

Ace Saturay
People's Assembly

Interviewee: Ace Saturay
Affiliation: People's Assembly
Interviewer: Jeremy Simer
Date of interview: 4 May 2000

JS I'm speaking with Ace Saturay of People's Assembly. Today is the Fourth of May 2000 in Ace's office here on Beacon Hill.

So first, Ace, I was wondering if you could tell me exactly what is People's Assembly and Sentenaryo ng Bayan. What are your activities, and what are the relationship with the organizations?

AS Sentenaryo ng Bayan is a campaign and also an organization that brought us together in relation with the issues of 100 years U.S. colonialization in the Philippines. It was started in 1896 when the United States colonized the Philippines. Of course, we see the colonialization - right now it is still ongoing, and we call the Philippines still a neo-colony of the United States. I can explain that later.

So Sentenaryo ng Bayan is another form or forum or education organization that can expose the true history of the Filipino people, their struggle, their situation, especially the Filipino workers, the peasants, the whole working of people, especially the Philippine American migration. What happened was there is a lot of Filipinos who are forced to migrate from other countries?

JS So it was a campaign to commemorate the 100th year anniversary of the colonization. Is it a continuing organization still, and where is it based?

AS We are part of the national democratic movement in the Philippines, and we are part of the whole alliance of the Philippine organization here in the United States. They call it Bayan U.S.A., and we are connected with the Bayan in the Philippines, which are advocating through genuine national freedom and democracy, achieving a genuine national freedom and democracy. Like I said, we believe that the Philippines are still under the neo-colony of the United States, and we want a genuine truly independent and genuine freedom from foreign domination.

JS What does Bayan mean?

AS Bayan means people, but it is an acronym. Nationalist Alliance, but the Bayan itself means people. Here in Seattle at Sentenaryo ng Bayan it's a people's centennial. We commemorate the history of the Philippine Revolution. We commemorate colonialization of the Philippines during the Spanish and during the time of Japanese and during the time of United States colonialization, so it's pretty much trying to expose the true history of the Filipino people. Then for that we can learn from our experience what should be done, what should we do next thing, so we found that we need to organize and mobilize more Filipino America to help the Filipino people to liberate themselves from foreign domination.

JS So do I understand correctly that the Sentenaryo ng Bayan is like a local organization?

AS A local organization.

JS Of Bayan USA?

AS Yes. Bayan USA.

JS And then People's Assembly? How does that work?

AS Sentenaryo ng Bayan hosted the People's Assembly, so we hosted the People's Assembly.

JS The People's Assembly, it's not an organization per se.

AS It's not an organization. It's a forum. It's a conference to all the Philippine networks, all the people that we are connected to discuss all the problems from different countries, so through the People's Assembly, they share their experience, lessons and possible action, what should be done for the issues. So it's a forum; it's a conference of different countries.

So like I said, Sentenaryo ng Bayan hosted the People's Assembly, and we gathered 300 delegates from different countries. These delegates are members of non-governmental organizations, citizen movement and people's-based organization. So there are only 300, but they are representing organized forces, the peasant movement, the workers' movement, the student movement. So they can speak. Those 300 delegates – they can speak on their organization. So it's a small number, but they can speak.

They come from different countries, like Asia, Africa, Canada...

JS How many different countries?

AS I think there were 12 countries plus that attended. Some of the countries just sent a message. So most of them are the network that we had established ever since when we put up to convene against globalization. So the People's Assembly actually has a history in that one, although our struggle against globalization was started, like I said, back then, against colonialization. And then we really put up this globalization now to become more clear, especially when the APEC had the meeting in Manila in 1996. So we put up this People's Conference against imperialist globalization, and then they put up the caravan against imperialist globalization. So pretty much the APEC was exposed, not only as an organization for a trade - that's just some organization for unification of the Asian countries - but it's an instrument of the, we can say, monopoly capitalists.

We see this APEC – it's another instrument of imperialist globalization, and we can say that imperialists in the high stakes of capitalism. So we see this one as another form of foreign domination. They use this instrument.

JS And would you say that that mobilization against APEC in '96 =was your mobilization against the WTO here an extension of that same thing?

AS It's pretty much, because we are exposing who is the tool of this imperialist globalization, and APEC is only one tool, so APEC - the same thing as NAFTA, North American Free Trade in Mexico, the USA and Canada. So for them, on the part of Asia, APEC is their instrument to continue to put forward their agenda on mobilization, so the APEC, that's their own main tool. We saw this as APEC, because during 1992 in the Blake Island, people don't see how the APEC is really affecting us.

JS What happened in 1992?

AS In 1992 when they had the first meeting of APEC here in Seattle.

JS Where?

AS Blake Island.

JS It was on Blake Island? Okay.

AS Yes.

JS I didn't live here then. I moved here in '95.

AS That's when they had the APEC ministerial meeting here, so there was a protest here, but it wasn't really clear what is the role of the APEC during the time. But when they went to the Philippines, that's the time it was exposed. "Oh, this is some kind of different APEC. It is really globalizing their policy." So this is the tool, another tool of imperialist globalization.

JS So then when the WTO came to Seattle, what was your...?

