these things. So I do think one of the things is that we all turned out on the same day in the same place. And I don't actually believe that, you know, people are talking about Teamsters and Turtles together and how wonderful it is, and that divisions are over, and that's just bullshit. But it does pave the

road for future work. And everything that we do together is promising. You know, and particularly, the labor unions were not happy until it was over.

**AE**

Right, right.

**NB**

They were worried down to the minute that we were going to block them from having their little march, or their large march, as it was. So we really had to work these things out.

**AE**

How did that go?

**NB**

It went fine. In the end, it went fine. So one of the big pieces was we did work together, that was good. We did pull out a lot of people across the board. There was a big diversity of folks who worked together. I think it was really important, too, that a big piece of non-marginalization, and particularly, this was important for the April actions in Washington, where we didn't get stuck talking about tactics, whether it's better to smash a window or hold hands around a building. But we wanted to talk about the issues of structural violence against the institutions. And I think that the biggest success was perhaps that the World Bank, well WTO from November, then the World Bank and IMF in April became household words, and people started talking about these global institutions. For me, education is basically the core of what I do. I think that's critical, and I think that was a huge success. And there were many, it's phenomenal, we didn't do it alone. The overreaction of the police and the corporate agenda on the streets of Seattle was a big shock to middle America, particularly in a soft latte-drinking town in the Pacific Northwest, where things like this don't happen. It exposed this raw underbelly of corporate greed here in the good ol' US of A. People really were shocked. People woke up after that. And unfortunately, they learned from that lesson, and they're really hiding it well now. The repression that's happening in Philly around the convention is phenomenal. And the fact that the media has all but buried it is notable exactly because of that. Sort of like the way, the Vietnam War, when the body bags came home into people's living room via the television, that was a big shocker. Whereas, when we were bombing Iraq in '91 and there was no war, it was clean, they managed the war at home so efficiently, the media they shuffled around. And I think that they learned that lesson. And that's exactly what they're doing now in the demonstrations after Seattle. It will be interesting to see what happens in L.A., how they handle that, because the police in Philly were extremely brutal. There's still people in jail weeks later.

**AE**

Gee.

**NB**

The fines were set, for example, John Seller's fine, and - Tate Sorenson, from ACT UP, John Sellers from Ruckus - were set at a million dollars bail. Outrageous for misdemeanors. So this is the big iron fist of the corporate

agenda here at home. When people hear about that, they're really forced to confront the fact that the corporations are trying to set every aspect of their life. I guess I do digress.

**AE** No, I think that is very well the answer to just the question of what got accomplished.

**NB** There's tons more. And training, training across the board. Between November and April, there were trainings all over the United States and all kinds of facets of direct action, media work, skill building, you name it, sort of revitalize that piece of the movement. This is interesting too, School of the Americas in Georgia, do you know who they are?

**AE** I don't.

**NB** School of the Americas is a school where we train basically assassins. The United States military trains people from South and Central America, Noriega, and the like.

**AE** Yeah, right.

**NB** We have done demonstrations in Fort Benning, Georgia, and in D.C. over the past ten years. And this November, the week before the WTO protest, there were 12,000 people who went to Fort Benning, Georgia. Nowhere, I mean, we're talking, you have to work to get there.

**AE** There's no direct flight to Fort Benning, Georgia.

**NB** Right. There were a lot of people there, there were 7,000 people who risked arrest. It was phenomenal. It was the 21st of November, I believe it was, the week, ten days before. And that organization has been religiously based and structurally hierarchical since its inception basically. Now, since November and April, they are making a huge effort to have now affinity group-based action and decision making. So, even in the movement, you can see an opening to this non-hierarchical decision-making, because it works, because it empowers people, and things are moving well. So there's a lot, that structure also has been important. So the training on the whole spectrum, how to facilitate meetings, how to climb buildings was critical. And the invigoration of the movement with the giant puppets and things like that are close to my heart.

**AE** Sure.

**NB** I do a lot of artwork. And the cultural resistance piece of it is great. I should find my stuff, I have a whole list, 20 things that we did well.

