

CHAPTER III

ANTI-GLOBALIZATION MOVEMENT

A. History of the Anti-Globalization Movement

On 29th November 1999, at night, Seattle business and political leaders held a party to entertain delegates who would attend the Third Ministerial Conference of WTO. On the other hand, about hundreds of activists protested in a big church in the city center in preparation for the first large-scale public demonstration which later became a historical tragedy known as “The Battle of Seattle.” The protesters came from a church that joined thousands of others who were waiting in the center of the city, the raining that had not flushed the enthusiasm of the demonstrators to join the protest. They wore union jackets or raincoats who declared their position in opposition to the WTO and celebrated what they called “Protest of the Century.” Many have waited in several city blocks and then continued their activities to the city soccer stadium, the venue for the WTO welcome party and the place was the main target of the protest at that time.

At the meeting held by the Ministers of Commerce at the end of 1999 revealed the basis of increasingly widespread and diverse opposition to the past few decades related to the global economy which has been oriented towards neoliberal policies. The “Battle of Seattle” and its earlier campaign to fight the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and oppose the authorization of “fast track” in the U.S. have reflected some of the first significant obstacles to international trade relations from the neoliberal pathway.¹ Indeed, these campaigns can be important meeting points by demonstrating the capacity of the masses towards economic globalization, Violations of

¹ *Ibid*

general concerns about human rights and labor and environmental protection are challenges for international trade agreements.

The protests held at the WTO Third Ministerial Meeting in Seattle challenged theories of traditional social movement about social movements and state relations when they demonstrated an increase in the meaning of global politics for national actors and various local actors. How globalization, social integration of global, economic, and political relations (both formally and informally) has influenced the way, people organize and act in global social and political movements. First, in terms of people mobilization, Seattle has raised significant questions about the limitations and prospect of mobilizing social movements across national boundaries as well as cultural and class differences. The search for evidence with a critical analysis of whether and how the actors of a social movement can indeed surpass local and national identities and interests to form a resistance movement that has a balanced power towards a healthy state and elite companies.

Second, in terms of collective action, scholars must pay attention to themselves with questions about how international institutional processes have traditional state-level political and capacity influences. "If inter-state relations and agreements become increasingly critical, then state decisions and practices are limited to different levels by their relations with other countries and economic elites how these global processes have influenced opportunities for social movement actors, who have forged their repertoire actions through nationally oriented disputes. The relationship between social movements and intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations is primarily accommodative, but Seattle highlights the history of more controversial

relationships between popular groups and intergovernmental financial institutions.”

Seattle protests are not the first events against one or more of the three organizations that regulate and authorize the world for international capital such as the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF. The Seattle protest was also not the first mass coordinating action that was “anti-capitalist or anti-globalization.” Seattle is the most massive mass protest against one of the triad organizations, and, furthermore, for a large number of demonstrators, it simultaneously fights capitalism as a way of life to create social justice throughout the world. Seattle was followed by Davos (World Economic Forum), Washington, 2000 May Day, Melbourne and other protests against triad organizations, or opposed to what they fought for such as international capital penetration into all areas of social life, neo-liberalism, and subject to the law of money.²

“Millennial Round” is an agenda formed by the Seattle Minister. At the opening of “Millennial Round” in Seattle on November, 30th 1999, protesters representing several movements such as scholars, trade unions and activist organizations came from more than seventy-five different countries. Concern, enthusiasm, creativity, and courage that has been included okay in their strategy to close the Seattle minister is genuinely extraordinary. Although Seattle security forces opened fire on tear gas, rubber bullets and pepper sprayed into the crowd, demonstrators stopped WTO ministers and entourage from enforcing their agenda, and then they withdraw from Seattle in very chaotic conditions.³ Mazur argues that the anger expressed in Seattle resulted from developments in the world economy

² McLaren, P. (2000) Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of Revolution (Lanham, ML: Rowman & Littlefield).

