

**Interviewee: Victor Menotti**  
**Affiliation: International Forum on Globalization**  
**Interviewer: Miguel Bocanegra**  
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**Interview Summary:**

Victor Menotti of the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) discusses his early involvement with the San Francisco-based Rainforest Action Network (RAN). Menotti views the WTO as an agreement that undermines democracy and allows the interests of corporations to go unchecked. Menotti helped organize conservation leaders from around the globe, as well as local forest protection groups. Their campaign planning and education was central in preventing the WTO from making disastrous environmental and forestry decisions, Menotti says. Menotti describes how police tackled and arrested him during the protests, and criticizes news media for focusing on the chaos on the streets rather than detrimental environmental actions by the ministerial. Menotti says the protests were effective, and helped prevent passage of the Free Logging Agreement.



**MB** This is Miguel Bocanegra. I'm here with Victor Menotti with the International Forum on Globalization. This is a phone interview. It is October 27, 2000. Do we have permission to record this phone interview for the purposes of the WTO History Project?

**VM** Absolutely.

**MB** All right. So, just to start off with, can you talk a little bit about yourself, how you got involved in the International Forum on Globalization? Just kind of like a short bio, the kind of things that you have done?

**VM** Okay. Back in 1990, I was working with an environment group based here in San Francisco called the Rain Forest Action Network, and we had some visitors from Malaysia who were briefing us on their activities and they told us they were watching closely these negotiations for something of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade. And everybody around me was sort of falling asleep, but I was on the edge of my seat because I thought this was big stuff. It sounded to me like it was going to change everything. So ever since 1990, I have been following some of the forest issues and the negotiations over trade.

It was a few years after that that those negotiations concluded, and it formed the World Trade Organization. It was at that time that I began working for my present employer, the International Forum on Globalization, which brought together a lot of the critics from different countries -- the economists, the researchers, the writers, the activists, the leaders of different popular organizations -- who were campaigning in their countries to stop the WTO from being formed. After we lost that back in 1995, we decided to form the IFG to not let the work die but in fact take it to the next level. And over the last five years we have been just slogging through with the public education about what the WTO is, how it works, monitoring its effects, and when we found that it was going to come to Seattle in November of 1999, it was just like a call to action for us.

**MB**

That goes just directly into the WTO. Maybe you can talk a little bit about some of the preliminary organizing that went on around the WTO protests, how the IFG was involved.

**VM**

Well, let's see. Of course, there is a lot of history to this. It didn't start just in 1999. I mean, like I said, since 1995 when there was a battle in Congress over whether or not to ratify this thing, or rather approve it, because it's not a treaty, it's a trade agreement. Not to go through that whole battle, but it was done during a lame duck session of Congress and those of us who continue to monitor the impacts of these things and educate other organizations and policy makers and people in the media about the WTO and globalization. And so when the word came that it was going to happen in Seattle, immediately some of our colleagues jumped on confirming space there for hotels and meeting space, and we just knew it would be a battleground and who was going to dominate would, you know, a lot of tactical issues there. Who was going to have space? Who was going to hold press conferences? Where were they going to be? Who was going to have access to the streets? Who was going to have access to photo copiers and fax machines and computers?

So, we got involved in a lot of that stuff because my organization has been really focused on the big picture of what the WTO is all about. We have been sort of the meeting place for all of the different kinds of perspectives of criticism on it. So, we decided to put on one of these public events that we call "teach-ins." They were at Benaroya Symphony Hall in downtown Seattle the weekend before the ministerial began. Now we have been doing these teach-ins, like I said, for about five years on the subject of globalization, and they had always talked extensively about the WTO. But now here was one we were going to do just before a WTO ministerial, so we wanted to make this the one place that people who, whether they were there to protest the WTO, or wanted to learn about it, or were skeptical, or didn't know much, whatever, this is your one place to go, sort of your one-stop-shop for understanding what the WTO is from a citizen's perspective. And by that I mean not from what corporations say, or what governments say, or trade negotiators say, but how

to think about it as a citizen in a capitalist society where the one thing between you and the excesses of capitalism is your supposedly democratically-elected government that is supposed to regulate and curb corporate behavior.

