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The World Economic Forum

Beginning January 31, the Swiss-based World Economic Forum will hold its first annual meeting ever in the United States in New York City at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel. Some 3,200 business leaders, politicians, journalists and academics will meet behind closed doors to set an agenda for the global economy. Thousands of protesters are expected to converge in the New York. To help make sense of it all, the New York City Independent Media Center offers this factsheet on the World Economic Forum.

For complete coverage visit www.nyc.indymedia.org

What is the World Economic Forum?

The WEF is a private member organization comprising representatives from 1,000 of the world’s largest corporations including Microsoft, Monsanto, Nike, General Motors and, until recently, Enron. Originally formed in 1971 as the European Management Forum, the Swiss-based group has grown into a major global agenda setter and a leading proponent of corporate globalization. Until this year, the organization held its annual meeting in the Swiss mountain resort town of Davos.

The exclusive meeting is open to members - who pay upwards of $30,000 in annual dues - as well as selected politicians, journalists and academics. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair are both expected to be among the 3,200 in attendance. While the WEF helps set global economic and trade agendas that affect the entire world, the group predominantly includes European and American businesses. The member breakdown by continent is Europe, 43 percent; North America, 26 percent; Asia, 13 percent; Central/South America, 7.5 percent; Middle East, 4.5 percent; Africa, 4.3 percent; Australasia, 2.2 percent.

What impact will the meeting have on NYC?

"City and World Economic Forum officials also note that one factor working in their favor is the diminished furor, particularly after Sept. 11, of the American anti-globalization movement," reported the Washington Post. In contrast, activists predict the New York action will be the largest anti-corporate American protest since April 2000, when tens of thousands took to the streets of Washington D.C. to protest the World Bank.

What is the World Economic Forum?

"As the world's financial capital and the site of the recent terrorist attacks, there could be no better place than New York City to confront [post 9/11] issues," said WEF founder Klaus Schwab on Nov. 7. City and state officials welcomed the decision with hopes that the meeting will help stimulate New York's lagging economy.

Protesters claim the meeting was moved to New York in an effort to muffle protest and dissent. "We are offended that at such time of crisis, the world's richest and powerful are descending upon the ruins of New York to plot and schmooze," read a statement by the Anti-Capitalist Convergence. Even before 9/11, many suspected years of protest in Davos would cause the WEF to seek a new home for its annual meeting in a less protest-prone venue.
Who is protesting the WEF?

Scores of organizations have planned protests, marches and counter summits to take place the week of Jan. 30 - Feb. 4. These include the Students For Global Justice, AFL-CIO, Another World Is Possible, Anti-Capitalist Convergence, Public Citizen, Public Eye of Davos and International ANSWER.

The World Economic Forum is seen by many as the corporate architect of the recent wave of economic globalization. Representatives from WEF set the foundation for the formation of the World Trade Organization, the highly contentious global economic body that was the focus of the Seattle protests in 1999.

In addition, WEF's growing clout is beginning to challenge even that of the United Nations which concerns many critics since the Forum is a private entity accountable to only its members. "Should a Forum that is dominated by corporate interests be encouraged to take on the role of mapping out future frameworks for global governance?" asked Australian scholar Peter Goodman in his article "The WEF: Capital's First International?" For protest groups, the answer is clearly no.

What is the connection between the World Economic Forum and the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization?

The IMF and World Bank were both formed following World War II ostensibly to help stabilize the international economy and to provide loans to struggling nations. The institutions, which are run by member nations, have advocated for the neo-liberal economic model that has been criticized widely for the inequality it produces both within countries and between first and third world nations.

The World Economic Forum dates to the early 1970s and was directly responsible for paving the way for the World Trade Organization. The IMF, World Bank and WTO all have power to implement policy and affect economic regulations while the WEF is a private group that can set the corporate agenda on trade.

How effective has the WEF been?

Since Swiss professor Klaus Schwab organized a small meeting of European corporate chiefs in 1971, the annual meeting has grown rapidly in size and scope. It was originally known as the European Management Forum. In 1982, the first Informal Gathering of World Economic Leaders took place in Davos. A year later the inaugural Davos Governors' Meetings were held. In 1986, the organization became known as the World Economic Forum and has since become the foremost annual corporate gathering in the world. Its impact on global economic policy has likewise been profound.

