

KELSEY, WALKER ERIN. Ph.D. The Feminist Transformation of the US Global Justice Movement, 1990-2007. (2022)
Directed by Dr. Lisa Levenstein. 215 pp.

This dissertation explores how feminists shaped the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle and the broader global justice movement. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Seattle feminists began meeting and networking with their Global South counterparts, mainly through international conferences, where they gained knowledge about the impacts of neoliberal globalization and free trade policies on women around the world. When they returned home, they shared what they had learned with their communities and networks. When the WTO announced in January 1999 that it would hold its ministerial meeting in Seattle, these feminists were ready to act. Some pressured the national organizations involved in the protest planning process such as the AFL-CIO, Public Citizen, and the Sierra Club to address the struggles of poor people, women, and people of color in the US and around the world. Others pursued a strategy of separate organizing, employing creative methods of protest and holding workshops, forums, and other events that highlighted the disastrous consequences for marginalized people of the free trade policies promoted by the WTO. Following the protest, feminists' role as organizers and theorists within the Global Justice Movement grew as they took on greater visibility and leadership. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, many helped shift the agenda of the movement away from large-scale protests, and towards efforts to build alternative solutions to free trade. To that end, they inaugurated a social forum process within the US that led to one of the most diverse gatherings of US activists in history.

THE FEMINIST TRANSFORMATION OF THE US GLOBAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT,
1990-2007

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to

the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro

2022

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help, support, and guidance of many people and institutions. First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest thanks to the members of my committee. My advisor Lisa Levenstein mentored and encouraged me through every step of this project, offering reassurance, wisdom, and invaluable feedback. Not many professors would spend so much time carefully reading and editing countless drafts of each chapter, and for that I will be forever grateful. At times of my greatest self-doubt, it was her words of encouragement and belief in my ideas that kept me going. I first met Watson Jennison when I took his early US History course, which inspired me to look at the world and history in new ways. As his Teaching Assistant, he taught me crucial lessons and tactics for explaining complex ideas to students. His sharp eye helped add greater complexity and nuance to this project. Danielle Bouchard made me think about feminist thought and organizing in new ways, challenging me to add greater depth and complexity to this story. Peter Villella's genuine warmth and encouragement in this project made working with him a delight. Despite being an outside reader, far from the scope of this inquiry, his poignant feedback pushed me to delve more deeply into the big-picture ramifications of the ideas expressed in this dissertation.

In addition to the members of my committee, I would like to thank the many other UNCG faculty members who have contributed to my graduate career. The origins of this project stemmed from an independent study with Thomas Jackson, who kindly offered to help me begin my inquiry into the history of feminism during my first year of the program. His creative methods for teaching that course allowed me to freely explore this history in new and comprehensive ways. It was an irreplaceable experience that I will never forget. I would also like to thank Anne Parson, Lisa Tolbert, Mark Elliot, Greg O'Brien and Jill Bender for your

continuing support. The history department has an incredible support staff. Thank you to Laurie O'Neill, Kristina Wright, and Dawn Aviolo for all the hard work you do every day to support students.

My pursuit of graduate studies would not have been possible without the support and teaching of the faculty at the University of Akron's department of history, where I earned my Master's degree in 2012. To Michael Graham, my deepest thanks for inspiring me to believe a graduate education was possible and to believe in myself and my ideas. Martha Santos was the reason I fell in love with history and the reason I pursued studies focused on women and gender. T.J. Boisseau challenged me in the best ways possible, making me a better student, scholar, and teacher. When I first began my graduate career, I was very shy and quiet. Thank you to Watson Hixson for bringing me out of my shell. To all the faculty, I thank you for making me so well-prepared to pursue my PhD.

During my research process, I was fortunate to visit several wonderful archives and libraries. These trips would not have been possible without the generous funding from a variety of institutions. I am so thankful for the Graduate Student Research Travel Grant from the Graduate Student Association, the Allen W. Trelease Graduate Fellowship in History from the History Department, the Sally and Alan Cone Award from the Women and Gender Studies Department, the Charles Hayes Fellowship, Bernard Dissertation Award, and two Summer Research Assistantships from the Graduate School.

Several archivists and librarians made important contributions to my research. Upon my first trip to the University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, I reached out to archivist Crystal Rodgers, who supported my archival research, guided me to important collections, and followed up on my many questions. Conor M. Casey served as the vital conduit between me and

the members of Seattle Radical Women. Thanks to his introduction, members of the organization not only agreed to meet with me, but to share internal documentation as well. All the staff made me feel welcome and supported.

On my second trip to Seattle, I was lucky enough to spend some time with members from Seattle Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party, who generously opened their doors to me and made me feel so welcome. To Helen Gilbert, who not only was the first to agree to an oral history interview, but also introduced me to so many other members of the organization and welcomed me into their meeting spaces, I will be forever in your debt. She shared with me internal documents related to my inquiry that were an important source for this project. One of my most cherished experiences in this entire process was sitting down with activists from these organizations who agreed to be interviewed. Christina López, Guerry Hodderson, Doug Barnes, Margaret Viggiani, Anne Slater, and Debbie Brennan, thank you for trusting me with your stories. Members opened their doors to me, invited me to their events, and generally made me feel at home.

I am also indebted to my colleagues in the UNCG department of History. My friend, Tim Reagin, who has been on this journey with me from the beginning of my time in the graduate the program. I was lucky to have you by my side on this adventure. To Hannah Dudley-Shotwell and Justina Licata, for sharing their words of wisdom and commiseration, I am deeply thankful. Arlen Hansen brought a smile to my face on my darkest days. Having these people around me made me feel part of a community of friends and supporters.

Thank you to the Women's and Gender Studies department at UNCG for helping me to grow as a feminist scholar. Classes with Claudia Cabello-Hutt, Danielle Bouchard, and Elizabeth

Keathley broadened and deepened my understanding of what feminism is and how it operates in the world.

I would never have completed this dissertation without the help of my wonderful family. My partner Ian Felland has been with me from the beginning, supporting and encouraging me through this long journey. I am so lucky to have my sister and best friend Corey Potts, who moved across the country with me and is the best sister anyone could ask for. Mitch Potts was a sounding board for all my ideas, and patiently listened as I explained and made sense of my arguments. Thank you to my dad, Dave Walker, for always being there for me and encouraging me to follow my dreams. My mom, Kimberly Walker, the strongest feminist role model anyone could ask for. My grandmother Ruth Friend is my greatest source of inspiration. She motivated my love of reading and knowledge from an early age and continued to support those interests throughout my life. To my family, I thank you more than words can express.

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ABBREVIATIONS IN THE NOTES

Archives and Libraries

ESCA	The Evergreen State College Archives, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington
HBCL	Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington
SMA	Seattle Municipal Archives, Seattle, Washington
SPLSC	Department of Special Collections, Seattle Public Libraries, Seattle, Washington
UWSC	University of Washington Libraries Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives, Seattle, Washington

Collections

JSWTO	Jen Stone WTO Seattle Protests Collection (1999-2003)
OHP	WTO Oral History Project (1999)
SCRLHP	Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project (2004-2020)
WSC	WTO Seattle Collection (1999-2000)
WTOHP	WTO History Project (1999)
WTOSMC	World Trade Organization 1999 Seattle Ministerial Conference Protest Collection (1993-2011)

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GJM	Global Justice Movement
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LELO	Northwest Labor and Employment Office
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NPC	National Planning Committee
SRW	Seattle Radical Women
USSF	United States Social Forum
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION: THE FEMINIST ORIGINS OF THE GLOBAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

On November 30th, 1999, over 50,000 activists took to the streets of Seattle to protest the 3rd ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO). They saw the international trade negotiating body as promoting free trade policies that favored the expansion of corporate profits over the protection of people and the environment. The mainstream media focused on the unlikely alliance between “Teamsters and Turtles” -- labor and environmental activists -- who captured the world’s attention by taking over the streets of downtown Seattle and preventing the ministerial meetings from taking place. Yet, away from the television cameras, Seattle-area feminists played crucial roles in fostering a coalition that was much more diverse and included feminists, students, public health advocates, religious activists, nonunionized workers, and neighborhood organizations. In the 1980s and early 1990s, US feminists had forged transnational alliances with women activists in the Global South by participating in international conferences. Through these contacts, many feminists from the Seattle area learned new perspectives and analyses that taught them about the dangers of free trade and other neoliberal policies promoted by the WTO. When the WTO announced in January of 1999 that it would hold its meeting in Seattle, these feminists worked in their own communities to highlight the racial and gendered consequences of free trade policies.¹ They also worked within the local protest coalition to convince powerful national organizations like the AFL-CIO, Public Citizen, and the Sierra Club, to pay greater attention to issues facing women, people of color and the poor in the US and around the world. Without their efforts, the protests would have been smaller, whiter, and more

¹ Anne Slater interview by Gillian Murphy, 12 December 2000, transcript, WTO Oral History Project, Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, University of Washington, Seattle, WA (hereafter OHP).

focused on an “America First” strategy that failed to recognize the global frameworks of these issues.

After the 1999 protests, feminists’ roles within the Global Justice Movement (GJM) grew as they increasingly assumed prominent places as both organizers and theorists. At the 2007 US Social Forum in Atlanta, despite facing discrimination and marginalization in the larger planning process, these feminists helped foster one of the most diverse gatherings of US activists in history. Through their efforts, they were able to build a GJM event that centered women, people of color, and the poor. They did this by convincing people of different perspectives, ideologies, and backgrounds that they had a shared interest, a common enemy and target for action: the global neoliberal capitalist system. Due in large part to their efforts, what had begun in the planning for Seattle as a narrow campaign focused on male industrial workers and environmental degradation had become a world-wide movement of women, immigrants, community activists, and indigenous people addressing issues ranging from global sex-trafficking to rising economic inequality around the world.

* * *

The WTO’s selection of Seattle for its 1999 ministerial meeting revealed an unsurprising divide. On the one hand, the city of Seattle and the state of Washington were economically dependent on international trade, with large corporations headquartered there, like Boeing, Microsoft, and Weyerhaeuser, which were heavily focused on exports. Large-scale agri-business in the region also relied on international commerce. With these major stakeholders committed to free trade, state and local political leaders, both Democrats and Republicans alike, welcomed the WTO to Seattle. Both parties argued that free trade fostered economic growth, particularly in the

Global South, where deregulation allowed for increased international commerce leading to more jobs.²

On the other hand, the state of Washington and the city of Seattle had a long history of progressive and leftist organizing, which fostered growing opposition to free trade. Labor organizing was a prominent feature in the state's history throughout the 20th century. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), known as the Wobblies, organized timber workers in the Seattle General Strike of 1919. In the postwar period, the Teamsters, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), and the IWW were all active in the region and had a strong presence during the WTO protests in 1999. Environmental activism in the area also had a long history, dating back to early conservationist efforts at the beginning of the 20th century, to more recent efforts to preserve old growth forests, rivers, endangered species, and habitat loss. Workers and environmentalists often clashed, as seen in fights over logging: environmentalists protested deforestation while people who worked as loggers viewed these protests as a threat to their livelihoods.

The city had a long history of local feminist organizing, in which many women's groups worked with one another and with other progressive organizations, such as labor unions.³ As in social movement organizing elsewhere, Seattle's progressive groups often found themselves at odds with one another, as they contended with differences of race, class, gender, and ideology.⁴ For example, middle- and upper-class white women in the early suffrage movement argued

² Paul Adler, *The Fair Globalizers: U.S. NGO Activism from the 1970s to the Battle in Seattle*, (Under contract with the University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming).

³ Kit Oldham, "WTO Meeting and Protests in Seattle (1999)," Historylink.org. 13 October 2009.

⁴ Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 130.

educated white women were better equipped to participate in politics than newly freed African American men or immigrants.⁵

At the same time, Seattle feminists had a long history of coalition-building. Feminists took the lead in some of the most successful efforts at cross-class and multiethnic organizing in the early 20th century. For instance, in 1915, working-class women in Seattle joined middle class feminists in the Women's Card and Labor League, a venture designed to bring together women's groups like the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's Trade Union League. Considered a "training school" for women, activists in the League conducted neighborhood campaigns to push ballot initiatives favored by organized labor. They also worked with middle class club women to found a girl's home and to fight for suffrage at the local and state levels. Later, members formed the Federation of Trade Unionist Women and Auxiliaries to garner ties between unions and working-class women.⁶ By World War I, working-class women in Seattle achieved women's suffrage and were key leaders, organizers, and participants in one of the greatest union victories in American history, the Seattle General Strike of 1919.⁷ In this way, working-class women were leaders in both Seattle's feminist and labor movements and offer just one example of cross-class, cross-gender political alliances in Seattle's organizing history.

Seattle is known as a "city of neighborhoods," with its sharp geographical divides like rivers, valleys, steep hills, lakes, and peninsulas segmenting the city into smaller communities, which often banded together and formed neighborhood organizations. Originally known as

⁵ Louise Michele Newman, *The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 19.

⁶ John C. Putnam, *Class and Gender Politics in Progressive Era Seattle*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2008), 11-14.

⁷ Jim Diers, *Neighborhood Power: Building Community the Seattle Way*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 45-54.

“Japan Town,” the International District of Seattle is today a diverse community, where immigrants from China, the Philippines, Korea, and the Pacific Islands settled alongside a growing African American community. In 1986, the community fought for and won the ability to preserve the neighborhood through the creation of the King Street Historical District.⁸ The neighborhood had a long history of multi-ethnic organizing. For instance, in 1946, residents in the neighborhood founded the Jackson Street Community Council, aimed at fostering racial harmony and improving living and social conditions in the community. The organization reflected the diversity of the area and included African Americans, Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Filipino Americans, and whites. The Council organized clean-up campaigns, voter registration drives, tuberculosis testing for residents, planted trees, fixed roads and streetlights, and sponsored events like the International Festival.⁹

Many of the Filipino and Asian Americans in the neighborhood worked in the seasonal cannery industry in Alaska and belonged to the ILWU Local 37 Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union, which had a long history of racial discrimination. In 1973, some of these cannery workers joined Black workers in the United Construction Workers Association and Latino farm workers from the Northwest Chapter of the United Farmworkers of America and founded the Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO) to work for racial and economic justice. While LELO worked mainly through class action lawsuits during the 1970s, by the 1990s, they had become a grassroots worker-led organization that combined popular

⁸ Genna Martin, “The Chinatown/International District through the years: A history of Seattle's Asian American neighborhood,” *Seattle PI*, 21 May 2018.

⁹ Doug Chin, *Seattle's International District: The Making of a Pan-Asian American Community*. International Examiner Press: Seattle, 2001. 76.

political education and international networking to empower and connect workers of color and women workers.¹⁰

Seattle was also home to a strong contingent of socialist, anarchist, and “radical” feminist organizations, the most prominent of which was the socialist group Seattle Radical Women (SRW). SRW began in 1967 after a “Free University” class at the University of Washington on Women and Society conducted by Gloria Martin, a communist and civil rights organizer. Martin joined with Clara Fraser, Melba Windoffer, and Susan Stern to found Seattle Radical Women. SRW was a socialist grassroots feminist organization that “trains women to be leaders in the movements for social and economic justice.” SRW expanded with two overseas chapters, one in Melbourne, Australia and another in San Salvador, El Salvador. From the beginning, SRW was a multi-racial organization with a “Comrades of Color Caucus,” which served to monitor issues of concerns for people of color, proposed changes to the group, and developed the leadership of women of color. The caucus also worked to mediate racism and race-related issues within the organization, allowing members to grapple with these issues in honest and open discussions.¹¹

Since its founding, SRW had a broad perspective on defining “feminist” issues. SRW worked with African American women from the state’s anti-poverty program to launch the first state-wide campaign for abortion in Washington and organized and led the first staff strike at the University of Washington, involving mostly female and non-white workers. Helen Gilbert, lead national organizer for SRW, explained that Seattle Radical Women was the first “reproductive justice” organization in the Pacific Northwest.¹² At the time, many were engaged in an abortion

¹⁰ LELO, “Northwest LELO: A History of a Multi-Racial Workers Organization,” Flyer, 1998, Box 5, Folder 2, Ascension Number 5651-001: Cindy Domingo Papers, 1978-2010 (hereafter CD), SMCP.

¹¹ Seattle Radical Women, *The Radical Women Manifesto* (Seattle: Red Letter Press, 2001). 22.

¹² Helen Gilbert interview by author, 9 October 2021, Seattle, WA.

debate defined around “pro-choice” and “pro-life” positions. However, for many women of color, these options overlooked the histories of forced sterilizations, gynecological medical experimentations, and further curtailments of nonwhite women’s “choices” surrounding motherhood. Instead, they advocated for “reproductive justice,” the human right for people to have children, not have children, and to raise their children in a healthy and safe environment.¹³

In the 1970s, many SRW members broke into male-dominated trades to become truck and bus drivers, welders, fire fighters and phone installers. In 1974, Co-founder Clara Fraser led a campaign at the city’s public power company, Seattle City Light, to develop the first program in the US to hire and train women as utility electricians. As a result of her efforts, Fraser was fired and fought an intense seven-year legal battle to regain her job and affirm workers’ rights to free speech.¹⁴ Due to their shared socialist feminist ideology and their strong working-relationship, Seattle Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party formally affiliated in 1973, sharing office space and pooling resources, but maintaining operational and decision-making autonomy. While Seattle Radical Women was open to all women, including transgender women, they did not allow men into their ranks. However, they worked closely with the Freedom Socialist Party, a mixed-gender organization.¹⁵

In the 1980s, SRW joined coalitions alongside queer rights organizations to prevent forced AIDS testing and ballot measures aimed at banning gay people from employment and housing. They also participated in coalitions with indigenous groups, such as the Puyallup Tribe’s takeover of a former Native American hospital turned Juvenile Detention Center led by Native American women like Janet McCloud and Ramona Bennett. As a socialist organization,

¹³ Sistersong, “Reproductive Justice,” sistersong.net.

¹⁴ Seattle Radical Women, “About Us: History,” <https://www.radicalwomen.org/intro.shtml>.

¹⁵ Seattle Radical Women, *The Radical Women Manifesto* (Seattle: Red Letter Press, 2001).

SRW maintained an international lens throughout its history and protested “imperialist wars” from Vietnam onwards. In 1993, SRW sent delegates to Russia and Eastern Europe during the period of political opening known as Glasnost. In 1997, SRW sent an International Feminist Brigade to Cuba to protest the Cuban blockade.¹⁶ Many of its members were active in a range of other organizations, including labor unions, community groups, and LGBTQ rights organizations.

When the WTO announced in January 1999 that it planned to hold its third ministerial conference in Seattle, local feminists immediately began organizing. Building on their ties throughout the city, groups such as Seattle Radical Women, the Community Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ), and the Filipino, African American, and Latino feminist labor organization the Northwest Labor Employment Law Office (LELO) joined a working group of activists from the King County Labor Council, the consumer advocacy group Public Citizen, and several national environmental organizations like the Sierra Club to plan a response. This predominantly white-male group would later become known as the People for Fair Trade/No to WTO network. At the meetings, feminists advocated broadening the critique of the WTO beyond “Teamsters and Turtles” to include immigration, sex-trafficking, domestic violence, and criminal justice. Many argued that the Fair-Trade board’s narrow understanding of the impact of free trade policies on workers and the environment left out many communities of color. For example, Public Citizen and the Sierra Club focused on forest preservation and did not discuss how Seattle neighborhoods of color were the most polluted areas in the city and had the lowest rating for water quality.

¹⁶ Seattle Radical Women, “About Us: History,” <https://www.radicalwomen.org/intro.shtml>.

While news reports portrayed the AFL-CIO as a leader of the protests, exploring the grassroots history of the event reveals that without feminist agitation, the AFL-CIO likely would not have committed to participating in the protests at all. As late as August of 1999, the powerful labor organization had not yet come out in support of a protest against the WTO that fall, nor did they commit to any plans for a march or rally. It took the efforts of a small group of labor feminists and their allies who confronted national leaders about the lack of attention to the impact of free trade policies on workers around the world that pushed AFL-CIO leadership to commit to a strong presence in the upcoming protests and promote a critique of the WTO that went beyond its nationalistic “America First” framework. At the same time, many felt their efforts working with and within the national labor organization to take up issues that impact a more diverse community was a waste of time and energy. Many reported they should have abandoned these efforts sooner to pursue coalition-building with others more sympathetic to their cause.

These feminists also contended with other national organizations, like the Sierra Club and Public Citizen, who dominated the protest coalition known as the People for Fair Trade Network (P4FT). They charged that these groups ignored important issues relating to women and people of color, such as the prison industrial complex, immigration, toxic dumping, and domestic violence. They argued that by ignoring these issues, mainstream organizers ostracized the low-income and minority communities that were the most impacted by free trade policies.

While these feminists were not successful in getting powerful national organizations like Public Citizen or the Sierra Club to recognize the ways in which issues like immigration or domestic violence were intertwined with free trade policies, by organizing separately ahead of the protests, they were able to highlight these issues and encourage a global solidarity approach

to confronting them. In the months leading up to the WTO protests, Seattle feminists focused on public education, holding forums and events that explained to the public what free trade policies were and how they impacted people and the planet. During the week of the November 30th WTO protests, known as N30, feminists held conferences, forums, and public education events focused on highlighting the ways in which global free trade policies impacted women around the world. On the streets of Seattle, feminists employed song, dance, humor, and street theater to turn the protests into a carnivalesque celebration.

After the WTO protests, US feminist organizing in the GJM accelerated, as activists from Europe, the US, and Australia joined in protests against global capitalism alongside those living in places in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, who had been protesting these issues for decades. However, important changes to the political landscape forced these activists to rethink the tactics they deployed in Seattle to such great effect. As GJM organizing grew, so too did police violence. For instance, at the July 2001 G8 Summit protests in Genoa, Italy, police killed one activist and wounded several others.¹⁷ The 2001 Patriot Act, passed in the immediate aftermath of September 11th, further increased police scrutiny and violence against Global Justice activists. The law expanded the government's authority to surveil activists with little to no oversight.¹⁸ It also inflated the definition of "domestic terrorism" to include any protestors who committed acts they deemed to be "dangerous to human life" as part of their efforts to "influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion."¹⁹

¹⁷ Joel Wainwright and Rafael Ortiz, "The Battles in Miami: the Fall of the FTAA/ALCA and the Promise of Transnational Movements," *Environments and Planning D*, 24 (2006), 349-366.

¹⁸ ACLU, "Surveillance Under the USA/Patriot Act," 2022. <https://www.aclu.org/other/surveillance-under-usapatriot-act>.

¹⁹ U.S. Congress, House, Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001, HR 3162, 107th Cong., 1st sess., introduced in House October 23, 2001.

While some scholars argue the conservative shift following the passage of the Patriot Act, curtailed GJM organizing, these scholars overlook the ways in which activists shifted their tactics away from large-scale confrontations like the so-called “Seattle Model.”²⁰ They recognized that powerful international institutions like the WTO or World Economic Forum could thwart the tactics used in Seattle by holding their meetings behind no protest zones and police barricades or simply moving these gatherings to countries that lacked laws guaranteeing free speech and assembly. Activists also wanted to move beyond their opposition to neoliberal globalization and develop their own alternatives. Instead, they planned and developed a world-wide meeting of activists, both in person and online, known as the World Social Forum (WSF). While US activists were largely absent from the first World Social Forum in 2001, those US feminists who did attend continued to push for more US activists, and especially US feminists, to join future global gatherings and were instrumental in bringing the social forum to the US in Atlanta in 2007. Their efforts also helped to make globalization part of the larger US political discourse and to create a greater public awareness of the impact of capitalist globalization on diverse people and the planet.

Historiography

This study contributes to the historiography on US feminism, which until recently focused on two periods, or “waves” of activism: the suffrage movement, or “first wave,” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the women’s liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the so-called “second wave.” According to these narratives, feminist organizing diminished in the 1980s, leading to the “nadir” of feminism by the 1990s. Recent scholarship

²⁰ Ibid. See also, Paul Adler, *The Fair Globalizers: U.S. NGO Activism from the 1970s to the Battle in Seattle* (Under contract with the University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming).

that highlights women who are not white and middle-class has uncovered a much more dynamic understanding of feminist activism that challenges the idea of two distinct waves.²¹ Scholars like Dorothy Sue Cobble in *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* and Alice Kessler-Harris in *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Pursuit of Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America* examined working class and black women's labor organizing in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s to reveal how working-class women fought against racism and sexism.²² Other studies, like Kathleen A. Laughlin and Jacqueline L. Castledine's *Breaking the Wave: Women, Their Organizations, and Feminism, 1945-1985* examine women's grassroots organizing to show a continuity in feminist agitation surrounding labor, consumer, civil rights, welfare rights, and international issues in the postwar period.²³

Historians have also begun to challenge the image of the 1990s as a low point of feminist organizing. In *They Didn't See Us Coming: The Hidden History of Feminism in the Nineties*, Lisa Levenstein reveals the breadth and depth of nineties feminism, a movement in which US

²¹ For example, see: Nancy Hewitt, *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010); Stephanie Gilmore, ed. *Feminist Coalitions: Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Stephanie Gilmore, *Groundswell: Grassroots Feminist Activism in Postwar America* (New Brunswick: Routledge, 2013).

²² Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Pursuit of Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). See also: Nancy MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (Harvard University Press, 2006); Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

²³ Kathleen A. Laughlin and Jacqueline L. Castledine, eds. *Breaking the Wave: Women, Their Organizations, and Feminism, 1945-1985* (New York: Routledge, 2011). For more, see: Megan Threlkeld, *Pan American Women: US Internationalists and Revolutionary Mexico* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Anne M. Valk, *Radical Sisters: Second Wave Feminism and Black Liberation in Washington D.C.* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Danielle Maguire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance- A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010); Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism During the Vietnam Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); Milagros Peña, *Latina Activists across Borders: Women's Grassroots Organizing in Mexico and Texas* (Duke University Press: 2007);

women of color activists and activists from the Global South played a lead role. For these feminists, “every social justice issue was a feminist issue,” whether it concerned the environment, labor, human rights, public health, or reproductive justice.²⁴ Levenstein argues that over the course of the decade, US feminists learned powerful and lasting lessons from Global South activists that “revolutionized their thinking.”²⁵ By focusing on local feminists in Seattle involved in the 1999 WTO protests, this dissertation provides a more nuanced and detailed understanding of how these events unfolded, illuminating, for instance, how feminists urged other progressive organizations to pay greater attention to issues relating to gender, race, class, and sexuality.

While Levenstein is most interested in US feminists’ relationship to global feminism, this study foregrounds their interactions with the male-led Global Justice Movement. It contributes to a growing body of scholarship on the emergence of an international movement of people working against the forces of neoliberal globalization on behalf of a variety of causes, including worker’s rights, environmental protections, indigenous rights, de-militarization, and women’s issues. Most of the scholarship was written in the early 2000s by direct participants.²⁶ Most importantly, there is a near total absence of feminist actors in these accounts. These works celebrate the Global Justice Movement as a broad and diverse coalition of activists, including women, yet they ignore the role of feminists in helping to mobilize that coalition. The few works that mention women activists typically point to the Lesbian Avengers, a group of women who

²⁴ Lisa Levenstein, *They Didn’t See Us Coming: The Hidden History of Feminism in the Nineties* (New York: Basic Books, 2020), 2.

²⁵ Levenstein, 26.

²⁶ See, Eddie Yuen, George Latsiaficas and Daniel Burton Rose, eds. *The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization* (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2002); Kevin Danaher and Roger Burbach, *Globalize This!: The Battle Against the World Trade Organization* (Monroe: Common Courage Press, 2000); Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, *5 Days That Shook the World: Seattle and Beyond* (New York: Verso Books, 2000).

appeared topless at the Seattle protests.²⁷ Even in works that discuss how the Global Justice Movement was against patriarchal oppression, they do so with no details about who these feminists were or what they were doing.²⁸ For instance, Alexander Cockburn, Jeffrey St. Clair, and Allan Sekula's *Five Days that Shook the World: Seattle and Beyond* notes that the Global Justice Movement was "less sexist" than other prior left-wing movements, yet they do not mention any feminists or women's organizations to support this claim.²⁹

A few feminist scholars have begun to question these narratives. Catherine Eschle and Bice Manguashca argue in *Making Feminist Sense of the Global Justice Movement* that these accounts "fail to recognize feminism as an integral presence within the antiglobalization movement and even position the movement as transcendent of feminism. This has the effect of actively excluding feminism from antiglobalization politics."³⁰ The absence of feminists in the scholarship of the GJM is not a reflection of their participation. Rather, their absence is more about the movement's own perception of itself.³¹ Much of this scholarship consists of sociological studies, which do not rely on archival and oral history sources. My exploration of the primary sources uncovered extensive feminist participation and numerous instances in which feminists fought back against their own marginalization within the Global Justice Movement. Another contribution of my historical approach is that I chart change over time. In the years following the Seattle protests, feminist voices became more visible, they received more publicity, and attention to their issues took on greater significance within the movement. Further,

²⁷ Emma Bircham, and John Charlton, eds. *Anti-Capitalism: A Guide to the Movement* (London: Bookmark, 2001).

²⁸ For instance, see, Naomi Klein, *No Logos* (New York: Picador, 2000). See also, Amory Starr, *Naming the Enemy: Anti-Corporate Social Movements Confront Globalization* (New York: Zed Books, 2000).

²⁹ Cockburn, St. Clair, and Sekula, 4.

³⁰ Catherine Eschle, "'Skeleton Women': Feminism and the Anti-Globalization Movement," *Signs*. 30:3 (Spring 2005), 1741-1769, 1743.

³¹ Eschle, 1741.

while Eschle and Maiguashca explore NGOs and actors outside of the US, this study focuses on Seattle activists and emphasizes how they acquired many of their tactics and analyses through working with women in other countries.

The feminists under study here drew insights from and sought to bridge the global feminist and global justice movements. Each chapter highlights the story of one of these feminists who lived in Seattle and participated in the 1999 anti-WTO protests. I chose to focus on Seattle-based feminists because they were key actors in the planning and implementation of the event, which was an important occasion in the rise of the Global Justice Movement. I selected these individuals as case studies because they left behind the most evidence of their involvement. They were networked into diverse groups of feminists in Seattle and beyond, who had similar mindsets and were working on similar problems. These activists recognized injustices in their own lives and their own communities and connected these injustices to a holistic global framework. They saw seemingly disparate issues, such as immigration, environmental degradation, violence and militarization, and economic inequality as consequences of the global capitalist system. Believing that capitalism was fundamentally shaped by colonialism, racism, and patriarchy, they thought these structures needed to be challenged simultaneously.

I call them “global justice feminists” because they shared a critique of neoliberal globalization and international capitalism that took into account race and gender oppression. They sought to ally with environmental, labor, religious, and public health activists and organizations. Most, but not all, self-identified as feminists, but some did not, given the history of the term in different contexts. For many women of color and working-class women, the label “feminist” represented a white middle-class women’s movement focused on issues that did not

resonate with poor communities and people of color. Nonetheless, they promoted a gendered analysis of free trade issues and networked and participated in coalitions with other feminist organizations and events.³²

My research has identified over fifty of these individuals in Seattle alone, but they represent thousands of others from Seattle and across the country. They were predominantly Asian-American, Latin American, African American, Native American, white working-class, or sexual minorities. Many of them were immigrants or the children of immigrants. They were working with similarly-oriented women from other parts of the country, with a particularly strong presence in states along the west coast. While their numbers were small in comparison to the broader US feminist and global justice movements, their impact was significant. Over time, due in part to the advocacy described in this dissertation, their frameworks and methods gained greater popularity and support among both US feminists and the global justice movement writ large.

This dissertation begins in Chile in the early 1970s, exploring the early implementation of neoliberalism in the Global South, as well as some of the earliest examples of the involvement of feminists in the growing movement against those policies. Chapter two argues that Global South feminists recognized the growth of powerful international institutions and corporations and, in response, shifted their organizing efforts to address this growing global force. They developed important analyses, such as the idea of the “glocal,” or thinking globally while acting locally.

³² Recent feminist scholarship emphasizes the importance of taking a broad view of feminist history by including working class women and women of color who did not call themselves feminists, but nonetheless did feminist work. See, Lisa Levenstein, *They Didn't See Us Coming: The Hidden History of Feminism in the Nineties* (New York: Basic Books, 2020); Premilla Nadasen, “Expanding the Boundaries of the Women’s Movement: Black Feminism and the Struggle for Welfare Rights,” *Feminist Studies* 28:1 (2002): 270-301; Kathleen A. Laughlin and Jacqueline Castledine, *Breaking the Wave: Women, Their Organizations, and Feminism, 1945-1985* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Finn Enke, *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminist Activism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 4-5.

They then shared these tactics and analyses with feminists from the Global North, especially through international conferences. From their Global South counterparts, US feminists learned powerful lessons about the effects of globalization and neoliberalism both at home and abroad.

When they returned from these international gatherings, Seattle feminists worked in their own communities to share what they learned. Chapter three examines how these feminists continued holding conferences, networking across borders, and holding public education events to enhance US feminists' engagement with global issues and movements. Chapters four and five examine the year of organizing that took place after the World Trade Organization's January 1999 selection of Seattle as the host city for its November 30th ministerial meeting. Chapter four shows how Seattle feminists worked with the powerful national labor organization the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Unions (AFL-CIO) to take a strong anti-free trade position and commit itself to joining the protests against the WTO. They also urged the organization to broaden its framework to issues relating to women, communities of color, the poor, and those living outside the US. Chapter five explores their efforts to work with the national consumer group Public Citizen and the prominent environmental organization the Sierra Club to broaden their agendas ahead of the protest. While they achieved some successes working with these national groups, the frustrations they experienced led them to pursue a separate organizing strategy with those more sympathetic to their viewpoints. Chapter six focuses on the week-long protests against the WTO and highlights some of the diverse forms of feminist activism that helped make the protests a success. The epilogue explores how feminists continued to build on these efforts in the years following, culminating with one of the most diverse gatherings of activists in US history at the 2007 US Social Forum in Atlanta. As feminists continued to push organizations on the political left to pay greater attention to issues related to

race, gender, class, and sexuality, they laid the groundwork for the greater cross-fertilization of feminist ideas and tactics in US progressive organizing.

CHAPTER II: US FEMINISTS GO “GLOCAL”

In the 1970s, US feminists gained significant exposure to feminist organizing against development taking place in the Global South. Activists in Latin American countries with US-backed dictators who implemented neoliberal economic policies were the first to feel the effects of free trade and the first to develop strategies to resist. In a world of powerful multinational institutions and corporations, where economics, politics and culture were increasingly globalized, they sought to shift the logic of their organizing efforts in kind. They developed what they called “glocal” analyses, which revealed the global dimensions of local issues such as sexualized violence and the plight of domestic workers. “Acting locally, thinking globally” became one of their mantras. By attending international conferences, Seattle feminists gained exposure to these Latin American activists and formed global networks of communication. For many of these US feminists, it was the first time they learned about neoliberal policies like structural adjustment and the institutions that enforced them like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. They began to analyze the effects of forces such as globalization and neoliberalism at home and to reckon with the role of the US government in promoting structural adjustment policies abroad.

The Global South Origins of the Fight Against Neoliberal Globalization

While many histories of neoliberal globalization begin in the 1980s with US President Ronald Reagan and UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, nations in the global south implemented structural adjustment, privatization, and deregulation policies a decade earlier. During the Cold War, in the name of security concerns over “containing leftists,” the US supported what were often brutal and repressive dictatorships in countries throughout Latin America, such as Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru. In 1973, for

instance, democratically elected Chilean president Salvador Allende was overthrown in a brutal military coup, backed by the US government.¹ Allende, himself a moderate leftist, was elected on a platform promising reform. That reform included the nationalization of several industries, such as copper, that US and Multinational corporations controlled.² When these companies complained to the US state department, the CIA developed a plan to oppose the newly elected Chilean president, which included taking covert actions, training opposition personnel, supporting and directing misinformation and propaganda efforts, and adopting a “maximum pressure” campaign against the presidency.³

When Allende was overthrown in a military coup in 1973, it was with the support of the US government. The new military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet was funded by the US government and many of its military personnel were trained at the CIA’s School of the Americas. Pinochet’s economic advisors were known as the “Chicago boys,” due to their education at the bulwark of neoliberalism, the Chicago School of Economics. These economic advisors pushed an agenda that advocated for the elimination of both price controls and government regulations, and pushed cuts in social services like healthcare, education, housing, and food subsidies. They also passed laws weakening labor unions. Historian Pieper Mooney refers to these policies as the “neoliberal shock treatment,” which aimed to increase “productivity” in the country at the expense of its population.⁴

¹ Lubna Z. Qureshi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende: US Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile*, (Rowman and Littlefield: Boulder, 2009).

² Oscar Guardiola-Rivera, *Story of a Death Foretold: The Coup against Salvador Allende, 11 September 1973*, (Bloomsbury: London, 2013).

³ Henry Kissinger, “Memorandum for the President: NSC Meeting, November 6—Chile,” *The Chile Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Elizabeth Quay Hutchinson ed. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

⁴ Pieper Mooney. *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women’s Rights in Twentieth-Century Chile*. (University of Pittsburg Press: Pittsburgh, PA, 2009) 137.

Due to the deregulation of the banking industry, the 1970s saw a “lending frenzy” in Chile, with foreign banks giving an unprecedented number of loans to middle- and upper-class Chileans. When the global economy took a downturn in the early 1980s, the interest rates on these loans skyrocketed, making it impossible for most borrowers to repay them. To avoid a total economic collapse, Chile (like many other Latin American countries during what became known as the 1980s “debt crisis”) imposed austerity measures under the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) advocated by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. To pay back the loans and avoid economic collapse, international financial institutions forced indebted nations like Chile to repay the loans through dramatic cuts to social services including healthcare, housing and food subsidies, and education.⁵

Pinochet used violence and repression to maintain power. He regularly jailed or permanently “disappeared” anyone deemed a threat to the state, which included not only political opponents, but also teachers, university professors, union leaders and journalists. The national stadium in Santiago was turned into an enormous concentration camp and many of those jailed there were never seen again.⁶

The economic crisis, combined with the violent repression of Pinochet’s government, fueled feminist resistance. In Chile as well other countries with oppressive military regimes supported by the US such as in Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Argentina, feminists adopted the rhetorical tool of “motherhood.”⁷ The dictators had cast themselves as the fathers of the nation,

⁵ Peggy Antrobus, *The Global Women’s Movement: Origins, Issues and Strategies* (Zed Books: London, 2004).

⁶ Roger Burbach, *The Pinochet Affair: State Terrorism and Global Justice* (New York: Zed Books, 2003).

⁷ For Brazil see, Susan K. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914-1940* (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1996); For Mexico see, Jocelyn Olcott, Mary K. Vaughan, and Gabriela Cano, *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); For Nicaragua and El Salvador see, Karen Kampwirth, *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas* (Ohio University Press, Athens, 2004); For Argentina see, Marguerite Guzman Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza del Mayo* (Lanham, MD: SR Books,

and they promoted notions about women's "natural" roles as wives and mothers. Many conservative women supported this casting of motherhood as a woman's civic duty, as they were the ones deemed primarily responsible for raising their children to embrace the values dictated by the state. As a result of this politicization of motherhood, women's private roles as mothers in the home became a public responsibility.

During the financial crisis and political repression of the 1980s, feminists turned the idea of politicized motherhood on its head and became what Mooney calls "subversive mothers," using their status as mothers to legitimize their resistance to the state. In Chile, for instance, in response to the violence and economic turmoil, they organized as mothers to defend their families and their communities.⁸ An influential middle-class women's organization, the Agrupacion de Mujeres Democraticas (Association of Democratic Women), worked to locate missing persons in the national stadium and provided support services for those who were arrested. Women in poor neighborhoods, or Pobladoras, organized to survive, setting up community kitchens, housing organizations, and cottage industries. They formed a multitude of organizations, with the largest being the Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CODEM), which pushed for health care and birth control. These organizations of poor women came together in what became known as the Movement of Shantytown Women to defend their communities from poverty and political repression.⁹

Chilean feminists developed creative cultural tactics of resistance. Some took the words of popular songs and re-wrote them with a political message. The verse from a popular song

1994); For Chile see, Mooney; See also, Heidi Tinsman, *Partners in Conflict: The Politics of Gender, Sexuality, and Labor in the Chilean Agrarian Reform, 1950-1973* (Duke University Press, 2002).

⁸ Mooney, 135.

⁹ Mooney, 153.

“There goes the Caiman¹⁰ . . . it goes to Barranquilla¹¹,” became “There goes patriarchy . . . it goes down the drain.”¹² They also adopted the time-honored tradition of mothers using the pots and pans they used to cook food for their families as symbols of resistance. Throughout the late 1970s and 80s, women would take to the streets banging pots and pans in protest of the government’s inability to take care of their families.¹³

Chilean women forced into exile under Pinochet for their perceived “leftist” activities helped fuel the growth of feminist resistance. These exiles who took refuge in countries in Latin America, Europe, Canada and the US were supported by a growing international feminist movement, encouraged through the United Nations decade for women (1975-1985) and the networks feminists formed as a result. Historians of global feminism have pointed to the UN series of global conferences as a key facilitator of feminist cross-border activism. The UN declared 1975 to 1985 the Decade for Women and planned a series of global conferences around the world for women to dialogue and collaborate. While earlier conferences like the 1975 Mexico City meeting were marked by division between feminists in the global north and south, the political and economic transformations of the 1980s helped bridge the gaps between women from different nations. In the 1970s, neoliberal policies like privatization and cuts in social services were mainly confined to places in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. However, by the mid-1980s, with the election of Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in the UK, women in the “First World” witnessed welfare reform, privatization, and cuts in social services. In response to the rise of neoliberal global capitalism and conservative governments in western

¹⁰ Slang term for “swindler.”

¹¹ Refers to the Colombian city on the Caribbean coast.

¹² Mooney, 175.