Well, we understand the WTO as an agreement between our government and the rest of the world's government that they are not going to regulate the behavior of corporations. That's what the WTO is: It is a binding contract in which our governments agree to constrain themselves from intervening in the marketplace, whether it is to protect food safety, or environment, or what have you. Our role is to put that message out for people. In addition to that, I spent a lot of time -- most of my activity was working, because of my background in the forest and in environmental issues, with that community of people. And so we put on a meeting near Seattle six months before the ministerial came to town where we brought forest conservation leaders from about 15 different countries together, together with some of the top local forest protection groups, and we did a whole training on WTO. And then we did a whole campaign planning. What are we going to do within the next six months to stop the WTO from making the disastrous decisions for forests that was going to finalize there in Seattle?

From there, there was a small group of us who was going to be doing the tracking of the negotiations, finding out what our friends in Japan and Europe and the U.S., what the positions of our governments are, sharing that information, getting the word out, pressuring our governments directly, getting to our elected officials to tell them what was going on, because they didn't know about any of this stuff. Getting it out to the media so they could cover the issue -- you know, like months in advance, so that we got the awareness building. And then of course with the whole local -- in fact the regional forest protection community up there in the Pacific Northwest which, as you know, is a real kitchen table issue. It's like fisheries and forests are in total collapse up there. And people in Seattle care about it. So we knew it was going to be an issue that really resonated.

So we put a lot of energy into doing the public education so when people, "Oh, WTO. Oh yeah, that's about the free logging agreements. It's going to accelerate logging in native forests around the world. It's going to roll back the raw log export bans, the Endangered Species Act, all these protections we've got. It's going to make things worse." And so people knew, they connected WTO with their local concerns, and I think that had a hell of a lot to do about why so many people came out and why we had the reaction we did, and I guess we saw it as a forest conservation community, and we were very pleased with what we were able to pull off, both inside the ministerial where some of us were, and outside on the street where more of us were. And we had good communication between the two about what was going on inside, what the message outside had to be, and what sticks in my mind is that picture on the front page of the New York Times on N-30 that said, "Clear-cut

the WTO. Defends our forests.” And so we felt like that message got out strong and was a good chunk of the mobilization. But that’s just one part. I’m just giving you an example of some of the stuff I did.

**MB**

Can you talk a little bit about the communication that was occurring within the ministerial meetings and on the streets? Can you talk a little bit about how that works, because I know an issue occurred with you getting arrested by some police officers going into one of the ministerial meetings and then coming out. So, I don’t know if -- it seems like there may have been some bumps along the way. Maybe you can talk a little bit about how that interaction occurred.

**VM**

All right. Well, some of us who have been following this for a while, tracking the negotiations and really doing the policy work on it, had decided to get accredited to go into the ministerial. That doesn’t mean that you can sit down with negotiators and like listen to what they’re talking about or even give them your opinion in the negotiating sessions. What I mean is you’re sort of relegated to this outside hall where everybody is standing around, trying to figure out what’s going on. But in there, in that context, you can talk to the negotiators or parts of the delegation, hear what’s going on, and give them your opinion and trade information. And that’s sort of part of what goes on in there. So in that role we were just trying to get the information out onto the street and into the press about what was going on.

We had scheduled weeks in advance a briefing with the White House officials on the forest issues they were negotiating around. And in that meeting we had Wednesday morning, December 1, which was in a municipal building there in downtown Seattle, there was the U.S. Wood Products negotiator, Barbara Norton. She was the one actually negotiating the market access talks for the U.S. -- the so-called “free logging agreement,” and then someone from the White House Council on Environmental Quality, Ian Bowles. And we had about 30 or so forest activities there to hear what was going on inside, because there was just a blackout of news. And they told us, basically, that they were just pushing everything ahead full blast. They had no care whatsoever for what our concerns are, all the press we had generated scrutinizing the issues, and the fact that the Wall Street Journal had published the White House’s own report figures, saying that they were going to increase logging in the world’s most sensitive forests as a result of this decision, that they were going to finalize it that week, and we were just like, “What can we do?”

It was after all that we had done, after all the screaming going on, and they were just saying they didn’t care, they were going to ignore it and get this deal done. So we left the meeting a little bit dismayed, but I thought the one thing we needed to do was at least go out and tell people in the streets. And so I walked towards the ministerial with my accreditation badge and everything on, and I was kind of dressed like for a briefing, so I actually turned my

accreditation badge over and on the back I had a “No WTO” sticker on it, because I felt safer on the streets with that on than I did the accreditation badge. And I stopped a couple of local news cameras and anchors there, and I introduced myself and said we had just got out of this White House briefing and would you like to cover the story about what the forest issues are? I know a lot of your viewers care about that stuff. And they were like, “Well . . .” -- and more than one of them said this, “You know, we’ve been given instructions from above by our producers to sit tight in this spot and wait for any more tanks rolling through or windows to be broken or tear gas canisters or whatever sort of action there might be.” And they told me pretty much point-blank, “Sorry, but that’s what the news is, or at least that’s what we were told to cover.”