AS So after that 1996, the continuation in the No to APEC, a coalition, was held in Vancouver in 1997. There were some mass protests. People were organizing. We sent a delegate from Seattle to that conference, exposing that APEC once again, as a tool of imperialist globalization. We discussed all these policies affecting the Asian countries and during the time there was really a big Asian crisis going on.

So after that, there was some meeting in Guadalupe for APEC again, so our network organized another conference confronting globalization policies of the APEC. After that we became active, the Sentenaryo ng Bayan, became active in participating in opposing the MAI, somewhere like 1998. So we did a lot of education forums, and then in connection with the Unitarian Church, we sent letters to oppose the multilateral agreement on the investment, which are especially the Seattle people who are directly affecting this one. Taking our jobs, taking our laws and policies of the state, so pretty much taken over by the monopoly capitalists. So we exposed them. It's a good campaign that we outreached to people. There was a lot of response on that one, opposed to MAI.

And then, of course, when we suddenly found out that the meeting of the World Trade Organization might be somewhere in the United States or either in San Jose, California or in Seattle, and then in somewhere like December, January, we felt that it might be happening here in Washington, so we started calling, organizing people up to our network that might be happening here. So we had to gear up and then be ready for a possible mobilization.

Then I found out through the Washington Fair Trade, they were putting up this discussion about the fair trade, everything, and that's the time we found out also that the WTO was coming here. So since the start of the discussion of the coalition, we've been involved with that, hooked up with them. So although most of the people are really white activists, and then we went there and were involved with them and had a discussion. I put forward that WTO, the Philippines are involved. We went to the WTO, because WTO, getting involved in the WTO, one country they give a better job and better opportunity to all the workers, especially in one country.

So we saw it. Actually before that, before the WTO, we found out this globalization policy has really a big effect, so the big devastating effect the peasant, the workers, especially the Filipino people. So we hooked up with all this network from Asia, all the people that are opposing globalization and free trade policies. So we have to have some kind of activities for them in Seattle.

JS When did you start working with your network that way?

AS January.

JS Right from the beginning?

AS Right from the beginning. We told them that we've got to put out some type of conference or forum from different countries, so right in there we put up the People's Assembly. It will be held somewhere in November and December coming, because we don't have a definite time yet for the WTO. So somewhere in November 27th to December 3rd, we're going to have it some kind of counterpoint conference and call it People's Assembly.

And then we see this one as another continuing resistance against imperialist globalization that was held in Vancouver. People who went to attend the No to APEC in Vancouver, we started

meeting and then working, doing all this education, from the church, from the different community organizations, and that's the start.

JS What organizations were you in contact with from the No to APEC in Vancouver?

AS In Vancouver, pretty much the one who really – our main contact there was the Philippine Women's Center. They are the one's who spearheaded the campaign, and then, of course, the youth organization there did their part. So pretty much it was led by all different organizations in Canada. It's a coalition against APEC. One of our networks there, like I said, Philippine Women's Center, they are the one who shaped the No to APEC. Through that, they gave us some pointers on how we could organize the coalition or some kind of conference here in Seattle, Washington.

JS What kind of pointers did they give you?

AS They gave us training, media training. They gave us how we can handle organizing, working with the whole different coalition. They found out that we are part of the coalition. I've been working the coalition before that. There's no name yet.

JS You mean the coalition that...?

AS People for Fair Trade. Before that there was no name, yet. So probably after four months they hadn't decided what kind of coalition that we would have.

But we definitely have to have this People's Assembly activities that people can be involved in the project. And then our concern is outreach to the Asian community, outreach to the people of color and outreach to all these other networks that are really interested to understand the issue of the third world country and, of course, the globalization policies.

JS Would you say that those are your main goals?

AS Yes. Pretty much our main goal on the People's Assembly is to expose the disastrous event of the free trade and globalization policies of free trade. The second one is to strengthen our organization from different countries and different networks and solidarity, pretty much an international gathering. So it's an international gathering, and then this is just another continuation, continuing with the stance against imperialist globalization, because we see that the WTO is another agency that was created to exploit, again, the people through this other policy. They just want to consolidate their ranks.

JS Once this started moving and you realized your goals were to expose the disastrous effects of the WTO on the third world and to strengthen international solidarity by bringing together people from different countries, if those were your goals, how did you implement them? What were Sentenary ng Bayan's activities? What did the People's Assembly look like?

AS So we did a lot of networking and we'd do a lot of distribution of our materials. We did a lot of forum discussion groups and then outreaching to the youth community and the church-based community, all the people that we'd been working to. We discussed everything about the WTO, how this really was directly affecting us –even the youth. We are affected by these globalization policies.

Most of the time, almost every day, we were doing a lot of campaigning against the WTO. During the span of four months, pretty much what we developed was more networking, because at the time there was coalition yet. And then we'd been part of that planning and putting up all kind of committees and putting up names and how we could reach the Seattle community and not be only Asian in the coalition. I started bringing some people to the coalition, because, you see, the coalition – it's really a good coalition that we can work together. It's a coalition, but they haven't put up a base of unity. What will be our base of unity putting up coalition? That's the hardest

part. What kind of coalition are you're putting up here?