**AE**

I would really love to see that, anything you've written about this, that would be great. You talked a little bit about cooperating with the Teamsters and the other union activists that were there. In general, what was your relationship with unions? Did they come to you, use you as a resource? Ask you for anything?

**NB**

Well, I personally work with unions here in D.C. quite a bit. I do trainings with them, and theater and props and make things for them and all that stuff. And over the years done a bunch of different things. However, here in D.C., we have an interesting piece, because we have the headquarters for the main unions here, and they're not always as progressive as the locals. The internationals are different. So, for example, the April actions and the World Bank and the IMF were not endorsed by the AFL-CIO. We didn't expect them to be, they told us basically they would do it over their dead bodies. They did eventually endorse us a few days before the march happened, because they realized we were the biggest show in town, and this was a critical piece. But until then, they were not interested in participating.

Whereas, the smaller, the more liberal, the progressive unions here, the Metro D.C. Labor Council, Alliance for Government Employees, they were on board from the beginning. Teamsters Democratic Union, sort of lefty Teamsters. We had huge support from labor unions in general. The AFL just sort of dragged in afterwards, because everybody else supported it. And so, that's why I say just holding a front piece of Teamsters and Turtles is a little misnomer, it didn't immediately translate into all of the unions being on board without a doubt for direct action work. Still, it's interesting, because the labor history in the United States is really a little history of direct action, and serious direct action. These people are the people who brought us the sit-down strike and brought us all this hard-core work. And lots of people died for the gains of a labor movement. So it's interesting now to look at where they stand and how the unions are or are not on board, and some of these, Jobs With Justice and Justice for Janitors and all those other unions are reinvigorating their own ranks by incorporating more and more direct action tactics into it.

**AE**

What about other groups with which you have worked closely, some that stand out to you. Environmental folks. I know it's everybody.

**NB**

It's everybody.

**AE**

But there must have been some with whom you were more closely networked with than others, or not?

**NB**

Yeah, I guess there were. I'm realizing sitting here I'm sort of blurring the information between my April organizing and November, because it was all one big spectrum of work. So, I could speak more clearly to the April stuff. I think there are other people in Seattle who could speak more clearly to what

happened in Seattle. One of the big pieces of this was to re-invigorate the student body and to get the students out and motivated. That was a big change. In Seattle, there was a large group of student participation. But it was much greater in April actions. So that was also, that translated from November to April. Also, in the East Coast, you know, we live in this megalopolis between Boston and Atlanta, basically, New York, Philly, D.C., and so we have this humungous population of students who could come to any protest and, in fact, we had a tremendous representation from the student body in D.C. In general, the students are kicking butt, they're doing really good work on lots of issues, sweatshop issues, international globalization work, on and on. So that's good. Over the years I've done more and more work with different student groups. And other groups like the Greens and folks who have been on board, all kinds of groups working on trade issues. One of the differences between Seattle and Washington is that here in D.C., we have, all these NGOs are based here, all these think tanks, and all these policy wonks, as we call 'em. So we had to deal with that, which was a pro and a con, as well. In Seattle, people had to move in. There weren't a lot of people based there to begin with.

**AE** I'm going to digress a little bit. What were some of the cons here.

**NB** Well, just people who are not used to dealing with direct action. So we had, for instance we would have huge arguments about whether or not we actually wanted to shut the meetings down, shut the Bank down, or whether we wanted just to have a big protest one day. Are you a reformer? Or are you an abolitionist? And things like that. That was always part of it, that was part of the discussion about the WTO too.

**AE** Yeah, that was a big part. Did that tend to marginalize some folks?

**NB** One of the big successes is that we organized around a day of action. It wasn't something that dictated people's slogans or their agendas. So everyone could come to town, come to Seattle, or come to D.C., with their particular banner and be included under this big umbrella. And the umbrella was the shut-down action for the day. It's no business as usual today whether or not you wanted to see the thing disappear forever or whether you wanted to reform it. And that's a big lesson. We met, for example, we met with some of the high-ups in the labor unions when we were starting to organize April, and we didn't beg them to be part of it. We just said there will be room to be included in this, and if you get on board now, your agenda could be one of the big agendas. But otherwise, you know, this is going to be the biggest thing happening in town, and you're either on it or you're not.