¹³ George de Lama, “Chile Marches Toward Freedom to the Beat of Pots and Pans,” *Chicago Tribune*. September 11, 1988. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1988-09-11-8801290837-story.html>.

nations and the demands of feminists from the global South to pay greater attention to issues of colonialism and economic inequality, feminists around the world re-directed their efforts away from pressuring national governments and focused on influencing multinational corporations and international institutions such as the IMF and World Bank. Although these UN conferences facilitated the growing global feminist movement, at the same time the UN was also responsible for the IMF and World Bank whose policies promoting austerity measures and privatization caused much of the devastation these feminists were dealing with in the first place. For this reason, the UN has served as what historian Margaret Snyder termed as both the “unlikely godmother” and “evil stepmother” of global feminism.¹⁴

The UN Decade for Women (1975-1985) and preparatory meetings for the UN Conferences on Women fueled feminist cross-border activism. Feminists were increasingly connecting the struggles of women in the global south with poverty, violence, and lack of access to clean water with the economic policies dictated to them by the US and other wealthy nations. Some activists from Africa, Asia, and Latin America analyzed how free trade policies contributed to women’s poverty by justifying government cuts in spending on social services and pulling more women into the workforce as laborers in low-paying, low-status jobs. They also criticized the US-backed World Bank and IMF’s promotion of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that required countries to cut social welfare programs, privatize land and government resources, and balance budgets in return for loans. Feminists in Latin America, for example,

¹⁴ Margaret Snyder, “Unlikely Godmother: The UN and the Global Women’s Movement,” In *Global Feminism: Transnational Women’s Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*, Myra Marx Ferre and Aili Mari Tripp, eds. (New York University Press, 2006); See also, S. Laurel Weldon, “Inclusion, Solidarity and Social Movements: The Global Movement against Gender Violence,” *Perspective on Politics* (4:1): 55-74; Valentine Moghadam, *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Lisa Levenstein, *They Didn’t See Us Coming: The Hidden History of Feminism in the Nineties* (Basic Books: New York, 2020).

argued that countries achieved debt repayment through the “super-exploitation” of women. The growing demand for women’s unpaid reproductive labor and low paid labor in the export economy increased their “double burden.”¹⁵

At the 1980 UN Conference in Copenhagen, Chilean feminists like Miren Busto and Eugenia Hola spoke about human rights abuses under Pinochet. They then helped to set up regional meetings in Latin America to discuss challenges facing women living under dictatorships. These regional meetings, known as Encuentros Feministas, or Feminist Encounters, served as vital spaces for Latin American feminists from different countries to dialogue, debate, develop strategies of resistance, and negotiate a common feminist vocabulary, naming that which previously had no name, such as marital rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, the feminization of poverty and more.¹⁶

The influence of feminists from the global south on those from the north through these international conferences is evident in the way one woman’s story about hardships and resistance in the mining region of Bolivia traveled to feminists in the US. At the 1975 UN International Women’s Year Tribunal in Mexico City, Domitila Barrios de Chungara met Brazilian feminist and writer Moema Libera Viezzer and shared some of her experiences living in the Siglo XX mining community in Bolivia. The two decided to publish an oral history based on Barrios de Chungara’s experiences. Originally published as “Si me permiten hablar, testimonio de Domitila, una Mujer de las minas de Bolivia” (Siglo XX Editores, Mexico), it was translated into English

¹⁵ Valentine M. Moghadam, *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 75.

¹⁶ Sonia E. Alvarez, Elisabeth Jay Friedman, Ericka Beckman, Maylei Blackwell, Norma Stoltz Chinchilla, Nathalie Lebon, Maryssa Navarro and Marcela Ríos Tobar, “Encountering Latin American and Caribbean Feminisms,” *Signs* 28, 2 (2002): 539; See also, Virginia Vargas, “Encuentros feministas: Enfasis y estrategias.” In *Feminismos plurales: VII Encuentro Feminista Latinoamericano y del Caribe*. Aportes para el debate 7 de la Agencia Lationamericana de Informacion (ALAI) (November): 30–32.

and published as *Let Me Speak!* in 1978.¹⁷ The book described the long hours, unsafe conditions, and low wages for Bolivian male miners. Even more, women in those communities faced additional hardships and labor as they struggled to feed, clothe, and care for their families, yet their economic contributions were often ignored. Domitila also shared her stories of resistance. In 1961, women from the mining community formed a Housewives Committee to protest the low wages and poor conditions. When they faced ridicule from their male counterparts for their activities, they went on strike in their homes and began keeping track of their domestic labors and then presented them as bills to their husbands. Another action the housewives committee undertook was to go on a hunger strike to demand the release of jailed miners from their community.¹⁸ By 1973, the movement had spread across the nation, beyond mining communities, with demonstrations against the military-controlled government of over 5,000 women on multiple occasions. The group staged hunger strikes, hid activists persecuted by the state, and picketed entrances of mines that exploited laborers. The military arrested and tortured many of these activists, including Barrios de Chungara.¹⁹

Barrios de Chungara reminded her readers in wealthy nations like the US of their complicity in her suffering and they took her words to heart. For instance, in a review of the book, US lesbian feminist Lisa Albrecht, a white academic, explained how it made her “painfully aware” of her own ethnocentric biases regarding what she sees as central feminist issues. While many white US feminists began the conference with a focus on issues that mattered to them, like

¹⁷ For more on the role of Domitila Barrios de Chungara, see, Jocelyn Olcott, *International Women's Year: The Greatest Consciousness-Raising Event in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁸ Jocelyn Olcott, “Cold War Conflicts and Cheap Cabaret: Sexual Politics at the 1975 United Nations International Women’s Year Conference,” *Gender and History* 22:3 (November 2010): 734-754. 745.

¹⁹ Domitila Barrios de Chungara and Moema Viezzer, *Let Me Speak! Testimony of Domitila, a woman of the Bolivian mines* (Monthly Review Press: New York, 1978), Translated by Victoria Ortiz.

abortion and women's equality, their experiences with women from the Global South helped them to broaden their understanding of what constituted "women's issues" to include a greater focus on economic and racial disparities within and between nations. Albrecht observed that women like Barrios de Chungara faced two forms of oppression. They were women in a sexist society, who were simultaneously living under oppressive governments "backed by imperialist dollars."²⁰

Many US feminists read Domitila's testimonial, which helped them expand their understanding of what constituted "women's issues." At the 1985 UN Conference in Mexico City, Domitila Barrios de Chungara pointed out that the issues prominent US feminists like Betty Friedan were focused on, such as birth control and the "glass ceiling," "didn't touch on issues that were basic for Latin American women."²¹ These critiques coming from women from the global south mirrored the critiques of women of color living in the US, who emphasized differences between women and promoted a focus on basic issues of survival.²² In the years following the Mexico City conference, Barrios de Chungara's testimony helped pave the way for the growth of the transnational feminist movement by pushing white feminists in wealthy nations to recognize the impossibility of achieving "equality" between the sexes when so much economic and racial inequality existed around the world.²³

Many Seattle feminists who became active internationally first learned about the dangers of free trade policies, and the connections between those economic policies and US military

²⁰ Lisa Albrecht, Review, "Let Me Speak! testimony of Domitila, a woman of the Bolivian mines." *Off Our Backs* 12, 3 (March 1982): 14.

²¹ Barrios de Chungara, Domitila, and Moema Viezzer. *Let Me Speak!: Testimony of Domitila, a woman of the Bolivian mines*, Translated by Victoria Ortiz (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978) 202-203.

²² Jocelyn Olcott, "A Happier Marriage? Feminist History Takes the Transnational Turn," In *Making Women's Histories: Beyond National Perspectives*, eds. Pamela S. Nadell and Kate Haulman (New York: NYU Press, 2013).

²³ Jocelyn Olcott, *International Women's Year: The Greatest Consciousness-Raising Event in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017): 202-206.

policies, through direct encounters with people living in developing countries ruled by US-backed dictators. For example, in 1974, Cindy Domingo, the daughter of Filipino immigrants, visited her family in the Philippines. In the Philippines, as in Chile, concerns about “leftist” economic policies during the Cold War, such as the nationalization of their industries, led the US government to back the military dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. On September 23, 1973, Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines, effectively beginning his 14-year reign of violent political repression. US policies supporting dictatorships like the Marcos regime were fueled by economic concerns that reformers in the so-called “Third World” might usurp the power of foreign-owned corporations in their countries. Under the guise of containing communists, the US backed dictators around the world to maintain their economic dominance in those nations.²⁴

On her 1974 visit to the Philippines, Domingo witnessed rural poverty, political repression, and military torture of citizens. Upon returning to Seattle to continue her studies at the University of Washington, she joined a Filipino student group called Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP) alongside her older brother Selme Domingo, who was a founding member. The organization’s goals were to help overturn the Marcos regime in the Philippines and to protest US support of the Marcos administration and the discrimination and exploitation of Filipino workers in the United States.²⁵

Early on, Domingo’s work in the organization focused on educating the US Filipino community about what was happening under the brutal Marcos dictatorship by producing

²⁴ Rene Cruz Ciria, Cindy Domingo and Bruce Occena, *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017); See also, Richard J. Kessler, “Marcos and the Americans,” *Foreign Policy* 63 (Summer, 1986); 40-57; Jose V. Fuentecilla, *Fighting From a Distance: How Filipino Exiles Helped Topple a Dictator* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013); James Hamilton-Paterson, *America’s Boy: The Marcoses and the Philippines* (London: Granta Books, 1999); Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: American’s Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 2010).

²⁵ “Cindy Domingo interview” by Michael Schulze-Oechtering Castenada and James Gregory, Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, The University of Washington, Seattle, WA (hereafter SCRLHP), 9 August 2008.

literature, leafletting, attending church and community group discussions and teach-ins, as well as speaking engagements with young people. While the KDP was not an explicitly feminist organization, Domingo said she experienced less sexism within that organization than she did elsewhere. She believed this lack of sexism stemmed from the KDP's commitment to using all members' skills and abilities as fully as possible. To further these efforts, all KDP events and meetings offered free childcare. The KDP also provided free childcare services for members any day of the week, first with members taking turns babysitting and later through an institutionalized system paid for with members' dues.²⁶ Because many members lived communally, they shared domestic chores equally, further freeing up women to be full participants within the group. Even more, the leadership of the KDP was predominantly women.²⁷

In May 1981, the Seattle chapter of the KDP took a new turn, when two of its founding members, Gene Viernes, and Cindy Domingo's older brother Selme, were gunned down by hired hitmen outside Local 37 of the Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union. Three weeks later, Cindy Domingo, Velma Veloria, and other labor activists in the KDP joined together to form the Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes to organize a community response.²⁸ Initially, the committee believed the murders were motivated by the activists' work organizing in the canneries. However, the committee soon learned it was a political assassination ordered by the Marcos administration due to these activists' support of democracy efforts in the Philippines.

²⁶ Augusto F. Espiritu, "Introduction," *A Time to Rise*, eds. Bruce Occena, Cindy Domingo, and Rene Ciria Cruz (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017): XVI.

²⁷ Castenada and Gregory, "Cindy Domingo interview."

²⁸ Kris Melroe, "How Do I Size a Bulletproof Vest?" *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos*. Eds. Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo and Bruce Ocena (University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 2017) 211-215.

They also uncovered evidence that US intelligence agencies knew about these plans ahead of time. The committee put out a “call for justice,” signed by community members that included city counselors, a board member from the cannery union, as well as other leaders in the area. They focused on publicizing information about the murders and their political motives to as many people as possible, including the police and justice department. The group also sought to expose the role of not only the Marcos government in the murder, but also the knowledge the US government had that could have prevented the murder in the first place.²⁹

Members of the committee made connections between the murders of Domingo and Viernes and other murders and disappearances of activists working against US-backed dictators around the world. The committee conducted teach-ins highlighting these political assassinations as part of a larger trend of the violent repression of anti-dictator activists even in the “home of the free.” For instance, the teach-ins connected the murders of Selme Domingo and Gene Viernes to the 1976 assassination of Orlando Letelier. Letelier was an outspoken opponent of the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. In 1976, while visiting Washington DC with his family, a car bomb exploded killing Letelier and his wife and children.³⁰

The Committee for Justice’s work resulted in the convictions of the hit men, the gang leader who hired them, and the cannery union president who aided them. Additionally, in 1982 the committee filed a civil suit against the Marcos regime, demonstrating that behind the murders was a network of Marcos agency members who harassed and intimidated anti-Marcos activists. The committee uncovered intelligence documents demonstrating that these Marcos agents also used physical violence and murder against members of the KDP. After nine years of struggle, US

²⁹ “Northwest LELO: A History of a Multi-Racial Workers Organization,” *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other LELO* newsletter, 1:1 (Fall 1998), Box 5, Folder 3, Acc. No. 5651-001: CDP, SMCP.

³⁰ Karen DeYoung, “This was not an accident, this was a bomb,” *Washington Post*, 20 September 2016.

District Court Judge Barbara Rothstein ruled that “the plaintiffs have provided clear, cogent and convincing evidence that Marcos created and controlled an intelligence operation which plotted the murders of Domingo and Viernes.” The jury awarded the families of the victims \$23.3 million in damages levied against the Marcos estate. This case marked the first in US history to hold a foreign leader accountable for the murder of a US citizen on US soil.³¹

Following the legal settlement, as well as the fall of the Marcos regime in 1986, the KDP disbanded, and Domingo spent several years feeling without an activist “home.”³² At the same time, Domingo, like many other US feminists at the time, began engaging with the growing global feminist movement through her preparations for and participation in the United Nation’s Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995. In 1991, Domingo’s friend and fellow activist Jan Cate asked her to join the EveryWoman’s delegation to prepare for the conference. The EveryWoman’s Delegation was a coalition of grassroots women of color and anti-racist white women sponsored by the Institute for Global Security Studies (IGSS).³³ The delegation was committed to a vision of “universal peace, justice and human rights.” The EveryWoman’s Delegation stressed that issues like poverty and domestic violence were in fact global issues and sought to join with women around the world to “build global and local strategies.” Delegation members were diverse in terms of age, race, ethnicity, sexual identity, and religion. Members represented a range of causes, including labor, debt relief, immigrant and refugee rights, and gender equality.³⁴

³¹ Michael Withey, “How to Sue a Dictator,” *YES! Magazine*. 20 September 2018.

³² Cindy Domingo interview with Michael Schulze-Oechtering Castenada and James Gregory, “Cindy Domingo: Oral History Interview,” SCRLHP, 9 August 2008.

³³ “EveryWoman’s Conference,” pamphlet, 18 November 1995, CDP, Box 6, Folder “EveryWoman’s Delegation,” Acc. No. 0561-001, SMCP.

³⁴ Scott Watanabe, “Seattle Women Prepare for Beijing Conference,” *International Examiner*, CDP, Box 7, Folder “EveryWoman’s Delegation,” Acc. No. 0561-001, SMCP.

Another local Seattle member of the EveryWoman delegation was African American civil rights activist Beverly Sims. Sims grew up in the South End neighborhood of Seattle with working-class parents who inspired her to work for labor rights in her early life. Upon her graduation from the University of Washington, Sims got a job as a secretary first at Boeing, then later at the Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO), a worker's organization that was at the time committed to reforming unions to ensure greater participation and leadership of people of color and women.³⁵ Here, she met her future husband and fellow labor activist Tyree Scott. In 1975, she went on a nine-week trip to Cuba as part of the Venceremos³⁶ Brigade, an offshoot of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) that responded to the Cuban government's call for Americans to travel to Cuba to work alongside ordinary Cubans in opposition to the US government's economic blockade and travel ban on the country.³⁷ Sims spent nine weeks in Cuba working in construction and touring the island.³⁸ She recalled that in Cuba "women were treated really equally," and this experience prompted her to get a high-paying job in the construction field. She recalled, "I never thought about doing construction work before this trip," but when she returned from Cuba she thought, "yeah, I can handle this."³⁹

³⁵ Kayla Blau, "Remembering Beverly Sims: A Lifelong Advocate," *South Seattle Emerald*, 4 September 2020.

³⁶ Meaning "we shall overcome" or "we shall triumph." Venceremos Brigade began in 1969 by students active in SDS to show solidarity with Cuba in protest of the US blockade. See, "About the Venceremos Brigade," <https://vb4cuba.com/about-the-venceremos-brigade/>. See also, Kavitha Iyengar, "The Venceremos Brigade: North Americans in Cuba Since 1969," *International Journal of Cuban Studies* 7:2 (Winter 2015): 236-264.

³⁷ Sandra Levinson, "The Venceremos Brigades," *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Eds. Aviva Chomsky, Barry Carr, Alfredo Prieto, Pamela Maria Smorkaloff (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019): 455-469; See also, "About the Venceremos Brigade," <https://vb4cuba.com/about-the-venceremos-brigade/>.

³⁸ Beverly Sims memo, The Beverly Sims Papers, Box 1 Folder 12 "Cuba," 1974-1975, No. 62203-001. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Seattle, WA.

³⁹ Beverly Sims interview by Nicole Grant and Trevor Griffey, 25 May 2005, Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project.

Sims entered the apprentice training program of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 46 under a 1969 court order that required the union to accept more black workers.⁴⁰ She was only the third African American woman to be accepted into the program, but after the two other women dropped out, she became the first in the state to become a licensed electrician in 1975.⁴¹ She also joined the United Construction Workers of America, founded by her husband Tyree Scott in 1970. The UCWA was a grassroots workers' organization intended to make the almost all-white unions in the construction industry take in more minority workers.⁴²

Activists like Sims infused the UCWA with a feminist analysis. Beginning in 1975, the UCWA launched its monthly news publication *No Separate Peace*, to which Sims was a frequent contributor. Long before the term “intersectionality” was popularized, the paper promoted a vision of struggle against the combined oppressions of racism, sexism, and imperialism.⁴³ Staff membership for the publication came from a broad range of organizations including the Chicano organization El Centro de la Raza, the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP), the Survival of American Indians Association, and the Seattle chapter of the American Friends Services Committee's Third World Coalition.⁴⁴ From its first issue, the newspaper promoted a message of global solidarity, writing “the primary contradiction” was “between those who will not move beyond their own community and culture, and those who see the need for unity among all

⁴⁰ Nicole Grant, “Seattle’s Electrical Workers Minority Caucus: A History,” Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project (Spring 2005).

⁴¹ Kayla Blau, “Remembering Beverly Sims: A Lifelong Advocate,” *South Seattle Emerald*, 4 September 2020.

⁴² Trevor Griffey, “Tyree Scott and the United Construction Workers Association,” Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/ucwa_history.htm

⁴³ Kayla Blau, “Remembering Beverly Sims: A Lifelong Advocate,” *South Seattle Emerald*, 4 September 2020.

⁴⁴ Michael Albert Schulze-Oechtering, “Blurring the Boundaries of Struggle: The United Construction Workers Association (UCWA) and Relational Resistance in Seattle’s Third World Left,” A Dissertation in the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of California, Berkeley, Spring 2016.

oppressed people.”⁴⁵ Thanks in large part to contributors like Sims and members of the KDP like Elaine Ko, the publication also promoted an “antiracist and antisexist analysis of women’s liberation.” For example, in its second issue, Sims and Ko co-authored a piece titled “Women in the Struggle” where they argued that “sexism, like racism” was “an evil tool of capitalism.” Women in the Global South, they claimed, suffered from a “triple-pronged oppression,” as they were simultaneously enduring racism, sexism, and capitalism.⁴⁶

During the 1980s, Sims continued her global solidarity approach to confronting issues. In 1981, she and her family moved to Mozambique for a year to work in the local community.⁴⁷ At the time, the former Portuguese colony was involved in a long and bloody civil war between the socialist Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) government and the militant rebel group Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO). This conflict was enmeshed within the larger Cold War struggle, with the Soviet Union backing the FRELIMO government and the US supporting the rebel group.⁴⁸ Sims and her husband hoped to aid organizing efforts with workers in the Global South by meeting with local community leaders and ordinary people. When she returned home, Sims shared with activists in her community the important lessons she learned overseas. For example, she spoke about how they had hoped to help ordinary laborers in Mozambique by building a machine that would make bricks from dirt. However, they soon realized that this machine was not what the community needed at all. In fact, what they needed was an irrigation system, but, as Sims recalled, “we thought we knew what they needed before

⁴⁵ “Editorial: Who We Are,” *No Separate Peace*, May 15, 1975, Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project.

⁴⁶ Beverly Sims and Elaine Ko, “Women in the Struggle,” *No Separate Peace*, 4. Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project.

⁴⁷ Beverly Sims interview by Nicole Grant and Trevor Griffey, 25 May 2005, Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project.

⁴⁸ Stephen Emerson, *Mozambican Civil War: Marxist-Apartheid Proxy, 1977-1992* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2019).

going over there and asking them.” She went on to recount how the machine they spent so much time building “has probably never been used to this day” and is likely “in some junk yard.” She reminded her fellow activists of the importance of listening to people from other countries, rather than assuming they knew what was best. “Just goes to show,” she recounted, “how problematic it is to go into a community and think you know better than the people that live there.”⁴⁹

For Sims and many US feminists at the time who wanted to build global solidarities, the preparatory work they did ahead of the international conference was just as important to fostering the growth of global feminism as the conference itself. In 1991, to draw more local Seattle women into the preparatory work ahead Beijing, Domingo, Sims and other feminists from the EveryWoman’s Delegation, including Jan Cate, Seattle feminist and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and Raging Grannies member Carolyn Canafax, and future state representative Sharon Tomiko Santos formed a coalition between the Institute for Global Security Studies (IGSS) Women’s Committee, the American Friends Service Committee, the Asia Pacific Task Force of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, the Northwest Labor and Employment Office (LELO), and WILPF to foster a series of local conferences and forums to facilitate greater networking between women’s groups in the US and the Pacific region ahead of the Beijing conference.⁵⁰ The coalition laid out eight critical areas of concern facing women world-wide, ranging from poverty and militarization to women’s legal inequality and

⁴⁹ Kayla Blau, “Remembering Beverly Sims: A Lifelong Advocate,” *South Seattle Emerald*, 4 September 2020; See also, Beverly Sims interview by Nicole Grant and Trevor Griffey, 25 May 2005, Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project.

⁵⁰ Everywoman’s Conference flyer, *The Flame* XXI:1 (February 1995), CDP, Box 6, Folder “EveryWoman’s Delegation,” Acc. No. 0561-001, SMCP.

inequality in decision-making power.⁵¹ At the same time, organizers sought to focus on specific issues facing women globally, such as sexual slavery and trafficking.⁵²

To foster greater cross-border communication and alliances ahead of Beijing, Domingo and several others from IGSS began networking with some of the women activists they knew in the Asia-Pacific region. Through those personal ties, they established the campaign, “Women of the Pacific: Confronting the Challenge,” which included conferences and forums in the US and in Asia, as well as the development of transnational connections and networks through the use of new technologies. This two-pronged effort, combining face-to-face conferences with technology was called the “Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries” project.

In September 1992, the campaign began with a conference in Seattle meant to establish a framework to discuss women’s “common struggles” across borders. Through forums, small group discussions, and keynote addresses from feminists from across the Pacific region, participants worked to establish links between women in developed and developing countries. The objective was both to make these links visible and to develop strategies for working together. Attendees identified the need for women from developed countries to do a lot of listening to and learning from their “southern sisters.” Doris Chargualaf, a Chamorro woman from Guam, shared with participants the efforts of Chamorro women to maintain their matrilineal ethos as part of their efforts to resist colonial domination. Patricia Keys, a Canadian feminist from British Columbia, offered a historical overview and analysis of how development policies have harmed women’s interests since the 1960s. She then went on to highlight the ways

⁵¹ Everywoman Delegation, “Seattle to Beijing: Bringing Home Equality, Development and Peace,” CDP, Box 6, Folder “EveryWoman’s Delegation,” Acc. No. 0561-001, SMCP.

⁵² Cindy Domingo, WILPF flyer, CDP, Box 8, Folder “Research Files: NGO Forum on Women, Beijing ’95,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

in which women in the global South were “mobilizing to have their interests heard and acted on at both the global and local levels.” US activist and professor Angela Davis echoed these themes when she urged attendees to “look outside their own borders” to find “common threads of domination and resistance.”⁵³ In this way, these feminists highlighted the importance of global perspectives in local organizing.

Through these preparatory conferences, forums, and meetings focused on dialoguing with activists overseas, Domingo and others learned a more global perspective, one that recognized their own position of global privilege. They learned to recognize global frameworks for understanding key issues like immigration, domestic violence, and labor rights. For instance, it was through these events that Domingo first learned about a recently passed domestic labor law in Canada that allowed Canadians to recruit young women from the Global South to come to Canada to work as live-in domestics, known as the Live-in Caregiver program. Under the program, foreign domestic workers were able to apply for legal residency in Canada, but only after working for their host-families for a period of 24-months. During that time period, the law afforded no legal citizenship status or protections for those workers. As such, if the employer failed to provide room and board to the worker, the worker, not the employer, would be in violation of the law and subject to deportation. While the program did grant a path to legal status, these workers were susceptible to abuse and unsafe working conditions during the 24-month waiting period.⁵⁴ By listening to feminists overseas, Domingo also learned about how free trade

⁵³ Gayle Nelson, “Conference Report: Women of the Pacific: Confronting the Challenge,” Institute for Global Security Studies newsletter, November 1992, CDP, Box 17, Folder “Research Files: Women Organizing,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁵⁴ Ethel Tungohan, “Debunking Notions of Migrant ‘Victimhood’: A Critical Assessment of Temporary Labour Migration Programs and Filipina Migrant Activism in Canada,” in *Filipinos in Canada: Disturbing Invisibility*. Eds. by Roland Sintos Coloma, Bonnie McElhinny, Ethel Tungohan, John Paul C. Catungal and Lisa M. Davidson. University of Toronto Press, 2012.

and privatization forced women in poor countries to migrate to wealthy nations like Canada to find work. Once in those countries, those women remained extremely vulnerable and lacked legal rights and protections. Through this work, Domingo and others on the delegation formed an alliance with activists working with Filipina domestic workers at the Philippine Women's Center (PWC) in Vancouver, BC.⁵⁵

To educate more US feminists about what they learned and to help foster transnational feminist organizing, Domingo and others at IGSS employed a second track of the "Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries" campaign that focused on adapting old and new technologies to draw feminists closer together ahead of the Beijing conference. The Beijing conference occurred on the eve of the digital revolution and feminists used the internet as a tool that built upon long-standing feminist practices that sought to counter mainstream media portrayals by producing their own news and communications.⁵⁶ Since the 1980s, activist women from around the world used new technologies like the internet to create their own media and information portals. These networks included FEMNET and TAMWA in Africa, ISIS International in Asia, FEMPRESS in Latin America and the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action in the Caribbean. In the late 1980s, these trends towards technological connectivity continued, as feminists created linked computer networks such as Geonet, Worknet, Fidonet, Econet, Greenet, Labornet, and Peacenet.⁵⁷

In 1990, to support this growing global communication network, activists formed the Association of Progressive Communications (APC), which provided cheap internet access to

⁵⁵ Women's Advisory Committee Meeting minutes, Institute for Global Security Studies, 10 February 1993, CDP, Box 17, Folder "Research Files: Voices of Working Women," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁵⁶ Lisa Levenstein, *They Didn't See Us Coming: The Hidden History of Feminism in the Nineties* (Basic Books: New York, 2020). 72-74.

⁵⁷ Levenstein, 233-5.

organizations around the world, drastically extending the spatial reach of political organizing. In 1992, the transnational feminist organization Development Alternatives with Women of the New Era (DAWN) based in the Caribbean, held The Women's Media Workshop in Barbados, which served to draw these developing regional women's communications networks closer together. The goal of the workshop was to build a network of communicators in the global South to disseminate DAWN's research and analysis throughout the region and to allow for greater interaction between grassroots activists and DAWN's work. During four days of "personal, professional and technical interactions," participants in the 1992 workshop identified the need for groups to raise money to buy necessary equipment to foster greater communication, like fax machines, as well as for trainings for women on the use of technology. Participants also identified specific targets for cross-border collaboration, including global institutions such as the UN, World Bank, IMF, and the corporate media around which they could focus their coalition-building activities.⁵⁸

Most importantly, participants at the workshop founded a Fax Information Exchange, named WOMENET, which was designed as a communication network connecting women's groups in different regions around the world using fax machines to share information. WOMENET relied on regional "hubs," where individuals with a fax machine would share information and communications to those without.⁵⁹ By creating a pre-made form for different activists around the world to fill out and then fax to the entire network, they were able to set up a system of communication that allowed for these different groups to inform one another on what they were doing. Those who received the faxes were then expected to share the information with

⁵⁸ DAWN, 1992, "DAWN Facilitates Women's Media Networks," *DAWN Informs* (January 1992). <https://dawnnet.org/publication/dawn-informs-january-1992/>.

⁵⁹ Kidd, "Which would you rather," 52.

other groups and individuals. For those groups that could not afford the expense of sending a monthly fax to multiple recipients, the International Women's Tribune Center offered to send the faxes on their behalf. DAWN also provided fax machines free of charge for participants.⁶⁰ By 1995, WOMENET grew to include 28 fax machine information portals, mainly in countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.⁶¹

During the early 1990s, feminists expanded their use of the internet as a tool of social change and global communication network, creating the Women's Network Support Programme (WNSP) of the Association for Progressive Communication (APC), a global computer network used to facilitate the creation of an online public sphere based in the Global South and Eastern Europe. In particular, the WNSP advocated for the internet as an "open network of networks" for feminist activists preparing for the 1995 Beijing women's conference. In addition to giving out free email accounts, the WNSP shared information through a combination of new technologies like email and older ones like fax machines, radio, newspapers, and mail. Audience responses were then shared with activists at face-to-face preparatory meetings, giving them a sense of the concerns and issues women who were not able to participate themselves were experiencing, helping to create what Political scientist and Latin American studies scholar Elisabeth Jay Friedman calls a "global town hall."⁶² To foster a truly "global experience" at the Beijing conference, WNSP created news groups and discussion forums around specific issues facing women, such as health, violence, labor, and the environment. Feminists in WNSP also held workshops and forums both preceding and during the Beijing conference to teach technological

⁶⁰ Levenstein. 234.

⁶¹ Levenstein, 233.

⁶² Elisabeth Jay Friedman, "The Creation of "a Modern Weaving Machine": Bringing Feminist Counter-publics Online," *Interpreting the Internet: Feminist and Queer Counterpublics in Latin America* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2017) 80.

skills to women.⁶³ Feminist activists in WNSP helped develop and promote a “modern weaving machine,” which used old and new technologies to foster collaboration, communication, and dialogue between women’s organizations around the world.

Ensuring equality in access to new technologies required concerted efforts of individuals. Feminists were often the key pioneers of these intentional strategies of using technology in ways to reach more people. Friedman argues that feminists were the most successful activists to use the internet to overcome internal divisions and hierarchies. They created what Friedman terms “chains of access,” wherein people with internet access communicate with non-internet users through face-to-face meetings, mail, newspapers and radio. Many of these feminist groups also offered teach-ins and workshops specifically for training women on the use of technology.⁶⁴ The combination of old and new technologies enabled feminists in the 1990s to use the internet as a means to foster a global justice movement rooted in ideas and analyses in the global south.⁶⁵

Concerns about affordability and access, especially for women in poor countries, prompted Seattle feminists to combine new technologies like computers and the internet with older ones like fax machines and radios. Technological networking and information sharing supported and bolstered face-to-face meetings and conferences. For instance, in addition to conferences and workshops, Seattle feminist Cindy Domingo and the IGSS coalition’s project “Women of the Pacific: Confronting the Challenge” included a second track of their Beijing preparation that emphasized the use of technology to facilitate greater communication and collaboration between women around the world. The “Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries

⁶³ Friedman, 83.

⁶⁴ Elisabeth Jay Friedman, “The Reality of Virtual Reality: The Internet and Gender Equality Advocacy,” *Latin American Politics and Society*, 47:3 (Autumn, 2005): 1-34, 15.

⁶⁵ Friedman, 12.

Project” was part of an attempt to create a women’s “multi-media, multi-cultural Pacific community” using a wide variety of communication tools, such as virtual conferencing, videos, radios, computers, and fax machines.⁶⁶ These activists saw new technologies as a way to draw women together while still leaving them embedded in their own communities.⁶⁷ They promoted the “creative use” of various electronic media, like computers, video cameras, radio, and satellite links as “ways of crossing borders, crossing boundaries while maintaining close ties with all the cycles we nurture and which nurture us.”⁶⁸ The project built on the UN Decade for Women’s theme “Equality, Development and Peace” as a unifying concept as “broad as the ocean itself” that offered a rich vision and direction for women in preparation for the 1995 conference in Beijing.⁶⁹

At home, IGSS activists worked to get people in their home communities’ access to computers and the internet. Using money received from WILPF, IGSS donated computers to the community center El Centro de la Raza and paid the monthly subscription for PeaceNet, an early computer network designed to support activists working to promote peace and de-militarization. In addition, they set up workshops to train people on the use of the internet.⁷⁰

Globally, these Seattle feminists also worked to use technology to foster coalition-building and information sharing. White Seattle feminist Carolyn Canafax shared with IGSS a pamphlet from the Asia Pacific Research Center for Women (ARROW), which spelled out that organization’s efforts to compile a database of women’s organizations in the Pacific region and

⁶⁶ “Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries,” CDP, Box 17, Folder “Research Files: Voices of Working Women,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Gayle Nelson, “Women of the Pacific: Confronting the Challenge,” Conference Report, November 1992, CDP, Box 17, Folder “Research Files: Voices of Working Women,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP

the issues they were working on. Canafax urged IGSS to join these efforts and worked with the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada and the Women's Media Circle Foundation of the Philippines to help add to this database. In addition, IGSS donated fax machines and video cameras to NGOs working to document human rights violations around the world.⁷¹ They opted for the use of satellite hook-ups as a way to connect with activists overseas because that is what their contacts in the Pacific Islands were already using. They also used fax machines, radio, and video journaling to dialogue and share their perspectives and experiences and learn from other women around the world.⁷²

Domingo and others working on the "Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries" project also publicized and promoted the Costa Rican-based Feminist International Radio Endeavour (FIRE), a communication and technology project produced by Latin American women living in Costa Rica with the goal of promoting information and analyses from women's perspectives, with an emphasis on women living in the global South.⁷³ It was the first feminist internet radio program and was also available via shortwave broadcast.⁷⁴ The project sought to strengthen feminist communications locally and globally and offered training in the use of radio, the internet, and other forms of media.⁷⁵ As a technology, radio was one of the most widely accessible mediums available in the Global South. It was cheap, did not require literacy to understand, and was easy to operate and acquire. Founded in 1991, FIRE broadcast a two-hour

⁷¹ "Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries," CDP, Box 17, Folder "Research Files: Voices of Working Women," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁷² "Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries," CDP, Box 17, Folder "Research Files: Voices of Working Women," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁷³ Women's Advisory Committee Meeting, Institute for Global Security Studies, 10 February 1993, CDP, Box 17, Folder "Research Files: Voices of Working Women," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Feminist International Radio Endeavor (FIRE), "Beijing Activities," *affection.org* (1995).
<http://www.affection.org/sante/asvc/www.igc.apc.org/womensnet/beijing/news/fire.html>

daily program, one in Spanish and the other in English, and continued to add programming in other languages, including Portuguese, French, and Creole using the short-wave radio station Radio for Peace International (RFPI) that broadcast to over 100 different countries world-wide. Each daily broadcast focused on diverse themes from a gender perspective, including structural adjustment, the environment, racism, militarization, sexuality, education, and art. The goal of FIRE was to use shortwave radio to carry a diverse range of women's voices to the international community, "crossing barriers of nationality, culture, race, geography, and language."⁷⁶

Radio FIRE called on women worldwide to send in their own media stories. In addition, FIRE workers offered training on how to record and produce radio segments, as well as sent out microphones, cassette tapes and other recording equipment to women who could not afford them.⁷⁷ In this way, Radio FIRE helped foster feminist communication, particularly in the Global South. Radio FIRE combined their own locally produced media and telephone interviews with women worldwide together with mailed in recorded segments from other women and recordings from regional and international conferences, such as the 1995 UN conference in Beijing. FIRE worker Nancy Vargas emphasized the need for women's voices to relate their own stories of survival, stating, "It is unacceptable and immoral that we women, the poorest of the poor, have to bear the burden of neoliberal policies and structural adjustment policies." To fight against these immoral programs, Vargas called on women to use their own personal stories and perspectives and to share them with the world.⁷⁸ FIRE implemented a "boomerang strategy," wherein women

⁷⁶ Maria Toro Suarez. *Women's Voices on Fire: Feminist International Radio Endeavour*. Boston, MA.: Anomaly Publications, 2001. 12.

⁷⁷ "Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries: Weaving the Net," CDP, Box 17, Folder "Research Files: Voices of Working Women," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁷⁸ Suárez Toro, 2000, 58-59.

could use media to further the sharing of personal experiences, stories, and ideas.⁷⁹ FIRE urged women from around the world to produce and submit their own radio content for broadcasting. The organization offered simple instructions on the use of a video recorder and microphone to create a tape to mail to the organization to broadcast. They also created kits that included a tape recorder, blank cassette tapes, and microphones to distribute to women's organizations around the world to be able to share their stories and concerns.⁸⁰

Domingo and other EveryWoman delegates to Beijing, including Jan Cate, Inez D. Allen and Joanne Staples Baum, worked in the Pacific Northwest on other projects in preparation for Beijing that combined technologies to foster women's collaboration across borders and bolster international conferences. In February 1995, over 2,000 participants from all over the world, including Africa, India, Egypt, and Taiwan, attended the three-day Northwest International Women's Conference, "Women's Leadership: Toward a Balanced Society" in Seattle. Ten similar conferences were taking place in different parts of the US that same weekend in February to foster women's leadership and organizing ahead of Beijing. The format of the conference in Seattle included round table discussions, participant response, entertainment as well as presentations from international women leaders. One of the speakers was Maya Angelou, who read her poem "Phenomenally Woman." Other speakers included prominent activists like the founder of the Children's Defense Fund Marian Wright Edelman, Nobel Peace prize winner

⁷⁹ Heather Gies and Cyril Mychalejko, "'The Capacity not to Stop Dreaming': An Interview with María Suárez Toro," *Upside Down World*, 19 April 2013. <http://upsidedownworld.org/archives/international/the-capacity-not-to-stop-dreaming-an-interview-with-maria-suarez-toro/>.

⁸⁰ "Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries: Weaving the Net," CDP, Box 17, Folder "Research Files: Voices of Working Women," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

Mairead Corrigan Maguire from Ireland and Thailand's first female cabinet minister Supatra Masdit.⁸¹

EveryWoman delegates like Cindy Domingo and Jan Cate hoped the conference would not only establish a platform emphasizing women in leadership, but also to serve as a model activists could replicate elsewhere. They held weekly planning meetings in Seattle to design a conference that would “spark a real network of women’s groups across the spectrum of age, race, interests and etc.” Domingo and others emphasized in the planning meetings the importance of inviting international participants and speakers, as one organizer argued, “As the world shrinks, we feel a need to connect with those around the globe who hold the same values and are incorporating them into their work and community.”⁸² This conference epitomized the rise in “glocal” feminist organizing in the US over the course of the 1990s.

To help build a network of women’s groups, local planners of the conference worked to create an “education, leadership and communications infrastructure,” which would combine face to face meetings and conferences, older communication technologies like fax machines and radios, and new ones like internet websites, list servs and email. To foster women’s use of these new technologies, planners recognized the need for women to receive training. Organizers included a “Virtual Village” workshop, where volunteers would help participants use the internet. These volunteers taught workshops on using new feminist online networks like Radio FIRE, PeaceNet, Women’s Wire and the Seattle Community Network. These workshops were specifically designed for women who had never used a computer and emphasized the various

⁸¹ Northwest International Women’s Conference program, “Women’s Leadership: Toward a Balanced Society,” February 1995, Seattle, WA. CDP, Box 17, Folder, “Research Files: Voices of Working Women,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁸² Ibid.

ways women could connect to one another online. Alongside the “Virtual Village” was a forum led by Trudy and Peter Johnson-Lenz called “Bringing Heart and Spirit Into Electronic Networks.” The forum demonstrated the ways in which women could learn about women’s experiences worldwide online by, as one organizer explained, “bringing women’s transformational values into online activities and to hear stories about work in this area.”⁸³

Like IGSS, other Seattle feminists were also inspired by Beijing preparation to adapt and further the use of technology in women’s organizing. In the months leading up to Beijing, six Seattle feminists, including Lorraine Pozzi of the Seattle Community Network and Jessie Walker, realized there was a need for a local Seattle conference ahead of Beijing. On August 24-27, they held a weekend retreat called BaseCamp Seattle at Seattle University, that included all the members of the EveryWoman Delegation, to establish solidarity between the members and prepare for their work at Beijing. The conference-like retreat included over 50 workshops and among the many speakers was the University of Washington’s Women’s Center’s president Sutapa Basu. The event also included a Young Woman’s Forum, who marched to celebrate the 75th anniversary of women’s voting rights. The weekend-long meeting combined political presentations and workshops with those focused on the use of technology to network and to help listen to marginalized voices. Recognizing that many local Seattleites could not afford to go to Beijing, admission to this conference was inexpensive, and free for volunteers.⁸⁴

To prepare for the retreat, BaseCamp Seattle created a website devoted to sharing information for the Beijing conference and for the conferences and workshops in Seattle

⁸³ “Visit the Virtual Village” flyer, CDP, Box 17, Folder “Research Files: International Women’s Conference-1995,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁸⁴ Patricia Quan, “Seattle Delegates at Women’s Conference,” Northwest Asian Weekly, 1995, CDP, Box 7, Folder “Everywoman’s Delegation,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

proceeding the Beijing events as well as upcoming international conferences like the 1996 Habitat II meeting in Istanbul. They continued to add new links and information to the website in the years following. What began as a tool for sharing information for a specific conference, transformed into what co-founder Jesse Walker called a “communication tool for women, and men, concerned about issues affecting women and children, particularly those having an international scope.”⁸⁵ The BaseCamp Seattle homepage provided information and links surrounding issues concerning women world-wide and included links to other local organizations such as the King County Women’s Advisory Board, Sustainable Seattle, and the Women’s Homeless Network. While BaseCamp began as a “grassroots gateway” for Seattle-based feminists interested in the Beijing conference, through networking and collaboration with local Seattle-based technology organizations like WomensNet and The Seattle Community Network, BaseCamp Seattle became an online community, discussion forum, information hub as well as an in-person series of workshops, forums and conferences.⁸⁶ At the conference in Beijing, BaseCamp hosted internet workshops and online discussions related to the twelve “critical areas of concern” for women as laid out in official UN documents. The group continued hosting conferences and workshops following Beijing, with the organization’s website growing dramatically from 700 users in 1994 to over 13,000 by 1997. Several of the founders of the BaseCamp website were also founders of the Independent Media Center in Seattle during the 1999 WTO protests.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Jesse Walker, “Transforming Words Into Action: Building Community for the 21st Century,” flyer, CDP, Box 6, Folder “Beijing and Back,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁸⁶ David Silver, “The Soil of Cyberspace: Historical Archaeologies of the Blacksburg Electronic Village and the Seattle Community Network,” *In Shaping the Network Society: The New Role of Civil Society in Cyberspace*, eds. Douglas Schuler and Peter Day (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004).