JS So that wasn't identified? That wasn't made clear?

AS It was not really clear. So that's why they hadn't put out the name, what kind of name. What will be our position to WTO? What will be our basic statement that we have to put up? What will be our mission? So if you put that thing right away on the table, the people won't be questioning anymore. What will be our goal? What will be our name? We'll say we were just against WTO -it's too big. But most of the people that put up the coalition are pretty much from the point of view of the environment, point of view of the agriculturists, point of view of the, say, middle class point of view.

During this time, the first quarter of the year, 1999, was the time where the U.S. invaded Iran/Iraq from the Kosovo, more of the progressive activists or the left group organization... Most of the activists were focusing during that time, so that's why nobody attended from the coalition. Most of the people who were doing the coalition for the fair trade, the Washington Fair Trade, first aid for APEC, and then right there. Of course, Public Citizen to Mike Dolan. We're friends with Mike Dolan, also, because as a coalition, we have to work together, so I've been working with them.

And then, finally, within the coalition, and I think we started attending – I don't remember when we called up for the youth at Seattle Central Community College. They have been meeting ever since and I've been part of that steering committee And then I brought up this to Lydia also. We're trying to outreach the students from different campuses.

So what happened during the time, the community couldn't decide what this mission was. Then right in there, five meetings before the actual meeting, the student community decided. So what will be our need? So everyone put up all different names, and I suggested NO2WTO. So most of the people under one meeting insisting No2 WTO. "How do we handle the NO2WTO?" How to answer the telephone? How do we get some stuff? We could put the acronym Network Opposed to WTO. So I am the one who suggested that name, Network Opposed to WTO. So they adopted it.

When they adopted it, in a couple of days they came back - Mike Dolan, Sally Soriano, all this stuff. "I don't think we should use this 'NO2WTO' alone, because we couldn't get funding, we couldn't get anything. So that's their reason. Then a lot of people now had agreed NO2WTO. We agreed on NO2WTO.

JS Wasn't that the steering committee agreed on it?

AS Yes. Then they came. Sally Soriano came back and then, "I think we have to change it. NO2WTO, Yes to Democracy," that kind of stuff, trying to put up a mellow position.

For me, now, what I see is a coalition. It's a coalition that you couldn't really expect a broad unity on that one. Why? Because, like I said, there is no basic formation. What will be our unity? So the basis of unity in forming a coalition is really important. How we can work together if we don't know what will be our basis of unity? So we're working. WTO – we're pretty much against WTO. Okay, on that level, we agree. So that's why I put up NO2WTO. We are all NO2WTO, but some of them, "No, no, we have to fix it. We have to scrutinize all this. We have to review." A lot of them, they like to do that.

Well, I'm still there, you know? I'm still with the youth. You guys from UW, for us, we see, because we are directly affecting this, the WTO. We already experienced it. You guys – maybe you haven't experienced it, so that's why you like to scrutinize the WTO, review it, all that stuff. For us, for the third world country, we are directly affecting the free trade policy on globalization, policy on free trade. So for us, that's why our position is pretty clear. NO2WTO.

Of course, behind that we have more analysis than simply NO2WTO. The WTO is another tool of imperialist globalization, so for the coalition, we've been part of the coalition because of that position, No to WTO.

During the general meeting, they put up beside some kind of two things. They raised the issue to all the people, what will be our name? So they decided, and who will agree with the dual name? People for Fair Trade, Network Opposed to WTO, or nothing?

So everyone agreed on this name. For us, this is a coalition, so we'll just go for that. But for us, we have to carry our own message, NO2WTO. That's what we are carrying while I am still working with the coalition, because the coalition is really not clear for us. While we are there, we're trying to unite with them, also, on that level. I've been working with them for many times. But what happened is, there is a lot of takeover on the People for Fair Trade.

JS In what way?

AS Well, of course, if you were in the Steering Committee, you have to respect all the members. If you are considering this as a coalition, you have to respect all the people that are part of the coalition. There are some people there that we have to consider also. But what we see is just nirvana, because they have money, all this stuff.

JS What specific decisions were made that this showed the people with the money were not respecting other organizations and their decisions?

AS It was really directly seen on how they really lament the policy within the People for Fair Trade, so I know, I felt.... That's what I felt, especially with the coalition. Of course, I've seen – there's a lot of disagreement. For us, we have a principle. We're still united with you guys. Then whatever difficulties or character or attitude you've got for us, what we see is a principle unity for you all that we are against the WTO. We work together, so I've been there ever since. That would mean I tried to get in there to suggest whatever possible that I can help within our organization, how we can reach the broadest as possible, mobilize the community.

Even Sally Soriano talked to me before I went to the Philippines. I went to the Philippines to discuss all this. I was invited to go to the Asian Pacific Conference in the Philippines, to talk to all different countries, asking them how they can send a delegate and mobilize from different countries. So they adopted that they were going to join the Seattle mobilization.

JS When did you go to the Philippines?

AS I went there somewhere like June or July.

JS And so what was the result of that?

AS I got all different – 12 countries accepted that they were planning to go to Washington, D.C. and they will join with us through the People's Assembly.

JS So the people who are involved in the Seattle People's Assembly, their organizations were also involved in the conference in the Philippines in the summer?