**AE** You decide what you want to do.

- NB** Right. And I do think that all of this arguing, I think that's one of the big things is not to argue about those picayune pieces, but to basically show up at the same place at the same time. That's one of the things that made it work.
- AE** Yeah, that's a lesson. I think that's really key. What about, I don't know, I'm going to ask a few more individual level of questions. You were talking earlier when we were making tea about your path, well, about your own history. I guess I'd like to ask you to go back a little further. Talk for a few minutes about your path to activism. What was the link for you between caring a lot about particular things that have gone on in the world and deciding you wanted to be involved in doing something about it? A lot of people never make the jump.
- NB** Yeah, I suppose that's true. And that's the 64-million-dollar question, how do you make people jump?
- AE** I'm really interested in that, and it's something that is pretty unclear.
- NB** Well, basically you have to reach people where their gut is or where their heart is, or on some level they care about. It's an organizer's question, right? So, if you're trying to organize people on environmental issues, but you want to talk to a women's group, how do you link women to the environment? If you're talking to a religious group, how do you link the religious to the environment, you know, that kind of thing. For me I guess, personally, I really got on board when I guess, my first year of college, Carter, see how old I am, Carter wanted to reinstate the draft. So that mobilized a whole bunch of us. And then we reopened the draft counseling center. At that point, I don't know which actually happened first. I've always been interested in the environment and sort of looking into nuclear power and nuclear energy and nuclear weapons, and at that point, our policy was the MAD policy, Mutually Assured Destruction. So both of those events, both of those pieces made me start looking at why do we have these nuclear weapons, and who is our enemy, and the definition of enemy, and where does that come from, and why, what are we doing with our resources and the whole piece of it, and fighting wars, and that whole piece. So for me, that's what mobilized me, catapulted me into it. I was really active in college around nuclear issues of all kinds and peace and justice issues.
- AE** Were the political experiences and the history of the younger activists like the students that you are working with now, than activists your age or activists who were protesting the Vietnam war?
- NB** I don't know. I remember when I was first getting involved, I thought I would be dead by the time I was like 25. Because we would go out and we would do all these demonstrations and we would get arrested every weekend, and if there was a nuclear weapon, we could blow the world up 15,000 times, and I

decided, okay, I'm not going to make it, and neither is anybody else. And I have a feeling that lots of people feel that way in the beginning, or constantly and you just learn to deal with it. I think that one of the pieces that's different, well the Vietnam War, five percent of people on college campuses were actually involved in any kind of a protest. And it was very focused on ending the war. And not, the bigger issues of globalization, globalization is way more complicated. All the issues about money moving across borders and sweatshops and how does that affect the people in our country, and I mean, just on and on and on and on. Big issues about city-state sovereignty, and it's very complicated.

That's one of the reasons art is so important, cultural stuff is so important to try and sort of tease these messages out. And that's one of the bigger issues. One of the great things about Seattle, again, was that for the first time people weren't saying to me, or anyone else, oh you're vaguely reminiscent of the 60s. It stopped. You know, oh this is something different.

**AE**

Yeah.

**NB**

People are talking about something else. There's a movement out here. There's other stuff happening. And that's nice. Now we'll be vaguely reminiscent of Seattle for a long time, but that's okay. We'll work on that one. And organizing now, when we were organizing nuclear stuff, we had some connections, for example, the Nevada test site to the test site in Russia. And that was a big deal, the international connection. But it wasn't easy and it wasn't as far spread. The Internet has helped quite a bit, even though there are plenty of places that are not connected. The Internet and cell phones and all those wireless pieces of equipment are really helping to bring a lot of the world together.

