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Globalisation

Opposition at the Davos World Economic Forum

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As it does every year, the World Economic Forum, comprising around a thousand of the world's chief decision-makers and some heads of state, met at Davos. To protect their meeting, the Swiss authorities employed roadblocks, closure of the Davos railway station, and a massive police presence.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/davos.jpg>]

Opposition at Davos

Many cars carrying demonstrators from France, Italy, and Germany were stopped at the frontiers, without respect for freedom of circulation, nor for individual liberties. The excesses of the police led to heated debate in the Swiss media. Despite all the talk about "listening to civil society", the supporters of ultra-neo-liberalism do not allow the slightest challenge, above all when it is their legitimacy that is at stake. Only Laurent Fabius could dare to claim that there was merely a "misunderstanding" between the opponents of capitalist globalisation and the financial and industrial magnates!

If the heavy police mobilisations prevented any significant demonstrations in Davos itself, other initiatives were held, notably in Zurich. On Friday January 26, a forum called "The other Davos" attracted nearly a thousand participants, mostly youth and trades unionists.

At the centre of the debates: the globalisation of capital, its social and ecological effects; the consequences for the labour and social situation of women; the new international law; the implications for the trade union movement; the arms race being led by the imperialist powers. Two forums drew particular attention: that on the situation in Palestine (with Michel Warschawski) and that on "Plan Colombia" (with Janette Habel). The forum ended with a meeting where speakers included François Chesnais, Charles-André Udry, Jean Ziegler, Annick Coupé and Roseline Vachetta, who stressed the role of the European Union as relay of capitalist globalization.

The second phase of the mobilisation was the attempt to demonstrate in Davos itself. However, demonstrators' cars were stopped about 30 kilometres from their destination by police supported by an assault tank and combat helicopters! An improvised meeting resulted with speakers denouncing police repression and protesting against the arrogance of the self-proclaimed planetary elite who refuse to even hear the voices of those at the bottom.

These mobilisations have fulfilled one of the objectives fixed by the international networks and the various social movements: not a single meeting of the world's powerful will be allowed without popular initiatives for debate or street demonstrations reminding them of their lack of legitimacy and highlighting the disastrous consequences of their decisions.