AS Yes.

JS What conference was it?

AS Asian Pacific Conference. It's another globalization issue affecting the third world countries.

JS What was the conference called?

AS Asian Pacific Conference. So I was invited to talk and give them what is now the situation in mobilizing Seattle against the WTO. I asked Sally Soriano to give me all the packets about the information about the WTO. But before that, before I left, Sally Soriano sat down with me right

there, asking me, "What do you think about the coalition?"

So I spoke to her right away. I've been talking to her ever since. "What will be the best thing that we can organize in Seattle?" I've been putting in several suggestions, but I've been seeing the actual information they're putting up all this community, this outreach community. It's not working.

So finally when we sat down, finally I sat down with Sally, "Sally, this is the best way that we can do. Neighborhood organizing, community outreach." So I'm the one insisting that you have to go to a community neighborhood organizing. This is the best we can outreach the community. I'm the one who put the thing right there, and we adopted that.

JS I remember. That was exciting.

AS I was in the Philippines and they said they had 150 people there at the Labor Temple. "This is the idea from Ace that we have to go through the neighborhood organizing, and we had to go, go to the masses. Organize them. Tell them this is the problem. This is what's going on. We have to agitate them. We have to mobilize them."

So then when I came back and Sally Soriano talked to me again. "That's the best thing that we did. People right away, they did their own thing." For me, "See. Look at that." I've been insisting ever since that you guys put up this outreach committee plan. That's good that you guys did that, but it's not working in all the communities. Because you couldn't see all this involvement of the people. We got to involve them. We've got to involve inside. We have organize the neighborhood. We have to report our organization. Maybe north, south, east, west. Let's divide it into four sections. If not, we can just divide it into territory or we can just divide per neighborhood. Organize the neighborhood and south end neighborhood, north neighborhood, and Ballard neighborhood. It started four and then grew up. That's good.

I wish I would be the coordinator of the neighborhood organizing committee. I can see what will happen, but pretty much it is an organization. Somebody is trying to take over the whole thing, though. For us, well, we still have to work. We have things to do, because our position in WTO, expose the WTO as an instrument of imperialist globalization and people that they would accept that. Some of the people from the coalition – they just don't do that.

But I don't want to be harder than... I'd like to work with them, so I've been in the coalition. I maintain my position as "No to WTO." So I worked with them, telling them "okay, this is what did. I went to Canada. I went to Montreal. I went to all the people from Montreal, Canada, Ottawa, Quebec." I talked to them.

JS You went to all those cities?

AS Oh, yes.

JS When was that?

AS That was the summer, like August and September. Canada. Talked to them. Discussed that, also. Networked with the People for Fair Trade/NO2WTO. Although we have a separate activities. So finally they adopted. Like I said, this is what I see. The People for Fair Trade, what I felt that - somebody trying to pre-empt the People's Assembly, trying to push them back. That's not part of the NO2WTO.

I've been there and they know me, and then when I'd seen that, they put up those activities on their flyer. They misprint the name. They misprint the contact person. They misprint the whole thing. They know me already. Why is it? What's going on? There's a lot of people misunderstanding what the People's Assembly was. Where is the event at? There's a lot of miscommunication and misinterpretation of what is really the People's Assembly. It was really bad. So we just did our own thing during the times, especially the first two months. It is really

hard to work with the coalition. Especially if you are a minority.

For us, we have to carry our own word. Outreach to the community. Outreach the other churches, other workers and so on. We've got our own truth and we've got our labor. We get all this success. Three hundred delegates from different countries. We've got delegates mostly from the people of color.

That preparation took us so long. Preparation met with big trouble everywhere. I was still attending the coalition meetings. They invited me there.

Then after that, of course, during the actual WTO meetings, that's the time how we could put these people in housing, organizing, all this stuff. So we had our own different way of organizing, although we still connected with the People for Fair Trade during the time. And I saw some of the flyers that came out. People for Fair Trade, all this stuff. That's what was going on. They just put People for Fair Trade. What about NO2WTO?

It's a miscommunication, and then derailing the concept of the coalition, so that's not the way it is, the coalition. This is our name. This is our position, NO2WTO. So all the people that we could hook up now, because we had already established the office, the People for Fair Trade, some of them, they wanted to take off the NO2WTO again. I made the sign. They want to get rid of that. It's bad if you're going to get rid of that. It's really bad, because you are destroying the coalition. That's what happened. People did their own thing; they did their own stuff, because we had already established the center, so a lot of this organizing. We just got in there and saw what activities were coming up. And that's fine.

After that, we'd been doing a lot of organizing during the actual conference. We developed our own committee. We developed our own outreach. We developed our own medical stuff. We developed our own security. We develop our own – all this committee just to secure the People's Assembly, especially during the march and rally.

Before that, we applied for a separate committee. We decided to separate our march to make it bigger. We could see that we could have a march from north, from south, from east to west to make it when we go down town; that's much bigger. Because we had experience that in the Philippines from north to south it is, in effect, a long march. Being marched together and mobilize people, but they are one. They're together.

So for us, what we see... Because the position of the workers, we couldn't see. It's really tough with them.