³ Bakan, A. (2000a) After Seattle: the politics of the World Trade Organisation. *International Socialism*, Spring, no.86: 19-36.

failing to benefit labor as against capital. These changes, summed up by the concept of globalization", had not been accompanied by new democratic organizations giving ordinary people a voice on these developments. However, this position ignores the fact that Seattle was an alliance of organized labor with a myriad of social movements, grassroots organizations, and environmental groups.⁴

Activists in Seattle and other multilateral contexts have been included in the official template. Therefore, one of the significant, influential coalition organizations in Seattle was organized by the People's Assembly at all WTO meetings to discuss this issue formally in parallel. Each day is dedicated to panels centered on different agenda items such as agriculture, environment and health, women and children, human rights and employment to include various issues and groups that make activists increasingly motivated.

During the Battle of Seattle and after, many debates occurred regarding its significance. For some socialists, the critical point was that Seattle was against capitalism.⁵ Although there have been many anti-war demonstrations in the past and significant strikes, it could be argued that these forms of struggle targeted the effects and symptoms of the workings of capital. As Peter Hudis has argued that Seattle was not just against the WTO, but against what the WTO stood for. It was recognized by some right-wing commentators too.⁶ As the Economist put it, the WTO was essential for policing neoliberal economic growth in the sphere of trade policies, relations, and practices; without it, it was

⁴ Mazur, J. (2000). Labor "s New Internationalism. *Foreign Affairs*, January/February: 79-93.

⁵ Roberts, K. (2000) Against Capitalism. *Socialism Today*, June no.48: 2-3.

⁶ Hudis, P. (2000) Can capital be controlled? *News & Letters*, April, www.newsandletters.org Joy

argued, trade wars would ensue.⁷ Thus, to the extent that Seattle challenged neoliberal economic growth, mainstream politicians raised the specter of chaos in world trade and further deterioration in a lot of the third world country if the WTO was abolished.

Global capitalism could be tamed or controlled. The key point, therefore, was the role that the WTO could play in the domestication of globalization. The Left debate on this issue polarizes significantly. On the one hand, Colin Hines has indicated that although "globalization cannot be tinkered with," it can be tamed. He advocates localization of trade and productive capacity. However, he does not advocate the transformation of capitalism, addressing the very social forces that created globalization in the first place.⁸

B. The Role of Anti-Globalization Movement toward WTO Mechanism

Demonstrations in Seattle cannot be underestimated, even though neoliberal commentators and the old leftist groups made shocked disparage demonstrators as rebels who are fanatical about protectionism. Instead, the protest succeeded in reviving the belief of millions of people in the world to oppose neoliberalism. The protests deliberately aimed at international meetings spread uncontrollably — Washington, Millau, Melbourne, Prague, Nice, Gothenburg, Quebec City, Genoa, London, Barcelona, Doha, Cancun are cities that witnessed the life of rebirth resistance against liberal capitalism.⁹

If the neoliberal momentum begins with the opening of the Berlin Wall on 9th November 1989, then that momentum ends in just ten years along with a

⁷ Economist (1999c) The real losers. The Economist, 11th December: 15.

⁸ Hines, C. (2000) Local must replace global, New Statesman, 18th September: 24.

⁹ Eric Hiarij. Gerakan Anti-Kapitalisme Global. Page 9

demonstration in Seattle on 30th November 1999. Seattle did not mark the beginning of this opposition, even though the demonstration there could say it brought resistance which was developing to a higher level than before.¹⁰

The process of opposition to global capitalism is more than limited to activist campaigns and street demonstrations. This movement can be considered a global scale because all of the protests have succeeded in finding adequate ideological articulation in various writings of a series of intellectuals and academics. Globalization from above reflects the collaboration of several vital countries in the world as the primary agents of capital formation. Meanwhile, globalization from below includes a series of transnational social forces that are united by concern on issues such as environmental degradation, human rights violations, and patriarchy, while some other activists prefer to call it the anti-globalization movement to give a typical connotation of what is being opposed.

