

Award-winning journalist Naomi Klein has become a central figure in debates on the dangers of globalization. Her book No Logo, about the increasing domination of the economy by multinationals and the dangers of laissez-faire liberalization, has become something of a bible for the anti-globalization protest movement.

In this interview given during the Quebec protests in 2001, Klein discusses the rise of the protest movement at trade talks, the corporatization of life, and the need for global regulation.

The Anti-Globalization Protest Movement

INTERVIEWER: What is this [anti-globalization protest] movement? Are you a part of it? How do you define it? Where is it going?

NAOMI KLEIN: I call it a movement just for shorthand. Really it's a movement of movements or coalition of coalitions. It's lots of movements and campaigns that converge every once in a while. It converged in Seattle during the World Trade Organization meeting, converged in Washington, [in] Prague, now in Quebec City, because there is a common target in a particular economic model that is reflected in trade agreements like the FTAA [Free Trade Areas of the Americas] and in World Bank and IMF policies and the types of ideas that come out of the Davos Economic Forum.

But it's not one movement in the sense that everybody is part of a political party organized into neat little cells and locals. I mean, here we are in Quebec City and calling it "the protest." "How do you think the protest is going?" There are thousands of autonomous protests going on in Quebec City that all happen to be here at the same time. It's kind of like this web that all comes together in one place, and it has to do with the fact that there are common themes that run through all of the campaigns that are converging in Quebec this week. I think the best way I would describe it is that there is a common concern about the privatization of every aspect of human life.

So you have people entering this movement from lots of different places, but it's that theme you hear over and over again. You've got students who are talking about the privatization of their education, the fact that they're paying more to go to school but there are ads in their classrooms, and their research departments are being privatized one study at a time. You

COMMANDING HEIGHTS

Naomi Klein

2

have people who are enraged by trade systems that would much more vigorously defend the intellectual property of multinational drug companies in the face of millions of people living with HIV and AIDS. You have people who are enraged by water being treated as a commodity as opposed to a human right.

I also think that many of the young people who are part of this movement are responding to the privatization of identity, our most powerful ideas [being] used in advertising slogans. This is a generation that has grown up under the marketing lens. It has almost grown up with ads in their schools, with every aspect of youth culture treated as a commodity to sell Pepsi or Benetton. What I see happening on the streets is an attempt to reclaim the public's fear. And, by the way, I'm not crying my eyes out; they're filled with tear gas. I'm not that sappy. It's an attempt to almost draw a line around the comments and say there are things that are more important than profits—water, education, health care. So is it a movement? There's definitely something going on, something converging, something weird.

If I could just say something about the fact that we're doing this interview with the air filled with tear gas and the fact that we're all sort of choking here? To me it's incredible that we're here in Quebec City ... and it's a city that is in open revolt at being shut out of the political process. Thousands and thousands of Canadians have signed petitions condemning the fences on constitutional [rights], including Canadians like Margaret Atwood. ... [Other] very high-profile Canadians have put their reputations on the line and said this is illegitimate, and when you do illegitimate things, when the state has so badly bungled their role—which is to balance the interests of ... protecting the heads of state who are here and protecting the rights of the protestors to their right to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression in their streets, their public streets—[then] the state has essentially lost legitimacy in the eyes of the protestors. That's why we're seeing this.

I guess to some people this is chaos on the streets or revolt in the streets, but to me, I think a lot of what people are protesting here is essentially the failure—now we're joined by helicopters—the failure of trickle-down economics.