⁸⁷ Silver, 321.

The September 1995 United Nation’s Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing was the largest international gathering of women in world history. The official conference drew 17,000 participants from 189 countries.⁸⁸ The parallel NGO Women’s Forum held in Huairou, 35 miles outside the city, included 30,000 participants who attended a variety of forums, tents, panels, and plenary sessions on issues including poverty, education, health, violence, militarization and economic development, religious fundamentalism, racism, and homophobia. The over 8,000 activists from the US who attended were the most racially diverse group of US activists to ever attend a women’s conference. These activists worked on a range of issues, including health, the environment, immigrant rights, labor rights, welfare rights, disability rights, human rights and homelessness.⁸⁹ The conference afforded them new opportunities to use the internet in their activism, build networks across borders and exposed them to new frameworks and analyses for understanding feminist issues, especially from feminists in the global south who emphasized the devastating effects of US-supported global neoliberal policies. These analyses helped US feminists think of their struggles within a global framework.⁹⁰

Significantly for the many US activists in attendance, the majority of the experts at the forum were Asian, African or Latin American, who offered their critiques about the devastation of global capitalism. For many US women, it was the first time they learned about neoliberal policies like structural adjustment and the institutions that enforced them like the IMF and World Bank. These analyses altered their understanding of globalization and neoliberalism, and in

⁸⁸ Lisa Levenstein, “Faxing Feminism: the Global Women’s Movement and the 1995 Controversy over Huairou,” *Global Social Policy*, 14:2 (2014), 228-243, 230.

⁸⁹ Lisa Levenstein, “A Social Movement for a Global Age: U.S. Feminism and the Beijing Women’s Conference of 1995,” *Journal of American History* 105:2 (September 2018): 336-365. 340.

⁹⁰ Levenstein, 342.

particular, forced them to recognize the role of the US government in promoting these policies.⁹¹ As Grace Chang, a US woman of color participant explained, “Women as members of the US women of color delegation were humbled by our Third World sisters who danced circles around us in their analyses and first-hand knowledge of global economic restructuring and its impact.”⁹² Seattle feminist Cindy Domingo echoed these sentiments, recalling how the speeches, workshops and events were “transformative” for her personally and for the US women’s movement writ large, as these global south activists “gave new meaning to the women’s movement” and they left China dedicated “to building a women’s movement that understood that ‘women’s rights were human rights’ and ‘human rights were women’s rights.’” Witnessing a coming together of women from 189 countries who worked across racial, national, and cultural lines to build an international women’s movement⁹³ left an “indelible imprint” by offering a “glimpse of what was possible.”⁹⁴ Prior to Beijing, Domingo focused her activities on empowering Filipino migrant workers in the Seattle area. Having experienced little sexism in her activist career, she was not focused on women’s issues in particular. After leaving the conference, she dedicated herself to the “liberation of women,” a theme which underlaid the many diverse issues Domingo engaged with in the following decades.⁹⁵

Through the Beijing conference on women and her preparations for it, Seattle feminist Cindy Domingo learned about the vast consequences of NAFTA for women in the Global South.

⁹¹ Levenstein, 355-356.

⁹² Grace Chang, “From the Third World to the ‘Third World Within’: Asian Women Workers Fighting Globalization,” *Labor Versus Empire: Race, Gender, Migration*, Gilbert Gonzalez et al, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004) 196.

⁹³ Cindy Domingo, “Opinion: API women’s voices must not be marginalized,” *International Examiner*, 7 February 2017. <https://iexaminer.org/opinion-api-womens-voices-must-not-be-marginalized/>.

⁹⁴ Cindy Domingo, “Opinion: API women’s voices must not be marginalized,” *International Examiner*, 7 February 2017. <https://iexaminer.org/opinion-api-womens-voices-must-not-be-marginalized/>.

⁹⁵ Devin Israel Cabanilla, “Cindy Domingo honored as a Woman of Courage” *International Examiner*, 25 March 2018. <https://iexaminer.org/cindy-domingo-honored-as-a-woman-of-courage/>.

She then worked to share those international connections with other feminists and activists in Seattle. For instance, at a 1993 event commemorating International Women's Day, Domingo gave a speech adding a global perspective to the theme of "all women are working women." First, Domingo commemorated the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire in which 146 workers, mostly women were killed. Then, she connected that tragedy to the 1991 fire at Imperial Food Products Chicken Processing plant in Hamlet, NC where 25 mostly female workers were killed. In both cases, these deaths were the result of employer's attempts to control the movements of workers and failures of employers to maintain proper worker safety standards. At the same time, Domingo added a global dimension to her analysis of worker exploitation in the name of corporate profits. Just as feminists have long analyzed women's "double burden" of productive and reproductive labor, Domingo pointed out that the global economy was likewise bifurcated, as the global economic system relied on women's unpaid labor to underpin the accumulation of capital. In this way, Domingo explained that women's double burden increased doubly under NAFTA, particularly for women in Mexico. At the event, Domingo criticized NAFTA, arguing its only goal was to increase US corporate profits by eliminating tariffs and other restrictions on growth, which may be policies that are good for businesses in rich countries, who get access to cheap labor and resources, but are bad for workers in poorer countries like Mexico, where workers got lower wages, less protections, and the debt-ridden country was forced into austerity measures that combined with continued inflation, increased the nation's debt. Domingo reminded her audience, "our Chicana sisters are especially hard-hit" by these policies, because they are the ones who must work harder to provide families with food, housing, health care and

other necessities for survival.⁹⁶ For example, Domingo explained how economic policies supposedly aimed at making hospitals more “efficient” required the shortening of hospital stays for all patients. As a result, it was largely women who served as caregivers in the home in place of hospital care.

Domingo particularly focused on educating women in the US of their own position of privilege vis-a-vis women living in the Global South. Once she learned about the impacts of neoliberal free-trade policies like NAFTA on women around the world, she expanded her analysis and understanding of power relations and patriarchy to a global framework, which identified other relations of inequality, like those between women from rich and poor countries. In the years following, Domingo called on women living in wealthy nations like the US to work to transform existing power relations that served to oppress women generally because women in privileged countries had more opportunities to do so. She urged women in wealthy nations to commit to three actions. First, to push the US government to ratify the 1981 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Equal Rights Amendment. Secondly, she urged them to “join hands with our sisters in developing nations” to recognize that “sisterhood is global” and that “their oppression is our oppression.” In particular, she urged women to participate in upcoming UN conferences such as the 1995 women’s conference in Beijing where she urged women in the US to work to “build bridges” of communication and cooperation with women around the world and to place women’s interests at the center of the agenda for these conferences. Lastly, she urged women in the US to commit in

⁹⁶ Cindy Doming, “International Women’s Day Celebration with Hazel Wolf,” CDP, Box 18 Folder “International Women’s Day” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

their own lives, through their own daily interactions and practices, to recognize and change their role in silencing and marginalizing the voices of women from the so-called “Third World.”⁹⁷

For other Seattle feminists, international conferences put on by the Filipina feminist organization GABRIELA proved key. In January 1999, Seattle feminist and WTO organizer Lydia Cabasco attended a GABRIELA conference in the Philippines dedicated to the issue of sex-trafficking. GABRIELA was an alliance of over 200 grassroots organizations throughout the Philippines, with other chapters in Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Laos. Founded in 1984, GABRIELA organized and educated Filipinas, provided services such as counseling, free clinics, disaster relief, and trainings on women’s health and political rights. GABRIELA also worked since its founding to build networks with women’s organizations around the world.⁹⁸

Cabasco directly tied her activism against the WTO to her research and knowledge from the conference in the Philippines and a forum she attended that same year at the Philippine Women’s Center of Vancouver, BC, where she heard Philippine feminist Ninotchka Rosca, founder of GabNet, a US-based network in support of GABRIELA, speak. Ninotchka Rosca was a writer and activist from the Philippines and a former political prisoner under Ferdinand Marcos. Rosca helped draft powerful statements regarding women’s rights for the 1995 Beijing conference. Much of Rosca’s activism was focused on the prostitution and sex-trafficking of Philippine women.⁹⁹ Rosca was influential in gaining widespread international recognition

⁹⁷ Cindy Doming, “International Women’s Day Celebration with Hazel Wolf,” CDP, Box 18 Folder “International Women’s Day” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁹⁸ Ligaya Lindio-McGovern, *Filipino Peasant Women: Exploitation and Resistance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); See also, <https://www.onebillionrising.org/41139/gabriela-national-alliance-of-filipino-women-southeast-asia-philippines-indonesia-thailand-vietnam-singapore-malaysia-cambodia-laos/>.

⁹⁹ Meghan Murphy, Podcast: “Ninotchka Rosca on intersectionality, the Philippine women’s movement, and the future of feminism.” *Feminist Current*. 24 August 2017. <http://www.feministcurrent.com/2017/08/24/podcast-ninotchka-rosca-intersectionality-philippine-womens-movement-future-feminism/>.

among feminists about the far-reaching consequences of free trade policies. Her work helped feminists in Seattle, like Lydia Cabasco, to develop an analysis that linked issues such as international free trade agreements, the tourist industry, militarization, and the sex trafficking of women. Cabasco recalled of Rosca's speech on sex-trafficking, "She had tied the IMF and GATT (a precursor to the WTO) into the sex trade coming out of the Philippines . . . Hearing her analysis . . . prompted me to get involved."¹⁰⁰ Through interactions with women from the Global South such as these, Cabasco and others began to see sex trafficking more broadly, as not just an issue for Filipino women, but rather a global, interconnected problem influenced by militarization, global inequality, patriarchy, and colonialism. Rather than an isolated problem, activists like Cabasco learned from their Global South counterparts to see the issue as part of a larger pattern of global inequality where rich nations exploit poor ones. They drew on such analyses when it came time to organize against the WTO.

During her research to prepare and at the conference itself, Cabasco began to make the connections between sex-trafficking, free trade policies and a whole host of broader issues including the environment, labor, migration, sexual violence and more. She began to ask why women were leaving countries like the Philippines and why were they going to rich countries in Europe and the US.¹⁰¹ She learned how IMF-imposed structural adjustment policies in the Philippines resulted in the expansion of the mining industry, which used dangerous chemicals that were harmful to local people and the environment. Furthermore, indigenous lands once used for subsistence agriculture were privatized and transformed into agri-businesses for export crops, mines or for the tourist industry. For women, these changes meant a "loss of their traditional way

¹⁰⁰ Lydia Cabasco interview by Monica Ghosh, 15 August 2000, transcript, WTO Oral History Project, Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, University of Washington, Seattle, WA (hereafter OHP).

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

of life, as food gatherers, water providers and caregivers.” Cabasco also learned how tensions these policies created within families also led to an increase in domestic violence. As a result of the abject poverty in the countryside, women were forced to migrate to export-processing zones, to cities to work in the tourist industry, or overseas as domestic workers. Presenters at the conference also emphasized the role of the WTO, by demonstrating how women forced to migrate in search of work were left with low-paid and unsafe jobs because, as Cabasco explained, “labor standards are considered trade barriers to the WTO.” Cabasco recognized that institutions like the IMF and WTO viewed women as another “exploitable natural resource.”¹⁰² In this way, Cabasco learned to see the sex-trafficking of Filipina women as embedded in a framework of global free trade.

At the Vancouver Philippine Women’s Center, Cabasco learned about Rosca’s tri-fold analysis of the causes and consequences of the global sex trade.¹⁰³ First, Rosca directly tied this growing industry to the labor export policies of first the Marcos dictatorship, and then the presidencies of Corazon Aquino (1986-1992) and Fidel Ramos (1992-1998) that followed. Rosca criticized these economic policies that exported unemployed Filipinos to work in other countries. She then connected this labor export policy to the island nation’s legacy of colonialism, stating, “When you’ve sold your land and resources, what’s left to sell? People.”¹⁰⁴ In 1994 alone, 340,000 Filipinos were exported to work abroad. Increasingly, women were a growing majority of those workers. Rosca highlighted how free trade agreements in the Philippines created export-

¹⁰² Lydia Cabasco, “Read Between The Lines: The WTOs Negative Effects on Women,” *Lesbian Resource Center News*. October 1999, 6. In author’s possession.

¹⁰³ As of 2017, GabNet has morphed into AF3IRM, a transnational feminist organization. The group held an international summit on the 21st of October 2019 in NYC to discuss “the foundational ideals of American feminism” and drew on the history and ideas of native American societies on this continent, especially the Iroquois, and shows their influence on American feminism.

¹⁰⁴ Esther “Little Dove” John, “Women in the Philippines: Ninotchka Rosca Speaks,” *Northwest Asian Weekly*, 17 February 1998, CDP, Box 7, Folder “Research Files: Gabriela,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

processing zones, industrial areas with no environmental or labor protections. While some Filipina women were forced to migrate as their lands were privatized, others lost their livelihood in the face of the dramatic influx of cheap foreign goods. With few viable options, many women from the countryside migrated to EPZs in the cities to find work. As women, these workers were viewed as more docile, more easily controlled and therefore women made up over 70 percent of the EPZ workforce by 1996. The combination of these women's low-status and meager wages made them more vulnerable to sexual traffickers and predators. Lastly, Rosca implicated global economic policies and the tourism industry for fueling the sex trafficking of Filipino women. According to Rosca, the IMF and World Bank promoted the tourism industry in indebted nations like the Philippines as a short-term solution to the debt crisis. The increased travel to the country only served to fuel the sex-trafficking of Filipino women, who were made more vulnerable as a direct result of free trade policies.¹⁰⁵

Rosca explained how the mail-order-bride industry was also tied to the sex-trafficking of Filipina women. The modern mail-order-bride industry flourished in the 1990s, with for-profit "mail order bride agencies" in "import" countries like the US purchasing women from "export" countries like the Philippines as commodities. The industry depended on power imbalances between men and women and between nations, with little government oversight or regulation, as these transactions were not recognized as a form of sex-trafficking. Mail-order bride agencies relied on western male exoticization and stereotypes of Asian women as docile and submissive. With few laws to protect them, once brought to the US, these women were extremely vulnerable

¹⁰⁵ Esther "Little Dove" John, "Women in the Philippines: Ninotchka Rosca Speaks," *Northwest Asian Weekly*, 17 February 1998, CDP, Box 7, Folder "Research Files: Gabriela," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

to a range of abuses and exploitation.¹⁰⁶ The same year of the conference, GABRIELA established a branch in Western Washington State to provide resources to Filipino women caught up in this industry.¹⁰⁷

Through international conferences like the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing, Seattle feminists learned about the importance of cross-border activism. They also learned an analysis of women's issues that highlighted connections between once seemingly disparate problems ranging from the environment, economic inequality, militarization, sexual violence, patriarchy, colonialism, and political oppression. In subsequent years, many took these lessons they learned through their overseas networking and applied them back home. They worked in their own communities to encourage more US feminists (and activists more broadly) to join the emerging Global Justice Movement and to ensure that the movement included feminist analyses.

¹⁰⁶ Kathryn A. Lloyd, "Wives for Sale: The Modern International Mail-Order Bride Industry," *Northwestern Journal of International Law and Business*, 20:2 (Winter 2000): 341-368.

¹⁰⁷ Esther "Little Dove" John, "Women in the Philippines: Ninotchka Rosca Speaks," *Northwest Asian Weekly*, 17 February 1998, CDP, Box 7, Folder "Research Files: Gabriela," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

CHAPTER III: BRINGING BEIJING BACK HOME

Seattle feminists who attended international conferences in the 1990s like the UN women's conference in Beijing returned to the US committed towards increasing US feminist activism across borders. Using the analysis of free trade policies and the global economic framework they learned about from their counterparts in the Global South, they worked in the US to demonstrate to activists there why the local issues they were working on were global ones. First through "Beijing and Back" campaigns and later by holding their own international and regional conferences, these feminists endeavored to increase US activist engagement with global issues and movements. They promoted gendered analyses of free trade that emphasized the common struggles of people in the US and overseas as well as the responsibilities and privileges of people living in wealthy nations for their part in the suffering of people in poor nations.

Over the course of the 1990s, transnational feminist activism in Seattle increased because of the efforts of several key locals. Seattle feminists held a series of international, regional, and local conferences and used new technologies to facilitate activism across borders. They helped foster increased "glocal" feminist organizing in the US and pushed to educate other feminists about the devastation of free trade policies on women around the world and at home. They worked through popular education to highlight the connections between the struggles of people around the world and those living in Seattle. As a result of their efforts, when the WTO came to Seattle, they were ready to engage. By the end of the 1990s, women's groups in the US critiqued and organized against Multinational Corporations, the IMF and World Bank, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, the WTO, and US free trade policies as part of the larger Global

Justice Movement.¹ The marginalization of women in the US, Canada, and Mexico under NAFTA served as “common ground” for women from diverse backgrounds to converse together over international economic issues.² By 1999, national feminist organizations like the National Organization of Women (NOW), the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF) and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) were poised and ready to join organizing efforts to oppose the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting. As this case study of Seattle feminists demonstrates, this changing orientation of US feminism was largely the result of the concerted efforts of individual feminists to make global issues salient at the local level.

Neo-Isolationism in the 1990s

When feminists who returned home from the 1995 women’s conference in Beijing to Seattle armed with new ideas about international solidarity and global justice, they were met with an increasingly isolationist leaning US public. The end of the Cold War signified an end to a long vaunted American ideal that its exceptionalism justified, and even required, the US to intervene overseas to “make the world a better place.” During the Cold War, there were clear enemies and allies in a battle between good and evil, of freedom and democracy versus tyranny and oppression. With the 1991 collapse of the Berlin Wall, the US entered murkier waters. These changes altered the US public’s views on America’s role in the world, and for many, prompted them to turn inwards.³ In 1991, such neo-isolationist sentiments prompted President Bush to halt the military’s advance during the Gulf War upon the liberation of Kuwait, against the advice of military commanders who wanted to press onwards into Iraq and defeat Saddam Hussein. During

¹ Valentine M. Moghadam, *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks* (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, Maryland, 2005),12.

² Liebowitz, Debra J. “Constructing Cooperation: Feminist Activism and NAFTA,” in *Feminist Locations: Global and Local, Theory and Practice*, edited by Marianne DeKoven, (New Jersey: Rutgers, 2001), 168-90, 170.

³ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011), 21.

the presidential primary campaign of 1992, critics of Bush like Republican Presidential candidate and conservative commentator Pat Buchanan charged too much time and energy was spent on international issues. Buchanan declared that Bush was running for “President of the world” instead of President of the United States.⁴

It was not just conservatives making these arguments. In the early 1990s, neo-isolationism spanned the political spectrum. Would be Democratic Presidential contenders like Senator Tom Harkin argued that spending on foreign aid would be better used at home and proposed to cut defense spending in half over a ten-year period. Likewise, former California Governor Jerry Brown stated during the 1992 Democratic presidential primaries that if he were elected, he “would not give a penny for foreign aid until every farmer, businessman and family were taken care of” in the US. Independent Presidential candidate Ross Perot echoed these attitudes when he charged that “free-riding” allies of the US like Germany and Japan should pay “\$50 billion each” for the US troops stationed in their countries.⁵ Throughout the primary campaign, Buchanan and Democrat Jerry Brown opposed the war in Iraq, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and spending US dollars on international aid. The winner of the presidential election, Democrat Bill Clinton pledged to “restructure our military forces for a new era . . . work with our allies to encourage the spread and consolidation of democracy abroad,” and “re-establish America’s economic leadership at home and in the world.”⁶ However, the

⁴ Irina Somerton, “America’s Post-Cold War Ambivalence About Foreign Entanglements has Roots in a History of Isolationism that Dates to Before George Washington’s Times,” LSE US Foreign Policy Conference, “Power Shifts: Perspectives on US Foreign Policy,” 17-19 September 2014. 18

⁵ Somerton, 45.

⁶ William J. Clinton, “A New Covenant for American Security,” speech at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, December 12, 1991, in James D. Boys, *Clinton’s Grand Strategy: US Foreign Policy in a Post-Cold War World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 17-21.

isolationist positions of so many candidates revealed significant skepticism about US involvement in the affairs of other nations.⁷

By the early 1990s, signs of globalization were more apparent and leaders who advocated for people in the US to get involved in international events and issues such as humanitarian missions in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Haiti and the Sudan or global economic concerns such as the 1995 devaluation of the Mexican peso were met with political scientist John Dumbrell described an American public who increasingly thought “too much world, not enough America.”⁸

Debates over the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) revealed the nationalistic character of globalization’s main opponents. For instance, in a 1993 *Washington Post* opinion piece a week before President Clinton signed the agreement, Buchannan declared “NAFTA is not really a trade treaty at all, but the architecture of the New World Order.” For Buchannan, this “New World Order” was dominated by a “global managerial class,” the would be “Lords of the Universe,” who would subvert American democracy and values. Such fears surrounding a new global order were rooted in a nationalistic “America First” framework. As Buchannan explained, NAFTA and other free trade agreements were “contemptuous of states’ rights, regional differences and national distinctions” and would “supersede state laws and diminish U.S. sovereignty.” Buchannan echoed many on the left and right who argued NAFTA allowed corporations to “move factory jobs south,” pitting workers in the US against their counterparts in the Global South. “What, after all, is America?” asked Buchannan, “Is she just a

⁷ John Dumbrell, “Varieties of Post-Cold War American Isolationism,” *Government and Opposition* 34:1 (Winter 1999), 24-43. 35.

⁸ Charles A. Kupchan, *Isolationism: A History of America’s Efforts to Shield Itself from the World* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

‘part of the global economy’ or a beloved country the unique character of which must be preserved?’” Echoing a popular sentiment from the time, Buchannan cast the \$7 billion in foreign aid NAFTA mandated as a waste of resources better spent at home.⁹

While some, like future Green Party presidential Candidate Ralph Nader, opposed NAFTA on the grounds it would be bad for people and the environment throughout the world, most Americans had little concern for the effects of the agreement beyond the nation’s borders. According to PEW polls, the early 1990s saw the greatest feelings of isolationism in the US since the 1930s. One 1995 poll found that half of Americans (the highest percentage in over twenty years) agreed with the statement that the US “should mind its own business internationally” by letting other countries “get along the best they can on their own.”¹⁰ Much of the opposition to NAFTA reflected these isolationist sentiments and centered on promoting economic protections for workers and consumers in the US against the “threat” of the worker overseas or the immigrant worker.¹¹

Media coverage also reflected an increasingly ambivalent US public regarding intervening in the affairs of other nations. Since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, in the US media, international issues increasingly took a back seat to domestic ones, with a greater focus on the costs of foreign interventions.¹² For instance, in 1994, when the Rwandan Armed Forces and Hutu paramilitary groups began slaughtering the ethnic minority group the Tutsis and the politicians that supported them, very few US politicians spoke out. As the Hutus continued to butcher, rape, torture, and murder, it took an intervention by the French military and the

⁹ Patrick J. Buchanan, “America First, NAFTA Never,” *The Washington Post*, November 7, 1993.

¹⁰ Pew Research Center, “Public More Internationalist than in 1990s,” Report, 12 December 2002.

¹¹ Dumbrell, 35.

¹² Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003).

Rwandan Patriotic Front to end the slaughter. The Clinton administration refused to call it a genocide because using that term would have legally required US intervention, something the US public did not support.¹³ Clinton's hesitancy to intervene when, in 1992, Bosnian Serbs began a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Bosnian Muslims further reflected US ambivalence towards overseas intervention.¹⁴ While the US did eventually begin a bombing campaign against the Serbs in 1995, observers at the time charged that the deaths of many Bosnians could have been avoided if the US had intervened sooner.¹⁵ It was against this isolationist backdrop that US global justice feminists sought to persuade people to adopt a global solidarity approach.

Broadening the Issues: Beijing and Back

Seattle feminists like Cindy Domingo, Beverly Sims, and others in the EveryWoman's Delegation who attended the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, recognized that not everyone would have the time and resources to attend international conferences like the 1995 meeting in China. To bridge the gap, they resolved to conduct "Beijing and Back" activities to share with others what they learned overseas. Delegation members individually and collectively also worked to develop new networks and helped strengthen those networks by following up with conferences back home in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁶ To further that end, delegates from Seattle formed the EveryWoman's Network to promote their "Beijing and Back" campaign.¹⁷ While at the NGO forum in Huairou, delegates of the EveryWoman's Network used the Opinionnaire process to survey over 2,000 women participants about issues facing women

¹³ Gil Troy, *The Age of Clinton: American in the 1990s*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015). 127

¹⁴ Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (Routledge: New York, 2006), 84-101.

¹⁵ Troy, 127.

¹⁶ "Everywoman's Delegation," Central Area Motivational Program (CAMP), Seattle, WA. Retrieved from: <http://www.affection.org/sante/asvc/www.igc.apc.org/womensnet/beijing/ngo/everywoman.html>.

¹⁷ "Everywoman's Network Gears Up," Northwest Asian Weekly, 27 April 1996, CDP, Box , Folder "Research Files: Gabriela," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP, HBCL.

world-wide. They then shared the results of the survey with audiences at home. In order to discuss the issues raised at the NGO forum and to link those issues to the everyday lives of people living in the Pacific Northwest, IGSS, BaseCamp Seattle, and the UN Association of World Affairs Council sponsored the “EveryWoman’s Conference” at Seattle Central Community College on November 18th, 1995. Titled “Beijing and Back: Bringing Home Equality, Development and Peace,” the conference aimed to “determine what kind of local action” US feminists could take to “help create positive change for women all over the world.”¹⁸ At the conference in Seattle, attendees of the Beijing conferences shared with their audience what they learned. For instance, Cindy Domingo recounted her experiences hearing about the issue of “comfort women,” and the pain still felt in those communities over the WWII era Japanese military sexual enslavement of (mainly) Korean women. However, Domingo did not frame that issue in isolation, but instead connected it to the global market for Asian women as mail order brides, prostitutes, and domestic workers.¹⁹ Placing these issues in the same framework highlighted the deeper global inequalities in power structures that underlaid them, as they all represented different ways of trafficking women from poor countries to wealthy ones. Domingo went further to emphasize the role of the US in the buying, selling, and enslavement of women for global profit, noting that over 5,000 women were sold to the US each year as mail order brides and many more as domestic workers. Either way, once those women got to the US, they had few legal protections.²⁰ Domingo also worked to have Dr. Kyung Chung of Iwha

¹⁸ “Everywoman’s Conference: Beijing and Back: Bringing Home Equality, Development and Peace,” pamphlet, CDP, Box 6, Folder “Beijing and Back,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Yoon Park email to Cindy Domingo re: “FW: Filipinas Not For Sale: A Four-Part Film Series,” 5 August 1997, CDP, Box 7, Folder “Research Files: Gabriela,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

University in Korea, a specialist on the issue of Filipina women's trafficking and migration, to speak about the issue to an American audience.²¹

To better share with the public the issue of sex trafficking of Filipina women, Domingo connected with the GABRIELA network, or GabNet, a US-based Filipina feminist network in support of the Filipina feminist organization GABRIELA. Through those contacts, Domingo learned of a film series being shown by GabNet New York about sex trafficking, titled "Filipinas not for Sale." The film series sought to publicize the selling, buying, and enslavement of women from the Philippines and included stories about Filipina women who were sold as mail-order-brides or prostitutes as well as women who work overseas as domestics. The film was geared towards an English-speaking audience, and highlighted the role of the US, both in terms of understanding the historical legacy of colonialism to these issues as well as the contemporary one as buyers of Filipina women. By showing these films to women in their communities, Domingo and others from IGSS helped to translate what they learned working with women around the world at home.²²

Delegates returning from the Beijing conference also emphasized the dangers women faced both world-wide and at home in the Pacific Northwest from rising religious fundamentalism, one of the plenaries at the 1995 UN conference. Delegate Elise DeGooyer from Seattle published her experience at Beijing, recounting a panel she attended where Dr. Chung Hyun Kyung from Korea spoke about the economic relationship to rising religious fundamentalism, arguing it was the direct result of increased poverty, violence, and inequality.

²¹ Tina Kelly, "Delegation Returns from Women's Forum Renewed in Mission," *Seattle PI*, 11 September 1995, CDP, Box 7, Folder "Everywoman Delegation," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

²² Yoon Park email to Cindy Domingo re: "FW: Filipinas Not For Sale: A Four-Part Film Series," 5 August 1997, CDP, Box 7, Folder "Research Files: Gabriela," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

DeGooyer explained, “Where there is a loss of identity and community, where the social situation offers no hope for justice or peace, there is fertile ground for fundamentalism.”²³

EveryWoman delegate Buzz Stewart also pushed this issue, articulating to activists back home the need to work to counter this rising religious fundamentalism, telling them “The fundamentalists are certainly well-organized all around the world, and it affects all aspects of women’s development.” As such, he urged the left to be just as vocal and well-organized in response.²⁴

Once they had established some of the key issues facing women world-wide, they held a weekend-long retreat and conference to strategize over and develop methods for how they could best explore those issues and how to galvanize public support around them. On August 2 to the 4th in Issaquah, Washington, a coalition including IGSS, the Coalition of Women, Religion, and Spirituality, the EveryWoman’s Delegation, BaseCamp Seattle, WILPF and Church Women United held the “Gonna Keep on Movin’ Forward” conference and retreat. Part of the “Beijing and Back” campaign, the conference title emphasized the global/local perspective, “Transforming Words Into Action From Both a Local and International Perspective.”²⁵ Building on the twelve critical areas of concern facing women around the globe established at the Beijing conference, here, activists worked to develop strategies on how best to work in their own communities on these issues. The conference included eight workshops focused on specific topics such as women’s health and education, violence against women in the context of

²³ Elise DeGooyer, “Religious Fundamentalism Experienced Globally: Voices from Beijing,” *A Matter of Spirit* 30 (Spring 1996), CDP, Box 7 “Beijing and Back,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

²⁴ Tina Kelly, “Delegation Returns from Women’s Forum Renewed in Mission,” *Seattle PI*, 11 September 1995, CDP, Box 7, Folder “Everywoman Delegation,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

²⁵ “Gonna’ Keep on Movin’ Forward” conference flyer, CDP, Box 6, Folder “International Women’s Conference,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

militarization, and poverty as a gendered phenomenon. To confront these issues, participants focused on devising tactics centered on the use of art and music, popular education, further networking opportunities through local, regional, and international conferences, and efforts to build coalitions around specific issues and campaigns.²⁶

In addition to showing other feminists the global connections of their activism, Domingo and others like her worked to highlight these international connections, especially for women around the world, to labor organizations in Seattle. Domingo was a member of the worker's organization The Northwest Labor and Employment Office (LELO) since the 1980s. LELO was a multi-racial grassroots workers organization that originally formed in 1973 to bring together Filipino workers in the Alaska Cannery Workers Association, Black workers in the Untied Construction Workers Association, and Latino farm workers from the Northwest Chapter of the United Farmworkers together to push class-action lawsuits against employee and union discrimination. However, the orientation of their activism changed during the 1980s and the organization began to operate as "a people-of-color led, grassroots workers' rights organization" that combined "community organizing, popular political education, and international networking to empower workers of color and women workers to have a voice and speak for themselves."²⁷ Feminists in the group like Cindy Domingo and Beverly Sims were a huge part of this evolution.

This shifted perspective, with its expansive and gendered definition of the worker and workplace embedded in a global context was due to the work of feminist members of the group like Cindy Domingo. In the 1990s, LELO broadened its analysis of the "worker's" plight, to

²⁶ "Gonna' Keep On Movin' Forward" agenda, CDP, Box 6, Folder "International Women's Conference," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

²⁷ "Northwest LELO: A History of a Multi-Racial Workers Organization," Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other LELO newsletter, 1:1 (Fall 1998), Box 5, Folder 3, Acc. No. 5651-001: CDP, SMCP.

include a feminist analysis of women's condition in a global capitalist order. Women of color and anti-racist white women activists from LELO were part of the San Francisco-based EveryWoman's Delegation to Beijing in 1995 and upon returning helped push LELO to embrace a more feminist stance and pay greater attention to the plight of workers overseas. When Domingo returned from Beijing, she, and others at LELO, began a commitment to "promote the idea that the welfare of US workers—particularly workers of color and women—is bound to the welfare of workers around the world."²⁸

By the 1990s, because of the work of feminist members like Cindy Domingo and Beverly Sims, LELO began to realize the need for workers to unite across racial, gender and national boundaries. LELO began to focus its efforts on global solidarity work in places like Cuba, the Philippines, Nicaragua, and Mozambique. They expanded their focus to empower workers of color, low income, and women workers "to support racial justice, workers' rights, and worker-led economic development in the US and in developing countries." Alongside this global awareness and connectivity, LELO also focused on local organizing and education. They sought to educate local workers about global economic issues, while at the same time engaged in local organizing efforts to promote the rights of workers of color, women, and low-income workers.²⁹

To promote the connections between workers abroad and at home, LELO launched its "International Worker to Worker Project" to develop strategies to counteract neoliberalism across borders. To begin the project, LELO began a fundraising campaign and planned for an international conference of workers. In May of 1997, LELO held a 4-day retreat in Seabeck,

²⁸ LELO, "1998 National Major Gifts Campaign," flyer, CDP, Box 5, Folder "International Women's Forum," Acc. No. 5651-001: CDP, SMCP.

²⁹ "Northwest LELO: A History of a Multi-Racial Workers Organization," *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other* LELO newsletter, 1:1 (Fall 1998), Box 5, Folder 3, Acc. No. 5651-001: CDP, SMCP.

Washington, called “Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other.” The Seabeck conference included forty-five ordinary workers and activists from eleven countries representing every region on the planet.³⁰ The meeting was called in the context of “an increasingly global economy and a proliferation of trade accords that have put the living standards of the world’s working people at risk.”³¹ They began a weekly radio show, “Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other,” that presented a working-class account of “economic, labor and community issues” and particularly focused on the experiences of people of color, women, and ordinary workers around the world.³² For instance, in one broadcast, Cindy Domingo spoke about her international solidarity work in the Philippines and Cuba. She explained how the sex-trafficking industry, which devastated Filipino and other Asian women, was intertwined with global free trade policies and the forced migration of mainly women of color from the Global South to the North.³³

From the beginning, conference-organizers faced an uphill battle getting international workers to Seattle. Three participants, one from South Korea and two from the Dominican Republic, were denied travel visas because they had been convicted as criminals for their attempts to organize workers in their home countries. Despite months of letter-writing, faxing and phone calls to the embassy on behalf of the participants, LELO only managed to get visas for eleven of the fourteen workers they invited. That they succeeded at all in bringing in eleven ordinary workers from other countries was, in the words of one participant, “in and of itself an

³⁰ Cindy Domingo, “Legacy of Equality, Leadership and Organizing,” Ethnic Studies 2015 Ah Quon McElrath Fund for Social Change Dinner speech, Kapi’olani Community College, Honolulu, Hawaii, 11 March 2015.

³¹ LELO, “International Worker to Worker Networking Project,” *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other* newsletter 1:1 (Fall 1998), CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

³² Ibid.

³³ Trevor Griffey, Harley Bird, Michael Woo, Michael Simmons, Cindy Domingo and Richard Ortega, “Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other: LELO’s Worker to Worker Organizing from the 1970s to the Present,” LAWCHA Conference (University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 23 June 2017).

<http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/lawcha/64.html>.

act of resistance.”³⁴ In the end, LELO managed to attract forty-five ordinary workers from six different countries to participate, including a housekeeper from North Carolina, a maquiladora worker from Mexico, a bus driver from Brazil and workers from Korea, the Philippines and South Africa. The format of the conference combined personal testimonies with dialogue and debate over various topics. Workers emphasized the role of the United States in the deterioration of working conditions globally. One woman who shared her story was Cicih Sukaesih, an Indonesian woman who worked in a Nike factory from 1989 until she was fired in 1993 for helping to lead a strike of all 65,000 workers at the plant. In 1997, she toured the US to speak about Nike’s role in denying workers’ rights.³⁵

Conferences like this one were key for local organizers to learn from workers from around the globe and find ways to work together across diverse backgrounds against neoliberal globalization. Communication required the use translators, one in English and five other languages, which meant that attendees had to referee one another amid heated debate, reminding each other to slow down for the interpreters. For such discussions to be successful, attendees had to practice deep listening-skills and employ patience, as translations from Korean, Zulu, Spanish, Portuguese, and so forth were slowly put forward.³⁶ The biggest issue they discussed was the impact of immigration policy on the working class, women, and people of color around the world. As LELO member and conference participant Frederick Simmons explained,

³⁴ LELO, “Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other” Final Report, CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

³⁵ LELO, “International Participants to LELO May 1997 Meeting *Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other*,” CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP; Christina Lopez, interview by author.

³⁶ Juan Bocanegra and Cindy Domingo interview by Monica Ghosh, transcript, 18 August 2000, OHP. See also, Trevor Griffey, Harley Bird, Michael Woo, Michael Simmons, Cindy Domingo and Richard Ortega, “Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other: LELO’s Worker to Worker Organizing from the 1970s to the Present” (LAWCHA Conference, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 23 June 2017).

“Immigration is an outgrowth of colonization.”³⁷ In the late 20th century, free trade globalization policies resulted in the displacement of millions of people who were forced to leave their homes to survive. In the US, these immigrants were often met with xenophobia and blamed for the inadequacies of global capitalism.³⁸ Fundamentally, the conference established that neoliberalism was the “main enemy” facing workers worldwide. This common enemy served as an important basis for the broad coalition-building that took place in the months leading up to the WTO Seattle showdown.³⁹

At conferences such as these, activists discussed and connected issues surrounding trade liberalization and the uneven results of them around the globe.⁴⁰ During the conference, local Seattle activists learned important lessons from the workers and activists from overseas. For instance, organizers initially planned to break into three groups to discuss the specific issues of workers’ rights, the environment, and immigration. However, Thereza de Santos, the Afro-Brazilian cultural advisor to the Cultural Secretariat of Sao Paulo and an activist with a union for domestic workers in Sao Paulo, challenged organizers for ignoring a specific session devoted to women. She decried, “are we not workers? Do we not take part in struggles that benefit men as well as ourselves? When will male workers finally take up our issues?” As a result, a fourth group was added to the conference specifically devoted to developing an agenda on women.⁴¹

³⁷ Frederick Simmons, “Immigrant Rights Movement Benefits All Workers,” *Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other* LELO newsletter, 12 (2006): 3.

³⁸ For scholarship linking immigration and imperialism, see, Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Maria Cristina Morales and Cynthia Bejarano, “Transnational sexual and gendered violence: an application of border sexual conquest at a Mexico-US border,” *Global Networks* 9:3 (2009), 420-439.

³⁹ Trevor Griffey, Harley Bird, Michael Woo, Michael Simmons, Cindy Domingo and Richard Ortega, “Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other: LELO’s Worker to Worker Organizing from the 1970s to the Present” (LAWCHA Conference, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 23 June 2017).

⁴⁰ Juan Bocanegra and Cindy Domingo interview by Monica Ghosh, transcript, 18 August 2000, OHP.

⁴¹ LELO, “Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other” Final Report, CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

Through the conference, workers from around the world learned their problems were “similar and intertwined.”⁴² Most significantly, they established a set of principles based on this understanding and published the “Seabeck Declaration.” The declaration established three main ideas. Firstly, it demanded that the environment was a working-class issue and protecting the environment was not “incompatible with jobs and development.” Building upon the arguments that women of color in the environmental and labor movements made for decades, the declaration continued the push to broaden people’s understanding of “the environment,” not as something “out there,” but in the spaces of people’s everyday lives, including the home and workplace. As such, for these activists, labor and environmental issues were inseparable.⁴³ Such a stance linking environmental concerns to workers’ issues was an important connection in countering prevailing notions among unionists that environmental protections cost jobs. This analysis laid the foundation for the broader coalition-building that took place in the Seattle protests.

Secondly, the declaration called for the freedom of workers to move across borders without fear of discrimination or exploitation, effectively joining issues relating to immigration, workers, and the global economy. Lastly, it declared that “the home is workplace” and domestic violence a worker issue.⁴⁴ As such, the declaration made plain that women’s issues were workers’ issues. In the spring and summer months of 1999, local WTO protest planners would later use the Seabeck Declaration as the starting point for developing their free trade critiques.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ For more on women and the labor and environmental justice movements, see, Lisa Levenstein, *They Didn’t See Us Coming: The Hidden History of Feminism in the Nineties* (New York: Basic Books, 2020), 141-162.