JS You mean the AFL-CIO?

AS AFL-CIO. That's where the People for Fair Trade join, calling all the people who joined this one, mobilizing all the people going there. But the position of the AFL-CIO – it's really bad against the WTO, but they're trying to play around to become more moderate. People are really opposing the WTO, so the call is to go out of the street and then join with this all the people against the WTO, not simply just because they were legal. They have a permit. Although we tried to attempt to get a permit, but we were denied.

The main question about denial, because there were like eight organizations that applied for a permit. They were granted. Not the People's Assembly, and then we asked them why. Their main answer was that because they wanted to contain all the rallies to the north, so it was better for all of you to go to the Seattle Center. No. We told them we are from different countries. We've got representatives from different countries. We've got people of color here from the South. We've got all the neighborhoods joining with us, so why do we need to go all the way to the north?

And then when we had a second dialogue again to the Municipal Building, the Office of the Mayor, the second reason. Another reason they provide us is because of the police resources.

They don't have so much police resources, so we couldn't accommodate you. And then they tried to minimize our march. "Why don't you guys just march the side streets? Just to complement them, just to make everything peaceful."

I told him, "We are peaceful. We've got delegates from different countries. They would like to express their opposition to WTO. They'd like to express their concern about the WTO." That's why they were here. "You guys should grant us a permit. With or without permit, we are going to march."

So I told them right there at the Office of the Mayor. We had a negotiating panel, and we got people from the church, and then we got professionals. We got the teachers. We got the doctors. We're negotiating.

JS What teachers and what doctors?

AS There was Dr. [inaudible]. She is from the Philippines, I'll give you her information. She's one of the speakers there. And then we got a priest, we got a Unitarian church minister. And we've got a couple of professors to talk to them to grant us a permit. But their position was no, because they don't have the police resources. If you don't have police resources, you can't give us even one, just one police? They said they couldn't do it. "We'll pay them." So I told them, "We'll pay them." No, we couldn't do it. All you have to do is go up to Seattle Center or march in the side. Okay. This ours – this is what you can do.

JS Did you have marshals?

AS Yes. We already have marshals. We already have medical stuff to provide medical care to all the people for whatever happens. And we do have all this traffic brigade. Whatever traffic that you guys said that we might cause traffic during the time. And he said, "Our march is supposed to march all the way from Martin Luther King to downtown, International District of downtown. But we shortened our march because he said you don't have any police resources, so we shortened our march to make it easy for us and for you, too.

JS So how much did you shorten the march?

AS We started in the International District, so that's Fourth and Jackson. It was supposed to be like a four-mile march, and then we shortened it like probably half a mile or a mile. From Fourth and Jackson all the way to downtown, because our main target was to capture the Fourth and Union, we were going to have a rally there while we were waiting for the big march from the workers.

JS That was in front of the - go to Fourth and Union to go to...?

AS Yes, that would be the convergent point. Then march, join all this, a lot of protests, and they were going to have a program there.

JS So how did that play out? Did that actually happen?

AS What happened – we had a U-Haul truck and then we were supposed to have huge speakers on top, and what happened – the speakers broke down. We rented some there, and they said they worked, and then we hooked up everything. "It's not working." So we got all this half-mile megaphone. Eight or I think six megaphones. We used that during the march. That's why we got a huge banner. You know all the banners that we had at the conference? This one? It was on the truck, the whole thing, and it was really good. That one. It was really good. And then along the conference, there were a lot of murals around... If you'd been to that conference, it was really a different atmosphere if you went to the community compared to Benaroya Hall. They were big, you know? They had got two thousand people going there, all that stuff.

JS Did you go to Benaroya Hall?

AS Oh, yes. I stopped by there, because we had to prepare for this People's Assembly. That's a really different thing, you know. You'll see the feeling of resistance right there inside the Filipino community. People speak about the issues, share the lesson, speak of different countries, a different dialogue. People of color speak about revolution; they speak about imperialism and they speak about capitalism. What will be done? But they speak the whole thing.

Most of them – they now it. We couldn't rely upon the WTO. How do we continue this resistance? It's just a learning experience, another learning experience from different countries that they are here. We brought the struggle here in the belly of the beast, the resistance against imperialist globalization. We brought it here, and this is the organized way into international - their delegation, the international solidarity and this is the People's Assembly, the highest expression of international solidarity is the People's Assembly.

So during the time of the march, while we were marching, we started like from five hundred to six hundred delegates and then people started coming in. Actually one night before, we spoke from different youth groups from UW, from Seattle Central, from different areas of the United States – San Francisco, especially the JustAct really joined us at the last minute. And then some of the UW students joined with us also and others from SCCC, although they had another divergent point. But a lot of them joined our routes. They saw that the People's Assembly was another direct action, because there was no permit. The militancy was there and then we declared that we're going to have a people's permit. With or without a permit, we were going to march.

We told that to the police and to the mayor. They just stood up and then they left us, because we couldn't come up with a negotiation from the Office of the Mayor.

JS Did they say anything else? Did they threaten you or say that police would do something?

AS They didn't say, but there was some threatening.

JS Did they say anything?