"The Forum has been remarkably successful - since 1971 the 'state of the world' has dramatically improved for many of the participating corporations. WEF strategizing drove the neo-liberal agenda in the 1980s, bringing together politicians from the 'pretender' states of the newly industrializing world, as well as from the OECD states, to map out an agenda with transnational business executives," writes Peter Goodman, an Australian professor at University of Technology Sydney.

What happened at previous WEF meetings?

Until the late 1990s, the World Economic Forum attracted little attention outside the financial elite. But that changed when annual protests began in Davos as activists demanded more accountability to this leading agenda-setting organization. Demonstrations grew to include over 1,000 people two years ago spurring Swiss officials to ban protests in 2000.

But that did not prevent "hacktivists" from decoding the WEF computer server to gain credit card numbers, travel information and private cell phone numbers for over 1,000 attendees including Yasser Arafat, Madeline Albright and Bill Gates. In September 2000, WEF held a regional meeting in Melbourne, Australia. There 10,000 protesters converged forcing delays in the meeting as one-third of the delegates were prevented entry into the meeting center. WEF protests have also occurred in

What is the connection between the WEF and the World Social Forum?

The World Social Forum formed last year Porto Alegre, Brazil, as a counter summit to the WEF annual meeting. Some 10,000 activists, educators, unions and workers from around the world met to discuss alternatives to the neo-liberal economic model. "'Another World Is Possible' was the event's official slogan," reported Naomi Klein last year. "After a year and a half of protests against the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the World Social Forum was billed as an opportunity for this emerging movement to stop screaming about what it is against and start articulating what it is for." As many as 60,000 people are expected to attend this year's Forum which meet again from Jan. 31 to Feb. 5. For full coverage visit www.brasil.indymedia.org.
A.N.S.W.E.R. - Act Now to Stop War & End Racism - calls for mass actions to:

• "Declare war on unemployment, poverty and mass layoffs - not on the people of Afghanistan."
• "Money for jobs, education and health care - not war in Afghanistan."
• We call on thousands of people to take to the streets of New York City between January 31 and February 5 in a protest coinciding with an annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.

This meeting includes political leaders and hundreds of representatives of the world's biggest transnational corporations, banks and media conglomerates, from Chase-Manhattan to GM to Siemen to AOL. It represents the world economic and military structures that have impoverished people throughout the Third World and inside the United States. It is these corporate and banking elites and government officials who are promoting the war against the people of Afghanistan. They will derive huge profits from the sale of military weapons of mass destruction under the rubric of combating "terrorism." They seek to consolidate their hold over the oil-rich Caspian region and the Middle East.

Since September 11, hundreds of thousands of workers from the airline industry, the hotel and restaurant industry and more have lost their jobs. Unemployment and mass layoffs are now sweeping through all sectors of the U.S. economy. The corporate and banking elites which dominate the U.S. government have crafted legislation and emergency aid to bail out corporate investors and insurance companies, while providing absolutely no assistance to working people who have lost their income and are now facing evictions, foreclosures and deepening poverty. Hardest hit have been the lowest paid workers, especially those in the service sector.

It is obscene that these modern day corporate robber barons and the government officials who do their bidding will hold their celebrated annual meeting at the Waldorf in New York City while hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers are being forced onto the unemployment lines. New York City officials will roll out the red carpet for the rich and powerful while working and poor people go without a guaranteed income, health care or a roof over their heads.

The demonstration is being called by International A.N.S.W.E.R., a national coalition that was formed in response to the headlong rush to war and racist attacks following the horrific events of September 11. A.N.S.W.E.R. has the support of more than 500 organizations and prominent individuals and scores of organizing centers in cities and towns across the country. Its national steering committee represents major national organizations that have campaigned against U.S. intervention in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Asia, and organizations that have campaigned for social and economic justice for poor people inside the United States.
A charter bus carrying forty-four members and associates of MEGAN (the Maine Global Action Network) left Brunswick, Maine at 2:00 a.m., Saturday, February 2. We arrived in New York City approximately 9:00 a.m. and proceeded to the site of the A.N.S.W.E.R. rally at 50th and Park Avenue, directly across Park Avenue from the Waldorf Astoria luxury hotel -- the site of the World Economic Forum.