Seven years after NAFTA and huge amounts of money have been made. ... Exports as a percentage of our GDP have skyrocketed in Canada, in Mexico. We have done all the things

that we were supposed to do. We've attracted investment; we've rearranged our economies to be much more geared towards exports. The problem is that it hasn't delivered on the promise, when the promise was that if we did all of this, there would be all of these [benefits]. ... It wouldn't just be a good in itself. Exports and investment, that's not a positive in itself unless you're an economist and you just get off on numbers going up on a chart. Other people care about that because of what they can buy with that investment, what that means to them—that they can rebuild their schools. Does that mean that they can better society? Does that mean that they're going to have better working conditions, that they're going to have funds to raise environmental standards? Does that mean that they are going to be a more just society? What we've seen with seven years of NAFTA [is] that it's been good for a few people, and the trickle-down effects in terms of the social good, they just haven't delivered. They just haven't delivered in Canada. In fact, our social safety net is in tatters. They certainly haven't delivered in Mexico, where 75 percent of the population lives in poverty, a much higher percentage than pre-NAFTA.

So people are losing faith in this economic system. And to me the most powerful image of a society of haves and have-nots is the American gated community, where the haves need ever more protection from the have-nots. And what we're seeing here in Quebec City, and what we're seeing more and more when these guys get together for their meetings, is the emergence of politics itself as a gated community that requires ever more protection to keep themselves from the citizens who elected them.

NAFTA in Mexico, Vicente Fox, and the Roots of Anti-Globalization

INTERVIEWER: Let me ask you a question about NAFTA. We recently filmed with some workers from [Mexico] ... who used to make \$28 a week. They now work in gleaming factories owned by Sanyo making American TV sets. However, their salary is doubled or even tripled, and they say they're better off.

NAOMI KLEIN: Look, you can find people in Mexico who are better off, but the statistics don't reflect that particular experience that you're describing. The statistics reflect the fact that the minimum wage in Mexico is worth less than it was in 1988. So we can hold up these models, but we know that ... the minimum wage has actually eroded in terms of buying power. We

COMMANDING HEIGHTS

Naomi Klein

4

know that 75 percent of the population lives in poverty as compared to 41 percent in 1981. I can't do this. [I'm not a statistician.]

I think it's worth remembering, there's so many people who take it upon themselves to speak for the world's poor. One of the things we were doing yesterday at the teach-in was giving an opportunity for people from around the Americas to speak for themselves. Obviously you're never going to get a situation which is wholly representative, but it was interesting. ... There were no cameras there, and there's language barriers and so on. That makes it kind of unsexy to listen to people speaking in Spanish or Portuguese about being kicked off their land, about facing water privatization. ... But there are thousands of people who traveled to Quebec City to be part of the people summit this week, to be part of that process, to give first-person testimony, and we've heard very little of it, unfortunately.

INTERVIEWER: Can you say something about the origins of the anti-globalization movement and also about Vicente Fox.

NAOMI KLEIN: There's debates about when this movement began, but I would say it began on January 1, 1994, in Chiapas, the day that the Zapatistas began their uprising. They timed it, because that was the day that NAFTA became law, and that's the day that they took up arms and began their uprising. What's interesting about that is that the Zapatistas started a national pro-democracy movement in Mexico.

Vicente Fox, when he was elected, ran on a platform not of more free trade, but to close the income disparity within Mexico. ... The rage at the previous administration shows that within Mexico there is enormous outrage at this model, and this idea of Mexican politicians coming to Canada and pretending that this unrest that we're seeing here in Quebec City doesn't exist in Mexico, it's totally absurd.

INTERVIEWER: They would say that the best way to help support their own country is through fair trade.

NAOMI KLEIN: Yes, and Vicente Fox has also said that he rejects the model. He's saying he wants trade, but he also wants aid, and what we're seeing is trade totally replacing aid. This

idea that poverty would simply be eradicated by trickle-down economics, that's what those guys inside believe, and they're trying to sell trade as a poverty-elimination project. Vicente Fox has been very clear that trade liberalization has to be met by a massive increase in aid. We never hear that, but he's said it very clearly recently.

Free Trade and Developing Countries

INTERVIEWER: We heard a bit about your own experiences going to sweatshops [in Cavite, the Philippines]. When did you actually go down there, the mid-90s?

NAOMI KLEIN: Late '90s, around '97.

INTERVIEWER: A major part of our film is a story about the Clinton administration pushing trade equalization as an empowering force for developing countries. When you got to [Southeast Asia], what was going on there?