AS They just said, "We would like you just stay into the side of the street. We couldn't say anything from whether we're going to disperse you or not. But your position, that's already your choice. So we couldn't really come up with anything here, but we would like if everyone would cooperate with the police staff."

We're asking your cooperation, but it seems you turned down our proposal. Are there any grounds for us to deny you or grant it, the organization. What about us? Why? Why are we not granted a permit? So it's still a big question for us. For us we see this as another suppression of our democratic rights?

JS Did you think it was a racist decision?

AS It's not simply racist. It's a question of the political standpoint. It might be because the People's Assembly are the ones who really carry the sharpest line condemning capitalism, condemning monopoly capitalism, condemning imperialist globalization. Imperialism is right there. We are here. So we carry the banner of anti-imperialist, the People's Assembly. That's the one. So we see this as especially also part of discrimination, because people of color in the south end. Most of the people of color live here, and in poverty, so it means all the people that are living here, they are denied all this information.

For us, no, we've got to continue our direction, our position, to march. This is a life and death struggle. This isn't just simply a "go there and join them," but this is a life and death struggle of the people of the world. Life and death struggle of the different countries. Especially the third world countries that are experiencing directly exploitation of mobilization policies, exploitation of foreign domination led by the United States. So we have to expose that. So we marched right there. And it grew, our march rank.

JS How many people do you think there were altogether?

AS While we were marching, it developed to a couple of thousand, because we were expecting really that they were going to teargas us at Fourth and Union. Then we directly linked with the Direct Action Network. They were definitely holding some areas to get in there.

They called us, the Direct Action called us. "They started beating up people here at Fourth and Union, so you guys from the People's Assembly, you guys take care of yourselves. I don't know if you can get in here or what?" So just letting us know that at Fourth and Union were already beating up people and kicking up here. "Okay. We're on the way now." It was probably three blocks away. We could see all this teargas. Okay, we couldn't decide if we were going to disperse or not. So, no, we're going to Fourth and Union. That's where we're heading.

People were building up, joining with our ranks, because we were ready. People were ready. They were all militant. No, we've got to go to the Convention Center. We've got to go to Fourth and Union. So what happened – the police were right there. And then there's Direct Action here, an affinity group blocking the road. And then there was smoke right here, and we were here. So what we did, we sent another breaking team to get some kind of picture of what was going on at Union and Third Avenue and other stops.

So we got the response right there. It was clear on Third Avenue. Police were at Fourth and Union. So we dodged in. I think I saw you right there doing the thumb. I got a cramp.

JS Oh, that's right. You stepped down and...

AS Something. I was the overall command on that march, because we wanted to make everything, our rank secure, and we didn't want anybody just getting there. But people would start joining with us. Started marching. Couple of thousand started marching, all this stuff. There were a lot of people there that started walking.

So I was left behind. I kept cramping. Finally I got relief. Somebody from our medical team, and they helped us and I went right away again.

After we went all the way to McDonald's, Third and Union, Fourth Avenue, we passed the police, right in the back, they're beating up. This time we're right here. So everyone was yelling, "Victory to the People. Junk. Junk. WTO." And then everyone is jubilantly yelling. We passed that. It was really exciting. Everyone was shouting.

So that's the one. And then we massed up right there in front of the Westlake Mall. We started calling people. People of color started shouting and stuff. There is picture right there.

JS So what you're saying is you had... This is Union and this is Fourth, right? And this is Third. So you're saying you were coming on Fourth Avenue and there were police here and protesters here?

AS Yes. Yes.

JS That puts us here. So then you came down to Third.

AS Yes. Third Avenue and then...

JS Up to Union?

AS I think between Pike and Pine. Police right there start beating up, so Union is really clear. Just right there.

JS So you did take Fourth Avenue up there after all?

AS Yes, we took the Fourth and Union right there. Fourth and Union and then between Fourth and Fifth. We converged right in front of Westlake Mall.

- JS You said before that you decided on having your event, the rally, at Fourth and Union. Why did you choose that intersection?
- AS That intersection actually is – that’s where we were going to meet with the big march, because there were a lot of workers that didn’t want to join with the AFL-CIO, because their position, it sucks. So we had connected with some of the workers that were going to break away from the big march and join with us.
- JS What workers were those?
- AS I guess from ILWU. They are really a more strong position against the WTO. Then we got several youth also coming here from other groups that were going to meet with. Actually, our several youth – we were going to meet them at 1:30 at Fourth and Union, just before we were going to march to the Convention Center.
- JS The youth were going to do what until 1:30?
- AS Until 1:30 we were going to wait for them to join with us.
- JS Where were they coming from?
- AS Probably coming from Seattle Center and either from Seattle Central Community College. So they were going to Fourth and Union to join all this, because there was a lot of people of color there.
- JS So you had people from the ILWU and you had students coming both from Seattle Central Community College?
- AS They were going to march with the People’s Assembly. That’s the last minute plan we had all this year.
- JS When did you make that plan?
- AS One night before at the meeting.
- JS What meeting?
- AS Different organizations – Seattle Central Community College. We had one meeting somewhere in the central area, and they were planning where they wanted to go, where they wanted to stay, what they were going to do. All that stuff. We knew those affinity groups will just stay there. We want to have programs, our message to be carried. Fourth and Union was the best way to program this an hour -songs, dance, all this agitation and stuff. We were marching to get all the flags, and it’s really festive.
- Right in there, an hour, we were trying to see if the march was coming or what, and then we found out. Anyway, during the program, there were a lot of speakers, it was open. Everyone was just jumping there and spoke about the WTO, condemning the WTO. It was strong. You haven’t seen that?
- JS Seem what?
- AS The video.
- JS You have a video of the People’s Assembly?
- AS Yes. Right here. I’ll show you.
- JS Can we get a copy for the archive?
- AS Yes, I can make you a copy of that. Oh, man, that’s really good if you see the actual march. It’s really good. I’ll show you the picture. During the march – this is in front of the Convention