⁴⁴ LELO, “International Worker to Worker Networking Project,” *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other* newsletter 1:1 (Fall 1998), CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP. See also; “The Seabeck Declaration,” CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

Upon writing the Seabeck Declaration, activists persuaded the traditionally conservative King County Labor council to pass a resolution in support of the Seabeck principles and endorsed its international worker-to-worker networking project.⁴⁵ At conferences like this one, activists discussed issues of trade from a variety of perspectives and formulated strategies of resistance. They gained new perspectives for viewing local problems that contextualized those issues in a global framework and revealed the interlocking nature of a range of issues including economic inequality, environmental destruction, workers' rights, and women's issues. As a result, when the WTO announced they were coming to Seattle, as one activist put it, "we were already ready to engage."⁴⁶

Immediately following the Seabeck conference, organizers planned several community events to educate the public about what they learned. On May 17th, Seabeck participants debuted their declaration at a community meeting held at Franklin High School that included over 100 labor union members. The international participants seized the opportunity to once again share their experiences living under free trade regimes with wider audiences. The meeting was intended, in the words of one organizer, as part of a "long term project to build worker-to-worker networks between" ordinary workers in the US, especially women workers and workers of color, and ordinary workers in other countries.⁴⁷ This event served as a first step in LELO's push to build US support for an international meeting of ordinary workers.

Following the Seabeck retreat, LELO participants resolved to plan a large international worker's meeting for the year 2000 (later changed to 2001) and planned a series of preparatory

⁴⁵ LELO, "International Worker to Worker Networking Project," *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other* newsletter 1:1 (Fall 1998), CDP, Box 5, Folder "International Worker's Forum," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁴⁶ Tyree Scott interview by Monica Ghosh, transcript, 2 May 2000, OHP.

⁴⁷ LELO, "International Worker to Worker Networking Project," *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other* newsletter 1:1 (Fall 1998), CDP, Box 5, Folder "International Worker's Forum," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

regional meetings. The goal of the conference was to create a permanent international mechanism to give ordinary workers a stronger voice in the global economy. For US workers, the hope was for them to access the stories and experiences of workers from other countries and learn their strategies for resistance. The conference and network were meant to give workers from elsewhere access to US workers to gain support for their activities through boycotts, local protests, and other solidarity measures. It was also the first step in developing a permanent international translation and communication network for workers.⁴⁸ To that end, LELO designed and developed a website and translator network to facilitate cross-border worker communication. In 1998, to support its international worker-to-worker networking project, LELO launched a national fundraising tour led by Glen Mpufane, a mineworker from South Africa, and Tyree Scott, an African American labor activist from Seattle, to meet with potential donors and foundations. The campaign raised over \$75,000 to provide international partners with computers.⁴⁹ Organizers also developed an education strategy to “expand the base of working class people” in the US, and most especially for women and people of color, to see “their lives and the lives of workers across the world as intertwined.”⁵⁰ Recognizing the importance of fostering dialogue between ordinary workers across borders, LELO also organized trips from the

⁴⁸ Kristyn Joy, “Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other, International Worker-to Worker Networking Project: 1998 National Major Gifts Campaign” flyer, CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP. See also; LELO, “Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other” Final Report, CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁴⁹ LELO, “International Worker to Worker Networking Project,” *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other* newsletter 1:1 (Fall 1998), CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁵⁰ LELO, “Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other” Final Report, CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

Pacific Northwest to Mexico City, Venezuela, and Cuba where activists could learn firsthand about workers struggles in those countries.⁵¹

To prepare for the 2000 international meeting, LELO organizers held a series of regional conferences. The goal of these preparatory meetings was to establish and strengthen worker networks, to identify its strengths and weaknesses, and to generate strategies for cross-border organizing. Through contacts made at the Seabeck conference, LELO reached out to partner with TADET (Taller de Economía del Trabajo), a collective of 350 professors and teachers at the Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), which operated as a support center for the independent labor movement in the country. From July 4-9, 1999, the two groups organized a regional workers conference in Mexico City intended to facilitate greater cross-border worker networking and to build on the Seabeck principles to develop a workers' alternative trade agreement.⁵² Planners emphasized the need for diversity in conference participants, in terms of age, race, gender, ethnicity and region. To that end, participation was on an invite-only basis. Organizers wanted to ensure ordinary workers, especially those in "non-traditional labor organizations," such as immigrant rights, environmental justice, or welfare groups, were also included. Most especially, designers of the conference emphasized participants who were directly affected by NAFTA, targeting groups like maquiladora workers, farm workers, domestic workers, indigenous workers, and African American workers from the US south.⁵³ Fifty-four people from the US, Mexico, Canada, Dominican Republic, Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago

⁵¹ Trevor Griffey, Harley Bird, Michael Woo, Michael Simmons, Cindy Domingo and Richard Ortega, "Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other: LELO's Worker to Worker Organizing from the 1970s to the Present" (LAWCHA Conference, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 23 June 2017)

⁵² LELO, "International Participants to LELO May 1997 Meeting *Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other*," CDP, Box 5, Folder "International Worker's Forum," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁵³ LELO, "North American Regional Workers Meeting," meeting agenda, CDP, Box 5, Folder "International Worker's Forum," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

attended, including Seabeck participants Cenen Bagon (Vancouver) and Martin Rodriguez (Mexico).⁵⁴ US attendees included individuals like Alejandro Benitez, a farmworker from Florida, Marilyn Gilliam, a poultry worker from rural North Carolina and Gaylen Tyler, member of the “War Council” of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWRU). Caribbean participants included Afro-Caribbean women’s organizer Rosa Ines Curiel Pichardo and garment worker and women’s organizer Altagracia Bautista from the Dominican Republic, as well as several workers and activists from Cuba and Puerto Rico.⁵⁵ This diverse invite list reflected organizers’ commitment to broadening the public’s definition of the “worker” and the “workplace.”

At the 1999 “Speaking for Ourselves from Worker to Worker” regional conference in Mexico City, participants shared their experiences as workers with one another to build relationships but also to “leave with the action steps to organize locally within a global context.”⁵⁶ Attendees created a worker-to-worker newsletter titled “Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other.”⁵⁷ The newsletter was printed in Spanish, English, and Portuguese. Following global feminist emphasis on the use of the personal experience to draw deeper connections between different people, workers from around the world shared their personal stories and learned powerful and lasting lessons. Lorena Serafico, a Filipino-Canadian domestic worker shared her experience of being forced to leave home at a young age to find work first in Greece then Canada and detailed some of the challenges domestic workers and caregivers faced. After listening to other workers, Serafico learned that they were facing similar challenges, and stated, “the

⁵⁴ “LELO’s Organizing Highlights July-December 1999,” CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁵⁵ LELO, “US, Caribbean and Canadian Participants: July 1999 North American and Caribbean Regional Workers Meeting,” Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁵⁶ Tyree Scott, fundraising letter, 8 February 1999, CDP, Box 7, Folder “Research Files: Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁵⁷ LELO, “International Worker to Worker Networking Project,” *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other* newsletter 1:1 (Fall 1998), CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

situation of textile workers in the free-trade zone in Mexico are very similar to domestic workers in Canada.” She recognized that both were mostly women who were forced to leave their own communities to find work and were the primary breadwinners for their families, as they sent their wages back home. At the same time, they were “also being paid lower wages for doing ‘women’s work’” and struggled “to gain recognition as real workers doing real jobs that contribute to the economy.” Serafico left the conference energized to use the internet as part of her activism, exclaiming “we won’t have to attend conference to find out what is going on with other workers in the world.”⁵⁸ Rather than viewing immigrant or overseas workers as the “enemy” intent on stealing the jobs of US workers, participants learned to view these workers as part of a shared struggle. In this way, the meeting worked to draw workers across borders closer together.

In Mexico City, attendees discussed four central themes related to neoliberalism and drafted a declaration on each. A series of workshops were dedicated to examining the role of neoliberalism in relation to women, immigration, the right to organize, and the environment and focused on drafting an accord to address each of these four main areas of concern. When discussing women in the global economy, participants recognized that despite deep disparities between them, “first” and “third world” women had much in common. They made specific demands for women, including the right to be free of physical and psychological abuse, the right to childcare and control over family planning, the right to organize, and for economic equality. They recognized that 70% of the world’s women and children lived in poverty and on average

⁵⁸ Liza Javier, “NW Workers Building Worldwide Connections,” *NW Asian Weekly*, July 1999, 1, CDP, Box 5, Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

women earned $\frac{3}{4}$ the wages of men working the same job.⁵⁹ The action steps they laid out at the workshop focused on educating women about their rights and strengthening women's cross-border organizations and communication. Even more, conferences like this one helped demonstrate to people around the world their struggles were interconnected. As one attendee reflected, "After attending this meeting, it is clear to me that the struggle is not mine or yours, but ours."⁶⁰ Immediately following the summer of 1999 conference, LELO members returned home to partner with the NW Immigrant Rights Project to found El Comité Pro Amnistia General y Justicia Social, which conducted outreach and education in undocumented Latino communities across Washington state. Comité was at the forefront of the local and national immigrant rights movement that operated as a grassroots organization focused on educating undocumented workers about their rights.⁶¹

Following the regional meeting in Mexico City, LELO held report back sessions to educate the local community in Seattle, particularly in the months and weeks leading up to the WTO protests. For instance, on October 16th, 1999, LELO held its "From Mexico City to the WTO: Workers Speak for Themselves About the Global Economy" report back meeting in downtown Seattle. Participants heard from speakers like Cenen Bagon and Lorina Serafico from the Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregiver rights (Vancouver), carpenter and Native American labor rights activist Frank Reynolds (Seattle), and rank and file union workers like Kelly Palmer (Seattle), Carlos Chavez (Portland) and Cynthia Anderson

⁵⁹ LELO, "Results of the discussion of the Second encounter "Hablando por nosotros mismos de trabajar a trabajar" ("Speaking for ourselves from worker to worker") report, CDP, Box 5, Folder "International Worker to Worker Project," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁶⁰ Carol Wells, "North American Caribbean Workers Cross Borders to Deepen Common Struggle," *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other* newsletter (Issue 3, Winter 2000). Box 5, Folder "International Worker to Worker Project," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁶¹ Karen Zammit, "A Face to the Struggle for Immigrant Rights: Jorge Quiroga," *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other* newsletter, 12 (Spring:2006) 1.

(Vancouver). One hundred local students and workers attended the forum where they heard from four local workers of color who spoke about each of the four themes from the conference. Carol Wells, a working-class single mother from the Central Area of Seattle, shared her experience in Mexico City where, she recalled, “We shared our stories, stories that were all too familiar and eerily too similar.” While workers came to Mexico City from the US, Mexico, and the Caribbean from a variety of trades ranging from domestic workers to steel workers, they “came together under one bloc” in Wells’ view, as “workers under siege in an increasingly insane world.” She explained to her Seattle audience how the diverse participants in Mexico City were able to find common ground despite their many differences because of shared “regional, local and personal struggles.”⁶²

While some focused-on worker activities overseas, others focused on organizing in the Pacific Northwest. Ana Maria Guzman, apple worker and Teamster organizer in Yakima, Washington told attendees about her experiences attempting to unionize farm workers in the region. In 1996, Guzman, along with five other workers, was fired from her job at a Wenatchee apple-packing warehouse for complaining about poor working conditions and trying to unionize.⁶³ A few months later, eight more were suspended for standing up for the fired workers and continuing unionizing efforts.⁶⁴ The fired employees filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which ruled that the company had unfairly fired them, ordered all six terminated employees rehired and required the company to pay \$19,000 in back pay to the

⁶² LELO, “From Mexico City to the WTO: Workers Speak for Themselves About the Global Economy,” flyer, CDP, Box 16, Folder “Research Files: World Trade Organization (WTO),” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁶³ Associated Press, “Fired apple workers claim unfair labor practices,” *Kitsap Sun*, 13 September 1996.

⁶⁴ Associated Press, “Apple picking plant faces new charges for violating rights,” *Kitsap Sun*, 6 February 1997.

suspended and fired workers.⁶⁵ Guzman told attendees of the conference how over the course of the 1990s, while apple-industry profits more than doubled, worker wages and conditions declined. She also shared how management at the company harassed her, particularly when she stood up against forced unpaid over-time. Despite these struggles, Guzman offered an inspiring story of struggle and solidarity.⁶⁶

At the meeting, participants also took part in a strategy session to prepare for the WTO protests. The workshop aimed to develop a plan for mobilizing workers of color and women workers in activities surrounding the WTO November ministerial meeting protests. Conference-goers were also encouraged to participate in the Worker's Voice Coalition's "Worker's Conference on Women, Immigration, and Globalization" planned for December 4th to emphasize the relation between the WTO's free trade policies and issues facing women and immigrants. Once again, feminists reminded US audiences that seemingly disparate issues, like free trade, immigration, and women's rights, were fundamentally intertwined. Even more, they once again demonstrated that immigrants and people of color living in the Global South were not the enemy intent on stealing the jobs of native-born US workers, but rather were in a shared struggle for survival.

Seattle feminists like Cindy Domingo took what they learned from feminists overseas and applied those lessons back home. Domingo's story reveals how feminists like her helped to foster other US feminists' engagement with global issues and movements. By using new

⁶⁵ Associated Press, "Stemilt settles case over union organizing," *Kitsap Sun*, 11 April 1997. See also, Associated Press, "WENATCHEE: Teamsters up ante on organizing apple workers," *Kitsap Sun*, 26 September 1997.

⁶⁶ LELO, "From Mexico City to the WTO: Workers Speak for Themselves About the Global Economy," flyer, CDP, Box 16, Folder "Research Files: World Trade Organization (WTO)," Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

technologies and holding local, regional, and international meetings, Domingo and her colleagues helped educate the US public about the dangers of free trade policies for women, workers, people of color and the environment both in the US and around the world. By demonstrating to these US audiences how their interests were intertwined with those overseas, they helped to foster increased US engagement with the growing Global Justice Movement. As a result of these efforts, when the WTO came to Seattle in November of 1999, a broad coalition of activists were poised to oppose it.

CHAPTER IV: FEMINISTS TAKE ON THE AFL-CIO

On the morning of November 30th, 1999, gray skies and rain greeted the estimated 50,000 who gathered in downtown Seattle to protest the 3rd ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO). While news cameras focused on a small group who smashed windows at Starbucks and engaged in other forms of property-destruction, most participants attended the march and rally at Memorial Stadium put on by the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Unions (AFL-CIO), the largest and most influential federation of labor unions in the US. There, Teamsters, teachers, longshoremen, steelworkers, machinists, farm workers, auto workers, and more joined with students, immigrant groups, feminists, environmentalists, religious activists, and consumer health organizations to declare the WTO “has to go!” Unionists from 144 countries and 25 states attended. Longshoremen carried signs depicting an octopus with its tentacles attempting to strangle the world, blocked by the letters “ILWU” (standing for the International Longshoremen and Warehouse Union). The ILWU managed to close all west coast ports, from Canada to Mexico, for the day’s protests. A twenty-foot-high balloon shaped like a rat floated overhead and people on stilts wearing business suits and animal snouts passed through the crowds. Rally-goers heard from 17 labor leaders as well as from labor activists from countries like Mexico, South Africa, and Brazil. Following an a cappella performance by the Black women ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock, the president of the Washington state AFL-CIO Rick Bender opened the rally by telling the crowd, “There's only one answer to organized greed, and that's organized labor.”¹

¹ Don McIntosh, “Labor rally opens America’s eyes to WTO,” *Labor Press* (17 December 1999) <https://nwlaborpress.org/1999/12-17-99WTO.html>.

While the media celebrated the AFL-CIO's leadership, the organization's participation in these events was not a foregone conclusion. Until at least August of 1999, the AFL-CIO did not even commit to any form of protest for the planned November WTO meeting. Union leadership remained devoted to lobbying the Clinton administration for a better bargaining position for organized labor within WTO arbitration rather than opposing the event altogether. It took a small group of labor feminists and their allies to push labor leaders to commit to a march and rally and present a strong "No to WTO" message that addressed the national and global implications of free trade. This chapter presents the little-known story of how several local Seattle labor feminists convinced the national AFL-CIO leadership to embrace a stance of opposition to the WTO and ally with labor activists from outside the US to present an internationally-informed critique of free trade. They pushed labor leaders to stop framing the debate as one of unfettered free trade versus isolationism and to embrace a third option: transnational solidarity.

The AFL-CIO: A Brief History

From the end of World War II until the 1960s, US trade unions generally supported free trade agreements, believing they served to strengthen US influence in countries "threatened" by the specter of communism in the context of the Cold War. In the early 1970s, in the wake of deindustrialization and manufacturing competition abroad from places like Japan and Europe, the AFL-CIO and other national labor unions began to seek protection from foreign competition. For example, in 1972 the AFL-CIO endorsed the Burke-Harley Act, which provided a broad array of protections for US manufacturing and tax penalties for companies who moved production overseas.² To promote the proposed law, John F. Henning of the California AFL-CIO sent a

² Jefferson Cowie, "National Struggles in a Transnational Economy: A Critical Analysis of US Labor's Campaign Against NAFTA," *Labor Studies Journal* (Winter, 1997): 3-32.

letter to all union affiliates that argued “American capital and technology are exported” abroad while the importation of consumer goods from “low-wage countries” threatened “our way of life.”³ While the bill failed to pass congress, union support demonstrated an isolationist perspective on trade calling for regulations and tariffs that would protect US industrial jobs from the “threat” of the overseas worker.

These protectionist views were evident in the popularity of 1970s and 1980s “Buy American” campaigns, which called on US consumers to buy goods produced “at home.” In the face of de-industrialization, “Buy American” campaigns had a racist component, offering a nonwhite “other” to blame for American job-losses.⁴ For example, in 1982, two white autoworkers in Detroit beat to death Vincent Chin, a Chinese-American man the perpetrators believed was Japanese. The once robust auto industry in Detroit was in major decline at the time and many blamed Japanese auto manufacturing. The assailants allegedly told Chin it was because “of you little m-f-s that we’re out of work.”⁵ Incidents of violence like this one revealed the racist scapegoating inherent in isolationist rhetoric.

Debates around the 1992 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) reflected labor’s protectionist position. In “National Struggles in a Transnational Economy: A Critical Analysis of US Labor’s Campaign Against NAFTA,” labor Historian Jefferson Cowie argues that US labor union’s NAFTA critiques emphasized that it would cause jobs to move from the US to Mexico. These arguments demonized Mexican workers based on paternalized notions of

³ AFL-CIO, “Labor Urges Major Drive to Enact Burke-Hartke,” *California AFL-CIO News*, 15:48 (1 December 1972): 1-4.

⁴ Dana Frank, *Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism* (Beacon Press: Boston, 1999).

⁵ Frances Kai-Hwa Wang, “Who is Vincent Chin? The History and Relevance of a 1982 Killing,” *ABC News* (15 July 2017) <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/who-vincent-chin-history-relevance-1982-killing-n771291>.

Mexico as a “backward” “Third World” country not on equal footing with the US, particularly in terms of enforceable labor standards.⁶ For example, one Teamster leaflet argued workers in Mexico made only \$4 per day. As a result of these low wages, the Teamsters argued, US corporations “threatened” America’s workers to “take big cuts in pay and benefits” or risk losing their jobs to Mexico. In many ways, anti-NAFTA arguments portrayed the Mexican worker as the enemy of the worker in the US.⁷

Historically, the AFL-CIO was focused on organizing white male industrial workers. Mainstream labor organizations had long ignored important economic sectors, like service and agricultural work, which employed primarily women and people of color. In 1995, the AFL-CIO elected John Sweeny and a “New Voice” leadership into office, who promised to expand labor unions and form new alliances with social justice organizations, especially at the grassroots level.⁸ At the time, unions were facing a threat from both sides. On the one hand, neoliberals painted labor organizing as a barrier to economic growth. On the other hand, social justice organizations often viewed unions as part of the problem, as upholding systems of power, not part of the solution of working against those systems.⁹ For many of these activists, this mistrust was the result of the racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, or marginalization they experienced when working as part of a union. Furthermore, the AFL-CIO long identified the

⁶ Cowie, 8.

⁷ Cowie, 13.

⁸ Jefferson Cowie, “National Struggles in a Transnational Economy: A Critical Analysis of US Labor’s Campaign Against NAFTA,” *Labor Studies Journal* (Winter, 1997): 3-32. See also; Margaret Levi and David Olson, “The Battles in Seattle,” *Politics and Society* 28:3 (2000): 309-329; Jamie K. McCallum, *Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing* (Ithaca, NY, ILR Press, 2013).

⁹ Margaret Levi and David Olson, “The Battles in Seattle,” *Politics and Society* 28:3 (2000): 309-329.

“worker” to be a white male industrialist and marginalized and ignored women and people of color.¹⁰

Over the course of the 1990s, union protectionist and isolationist positions began to shift. First, the Clinton administration and the Democratic party, strongly aligned with labor leaders, pushed free trade agreements like NAFTA. At the same time, ordinary workers and rank-and-file unionists, particularly labor feminists, began pushing for more cross-border organizing efforts. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, with the rise of the Global Justice Movement in the US as seen in the “Battle of Seattle,” labor historians point to a dramatic rise in labor activism across borders.¹¹ But most have missed the crucial role of labor feminists in making that push. They built on the lessons learned in forums such as the Beijing Women’s Conference of 1995, and the 1992 Tri-National Conference of Women Workers sponsored by the transnational feminist organization *Mujer a Mujer*, where women from Canada, the US, and Mexico gathered to examine the effects of NAFTA on women, concluding they were all hurt by the agreement, just in different ways. While Mexican women were forced to migrate in search of work where they ended up in low wage jobs working in poor conditions, women from the US and Canada saw a decline in manufacturing jobs, benefits, and labor protections.¹² Labor feminists brought these lessons home where they emphasized that the debate around trade was not confined to either

¹⁰ Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America*. Oxford University Press, New York: 2001; Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women’s Movement: Workplace Justice in Modern America*, Princeton University Press, Princeton: 2004.

¹¹ Cowie, “National Struggles in a Transnational Economy: A Critical Analysis of US Labor’s Campaign Against NAFTA.” See also, Kate Brofenbrenner, ed. *Global Unions: Challenging Transnational Capital Through Cross-Border Campaigns* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2007); Jamie K. McCallum, *Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing* (Ithaca, NY, ILR Press, 2013); Margaret Levi, “Organizing Power: The Prospects for an American Labor Movement,” *American Political Science Association* 1:1 (2003): 45-68.

¹² Lisa Levenstein, *They Didn’t See Us Coming: The Hidden History of Feminism in the Nineties* (Basic Books: New York, 2020). 158.

protectionism or free trade, but rather, there was a third option: transnational solidarity. The case study under review here offers a window onto how this change happened.

Part I: “While labor dithers, the clock ticks”

In September 1998, Martha Baskin was appointed by Ron Judd as the “Fair Trade Representative” to the King County Labor Council (KCLC, a board of AFL-CIO unions of King County) to speak against the proposed “fast-tracking,” a measure that would have allowed a US president to bi-pass congress to unilaterally approve trade deals. Baskin was a union delegate from the local American Federation of Television and Radio Arts who saw NAFTA, and the lackluster opposition of organized labor to it, as a “wake-up” call. In 1998, Baskin joined local efforts led by Sally Soriano of Global Trade Watch (an offshoot of Ralph Nader’s organization Public Citizen) to oppose the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). The proposed free trade agreement sought to establish a set of universal investment laws that granted multinational corporations the power to operate their businesses around the world without subjecting them to national or local laws. The agreement included a provision that would have allowed corporations to sue any government that passed labor, environmental, or public health laws deemed to infringe on their profit-making ability.¹³

Six months before the AFL-CIO came out against the proposed agreement, Baskin wrote an anti-MAI resolution. On October 19, 1998, at the yearly summit between local labor leaders and the leaders of the KCLC, Baskin presented a motion calling for opposition to the MAI.

¹³ Michelle Sforza-Roderick, Scott Nova and Mark Weisbrot, “A Concise Guide to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment—Supporters’ and Opponents’ Views,” *Center for Public Policy*, New York, 1999. See also, Biswajit Dhar and Sachin Chaturvedi, “Multilateral Agreement on Investment: An Analysis,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 33:15 (April 11-17, 1998): 837-849; Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, “Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI): The Facts,” U.S. Department of State, 23 March 1998. https://1997-2001.state.gov/issues/economic/fs_980323_multilat.html.

Baskin described MAI as superseding “the acts of all levels of government, including municipal governments.” Activists called MAI “NAFTA on steroids” and argued it was a threat to local and national sovereignty and democracy and stated it would pit nations against one another in a “race to the bottom” in declining labor standards and environmental quality.¹⁴ Baskin explained how the proposed deal represented a “threat to labor” as its main goal was to diminish regulations protecting workers and the environment. The motion argued MAI was only the latest in a series of trade agreements that would “have a dramatic impact on working people in this country and worldwide yet failed to address even the most fundamental labor standards to protect workers.”¹⁵ On 14 December 1998, the KCLC passed the motion unanimously.¹⁶ Local opposition to MAI in Seattle mirrored efforts that occurred in cities around the world, where protests in places like Houston, Vancouver BC, San Francisco, Toronto and Paris forced the trade deal to a halt. In Seattle, protests to MAI eventually led the conservative-leaning King County Council to vote against it and the Seattle City Council voted unanimously to oppose the agreement.¹⁷ This victory left many local activists energized to take on the WTO.

In January of 1999, the WTO announced its third ministerial meeting would take place in Seattle, Washington. From the start, many local activists viewed the meeting as an “organizing opportunity of a lifetime.”¹⁸ However, AFL-CIO president John Sweeney and other labor leaders pushed a message of reform, urging the Clinton administration to push the WTO to adopt a labor

¹⁴ Janet Thomas, *The Battle in Seattle: The Story Behind and Beyond the WTO Demonstrations*. (Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2000), 120.

¹⁵ King County Labor Council Motion No. 10621, “A Motion adopting the minutes of the 1998 labor Summit between local labor leadership and King County elected officials,” Seattle, 1 February 1999.

¹⁶ Sally Soriano, “Seattle City Council Votes Against International Investment Pact: MAI is a threat to local government,” press release, 12 April 1999, Seattle.

<https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/209/43236.html>.

¹⁷ Bruce Ramsey, “Seattle woman striving to limit powers of WTO.” *Seattle P.I.* 7 September 1999, Hazel Wolf Papers, Box 1, Folder 14, SMCP.

¹⁸ Martha Baskin interview by Jeremy Simer, January 2000, OHP.

rights agreement.¹⁹ The national labor movement was poised to endorse the presidential bid of Vice-President Al Gore, an avowed free trader. For many rank-and-file unionists, this endorsement was pre-emptive, as Gore's 1994 pledge that "the US would never lose one law to the WTO," came back to haunt him after a plethora of WTO rulings came down against US labor and environmental legislations, such as the 1998 "Shrimp and Turtle" case where the WTO declared US laws protecting sea turtles in the shrimp fishing industry violated WTO policies.²⁰ Labor's alliance with Gore meant that leaders were reluctant to adopt even the most modest critique of the WTO, for fears of hurting Gore's presidential bid. Long aligned with the Democratic party, labor leaders feared a large protest in Seattle could potentially embarrass the Clinton/Gore administration.²¹ The 4 August 1999 AFL-CIO Executive Council Statement titled "Justice in the Global Economy--A Program for the WTO Ministerial," reflected labor's reformist position, stating, "We call upon the trade ministers at the 1999 Seattle WTO Ministerial to incorporate core workers' rights and environmental protection into WTO rules with strong enforcement procedures."²² The statement recommended six total reforms, including protections for the environment and public health.

However, many rank-and-file unionists, especially labor feminists, pushed a "No to WTO" message. Martha Baskin, a white lesbian labor feminist who was working as a freelance journalist covering environmental issues took a harder line. As Baskin explained,

The race to the bottom is now codified in world trade law. Once a WTO agreement has been signed, it effectively supersedes all domestic laws because of the WTO's ability to

¹⁹ Margaret Levi and David Olson, "The Battles in Seattle," *Politics and Society* 28:3 (2000): 309-329.

²⁰ Bill Bigelow and Bob Peterson, *Rethinking Globalization: Teaching for Justice in an Unjust World* (Rethinking Schools: Milwaukee, 2002).

²¹ Geov Parrish, "Will labor fight? Unions are scaling back protests against free trade and the WTO," *Seattle Weekly*, 9 October 2006. <https://www.seattleweekly.com/news/will-labor-fight/>.

²² AFL-CIO Executive Council Statement, "Justice in the Global Economy—A Program for the WTO Ministerial." 4 August 1999. Chicago, IL. <https://aflcio.org/about/leadership/statements/justice-global-economy>.

foster enormous punitive trade sanctions against any country judged to have acted inconsistently with any WTO agreement.

Baskin added, "Inconsistent acts can include labor laws, environmental protections, consumer safety laws, performance requirements--to mention a few." As such, for many Seattle locals, the AFL-CIO's belief that an organization like the WTO would incorporate workers' rights agreements within its "undemocratic structure" meant that they were "living on another planet."²³ These feminists argued the AFL-CIO ignored key issues like immigration rights, the condition of women world-wide, worker migration, childcare, wage equity, the exploitation of domestic workers and domestic violence.²⁴

Both labor leaders and rank-and-file activists agreed on the terrible record of the WTO. In its 4 August 1999 Executive Council Statement, the AFL-CIO argued the WTO rules encouraged the "exploitation of labor, the degradation of our environment, and do nothing to limit the growing power of multinational corporations and capital. The WTO has undermined the legitimate national regulations protecting the environment, human rights, and public health."²⁵ What they disagreed over was what should be done about it. Sweeney's commitment to progressive organizing meant that when local mobilization efforts took off in Seattle, he was pressured to some degree to join them. Upon his 1995 election, he told delegates "I will never forget that our movement grows by addition and multiplication, and not by division and subtraction." He also promised to bring in more women and minority members, appointing a union board in which 20 of the 57 members were women, black or Latino.²⁶ Based on these

²³ Martha Baskin interview by Jeremy Simer, January 2000, OHP.

²⁴ Sarah Luthens, "Labor and the WTO," *Eat the State!* 4:2 (29 September 1999).

²⁵ AFL-CIO Executive Council Statement, 4 August 1999.

²⁶ Steven Greenhouse, "Man in the News: John Joseph Sweeney; New Fire for Labor," *The New York Times*, 26 October 1995. A-1.

promises, when local organizing efforts began in Seattle, Sweeney had little choice but to get involved.

Yet, AFL-CIO leadership remained ambivalent regarding plans for the upcoming November 30th WTO protests. In the Spring of 1999, they sent in two organizers from the national offices in D.C. to Seattle. Seattle Radical Women member and union activist Sarah Luthens stated that despite these two national organizers assigned to assist with WTO mobilization, the AFL-CIO's efforts were largely "invisible" to rank-and-file unionists, an apparent "paralysis" that reflected the "ambivalence" within AFL-CIO leadership ranks as to how many resources to dedicate towards mobilization. Many local activists were concerned this ambivalence reflected a more perilous question: Were national labor leaders committed to joining protest efforts at all?²⁷

It soon became clear to Seattle activists that the national organizers from D.C. were there to monitor the situation and moderate more progressive or radical activities. Ron Judd, the Executive Secretary of the KCLC began the year with a commitment to recreating the 1919 General Strike in which the city's 101 AFL unions, representing 60,000 workers, refused to show up to work, leaving the metropolis at a stand-still.²⁸ At the March 1999 "STRIKES!" conference at the University of Washington Center for Labor Studies, Judd promoted the idea of a general strike and other direct actions for the WTO protests. However, by April, his position seemed to change at a KCLC meeting where two AFL-CIO national organizers were in attendance. Local organizers like Tyree Scott of Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO) and Rosalinda Aguirre from Jobs with Justice (JwJ) proposed a direct action against the

²⁷ Parrish, 14.

²⁸ Robert L. Friedham, *The Seattle General Strike* (University of Washington Press, Seattle: 2018) 2-4.

WTO. This time, Judd strongly opposed the measure, and without any discussion or debate, closed the issue. For Baskin and other observers at the time, Judd's about-face was the direct result of national labor leaders' interference. As Baskin recalled, "In a nutshell, Ron Judd became very compromised by the AFL-CIO's firm allegiance to the Democratic Party."²⁹ By the spring of 1999, it seemed clear the national AFL-CIO would direct the messaging for the local unions and anyone who disagreed was either, in the words Martha Baskin, "silenced, censored, marginalized, race baited or dismissed."³⁰

Despite on the ground enthusiasm, the AFL-CIO national offices began to exert more direct control over local WTO planning activities in the months leading up to the protests. While the KCLC generally operated autonomously from the national offices of the AFL-CIO, as planning progressed, much of the decision-making went through national union leaders, rather than local ones. Baskin said that prior to the WTO's selection of Seattle for the ministerial, the KCLC operated autonomously from the national AFL-CIO. Afterwards, it seemed as though everything had to be "pre-approved and stamped" by labor leaders in DC. Baskin recalled months of debates with union leadership over whether to even have a march and was told to keep things "ceremonial."³¹ She continued to push AFL-CIO leaders to include more rank-and-file input into planning efforts and promoted a "No to WTO" perspective. In response, she was excluded from important meetings and conversations and labor leaders denied many of her funding requests.³²

²⁹ Martha Baskin interview by Jeremy Simer, January 2000, OHP

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Sarah Luthens, "Labor and the WTO," *Eat the State!* 4:2 (29 September 1999).

As time wore on, the reluctance of the AFL-CIO to embrace the protest planning left feminists like Baskin concerned about the lack of worker education and mobilization. She was also frustrated by labor union leaders who failed to do the necessary work of understanding the broad implications of free trade policies. She recalled that within the union leadership “no one really knew anything about the WTO. It was much too complex. Or so they thought. They didn't even begin to try to wrestle with it.”³³ This omission seemed egregious to Baskin, who viewed the 18 WTO agreements up for debate as a “phenomenal tool for organizing.” For Baskin, it was only through “non-union allies” like her friend Ellen Gould from British Columbia, that she learned about these agreements. In particular, Gould emphasized the implications of the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS), which she showed Baskin how to research online. Baskin soon learned the agreement sought to privatize a wide-range of services, including education, healthcare and housing, municipal and public construction, transportation, and financial institutions, as well as cultural services like libraries and museums.³⁴ Recognizing the large numbers of US workers this agreement would impact, Baskin emphasized GATS throughout the summer as a key issue to mobilize the rank-and-file.³⁵

In June, Baskin formed the rank-and-file “Labor WTO Mobilization Committee” to do the union educational and mobilization work the AFL-CIO was ignoring. While nominally still part of the KCLC, this group within a group was able to act autonomously to educate and mobilize rank-and-file unionists ahead of the protests. Along with Bill Brognoli of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the Labor WTO Mobilization Committee met weekly at

³³ Baskin interview.

³⁴ Martha Baskin, “Comments for Open World Conference & Union Democracy,” San Francisco, 12 February 2000, SCRLHP.

³⁵ Labor WTO Mobilization Committee, “What Could the WTO Mean for Teachers? Vouchers!” pamphlet, Tamara Turner Papers, Box 3, Folder “Coalition of Labor Union Women,” SMCP.

Teamsters Hall and called-for a city-wide strike for the November 30th WTO protests (N30), an action that was endorsed by the People’s Global Action Network (which formed out of the Zapatista Encuentro in 1997).³⁶ Over the summer, attendance at the meetings grew dramatically. The main goal was to continue educating unionists with things like leafletting jobsites and tabling at events like concerts and picnics. Members trained individuals involved so they could give their own WTO presentations to their local unions. The group produced workshops that would appeal to the rank and file like “Cutting Globalization Down to Size.”³⁷ These seminars and literature made complex free trade issues understandable and highlighted concerns meant to galvanize rank-and-file unionists. They published pamphlets and flyers that gave simple explanations of what the WTO was and how it effects workers worldwide. They explained the lack of public accountability or transparency in the decision-making processes of the institution and highlighted instances where the WTO ignored human rights, consumer safety, and the environment in its decisions. They clearly explained how free trade policies put US workers in a “Race to the Bottom,” as wages declined and workers’ rights were dismantled. The group put out calls for action to join the N30 protest and encouraged local union organizing.³⁸

In August, the Washington State Labor Council held its annual state labor convention. When the agenda for the convention came out, and no WTO events or action items were included, local activists like Martha Baskin were outraged. This omission was not because of a

³⁶ Luma Nichols “Anti-WTO Groups” memo 4 November 1999. In author’s possession.

³⁷ Letter to Rich Feldman Executive Director Workers Center from Martha Baskin Fair Trade Rep King County Labor Council, 2 August 1999, Re: WTO Mobilization, WTO Seattle Collection (hereafter WSC), Box 3, Folder “Economic Globalization and the Role of the World Trade Organization,” Acc. No. 5177-003, HBCL; See also, No to WTO Rank and File Labor Mobilization Committee, “No! To WTO Rank-And-File Labor Mobilization Committee open letter to all union members and supporters,” 8 October 1999, WSC, Box 3, Folder “Evergreen State College,” Acc. No. 5177-003, HBCL.

³⁸ Martha Baskin and Lynn Dodson, “The World Trade Organization Is Coming . . . and it’s not good news for working people,” flyer, WSC, Box 2, Folder “Pre-WTO,” Acc. No. 5177-003, HBCL.

lack of rank-and-file interest in the subject, as several local unions had passed resolutions on the WTO.³⁹ For instance, the local Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) passed Sarah Luthens' "Stop the WTO" resolution, which she then submitted to the state labor council. However, the resolution, as well as others like it, "mysteriously disappeared." For Baskin, the lack of any WTO action items or educational materials for the State Labor Convention made it "very clear that there was some level of subterfuge" going on.⁴⁰

In response, Baskin called her friend Norma Kelsey who served on the executive board of the state labor council and had helped with the OPEIU anti-WTO resolution. Kelsey did not know why the WTO materials were left out of the convention packet and expressed concern that this would mean there would be no democratic debate about the issue. Baskin then enlisted the help of several others from the Labor Mobilization Committee, including Dick Burton and Lynne Dodson of the Seattle Community College Federation of Teachers. The group contacted other union activists who were involved in drafting local anti-WTO proposals and asked why these proposals were not included in the convention materials. They caused such an uproar with rank-and-file activists that just four days prior to the convention Ron Judd added a WTO resolution to the agenda.⁴¹

However, Baskin and others felt Judd's last-minute WTO proposal was too weak and lacked educational information and a call to action. Therefore, they mobilized to produce their own pamphlets, flyers, and leaflets to distribute around town where the delegates were staying

³⁹ Martha Baskin interview by Jeremy Simer, January 2000, OHP; Sarah Luthens, "Labor and the WTO," *Eat the State!* 4:2 (29 September 1999); Geov Parrish, "Will labor fight? Unions are scaling back protests against free trade and the WTO," *Seattle Weekly*, 9 October 2006.

⁴⁰ Martha Baskin, "Comments for Open World Conference & Union Democracy," San Francisco, 12 February 2000, SCRLHP.

⁴¹ Baskin interview, commentary ; Geov Parrish. "Will labor fight? Unions are scaling back protests against free trade and the WTO," *Seattle News Weekly* 9 September 1999. <http://archive.seattleweekly.com/1999-09-29/news/will-labor-fight/>.

for the convention. The literature explained the WTO in simple terms and emphasized how it sought to privatize the “entire public sector,” with 160 services ranging from education and healthcare to public road maintenance and civil construction.⁴² They also wrote their own anti-WTO resolution, which they took to union leadership who told them they were “causing a stir.” They did not think they would be able to get the resolution to the convention floor for a vote. However, in a surprise move, Shirley McCullough a 70-something year old retiree of the Greater Seattle Association of Postal Workers, who had somehow gotten a copy of the resolution, presented it on the floor of the convention. Stunned, Baskin stepped up to the podium and seconded the motion.⁴³

McCullough then turned to AFL-CIO president John Sweeney and asked if the WTO does not address workers’ rights, “What was the AFL-CIO’s plan?” This question left Sweeney, as Martha Baskin recalled, “basically at a loss for words.”⁴⁴ The resolution passed with unanimous approval of convention-goers who were already primed about the issue thanks to the work of Baskin and her cohort. The resolution stated that the WTO rewards corporations for abusing and exploiting workers and called for an economic system in which “the benefits of global growth are shared by all.” Furthermore, it demanded that if the WTO did not make the necessary reforms to protect the environment, food and consumer safety, and workers’ rights, then the AFL-CIO could lobby the US Congress to withdraw from the organization. Declaring a firm alliance with “700 labor, environmental, consumer and social justice organizations from 73

⁴² Martha Baskin letter to *The Nation*, Re: December 20th Cockburn Essay: Trade Wars, Trade Truths, 28 December 1999, WSC, Box 1, Folder “Martha Baskin,” Acc. No. 5177-003.

⁴³ Baskin interview; See also, Luthens, 2.

⁴⁴ Baskin interview; See also, Martha Baskin letter to *The Nation*, Re: December 20th Cockburn Essay: Trade Wars, Trade Truths, 28 December 1999, WSC, Box 1, Folder “Martha Baskin,” Acc. No. 5177-003; Baskin open commentary.

countries” to “oppose any efforts to expand the powers of the WTO,” the resolution committed the AFL-CIO to educating unionists on the environmental and human costs of free trade and to supporting and encouraging other local plans to protest the WTO. It also committed the labor organization to support a day of action on N30.⁴⁵

Baskin realized from day one of the convention that she had caused problems for herself with union leadership. Even though she was supposedly the “fair trade rep,” she was not asked to participate in any of the scheduled events. This sense of union displeasure led her to realize that she was now the union “bad girl” and so she began operating like “an anarchist would.” In September, Baskin decided to send an open letter to every member of the KCLC urging them to join the N30 protests. Although her efforts galvanized rank-and-file union support opposing the WTO and forced the AFL-CIO to finally commit to a labor march for N30, Baskin considered her time over the spring and summer focused on trying to change the AFL-CIO or the KCLC on this issue, like “hitting her head against a wall.”⁴⁶ Baskin maintained that although the AFL-CIO became more critical of the WTO and free trade policies, they continued to portray neoliberal globalization as a problem “out there,” not an issue back home.