NAOMI KLEIN: Everybody wants trade. Everybody wants investment. Everybody wants jobs. This is a false dichotomy that somehow we are trying to take away jobs, that we're against trade. Canada is a country that was founded, as was the U.S., on trade. This process is 500 years old, if not older. It used to be called colonialism.

The issue is: are governments going to be able to keep the tools that they have, and are citizens going to be able to keep the tools that they have to engage with investment and trade to turn it into genuine development? And what's being said here at Quebec City is that what these trade agreements are about is not trade, but in fact the net effect is to take the tools that democratically elected governments have and citizens have to engage with capital, to engage with trade, to affect it so that it becomes genuine development, the best example of that being the right to form unions. What my research in free-trade zones in the Philippines and Indonesia [did was] confirm the idea that of course these jobs are needed, but the choice should not be "Do we have these bad jobs or do we not have the bad jobs?" The issue is "Are we going to have the tools that we need to make these bad jobs into good jobs?" We know how we did it here in Canada and how you did it in the U.S. It was done through mass organizing, it was done through mass unionizing, and it was done through government

regulation and intervention and monitoring in factories, which eventually lead to the elimination of all kinds of security risks.

Sorry—I'm getting a little bit dizzy [from the tear gas].

Anyway, my research into free trade in the Philippines and Indonesia made it very clear that the key demand of the workers on the ground is simply the right to organize, the right to freedom of association, and the right to negotiate with their employers without being punished. And what's happening all over Southeast Asia is that as soon as the organizers start, as soon as organizers come in and unions come into the factories, these companies have the ability to cut and run, which is why we're seeing a race to the bottom. ... Basically this is the natural process of industrialization. You went through it, and now these countries are going through it. Just be patient. The reason why that isn't happening is because within an international context, where every developing country is essentially playing at the same game, where their one commodity is their cheap labor, they're getting this clear message from these companies that if you try to improve conditions we're simply going to go somewhere else. I think that the model has, in a global context, completely changed. And the model of global manufacturing—to make these parallels between the situation at the turn of the century in Canada or the United States or Britain just doesn't hold.

The Rules of Globalization and Trade Liberalization

INTERVIEWER: Another big change is that at that time, in the U.S. and Canada and other industrialized countries, the rules were made by government. You say labor movements [used to do this also], but in a globalized society, who's making the new rules? How do you deal with these issues? Who's going to say the rules need to be changed? How is it possible now?

NAOMI KLEIN: The irony of George Bush coming here after abandoning the Kyoto Accords and talking about the need for a rules-based economic system is absolutely absurd. There are certain types of rules that get written and respected, and those are the rules that make trade more profitable for multinational corporations. When democratically elected governments get together and sign something like the Kyoto Protocol and agree to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, basically the U.S. acts like a complete unilateral renegade because those particular rules were written not in the interests of multinational corporations, [rules] that are clearly

going to hurt short-term profits for oil companies and car companies. But then that's globalization, too. That's why I reject the term anti-globalization, because I think it's a meaningless term. The process that we're talking about is just governments getting together and writing rules. The problem is that there only seems to be a certain type of rule that gets respected.

I want to build on that idea. It's not about countries refusing investment or refusing trade. It's about do you maintain the democratic right to engage with capital and engage with investment somewhat on your own terms, and that these trade agreements have come to represent a legal process that is systematically taking those tools out of the hands of government.

So just to talk generally about that, what does that mean? How does development happen? Does it just happen because you get money and then there's this trickle-down of wonderful things like environmental standards and labor standards, technology transfers, the rest of it? That's actually not how development happens. The way development happens is you have foreign investment, which is then met with the set of domestic policies that leads to technology transfers and expertise, which leads to infrastructure, job creation, and eventually the creation of a consumer class.