Center – after the program, then the people from Seattle Center and the workers and people from all different organizations, workers, started walking in, we're blocking their way. So what we decided –just move. Pretty much we are on the forefront of the march, the big march.

JS So the big march caught up with you where? At Fourth and Union?

AS Fourth and Union.

JS I thought that the march came up Fourth and then turned left onto Pine Street?

AS Actually Pine and Fourth. I guess Fourth and Pine. What's the street of the Westlake Mall?

JS Pine.

AS That's the one. Fourth and Pine. That's where we had the program, Fourth and Pine. So they went all the way to, I guess, Fourth and then Pine, and then we were right there on Pine, Fifth and Pine, somewhere right there at that convention center. So we're huge, blocking all the centers, so they couldn't get in. So our tendency is to move, because they said, "We got permit." Okay, so when we started moving, we found out that we were on the forefront all the way to the Convention Center.

When we arrived, Dave Solnit saw us. We were huge. And then, "Ace, bring all the people right in front of the fire marshal." "Yeah, I'll be there. I'll be there." They think we are more organized. "Come on, Ace. We need you there." "We'll be there."

So we stayed an hour and we decided to get right in front of the fire marshal, so we brought all the people right there, because the plan was the Convention Center and the workers, they just went right in front of the WTO and then went all the where to, somewhere, Ninth Street, and then go back. That's dumb. The protest is right here and they should go in that. So we get all the people right here all the way to the Paramount.

The workers are confused now, because we are on the lead. They joined with us. "Which way are we heading?" "No, right here. The Paramount." So we brought a lot of people to the Paramount. We had an argument with the workers' marshal. "This is our street." "No this is the people's street." So we had all the stuff. It's fun. This is the timing, like in Fourth and Pine.

JS So what you were saying, in telling me this story before about choosing Fourth and Union as the place for the rally, right?

AS No, Fourth and Pine.

JS So the whole thing; everything that we talked about before was Fourth and Pine.

AS Yes, Fourth and Pine. Yes, that's right. Fourth and Pine, because I am going that way right there. And Westlake is right here. Because the march is right here. So at Fourth and Union they started beating up the police – the police started beating up us on Fourth and Union, so we managed to get to University or Seneca right here, so we were right on Third. And then all the way to Pine. We passed that Union. That's where they started beating up the protesters.

So we sent a recon team right there. "Okay, it's clear on Third Avenue." So somewhere right there we passed by. "Ooh, this is exciting. It's the police." So we started all those speakers from different stuff...."

We carried the people's permit. Everyone saying a prayer. That's where we started, actually right here at the Fourth and Jackson.

JS At the Union Station?

AS Union Station, yeah. All the way to Fourth and Third Avenue, people were building up. I think it is the one at Fourth and Union.

JS I remember seeing Radical Women there.

AS At the last meeting they joined us, because they felt they were also kicked out of the People for Fair Trade. "This is what happened, and I would like to join with you guys, People's Assembly." Why, because Radical Women, they like to go into all this stuff. They finally joined with us in the last minute, so they joined with us.

This is important right here.

JS Gabriella was there?

AS Yes, as one of the main speakers there.

JS Who is this?

AS Lee Master.

JS Where is he from?

AS From the Philippines. We started getting big and big and we marched at the way to Third. I got a lot of pictures on this one. At Fifth and Union, we were supposed to have a platform; we only got a base.... So that's the platform right there.

JS The planter? Well that works, people could see her.

AS People are standing up there.

JS These are the things on the sidewalk right by Nordstrom or something, right?

AS That's right, right there on the corner of Fifth and Pine.

JS So what other organizations?

AS And then we are on Fourth Avenue and we're expecting actually the blockade, expecting the police to block this one, but when we sent a recon "It's clear," so we go all the way clear again.

JS They were busy at that time.

AS Yes, they were busy at the time. So we start building our own. You can see our stuff, the Philippine flag, all stuff, Bayan. I think that's the main stuff. All the flag, the red flag and then blue. That's the front of the march, people from JustAct spoke in there

JS Who is this?

AS I think they're from JustAct, from San Francisco.

JS I think the People's Assembly march was the most colorful. The Direct Action stuff was really colorful, too, but it was like more interspersed. You guys had so many flags and banners altogether.

So what other organizations marched with People's Assembly?

AS We got several... CCEJ joined with us at the last minute, also. And then Unitarian Universalists. From Evergreen, Oregon...

JS Where in Oregon?