The final breaking point between Baskin and the KCLC occurred at a Labor Day weekend meeting of the labor council. Baskin introduced a resolution opposing the WTO and debate ensued. As a quorum could not be reached, the motion was tabled until the following meeting, but it did receive initial support from some board members of the KCLC. When the Clinton administration heard of the measure, they pressured Judd to step in and oppose it, a move

⁴⁵ Labor WTO Mobilization Committee, “Celebrate the Victory! WA. State Labor Convention Passes Strongest Resolution to Date Regarding Seattle-WTO Ministerial,” WSC, Box 1, Folder “Martha Baskin,” Acc. No. 5177-003.

⁴⁶ Baskin interview.

Baskin felt was the only thing preventing the resolution from passing.⁴⁷ Before the next KCLC meeting, Judd fired Baskin from her position as Fair-Trade representative.⁴⁸ Baskin stated of her dismissal, “Removing me was central” to AFL-CIO leadership’s “need to maintain convivial relations with the White House” and business community.⁴⁹ Observers at the time noted Baskin’s departure following the passage of one of the “strongest trade resolutions in the country’s labor movement,” revealed the pressures of AFL-CIO national leaders to “go slower on trade,” pushing a message of reforms rather than a broader critique of the WTO.⁵⁰

Despite losing her paid position with the KCLC, Baskin continued working with other coalitions to mobilize and educate the public ahead of the WTO protests. She joined the efforts of Lydia Cabasco and the “No to WTO Student Outreach Committee” at the University of Washington (UW) and Seattle Central Community College (SCCC).⁵¹ Baskin helped plan the November 11 “Teachers’ Teach-in About the WTO” at the University of Washington titled “Thinking Globally, Acting Locally?” For Baskin, the work of the student outreach committee “makes most of the union activity pale by comparison.”⁵² As she put it, mass-grassroots mobilization to prepare for the Battle in Seattle happened “in spite of, not because of, the vast resources of the AFL or Seattle’s central labor council.”⁵³

⁴⁷ Baskin interview.

⁴⁸ Ibid; Martha Baskin, “Comments for Open World Conference and Union Democracy,” San Francisco, 2 February 2000; Heidi Durham, WTO Fraction Meeting Notes, 30 September 1999, In author’s possession. Some characterize Baskin’s departure as mutually agreed upon, and Judd went so far as to suggest that she resigned from her position, Baskin makes clear that in her mind, she was fired from her post. See Baskin interview with Jeremy Simer.

⁴⁹ Martha Baskin letter to *The Nation*, Re: December 20th Cockburn Essay: Trade Wars, Trade Truths, 28 December 1999, WSC, Box 1, Folder “Martha Baskin,” Acc. No. 5177-003, HBCL.

⁵⁰ Parrish, 3.

⁵¹ Baskin interview.

⁵² Martha Baskin, “Comments for Open World Conference & Union Democracy,” San Francisco, 12 February 2000, SCRLHP.

⁵³ Martha Baskin, “Comments for Open World Conference and Union Democracy,” San Francisco, 2 February 2000.

Part II: Anti-Globalization or Global Justice?

Once the AFL-CIO committed to participating in a march and rally for N30, debates about what the protest would look like continued. Feminists like Cindy Domingo of the Northwest Labor Employment Office (LELO) argued the AFL-CIO ignored important issues related to free trade policies such as immigration and migration. Based on their 1998 Seabeck Conference (discussed in chapter 2), LELO members worked to educate the public about why immigration was a worker's issue. They explained how free trade agreements like NAFTA allowed for the free movement of capital and goods across borders yet restricted the flow of people. These agreements created conditions in places like Mexico where people lost their livelihoods and were forced to migrate in search of work. Once these migrant workers arrived in wealthy countries like the US, they were labeled "illegal immigrants," denied basic rights, and further subjected to exploitation in the name of increased corporate profits. Feminists like Domingo argued that people migrated in search of work; therefore, immigration should be considered a labor issue. As Domingo explained, "In the United States, immigrant workers have become scapegoats for the failures of the global economy because US workers don't see their interests as one and the same with workers in Latin America, Asia, or Africa."⁵⁴ For feminists like Domingo, this oversight was a missed opportunity for building worker solidarity across borders, a move they considered the best option for curtailing global capitalism. Domingo said, "the WTO coming to our city gave us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to draw links between

⁵⁴ Grace Chang, "From the Third World to the 'Third World Within': Asian Women Workers Fighting Globalization," *Labor Versus Empire: Race, Gender, Migration*, Gilbert Gonzalez et al, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 209.

conditions faced by working people in developing countries and those faced by immigrants and people of color in the United States.”⁵⁵

Global Justice feminists also criticized the AFL-CIO’s inattention to issues relating to women. As LELO organizer Sarah Luthens explained, “we also need to address the necessity of child-care availability, wage equity, the status of exploited domestic workers, and how domestic violence affects women's ability to work for wages.”⁵⁶ LELO defined the home as a “workplace,” and as such, issues like childcare, domestic violence, and domestic work were promoted as labor issues. Activists in the organization emphasized how free trade policies, like those endorsed by the WTO, exacerbated women’s struggles. Domingo observed “the profound deterioration in the conditions of immigrant and women workers worldwide is a direct result of free trade policies, globalization and privatization.”⁵⁷ For feminists at LELO, ignoring the plight of women was a missed opportunity for increased grassroots mobilization and cross-border alliances.

Once the AFL-CIO did commit to plans for a march and rally, Domingo and others were concerned about what those activities would look like. Based on their conversations with labor leaders like Judd, they learned the AFL-CIO planned to hold a rally where scientists, doctors, labor leaders and politicians would take the stage to speak about free trade issues. They were apprehensive about the lack of participation from grassroots activists and workers from other countries.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Chang, 211.

⁵⁶ Sarah Luthens, “Labor and the WTO,” *Eat the State!* 4:2 (29 September 1999), In author’s possession.

⁵⁷ Chang, 211.

⁵⁸ Juan Bocanegra and Cindy Domingo interview by Monica Ghosh, 18 August 2000, OHP.

To correct these omissions, feminists like Domingo and others from LELO helped form the Workers' Voice Coalition (WVC) with the goal of bridging the gap between workers in the US and those in the Global South. The WVC was made up of local activists and grassroots organizations including The Center for Women and Democracy at the University of Washington, Washington/Northern Idaho Church Women United, Committee Against Repression and for Democracy in Mexico, the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (CCEJ), The Independent Media Center (IMC), LELO, People for Justice in Chile, Seattle Columbia Committee, Seattle Young People's Project, Washington Alliance for Immigrant and Refugee Justice, and the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition.⁵⁹ Domingo explained of the group's purpose, "Unless we brought workers from struggles outside the United States—their voices would not be heard." The coalition was on a "mission to include our voices in a most substantial way in the broad opposition to the WTO" and began planning to bring international workers and organizers to Seattle to speak at the labor rally to provide a global lens to free trade policies.⁶⁰

The WVC raised \$15,000 to fund nine workers and activists from Brazil, Canada, Columbia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Saipan and South Africa to share their personal experiences living under free trade policies.⁶¹ The WVC also obtained visas, coordinated a speaking schedule, and arranged media interviews for the workers.⁶² They funded these activities through small individual donations and substantial contributions from national organizations like the Asia Pacific Task Force and Methodist Board of Global Ministries.⁶³

⁵⁹ Cindy Domingo letter to Kathleen Hurtz, 29 October 1999, CDP, Box 7, Folder "Research Files: International Worker's Conference," Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

⁶⁰ Tammy Luu, "LELO Launches Workers' Voices Coalition to Protest the WTO," Speaking for Ourselves to Each Other, newsletter, 3 (Winter 2000), CDP, Box 5, Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² LELO, "LELO's Organizing Highlights," CDP, Box 5, Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

⁶³ Bocanegra and Domingo interview, 2000, OHP.

Once the WVC obtained the visas and financing for the overseas workers, they had to get the AFL-CIO to agree to let those workers take the stage at the labor rally on N30. They lobbied labor leaders for several weeks, holding phone calls and meetings with local leaders like Ron Judd to ask for funding, and attended local planning meetings where they raised questions like “Where are the voices of workers from around the world?”⁶⁴ In response, they were met with false promises and an assurance there would be international speakers on stage at the rally. However, Domingo and others were concerned that these speakers from abroad were elite intellectuals, academics, and labor leaders who were not “representative of the issues that were going down in their countries.” But two weeks before the events, they suddenly got a call giving them the go ahead.⁶⁵ Domingo recalled of the about face, “we’re not quite sure how all the decisions got made,” but then “all of a sudden” they received a call giving them they go ahead. Some speculated the last-minute inclusion was a response to the optics of having the Mexican-American AFL-CIO executive Vice-President Linda Chavez-Thompson as the only person of color and one of the only women on the stage at the rally.⁶⁶ Domingo attributed the AFL-CIO’s late decision to the fact that they did not want to “get caught” with their “pants down” as they realized “they had no rank and file workers, not even any white workers, speaking on that platform.”⁶⁷

According to Larry Dohrs of the Public Education for the Free Burma Coalition, if the WVC had not done the work of bringing in those workers to share their experiences then the labor rally “would have just been a series of white male leaders of organizations standing up and

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Tyree Scott interview by Monica Ghosh, 2 May 2000, OHP.

⁶⁷ Domingo and Bocanegra interview, 2000.

speaking.” Dohrs pointed out that the AFL-CIO had their “neck saved” by Seattle activists in organizations like LELO. The value of bringing in a South African mine worker or a Mexican maquiladora worker was to show that the protest was not just about white middle class or union folks. Without the financing for travel and help obtaining visas, those workers would not have been able to come. Such alternative perspectives were also important to countering media portrayals of the protests as confined to unionists and middle-class environmentalists. The media “said it’s a bunch of over-privileged hippie kids who were protesting the WTO,” observed Dohrs. “Those sorts of voices from workers from other parts of the world were really important in breaking that down.”⁶⁸ Without feminists like Domingo, those voices would have been absent.

For global justice feminists, trying to get large national organizations like the AFL-CIO to expand their understanding of free trade issues as they related to the most marginalized groups in society was like “hitting our heads against a wall.”⁶⁹ They did succeed in helping to push the AFL-CIO to commit to a march and rally in protest of the WTO ministerial meeting and to include workers’ voices from around the world during those events. But they were less successful in urging the labor union to expand its critique beyond a nationalistic framework. Nor were they able to get the organization to take up issues that particularly impacted women and people of color, such as immigration and criminal justice. This kind of broader and more holistic organizing only happened when they abandoned these efforts to pursue coalition-building at the grassroots level. When they left the AFL-CIO-dominated People for Fair Trade Network and

⁶⁸ Larry Dohrs interview by Miguel Bocanegra, 10 October 2000, OHP.

⁶⁹ Martha Baskin interview; Domingo and Bocanegra interview.

started focusing on neighborhood, community, and student organizing, they found they could form much broader and more diverse coalitions than the famed “Teamsters and Turtles” alliance.

CHAPTER V: FEMINISTS TAKE ON THE PEOPLE FOR FAIR TRADE NETWORK

In the decades preceding the WTO Seattle protests, global justice feminists had worked to broaden the focus and reach of progressive organizing in the United States. They maintained that in the face of global capitalism what was needed was global solidarity. Several Seattle feminist organizations pushed national environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and consumer groups like Public Citizen (PC), which focused on issues that affected the middle-class, to take up topics such as immigration and toxic dumping that would resonate with those most negatively impacted by free trade policies, especially women, poor people, and people of color. When the Sierra Club critiqued the WTO for implementing policies that promoted deforestation and focused on preserving animal populations and habitats, global justice feminists urged the organization to consider how the same policies threatened poor people's access to clean air and water and contributed to the loss of indigenous lands.

In the months leading up to the Seattle protests, feminists contended with the local protest coalition known as the People for Fair Trade Network (P4FT) and the powerful national organizations that dominated the coalition, including the AFL-CIO, Public Citizen, and the Sierra Club. They urged coalition leaders to broaden their focus by highlighting the connections between the WTO's free trade policies and issues like militarization, the prison-industrial complex, and women's rights. They urged for outreach and education to the low-income and minority communities most negatively impacted by free trade policies. However, leaders of the protest coalition continually rebuffed their requests for money and support. Many of these progressive organizers like Ralph Nader favored a "colorblind" approach, in which they would talk about issues facing nonwhite communities, without ever mentioning or discussing the role of race. They mounted their WTO critiques within a national framework, arguing that free trade

eroded national sovereignty and democracy. This national framework followed in line with the “buy America” campaigns of the previous decade, which feminists labeled “chauvinistic.” Following the WTO protests, feminists continued to push progressive organizations to pay greater attention to the gendered and racial dimensions of free trade policies and to foster cross-border alliances. While they did not succeed in getting powerful national organizations like the AFL-CIO, Sierra Club, or Public Citizen to recognize how issues like domestic violence and immigration intertwined with free trade policies, labor rights, and the environment, by banning together, they were able to educate the US public about these issues and articulate a global solidarity approach to confronting them.

A Legacy of Contention

In 1971, Ralph Nader founded Public Citizen to lobby for the rights of consumers against large corporations and public institutions. As an advocacy organization, the group lobbied congress, brought lawsuits, conducted research and public education, and savvily engaged the media to promote their campaigns. However, while PC focused on issues like corporate globalization, poverty, and environmental destruction, which have the most devastating impacts on communities of color, rarely did the group mention the racial dimensions of these issues. This colorblindness reflected Ralph Nader’s history over the course of the 1990s. When he ran for president in 1996, Nader refused to condemn Proposition 209, which sought to end affirmative action in California. Nader responded to critics by saying, “I’ve come to believe that in a political campaign, if you don’t focus on basic, fundamental, democracy issues and corporate power, the media will scatter you in terms of other issues.” As one commenter at the time put it, for Ralph Nader, “racism is apparently an addendum to ‘real’ social justice issues.”¹

¹ Vanessa Daniel, “Ralph Nader’s Racial Blindspot,” *ColorLines*, 17 August 2000.

National environmental organizations like the Sierra Club had their own histories of race-based exclusivity. John Muir, who founded the Sierra Club in 1892, embodied the racist and classist origins of the conservationist movement.² His writings frequently drew on racial stereotypes about Native Americans, African Americans and Latinx.³ Muir was also friends with people like Henry Fairfield Osborn, who was not only the head of the New York Zoological Society and a board member for the American Museum of Natural History, but was also a co-founder of the American Eugenics Society. Other early leaders of the organization, such as David Starr Jordan, were outspoken proponents of white supremacy and eugenics. Jordan helped found the Human Betterment Foundation, whose research served to underlie Nazi Germany's eugenics laws.⁴ Over the course of the century, the Sierra Club did not expand much beyond its white upper- and middle-class origins, as membership continued to be based on exclusionary practices requiring new members be sponsored by existing ones. These practices allowed for the continued red-lining of non-white candidates. In the 1950s, such racial exclusions became explicit when the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club enacted a policy specifically barring African Americans from joining.⁵

Even with the explosive growth of the environmental movement in the 1970s, membership in the organization remained largely white. In 1972, the Sierra Club found in a poll

² For more on the role of race in the environmental movement, see: Dorceta E. Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection* (Duke University Press, Durham: 2016); Ronald Sandler and Phaedra C. Pezzullo, *Environmental Justice and Environmentalism: The Social Justice Challenge to the Environmental Movement* (MIT Press, Cambridge: 2007); Carolyn Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors* (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill: 2014).

³ Jedediah Purdy, "Environmentalism's Racist History," *The New Yorker*, 13 August 2015; See also, Kristen Spicer, "'A Nation of Imbeciles': The Human Betterment Foundation's Propaganda for Eugenics Practices in California," *Voces Novae* 7:1 (2018), 109-130.

⁴ Michael Brune, "Pulling Down Our Monuments," *Sierra Club*, 22 July 2020.

⁵ Hop Hopkins, "How the Sierra Club's History with Immigrant Rights Is Shaping Our Future," *Sierraclub.org*. 2 November 2018. <https://www.sierraclub.org/articles/2018/11/how-sierra-club-s-history-immigrant-rights-shaping-our-future>.

of its members that forty percent were “strongly opposed” to the organization concerning itself with “the conservation problems” of “special groups” like the “urban poor and ethnic minorities” and only fifteen percent supported the move.⁶ Furthermore, in the 1980s and early 1990s, the Sierra Club embraced English-only legislation and other laws aimed at curbing Latin American immigration, such as the 1994 Proposition 187, an immigration restriction bill focused on denying public services to undocumented people in California.⁷

In the 1990s, national environmental groups were further hampered by issues of respectability. In the context of “environmental extremism” and “eco-terrorism,” national environmental organizations like the Sierra Club sought to avoid the “taint” of radical politics. In the 1990s, “eco-terrorism,” or crimes committed to save wildlife and their habitats, became a household name, following headlines about groups like the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) for burning ski resorts and building projects and bombing research facilities and timber operations.⁸

In 1992, PC began its Citizens Trade Campaign (CTC) to protest the North American Free Trade Agreement and subsequent proposed free trade deals. CTC was a broad coalition including labor unions, consumer groups, environmental organizations, and religious groups.⁹ It included organizations like the United Methodist Church, Friends of the Earth, and the Teamsters and Steelworkers unions.¹⁰ However, this coalition left out a key section of

⁶ Jedediah Purdy, “Environmentalism’s Racist History,” *The New Yorker*, 13 August 2015.

⁷ Eric D. Larson, “Anxieties of Empire: Class, Race, Nation, and the Roots of the Anti-Neoliberal Globalization Movement in the US and Mexico, 1987-2003,” A Dissertation for the Program of American Civilization at Brown University, 2011.

⁸ For example, see, Robert Sullivan, “The Face of Eco-Terrorism,” *The New York Times*, 20 December 1998; James Brooke, “Group Claims Responsibility for Blazes at Vail Resort,” *The New York Times*, 22 October 1998; Timothy Egan, “6 Arrested Years After Ecoterrorist Acts,” *The New York Times*, 9 December 2005.

<https://www.nytimes.com/topic/organization/earth-liberation-front>.

⁹ *Public Citizen: The Sentinel of Democracy* (Washington DC: Public Citizen Foundation) 2016.

¹⁰ Steven Pearlstein, “Protest’s Architect ‘Gratified,’” *The Washington Post*, 2 December 1999.

environmental activists, mostly led by women and people of color, known as the environmental justice movement.

Since at least the early 1980s, people of color led environmental groups promoted an “environmental justice” agenda that was much broader than the focus of national (majority white, middle class) environmental organizations like the Sierra Club, who fixated on preserving wildlife and their habitats. Environmental justice organizations adopted a much broader understanding, outlined in the “Principles of Environmental Justice” created at the 1991 People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held in Washington DC. The year before the event, organizers sent letters to the “Group of 10” major environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club and Audubon Society, urging them to take up a discussion of the role of race in their organizations. When their efforts went unanswered, organizers began planning for a national summit of people of color led environmental organizations.¹¹

At the summit, 300 African American, Latino, Native and Asian Americans from all fifty states as well as delegates from Puerto Rico, Canada, Central and South America gathered to discuss the most critical environmental issues of the day. For many people of color in the movement, “the environment” was a broadly defined concept, incorporating issues related to economics and labor, public health and consumption, militarism, transportation and housing, and land and sovereignty rights.¹² Conference-goers established a set of principles outlining the main concepts of “Environmental Justice,” which included seventeen platforms relating to ecological destruction, discrimination in public policy, renewable energy, toxic dumping, worker safety, experimental medical and reproductive procedures tested on people of color, multinational

¹¹ Jeff Chang and Lucia Hwang, “ ‘It’s A Survival Issue’: The Environmental Justice Movement Faces the New Century,” *ColorLines* 3:2 (Summer, 2000). <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45/290.html>.

¹² Dana Alston, “The Summit: Transforming a Movement,” *RP&E*, 17:1 (Spring 2010).

corporations, and militarization.¹³ As one participant explained, “environmental issues are not just a matter of preserving ancient forests or defending whales.” While participants recognized the importance of saving endangered species and preserving wildlife habitats, it was also clear to them that people “living in communities of color are endangered species too.” As such, environmental concerns were “immediate survival issues.”¹⁴ In particular, conference-goers highlighted the issue of toxic-dumping, a practice of waste disposal of unsafe chemicals near communities of color.¹⁵ While national environmental organizations popularized the “Not in my backyard” slogan in response to the issue, environmental justice advocates said, “Not in anyone’s backyard.”¹⁶

Feminists were a vital part of these efforts from the get-go. Environmental justice organizations grew out of the intersections of labor and environmental concerns as workers, many of them immigrant or indigenous women, got together to demand jobs free from exposure to toxic chemicals with safer conditions, fair pay and wages, and an end to workplace harassment. While not explicitly feminist, as many women of color did not feel an affinity for the term that they associated with white bourgeoisie women, they nonetheless pursued feminist objectives and, in the words of Elizabeth Martinez, they lived “objectively feminist lives.”¹⁷ Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ), was involved in these early efforts to promote an environmental justice framework. In one of its founding documents,

¹³ Delegates to the First People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, “The Principles of Environmental Justice,” Washington DC, October 1991. <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/ej-principles.pdf>.

¹⁴ Alston.

¹⁵ Dorceta E. Taylor, “Race, Class, Gender and American Environmentalism,” US Department of Agriculture, 2002.

¹⁶ Kristine Wong, “The Showdown Before Seattle,” in *The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization*, eds. Eddie Yuen, George Katsiaficas, and Daniel Burton Rose (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2001): 215-224. 220.

¹⁷ Lisa Levenstein, *They Didn’t See Us Coming: The Hidden History of Feminism in the Nineties* (New York: Basic Books, 2020). 142.

SNEEJ made its feminist goals explicit, writing that women, especially women of color, were the “poorest of the poor” and bore the greatest burdens of ecological and economic injustices.

SNEEJ, like many organizations rooted in working class neighbourhoods, reflected the realities of the communities it was imbedded in, as immigrant working class women were the ones already “leading the fight.”¹⁸

Feminist environmental justice advocates worked over the course of the 1980s and 1990s to broaden the understanding of “environmental issues.” They explained how issues like the mass incarceration of black and brown people was of environmental concern. For instance, in 1985, Chicana women formed the grassroots community group Mothers of East LA (MELA) to protest the building of a new prison in the East Los Angeles community. They argued that the over-policing of communities of color and the over-representation of non-white people in the prison system represented an environmental threat.¹⁹ They saw the environment not as something “out there,” but rather “right here,” in the home, in the workplace, and in their communities. Even more, as prisons were frequently built on or near toxic waste sites, incarcerated people often lacked access to clean air or drinking water.²⁰ In a battle that took over a decade, hundreds of mothers, often with their children alongside them, marched weekly, traveled to the state capital, and held candlelight services to successfully stop the building of the new prison. In response to the crack cocaine epidemic that swept their community in the 1980s,

¹⁸ Levenstein, 146.

¹⁹ Rose Braz and Craig Gilmore, “Joining Forces: Prisons and Environmental Justice in Recent California Organizing,” *Radical History Review*, 96:95 (2006): 95-111.

²⁰ David Pellow, “Struggles for Environmental Justice in US Prisons and Jails,” *Antipode* 53:1 (2021).

they argued it was a public health concern, not a criminal issue. They also successfully prevented the building of both an oil pipeline and a toxic waste incinerator in their neighborhood.²¹

In Seattle, there was a strong grassroots environmental justice movement, led by the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (CCEJ). Founded in 1993, CCEJ was the first environmental justice organization in the Seattle area. It was a “people of color led multi-ethnic nonprofit” that focused on “social, economic, and environmental health issues that disproportionately affect women, children, people of color, immigrants, and low-income people.” The goal of the organization was to create a community-based coalition to advocate for environmental justice issues.²² Through flyers, pamphlets, published materials, formal speaking engagements, door-to-door campaigns, education events, forums, and workshops, CCEJ sought to provide evidence of how and why the environment was a racial and economic issue. CCEJ shared research such as the 1987 United Church of Christ’s Commission for Racial Justice’s “Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States” report, which found race to be the “most significant factor in determining the siting of hazardous waste facilities across the country.”²³ Another study of 64 different cases of environmental threats to human safety found “people of color and low-income communities were at the greatest risk.” CCEJ promoted these issues through community education efforts at neighborhood group meetings, schools, churches, and

²¹ Mary Pardo, “Mexican American Women Grassroots Community Activists: ‘Mothers of East Los Angeles,’” *Frontiers* 11:1 (1990), 1-7; Stephanie O’Neill, “Mothers of East LA,” *Living on Earth*, 9 April 1993; Flyer, “Mothers of East Los Angeles,” July 2004, Los Angeles, CA; David Pellow, “Struggles for Environmental Justice in US Prisons and Jails,” *Antipode* 53:1 (2021).

²² Letter from Hazel Wolf to Grant Gallup, 1 August 1999, Hazel Wolf Papers, Box 1, Acc. No. 3647-005, HBCL.

²³ Commission for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ, “Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites,” New York, 1987.

community centers, and created an Environmental Justice Library with videos, books, news articles, reports and newsletters all free to the public.²⁴

In 1994, CCEJ held a conference to link community-based neighborhood groups and residents to the larger environmental movement. The February 1994 “What’s Actually in Our Backyard?” conference drew a diverse mix of 200 people, including legislators, Native American activists, ecofeminists, people from the community, and environmental groups. The workshops were devoted to finding common interests between these groups. One session revealed the issue of toxic pollution and dumping in the Duwamish River, which ran through a mostly Southeast Asian immigrant neighborhood. Local residents nonetheless fished and swam in the chemical-ridden river, as they knew nothing of the problem. As a result of the conference, this local coalition of activists set to work developing an education and advocacy campaign around the issue.²⁵

One person who attended that conference was African American environmental justice feminist Yalonda Sinde, who would go on to become a founding board member and later the Executive Director of CCEJ, a position she held for ten years. Sinde was born and raised in Seattle by working-class parents. Her mother worked as a hairdresser and her father worked for the railroad service Amtrak. Her father’s on the job struggles inspired much of her later activism. As Sinde recalled, “Watching what my father endured as a black man in the 1960’s and 1970’s as a kid, I learned to stand up for what is right. My dad, like many black men endured a lot of racial harassment on the job, and he dealt with it so he could feed his family.”²⁶

²⁴ Letter from Irene Hull to Leo, 30 September 1999, Hazel Wolf Papers, Box 1, Acc. No. 3647-005, HBCL.

²⁵ Starbuck, 253.

²⁶ S. Charles-Ford, “Yalonda Sinde (1963-),” *BlackPast*, 11 January 2008. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/sinde-yalonda-1963/>.

In the fall of 1998, under the leadership of Yalonda Sinde, CCEJ began its the “Stop the Burning!” campaign. They urged the Department of Veterans Affairs’ medical center in the area to shut down its medical waste incinerator, which produced dioxin, a carcinogenic toxin. Residents of the Beacon Hill neighborhood, an area where most were low-income people of color, joined CCEJ in this campaign. Through community strategy meetings, door-to-door education campaigns in the Beacon Hill neighborhood, a series of forums, public protests, and the use of the media to lobby policymakers and legislators, CCEJ persuaded the VA to close the facility.²⁷ In this campaign, CCEJ connected the local issue to global ones, recognizing that the World Bank promoted policies encouraging hospitals to incinerate waste (as it is the most cost-effective), rather than look for safer disposal methods. On the campaign’s success, “Our local victory,” CCEJ organizer Kristine Wong recalled, “had a global impact.”²⁸

In the lead up to the Seattle WTO protests, feminists on the margins of the labor and environmental movements continued to build on this legacy of struggle.

Beyond “Teamsters and Turtles”

In January 1999, when the WTO announced it planned to hold its 3rd Ministerial meeting in Seattle, WA, local activists began meeting to organize a protest against the institution under the umbrella group People for Fair Trade Network. Public Citizen sent their Field Director Mike Dolan and Director of Global Trade Watch Lori Wallach to help organize, who then hooked up with Seattle resident and veteran free trade opponent Sally Soriano, coordinator for the Washington State Fair Trade Campaign. Dolan came from a background in union organizing and public interest lobbying. He described his approach to organizing as “hierarchical,” demanding

²⁷ Letter from Joshua Karliner to Hazel Wolf, 20 May 1999, Hazel Wolf Paper, Box 1, Acc. No. 3647-005, HBCL.

²⁸ Wong, 215.

“accountability” from organizers. “I want numbers,” he explained, “I want updates. And I’m going to get it.”²⁹ For many local activists, this approach ignored an important legacy in Seattle organizing, as Anne Slater of Seattle Radical Women explained there was a “history” of “debate” and “open discussion” among coalitions in Seattle.³⁰

Dolan and Wallach knew they would have to play a careful balancing act between the various groups involved in the planning process. Many grassroots groups favored a no to WTO message and pushed for direct-actions, or the use of public forms of protest rather than negotiations to achieve change. They viewed the WTO as an institution that favored wealthy nations and individuals at the expense of poor ones. National groups like the Sierra Club and Public Citizen favored a “fair trade” message of reforming the WTO to give labor, environmental, and consumer organizations greater negotiating power within its arbitration process. Ahead of the WTO protests, the Public Citizen dominated P4FT network sought to balance the competing interests of national organizations and the much more diverse local ones. It required walking a fine line.³¹ For many grassroots feminists and people of color, leaders of the local protest coalition like Dolan erred on the side of favoring these national organizations.

News reports celebrated the Public Citizen dominated People for Fair Trade Network for its role in forging the so-called “Teamsters and Turtles” alliance, which successfully bridged two groups long at odds with one another. Workers and environmentalists often clashed (or were pitted against each other), as seen in fights over logging. While environmentalists protested deforestation and habitat loss, workers in the logging industry felt those efforts threatened their

²⁹ Mike Dolan interview by Jeremy Simer, November 10, 1999, OHP.

³⁰ Anne Slater, interview by Gillian Murphy, December 12, 2000, OHP.

³¹ For more on the role of Public Citizen in balancing these organizations with differing viewpoints, see Paul K. Adler, *The Fair Globalizers: U.S. NGO Activism from the 1970s to the Battle in Seattle* (Under contract with the University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming).

own jobs and livelihoods. By framing environmental protections as costing jobs, industry leaders found a useful tool for separating the two groups to stave off further worker or environmental protections.

To forge that alliance, P4FT materials tended to highlight several WTO rulings, especially the so-called “Dolphin Tuna,” “Beef Hormone,” and “Shrimp and Turtle” cases. In 1997, a WTO ruling overturned the US ban on tuna caught using nets that were deadly to dolphins.³² That same year, the WTO reversed a European Union ban on beef imports that used hormones, which some studies linked to causing cancer.³³ In 1998, the WTO struck down a part of the US Endangered Species Act that required shrimp fishers to use methods that did not threaten endangered sea turtles. The Endangered Species Act barred several nations who used these methods from importing shrimp, a ban the WTO overruled.³⁴ These cases demonstrated how the WTO undermined national sovereignty and democracy by overturning democratically enacted environmental regulations and protections. They appeared repeatedly in flyers, speeches, media interviews, educational materials and other publicity put out by P4FT. Such cases resonated with many white middle-class activists.

However, for many women, people of color, and working-class people, the publicity surrounding these cases ignored key aspects of how the WTO’s rulings impacted them. For instance, in the fall of 1999, P4FT sponsored an education event in Rainier Valley, one of the largest communities of color in the city. Kristine Wong, a Chinese American community

³² World Trade Organization, “Mexico etc versus US: ‘tuna-dolphin,’” https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/envir_e/edis04_e.htm.

³³ Michael Nepveux, “Where’s the (Hormone-Free) Beef?” *The American Farm Bureau Federation*, 25 March 2019. <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/wheres-the-hormone-free-beef>.

³⁴ American Lands Alliance, “The World Trade Organization,” packet, WSC, Box 1, Folder “Organizing Packets,” Acc. No. 5177-003.

organizer with the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (CCEJ) recalled of the event: “As soon as I walked into the room, it was clear that, despite the demographics of the neighborhood, the atmosphere was not inviting to a variety of races and ethnicities.” There were no materials that would resonate with people of color, women, or the working class. Instead, the event focused on two major issues that demonstrated the WTO’s erosion of national sovereignty, the “Shrimp and Turtle” and “Dolphin Tuna” cases. At the event, Wong noticed the only other two people of color present, a young Latina woman with two kids and an African American woman, were not engaged. After a performance by two white women playing instruments resembling ukuleles, “both of the women of color politely gathered up their belongings and left the room.”³⁵ Such inattention to issues related to race reflected both the racial imbalance of the almost all-white P4FT staff, as well as the larger inattention to these issues of national organizations like Public Citizen, the Sierra Club and AFL-CIO. For feminists like Wong, P4FT organizers ignored an important framework for understanding environmental issues.

Local feminists were critical of P4FT’s nationalistic framework for understanding key issues. They thought the widely distributed “Citizen’s Guide to the WTO,” a pamphlet that played a major role in articulating the key issues of the day, epitomized the limitations of the P4FT’s focus on the WTO as an erosion of democracy. Yalonda Sinde and Kristine Wong of CCEJ pointed out that the title’s use of the term “citizen” omitted many people of color who were immigrants or refugees denied legal citizenship and ignored the ways in which people of color were already denied full access to democracy.³⁶ Another prominent flyer put out by the

³⁵ Wong, 217.

³⁶ Kristine Wong, “The Showdown Before Seattle: Race, Class, and the Framing of a Movement,” *The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization*, Eddie Yuen, et. al. Eds. (Soft Skull Press: New York, 2001), 215-224. 217.

Sierra Club glorified the American Revolution, depicting a scene reminiscent of the Boston Tea Party with the slogan “No globalization without representation.” When an African American friend of Wong’s saw the flyer, she remarked that the picture reminded her of the days of slavery.³⁷

Despite their experience and successes in the local environmental justice movement, CCEJ (and other grassroots organizations like it) were marginalized and excluded from the planning process for the WTO protests. Kristine Wong of CCEJ saw the mobilizing in Seattle ahead of the WTO as an important opportunity for more collaboration between local activists and offered a chance to “build an inclusive movement” that connected struggles at the local and global levels. However, these activists charged that organizations like Public Citizen and the Sierra Club “were not addressing the connections between WTO policies and the daily lives of the working-class and communities of color, much less recognizing or including grassroots groups as an integral part of their leadership.”³⁸ For Wong, this “elite supergroup” had the financial and political power and media attention that enabled them to dominate planning.³⁹

When Wong attempted to get involved in these planning efforts to put forth a global environmental justice framework, these national organizations stymied or ignored her requests. For example, Wong learned planners had divided each day of the weeklong protests to focus on a specific set of issues, with Monday November 29th devoted to discussing environmental and public health issues, Tuesday to human and labor rights, Wednesday to women’s issues, Thursday to food and agricultural production, and Friday to corporate responsibility.⁴⁰ Wong

³⁷ Wong, 219.

³⁸ Wong, 215.

³⁹ Wong, 218.

⁴⁰ People for Fair Trade/Network Opposed to the WTO, “The Citizen’s Calendar: World Trade Organization Ministerial,” Seattle, 1999. In Author’s Possession.

saw this segmented approach as problematic. By dividing issues and setting them to specific dates, the agenda furthered the notion these issues were distinct. Nevertheless, she attempted to get involved. She received no return call from Public Citizen, but the Sierra Club responded with a promise to include her in the planning meetings. When that did not happen, CCEJ decided to put on a separate event focused on environmental justice and the dioxin issue to illustrate “how local environmental justice struggles are connected to global ones.”⁴¹ When Wong began looking for a downtown area to hold the event, she learned that Public Citizen had already reserved all the available locations, forcing her to contact the group to request a space. Wong recalled, “the fact that I had to ask a Washington D.C. based group for permission” to access a space to educate the public about struggles “in my own city” was “ironic and disturbing.”⁴²

Under the face of mounting pressure by local groups like LELO, Seattle Radical Women, and CCEJ to diversify the P4FT and their outreach efforts, the network hired Lydia Cabasco to focus on education and outreach to communities of color in the city. Cabasco termed herself a “token-like” figure on the Fair-Trade staff, as “the only woman of color, only queer of color” she was “someone in a white institution with no institutional power.” Cabasco oversaw organizing both students and people of color, however, the P4FT staff granted her few resources and little support in those efforts.⁴³ Cabasco quipped that for the P4FT it was all about “turtles and beef.” She criticized the group for ignoring issues pertaining to people of color, such as the mass arrests of black people or toxic dumping. She stated, “people were talking about the environment, they were talking about forest preservation, but they weren't talking about environmental racism.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Wong, 218.

⁴² Wong, 218.

⁴³ Cabasco, OHP.

⁴⁴ Cabasco OHP.

Many local feminists were also frustrated by the P4FT's framing of the WTO around a message of reform. The Sierra Club and AFL-CIO argued for a greater bargaining position for labor and environmental groups within the WTO's arbitration process, while many locals were much more virulent in their critiques, calling for an end to the organization — the “No to WTO” position. Lydia Cabasco remembered feeling frustration with Mike Dolan, the field Director for Global Trade Watch, in particular. In one instance, he instructed her to remove a “No to WTO!” sign she had hung in her office at the P4FT network, telling her, “We've secured the left,” and now needed to “secure” those in the “middle and the mainstream.” Cabasco pointed out that Dolan's definition of “the left” did not include grassroots groups, particularly those in black and brown neighborhoods. Without outreach to communities of color or low-income neighborhoods, Cabasco charged they had a “cracker-ass movement.”⁴⁵

Even Sally Soriano of Public Citizen bristled under national leaders' reluctance to openly criticize free trade policies. Soriano worked in the late 1980s for Jesse Jackson's primary campaign known as the “rainbow coalition” and spent the nineties in various battles against free trade proposals, first against NAFTA, and later against the proposed “fast-tracking” measure, which would have allowed a US president to bi-pass congress to unilaterally approve trade deals, and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), a global free trade agreement that would have allowed corporations to operate in any country without subjecting them to that nation's environment, public health, or labor laws.⁴⁶ Ahead of the Seattle protests, Soriano put together an informational packet called “No to WTO, Yes to Democracy!” that urged readers to join the global coalition of “progressive people” to “protest, strategize, and educate” others on the ways

⁴⁵ Cabasco OHP.

⁴⁶ Michelle Sforza-Roderick, Scott Nova and Mark Weisbrot, “A Concise Guide to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment—Supporters' and Opponents' Views,” Center for Public Policy, New York, 1999.

the “global economy affects us all” and how “all of us” affect the environment.⁴⁷ The packet included a demand for democratic accountability within the WTO and explained how the WTO’s record elevated corporate power over that of nation-states. However, when she sent the packet back to DC for Public Citizen approval, they met Soriano’s “No to WTO” framework with a resounding “no way.” PC organizers from Washington DC like Lori Wallach feared publicly voicing a position of dismantling the WTO would scare off more conservative national organizations like the Sierra Club. Soriano herself almost left to form her own “Network Opposed to the WTO,” but two fellow activists she met, Sara McElroy and David Korten, persuaded her coalition-building required compromise.⁴⁸

For Soriano, the network achieved that compromise at a May 22nd meeting of the local protest coalition at Teamster Hall. Here, the group tried to determine a name for themselves. While some argued for a strong critique of free trade and opted for the name “Network Opposed to WTO,” one attendee and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) member suggested the organization should be “for” something and offered the name “People for Fair Trade.” Northwest Labor and Employment Office (LELO) member Tyree Scott and Anne Slater and Heidi Durham from Seattle Radical Women (SRW) objected and argued for a strong oppositional stance against the WTO. Guerry Hodderson from SRW who also attended the early meetings recalled: “The disputes centered around fair trade (AFL-CIO/Clinton position vis a vis WTO) and a radical, environmental (and sometimes anticapitalist) position of No to WTO.”⁴⁹ Soriano and others defended the “People for Fair Trade” moniker, not because they disagreed

⁴⁷ Janet Thomas, *The Battle in Seattle: The True Story Behind and Beyond the WTO Demonstrations* (Fulcrum Publishing, Colorado: 2000) 123.

⁴⁸ Thomas, 124.

⁴⁹ Guerry Hodderson email to John Tully, “Lessons of the anti-WTO organizing experience in Seattle,” 23 February 2000. In author’s possession.

with the anti-WTO perspective, but thought that it was “important to adopt a broader name so that this committee would be seen as the coordinating body of all anti-WTO activities.” They did not want to take the chance of offending other groups or individuals coming to town because of the protests.⁵⁰ After two hours of debate, activists failed to settle on a name. Many left the meeting in frustration. One month later, at the next gathering, the debate continued. To avoid a split, the committee decided to go with both names: “WTO Host Committee for People for Fair Trade and Network Opposed to the WTO (P4FT),” a move only endorsed by one-third of those present.⁵¹

For other feminists, P4FT’s inattention to issues relating to women and communities of color pushed them to pursue that work on their own. Lydia Cabasco saw P4FT’s definition of “labor issues” as too limited, catering to the AFL-CIO because of its resources in terms of mobilizing people and raising funds, as well as its close affinity to powerful Democratic leaders in DC like President Bill Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore.⁵² Over time, she began to develop an analysis of the connections between labor, free trade, and immigration. At a 1999 meeting at the Vancouver Canada Philippine Women’s Center, she heard Filipina feminist and founder of GABNet Ninotchka Rosca deliver a broad analysis of free trade that incorporated issues ranging from tourism, sex trafficking, immigration and migration, and militarization.⁵³ Cabasco also conducted her own research that taught her how free trade policies worked hand in hand with immigration laws to first force people in poor countries to migrate to wealthy ones like the US in

⁵⁰ Heidi Durham, “Meeting Report WTO Organizing Committee,” 22 May and 26 June 1999. In author’s possession.

⁵¹ Heidi Durham, “Meeting Report WTO Organizing Committee,” 22 May and 26 June 1999. In author’s possession.

⁵² Eric Larson, “Anxieties of Empire: Class, Race, Nation and the Roots of the Anti-Neoliberal Globalization Movement in the US and Mexico, 1987-2009,” Dissertation, Brown University, May 2011.