What is being negotiated behind the fence here in Quebec City is a model of development which is systematically taking those tools out of the hands of government. [Corporations are saying] when we come and invest in your country, you're not allowed to tie that investment to local job creation, you can't tell us what sort of infrastructure we have to create, because that's discrimination. Also, we have to get equal treatment with your national governments, and you can't change the terms on us. If you decide to raise standards, we can sue you for that under Chapter 11, basically creating these islands of investment that are as productive as they possibly can be from the country around it. What's being negotiated in there is a Club Med-style investment policy, a guarantee that wherever you go in the world you'll basically get the same treatment.

Anti-Globalization Protests

INTERVIEWER: We talked to the president of Tanzania [Benjamin Mkapa], and we asked him directly about trade. That whole country, they're desperate for trade; they want it on fair terms. We asked them about protestors, this [anti-globalization] movement, and he [essentially said] "Who are they to talk for us?" So who are you to talk for the world's poor?

NAOMI KLEIN: I'm not talking for the world's poor, but I don't think that they're talking for the world's poor, either. We need a hell of a lot more spaces and opportunities for people to speak for themselves. What amazes me is this idea that we've heard here more and more now, where protest somehow is anti-democratic, right? Taking to the streets, expressing your views is somehow a violation of democracy rather than an incarnation of democracy, which is exactly what it is. Democracy does not just happen every four or five years when you vote. Democracy happens in the street. Democracy happens at town hall meetings. It happens in protest. That's why we have constitutional guarantees for those things: because we understand that we need freedom of the press and freedom of assembly to have a genuine living democracy. Now politicians whose job it is to protect that constitution are turning around and calling all of those things—the mere expression of different opinions, organizing, being active—as being somehow anti-democratic, and our role is simply to vote and be good little consumers. Don't mess with democracy, because that's anti-democratic. Don't try to affect it in any way. It's like the prime directive on *Star Trek*.

INTERVIEWER: That's a good one: "Don't mess with the prime directive." Let me ask you about how you came to this. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and this triumph of capitalism, in a way there is nothing left for the left in a lot of places. Is this movement that we're seeing a kind of reincarnation of the left, giving it some kind of relevance, and if so, where do you think it's going?

NAOMI KLEIN: I think it's more than a reincarnation. There's something new going on here that's certainly within a tradition, but I think it's as much a reaction to the centralizing forces of communism as it is to the centralizing forces of capitalism. That's why a lot of people on the streets call themselves anarchists, because they are interested in decentralized power and are suspicious of the dehumanizing models of both, some forms of centralized socialism and capitalism. When I was in Prague for the protest against the World Bank and the IMF, I met a

lot of young Czechs who said one system treated us only as consumers, and one system treated us only as producers, and we actually were whole human beings. We're tired of being treated like that. We want to be treated like whole people. So I do think that something new is going on.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any sense of where it might be headed?

NAOMI KLEIN: I think where it's headed is all of this anti-corporate, anticapitalist sentiment is going to coalesce into a genuine pro-democracy movement. And I think that really when we talk about globalization and a suspicion of it, really what we're talking about is a crisis of representative democracy. What we're seeing and experiencing [is] power being delegated to points further and further away from where we live and where the effects of those decisions are felt. It begins from the delegation of power from local to state, then from state to national, then from national to national, and then suddenly democracy is voting for a guy once every four or five years because he talks about the values that you believe in and you like his tie. Then he has the power to delegate his own powers to these international institutions that are entirely unaccountable and need to erect giant fences just to have meetings. So I believe that the answer to that is a renewed participatory democracy at the local level. I think that we're seeing an interest in democracy and the process of democracy. I think that the debacle of the U.S. election in many ways has more people in the United States thinking about democracy than they had in a very long time.

Europe's Growing Unease with Globalization

INTERVIEWER: When you come to Europe, do you find any sense of anxiety or discomfort with globalism. Do you perceive that a lot of it is being dominated by the U.S. economy?