I thought that was pretty sad because all the real looting was going on inside the ministerial and it was being ignored. It wasn’t being covered. They were only interested in all the chaos out in the streets. So after trying to talk to a couple of news anchors, I walked on and I saw a group of friends and I told them what we had just learned in this briefing, and a few people overheard and crowds started to gather, and I started so and someone said, “Now start over, explain that again.” So like a few just independent people with video cameras started rolling it and I was explaining it for a couple of minutes. I don’t know, have you seen the footage of this?

**MB**

Some of it, yeah.

**VM**

Okay, well then you see me just talking about the issues. I’m not ranting, I’m not screaming, I’m not saying, “Let’s go get that building.” I was just explaining what we learned in this briefing. And I get bum-rushed by these robocops from behind, about a dozen of them. You could see them coming right over my shoulder, totally unannounced. One of them nearly gets his hand on the back of my neck, I see from one of the angles, but I didn’t know that at the time. I just saw . . . they came from behind me. So I saw everybody in front of me that I was talking to just sort of lurch backwards and turn and run, and I kind of ran with them to get out of the way.

All I could figure was someone was coming and they didn’t even want us together like that. So I bolted across the intersection which was open because that was a pedestrian zone there, a no-protest zone. And ran through it, and then “What am I running for?” Then I figured out that these guys were following me. So then I slowed down. Like, I’ve got nothing to run for. And they grabbed me and put their arm locks and thumb holds and all this stuff. Snatch off my accreditation badge. Snatch away my report that I had written on how WTO undermines forests, and then hauled me off. Threw me in the paddy wagon and I spent a night in jail.

**MB**

Did they tell you why?

**VM** Well, one of them called me a “Commie” on the way to the paddy wagon, but after that I just figured that these are not people to really be engaged with any discussion.

**MB** Were you charged with anything?

**VM** Well, they didn’t know what the charges were going to be. They said, “Blocking traffic. Well, you know, it was a no-traffic zone,” and I was up on the curb. And they said it was impeding an officer, but here I was running away. And so they didn’t know what it was. And when we finally got the police report it was so confused. In fact, we saw that the arresting officer was instructed to arrest me. It doesn’t really say why. I think what they were doing was just going around and picking people who sort of looked like ringleaders that day, and there I was, talking with a group of people around me, and it looked like either I was in charge of something, or what. I don’t know what kind of impression they got, but it was like, “Get him.” And so this was the violation of civil rights that we saw.

**MB** Definitely. Exactly.

**VM** I was freely speaking and there was a group peacefully assembling, and that was broken up as illegal activity.

**MB** I kind of want to go back. . . you were talking about some of the educational campaigns that the IFG was involved in, which is probably directly related to you being arrested, partially. Can you talk a little bit about the coalitions you were working in to develop these campaigns? Were you working with DAN? Were you working with organized labor to do these educational outreach programs?

**VM** Well, there were a lot of different levels of organizing and I would say at the global level, the national level, and the local level there were contacts with labor leaders about how we were approaching this, what we would be doing, what our priorities would be, what sort of tactics we would use. That same conversation takes place with the forest conservation groups at all those different levels, with direct action types at all different levels.

Although you should know that the work of the IFG and my work -- we don’t think of ourselves as really the direct action types. We do more of the research and the education to help people know how to think about this stuff. And that in turn informs a lot of these mobilizations and direct actions. So you shouldn’t think of us as people who are street organizing the shut-downs of events, but maybe as people who have been putting out this analysis over the last five years about what the WTO is all about, which resonates in people,

and which informs the mobilization. That's how we think about it. So whatever working relationships there are, it is sort of on that basis.

Now again, just to focus on the forest protection groups, on Sunday night before the week started, we had a big meeting at the Mountaineers. They were nice enough to open up to host us and there were hundreds of people that showed up. There were like 300 forest activists from probably 20 different countries who had shown up, and there were everything from your policy wonks there to your tree-sitters. And it was everybody just sort of meeting everybody, trying to get sort of on the same page where we were, and I would say that just almost naturally there was this division of labor that everybody fell into. It's like, people who knew they were going to be inside the ministerial, monitoring this stuff, then there were people good at press operations and writing that stuff up and had the fax networks in place and machines and the printing capabilities to get the message out to the press and also to the street, and then there were people with materials ready to make banners and to lead the marches with the right message on it, and then there were people who were engaged in other kinds of direct action.