We stood for six hours in confined cage-like pens under close scrutiny of the New York City Police Force. Four thousand (4000) uniformed officers - some on foot, some mounted on horseback, some on bicycles and others in full riot gear - had been mobilized to keep watch over the 10,000 to 15,000 demonstrators gathered along Park Avenue and elsewhere in the city to protest the WEF that weekend. In past anti-globalization protests in other cities, notably the WTO in Seattle and Washington, and the FTAA in Quebec, heavy fences had been erected around the meeting locations to keep demonstrators OUT. On this occasion, however, small “pens” about twenty-four (24) feet wide and half a block long had been erected to keep us IN. We were corralled into these closed areas, separated into small manageable groups of 100 to 200 persons per “cage” and were not allowed to come and go from the rally site. Uniformed police officers individually escorted those of us who wished to use the porto-potties to and from our respective cages.

Experientially, this arrangement generated, for me, a unique feeling of claustrophobia. I now understand, to some small degree, the term used by prison inmates: “stir-crazy.” To say that I had a personal revelation that we as American citizens are now living in a “Post 9-11 Police State,” might be considered by some to be inflammatory rhetoric. However, I must admit that the thought most definitely did cross my mind. To hear and read the phrase “Police State” in writing or on the media is one thing. But to actually be there and feel it, is quite another. It was a transformational experience.

During the many hours of the rally, numerous speakers addressed us, each representing a different organization working in conjunction with the rally’s sponsor, A.N.S.W.E.R. (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism, www.InternationalANSWER.org) Among these were advocates for Mumia Abu Jamal, a journalist and political prisoner who has been on Death Row in Pennsylvania for the last twenty years, having been, in the opinion of many, wrongly convicted of the 1982 killing of a Philadelphia policeman.

For me, the most eloquent and emotional speaker was a young woman representing the Muslim American Students Association. She spoke with deep emotion of her experience as a victim of racial profiling since and before September 11. She is a third generation American. Her words moved many of us to tears.

The anti-globalization movement has gained momentum and is now defined as the umbrella under which virtually all other protest movements may find shade. We grow in awareness that environmentalists struggling to save the planet from destruction are fighting against corporations; that Welfare Rights Unions and people struggling for a living wage face the opposition of corporations and their interests; that corporate strategies to maximize profits that have taken manufacturing jobs out of this country and moved them to underpaid workers in impoverished countries; that racism and injustice in the US legal system are intimately tied in with the corporate agenda; and finally, that the war in Afghanistan was planned months ahead of the attacks on New York City as strategy to maximize profits from oil in the Caspian Sea region and Middle East; AND that corporate arms dealers and defense contractors are the ones who have ALWAYS profited from war, and that it is THEY who stand to profit immensely from the Bush regime’s “War on Terrorism.” We grow in awareness that most of us who are poor and marginalized in the world are victims of CORPORATE TERROR. Nevertheless, our movement stands as evidence that, as we chanted many times last Saturday: “The people united will never be defeated!”

"[The Beast] forced all men, small and great, rich and poor, slave and free, to accept a stamped image on their right hand or forehead. Moreover, It did not allow a man to buy or sell anything unless he was first marked with the name of the Beast, or with the number that stood for its name."

REVELATION, Ch. 13, v. 16-17
PROTEST "BLACK HAWK DOWN"
Money for Jobs and Human Needs, Not for War and Racism!
No new war against Somalia!

Why are we calling for protests and boycotts against “Black Hawk Down”? 

This movie is a blatantly racist attempt to create support among the U.S. public for a new war against Somalia. According to the Bush Administration, Somalia is at the top of the Pentagon's list of countries to be the next major target of the so-called “war against terrorism.”

In his review of “Black Hawk Down,” New York Times movie reviewer Elvis Mitchell wrote that the movie “converts the Somalis into a pack of snarling dark-skinned beasts ... it reeks of glumly staged racism.”

What actually happened in Somalia in 1992-93?