NAOMI KLEIN: I think in Europe right now there's really a growing sense that all of this talk of a level international playing field has been disguising real power and inequalities and who's actually calling the shots. There's a way in which the ... defiance of the Bush administration, [its] ripping up the Kyoto Protocol and also being really honest about the relationship with big business, particularly big oil, that I think [is] unmasking a lot about globalization. There's definitely growing unease about the U.S. in Europe and what that means in terms of globalization, but there's also a growing unease about centralization in general—not about the

U.S., but whether it's about the European Union, particularly as it relates to food safety issues. I think that post-BSE, post-hoof and mouth, these abstract issues, [asking] what are we actually talking about when we talk about globalization has suddenly become very concrete.

I believe that what we are talking about is a crisis in representative democracy and power and decision making being delegated to points further and further away from where the effects of those decisions are felt, to the point where there is a deep alienation from the people making those decisions. You certainly see that in Europe, with the relationship on agricultural policies. It seems so far away, so remote, that it's hard to call it democratic.

INTERVIEWER: We talked about dealing with the Bush administration, the honesty about who's calling the shots. If you think of the global economic system as a set of rules, who are those rules written by and who do they serve?

NAOMI KLEIN: What we have now is a particular model of globalization that's based on a belief system, and that belief system is how laissez-faire free-market economics, which holds that the pursuit of profit, the pursuit of growth, whether by corporations or by nation states, is essentially the only overarching goal, and essentially the only goal that matters in that any of our other concerns, whether it's for higher environmental standards, more job security, better labor conditions, human rights, all of that will be solved in the trickle-down from this pursuit of growth and profits. So the rules that are written are rules that favor that accumulation of wealth, whether it's protections for pharmaceutical companies being extended from 17 years to 20 years for a trade organization, and when rules are written that in some way threaten short-term corporate profits. For instance, rules that put caps on fossil fuel emissions. Those rules are seen as a threat to those interests and are under threat themselves.

INTERVIEWER: So what's your sense of how things need to change, because you're not opposed to globalism per se, correct?

NAOMI KLEIN: Yes, I'm not opposed to internationalism, and the truth is that creating international rules and standards is not a new idea. I think that putting all of the emphasis on trade is what we are experiencing and is somewhat new. But the United Nations Declaration

on Human Rights is an attempt to set international standards, that's a form of globalization. It's a different form of globalization, which is a globalization that starts with human need and a definition of what the public good is, and what rules and standards will we need to fulfil that.

The Emphasis on Trade and Its Political Agenda

INTERVIEWER: Let me ask you about trade. Colin Powell's speech in South Africa this week basically said that for developing countries—for Africa in particular, but for all developing countries—the way to develop is through trading. That is the only option they have to be part of this global system. What's your sense of that?

NAOMI KLEIN: I think trading is a part of economic development. There's no doubt about that. I don't think it needs to be as big a part as is the current model. If you look at the U.S., perhaps the healthiest economy in the world, you see a nation that is much less dependent on trade. It is actually much more self-sufficient in terms of trade as a percentage of gross domestic product than all the countries that the U.S. has gone around saying, "You have to be more trade-dependent," so there's a real double standard there.

Definitely trade is one part of economic development. But I think that the real myth that needs to be countered here is that there's only one kind of trade, that there's only one way to trade. What we need to do is to reject this dichotomy that there's one group that is in favor of trading goods and services across borders; there's another group of people that want to live in grass huts and make all their own clothes and have absolutely no commerce. The real debate is, what are the sets of policies, what are the rules that are going to regulate that trade? If you look at the countries that are often pointed to as the success stories, the models of successful trade, these are countries that predated the World Trade Organization; [countries that] were able to take the seed of trade, the seed of foreign investment, and make their own lives, to build on development through technology, transfers, by insisting that foreign investors do business with local contractors, that it be tied to a certain amount of job creation and so on. So to engage directly with that trade, with that investment, and, and try to turn it into something sustainable that creates a broader social good.

INTERVIEWER: A managed trade.

NAOMI KLEIN: It's managed trade that actually is under attack here, because the idea of trade [being promoted by the corporate interests] is all just colonialism. Frankly, it's a very old idea.