**AE**

No kidding. You talked a little earlier about working with these student activists who had never really been involved in a protest before. What were your challenges there? Was it more just training? Did you find that people came in with a clear idea of why they were there and what they were up to? Or more just, this is cool, I want to be here?

**NB**

There's a whole spectrum. Clearly people come because there's free beer or lots of cute guys, or whatever it is that draws people in. And some people come because they are genuinely upset about the inequities in the world that they see. Some people are upset because they are on the rich side of things, some people are upset because they are on the poor side of things. All these things. Since I'm an artist, I was actually invited to speak at the Maryland College of Art and Design for one of their art forums. There is a great teacher there who is doing political education with the artists. There are plenty of political artists, but traditionally, there are a lot of people who hide . . . so that was very exciting. You try to talk to people, for instance, these students,

about how to take their particular interest, which was art, and use it for social good. And beyond that, to make decisions about how you do that. So rather than, for example, use a toxic material, like an oil-based paint or some kind of toxic plastic in your artwork, how do you translate that and use less toxic materials, more appropriate materials and the connections between that and your direct action. What is direct action on that spectrum, is that included, and you are going to take a puppet that you've made with toxic materials out into the streets and protest making toxics? Or are you going to do the work and make it better all through, this whole integration of the message -- how do you walk your talk. For students, some of these programs, taking pledges of not working with corporations that are really bad, is really good in getting kids to think about their future path and what they are going to give to the planet.

**AE**

In your own path, was there a pivotal moment when you decided that this is what your life was going to look like and that you, I guess I want to say, rejected this model of you go to school and you get a job and you do this linear thing, or is it something that just kind of evolved?

**NB**

Well, I was particularly lucky, or unlucky, depending on how you look at it. I ran away to sea for a while. I have a captain's license. I worked on sailboats, sail training vessels for years. And one of the things I got out of that, one of the most liberating things that I got out of that, I guess, fabulous things, as opposed to the community where I grew up where everybody, the family units were somewhat traditional and people worked one job their whole life, was that you could actually have a life that incorporated many different professions and many different skills. And, in fact, on ships, the more of a Jack or Jill of all trades that you were, the better off you were. And that was really liberating for me and wonderful to see. And I think that's one of the reasons why I am where I am today, is that I can incorporate some of these diverse skills and sort of eek out a living or put it together. Certainly some of the jobs I've gotten are because I have this random collection of skills from carpentry to non-violence to organizational work.

**AE**

That's great.

**NB**

So, I think that piece of it.

**AE**

So many things here. So, yeah, I can see where being on the ship would definitely kind of give you a different model to start with and be able to apply that to your land life in some way. Some of my friends have similar life course experiences, but it's interesting that there are some who look at that like, okay, that's what I did, and now I have to change because I'm back, and I just don't at all. A little bit about what's next, there's November, there's April. Where do you see all this going? You talked about building a network and supporting it, so what's on the horizon?

**NB**

Well, who knows. But there are a few things that are happening. One is that we have now got a lot more people trained and invigorated and looking at their local communities. I think you'll see a surge in work happening locally, for example in D.C. Just one of the things that came out of it was a group working on housing here. They did a fabulous takeover of an abandoned building not too long ago. It was excellent work, excellent education happening in the District of Columbia on this. And I think you'll see a lot of stuff like that. Little affinity groups or little community groups that have formed now and will take the work home, that's one thing. The other thing is that with the conventions, which are happening, the Democratic and Republican conventions, we see the transition from just looking globally or looking internationally at the problems created by corporate globalization and translating this to what's happening here in the United States. The lack of social services, the increased prison and industrial complex, and on and on and on. I think that people have done a fairly good job of making that message clear to the conventions and to make sure that the link is there between what we did in November and what happens here in the United States. And after that, we're looking at Prague, there's already major organizing efforts, sympathetic actions happening all across the world, as well as in Prague. And lots of people, a bunch of activists, new people, new activists who were so taken by this that they have actually quit their jobs and moved to Prague to help organize over there. So I think that we'll see a lot of activist work happening on a lot of different fronts, and we'll also see some significant changes. For instance, the Bank and the IMF are ready, there's a bipartisan commission in Congress that is not happy about how the money is being spent. I think we're going to see cuts in funding. I think those organizations' venue or breadth of work is going to change, particularly the IMF, significantly, for the reason they're not doing what they were originally intended to do. So I think we're going to see some changes in how things are done. I think we already have, the way people talk about inclusiveness, the World Bank. There have been some interesting victories around the China Tibet issue and relocation of people. So, I think hopefully the work will continue and protests will continue, either nationally, globally, and the work will continue in a smaller venue in people's hometowns.