On December 12, 1992, the U.S. sent 28,000 soldiers into Somalia under the cover of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in what they said was a “humanitarian mission” to bring food to starving people. The invasion came when a several-year drought that had taken tens of thousands of lives was actually abating. At the time, the evening news showed images of thousands of starving Somalis. What people didn’t see was U.S. troops—not delivering food—but instead engaged in daily gun battles and bombing raids in heavily populated neighborhoods. In ten months, more than 10,000 Somalis died as the U.S. engaged in aggressive military action against those who resisted.

Resistance among Somali women, men and even children to the foreign troops became widespread. The Somali people have a long and proud history of resistance. They fought for the freedom of their country from Italian, French and British colonialism—and they resisted the U.S. attempts to recolonize their country.

In the beginning of the military intervention in 1992, Colin Powell, at the time chairman of the Pentagon’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, called the invasion a “paid political advertisement” for the Pentagon at a time (less than a year after the end of the so-called Cold War) when Congress was under growing pressure to cut the war budget. Powell opposed calls that that money be used instead for jobs, education, health care, housing and other social needs, and instead sought to maintain the $300-billion-plus military budget.

In reporting on the U.S./UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), the human rights organization Africa Rights stated that troops “have engaged in abuses of human rights, including killing of civilians, physical abuse, theft ... Many UNOSOM soldiers have also displayed unacceptable levels of racism toward Somalis ...” These abuses included opening fire with machine guns against unarmed protesters, firing missiles into residential areas and outright murder of civilians, including many youth. The report states “UNOSOM has become an army of occupation.”

Pro-war propaganda

Since September 11, Bush administration officials have held meetings with Hollywood representatives regarding the content of the movies and other material they produce. In an October 17, 2001, meeting, Hollywood heads “committed themselves to new initiatives in support of the war on terrorism.”

“Black Hawk Down” is just one of those movies, made hand-in-hand with the Pentagon. Weeks before the release of “Black Hawk Down,” the Motion Picture Association of America held a private screening for senior White House advisers, and allowed them to make changes. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Oliver North, among others, attended the movie’s Washington DC premiere.

Hollywood spends hundreds of millions of dollars on pro-war, racist films like these—$90 million on “Black Hawk Down” alone—while millions of people in New York and around the country are facing layoffs, evictions, cuts in health care, attacks on their pensions and more.

A new war in Somalia

“Somalia Possible Target” is now a common sentiment echoed in newspaper headlines and statements of Bush administration officials. In some ways, a new war against Somalia has already begun. In November, the U.S. government shut down the Somali-owned Al-Barakat money transfer company, which provided the only way for Somalis living out of the country to send back much-needed funds, known as remittances, which are often vital for family members’ survival. Up to eighty percent of Somalis—which is hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people—rely on funds sent by relatives living outside of the country. This exposes the pretext given by the U.S. government for the 1992 intervention—said then to be a mission to help starving people—because now the U.S. is imposing measures that will cause Somali people to starve because they are unable to afford food.

The U.S. also shut down Somalia Internet Company, denying all Internet access to Somalis, and has severely restricted international telephone lines. This is really the beginning of a strangulation of the country.

Since the U.S. government cannot implicate Somalia in the events of September 11, they are attempting to justify a new military assault by implying that the Pentagon has unfinished business, that they have a “black eye” and must return with a vengeance. This is the goal of “Black Hawk Down.”

All those who believe in justice for the people of the world must take a stand against U.S. threats against Somalia, Sudan, the Philippines, Iraq, Colombia and everywhere else. We don’t know where the next war will be. The Pentagon has announced that it’s wartime all the time and they will select the targets. But we do know the U.S. public is being prepared to justify another bloody incursion into Somalia.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO PROTEST AND BOYCOTT “BLACK HAWK DOWN”

• Organize a picket line at a movie theater in your city
• Pass out this fact sheet to moviegoers and others

To get involved, contact International A.N.S.W.E.R. (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism)
39 W. 14th Street, NY, NY 10011 - 212-633 6646 - Email: iacenter@action-mail.org
www.internationalANSWER.org (downloadable flyers available)
Web Deflation and Depression Model
America: 2000-2010