So by far the biggest group was those engaged in direct action, and this was just sort of our final meeting place, where we all sort of working at an understanding about how we were going to work together. And we knew that we needed some intelligence-gathering capacity about the negotiations, and then we needed some ability to communicate that information outward, to the press and to the public, and then we needed a response on the streets. And it was those sort of three jobs that got done, I think extremely well. And this was with people who . . . you know, a lot of us have known each other, but the way that it came together, I had never seen anything like it because there was just no fighting. There was no real disagreement on any major point. Everybody just seemed to understand what our mission was, although nobody had ever done anything like this before in our lives. Everything just sort of came out like that. And it wasn't like we had a textbook that we were able to go by.

**MB**

Were there any formal relationships develop that are continuing to work now?

**VM**

Well, one other thing that that whole experience helped to form in the lead-up to Seattle, and that still exists now, is a working group on forests and globalization. And again, I'm speaking to that because that's what a lot of my energy focused on, the forest issues there. And this working group on forests and globalization is this sort of loose international network of forest conservation activists who understand that globalization affects forests and we were devoted to addressing that. So whether it's going to WTO or NAFTA expansion, or APEX or Free Trade Area of the Americas, or IMF, or what have you, our focus is to understand the stuff and get the word out and form a response to it.

**MB**

So what do you think was accomplished during that particular week as far as mobilization efforts through the IFG? Did things come out of it that you can say, "Yeah, we were successful."

**VM**

Well, I guess there's like the practical policy implications and then there's more the political implications, and by that I mean the WTO just absolutely failed at what they were there to try and do. And as you may recall from Barshevsky's advance press interviews, "Failure was not an option," she said. That's what her quote was. And in fact, that's what happened. And so that means they got no free logging agreement. They got no MAI. They got no expansion of agriculture agreement. You could just go through the whole agenda that they were putting forward there, and they didn't get anything. They didn't even get a negotiating mandate for a next round. They didn't even come away with any parameters for what was supposed to be their built-in agenda for negotiating.

So all of that happened, and because of the way it happened and the total destruction of confidence in the system internally by the member governments, it has actually set them back. They have an internal crisis right now. They can't get anything done. Nobody trusts anybody. They can't come to any agreement on what they should be talking about, or how they should be talking about it, or when they should be talking about it, and it's in convulsions right now, even a year after. They just tried to announce that they're going to have the next ministerial at this time next year, and they floated the idea of doing in Qatar. I don't know if you've heard this. You know, the tiny Arab Emirate on the Arabian Peninsula in the Persian Gulf. It's like, who ever heard of it? Do you know any human rights or labor groups in Qatar? So, but now Qatar stepped up and said, "Well, we don't have the hotel space, and that's during Ramadan, so we ain't gonna do it." So now we've got this--like a floating toxic barge, the WTO ministerial. They had nowhere to go. And after Seattle, who's going to want to host them?

**MB**

Yeah. Can you talk a little bit about the international links and how the IFG works with groups internationally, and how that kind of culminated during the WTO, if it came together in a particular way during the WTO protests?

**VM**

Well, you know, what brings everything together is the understanding that the WTO threatens all of our interests. And some of those are small farmers or workers' rights. I don't know if I need to list off all the interests, but those were all the people who came together internationally, saying that WTO is a threat to us all, and we will stand together and support one another to take this thing on. And I guess the role of the IFG in all of that is really sort of the intellectual spade work, if you will, about what the connections are between the different issues, how the WTO impacts them, and forming all that trade-technical-speak into something that's understandable and accessible for most

people. So in a way we're kind of an interpretive or a translating service from GATTese into people's language. And what else about international are you trying to get to?

**MB**

I'm thinking more trying to work with international organizations, if you guys were trying to develop links between people organizing in the global south, people organizing in Japan, in different areas -- if there was any culmination during the WTO working with these people in your efforts. If there was a way that people kind of came together on a particular matter.