INTERVIEWER: ... Do you have any sense of whether the system that we've found ourselves in just kind of happened, or was it a deliberate result of a series of [policies and agendas]?

NAOMI KLEIN: There's a very clear political agenda at play here. There are certainly those who would have us believe that free trade is like gravity—a force of nature, unavoidable, it just happens. But it's clearly been an ideological agenda powered by a powerful lobby group, sets of lobby groups that have started with the push to create the free-trade agreement between Canada and the U.S. and expand that agreement, ... now pushing for the largest free trade zone in the world, which is the free trade area of the Americas. ... At the same time, internationally, globally, [we have seen] the creation of the World Trade Organization.

INTERVIEWER: And what's been the idea, the purpose, behind this push? What's been the objective?

NAOMI KLEIN: The objective is the oldest objective in the capitalist economy, which is to create the conditions of increased growth and profits, find new markets for products, find new markets for labor, to produce products, and also to find new areas to commodify. In other words, plants can be genetically engineered and modified [so] that [they are] treated as a patentable commodity, and then protect those patents with ever stricter laws and regulations. So I don't think that there's anything new going on in globalization, but it is a more ambitious, more developed stage of this process.

INTERVIEWER: And made all the more [acute] because of technology, too. [With these elements] coming together at the same time, it's the policy push.

NAOMI KLEIN: To be honest with you, I'm not sure how much it's about the relationship between a set of policies and technology. It has mostly been rhetoric. It's certainly possible to be increasingly connected to one another without adopting this sort of cowboy capitalist deregulation agenda.

INTERVIEWER: When I was in Asia, I talked to people like Lee Kuan Yew, and he said that in the '90s, America was pushing for trade with almost an evangelism because after the end of the Cold War, this was seen as America's right, [to promote democracy and free trade] Do you think that that was going on in the '90s and the Clinton administration?

NAOMI KLEIN: There's definitely an evangelism about this agenda. You see it in the accounts of the types of intense pressure that has gone on, in the attempt to get a new round of negotiations for the World Trade Organization. Countries are love-bombed by the U.S. and Europe if they are in any way blocking this agenda, [subjected to] intense amounts of pressure. I see it as a kind of zealotry, because there's a total unwillingness to look at the problems associated with this system beyond simply saying that the problem is that we don't have enough of the same trade. The problem is not disparity; the problem is not the erosion of environmental standards. The problem is that we don't have enough trade, enough investment which will cure all of the other problems in the trickle-down. When you have a kind of nagging unwillingness to look at reality, then you are dealing with a kind of evangelical zealotry.

But, yes, I guess I'm not entirely convinced that it's about American power. I really do believe it's about corporate power, and it so happens that a great deal of corporate power is concentrated in the U.S., more than anywhere else in the world. Fundamentally what we are talking about is a corporate agenda and politicians who believe in this ideologically, that by doing good by the corporate sector they are doing their job in terms of serving the public. That's why this is ideological, because that ideology is the basic ideology of laissez-faire economics. So I think that it's driven by American interests only in the sense that that's where so much corporate power rests.

The Need to Regulate Global Capitalism

INTERVIEWER: So how do you make the system more equitable? Do you have to regulate corporations? Do you have to change the way that they behave voluntarily? It is about corporate power. What do you do?

NAOMI KLEIN: Yes, I think you do regulate corporations. You find international mechanisms that are able to counter the rhetoric of helplessness, of impotence that convinces us that

there's nothing we can do beyond simply pursue more growth, more profits, and hope for the best.

It is true that it's very hard for individual nations [to] adapt to transnational capital. All globalization is is world leaders getting together and agreeing on a set of rules and standards to regulate how they interact with one another. The truth is that those agreements have largely been written in secret, have been influenced tremendously by business lobby groups, are seen as totally unaccountable to and unrelated to anything that citizens voted for, which is why you are seeing ever greater resistance outside these meetings, whether it's the World Trade Organization, IMF, FTAA, EU. They could be getting together and writing other rules.