American GDP ($ Trillions)       Year

This schematic is a combination of John Maynard Keynes's idea of 'secular stagnation' and Karl Marx's 'falling rate of profit crisis' theory. Both concepts derive from the idea of 'over-investment' in productive industrial capacity and consequent decrease in 'over-production'. In the 1940s Marx looked at the aggregate effects of Adam Smith's and David Ricardo's theory in an industrializing economy, Marx believed that excessive investment in machinery (a rising organic composition of capital) would drive production levels too high for the existing aggregate wage base, drastically lowering buying capacity or effective demand. This would have lead to:

1. excessive inventory or 'overproduction/underconsumption'
2. deflation of prices and finally to a
3. falling rate of profit crisis, at least in theory.

However, because of quasi-monopolization in industry, and monetary-fiscal intervention and war by the federal government, the falling rate has never occurred long enough to become a crisis since Marx made his prediction.

This schema roughly parallels the pattern of the Great Depression, except that seemingly, aggregate labor costs were cut faster than the GDP dropped in the 1930s, delaying a falling rate crisis. This is one way of viewing Keynes's idea of 'secular stagnation'.

For More, See
www.ClassStruggle.Net
Free Email: ex: AdamSmith@ClassStruggle.Net
Write Questions to:
JMKeynes@ClassStruggle.Net
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS - STREET LAW AND PRACTICE

There are many legal observers on the street today to monitor the New York City Police Department ("NYPD") during this lawful and peaceful protest against the World Economic Forum. The legal observers will be wearing red "LEGAL" armbands.

HELPFUL TIPS
*Carry one piece of photo ID—do not carry conflicting ID
*Carry quarters and phone cards (helpful in jail)
The NYPD has a policy against wooden sticks or plastic tubing being used to hold signs or props; cardboard is OK.
*There is an old law that prohibits three or more "being masked or in any manner disguised by unusual or unnatural attire or facial alteration". While the NYPD may allow performance masks within permitted rallies and marches, there is a risk of arrest for masks elsewhere.
*The NYPD may be searching bags in some areas. Avoid carrying any unlawful drugs or weapons, even pocket knives. Marking pens and spray paint have been interpreted as graffiti instruments.
*Avoid carrying any private items that you would not like to share with the NYPD, such as telephone contacts and date books. If there is a risk of arrest, pass your valuables to another not at risk.
*Electronic sound amplification devices (e.g., bullhorns) require a permit. Unamplified noisemakers—e.g., drums—are legal.

POLICE AND ARRESTS
*STOPPED: If you are stopped by the police, you do not have to talk or answer questions. You do not have to provide ID (exception: if driving, you must produce a license). If you don’t know if you are being arrested, ask: “Am I free to go?”
*SEARCHES: If a police officer demands to search your bag or person (and you are not under arrest) say clearly “I DO NOT consent to this search.” Do not interfere with the search.
*ARREST: If you are being arrested, you have the right to say: “I am going to remain silent, I want to speak to a lawyer.” Do not answer questions about any alleged incident. It is okay to give “pedigree” information for processing release from jail: your true name, address, date of birth, fingerprints, and photo.

If “yes”, say no more and walk away. If “no”, remain silent and assume you are under arrest.

SILENCE=SAFE.

*If you physically resist an arrest, including going “limp”, you risk an additional charge of "Resisting Arrest”.
*Depending on the serious of the charge(s), the status of your ID, whether you refuse to cooperate, and the circumstances of your arrest, you may be: (a) issued a summons or desk appearance to return to court; or (b) be “put through the system” and jailed for 24-36 hours before appearing at arraignment. Remember, DO NOT TALK about your case except to your lawyer.
*At arraignment, a Legal Aid attorney will represent you. The NLG can help find a lawyer later. Plead NOT GUILTY.

IF YOU ARE ARRESTED AND IN JAIL, call: (917) 807-0658

*If you witness or learn of people being arrested get their names and the names of other witnesses and call: (917)603-3835

Please keep these numbers handy, write them on your wrist or ankle and pass them on to your legal support people.

Disclaimer: The advice given here is meant as a general statement of the law, and should not substitute for consulting with your own lawyer should you be arrested.

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GLOBAL ECONOMY: THE MARK OF THE BEAST?