On the one hand, the confusion of names and terms reflects the diversity in beliefs, approaches, and strategies that rage within the social resistance movement itself. However, on the other hand, the confusion is united by what is actually in the opponent. If the cultural resistance movement is simplified since Seattle has opposed four things.¹¹ First, protection of the interests of capital and expansion of capital accumulation on a world scale. Secondly, the tendency towards uniformity of policies and forms of state that changes the state is nothing more than an executive committee of interests its capital and accumulation processes on a world scale through free market ideology. Third, the formation and expansion of a new

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Page 9

¹¹ Gill, S., 2003. Power and Resistance in the World Order.

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

circle of transnational authorities over countries that function to reproduce the primary function of the state as servants of capital. Fourth, the process of eliminating dissident social forces from the arena of state policymaking to socialize the issues being discussed while isolating the neoliberal state from public pressure. To be precise, this social movement is against capitalism, which is deliberately globalized by a flexible model of accumulation, policies that believe in the neoclassical tradition, and free-market ideology.

Resistance to global capitalism is a relatively new movement. Even so, this movement began to reap the classic problem, which almost always faced every social movement in the last two centuries. The issue is whether the social change being fought for will be achieved using reform or revolution. Robin Broad distinguishes between groups who want to reshape and roll back economic globalization.¹² The first group wanted to rewrite the global economic order to strengthen protection and glorifying workers, women, native residents, and environmental preservation. Whereas the second group wants to stop some aspects of globalization such as free trade that is applied to the standard natural resources that are shared at first it was non-economic like water or the flow of capital transfers without control beyond national boundaries. The attraction between reform and revolution seems increasingly complicated from the standpoint of some contemporary issues facing the anti-globalization movement globally.

The anti-globalization movement claims that the adoption of neo-liberal ideas is only beneficial and has a positive impact on a small portion of the earth's population, leaving behind other losses and negative impacts for most of humanity. The deregulation policy

¹² Broad, R. (ed.) 2002. *Global Backlash*. Lanham-Boulder-New YorkOxford: Rowman and Littlefield

adopted by developing countries made them leave one of its primary functions as public service providers and social security nets for the poor. Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) issued by the IMF turned out to be unable to free the third world countries from foreign debt traps. The policy aggravates the structure of the circle of poverty and dilemma third world debt with the implementation of incompatible SAP policy points such as banking deregulation, privatization of state-owned companies, and trade liberalization.¹³ WTO free trade agreements are also often accused of exacerbating the problem. As said by Walden Bello, leader of focus on the Global South, one of the leading anti-globalization movements: "The WTO is unrepresentative and undemocratic institutions based on a free market ideology that does not create a condition except socio-economic inequality and the problem of increasing poverty. "Furthermore, he also claims that the WTO is not an independent organization, but a representation of American hegemony and private actors sector."¹⁴

On the strategy side, the anti-globalization movement tends to use nonviolent strategies and dissemination of ideas, and not a coercive strategy by building a base of material strength. These strategies are in line with Gramsci's thinking, the war of position. The anti-globalization movement avoids the war of movement strategy with a direct physical confrontation against neoliberal hegemony. This method was once used in the Seattle battle and only failed.¹⁵ As Karl

¹³ El-Ojeili, Chamsy dan Patrick Hayden, 2006. *Critical Theory of Globalization*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

¹⁴ Bello, Walden, 2004. *Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy*. London: Zed.

¹⁵ Gramsci, Antonio, 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Dalam Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith eds. New York: International Publishers.

Marx said, the strategy that is used is to overthrow neoliberals at the level of the superstructure (ideas and main substances) by forming and promoting alternative ideas rather than at the level of structure (material basis) by carrying out a physical revolution. In other words, to undermine neoliberal hegemony, the primary and first factors that are deconstructed are the awareness of neoliberal consciousness and common sense, one of which is that free markets lead to the harmony of interest; barriers to capital, production, and distribution in trade the world will ultimately increase global prosperity benefit everyone. Awareness of the idea that the neoliberal agenda brings benefits to the world must be countered by showing the motives and adverse effects produced by global capitalism. The debate about the harmful effects of neoliberal globalization and the need to find alternatives the better ones must be intensively discussed and disseminated.