To me, probably the most important rule right now has to do with freedom of association, because I think that the right to form unions, it's absolutely unfeasible to talk about genuine labor rights in a context where you have some, like Jack Welch from General Electric, saying that if he had his way all his factories would be on barges and he would be able to move them from one country to the next. The latest development in export processings are the really mobile factories that can be moved from one place to the next, so what does it mean to have the right to freedom of association on paper in a context where it is so easy to be penalized for daring to stand up and fight for rights that [are] already guaranteed under numerous UN charters? There needs to be a penalty. If it's possible to create systems of penalties for failures to protect intellectual property rights or for subsidizing agriculture, then it's possible to come up with a system of penalties for failing to protect the right to freedom of association. If you have that right protected, then a lot of the discussion about having a global minimum wage or somehow creating a global labor standard becomes beside the point, because the real issue is that workers are able to negotiate for themselves in their countries and in their factories.

INTERVIEWER: And what about political change?

NAOMI KLEIN: I actually think that [there] has been political change foisted upon countries already. I think that most countries have on the books the rights to freedom of association to form unions, and it's been pressure from the business lobby that has already forced a kind of political change, whereas now that [rule's] not enforced. No-union zones are created within

free-trade zones, which is basically creating a lawless territory within a nation-state, so when companies turn round and say, "You're trying to infringe on the sovereign territory of these nations," it's pretty ironic, because this whole model of development is based on changing sovereign laws of countries.

Is Globalization Democratic?

INTERVIEWER: We filmed with you in Quebec, and tens of thousands of people protested. The kind of changes you're talking about are actually changes that need to be made from within the system, by lobbying within. Do you think that this kind of change [is] really going to come from the streets?

NAOMI KLEIN: When we're talking about globalization, we're talking about a crisis of democracy. The crisis that we face in many ways has to do with this conspiracy of experts around globalization and this feeling, this message that we've all received that this is really complicated, and you might have been able to get involved in debates in your state, or debates in your country or province, but this global stuff is really [complicated], you need a degree in international law, in economics, even, so why don't you just go shopping and play your part in the global economy. So an enormous amount of popular education has gone on because when you have a situation where the vast majority of populations feel that they just don't have the tools to participate in the discussion, and you have institutions that are thrilled about it, that are just happy that they can have their quiet little meetings, play golf, and nobody interrupts them. When the World Trade Organization was created in Uruguay, there was nobody outside. This was a massive leap forward, and no one even knew.

So I think that the protests, even though they're called anti-democratic and every name in the book is leveled against the young people protesting on the streets, I see this as an enormous leap forward for democracy. I think that there is no possibility of negotiated change inside these institutions without masses of people on the streets that are saying to these trade bureaucrats who have enjoyed this anonymity for the past 15 years, "We're watching you now." That is news to them. They are not used to this. They can't believe that these people are paying attention. They can't believe people are watching. They can't even believe they understand what the acronym stands for. What's interesting is that the first stage of backlash against the protest was to say, "You're stupid, you don't understand, you're clueless"—"You're

Clueless in Seattle" was the headline in *The Economist*—and of course the opposite was true. That's why they were so angry: people were educating themselves. Sure, the education process wasn't perfect, and it was happening ... in church basements. ... But there was this hunger, this hunger for knowledge and information that is still there. That really does blow me away. I think that that's where this movement is. It's in the teach-ins, it's in this popular education process.

I see somewhat of a split right now within certain movements, the broadly described anti-globalization movement. I don't call it anti-globalization because it's more anti-corporate than anti-globalization and more pro-democracy than [anti-democracy], but the debate now is really about what we are asking for. Are we saying that what we want is a better kind of globalization, a more democratic globalization? Do we want our guides at the World Trade Organization? Do we want more transparency, more democracy within the World Bank? Or are we talking about resisting the delegation of power, responsibility, in a sense, on principle? Because the alienation from the political process is not just happening at the global level. It's happening at the national level, it's happening at the state level, seen [in] dropping voter participation, what's called apathy, but I think is actually paying attention.