⁵³ Braden Goyette, “Interview With Ninotchka Rosca,” *Maisonneuve*, 16 May 2010.

search of employment. Once they arrived, immigration laws kept this vulnerable group more susceptible to exploitation by denying them the rights and protections of citizenship. Most notably, many of these migrant workers were women of color, who left their children in their home countries to come to the US to serve as nannies and caregivers for upper-class and middle-class white families.

As Cabasco developed this broad analysis of free trade policies and their impact on women around the world, she created popular education toolkits to educate the public on these issues. One toolkit included a “Sweating it Out with the WTO” trainer’s guide, where following a brief explanation of free trade policies and institutions, and how these policies effect women around the world, it included an activity where participants were asked to imagine themselves as a woman worker in the Bataan free trade zone in the Philippines, describing the poor living and unsafe working conditions, long hours, and low wages for workers. “Don’t complain,” the instructions read, “you may get beaten. Don’t even try to organize. There are armed soldiers at the gate.” At the same time, the activity also included reminders of how these women fought back. The outline explained that while “these women experience the harshest consequences of free trade” the fight for change was “coming from them.” Whether it was women workers banding together to meet production quotas, organizations like the Kilusang ng Manggawang Kababaihan (KMK) from the Philippines that provided trainings and programs for women to organize themselves, a co-op founded by women workers in Sri Lanka with its own Legal Advice Center that offered free legal advice for women, or the Women’s Center in Malaysia founded to provide legal and medical assistance as well as job training for women workers in free trade zones, these women were fighting back and served as an important source of

inspiration for activists in the US.⁵⁴ The activity also included examples of how the plight of these women from poor countries were intertwined with issues facing women in the US. The brief explained how the prison industry's reliance on inmate labor for as little as .30 cents an hour while the industry's profits were untaxed was strikingly similar to the conditions for workers in free trade zones abroad. However, when Cabasco tried to get members of the Fair-Trade staff to support these ventures, they ignored her requests for aid and additional resources.⁵⁵

Feminists at the grassroots labor organization the Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO) were also frustrated by the outreach and mobilization efforts pursued by the P4FT. Filipina American feminist Cindy Domingo described how she and others felt discouraged as they tried to raise the issue of the whiteness of the P4FT coalition. They critiqued the coalition's outreach efforts for ignoring communities of color and asked for money and resources to pursue such efforts. They were also concerned that the coalition ignored important issues related to women and globalization and charged they were given false promises that there were plans to address these issues. Domingo and others kept attending P4FT meetings over the summer and repeatedly asked questions like "Where is the local outreach work? Who is doing the local outreach work? Where are the resources going to?" Domingo recalled that they "continued to hit . . . a brick wall."⁵⁶

Many of these feminists felt mainstream WTO organizers ignored important issues relating to women, people of color and poor people, both in the US and around the world.

Although the P4FT designated Wednesday December 1st as "Women, Democracy and

⁵⁴ "Sweatshop Labor: Women and Development Outline," WSC Box 1, Folder "Campus Organizing," Acc. No. 5177-003, HBCL.

⁵⁵ Lydia Cabasco to A. Jarman, "Re: WTO Curriculum," July 30, 1999, Box 2, Folder 27, Accession No. 5177-003, WSC, HBCL.

⁵⁶ Domingo and Bocanegra interview OHP.

Development Day,” many of them did not want their concerns confined to a single day and accused the P4FT of continuing to marginalize their struggles. Throughout the summer, Domingo asked P4FT leaders like Mike Dolan why there was not more attention paid to women and globalization in the week-long events? In response, Dolan told her, “Oh, somebody . . . has been appointed to help organize this all-day conference on women.” However, when Domingo tried to find further information about the plans or reach out to organizers to get involved, she was unable to find any information or anyone who could help. Even more, because grassroots feminists like Domingo and others at LELO were involved in community organizing around women’s issues for years, it made sense to them that they should lead local efforts in these areas ahead of the WTO. However, when Domingo attempted to get resources or information to further their local outreach efforts, they reported P4FT leaders like Mike Dolan “purposefully kept information” from them and gave them false promises to give them money to support their work when they had “no intentions of ever giving us money to help us organize.”⁵⁷ When she was able to find information about events for “Women and Democracy Day,” she was disturbed to learn that no “rank and file women” were involved in any of the panels and instead were a “lot of intellectuals and researchers” addressing the audience.⁵⁸

Domingo and others believed that attention to issues like immigration and women’s rights would mobilize more people ahead of the protests. In what they considered the organizing opportunity of a lifetime, the P4FT’s failure to focus on issues like immigration that would draw out people beyond the middle-class white male environmental movement and mostly white male trade unionists was a missed opportunity. Even more, Domingo and others at the WVC stressed

⁵⁷ Domingo and Bocanegra interview OHP.

⁵⁸ Domingo and Bocanegra interview OHP.

the importance of connecting the struggles of workers in the US to workers' struggles abroad, especially for women. However, it was not surprising that advocacy organizations like Public Citizen or the Sierra Club ignored how trade related to immigration issues. Throughout the 1990s, PC founder Ralph Nader called for increased militarization at the US/Mexico border, allegedly to "protect" the jobs of working-class white people in the US. While feminists like Cabasco argued that trade policies like NAFTA created conditions in countries like Mexico that forced people to migrate in search of work, national organizations like Public Citizen, remained ambivalent and/or largely ignorant to the plight of immigrants from Mexico.⁵⁹

The Sierra Club had a similar checkered past relating to immigration. For most of the 20th century, the organization cast immigration as a population control issue. It argued immigration-fueled population growth was a threat to the environment, and as such, needed to be curbed. They claimed immigrants tended to be of child-bearing age and had higher rates of fertility than the native-born population, causing population increases that would strain natural resources. In 1996, the Sierra Club shifted its policy and embraced one of neutrality, calling for all members to refrain from speaking about issues related to immigration. In 1998, in direct response to the neutrality policy, a faction called Sierrans for Population Stabilization (SUSPS), which included Jon Tanton, whom the Southern Poverty Law Center deemed the "racist architect" of the modern anti-immigrant movement, put forth a controversial ballot measure that would revert the organization to its stance of opposition to immigration.⁶⁰ While the measure failed in a 60/40 split, the group remained deeply divided over whether or not to oppose or remain neutral to

⁵⁹ Eric Larson, "Anxieties of Empire: Class, Race, Nation and the Roots of the Anti-Neoliberal Globalization Movement in the US and Mexico, 1987-2009," Dissertation, Brown University, May 2011.

⁶⁰ Hop Hopkins, "How the Sierra Club's History with Immigrant Rights Is Shaping Our Future," *Sierraclub.org*, 2 November 2018. <https://www.sierraclub.org/articles/2018/11/how-sierra-club-s-history-immigrant-rights-shaping-our-future>.

immigration issues.⁶¹ Such attitudes towards immigrants made it unlikely that either the Sierra Club or Public Citizen would take up immigration as a central trade issue.

Separate Organizing

As the summer went on, many local feminists' frustrations with the P4FT network's lack of outreach or education about issues relating to women and people of color reached a breaking point. They began to turn to forming their own coalitions and alliances with more like-minded folks. As a result, they were able to expand the critique of free trade to include issues like toxic dumping, immigration, and domestic violence. These analyses allowed them to draw a more diverse mix of people, especially women, immigrant and communities of color, and the poor.

By the end of the summer, Lydia Cabasco's frustration with the P4FT prompted her to turn to other avenues of mobilizing communities of color and students. In July, she helped start the No to WTO Student Outreach Committee that involved students from the University of Washington, Seattle Central Community College, and several local high schools.⁶² The group worked to educate young people, particularly young people of color, about the consequences of free trade. For instance, on November 6th, Cabasco helped organize a student teach-in at Seattle Central Community College alongside African American community activist Hop Hopkins from the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (CCEJ). The event included educational workshops on women and international development by a representative from the Philippine Women's Center in Vancouver, BC. Hopkins gave a presentation on environmental racism and environmental justice. LELO representatives Ricardo Ortega and Susana Saravia presented on indigenous rights in the global economy. The event also included action-oriented workshops, like

⁶¹ Alice L. Clarke, "The Sierra Club and Immigration Policy: A Critique," *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 20:1 (March 2001): 19-28.

⁶² Cabasco interview OHP.

the Direct-Action Network's (DAN) puppet-making and theater activism training, a nonviolence training for demonstrators by K.L. Shannon from LELO, and a how to on do-it-yourself radio from Jeff Perlstein of the newly formed Independent Media Center. The teach-in also offered free lunch and live music.⁶³

Other feminists were likewise more successful in broadening the analysis of free trade issues when they pursued a separate organizing strategy. By October, feminists from LELO like Cindy Domingo reached a breaking point with the P4FT network. She finally told Mike Dolan of Public Citizen, "There is no use to being part of this coalition that you guys have," because "it is still lily white." Based on the networking and analysis they developed at the 1998 Seabeck conference (discussed in Chapter 2), LELO helped launch the Workers' Voices Coalition (WVC) to do the outreach to communities of color marginalized in the larger city-wide process and frame WTO issues in a way that resonate with women and people of color. As Domingo explained, "In the months leading up to the WTO, many of us realized that the voices of women, immigrants, and people of color were missing from the larger coalition being built city-wide and regionally."⁶⁴ In October, they left to pursue those efforts themselves.

The objective of the Workers Voice Coalition (WVC) was to incorporate marginalized voices within critiques of corporate globalization and privatization as pushed by the WTO. The WVC was made up of local activists and grassroots organizations who were marginalized in the planning process. The list of these groups read like a who's who of progressive organizations in Seattle. It included The Center for Women and Democracy at the University of Washington,

⁶³ No to WTO! Student Outreach Committee, "No! WTO teach-in : a youth activist training, by students, for students," 6 November 1999, Flyer, WSC, Accession No. 5177-003, Box 2, Folder 76.

⁶⁴ Tammy Luu, "LELO Launches Workers' Voices Coalition to Protest the WTO," Speaking for Ourselves to Each Other, newsletter, 3 (Winter 2000), CDP, Box 5, Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

Washington/Northern Idaho Church Women United, Committee Against Repression and for Democracy in Mexico, the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (CCEJ), The Independent Media Center, People for Justice in Chile, Seattle Columbia Committee, Seattle Young People's Project, Washington Alliance for Immigrant and Refugee Justice, and the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition.⁶⁵

Prior to the WTO show-down, the WVC “conducted extensive outreach and mobilization in local communities of color.”⁶⁶ In October, they held a weekend long retreat to develop popular education tools “to help ordinary workers expand their class analysis and understanding of the global economy” and a plan to “expand and strengthen” their grassroots fundraising efforts ahead of the WTO protest.⁶⁷ They focused on popular education and expanding community involvement because, in the words of Cindy Domingo, the WTO meeting in Seattle presented a “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to educate members of Seattle’s diverse communities about the links between globalization and free trade in developing countries and its impacts in our own backyard.”⁶⁸ Beginning in October, the WVC held WTO Strategy Workshops at many of their events where they urged members to help develop a plan for “engaging and involving” more “workers of color, women workers and unorganized workers” in WTO protest mobilization activities.⁶⁹ They also had a monthly radio show where they broadcast stories highlighting the

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “LELO’s Organizing Highlights July-December 1999,” CDP, Box 5, Folder “International Worker’s Forum,” Acc. No. 5651-001, SMCP.

⁶⁸ Cindy Domingo letter to Kathleen Hurtz, 29 October 1999, CDP, Box 7, Folder “Research Files: International Worker’s Conference,” Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

⁶⁹ LELO, “From Mexico City to the WTO: Workers Speak for Themselves About the Global Economy,” flyer, CDP, Box 16, Folder “Research Files: December 4th Conference,” Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

experiences of “people of color, women and ordinary workers” in the US and around the world.⁷⁰

In addition to wrangling with the AFL-CIO to get the international workers they brought to Seattle onto the stage at the labor rally, discussed in the previous chapter, the WVC also planned a workshop where the six women workers they invited from around the world could share their stories with the public. They wanted to highlight the ways in which the lives of these women workers from poor countries were fundamentally intertwined with those of people living in wealthy nations like the US. In a fundraising letter to Church Women United, Domingo urged, “We must ensure that the people most strongly effected by global economic policy—ordinary working people from third world communities both within and outside of the US—are not left out of the WTO activities.” The goal of these interactions was to encourage transnational solidarity, as Domingo explained, “We believe that through cross-border exchanges and solidarity efforts such as ours, working women in the United States will broaden their understanding and analysis of the problems they face” and will begin to see their own lives, and “plan their local actions” in a “more global framework.”⁷¹

One feminist organization avoided much of the frustration other feminists and people of color experienced working within the P4FT coalition by pursuing a separate organizing strategy almost immediately. As early as the 22 May P4FT meeting, where activists voted on the comprised name of the “People for Fair Trade/No to WTO! Network,” Heidi Durham of Seattle Radical Women wrote a memo to her fellow SRW members advising them to “gear” up to get

⁷⁰ LELO, “Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other,” radio program flyer, CDP, Box 5, Folder “Pre-WTO,” Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

⁷¹ Letter from various congress members to Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, 3 November 1993, CDP Box 8, Folder “Research Files: Working Women in Japan,” Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

their “political analysis out during the time the WTO are intown.”⁷² Durham argued that the “fair trade” position promoted by labor bureaucrats like AFL-CIO president John Sweeney or national advocacy organizations like Public Citizen, was the equivalent of “begging for crumbs” from the WTO’s table.⁷³ SRW members continued attending workshops, events, and meetings put on by the P4FT coalition to see who attended, gather information on what was planned and “provide an anticapitalist/pro-socialist feminist point of view.”⁷⁴ However, they did not volunteer for any leadership positions or steering committees. This was a conscious decision based on their awareness that the committees would not be in line with their oppositional stance on the WTO nor do enough outreach to women, communities of color or the poor.⁷⁵

Seattle Radical Women had a long history of this kind of organizing. It was founded as a grassroots socialist feminist organization that believed the leadership of working-class women, especially women of color, was necessary to achieve social change.⁷⁶ Since its founding in 1967, SRW participated in a wide variety of coalitions and alliances. They organized with the local Black Panther Party to help prevent police attacks on black militants. They joined the United Construction Workers in their battle for the hiring of people of color in the white-dominated trade industry. While founded by a group of mostly white women, key early members helped to expand SRW’s racial and sexual diversity. One important contributor was lesbian Chicana activist Yolanda Alaniz who joined the organization in 1974.⁷⁷

⁷² Heidi Durham “Meeting Report WTO Organizing Committee” 22 May and 26 June 1999. In author’s possession

⁷³ Heidi Durham “FSP Branch Meeting WTO Report.” 14 November 1999. In author’s possession.

⁷⁴ Heidi Durham “Meeting Report WTO Organizing Committee” 22 May and 26 June 1999. In author’s possession.

⁷⁵ Mike Dolan email to WTO-host list-serv, “WTO Host,” 4 March 1999. In author’s possession.

⁷⁶ Gina Petry, “Local Socialist Feminist Group Still Kicking at 50,” *South Seattle Emerald*, 3 October 2017. <https://southseattleemerald.com/2017/10/03/local-socialist-feminist-group-still-kicking-at-50/>.

⁷⁷ Matt Nagle, “Yolanda Alaniz: From farmworker to revolutionary—the making of a dynamic Chicana leader,” *Freedom Socialist*, 1992.

Alaniz was born in Texas but moved at a young age to the Yakima Valley region of Washington state where she and her family worked in the agricultural industry. She came from a family of activists as her mother was a major leader of farmworkers in Sunnyside and led a strike against Safeway alongside the Chicano labor leader Caesar Chavez to protest unsafe working conditions and low wages for the mainly immigrant farmworkers.⁷⁸ In 1969, she attended the University of Washington where she joined several Chicano rights organizations like MEChA and Las Chicanas and later graduated with a degree in journalism.⁷⁹

Alaniz first began working with members from SRW during the 1973 strike she helped lead with staff members at the University of Washington after it began a reclassification system that demoted the lowest paying staff members, most of whom were women of color. Her friend Monica Hill invited her to a meeting to discuss the upcoming policy change and plan a student and staff response. Alaniz recalled that while there was a diverse group in attendance, she was the only Latina. While initially Alaniz found working with what she saw as a white woman's organization like SRW as suspect, the members of SRW at this event shared what Alaniz found to be useful tactics and strategies for organizing a response to the discriminatory policy change at the University. Over the coming months, Alaniz continued to attend meetings with SRW where she met the organization's founder, Clara Fraser. Alaniz was impressed by Fraser's socialist feminist analysis as "ahead of her time." She recalled how "it was amazing" that the organization was committed to training women as leaders, which she felt was not something offered elsewhere, and it appealed to her because she wanted to be a leader. She recalled how Fraser was talking about "gay rights, unionism, women's leadership and race liberation way before anyone

⁷⁸ Oscar Chapa, "Yolanda Alaniz," *Chicana por mi Raza* Digital Memory Project, 2015.

⁷⁹ Yolanda Alaniz interview with Edgar Flores and Michael Schulze Oechtering Castenada, Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project.

else was.”⁸⁰ Soon, Alaniz helped to transform the feminist organization beyond its white working-class base. She urged other women she knew in the Chicana movement and elsewhere to join. In 1975 she helped launch the organization’s “Comrades of Color Caucus” and became its national coordinator. Through this group, Alaniz sought to “work with other members to educate” them about “racism, set policy and initiate theoretical writings on issues affecting people of color, and collectively strengthen each other’s leadership abilities.”⁸¹

Throughout its history, people like Alaniz encouraged SRW to maintain its international lens. For instance, in 1997, they sent an International Feminist Brigade to Cuba in order to attend the International Feminist Solidarity Conference in Havana hosted by The Federation of Cuban Women.⁸² Here, “Brigadistas” from the US, Australia, Canada, South Africa, and Cuba met to address the “interconnections between race, class, sex and sexuality” as well as the ways in which the “feminist and labor movements can increase solidarity” with Cubans, “especially its women and children who are hit hardest by the US blockade.” Attendees then signed on to a resolution of demands denouncing the blockade and declaring the “inalienable right of the Cuban people to establish the social, economic and political system they consider more consistent with their history and culture.”⁸³

Many of Radical Women’s members were also members other organizations, including labor unions, community groups, and LGBTQ rights organizations.⁸⁴ For example, in 1998

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Matt Nagle, “Yolanda Alaniz: From farmworker to revolutionary—the making of a dynamic Chicana leader,” *Freedom Socialist*, 1992.

⁸² Seattle Radical Women, “About Us: History,” <https://www.radicalwomen.org/intro.shtml>.

⁸³ Fax from International Feminist Brigade Coordinator to Seattle Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party, re: “International Feminist Solidarity Conference,” 29 September 1997, Tamara Turner Papers Box 2, Folder “Correspondence,” Acc. No. 6180-001, HBCL.

⁸⁴ Helen Gilbert, interview by author, September 2018, Seattle, WA.

Latina feminist Christina López joined the organization and served on its National Comrades of Color Caucus (which by then was a joint organization between both Seattle Radical Women and its sister organization the Freedom Socialist Party). López was also a member of the Chicano organization MEChA, a local community theater and gay rights group, and several unions, including the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers.⁸⁵

López was born in Phoenix, Arizona in 1969 where she learned from her mother about the importance of working to defend her community over issues like safe and affordable housing.⁸⁶ She began her activism in 1988 when she joined the Phoenix chapter of the Chicano student group MEChA to protest a proposed English-only law in the state. In 1992, she campaigned for presidential candidate Bill Clinton, specifically because she knew “we can’t allow (then President George H.W.) Bush another four years” because he will pass NAFTA “and that is bad for workers.” After Clinton won, and went on to not only pass NAFTA, but also other measures like welfare reform, López became “disillusioned” and “politically apathetic.”⁸⁷

In 1998, she moved to Seattle where she met several members of Seattle Radical Women and soon joined the organization. Throughout the summer-long WTO organizing, López attended a variety of events and workshops put on by various organizations, including faith-based groups like those that put on the Jubilee 2000, a coalition of religious organizations that called for the cancellation of the debts in nations in the Global South, and BAYAN, an alliance of workers’ and peasants’ organizations in the Philippines. She was struck by the ways in which

⁸⁵ Susan Williams and Megan Cornish, “Passion and principles: Introducing FSP candidates Stephen Durham and Christina López,” *Freedom Socialist*, February 2012.

⁸⁶ Megan Cornish, “Freedom Socialist vice-presidential candidate Christina López: a biographical sketch,” *Freedom Socialist*, April 2012.

⁸⁷ Christina López interview by author.

groups and individuals involved in the protests may have had “political disagreements” but were able to find “common ground.”⁸⁸

Ahead of the WTO protests, Seattle Radical Women worked independently to build coalitions between different activist communities throughout the city.⁸⁹ Radical Women joined coalitions at both the University of Washington and Seattle Community College. SRW members like López also joined Ace Saturay, organizer for Sentenaryo ng Bayan ('Peoples Centennial' in Tagalog) and the lead organizer of the 'No to WTO' International Peoples Assembly, an international coalition of activists opposed to neoliberal globalization, which brought together thousands from the Global South to protest the WTO in Seattle. The People's Assembly also worked locally by holding weekly gatherings with community and neighborhood groups.⁹⁰ When the city denied the People's Assembly a permit for their march, SRW sent a letter to the mayor and the *Seattle Times* urging them to grant the permit, calling the denial a clear case of “discrimination.” As the People's Assembly emanated from Seattle's southside, it was likely to be the most racially diverse group participating in the protests. Denying the permit, SRW charged, would increase the likeliness that marchers with the People's Assembly would face “arrest, police harassment and being pepper sprayed simply for doing what thousands of others will do that same day with the city's blessing.”⁹¹

SRW also conducted outreach to neighborhoods and communities of color. For instance, when the Central Area (a primarily Black and Latino area) Chamber of Commerce was asked to

⁸⁸ Christina López interview by author.

⁸⁹ Slater interview OHP.

⁹⁰ Ace Saturay, “WTO Shutdown: ‘Victory Belongs to the People,’” in *Voices from the WTO: An Anthology of Writings by the People Who Shut Down the World Trade Organization in Seattle 1999*, ed. Stephanie Guilloud (Olympia: The Evergreen State College Bookstore, 2000).

⁹¹ Luma Nichol and Anne Slater letter to Mayor Schell, 21 November 1999, Seattle, WA. In author's possession.

participate in the hosting of the WTO, the Chamber invited members from Radical Women to present on the topic at a meeting to discuss the invitation. After that meeting, the Central Area Chamber of Commerce decided to decline the invitation to participate in WTO ministerial events. Many of the members of SRW were also active in various labor unions in the city as well as part of the King County Labor Council. These members brought resolutions to push labor to support protests against the WTO and to encourage unions to officially participate in anti-WTO demonstrations.⁹² Members from SRW also attended the meetings of Martha Baskin and the WTO Rank and File Labor Mobilization Committee (discussed in the previous chapter).⁹³

In the months leading up to the protests, SRW members emphasized the ways in which the WTO impacted women around the world. After compiling a list of readings and starting a study group, they presented their findings to the public.⁹⁴ At the October 21st “Feminist Say No to the WTO” event, Heidi Durham began by explaining what the WTO was and how it operated in an undemocratic, closed-door process solely motivated by profit. She told her audience, “In the mad dog rush to make a buck, women suffer the most.” Seattle Radical Women, she explained, “was founded on the belief that working women around the globe constitute the most exploited collective group globally, whether they reside in either first or third world countries.” Even more, SRW believed that women, “especially working and women of color, constitute the most exploited sector in the world” because they traced “women’s super-exploitation to the advent and development of capitalism—a system where labor is exploited to insure the profits of a handful of entrepreneurs,” and which depended on women’s unpaid domestic work.⁹⁵ SRW

⁹² Slater interview OHP.

⁹³ Heidi Durham, WTO Fraction Meeting Notes 30 September 1999. In author’s possession.

⁹⁴ Heidi Durham, WTO Fraction Meeting Notes 30 September 1999. In author’s possession.

⁹⁵ Heidi Durham “Introduction to RW’s WTO report” October 1999. In author’s possession.

coordinator at the University of Washington Mary Ann Curtis, who attended the 1995 UN conference on women in Beijing pointed out that at the 1998 WTO meeting in Geneva, the WTO dismissed the Beijing Declaration and refused to make any commitments about gender equity.⁹⁶

Other SRW members presented on the devastating effects of free trade policies in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. For instance, Maxine Reigel highlighted the Agreement on Agriculture and Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which was designed to set global rules on patents, copyrights, and trademarks. One key group involved in crafting the agreement was the pharmaceutical industry. The agreement required all WTO member countries to adopt US-style intellectual property rights, such as those that granted monopoly rights to individual patent holders for a set time. These policies forced countries like India, Argentina, and Brazil to abandon policies that enabled them to develop their own medications and treatments at much more affordable prices. Most controversially, these laws would have made HIV/AIDS medication more expensive and less accessible to poor people around the world.⁹⁷ Reigel explained this complex trade agreement to her audience in simple terms. Under the agreement, a corporation “can patent, own, and thereby extract profit from natural remedies and seeds, planting and harvesting methods—all utilized by primarily indigenous peoples for centuries.” She emphasized that “third world women will be hardest hit” because it is women in those countries who are primarily responsible for agricultural production.⁹⁸ Reigel also highlighted instances of African women’s resistance, such as recent

⁹⁶ “Report to Seattle RW Meeting on the WTO’s Effect on Women in Asia and Former Soviet Union and Soviet Bloc Countries” 21 October 1999. In author’s possession. For more on the 1998 second WTO Ministerial Conference on Agriculture, WTO Transparency and Developing Countries, see: Peter Gallagher, *The First Ten Years of the WTO, 1990-2005* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2005).

⁹⁷ Michael MacSems. “The World Trade Organization: The Agenda for Seattle,” *Freedom Socialist*, September 1999, 13.

⁹⁸ Heidi Durham “FSP Branch Meeting WTO Report,” 14 November 1999. In author’s possession.

protests of 13,000 women in Senegal to demand property rights for women, and 10,000 women in Zimbabwe who called for the criminalization of domestic violence. She ended her talk by telling her audience: “The WTO, IMF, and capitalist bums will find the South African proverb true, ‘When you strike a woman you strike a rock.’ I plan to be on the lines with my African sisters.”⁹⁹

The success of the October 21st meeting inspired SRW members to continue their efforts educating the public about the effects of the WTO on women in the US and around the world. They self-published their report as a “Woman’s Guide to the WTO” and held a weekly discussion series in the month leading up to the N30 protests. The goal of the meetings was to publicize the effects of WTO policies on women, children, and the poor as well as to learn about the global movement of resistance to free trade and provide information on local anti-WTO organizing.¹⁰⁰ SRW also compiled a reading list for each of the meetings that included scholarly articles, articles from the *Freedom Socialist Newspaper*, and other news pieces and literature about socialist feminism.¹⁰¹

In 2000, less than a year after the WTO protests, Public Citizen’s founder Ralph Nader returned to Seattle for a campaign event for his presidential bid. CCEJ member and African American community activist Hop Hopkins attended the event. Although Hopkins believed Nader took a strong stance against neoliberal globalization and was attentive to important issues facing the black community, the longer Hopkins listened to Nader speak, the more troubled he

⁹⁹ Maxine Reigel, “World Trade Organization—Effects on African Women” 21 October 1999. In author’s possession.

¹⁰⁰ SRW flyer “Weekly Discussion Series: A Woman’s Guide to the WTO” November 1999. In author’s possession.

¹⁰¹ Mary Ann Curtis memo to Anne Slater, “RW WTO Study Group,” 24 October 1999. In author’s possession.

became as Nader never once mentioned race or people of color. At the end of the event, Hopkins took to the floor to ask Nader why when he was speaking of issues that were so important to people of color, he did so without talking about race. Hopkins alleged that this omission would mean Nader would not get the support of the Black community. In response, Nader charged, “you ask what I have done to reach out to the Black community and address racial issues and I ask you, how many Black people did you bring here today to hear me and support this campaign?” Hopkins left the event feeling like Nader’s colorblindness reflected a larger issue within the white American left.¹⁰² As one observer at the time reported, “Many activists of color look askance at Nader” as they do other white progressive activists in the Global Justice Movement, “viewing him as emblematic of a contemporary protest movement which risks life and limb to fight corporate globalization, only to ignore the third world people most brutally oppressed by these forces.”¹⁰³

For decades, feminists like those under study here worked to challenge progressive organizations like Public Citizen to broaden their agenda to include topics that impacted a more diverse audience. They criticized these organizations for ignoring important issues like immigration and environmental justice, thereby ostracizing the groups most affected by free trade policies. Despite their marginalization in the planning process, feminists and people of color did in fact make vital contributions to the protest’s mobilization efforts. They worked to receive recognition within the larger GJM and the Seattle protest coalition, were prominent on the streets and important educators and mobilizers but spent much of their time trying to get the mainstream movement to change the framework to include a gendered and racialized analysis of

¹⁰² Winn, 2.

¹⁰³ Winn, 2.

free trade issues within a global lens. While their contributions were vital to forging a more diverse coalition beyond the “Teamsters and Turtles” alliance, there was still much work left to do.

CHAPTER VI: FEMINISTS TAKE ON THE WTO

In May 1999, Denise Cooper, a nineteen-year-old African American student at the University of Washington (UW) in Seattle unexpectedly found herself homeless after her landlord sold her rental property and soaring housing prices left her with no affordable alternatives. As Cooper spent the summer sleeping on friends' couches or in her car, she read pamphlets and newspaper stories debating the planned November 30th World Trade Organization's ministerial meeting in Seattle. Cooper described her experience as eye-opening: "I started to see what was really going on here in Seattle."¹ She started to "notice things" in her life that were shaped by the system of global trade discussed in the newspapers. As she read about the US and Europe growing their consumer economies by "using" and exploiting countries in the "Third World," she drew links to what was happening in Seattle with gentrification and the growth of urban poverty.²

Cooper was just one of the thousands of young people, women, people of color and labor activists who gained exposure to feminist ideas in the months ahead of the WTO protests. Some, like Cooper, were directly recruited into the global justice campaign by feminists who helped them see how free trade policies shaped their lives. Feminists also conducted outreach to labor, environmental, and racial justice activists, who were already involved in the campaign. They talked with these other activists about why WTO policies were harmful not just for the environment and for people in the US, but for those living in the global South.

During the week of protest, feminists promoted their broad global analysis of the effects of free trade and the WTO in workshops, forums, and public education events in community

¹ Denise Cooper interview by Steve Pfaf, 14 April 2000, OHP.

² Cooper interview OHP.

centers, churches, and even jails. On the streets of Seattle, they brought song, dance and music, poetry and art, puppet making and street theater to engage audiences and provide a celebratory atmosphere. While they did not gain much media attention, these feminists also helped recruit some of the most racially diverse coalitions to take part in the protest. Although several labor and environmental leaders ignored and even stymied their efforts, away from the limelight, feminists like Cooper turned the protests into a “colorful” celebration of diversity.³

The Week of “N30”

While the biggest protest events were scheduled to begin on Tuesday, November 30th (N30), the entire week was booked with teach-ins, conferences, forums, marches, and rallies. Each day was divided into a focus on a particular set of issues, beginning with Monday November 29th as “Environment and Public Health Day,” Tuesday as “Human and Labor Rights Day,” Wednesday as “Women, Democracy, and Development Day,” Thursday as “Food and Agriculture Day,” and Friday as “Corporate Accountability Day.”⁴

Embodying the spirit of peaceful and fun creative protests was the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (known as the *Seattle P.I.*) prank that occurred a few days before N30. On the morning of the 25th, exactly one week before the planned city-wide strike, walkout, and day of protests scheduled for N30, Seattleites who grabbed a copy of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* from one of the many newspaper boxes throughout the city were greeted with the “front page” headline “Boeing to move overseas,” an article “authored by” the deceased Joe Hill, a famous Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organizer who was executed in Utah in 1915. The article claimed the largest employer in the state would be relocating to a foreign country. Another story, by

³ Cooper interview OHP.

⁴ People for Fair Trade/Network Opposed to the WTO, “The Citizen’s Calendar: World Trade Organization Ministerial,” Seattle, 1999. In Author’s Possession.

Emma Goldman, anarchist feminist from the early 20th century, was titled “WTO director power grab.”⁵ Because the real newspaper threatened legal action against this fake version, two of the participants in the prank interviewed by the Center for Labor Studies at the University of Washington used pseudonyms. “Katie” and “Elijah” explained that the creation of the fake newspaper and its widespread distribution was part of an organic process of collaboration. Three months before the protests, a small group of young activists, including several feminists, spontaneously met in coffee shops and living rooms to discuss strategy. “Elijah” explained, “one of the many, many outlandish and unattainable ideas that was thrown out there was to wrap all the morning papers with an activist paper that talked about the WTO, that looked exactly like it,” and would trick readers into believing it was the authentic newspaper.⁶ What started as a pie-in-the-sky idea, became even more attainable thanks to the procurement of funding from the Direct Action Network. The thousand-dollar contribution enabled these young activists to create over 15,000 copies of the newspaper wrap to distribute all over the city and surrounding suburbs. Participants also attended legal trainings with DAN and attended workshops on the use of nonviolent tactics.⁷

The activists described the final meeting held before they distributed the papers as a “party atmosphere.”⁸ Using word of mouth, the small group got over 60 of their friends and associates to show up at a warehouse in South Seattle at 3 o’clock in the morning on the 25th. They divided into groups of three or four and went in about 25 different cars, armed with quarters, to as many newspaper stands as they could find. They took out the real newspapers and wrapped them in

⁵ Peggy Andersen, “Protestors Score with Fake Newspaper,” *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, November, 25, 1999.

⁶ “Katie” and “Elijah,” “Seattle Post Intelligence prank,” interview by Jeremy Simer, OHP, August 18, 2000.

⁷ “Katie” and “Elijah,” “Seattle Post Intelligence prank,” interview by Jeremy Simer, OHP, August 18, 2000.

⁸ “Katie” and “Elijah,” “Seattle Post Intelligence prank,” interview by Jeremy Simer, OHP, August 18, 2000.

their spoofed front-page. The fake paper was so well-done, even the newspaper's managing editor Ken Bunting admitted "it's actually a fairly good spoof." He worried it would fool readers into thinking it was the real thing.⁹ These concerns were validated, as one participant stated that her boss asked if she had heard that Boeing was moving overseas.¹⁰

On November 26th-27th, the weekend before the WTO protests, hundreds of local feminists joined thousands of others to participate in the International Forum on Globalization's two-day teach-in on "Economic Globalization and the Role of the World Trade Organization." Attendance at the teach-ins surprised the organizers themselves, with the 2,500-seat hall filling beyond maximum capacity and flowing into the hallways and streets outside, giving organizers a first-hand glimpse of just how big the N30 protests might be. In 1996, activists, economists, and scholars from the Global North and South formed the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) to facilitate research and education about neoliberal globalization and the institutions and agreements, like the WTO, IMF, World Bank and NAFTA, that enforced it. The IFG worked to support the social justice and environmental movements by publishing literature, organizing high-profile public events and seminars, and working with the media at international events. The Seattle IFG teach-in included a range of speakers from around the world who addressed the role of the WTO, and other international agreements and institutions, and its impacts on agriculture, the environment, human rights, labor rights, consumer rights, food safety, public health and more.¹¹ Although the event included many prominent international feminists as well as information and literature on the role of the WTO on women and gender, IFG organizers did not

⁹ Peggy Andersen, "Protestors Score with Fake Newspaper," *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, November, 25, 1999.

¹⁰ "Katie" and "Elijah," "Seattle Post Intelligence prank," interview by Jeremy Simer, OHP, August 18, 2000.

¹¹ International Forum on Globalization email to John Knox, "Teach-In on the WTO," 7 June 1999, Hazel Wolf Papers, Box 2, Acc. No. 3647-005, HBCLS.

list women and gender as major issues in any of its publicity materials, nor did they include a dedicated topic of discussion or panel to those issues.

Although the IFG teach-in did not include a direct focus on women and gender in most of their publicity materials, that is not to say that it offered no feminist perspectives on free trade. On the contrary, several workshops throughout the two-day teach-in specifically focused on free trade issues relating to women and gender, including “Women in the Global Economy” and “Women and the Environment.”¹² The events reflected a new paradigm for activism, one which recognized the interconnectivity of once seemingly disparate issues, like economic development, environmental destruction, and women’s rights, into close connection with one another. The 1995 founding of the WTO drew, in the words of famed eco-feminist Vandana Shiva, “all domestic issues into the global economy” and all matters of life, from ethics and values to food, culture, and democracy have been brought into the global realm as matters of international trade.¹³

At the “Women in the Global Economy” workshop, prominent international feminists, like Indian Philosopher of science, physicist and environmental activist Vandana Shiva, explained the role of the women’s movement within this paradigm shift, emphasizing that women from the global south were on a collision course with the “power of men who control global patriarchal institutions.”¹⁴ The IFG distributed educational packets they had created that included a range of articles on women and global trade. Shiva contributed several articles, such

¹² Seattle International People’s Assembly, “Seattle International People’s Assembly Program,” WSC, Box 3, Folder “June to August 28, 1999,” Acc. No. 5177-003, HBCL; International Forum on Globalization, “Economic Globalization and the Role of the World Trade Organization Teach-In,” flyer, Hazel Wolf Papers, Box 2, Acc. No. 3647-005, HBCL.

¹³ Vandana Shiva, “Gender and Globalization,” *Trading Our Lives Away*, 1995, WSC Box 1, Folder “WTO- People for Fair Trade,” Acc. No. 5177-011, HBCL.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

as “Gender and Globalization,” which called for two major shifts in the analyses of the women’s movement. Firstly, in the face of an increasingly interconnected world, Shiva urged for gender analyses to go beyond the domestic model and “towards an understanding of gender relations between actors at the global level.” Secondly, Shiva maintained that gender analyses should move beyond evaluating the impact of these changes on women’s lives and portraying them as victims. Instead, Shiva urged a “structural” and “transformative” understanding of gender that examined the underlying and systematic forces to better effect change. Shiva argued that free trade institutions and policies impacted men and women, rich and poor, in different ways. Dominated and controlled by men from rich G7 countries, free trade institutions and policies were shaped by particular gender, class, and race relations. As such, gender analyses must not only look at the impacts of these policies on women, but must examine underlying patriarchal models within global economic structures and understand how “women’s concerns, priorities and perceptions are excluded in defining the economy, and excluded from how economic problems and solutions are proposed and implemented.”¹⁵ Despite achievements and gains, Shiva argued “the women’s movement hasn’t yet, really, developed the tools to deal with the patriarchy embodied in global capital. We haven’t even yet got the language to talk about the multinational corporation as a patriarchal institution.”¹⁶ Shiva, alongside many other feminists who participated in the protests, worked to emphasize the patriarchal nature of free trade institutions like the WTO.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Vandana Shiva, Anuradha Mittal, and Cynthia Brown, “transcript of an International Forum on Globalization Teach-In Workshop: ‘What Women Want,’” New York, 1995, WSC Box 1, Folder “WTO- People for Fair Trade,” Acc. No. 5177-011, HBCL.

Shiva also emphasized the role of gender and the environment within the global neoliberal model. Shiva's concept of "Earth Democracy" echoed other ecofeminists which examined the earth's resources, especially water, as part of an interconnected web that was inseparable from democracy. She cast feminism as not only the fight for gender, race, and class equity, but all life on earth, both human and non-human, as intrinsically valuable and a necessary part of the feminist endeavor. Shiva helped popularize the term "ecofeminism" with her 1993 co-authored book with Maria Mies, *Ecofeminism*, which argued environmental degradation brought on by industrial capitalism was a direct threat to everyday life for people around the world. These threats were particularly acute for women, in both the global North and South, as they were the ones generally responsible for the maintenance of what she termed "life-sustaining systems," like food, water, clothing and shelter. In response, "women were the first to protest against environmental destruction." These authors forged a connection between the "exploitative dominance between man and nature" and the "exploitative and oppressive relationship between men and women." Coming out of the peace, environmental and women's movements, ecofeminism connected military domination and the threat of nuclear annihilation to the destruction of the environment as feminist issues. As Mies and Shiva explained,

We see the devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors, and the threat of nuclear annihilation by the military warriors, as feminist concerns. It is the masculinist mentality which would deny us our right to our own bodies and our own sexuality, and which depends on multiple systems of dominance and state power to have its way.¹⁷

For many Seattle activists, these events were the first time they heard the term "eco-feminism."¹⁸

¹⁷ Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (Zed Books: New York, 1993) IX.

¹⁸ While many local Seattle feminists were impressed by Shiva's analyses, they were less pleased with the solutions she advocated to solve the problems discussed. Helen Gilbert of Seattle Radical Women recalled, "I remember her speech discussing the leadership being played by poor women fighting mega-corporations on environmental and

On Sunday November 28th, the Northwest Employment Labor Office (LELO), a grassroots organization that works for the rights of workers, especially workers of color and women workers, co-sponsored the International Women Workers Forum at the Lesbian Resource Center in downtown Seattle. Feminists consistently chose LGBTQ, working-class, people of color and immigrant community spaces like the Lesbian Resource Center, El Centro de la Raza and the Filipino Community Center for their workshops and events. The International Women Workers forum included speakers from Mexico, Brazil, Bangladesh, and a local Roma woman, who discussed how free trade policies eroded laws in their home countries that protected their access to clean water, healthcare, and education by mandating cuts to social services, eliminating labor and environmental protections, and switching to export production. The forum was moderated by the Iranian-born Seattle resident, Bookda Gheisar, who shared her experiences as a grassroots organizer working with immigrant and refugee communities in Seattle.¹⁹ Many immigrants came to the US as a direct result of increased violence in their countries of origin. In the case of Iranian immigrants like Gheisar, that violence was the direct result of US intervention and militarism. Once in the US, these immigrants often faced discrimination, marginalization, and xenophobia. Personal stories helped give a human face to the displacement and disruptive shock waves free trade policies fostered world-wide and drew connections between free trade policies, militarization, and immigration.