AS Some people from Oregon. Yes, that's when we start moving now. Fifth and Pine, that's the one.

JS This is just funny, because, did you hear the story about the Union Way? See this glue sign that says Union Way? The AFL-CIO when they were organizing the march, they wanted to go up Fourth and turn left on Union. But the cops and the secret service said no because that's too close to... Well, I don't know exactly what the reason was, but they said, "No, you can't go up Union.

You have to go up Pine.” And they said, “No, we’re going to go up Union.” And they said, “No, you’re going to go up Pine.”

So they made a compromise, and they went up Pine, but they put up these special glue signs that said, “Union Way.” You know, because of unions.

AS Oh, I see. Union Way. Right. Kingdome is still there. This is a good thing, the memory of the Kingdome. That’s the black and white picture.

JS These are great pictures.

AS The actual video, you’ll see that. It’s only like 5-10 minute video. I’ll show it to you. We really mobilized. They’re ready to confront the police, actually, because we’re expecting dispersal, but we’re going to push how far we can go. We’ll try to negotiate first, and then how far we can go in negotiation, because that’s our policy. Every point that they’re going to block us, that’s one point that we’re expecting is the bridge. They’re going to block us. So right there we pass it, so we passed that one. So it’s another one. It looks like we’re getting into the gauntlet, then we see all those people, now they’ll start blocking up Fourth and Union, a huge crowd. “Uh-oh. Hey, come on. People’s Assembly, get ready now. Lead us right there. Okay, what are we going to do, now?”

In case we couldn’t pass, we were going to have organized dispersal, going to the church, but we already passed the church, on Union, we are going to disperse right there. So after that, we passed the church, so we don’t know where we were going, if we going to disperse or what

So we sent out a recon team and then it’s clear, so we marched in right there. Everyone is shouting, “Yea!” But everyone is shoulder to shoulder. They put their arms together and link, and there are already like eight people on their backs, and they are ready to disperse. You can see the militancy inside the march. Everyone is ready with bandanas and they put up all this Colgate right. This one is to protect. This is the Korean group. They told us Colgate is the best way to protect. Colgate right here.

JS Colgate specifically, or any kind of toothpaste?

AS Colgate. This toothpaste. Put it there. So we got all the toothpaste. “Okay, let’s see what’s going to happen!”

JS I had a friend in California call me. He was talking to a friend of his from Palestine, and he said, “Where are the onions?” And friend didn’t know what he was talking about. He said, “Yeah, in Palestine, whenever we would fight with the police, we’d cut an onion in half and you’d hold it up to your mouth. And that blocks out the teargas.” Apparently it neutralizes the teargas. I don’t know if that’s true.

AS For us it is really a victory, especially people from other countries. They felt it. The militancy is right there, and victory. We shut down the WTO. We tried to be honest in how we really contributed to shutting down the WTO. Shutting down the WTO was a contribution of the People’s Assembly. It’s a long process and we developed, organized and developed education, the community networking, all this stuff. So it’s all a part of contributing shutting down the WTO, educating the whole communities in Seattle. We tried to share our modest part in shutting down the WTO.

We were there; right there. So we were expecting the worse to come to worst We did the best part, everyone was happy. This is just an event that took place, a very historical event, this is the protest of the century, and it’s like you said, it’s not just a one-night struggle. The one night contribution, although some of the delegates stayed here until the Third and joined with other people, confrontation moving after the November 30th. But November 30, like I said, it was a very important thing. Everyone over there, I think a thousand people were there, and it’s a victory

for the people.

We mobilized them; we aroused them. We educated them in the actual facts of this. And for us, all the People's Assembly delegates, we put up a unity statement. We vowed to continue this struggle, not only against APEC, not only against NAFTA and IMA, World Bank, but exposing them as a tool of imperialist globalization. Continue our resistance against imperialist globalization. This is not a one-night resistance. It is not a one-night struggle. It is a long struggle against foreign domination, against monopoly capitalists. That's what this is. So that's why the People's Assembly expressed our opposition to IMA World Bank, so we sent delegates there. Same thing as we did here. We immobilized people. It's a short time, but still, we immobilized 150 people in the forum.

The same thing will happen here. They shut down our event in George Washington University. They deny all this academic freedom from all the students. So we lost our mobilization, some of the mobilization, but we managed to find another place to have a forum. Then we managed to have a march and rally also without any permit. So it's a big victory for us, especially in Washington, D.C. again. We did it again. I'll show you the picture. I've got several pictures, actually.

JS I do need to go in a minute, but that's an important part, so could you tell me a little bit about these caucuses?

AS One of the components of the People's Assembly is the Youth Caucus. All the youth delegates from different areas – they discuss the effects of the World Trade Organization in the schools, and especially from other countries. Youth and students are affecting the globalization policies, so they come out with several activities. They come out with the youth caucus, discussions, sharing their experience. They are all affected in this one.

There are the forefront of the march, and they are the ones doing a lot of agitation and mobilizing the youth section, so Youth Caucus is very important. The same happened in Washington, D.C. There is a Youth Caucus there, especially the people of color speak up – how they are all affected by the globalization policy.

JS Right, thank you.

End of Interview