**VM**

Yeah, the whole process was about coming together. And, you know, like I said, this stuff started before the WTO was formed. Groups were linking up internationally to work on this stuff. And so, as Seattle got closer, there were constant conference calls between the different leading campaigners from the different country-based campaigns and the sharing of information on the negotiations. You know, "What did your government say about the investment agenda?" "Well, they said this, and they said it depends on your country's position on the agricultural agreement." "Oh, well that's interesting, because our . . . ." And this sort of sharing of information allows us to do what we call the international monkey-wrenching, all right?

And that's basically how we killed the MAI. It's like we understood enough where our different governments stood and we exploited those differences, and we caused a stink in our country to make our government dig into its position, which was a position that was at odds with another government, and because we get them both to dig into their different positions, they would never come to an agreement. So we found little ways to create fights and aggravate the tensions that there were between the negotiators. This is really sort of an insider's game, though. There then is the work to get all that out to the street and to the press.

**MB**

How did that mechanism work, from working on the inside as far as aggravating the tensions that already exist and then trying to mobilize the people on the streets and doing these educational forums?

**VM**

Again, using the example of the forest groups, we had our group that was inside the ministerial and tracking it, and that included Americans and Japanese and Europeans and Indonesians and Chileans and Malaysians and north, south, east, west -- everything. And so we could go to our governments and find stuff out, or go to other governments, and then we would all come together and share that stuff. And then it was mostly U.S. groups who had the contacts with the groups outside which were mostly Americans. Then we would then communicate that message to them and then there would be information from the street coming in too, about what was going on. Because what was going on in the street was so much a part of what was going on inside. Because most of the time inside there, people are not able to hear what

is going on in the negotiating rooms. Instead they're sitting out in this huge hall watching the local news coverage of the protests. And on everybody's mind is this riot out on the street. And so there is a sort of siege mentality that emboldened a lot of the Third World countries to take stronger positions as it got later into the week.

**MB** Yeah. Did the Internet make . . . was it fundamental in any of the IFG's efforts as far as organizing?

**VM** We always downplay the role of the communications technology. Our views on technology are probably different than most groups. We view it as something that empowers more those who already have power. Well, you know, well I've got this crappy machine in front me, and I can barely get on the Internet and check out the WTO website, while the Proctor & Gamble and the American Electronics Associations, they've got all sorts of equipment and technological capabilities that maybe we'll have in 10 years, but then they'll be on to something else. See what I'm saying?

So, I would say, yeah, we use the e-mail to communicate with people, but we also use the phone and we use the fax and we get together and meet -- although that's the least frequent. I guess the point is that, yeah, we use the Internet, but the other side uses it probably even more than we do, because they've got much more technological capacity than we do, and they always will, because the way technology is developed and deployed is depending on what the need is, what the market is. And the market isn't so much nonprofits fighting corporate power; it's the global corporations themselves. They're the ones with the satellites and the massive databases, and the Internet hookups. See what I'm saying?

**MB** Yeah. Exactly.

**VM** You know, people always ask that. You know, "How did you organize around Seattle? Was the Internet fundamental?" Well, yeah, I mean we use it just because it's a tool that we use. It's like, if we're using our hammer, they've got a jackhammer.

**MB** If that wasn't the successful element, if the Internet wasn't, like you said, that the technology is always going to be used and best utilized by the people who controlled it, what was the successful element, then, in Seattle. What would you say?

**VM** Hold on. First of all, the term "successful element" . . . I mean, again I think of it as a tool. It was a useful tool. What it was, I think, was . . . well, it's like comparing apples and oranges here.

**MB** What were some of the successful elements that made these ministerial meetings . . .

**VM** What worked, I think, was the understanding that this was against everybody's interest except the very few elite. And there are a lot of different ways that that understanding got publicized and popularized. But that was at the heart of it. I don't know if that satisfies you, but that's how I think about it.

**MB** Yeah, no, for sure. I mean, I think that's kind of what the IFG is focused on also, is trying to educate people so that they understand how the institutions work, right?

**VM** Yeah.

**MB** So, is there anything that you learned at this particular event, mobilized around the WTO, and this particular ministerial meeting, that you will take to the future mobilizing.

**VM** Well, one of the biggest things that we learned there is that we have got to be working more with youth. We have always tried to do that, but it was always a bit awkward to know where to start. So we're trying to start a program right now that engages some of the student and youth organizations. We realize that that sort of emboldened us then to go on to the World Bank IMF meetings in April in Washington, and we did a whole teach-in there and, as you know, that got a lot of coverage. And so I guess we felt like in a very short time after many years' work, we had managed to expose this holy trinity of the Bretton Woods institutions. And it's like it was a whole new world.