**AE**

Is there an umbrella organization or organizations spearheading organizing Prague?

**NB**

There are a couple of European organizations.

**AE**

Do you know . . .

**NB**

INPEG is one, that's a more direct action group. And then there's the other group, I'm blanking out, I think Friends of the Earth is involved and a bunch of other folks. You could talk to Soren Ambrose at 50 Years is Enough.

**AE**

Okay.

**NB**

They're in D.C. Their number is (202) 544-9355. And Soren actually went over to Prague in early May to start talking to those guys. There are two coalitions. One is a more NGO, legal-oriented group, and then there's the direct action group. And then there's a group of communists. There's a whole bunch.

**AE**

In your experience, Seattle and D.C., did you identify any tension between the NGOs and the local groups or ...

**NB**

Yeah, there could be. I mean, there is and there isn't. I mean yes and no.

**AE**

It was no big deal?

**NB**

Well, it depends. There are struggles in the beginning about what the message is going to be and this and that. In D.C., people are really conscious about who you are alienating and who you're not, and like the Friends of the Earth or the Sierra Club were not, the national group was not particularly on board until later. The local Sierra Club chapters, for example, were all with us. They were so excited. But the national Sierra Club, the head, was not. It was kind of ridiculous things. There's one particular individual, and you wonder well, was he behind it because he didn't think of it or because he really disagreed with the politics or what? Nobody knows. So there's always issues like that. This is part of organizing. We work through all these different agendas and I don't think there was a big crisis.

One of the big issues coming out of Seattle, then we had to deal with it head on in April, was the issue of the Black Bloc, and property destruction is violence, and that whole thing. We were pretty effective and pretty clear here in D.C. that we did not want to get into that discussion, we were not going to make decisions about tactics, other than we were calling for a non-violent demonstration, and we very clearly asked people who were not going to be non-violent to do something else, another day or somewhere else. And the Black Bloc in D.C. was a great and creative and energetic force here. There was a group that came out of that group called Guerilla Gardeners who did a lot of wonderful work planting gardens in community areas and, also, with the help of residents or helping residents plant their gardens, or liberating lawn space from corporate headquarters, which was a wonderful way to channel a lot of good energy. There was very little violence, property destruction of any type. Essentially the only violence down here in D.C. or in Seattle was the violence of the police.

**AE**

So someone might come to work and find a new tree and that would be it.

**NB** Yeah, or some local shrub or vegetable plantings instead of a corporate chemical lawn.

**AE** That's excellent.

**NB** Yeah. That was a really fun thing. We did a lot of work talking to the Black Bloc and the folks who were coming to D.C. who potentially might have done some property destruction and asked them, communicated what our thoughts were politically behind our calling for a non-violent action and sort of worked through that, just to try to get groups not to marginalize each other.

**AE** Yeah.

**NB** Because that is a tool of the right. They try to get us to splinter ourselves and to slice off our power. And we have refused to do that, and I hope that will continue, to be more inclusive, to say that we are, the whole spectrum of people are involved in fighting this globalization, and that's where our power comes from. I think that was effective in April and a good lesson.

**AE** That's really encouraging.

**NB** Yeah, it was great.

**AE** It's a formidable task, but to see successes, that's really great.

**NB** Yeah.

**AE** Thank you. I've learned a lot. It's just one thing that was made clear to us, especially in regard to an organization like DAN that encompasses so much, that it was going to be important to talk to a lot of people.

**End of Interview**

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