The four days of protest against the WTO officially began on Monday November 29th with “Environment and Public Health Day.” Feminist groups and individuals took a lead role in organizing and participating in the events, and strongly spoke about the ways in which health and

food issues in India. Her conclusion, however, was that we just need to love each other more. Love, love, love – that’s all we need! Seems that has been tried before.” Helen Gilbert email to author, 10 October 2018.

¹⁹ “The Citizens Calendar,” In Author’s Possession.

the environment impacted women. At the Filipino Community Center, the People's Assembly held an educational event titled "Women Say No to the WTO" where Filipino feminist organizations GABRIELA and the National Federation of Peasant Women (AMIHAN) presented their statement on why the WTO was bad for women. Founded in 1984, GABRIELA was an umbrella organization for grassroots women's groups in Southeast Asia.²⁰ In 1986 peasant women in the Philippines founded AMIHAN in response to the government's land privatization and agricultural export policies, which had a devastating effect on both agricultural workers and the environment. For instance, the group targeted the Calabarzon development project, which sought to convert the fertile lands surrounding the city of Manila into industrial agricultural export production. As a result, thousands of peasants were displaced. Many women, with no other means to feed their families, were forced into prostitution. At the same time, these agribusinesses pumped toxic chemicals and pesticides into the soil and ground water, causing both ecological damage and health problems.²¹

In their statement to those gathered at the "Women Say No! to the WTO" event, AMIHAN and GABRIELA emphasized the ways in which the agricultural agreements pursued by Global North nations and Multinational Corporations (MNCs) exploited the people and natural resources of the rest of the world. Writing on behalf of "the impoverished producers of Asia," the Women's Statement explained how peasants, farmers, agricultural workers, and the women and children "without whose labor there could be no products to be traded" were the real "losers" in the trade agreements on agriculture for nations in the Global South because they were forced to

²⁰ Ligaya Lindio-McGovern, *Filipino Peasant Women: Exploitation and Resistance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); See also, <https://www.onebillionrising.org/41139/gabriela-national-alliance-of-filipino-women-southeast-asia-philippines-indonesia-thailand-vietnam-singapore-malaysia-cambodia-laos/>.

²¹ LB Ayupan and TG Oliveros, "Filipino Peasant Women in Defense of Life," *Development Dialogue* 1:2 (1992): 131-140.

produce cash crops for export without having enough to feed themselves, could not provide an education for their children nor afford healthcare. The WTO has meant disaster “on us and our natural resources” with large tracts of lands once used to grow staple crops converted into export agricultural production, tourist resorts, golf courses and large-scale development projects like those for dams, mining, and logging. In essence, “we are left landless and ruined,” particularly for women for whom “the squeeze is even tighter.” The “winners” in these agreements were the “national ruling elite” (large landholders and big business owners) and multi-national corporations based in the global North, who gained the lion’s share of the profit and whose monopoly over production was reified by these agreements.²²

The week’s biggest events were scheduled to begin the morning of Tuesday November 30th for “Labor Rights and Standard of Living Day.” The vast majority of protestors attended the Big Rally and Labor March sponsored by the AFL-CIO.²³ Protestors rallied at different starting points throughout the city with a plan for everyone to march downtown. NOW members met at a local women’s shelter. The Workers Voices Coalition, a “coalition of community and solidarity groups that have come together in response to the WTO coming to Seattle, focusing on mobilizing communities of color, women, and others that are affected by globalization,”²⁴ met at a parking lot of the Local 6 SEIU. From their various starting points, these contingents then marched on downtown towards the labor rally held at Memorial Stadium where a crowd of 50,000 gathered.²⁵

²² “Women’s Statement against AOA/WTO,” presented by GABRIELA and AMIHAN in the People’s Assembly Session: Women Say NO to WTO, Seattle, WA, November 29, 1999.

²³ Patrick Gillham, “Complexity and Irony in Policing and Protesting: The World Trade Organization in Seattle,” *Social Justice*, 27:2 (2000): 212-236. 212.

²⁴ Tammy Luu, “LELO Launches Workers’ Voices Coalition to Protest WTO,” *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other*, 3 (Winter 2000): 1-2. In author’s possession.

²⁵ Thomas, 132.

Many feminists who attended the labor march and rally argued for an expansive view of “the worker,” which included both unionized and non-unionized people. As part of the “One Big March,” feminists, including those in the Workers’ Voices Coalition (WVC) organized under the banner of “Organized and Nonorganized Workers—No Separate Peace” and wore red and black (the “colors of strike and resistance”) because they saw themselves as part of the labor movement “even though we may not be . . . members of a union.”²⁶ As LELO founding member and African American labor activist Tyree Scott explained, “no separate peace” was a call to all workers, in the US and around the world, to see their fates as intertwined. “The low wages and exploitation of one” group, he explained, “will pull down the wages and conditions of the other.” In this global context, “foreign policy, trade, and immigration” were all central issues of concern for the labor movement.²⁷ For these activists, the term “labor movement” was not confined to dues-paying unionists. Rather, as Scott explained, “we have a much different perspective” of the term “labor movement” than that of the trade union leadership. They understood the labor movement to include “immigrant workers who are not organized into trade unions, workers of color who may or may not be in trade unions,” those who struggle against discrimination and unemployment and women who are striving for equal pay and against sex and gender discrimination.²⁸

Like feminists from LELO and the WVC, Seattle Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party also joined the labor march to push a broader critique of the WTO that centered women, people of color, and the poor both in the US and across the globe. At the rally, they set

²⁶ Tammy Luu, “LELO Launches Workers’ Voices Coalition to Protest WTO,” *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other* newsletter, 3 (Winter, 2000). In author’s possession.

²⁷ Jonathan Rosenblum, “The Battle in Seattle, 15 Years On: How an Unsung Hero Kept the Movements United,” *YES! Magazine* 5 December 2014.

²⁸ Tyree Scott interview OHP.

up information stalls about socialist feminism and the negative consequences of free trade policies pursued by the WTO from the perspective that all women were workers, and all workers were exploited by free trade policies.²⁹ For instance, one flyer they printed and distributed during the march and rally first explained what the WTO was and how it was used as a “weapon of transnational corporations and giant banks” against the world’s workers and as a weapon for the “richest countries” to use against “the poorest.” It went on to explain how the WTO operated behind closed doors and had “upheld every complaint against environmental protections or public health laws” that it heard. While the WTO was harmful to people everywhere, SRW materials like this one emphasized how women were “the hardest hit.” SRW/FSP reported that in the world’s 200 Export Processing Zones (EPZs) located in 50 different countries, “80 percent of the workers are young women,” who are forced to work for less money paid to men and endure 12-14-hour workdays 6-7 days a week. However, “the super-exploitation of women” spurred them to become “fierce opponents of the deadly status quo.” They highlighted the Korean Women’s Trade Union that fought for job security, higher wages, and childcare as well as indigenous women’s crucial participation in the Zapatista uprisings against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) “that reverberated around the world,” thereby demonstrating that women’s resistance was global capitalism’s “worst nightmare.”³⁰

While many feminists participated in the “One Big March” sponsored by the AFL-CIO, others decided to take part in separate marches and rallies. Students at the University of Washington like Denise Cooper, led by Lydia Cabasco, a Filipina American activist who

²⁹ Seattle Radical Women, “Abolish the WTO! Capitalist trade can never be free or fair,” flyer, November 1999, Seattle, WA. In author’s possession.

³⁰ Seattle Radical Women, “Abolish the WTO! Capitalist trade can never be free OR fair,” flyer, November 1999, Seattle, WA. In author’s possession.

identified as a “queer woman of color,” formed the No to WTO! student group, one of the most diverse coalitions to take part in the Seattle WTO protests. It included students from the University of Washington, Seattle Central Community College, Evergreen State, and several local high schools. They were joined by the Chicano/a student group Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o de Aztlan (MEChA), who wore readily identifiable symbols of the Zapatistas, such as the black ski masks and banners proclaiming “*en todos somos Zapatistas*” (“we are all Zapatistas”). They were joined by the so-called “Brown Collective,” a small group of mostly women of color activists, including Denise Cooper. In total, an estimated 5,000 students marched in the streets of Seattle on November 30th (N30). They did not participate in the “Big Labor March and Rally” sponsored by the AFL-CIO. Nor did their events or publicity items appear in the materials widely distributed by the mainstream local coalition known as the People for Fair Trade/No to WTO! Network. Rather, these students organized separately and created their own literature, calendars, training, and education materials.³¹

The Seattle International People’s Assembly (SIPA), led by Sentenaryo ng Bayan (SnB), a newly formed Filipino community organization, planned a separate “No to WTO/Seattle International People’s Assembly March and Rally.” Many environmental justice feminists, like Kristine Wong and Yalonda Sinda of the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (CCEJ) as well as those from the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice and the Indigenous Environmental Network marched alongside them. Founder Ace Saturay described the People’s Assembly as “the highest expression of international solidarity against the World Trade Organization where people of color were not only visible, but CLEARLY in

³¹ Cabasco interview OHP.

leadership.”³² While more than eight NGO’s requested permits from the city for protests that day, SIPA was the only group the city denied a permit for. SIPA went ahead with their march anyway, with over 500 delegates gathering in Seattle’s historic International District, a working-class community of mostly immigrants and people of color. The SIPA march proceeded along their own protest route down Fourth Avenue to join the 50,000 gathered at Memorial Stadium for the AFL-CIO’s big rally. As marchers approached the historic Westlake Mall at Fourth and Pine, with protesters “jubilantly” shouting slogans like “Victory to the People,” “Junk, Junk WTO,” and “Long live International Solidarity!” they converged with other groups, like the No to WTO student group. Here, they held an hour long “celebration” with speakers criticizing the WTO. At the event, Liza Maza of the Filipina feminist organization GABRIELA spoke of unity between the “oppressed people” of the Global South and North. “For so long,” she lamented, “monopoly capitalism, especially US imperialism, has been exploiting and oppressing our peoples.” Yet, on this day, she told the crowd, “We say to the WTO that this is payback time . . . The buck stops here!”³³ The result was, in the words of Chinese American CCEJ organizer Kristine Wong, an “electrifying mix” of ordinary people with an “international perspective,” mostly consisting of women of color.³⁴

Thousands of other protestors took to the streets of downtown Seattle to partake in nonviolent civil disobedience. Direct action proponents, led by the newly formed Direct-Action Network (DAN), planned N30 as a day-long, city-wide student and worker walkout and international day of action. N30 began with the 7am call to “Shut down the WTO” with the

³² No to WTO/People’s Assembly, “Report from the Secretariat of the Seattle International People’s Assembly,” January 2000, W5C, Acc. No. 5177-003, Box 4, Folder “International People’s Assembly,” HBCL.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Wong, 220.

“Mass Nonviolent Direct Action” as part of a “Festival of resistance.”³⁵ In the early morning hours, activists gathered at city parks, intersections, and downtown sites where WTO events were scheduled. Demonstrators locked themselves together using chains and pipes to block streets and intersections and prevented WTO delegates from reaching the Paramount Theater and Convention Center where the opening events were scheduled to begin.³⁶ The protestors joined with activists across the city with one goal in mind, to prevent the meeting from taking place.³⁷ Demonstrators danced and sang in the street, beat drums and chanted, converging from across the city onto the downtown streets. They used a variety of creative methods to reclaim public spaces through a festival of resistance. Reminiscent of a holiday parade, activists brought kites and puppets, people dressed in butterfly costumes, and stilt-walkers accompanied floats like the giant green condom that wore a sign urging the WTO to “practice safe trade.” Another giant street puppet portrayed a Frankenstein-like figure perched atop a large pyramid, where Bill Gates figured at the top, above “God,” and was seen to be smashing the people and the planet. These protestors used creative non-violent tactics to physically block delegates from reaching the meeting-sites. Some protestors overturned dumpsters in key intersections and danced atop them or used them as giant drums.³⁸ At other intersections, protestors formed human chains, linked arm-in-arm to block traffic.³⁹ Others chained themselves to makeshift platforms to impede traffic on roads and sidewalks.

³⁵ Direct Action Network, “Against Corporate Globalization,” packet, in author’s possession.

³⁶ The WTO History Project, “Day Two: November 30, 1999,” <https://depts.washington.edu/wtohist/day2.htm>.

³⁷ Denise Cooper interview OHP; Anne Slater interview OHP; Liz Highleyman, “Scenes from the Battle of Seattle,” 30 November 1999. <http://www.black-rose.com/seattle-wto.html>. See also, John Burgess and Steven Pearlstein, “Protests Delay WTO Opening: Seattle Police Use Tear Gas; Mayor Declares a Curfew,” *The Washington Post*, December 1, 1999, sec. A.

³⁸ Sara Ruth van Gelder, “Notes from the Streets of Seattle,” *YES! Magazine*, 30 November 1999.

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/the-wto-in-seattle/notes-from-the-streets-of-seattle>

³⁹ Highleyman, “Scenes from the Battle of Seattle.”

Feminists helped create a jubilant, festival-like atmosphere on the streets of Seattle. For example, the Radical Jeerleaders, a Seattle grassroots feminist group, created a series of cheer-like chants about patriarchy and globalization. The Radical Jeerleaders entertained and educated those gathered with important feminist messages about globalization and patriarchy. Ahead of the protests, the radical feminist group created and photocopied a booklet of cheers to distribute to the crowds to allow them to interactively participate. The cheers included chants like “take back our body/take back our lives” and “Hey grrrl Empower yourself.” To draw attention to the lack of regulation of female sanitation products, the Jeerleaders chanted to the crowd to “throw away those bleached tampons and start a menstrual party.” The jeers also included references to empowering female sexuality, with one titled “Barbie likes to masturbate.”⁴⁰

The one feminist group who did garner media attention were the Lesbian Avengers, not by name, but were instead only referred to as the “topless women” who marched. Media reports focused on their toplessness obscured or ignored the messages those women tried to convey about the harmful effects of free trade on women’s bodies around the world. In addition to marching topless with critiques of free trade policies written on their torsos like “WTO is bad for my body,” the Seattle Lesbian Avengers also created and dispersed flyers critiquing the WTO and calling for people to take part in the protest.⁴¹ In addition, they created a “Dyke Manifesto,” calling for the support and participation of other lesbian and queer activists, demanding policies like universal healthcare and housing, and food and shelter for all. The manifesto also laid out a commitment to nonviolent creative tactics, stating a belief in “creative activism, loud, bold, sexy,

⁴⁰ Radical Jeerleaders, handwritten songbook, WSC, Box 1, Folder “Radical Jeerleaders,” Acc. No. 5177-003, HBCL.

⁴¹ Andrew Boyd, “Irony, meme warfare, and the extreme costume ball,” *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of globalization*, eds. Benjamin Shepard and Ronald Hayduk (New York: Verso Books, 2002): 245-253. 248.

silly, fierce, tasty and dramatic,” while adding that arrest was “optional.” The manifesto also celebrated lesbian sex and freer sexuality, as well as a commitment to activism that is local, regional, national, and “cosmic.”⁴²

The Lesbian Avengers were originally founded in NYC. In early 1992, lesbian activist Ana Simo became frustrated when she learned about the near invisibility of lesbians in the battle over the so-called New York “Rainbow Curriculum,” a proposed education plan that sought to highlight the diversity of residents in the city, with a small portion focused on the LGBT community.⁴³ However, for lesbian activists like Simo, the curriculum’s inattention to lesbians reflected a larger male bias within the LGBTQ movement. She began conversations with Sarah Schulman in the hopes of starting a lesbian direct-action group dedicated to what Simo called “high-impact street activism, not on talking” with the aim of providing greater visibility to lesbians in the gay rights movement. By October, the two joined with four other women, Maxine Wolfe, Anne-christine d’Adesky, Marie Honan, and Anne Maguire, all lesbian activists involved in a range of organizations including the lesbian theater group Medusa’s Revenge, Women for Women, ACT-UP, and the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization.⁴⁴

Their strategy went beyond traditional protests and marches and instead used creative methods to garner media attention. For instance, in October 1992 the group held a memorial to lesbian Hattie Mae Cohens and gay man Brian Mock who were burned to death after someone threw a Molotov cocktail into their shared apartment. In response, the Avengers held a march down Fifth Avenue carrying torches and burning signs bearing the names of anti-gay proponents many blamed for the act of homophobic violence. Following the march, choreographer and

⁴² Lesbian Avengers flyer, WSC, Box 1, Folder “Protest Flyers,” Acc. No. 5177-003, HBCL.

⁴³ Anthony Hiss, “The End of the Rainbow,” *The New Yorker*, 12 April 1993.

⁴⁴ Lesbian Avengers, “An Incomplete History,” lesbianavengers.com.

dancer Jennifer Monson introduced the use of fire and fire-eating that became a widely recognizable symbol for the group. The Lesbian Avengers were introduced to the world at the 1993 “Dyke March” where 40,000 lesbians marched on Washington DC in protest of the government’s response to the AIDS crisis. At the 1993 March in Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation, the Avengers stunned the crowds with a dramatic fire-eating performance in front of the White House. From there, the organization expanded rapidly, with over sixty chapters across the US by 1996.⁴⁵

The Lesbian Avengers had a broad agenda and focused on a wide variety of issues. In 1994, the group protested Proposition 187 in California, which banned immigrants from using basic social services like education. They also protested the three strikes law, anti-homelessness ordinances and the defeat of the national healthcare law. As historian Benjamin Shephard explains, “Such thinking suggested a new queer universalizing politics, opposed to narrowly defined minoritizing lenses of interest group participation.”⁴⁶

Thanks in large part to the creative street activism of feminists like the Lesbian Avengers and Radical Jeerleaders, hours after the ministerial meetings were scheduled to begin, many high-profile delegates remained trapped in their downtown hotels. Over 6,000 delegates from 135 different countries were prevented from reaching the meeting sites, including then UN Secretary-General Kofi-Anon, who was scheduled as the keynote speaker at the opening ceremony. Participants in the general strike included cab drivers, further preventing many delegates from reaching their destinations.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Lesbian Avengers, “An Incomplete History,” lesbianavengers.com.

⁴⁶ John C. Berg, *Teamsters and Turtles? US Progressive Political Movements in the 21st Century* (Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield, 2003) 148.

⁴⁷ “Curfew in effect as Seattle struggles to control WTO protests,” CNN.com, 30 November 1999.

By noon, the WTO announced the opening ceremony was postponed as many delegates remained unable to make it to the event space. As word spread through the crowd at Memorial Stadium that the opening ceremonies were suspended, the jubilant atmosphere turned euphoric.⁴⁸ However, as one participant noted, this “festive time” with “people reveling in the global display of unity” soon took a “dark turn.”⁴⁹ Throughout Tuesday morning and early afternoon, the downtown streets remained joyful and festive, despite the police’s sporadic use of tear gas. Around noon, a small group of two dozen anarchists dressed in black (whom the media dubbed the “black-block”) broke a few downtown windows and engaged in other small-scale property destruction. Police used this property destruction as a pretense to curb the protestors with the use of full force. One participant explained how this police violence “turned a legal, peaceful march into a pandemonium of outraged disbelief and dissent.”

At 3:30 in the afternoon, Mayor Paul Schell declared a state of emergency and a mandatory curfew beginning at 7:00 PM. With President Clinton due into town that evening, the mayor faced enormous pressure from federal officials to clear the streets and continue the WTO ministerial events. Not even waiting until the curfew began, police in riot gear and gas masks, carrying rubber bullets and pepper spray accompanied by armored vehicles resembling military tanks began to sweep the streets, often targeting protestors and bystanders alike.⁵⁰

While some activists downtown experienced police violence throughout the day on Tuesday and into Tuesday night, the majority of the protestors, as they were at the labor rally, were unaware of these violent confrontations until they saw them on the news that night or in

⁴⁸ Highleyman.

⁴⁹ Bruce Herbert email to Seattle Radical Women, “WTO report #2 from Seattle,” 3 December 1999. In author’s possession.

⁵⁰ Kit Oldham, “WTO Meeting and Protests in Seattle (1999),” HistoryLink, 13 October 2009.

newspaper headlines the next morning.⁵¹ For many activists, whether experiencing it on the streets first hand or watching on the news, it was the first time they had seen such a militarized police force. While police brutality was nothing new for communities of color in the city, it was the first time it happened to white people on such a large scale. In addition, for even seasoned protestors, the militaristic scale of the police response was new. This was the first-time activists, and those who saw pictures in the newspaper or on the evening news, saw police wearing what some called “Darth Vader-like” masks and outfitted in tactical gear previously only used by the military in warfare.⁵² As Christina López of Seattle Radical Women recalled, “I was used to seeing cops in uniforms and badges” but that day was the first time she saw them in “riot gear and tanks.”⁵³ No protest zones, police in soldierly garb, police-tanks, rubber-bullets and tear gas all combined to prompt many of these activists, as well as many Seattle citizens, to head to the streets the next day to not only continue protesting the WTO, but to also stand up against these restrictions on constitutional freedoms of speech and assembly.

One victim of the police violence was 85-year-old WILPF member Carolyn Canafax. Canafax was a committed activist in Seattle throughout her life. She was a member of the radical feminist group for women of a certain age called the Raging Grannies. In the days ahead of the protest, Raging Grannies members like Canafax opened their homes to out of town activists and provided them food and lodging. The Raging Grannies emerged in 1986 in Victoria, BC, after several peace activists began doing street theater dressed in over-the-top hats and singing songs to protest militarization, nuclearization, racism, logging, and the growing power of corporations.

⁵¹ Interviews by author with Helen Gilbert, Gerry Hodderson, and Christina Lopez, 2018.

⁵² Helen Gilbert, interview by author, September 2018, Seattle, WA.

⁵³ Christina López interview by author.

Groups quickly spread across Canada and around the world.⁵⁴ In 1995, Shirley Morrison helped found the Seattle Raging Grannies. Wearing brightly colored floral dresses and large sunhats, carrying knitting needles and porcelain teacups, the group staged sit-ins (sometimes bringing their own rocking chairs) and other actions to “sing” for women’s rights, education, clean air and water, and an end to militarization.⁵⁵

Canafax played an important role in the region as a founder of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom’s (WILPF) newsletter *Pacific Vision*. WILPF was long interested in trade policies, having not only made the connection between militarization (war) and global capitalism, but also having witnessed the corporate exploitation of local people and resources and the devastating impact of debt on the global South under the sanction of the IMF and World Bank through the course of their international travel and work. Canafax remarked that while the organizing against something like the WTO was not new for WILPF, the coalition-building that made Seattle possible was astounding. On November 30th, Canafax was hit with rubber bullets. When she went out the next day to protest, she was sprayed by police with tear gas.⁵⁶

Wednesday December 1st was the day President Clinton was scheduled to make appearances for the WTO events. With the arrival of the President, as well as widespread criticism of city officials for the cancellation of the opening ceremonies the day before, police escalated their handling of protests. The governor called in the National Guard as well as police and sheriffs from nearby cities and counties, prompting activists to note that “police were everywhere” that day, and they made their presence known by performing mass-arrests of

⁵⁴ Carole Roy, “The Original Raging Grannies: Using Creative and Humorous Protests for Political Education,” raginggrannies.org.

⁵⁵ Sarah Kaplan, “Meet the 92-year old ‘raging granny’ who just got arrested for protesting Arctic oil drilling,” *The Washington Post*, 10 June 2015.

⁵⁶ Thomas, 121.

protestors.⁵⁷ Despite declaring downtown a “no protest zone” and establishing a large police presence, by 7:30 that morning, hundreds of protestors gathered at Westlake Plaza, considered Seattle’s “public square.” In response, police began engaging in mass-arrests. Despite these measures, the protests continued to grow, with some concerned community members joining in as a response to police violence and the curtailment of civil liberties.⁵⁸

At the nearby Pike Place market, police used tear gas and rubber bullets on protestors and civilians alike, and one business owner along the way got pepper sprayed. Most demonstrators moved out of downtown by 6 o’clock that evening, but small groups still gathered, like the one at 6th and Pine who had a nonviolent civil disobedience sit-in at the intersection just before the 7pm curfew. Into the evening, most activists were pushed out of downtown, while those that remained were cajoled into the Capitol Hill neighborhood, an area known for its political activism. Thanks to the economic downturn of the 1970s, the once posh Capitol Hill neighborhood witnessed declining rents and property values, making way for a counterculture revival as a diverse group of young people, activists, former hippies, and artists moved in. It was also home to a large LGBTQ community.⁵⁹ As residents of the neighborhood witnessed police tear gassing and firing rubber bullets at protestors pushed through their community, many took to the streets to join them and protest the presence of police in their neighborhood, in what became known as “The Battle for Capitol Hill.” This violent contest changed public opinion in the city

⁵⁷ Scott Sunde, Lewis Kamb, and Hector Castro, “WTO Protesters are greeted by a police show of force,” *Seattle P.I.*, 30 November 2000.

⁵⁸ Louise Barry, “WTO Protests, Seattle 1999,” *Audio Interference*, interferencearchive.org.

⁵⁹ John Caldbick, “Seattle Neighborhoods: Capitol Hill, Part 2,” HistoryLink.org. 3 June 2011.

against the city officials' handling of the situation, especially locals who then saw residents defending their community from armed police who viciously attacked them.⁶⁰

However, these headlines overshadowed the important work feminists were doing that day to highlight how the WTO undermined women's rights around the world. For "Women, Democracy, Sovereignty and Development Day," Diverse Women for Diversity, an "international group of women's rights advocates" sponsored a one-day conference called "Women, Democracy, Sovereignty, Development" that included workshops and panel discussion focused on making the connections between the WTO and "democracy, development, and the lives of women."⁶¹ Organizers of the event expected around three to four hundred attendees. Instead, an estimated fifteen hundred people participated. Planners hoped to foster "north/south connections" by highlighting examples of the consequences of free trade agreements on people in the global South that would resonate with a US audience. For example, Lori Wallach and local Seattle activist Sally Soriano of Public Citizen highlighted the role of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement in Guatemala. Following the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), guidelines that came about as the result of a seven year long boycott against Nestlé for its aggressive advertising practices in mainly countries in the global South, Guatemala passed a law restricting advertisements on baby food and formula packaging.⁶² Poor mothers would see advertisements depicting fat and healthy babies on these products, leading them to

⁶⁰ Dave Wilma and Kit Oldham, "The week in history: WTO riots happen in Seattle," *KOMO News*, 7 December 2018.

⁶¹ Debra J. Liebowitz, "Gendering (Trans)National Advocacy," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 4:2, 173-196. 185

⁶² For more on the Nestlé Boycott, see: Paul K. Adler, *The Fair Globalizers: U.S. NGO Activism from the 1970s to the Battle in Seattle* (Under contract with the University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming).

believe their children would be healthier than if they were breastfed. In reality, a lack of clean water and scarcity of funds to purchase these products resulted in higher rates of infant mortality. To encourage women to breastfeed, Guatemala banned such advertisements. However, Gerber Products Company complained to the US State Department who threatened to challenge this regulation in the WTO. As a result of this threat, Guatemala lifted the advertising ban in a move that actually violated the UNICEF guidelines.⁶³

To further drive home North/South links at the Diverse Women for Diversity event, LaDoris Payne-Bell, director of WomanSpirit (WS) from St. Louis and member of the National Congress of Neighborhood Women shared her personal and organizational story. LaDoris was an African American community leader, a former welfare recipient who went on to found a grassroots women's community economic development cooperative. WomanSpirit allowed over a hundred poor women to come together to share access to technology and money to collectively purchase and manage property. WS also supported small businesses with job-trainings and other programs, allowing women to build "mutual support system and build their joint capacity to undertake a range of economic and financial activities." As a participant in the global feminist movement, LaDoris was active in UN conferences such as the Women's Conference in Beijing and Habitat II in Istanbul.⁶⁴ She also participated in the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) campaigns in South Africa and worked with GROOTS, an international collective of grassroots feminist organizations. GROOTS came out of the 1985 UN World

⁶³ Sara Ruth van Gelder, "Notes from the Streets of Seattle," *YES! Magazine*, 30 November 1999. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/the-wto-in-seattle/notes-from-the-streets-of-seattle>. See also, Rod Arakaki, "A Perspective on 'The Battle of Seattle,'" *YES! Magazine*, 30 November 1999. <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/the-wto-in-seattle/a-perspective-on-the-battle-of-seattle>.

⁶⁴ Vandana Shiva fax to Lori Wallach, re: Diverse Women for Diversity, WSC, Box 3, Folder "Women and Democracy Day," Acc. No. 5177-003, HBCL.

Conference in Nairobi when feminist activists from the National Congress of Neighborhood Women began discussions with other feminists from India, Kenya, Cameroon, and the Philippines about the absence of grassroots women's voices from such gatherings. They then joined with 20 community activists from around the world to found a global network in support of grassroots women's organizing across borders, by sharing resources, information, personal stories, and experiences and working to increase the visibility and coherence of a grassroots women's perspective onto the official UN agenda.⁶⁵

On Wednesday evening, Seattle Radical Women (SRW) and the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) hosted a public "Stop the WTO Coffeehouse" event where activists and community members could "warm up" with coffee, conversation, and music "at an avowedly feminist and radical community center." To publicize the event, they distributed flyers and leaflets inviting guests to join them in learning about what the WTO is and it was wielded as a "weapon by transnational corporations and giant banks." They believed the WTO, like global capitalism more broadly, was premised on maximizing corporate profits through increased exploitation. As such, they did not believe the WTO could be reformed but should be abolished. In response to a corporate led, first world dominated capitalist globalization embodied in international organizations like the WTO, socialist feminists called for the creation of a global union, led by workers, independent from businesses and governments. They proposed a World Labor Organization that would raise labor, health, education, and environmental standards around the world, expand civil rights for women, people of color, immigrants, queer people, the elderly, and those with disabilities as well as strengthen Native sovereignty. The WLO would also seek to

⁶⁵ Sandy Schilen, "1985-Groots," *GROOTS International Network News*, 1:1 (June 1992).
<http://neighborhoodwomen.org/1985-groots/>.

cancel the debts owed by nations in the global South to “imperialist countries, banks, and institutions.”⁶⁶

While feminists continued peacefully demonstrating and holding forums and educational events, the media sensationalized stories of property destruction and vandalism. Even more, the violent confrontations between police and peaceful protesters jarred the nation. Images of peaceful protestors getting hit with pepper spray and rubber-bullets dominated the headlines the following days. Nonviolent tactics of protests in the face of such militarized violence only further served to highlight the point those activists were making, especially those that articulated the connection between global capitalism and militarization and violence. Furthermore, the fact that there were so many white protestors that day subjected to police violence made the issue of police brutality hit home outside of the black and brown communities. An estimated 500 people were arrested on Wednesday alone.⁶⁷

Young people, like Lydia Cabasco and student activist Denise Cooper, were the main group of the hundreds of people arrested on December 1st. However, for Cooper, her time in jail with other activists represented a space for further coalition and solidarity-building. Cooper described of her arrest, “when all those people got arrested and they had us in the jails, I really realized how many separate issues I was dealing with here.”⁶⁸

In jail, feminists like Cooper formed new ties with other activists and broadened their understanding of the range of issues at stake under free trade policies. For example, Cooper specifically connected with another activist with the group “Feminists for Animal Rights” who

⁶⁶ Seattle Radical Women, “Stop the WTO Coffeehouse” booklet, October 1999, in author’s possession.

⁶⁷ *This is What Democracy Looks Like!* directed by Jill Friedberg and Rick Rowley (Independent Media Center, 2000).

⁶⁸ Cooper interview OHP.

discussed mutual issues they were working on. The two exchanged information and coordinated their activities for the IMF/World Bank protests in D.C. the following spring. Cooper explained of the networking that took place in those jail cells, “We started comparing our issues, like, what are you working on? Well, I’m doing this. Oh, well, I’m doing this. But you know what, we’re really doing the same thing. So now I can call on environmentalists, Anarchists, labor people.”⁶⁹

To support those arrested, many feminists participated in jail solidarity efforts. Using new technology like e-mail, as well as older technologies like fax machines, they helped send out information regarding the numbers of people arrested and asked for aid in helping those in jail. They helped raise funds to purchase things like portable toilets, food, and water to support the protestors gathered outside the King County detention center. Activists also set-up medical support and legal services for those arrested and released. Others provided transportation or food and water to people as they were let out of jail. Helen Gilbert of Seattle Radical Women recalled how she spent the evening driving back and forth to different jails to take home released arrestees and bring more people to join the solidarity protests held outside.⁷⁰ As many as 6,000 people rallied outside the jails demanding the release of all protest arrestees.⁷¹ Many remained outside the jail until Sunday night, when the last arrestees were released.⁷² Activists both inside and outside the jails reported a strong sense of solidarity, bolstered when they learned about activists in Mexico, Cuba, Amsterdam and elsewhere holding support rallies to demand the release of those arrested. Kristine Wong of CCEJ recalled of her time rallying outside the

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Helen Gilbert, interview by author, September 2018, Seattle, WA.

⁷¹ *This is What Democracy Looks Like!* directed by Jill Friedberg and Rick Rowley (Independent Media Center, 2000).

⁷² Email from Trevor Griffey to speakeasy.org list-serv, Re: “people needed to help w/ WTO jail solidarity work ASAP,” 5 December 1999, Independent Media Center WTO 1999 Protest, Box 1, Acc. No. 5848-001, HBCL.

jailhouse as a key “turning point” because despite the different backgrounds and reasons for being there, they had a sense of unity and solidarity of purpose.⁷³

In response to police violence and mass-arrests, other feminists published statements condemning the actions of the police and highlighting the use of non-violent protest. At the same time, they maintained a focus on the reasons for the protest, rather than just discussing the police violence, so as to not let those issues become overshadowed. On December 2nd, the Seattle International People’s Assembly, many of whose members and participants were feminists, issued a statement “Condemning the State of Siege in Seattle.” The document highlighted the various measures state, local, and national politicians used to repress the protests and to shift attention away from the critiques they were making. The statement specifically highlighted the ways in which Seattle mayor Paul Shell refused a permit for their rally and the march on the 30th. The statement also explained how the World Trade Organization was implementing “policies and trade laws of imperialist globalization,” which are increasing poverty and intensifying exploitation around the world.⁷⁴

Many activists made connections between the violent response of the police in Seattle to U.S. violence overseas. For instance, activists noted the ways in which “globalization” often meant US aggression, citing examples such as the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba and the “U.S. genocide in Iraq,” instances of US violence in pursuit of its economic growth. Similarly, activists also highlighted previous violent responses to protests against free trade, such as the

⁷³ *This is What Democracy Looks Like!* directed by Jill Friedberg and Rick Rowley (Independent Media Center, 2000).

⁷⁴ “Statement of the Seattle International People’s Assembly Condemning the State of Siege in Seattle,” 2 December 1999, WSC, Box 4, Folder “Seattle International People’s Assembly,” Acc. No. 5177-003.

“state police and military repression” during the anti-APEC protests in Manila in 1996, in Vancouver in 1997, Kuala Lumpur in 1998, and New Zealand in September of 1999.⁷⁵

Socialist feminists also sought to condemn police responses to the protests, issuing flyers and statements about the use of no-protest zones and a militarized police response. On December 1st, SRW issued a joint statement with its “sister organization” the Freedom Socialist Party condemning the WTO “no protest zone.” In it, SRW organizer Anne Slater called the mass arrests of peaceful demonstrators as well as the use of “brutal force” to enforce the no protest zones “responses worthy of a police state.” The statement also included Slater’s own first-hand experience where only a “tiny minority” of the tens of thousands on the streets of Seattle that day were engaging in acts of vandalism. Slater asserted that these few instances were used as an excuse for police and other officials to “stifle any and all forms of direct protest against the WTO.” To discuss these issues in greater depth, SRW/FSP invited all community members to attend its coffeehouse event that evening. The feminist organization then called on all “WTO resisters and civil liberties proponents” to call the Seattle City Council, Mayor Paul Schell, and Governor Gary Locke to demand the release of those arrested, institute a civilian review board of the incidents, engage in public hearings, and condemn the restrictions on free speech and public assembly imposed by the no protest zones and curfews. They also urged for solidarity between all protestors, telling readers not to “fall prey to false divisions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ protestors.”⁷⁶

The December 4th Conference on Women and Immigration

The day after the week of official WTO protests, feminists held a one-day conference on women and immigration in the global economy. The conference was organized by the Workers’

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Anne Slater, Seattle Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party “Denounce the Police Siege of Seattle,” December, 1999, in author’s possession.

Voices Coalition (WVC), a group of organizations and individuals who came together two months before the WTO protests to do the organizing work they felt mainstream organizers ignored. Feminist members of the WVC liked Domingo stressed the importance of connecting the struggles of workers in the US to workers' struggles abroad, especially for women. To correct that omission, the Workers Voice Coalition decided to hold a conference the day after the protests to focus on women and immigration where they could bring in workers and activists from around the world to share their stories living under free trade policies.⁷⁷

Sponsors of the event mainly came from connections activists like Cindy Domingo of LELO had already established, including feminist groups like the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice, White Women Organizing Against Racism, American Women's Work, Church Women United, and the Women of Color Coalition from Evergreen State College. The goal was not only to address the ways in which globalization impacts women and immigration, but also to establish a platform and network to facilitate cross-border organizing around these issues.⁷⁸

Held at Seattle University, more than 200 attendees, over one third of whom were people of color, heard from women workers and organizers from around the world.⁷⁹ Building on their Seabeck ties, the WVC invited and funded nine international speakers to take part in WTO protest activities and to present at the December 4th conference. Ana Semião de Lima, a leader in a domestic workers union that organized mainly Afro-Brazilian women, who presented on "The

⁷⁷ Workers' Voices Coalition, leaflet, "Beyond the WTO Ministerial," 4 December 1999, WSC, Acc. No. 5177-003, Box 7, Folder 15, SMCP.

⁷⁸ Cindy Domingo, "Introduction," *Voices of Working Women: Beyond the WTO Conference on Women and Immigration in the Global Economy*, November 1999, WSC, Acc. No. 5177-003, Box 7, Folder 15, SMCP.

⁷⁹ Tammy Luu, "LELO Launches Workers' Voices Coalition to Protest WTO," *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other*, LELO newsletter, 3 (Winter 2000). WSC, Acc. No. 5177-003, Box 7, Folder 15, SMCP.

Process of Immigration in Brazil,” highlighted the continuity of afro-Brazilian oppression since, what she termed, “false abolition” in 1888.⁸⁰ Semião discussed migration in the context of Brazilian colonization, a long history that began with the decimation and enslavement of indigenous peoples and “the great kidnapping of African labor,” which built the wealth of the nation. Semião also spoke of the country’s history of continued marginalization of Afro-Brazilians following the abolition of slavery, noting the discrimination they faced, and the state’s policy of subsidized European immigration intended to “whiten” the population.⁸¹ As Semião explained, “White workers were almost always preferred by white employers in both rural agricultural and urban industrial settings.” Adding gender to this analysis, Semião then explained the convoluted history of the “domestic worker” in Brazil, which has, since slave times, relied upon the unpaid or low paid work of often young Afro-Brazilian women. Despite the large numbers of domestic workers in the country, 70% of whom were Black women, these workers were not considered contributors to the larger economy or to the nation’s economic wealth. She spoke about the difficult nature of domestic labor, with long hours and harsh conditions, while they received no workers’ compensation, unemployment insurance, or social security. Many were left vulnerable to sexual or physical abuse as well as “becoming easy prey for the sex trade.” In light of these realities, Semião and others in the National Federation of Domestic Workers fought back, advocating for the Brazilian government to approve their proposed Social Security Fund, which would have granted domestic workers benefits. In stressing global

⁸⁰ Tammy Luu, “LELO Launches Workers’ Voices Coalition to Protest the WTO,” Speaking for Ourselves to Each Other, newsletter, 3 (Winter 2000), CDP, Box 5, Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL; See also, Angela M. Gilliam, “A Black Feminist Perspective on the Sexual Commodification of Women in the New Global Culture,” in *Black Feminist Anthropology: Theory, Politics, Praxis and Poetics*, ed. Irma McClaurin (New Jersey: Rutgers, 2001), 150-179.

⁸¹ For more on the history of racial “whitening” in Brazil, see, Thomas Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*, (Durham: Duke University Press): 1992.

opposition, “We must recognize,” Semião told her audience, “That workers all over the world share our struggles. Whether we are fighting for land, health care, housing, or education, we must work together and support one another.”⁸² In this way, Semião reminded her audience they were in a shared battle for survival.

In addition, Amparo Reyes an assembly worker and border zone organizer of women workers spoke about workers experiences on the US/Mexico border. Reyes began her talk by describing the legacy of NAFTA in her home country of Mexico, where privatization, decreased government spending and a switch to export production resulted in the unemployment or underemployment of 14 million Mexican workers. Those jobs that were created, such as those in the maquila industry along the northern border, were low wage and low status for workers, but produced major profits for multi-national corporations. Companies like General Electric and Panasonic who moved to the region to take advantage of the labor force made huge profits, which should be “reason enough” for them to offer “decent salaries and humane working conditions.” Yet, families were so poor that children were forced to enter the workforce at a young age and parents often could not afford their education. Reyes told those assembled, “Labor conditions have not improved under NAFTA, but on the contrary, they have worsened.” As part of the Border Committee of Women Workers, she worked to change conditions in these factories, raise salaries and benefits, and increase profit-sharing.⁸³

⁸² Ana Semião, speech *Voices of Working Women, Beyond the WTO: Conference on Women and Immigration in the Global Economy*, 4 December 1999, Translated by Helen Watley Ames, CDP, Box 17, Folder “Research Files: Voices of Working Women,” Acc. No. 5651-001.

⁸³ Amparo Reyes, speech, *Voices of Working Women, Beyond the WTO: Conference on Women and Immigration in the Global Economy*, 4 December 1999, Translated by Carlos Marantes, CDP, Box 17, Folder “Research Files: Voices of Working Women,” Acc. No. 5651-001.