And so after that we saw that we had exposed that whole international system of rights for corporations and now the alternative we needed to elevate the international system for workers and human rights and environmental protection. So now we are trying to play off these two international systems, one versus the other -- the corporate rights embodied by WTO, IMF and World Bank, and then the sort of the people's and planetary rights under the U.N.'s Human Rights Conventions, the International Labor Organization agreements, and all the multilateral environmental agreements. Right now we've got two parallel international systems of rights, but the corporate ones subordinate the people's ones. And so we are going to be trying to draw out those contrasts more and more.

We've already seen some good work being done by the U.N. Human Rights Commission showing how basic human rights are violated by the WTO's agreement on intellectual property rights. And I think we need to see more and more of those dogfights created, until eventually we create the pressure to

re-subordinate the corporate rights into where they belong, underneath our rights. You see where I'm going?

**MB** Yeah, definitely. Is there anything that you would like to add that wasn't covered?

**VM** No, I guess that's quite a bit.

**MB** Well, thanks a lot. I appreciate it. I'm going to turn off the recorder here.

**VM** All right. Conversations with the delegates from Mozambique or South Africa, about telling them how we have been fighting our government on this stuff, and they couldn't believe it, that there were Americans who were tooth and nail suing their government, organizing demonstrations, doing all this stuff because of their positions on trade.

**MB** Did you say, "Roll the tape"?

**VM** Yeah.

**MB** Okay, yeah, I started doing that. I just wanted to make sure that that's what you said. Okay.

**VM** And you know, like we told them that we sued the U.S. Trade Representatives Office and we won because they were excluding everybody other than industry in their Advisory Committees, and the South Africans were just rolling on the floor, they thought that was so great. And then they go into the negotiating session and now they know the U.S. negotiator has no backing. And it gives them more leverage. And we saw that over and over throughout the week.

And here's another important piece about the IFG is one of our board members is really influential with the Third World governments. His name is Martin Kohr. And you can look on the website of his organization. It's the Third World Network, just [TWN.org](http://TWN.org). Since the WTO was formed, and he is one of our board members, but he has made it a big priority to do the real education of the Third World delegates based in Geneva who signed these agreements on intellectual property rights, investment measures, technical barriers of trade. They signed this shit, and they didn't even know what it was about. They were lucky to get somebody to the negotiating sessions, because there were like 12 of them going on and the Americans got 40 people at each one, and some of these countries can't even get people there, let alone be briefed on the issues and have an informed negotiating session.

So Martin tells the story of this agriculture minister from Africa who came up to Geneva because he was, like, "I don't understand this agreement that my

government signed.” So he goes through this whole technical workshop, explaining it to him, and he’s like, “Look, I can’t implement this. This is against the agricultural policy of my country. And not even that -- it’s against the constitution of my country.” It’s like, “Don’t worry, Mr. Minister, we have prepared for you a new agricultural policy. Here it is. Oh, and here’s the constitutional amendment to go with it.” And so these people go home and then they’re like, “What the hell did we sign?”

So these many governments came to Geneva with a list of things that they wanted changed in the existing agreements, before they started talking about any new negotiations. And that sort of played off through the whole week. And as the process rolled on, the so-called “Green Room Process” where it’s the U.S. with Japan, Canada and the EU basically calling the shots and they call in a few other countries in this “Green Room” to get decisions and everybody else is told about them. That, plus with people witnessing that, people being told by Charlene Barshevsky that she would make the decisions, people seeing all the footage out in the street of the riots. All that sort of culminated into these countries just saying, “Forget this, man. We’re not going to sign anything.” And they were pissed, because they didn’t even get treated well at the ministerial. It’s like they had midnight negotiating sessions where they couldn’t even find coffee or tea or water, even, because the place shut down. They couldn’t believe what a terrible host they had been welcomed by. And all of this sort of created this atmosphere of resentment and exclusion, and that’s when on Friday afternoon I think it was the Caribbean and the African nations were the first to come out with a statement denouncing the process, and then the Latin American groups, and the Asian groups. Then it was . . . just the whole thing imploded.

**MB** Yeah, definitely. Yeah, I think that is kind of the story of the WTO.

**VM** But you had the trouble inside and outside and it was all based on the exclusionary process. It collapsed under its own dysfunction. But listen, so you’re trying to continue this work through MEChA . . . ?

**MB** Yeah. I’m going to turn off the tape. Okay?

**VM** Okay.

**End of Interview**

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