Carmencita “Chi” Abad from the Philippines who was a garment worker for 6 years in Saipan, spoke about the retaliation she received when she tried to unionize workers there.⁸⁴ Saipan, similar to Puerto Rico, became a commonwealth of the United Kingdom in 1978. Abad worked for six years in a Saipan sweatshop that produced goods for Gap, Inc. She left her home in the Philippines as a contract worker. Abad shared with conference goers how she “became a victim of the World Trade Organization (WTO), an organization that exploits workers and profits from indentured labor and slavery.” She described terrible conditions, where garment workers were required to work 12-hour days 7 days a week, were prohibited from forming unions, and earned low wages. She described a factory lacking proper ventilation where workers breathed in dangerous dust and chemicals. Their living conditions were no better, lacking sanitary drinking water and in over-crowded environments. She also discussed particular discriminations against women, such as the practice of firing pregnant workers.⁸⁵

In response to these conditions, Abad began organizing workers at the Sako Corporation (contractor of Gap, Inc.). She reached out to the only union on the island, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE), a local union part of the AFL-CIO. Although these efforts failed after the company threatened and pressured workers, Abad went on to help expose the injustices committed inside the factories. She agreed to wear a hidden camera to document and expose the abuses for the ABC news program *20/20*. The 13 March 1999 episode titled “Is this the USA?” revealed the gruesome working and living conditions for workers. Abad also

⁸⁴ Carmencita Abad, speech *Voices of Working Women, Beyond the WTO: Conference on Women and Immigration in the Global Economy*, 4 December 1999, CDP, Box 17, Folder “Research Files: Voices of Working Women,” Acc. No. 5651-001.

⁸⁵ Carmencita Abad, speech *Voices of Working Women, Beyond the WTO: Conference on Women and Immigration in the Global Economy*. 4 December 1999, CDP, Box 17, Folder “Research Files: Voices of Working Women,” Acc. No. 5651-001.

contacted the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and filed a Title VII violation claim against the Sako Corporation. On behalf of 24 pregnant women who were terminated, Abad filed and won a suit against the company, which were required to pay the medical expenses and maternity leave for the fired workers and forced the company to provide health insurance for all its employees. However, a week later Abad was fired from her job. She soon met a group from Global Exchange, a human rights organization, who convinced her to become the spokesperson for their anti-sweatshop campaign. Abad then went on a tour of the US speaking out against the labor practices of many of its major garment retailers, but most especially Gap, Inc.⁸⁶

Cenen Bagon, a leader in the Vancouver B.C. Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregiver Rights, focused on organizing and empowering immigrant women workers in Canada, emphasized that the negative consequences for women of free trade policies was not some “unintended consequence” as many proponents of neoliberalism claimed. Rather, wealthy nations intentionally crafted these agreements to create an under-class of exploitable workers. Bagon told conference-goers, “we must insist that human rights, environmental protection, access to education, health and other social services are trade issues.”⁸⁷ Bagon also spoke about the importance of examining the impact of free trade policies on women. For example, she talked about the devastating effects of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP’s) on women in the Philippines. In addition to the IMF and World Bank, the WTO played a decisive role in arbitrating and enforcing structural adjustment and free trade policies in the global South. Over the course of the 1990s, these institutions increased their efforts to coordinate policy around

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Tammy Luu, “LELO Launches Workers’ Voices Coalition to Protest the WTO,” Speaking for Ourselves to Each Other, newsletter, 3 (Winter 2000), CDP, Box 5, Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

trade liberalization across their organizations. As such, WTO trade negotiations had to uphold the policy aims, including Structural Adjustment, of organizations like the IMF and World Bank.⁸⁸ Bagon went on to explain how these policies devastated women in the Global South by telling stories of countless Filipino women in cities in Japan, Hong Kong, Canada, and the US who left home to work as entertainers but were instead forced into prostitution. She also shared experiences of domestic workers from the global south, who were forced to leave their families and children to care for the children and households of wealthy women in the Global North.⁸⁹ Bagon emphasized that the devastation of SAPs on women were not an unintended consequence of economic change, but rather a deliberate attempt to facilitate the extraction of resources from the Global South, including its people. The forced migration of “third world women” for Bagon, was the result of policies intended to create a class of low wage more easily exploitable workers.⁹⁰

Bagon and others at the conference connected policies like structural adjustment abroad to “internal structural adjustment” in the US, like welfare reform.⁹¹ As child and health care spending was cut or privatized in the US, the demand for domestic laborers grew. At the same time, SAPs forced migrant women from poor countries into service work in wealthy ones. As migrants, these women were even more vulnerable due to their combined dependence on wages to send to their families back home as well as US laws and policies that denied rights and essential services to immigrants. Bagon went further to highlight specific laws and policies in the

⁸⁸ Rick Rowden, “An Overview of the Increased Coordination of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization Trade Liberalization Policies,” *RESULTS Education Fund*, October 2021.

⁸⁹ Chang, “From the Third World to the ‘Third World Within,’” 220.

⁹⁰ Chang, 198; See also, Testimony of Cenen Bagon, “Voices of Working Women,” Proceedings of “Beyond the WTO: conference on Women and Immigration” Seattle, Washington, 4 December 1999, CDP, Box 17, Folder “Research Files: Voices of Working Women,” Acc. No. 5651-001.

⁹¹ See, “Third World Within Statement,” cited in *CAAV Voice*, Special Issue on Women, Race and Work, 10 (Fall 2000) 17.

US and Canada, like the Live-In Caregiver Program, that recruited migrant workers from the Global South but classified those workers as “temporary,” thereby denying them rights and protections of citizenship.⁹²

By describing how global capitalism took its toll on women and immigrants, they sought to establish a platform and network to continue activist work. At the conference, attendees established a “shared analysis” that saw the global economic system as one that caused “women’s condition to deteriorate worldwide,” destroyed “the social safety nets created by workers struggles,” forced “workers to emigrate from poor countries to developed ones while dramatically restricting immigrants’ legal rights,” lowered “wages while profits soar and denied workers the right to organize.”⁹³ Cindy Domingo emphasized that “the WTO coming to our city gave us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to draw links between conditions faced by working people in developing countries and those faced by immigrants and people of color in the United States.”⁹⁴

They then compiled and published these speeches to distribute (for free) to the public. Included in the *Voices of Working Women* booklet was an introduction written by Cindy Domingo which described the purpose of the conference in bringing the voices of working women from around the world to add to the opposition to the WTO. Domingo explained why their voices were so important considering the WTO’s failures to “address the growing threat globalization poses for women throughout the world.” These women’s stories revealed “the

⁹² Chang, 198; See also, Testimony of Cenen Bagon, “Voices of Working Women,” Proceedings of “Beyond the WTO: conference on Women and Immigration” Seattle, Washington, 4 December 1999. 16.

⁹³ Tammy Luu, “LELO Launches Workers’ Voices Coalition to Protest the WTO,” Speaking for Ourselves to Each Other, newsletter, 3 (Winter 2000), CDP, Box 5, Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

⁹⁴ Chang, 199, footnote 7. See also, Kristyn Joy, “Gender, Immigration and the WTO,” *Network News* (Winter 2000), 12.

harsh reality of free trade and corporate interest” and helped show “why leaders of the WTO profit by keeping the issue of women from their agenda.” The stories of these women, both at the conference and in print, offered an important contribution to the debate over globalization by ensuring “that the citizens of the world hear firsthand that the trade policies authorized by WTO leaders in no way improve living and working conditions for workers in developing countries,” or for those in wealthy nations and for women workers in particular. Their stories helped to highlight the connection between working people in the US and those around the world.⁹⁵ While the conference was an important step in bringing issues related to women and immigration to greater attention, the fact that they had to hold a separate conference underscores the mainstream protests’ inattention to issues facing women and immigrants.

Despite global justice feminists’ efforts to educate and mobilize some of the most diverse coalitions in the city, few at the time recognized their contributions. Following the WTO showdown, newspapers praised the historic partnership between labor unionists and environmentalists, known as the “Teamsters and Turtles” alliance, but few at the time realized that the coalition was much more diverse than this narrow group and included feminists, students, immigrant groups, nonunionized workers, neighborhood organizations, public health advocates, and religious activists from the US and around the world. The feminists under study here were important actors in fostering this broader coalition.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Cindy Domingo, “Introduction,” *Voices of Working Women, Beyond the WTO: Conference on Women and Immigration in the Global Economy*, December 1999, CDP, Box 17, Folder “Research Files: Voices of Working Women,” Acc. No. 5651-001, HBCL.

⁹⁶ Levenstein, 161.

The media's focus on instances of vandalism conducted by white male youth and on white-led organizations like the AFL-CIO, the Sierra Club, and Public Citizen made it appear as if people of color did not participate in the protests. As Kristine Wong of CCEJ lamented, "Teamsters and turtles" and young white protestors became the "universal symbols" of the Global Justice Movement, "rather than the numerous communities around the world who have resisted globalization."⁹⁷ "We were there," Wong observed, "peacefully protesting in large numbers." Despite marginalization by mainstream protest organizers and lack of media coverage, feminists like Wong helped ensure that people of color and indigenous people had a "strong and unified voice of resistance to the WTO."⁹⁸ In the coming decades, feminists in the US Global Justice Movement continued to build upon these efforts

⁹⁷ Kristine Wong, "The Showdown Before Seattle: Race, Class, and the Framing of a Movement," *The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization*, Eddie Yuen, et. al. eds. (Soft Skull Press: New York, 2001): 215-224. 221.

⁹⁸ Scott Winn, "People of Color Against the WTO," *Blind Spot: A Compilation of Underreported Anti-WTO Activism*, December (1999): 1-2.

CHAPTER VII: EPILOGUE: FEMINIST BRIDGE-BUILDING AND THE POST-SEATTLE “UPSURGE”

Following the 1999 WTO Seattle protests, US feminist involvement in the Global Justice Movement (GJM) continued to expand, as seen in major protests against the World Economic Forum (2000), Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (2001 and 2003), and the International Monetary Fund (2001). At the same time, police violence and scrutiny over GJM activities increased. For instance, at the July 2001 G8 Summit protests in Genoa, Italy, police killed at least one activist.¹ Back in the US, at the 2003 demonstrations against the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), an agreement that would have expanded NAFTA’s reach to all countries in North and South America, police seemed to deliberately target “Seattle-esque protestors” dressed in costumes and carrying floats. Activists that day were met with police officers described as “Robocops,” armed in riot gear, carrying batons, pepper spray and rubber bullets, who responded brutally against the demonstrators.² What these protests revealed was that new tactics were needed in the face of police brutality. Even more, activists realized that mass convergences like the one in Seattle would not work if powerful global institutions like the IMF, WTO, and World Economic Forum held their meetings in nations without constitutional guarantees to free speech and assembly.

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the political discourse in the US placed increased scrutiny on the activist community and further heightened police brutality and the surveillance of activists. Just six weeks after the attacks, the US government passed the 2001 Patriot Act, which

¹ Joel Wainwright and Rafael Ortiz, “The Battles in Miami: the Fall of the FTAA/ALCA and the Promise of Transnational Movements,” *Environments and Planning D*, 24 (2006), 349-366.

² Paul R. Babin, “Local Marches Against FTAA,” *Labor Notes*, “Dispatches from Miami: Special Report,” 30 November 2003.

broadened the definition of “domestic terrorism” to include protestors engaged in civil disobedience, should those activities result in violence. The law expanded the government’s authority to surveil and prosecute a broad range of activist organizations and campaigns. Some scholars argue that these changes curtailed and even ended the GJM by the early 2000s.³ These accounts overlook how activists shifted their strategies to meet these changing conditions.⁴ Increasingly, GJM activists sought new methods for developing alternatives to the global free trade system. As in Seattle, feminists played crucial yet unheralded roles in this process.

Feminists working on global issues, including those in the US, played leading roles in organizing the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January 2001. Activists conceived this worldwide gathering of over 50,000 environmental, human rights, labor, feminist, and community activists, as well as public intellectuals and academics in opposition to the 2001 World Economic Forum (WEF), an international coalition of the world’s wealthiest and most powerful CEOs, business, and political leaders, which met in Davos, Switzerland. Organizers defined their social forum as an “open meeting place” to allow for “reflective thinking,” debates, and the exchange of personal experiences to foster the “interlinking” of groups and movements that were opposed to neoliberalism. They expressed a commitment to “building a planetary

³ See: Jennifer Hadden and Sidney Tarrow, “Spillover or Spillout? The Global Justice Movement in the United States After 9/11,” *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 12:4 (2007), 359-376; Paul Adler, *No Globalization Without Representation: U.S. Activists and World Inequality*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021.) 7; Andrew Lang, *World Trade Law after Neoliberalism: Reimagining the Global Economic Order*, (Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁴ See: Janet Conway, “Transnational Feminisms and the World Social Forum: Encounters and Transformations in Anti-globalisation Spaces,” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 8:3 (2007), 49-70; Catherine Eschle and Bice Maiguashca, *Making Feminist Sense of the Global Justice Movement*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010); Marta Kolařová, “Fairies and Fighters: Gendered Tactics of the Alter-globalization Movement in Prague (2000) and Genoa (2001),” *Feminist Review* 92 (2009), 91-107; Bice Maiguashca, “Looking Beyond the Spectacle: Social Movement Theory, Feminist Anti-globalization Activism and the Praxis of Principled Pragmatism,” *Globalizations* 8:4 (2011), 535-549; Virginia Vargas, “Feminism, Globalization, and the Global Justice and Solidarity Movement,” *Cultural Studies* 17:6 (2003), 905-920.

society directed towards fruitful relationships” between humanity and the environment.⁵ The theme of the forum was “another world is possible” with activists united behind the common idea that corporate globalization was devastating for people and the environment, and they met to discuss alternative solutions.⁶

Transnational feminist organizations like The World March of Women, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), and Women in Development Europe (WIDE) played a major role in planning and implementing the first World Social Forum.⁷ As in Seattle in 1999, the WSF process and rhetoric reflected the permeation of feminist ideas and actors as global justice feminists urged other activists to recognize the ways in which patriarchy supported other systems of oppression. The website for the event deployed a set of terminology that reflected the influence of feminist thinking, especially the frequent use of the term “patriarchal capitalism.”⁸ As WSF participants and USSF organizers Rose Brewer and Walda Katz Fishman explained, “one of the most significant” feminist insights was rooted in how “deeply race, class, and gender operate in deep interplay” in the world. The term “patriarchal capitalism” reflects this understanding.⁹

⁵ World Social Forum, “World Social Forum Charter of Principles,” (2001) retrieved from <https://fsm2016.org/en/sinformer/a-propos-du-forum-social-mondial/>.

⁶ For more on the history of the World Social Forum, see, Jeffrey Juris, *Networking Futures: The Movements Against Corporate Globalization*. Duke University Press: Durham, 2008; Boaventura De Sousa Santos, *The Rise of the Global Left: The World Social Forum and Beyond*, Zed Books: New York, 2013; Lyndi Hewitt and Marina Karides, “More Than a Shadow of a Difference: Feminist Participation in the World Social Forum,” *Handbook on World Social Forum Activism*, eds. Jackie Smith, et. al. Paradigm Publishers: New York, 2015 (85-104).

⁷ Valentine M. Moghadam. *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks*. The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, Maryland, 2005.

⁸ Rose M. Brewer and Walda Katz-Fishman, “Feminism: Gender, Race & Class – Lessons Learned & Today’s Moment,” *The United States Social Forum: Perspectives of a Movement*, Marina Karides, Walda Katz-Fishman, Rose M. Brewer, Alice Lovelace, Jerome Scott eds. (Chicago: Changemaker Publications, 2010), 319-327. 323.

⁹ Rose M. Brewer and Walda Katz-Fishman, “Feminism: Gender, Race & Class – Lessons Learned & Today’s Moment,” *The United States Social Forum: Perspectives of a Movement*, Marina Karides, Walda Katz-Fishman, Rose M. Brewer, Alice Lovelace, Jerome Scott eds. (Chicago: Changemaker Publications, 2010), 319-327. 323.

At the same time, as in the Seattle WTO protests, the forum was inconsistent in its recognition of feminist thoughts and voices. In much of the publicity and education materials, forum organizers did not feature feminism as an aspect of its central beliefs. When these texts did mention feminism or feminists, it was generally as part of a larger claim about the diversity of perspectives and participants, meant to highlight the broad range of activists who attended, without any specificity or detail about feminists or their activities. Some women participants were critical of the Forum's masculine character.¹⁰ As Maria Osava, coordinator in Brazil for the World March of Women explained, the WSF "changed our lives," but it continued to be a "machista" organization where men vastly outnumbered women in leadership positions.¹¹ Women have also reported experiencing sexual assault at the gatherings.¹²

Yet, over time, feminists began to take on greater visibility within WSF organizing. By the second WSF in 2002, a network of feminist organizations in the Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay) launched the Campaign Against Fundamentalisms. While religious fundamentalism was not a new phenomenon, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and subsequent revelation that they were motivated by a holy war against the United States had thrust the issue to the forefront of the US public's attention.¹³ Following the attacks, President George W. Bush invaded first Afghanistan in 2001 and then Iraq in 2003 on the grounds that these countries fostered terrorism. At the time, the national feminist organization the Feminist Majority Foundation received widespread attention for its "Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid" in

¹⁰ Wilson, 14

¹¹ Maria Osava, "World Social Forum: 'Machista' but Valued by Feminists Nonetheless," *Interpress Service News Agency*, 30 January 2010. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2010/01/world-social-forum-machista-but-valued-by-feminists-nonetheless/>

¹² Wilson, 14.

¹³ Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms around the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). 17.

Afghanistan, an effort that portrayed Afghan women as in need of saving by the US military.¹⁴ In contrast to these feminist efforts that supported the Bush administration's invasion of the country, feminists here argued that economic inequality, poverty, and colonialism fed religious fundamentalism. The campaign worked to reveal the links between the "economic fundamentalism" of neoliberal capitalism and the growth in religious and ethnic fundamentalisms around the world.¹⁵ They also explained how patriarchy, fundamentalism, militarization, and colonialism were intertwined, as fundamentalists gained power, in part, by controlling women's bodies.¹⁶ By the 2003 WSF, the campaign became truly international as feminists from Women Living Under Muslim Law (UK), the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID, Canada), the Center for Women's Global Leadership (US), DAWN (Fiji), and the Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice (WICEJ, US) joined the coalition.¹⁷

Beginning in 2003, feminists involved in World Social Forum organizing began calling separate meetings specifically devoted to issues of gender and sexuality in response to the marginalization women, homosexual, and transgender people still faced within the movement. These independent gatherings furthered their efforts to make the struggle against gender and

¹⁴ Ann Russo, "The Feminist Majority Foundation's Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8:4 (2006), 557-580.

¹⁵ Frieda Werden, "Feminist Report from II World Social Forum," *FIRE*, 2 February 2002. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070623193958/http://www.fire.or.cr/forosocial02/frieda1.htm>

¹⁶ It should be noted here that many national feminist organizations in the US, such as the Feminist Majority Foundation, implicitly or explicitly supported the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq based on the Bush administration's arguments about the need to save Afghan and Iraqi women from the tyranny and oppression of the Taliban or Saddam Hussein. For more, see: Ann Russo, "The Feminist Majority Foundation's Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8:4 (December 2006), 557-580; Naje Al-Ali, "A Feminist Perspective on the Iraq War," *Work and Days* 57:29 (2011), 1-15.

¹⁷ Carol Barton, "Global Women's Movements at a Crossroads: Seeking Definition, New Alliances and Greater Impact," *Socialism and Democracy*, 18:1 (2004): 151-184.

sexual oppression more central within the Global Justice framework.¹⁸ For instance, in 2003, over 120 feminists representing dozens of different networks, including DAWN, WICEJ, the Articulaci3n Feminista Marcosur (AFM), and AWID, met to coordinate for the upcoming WSF and to draft a feminist antiwar statement.¹⁹ These feminists worked to explain the connections between violence against women, military violence, fundamentalism, and neoliberal globalization.²⁰ Following the meeting, the WMW, DAWN, AFM, and WICEJ all issued powerful antiwar statements condemning the US invasion of Iraq.²¹

By 2004, feminists in the WSF began to develop strategies for increasing their visibility in the larger Global Justice Movement. They began to hold meetings, conferences, and dialogues with other groups, where they revealed why feminism was important to understanding issues relating the environment, labor, and militarization. By the 2004 Mumbai WSF, thanks in large part to the work of feminists from Latin America and South Asia, feminism became undeniably visible when organizers ceded to their demands for “parit3” (equal representation of men and women on panels).²² In Mumbai, feminists from seven transnational feminist networks and organizations planned a series of “Feminist Dialogues” where they spoke on the major issues of the day, including war and militarization, the rise of religious fundamentalism, neoliberal

¹⁸ Ariane Jossin, “Feminism and the Global Justice Movement,” *Encyclop3die pour une histoire nouvelle de l’Europe*. 24 May 2017. <https://ehne.fr/en/article/gender-and-europe/european-feminisms/feminism-and-global-justice-movement>

¹⁹ Catherine Eschle, “‘Skeleton Women’: Feminism and the Anti-Globalization Movement,” *Signs* 30:3 (Spring 2005): 1741-1769.

²⁰ Carol Barton, “Global Women’s Movements at a Crossroads: Seeking Definition, New Alliances, and Greater Impact,” *Journal of the Research Group on Socialism and Democracy* 25:3 (2004), 151-184. 153.

²¹ Eschle, 1755. See also: Women’s International Coalition for Economic Justice, “Women’s International Coalition for Economic Justice Opposes Attack on Iraq and War on Many Fronts,” *WICEJ*, 25 March 2003. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20030628002456/www.wicej.addr.com/antiwar.html>.

²² Wilson, 14.

globalization, and US imperialism.²³ The Dialogues attempted to foster transnational feminist organizing and collaboration as well as bring feminist voices in greater contact with other social movements. The event included one panel called “A Dialogue Between Movements” aimed at fostering greater “cross-fertilization” of feminist ideas to groups working on environmental, labor, public health, and indigenous rights.²⁴

While early US feminist participation in the WSF paled in comparison to the participation of feminists from Latin America, those that did attend returned home with a commitment to increasing US activists’ engagement with the social forum process.²⁵ In 2002, a delegation of US activists sponsored by the French American Charitable Trust foundation attended the second WSF in Brazil. After attending these early WSFs, similar to what happened with the 1995 Beijing conference, many of the delegates returned home with the hope of drawing more connections between US grassroots low-income and non-white community groups and those from around the world. By 2005, delegates from Jobs with Justice, Project South, and the LA-based community improvement group Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE), helped found the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance (GGJ). GGJ used what they termed “grassroots internationalism” to build solidarity among grassroots activists across borders.²⁶ They helped organize and support delegations of grassroots activists from the US to

²³ These networks included Isis International (Manila), DAWN, INFORM (Sri Lanka), WICEJ, AFM, African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), and India National Network of Autonomous Women’s Groups (INNAWG).

²⁴ Wilson, 18.

²⁵ Marc Becker, “World Social Forum,” *Peace and Change* 32:2 (April 2007): 203-220. An estimated 63% of participants at the 2005 WSF came from South America.

²⁶ Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, “Our Story,” ggjalliance.org.

attend the WSF from 2002 to 2006.²⁷ In early 2002, GGJ began attempts to develop a national social forum in the United States.²⁸

To draw greater public participation in the US forum process, organizers began planning several regional forums that revealed important lessons for how to plan an inclusive gathering that centered the most marginalized groups in society. Less than five years after the historic “Battle in Seattle,” many of the same organizers, including Seattle feminists Cindy Domingo, Tammy Bang Luu, and Christina López, worked to put on a regional social forum in the Pacific Northwest.²⁹ However, just two weeks before the Northwest Social Forum was supposed to take place, first the Indigenous Committee, and then the Youth Committee, pulled out of the events, forcing organizers to cancel due to concerns about outreach, allocation of funds, and the centralized nature of decision-making.³⁰ Christina López of Seattle Radical Women who served on the Gender Justice Working Group for the event recalled that the cancellation reflected larger fissures within social justice organizations in the Pacific Northwest.³¹ Many grassroots feminists were especially critical of the outreach process, with one local feminist decrying “in terms of outreach to women’s groups, it was not really happening.”³² While leaders originally committed

²⁷ Michael Leon Guerrero, “The US Social Forum: Building from the Bottom Up,” *Societies without Borders* 3(2008): 168-186.

²⁸ Michael Leon Guerrero, “The US Social Forum: Building from the Bottom Up,” *Societies without Borders* 3(2008): 168-186.

²⁹ “Northwest Social Forum” Newsletter, Issue 1, August 2004 Northwest Social Forum Project, Center for Communication and Civic Engagement, University of Washington, Seattle. <http://ccce.com.washington.edu/wp-content/uploads/nwsfnewsletter1.pdf>. See also: NW Social Forum “Indigenous Programming Committee Statement on the Northwest Social Forum” (11 October 2004). Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20041011233258/http://www.nwsocialforum.org/?q=news/ipcstatement>; Frances F. Korten and Roberto Vargas, “Movement Building for Transformational Change: Bringing Together Diverse Leaders for Connection and Vision.” Bainbridge, WA: *YES! Magazine* (30 June 2009).

³⁰ Amoshaun Toft, Nancy Van Leuven, Lance Bennett, Jonathan Tomhave, Mary Lynn Veden, Chris Wells and Lea Werbel, “Which Way for the Northwest Social Forum? A Dialogue on Cross-Issue Organizing,” Center for Communication and Civic Engagement, Seattle, Washington. 7 June 2007.

³¹ López, interview by author, Seattle, WA. 2018.

³² *Ibid*, 5.

to a process in which women, indigenous people, young people, and people of color were at the center, as the process unfolded, many participants were critical that there were not more women and people of color, particularly those representing grassroots organizations, in leadership positions.³³ The goal of the NWSF was to bring marginalized groups to the center, and that it failed revealed, in the words of participant Edward Mast, “a crucial weakness,” not just in the planning process, “but in our progressive community as a whole.”³⁴ Building on these lessons, feminist planners for future regional and national social forums in the US developed new strategies for centering underrepresented communities in their organizing processes.

Other regional forums were more successful. On July 23-25, 2004, 5,000 activists from New England, across the US and around the world, attended the Boston Social Forum held at The University of Massachusetts, Boston.³⁵ To better center women’s voices ahead of the event, activists from several feminist organizations sought to develop a “Feminist Agenda” for the meeting.³⁶ To that end, they created the Women’s Web, an online hub for exploring ideas, communicating, and networking.³⁷ To ensure their voices were not segmented from the larger event, the website called on feminists to share their ideas across the forum, not just in panels specifically devoted to women.³⁸

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Edward Mast, “RE: Follow-up to Oct 7th Mtg.” 10 October 2004. NWSF list-serv.

³⁵ Jason Pramas, “The Boston Social Forum—5 Years On,” *Open Media Boston*, 24 July 2009.

³⁶ These organizations included the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), The Global Peace Initiative of Women, The Brazilian Women’s Group, The Center for New Worlds, The Association of Haitian Women, STEP, The World March of Women, Wand, CODEPINK, and NOW Boston.

³⁷ Sean Donahue, “The Boston Social Forum,” *CounterPunch*, 7 July 2004.

³⁸ Boston Social Forum—Women’s Web, “The Feminist Agenda,” 2004.
<http://bostonsocialforum.org/tracks/womens/>.

By August of 2004, 22 organizations agreed to participate in planning a US Social Forum and officially founded the National Planning Committee (NPC).³⁹ Feminists, such as Tammy Bang Luu from LELO, were central actors and planners for the event and made up a significant membership of the committee. Within the NPC, 85 percent were people of color, 64 percent were women, 51 percent were under the age of 40, and 15 percent identified as queer. Most members represented grassroots organizations.⁴⁰ While originally planned to take place in the summer of 2006, Hurricane Katrina and the government's failed response to the storm prompted organizers to postpone until 2007. The postponement gave activists more time to respond to the crisis in the Gulf.⁴¹

Many of the feminists involved in the planning process saw Katrina as a “political ‘a-ha’ moment” that revealed that social justice organizers were unprepared to assist with the natural and man-made disaster. The news images of Black and Brown people desperately waiting for rescue or begging for food, water, or shelter served as a violent wake-up-call. Even more, the naming of Haliburton as a principal corporation in charge of rebuilding the city, the same company already under investigation for its dealings in Iraq, revealed a virulent link between the injustices experienced by the poor and non-white people of the Gulf Coast and those around the world.⁴²

Feminists involved in the USSF highlighted Katrina, and the resulting devastation and displacement in the Gulf Coast, as the central issue of the day. Those working within the

³⁹ Michael Leon Guerrero, “The US Social Forum: Building from the Bottom Up,” *Societies without Borders* 3(2008): 168-186.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Jerome Scott and Walda Katz-Fishman, “Building the US Social Forum is Building Movement,” Project South newsletter, 1 August 2006. <https://projectsouth.org/building-the-us-social-forum-is-building-movement/>

⁴² Alice Lovelace, “Katrina and the United States Social Forum (USSF),” *Motion Magazine*, 8 April 2007. Retrieved from: https://inmotionmagazine.com/ac07/al_ussf_katr.html.

Grassroots Global Justice Alliance saw the hurricane as a feminist issue that highlighted the intersections of different activist sectors. They explained how the government's failed response to the storm was embedded in a long history of racialized and gendered poverty. They decried media reports where White people were deemed to have "found" food while Black people doing the same were called "looters." Some sought to expose the numerous accounts of police brutality, mass arrests, and even deaths from military and police officers that went unreported in mainstream media.⁴³ They connected these instances of state violence to "military occupation" in places like Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan.⁴⁴ As the reproductive justice advocate and leader of the Women's Working Group to the USSF Loretta J. Ross explained, "We need to redefine occupation as a violent means to maintain order and confiscate our land. We must connect militarism with occupation and reveal who controls the resources and who benefits from the process of occupation" as "these are all expressions of the same phenomenon."⁴⁵

The USSF took three years to plan and organize before it convened in Atlanta in June 2007. Thanks in part to the organizing of feminists, twelve thousand people representing over a thousand organizations attended, including people from every state, 68 countries, and US occupied territories like Guam and Puerto Rico.⁴⁶ One example of feminists' influence is Heather Milton-Lightening of the Indigenous Environmental Network, who set up a national advisory council of indigenous leaders throughout the country to aid her work and met with

⁴³ Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007), 9.

⁴⁴ For example, see: Loretta J. Ross, "A Feminist Perspective on Katrina," *Collective Voices* 1:3 (11 September 2005): 1-3. Sister Song WOC Reproductive Justice Collective Records, Sophia Smith College, Accession 105-44, folder: Collective Voices Summer 2005, Smith College Special Collections, Northampton, MA; Alice Lovelace, "Katrina and the United States Social Forum (USSF)," *Motion Magazine*, 8 April 2007.

⁴⁵ Loretta J. Ross, "A Feminist Perspective on Katrina," *Collective Voices* 1:3 (11 September 2005): 1-3. Sister Song WOC Reproductive Justice Collective Records, Sophia Smith College, Accession 105-44, folder: *Collective Voices* Summer 2005, Smith College Special Collections, Northampton: MA.

⁴⁶ "Feminists Participate in First-Ever US Social Forum," *Feminist Majority Foundation*, 5 July 2007. <https://feminist.org/news/feminists-participate-in-first-ever-us-social-forum/>

regional leaders and helped organize local delegations. Her efforts helped to bring in indigenous leadership from Alaska, Hawaii and almost every region of the country.⁴⁷ Another example is Alice Lovelace, the African-America Atlanta-based poet and community activist, who became the National Lead Organizer for the USSF, bringing her years of organizing experience to facilitate logistics, fundraising, and local and national outreach as the only paid full-time staffer for the event.⁴⁸ Other National Planning Committee members included those from SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, a multi-racial Atlanta-based network who, led by Loretta J. Ross, helped organize delegations of women of color from around the country to attend the forum.⁴⁹

At the same time, as in GJM events elsewhere, feminists within the USSF had to fight to convince other organizers to center their ideas and voices within the larger process. Rather than outright hostility to their cause, they experienced what Ross termed “sexism by neglect”—a sense from others that there was no need to pay attention to gender issues beyond the one plenary session specifically devoted to the topic.⁵⁰ For instance, Ross recalled a “rough moment” during negotiations between the Women’s Working Group (WWG), a committee of women organizers that formed to plan a gender plenary session as part of the USSF, and the National Planning Committee, which was challenging the group to ensure they had a balance between straight,

⁴⁷ Stephanie Guilloud, “The First US Social Forum Report from the Anchor Organization,” Project South, 15 February 2009, Atlanta, GA. Retrieved from: https://projectsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/USSF_report.pdf.

⁴⁸ Stephanie Guilloud, “The First US Social Forum Report from the Anchor Organization,” Project South, 15 February 2009, Atlanta, GA. Retrieved from: https://projectsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/USSF_report.pdf.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 8.

⁵⁰ Nkenge Toure, Pat Willis, Anne Olson, Ann Smith, Loretta Ross, Beverly Yuen Thompson, Mia Mingus, Fakhri Haghani, Jacqui Patterson, “Women’s Working Group Organizing Gender Justice for the US Social Forum A collective process,” eds. Marina Karides, Walda Katz-Fishman, Rose M. Brewer, Alice Lovelace, and Jerome Scott, *The United States Social Forum: Perspectives of a Movement*, Changemaker Publications: Chicago, 2010. 217-245.

lesbian, and transgender people. While Ross felt it important these groups were all represented, she objected to the notion that it was the sole responsibility of the Women's Plenary to maintain gender diversity, and not the other five plenaries that were planned. As Ross recalled, this approach meant the gender plenary "was supposed to bear the weight for gender inclusiveness and balance, especially when it came to transgender representation." Ross felt this argument was "unfair" as the gender plenary was "the only one that actively included a trans speaker at all." This inequity caused Ross to ask why the national committee expected "women to fix something" that was "not addressed in the other five settings." Ross lamented the notion that women were the "political clean-up specialists" and urged the NPC to include more LGBTQ speakers and participants within the other planned sessions.⁵¹

Nevertheless, feminists like Ross believed the USSF was an "unqualified success by any measure." Due to their efforts, the USSF ended up as "the most gender balanced social forum ever." There were over 120 different feminist workshops over the course of the three-day event,⁵² which covered a range of issues including Katrina, domestic workers, global/local connections, neoliberalism, jobs and the economy, the prison industrial complex, health, sex workers rights, LGBTQ rights, Muslim rights, trans feminism, indigenous rights, and women and gender in media and technology.⁵³ Seattle feminist Cindy Domingo held a workshop

⁵¹ Nkenge Toure, Pat Willis, Anne Olson, Ann Smith, Loretta Ross, Beverly Yuen Thompson, Mia Mingus, Fakhri Haghani, Jacqui Patterson, "Women's Working Group Organizing Gender Justice for the US Social Forum A collective process," eds. Marina Karides, Walda Katz-Fishman, Rose M. Brewer, Alice Lovelace, and Jerome Scott, *The United States Social Forum: Perspectives of a Movement*, Changemaker Publications: Chicago, 2010. 217-245.

⁵² Feminist groups, organizations, networks, and alliances included transnational ones like the Center for Concern, Gabriela, JASS (Just Associates), Arab Movement of Women Arising for Justice, Women's Action for New Directions (WAND), WILPF and Arab Movement of Women Arising for Justice. National networks and alliances of feminists included the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, Sister Song, and Domestic Workers United. Local and regional feminist groups and networks included CODEPINK, Women for Peace Bay Area and Atlanta, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, US Women and Cuba Collaboration, the Audre Lorde Project, Community Voices Heard in NYC and The Northwest Employment Law Office (LELO) and from Seattle.

⁵³ USSF 2007, "List of Accepted Workshops," 12 October 2007.

https://web.archive.org/web/20071012122250/https://www.ussf2007.org/en/submitted_proposals.

highlighting women's rights in Cuba and her friend and fellow Beijing conference attendee Jan Strout also highlighted the global women's movement in her workshop "Advancing U.S. Women's Rights Through Global Feminism."⁵⁴ Further, as Pat Willis from the Women's Working Group explained, "each of the groups and the plenaries and people involved in the process were far more gender-sensitive and accountable to gender balance than they might have been without our influence."⁵⁵

As they had in Seattle, feminists at the forum used art, drama, puppets, theater, music, dance and more to overcome differences and foster collaboration and teamwork. For instance, a collective of poor women named welfareQUEENS put on a two-hour play that included poetry, storytelling, spoken word, art, and music featuring six poor women of color relating their own experiences of resistance and survival. The performance was designed to be thought-provoking and serious, and included a handout for attendees to educate them more deeply about the historical myths surrounding poverty and the "welfare queen" in the US.⁵⁶

In the years following, the feminist influence on the Global Justice Movement continued to grow. Feminists were a prominent force in the 2010 US Social Forum in Detroit.⁵⁷ And recent scholarship points to the important roles of feminists in the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement that emerged on the world stage with its takeover of Zuccotti Park near the financial district in New York City.⁵⁸ Among those who participated in the Seattle Occupy movement was SRW and

⁵⁴ USSF Web Archive, "Submitted Proposals," 27 October 2007.

https://web.archive.org/web/20071012122250/https://www.ussf2007.org/en/submitted_proposals.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Lisa Gray-Garcia, "welfareQUEENS," 15 March 2007. Web archive 21 October 2007.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20071021084039/https://www.ussf2007.org/en/node/1394>.

⁵⁷ Marina Karides, "Events, Tents, and Assemblies: Promoting Gender Justice at the US Social Forum," *feministing.com*. (2010).

⁵⁸ Valentine Moghadam, *Globalization and Social Movements: Islamism, Feminism, and the Global Justice Movement* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013). See also: Heather McKee Hurwitz, *Are We the 99%?: The Occupy Movement, Feminism, and Intersectionality* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2020); Megan Coler

WTO veteran Christina López.⁵⁹ In 2013, to counter police violence against people of color, three Black women founded Black Lives Matter (BLM), a campaign that soon exploded into a global movement.⁶⁰ Two of the founders, Opal Tometi and Alicia Garza, attended the 2007 USSF in Atlanta.⁶¹ Tometi explained of the global orientation of the BLM movement, “I always think we should be acting locally, but thinking globally . . . we are living in the age of globalization.” She went on to add that she encouraged people “to get involved at the local level,” but to also “ensure they are a part of global networks” as “it’s important to be part of global campaigns that allow you to address issues that span across the globe in addition to assessing the local change in your community.”⁶²

Global justice feminists also permeated the Fight for Fifteen, begun in 2012 when low wage service workers primarily in the fast-food industry launched a movement to demand a living wage.⁶³ As the vast majority of low-wage workers were women of color, it was unsurprising that they took lead roles in not only fighting for a better pay, but also against pregnancy discrimination, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence. They pursued a strategy of building global solidarity between laborers by funding trips for ordinary workers to travel and meet their global counterparts. They also pursued tactics intended to embarrass global

and Christina Nitsou, *Women Activists of Occupy Wall Street: Consciousness-Raising and Connective Action in Hybrid Social Movements* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Molly Talcott and Dana Collins, “Building a Complex and Emancipatory Unity: Documenting Decolonial Feminist Interventions within the Occupy Movement,” *Feminist Studies* 38:2 (Summer 2012), 485-506.

⁵⁹ Christina López, interview by author. See also, Megan Cornish, “Passion and principles,” *Freedom Socialist*, February 2012.

⁶⁰ AnaLexicis T. Bridewell, “Black Lives Matter: Why Black Feminism?” *First-Gen Voices: Creative and Critical Narratives on the First-Generation College Experience* 5:1 (February 2016); Catherine Knight Steele, “When the Black lives that matter are not our own: digital Black feminism and a dialectic of self and community,” *Feminist Media Studies* 21:5 (July 2021), 860-863.

⁶¹ Cathy J. Cohen and Sarah J. Jackson, “Ask a Feminist: A Conversation with Cathy J. Cohen on Black Lives Matter, Feminism, and Contemporary Activism,” *Signs* 41:4 (Summer 2016)

⁶² Chanté Joseph, “Black Lives Matter Was Always Designed to Be a Global Movement,” *Vice News*, 7 July 2020.

⁶³ Annelise Orleck, *We Are All Fast-Food Workers Now: The Global Uprising Against Poverty Wages* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018).

brands about human rights abuses.⁶⁴ And, in the 2014 People’s Climate March in New York City, feminists from organizations like DAWN and the US-based Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) showed up in force and emphasized how climate change particularly impacted women, and especially women of color and women in the Global South.⁶⁵ Two years later, indigenous women were the principal leaders and organizers of the protests against the building of the Dakota Access Pipeline in Standing Rock.⁶⁶

These are just some of the many examples of how feminists in the new millennium drew on the groundwork laid by activists in the 1990s to resist global capitalism. Today, as economic inequality and capitalist globalization intensifies, it is even more vital to learn from these feminists’ endeavors to build broad coalitions that recognized the ways in which these injustices were intertwined. As Seattle Radical Women’s Maxine Reigel argued, “If we are fooled into blaming our sisters and brothers for our common oppression we will be doomed to live in accelerated misery.”⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Ibid. See also, “When Workers Fight Back: An Interview with Annelise Orleck,” *Jacobin*, 28 February 2018.

⁶⁵ Levenstein, *They Didn’t See Us Coming*, 188. See also, Greta Gaard, “Out of the Closets and Into the Climate! Queer Feminist Climate Justice,” *Climate Futures: Reimagining Global Climate Justice*, eds. Kum-Kum Bhavnani, John Foran, Priya Kurian, and Debashish Munshi (New York: Zed Books, 2018), 92-101. 97-98

⁶⁶ Levenstein, 188. See also, Oka Apesvchi, “Indigenous Feminism, Performance, and Protest,” *Theatre Journal* 27:2 (June 2020), 127-142; Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future* (London: Verso Books, 2018), 180.

⁶⁷ Maxine Reigel, “Ladyfest” speech, 5 August 2000, Olympia, WA. In author’s possession.

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