I guess I am a little worried about any model that thinks the solution's going to be found in Geneva or Brussels. If you're facing a crisis of representative democracy, the first stage is to start getting people re-engaged in politics, which will, in my opinion, always happen close to home. I think it happens in the workplace; it happens within a level of government which immediately affects you, which is about health care, is about education. But the truth is that you can't just have local politics now because we had international agreement that so profoundly affects our ability to make local decisions. If you introduce a two-tier system in public education, then you can find yourself getting sued by an international corporation under [legislation] which says that your subsidization of education is an unfair trade subsidy. So I think it's going to be in these connections between local issues and global agreements. It's a reinvigoration of a debate about what democracy actually means. ...

INTERVIEWER: A couple of times you said we're facing a crisis. What's at stake? What happens if we don't do anything? Crisis means you're heading toward something. What are we heading towards?

NAOMI KLEIN: A crisis in democracy means that you simply have democracy on paper, but you are in a context in which people simply accept that power's too big, too remote to affect it. I think we are very far along in that process—most people feel that way. I believe that if you're serious about political change, the first thing you have to do is shake [free] of that feeling.

INTERVIEWER: Or what?

NAOMI KLEIN: Or you don't have democracy. Maybe that's not a crisis, but I think it's a crisis.

INTERVIEWER: And what about the growing gap globally between the haves and the have-nots? [It's been said] that this inequality, if not addressed, the whole system will face a massive crisis and a reaction against capitalism on par with Marxism, a new reform. What's your sense of what's at stake globally?

NAOMI KLEIN: I agree with that, and that's why I talk so much about democracy. To me, it's dangerous when you get to that point where there's so little faith in the system, and I think we're seeing that all over the place. I think that what's been happening in South Africa is fascinating, because here you have a country that has fought one of the great liberation struggles for equality [and] democracy in modern history only to find that apartheid still exists, and it's economical apartheid, and it is life and death. It is.

Klein's Personal Motivation

INTERVIEWER: What's motivating you?

NAOMI KLEIN: I think people see the injustices of the system, and they feel it intuitively. I'm personally enraged to have lived through this economic boom and seen greater homelessness, disparity, and erosion of social programs. To me it's just so plainly obvious that this system isn't working, and ... when I've traveled to the developing world, I've seen that even more clearly, and the disparity and poverty is even more enraging. I just don't worship money for its own sake, and I think most people are only interested in money if it can give them something valuable. On a macroeconomic level, we are failing miserably at that.

INTERVIEWER: [So that's why] you care [about globalization]?

NAOMI KLEIN: I guess I care because I'm part of a generation that has seen a lot privatized, and I sort of feel that I witnessed in my lifetime the decimation of our last public spaces. I was in school when the first ads came in in university, and I watched my university politics get turned into Benetton slogans and Sprite slogans. My family came to Canada—I'm a Canadian—we came to Canada during the Vietnam War, then we went back to the U.S. and then came back because my father works in health care. He explained to us when I was four years old that we're in Canada because in the U.S. you have to be rich to get sick. I guess I grew up with a respect for the public sphere and a very clear sense from my family that there were things that were more important than profits and money. There are things that you just don't want to leave in the hands of the free market, and health is one of them. Culture is another one, and we've watched the erosion of that idea. I've certainly watched it in my lifetime, watched the public institutions that my parents worked for essentially destroyed. I guess what I see in this movement is this spontaneous and intuitive reaction to the privatization of life, an insistence, even if it seems irrational looking from the outside, that there are some things that are part of what we might call the commons.

What are those things? It's interesting to look at some of the worst corporate mishaps of the past few years. One of them would be Shell's decision to sink the *Brent Spar* oil platform, which was eventually overturned. Another one would be Monsanto's decision to launch the terminator seed, which died every year—an infertile seed so you would have to go back, as farmers, to Monsanto every year and buy new seeds. And another would be the decision of the multinational drug companies to sue the South African government when they decided to import generic drugs on a continent where 70 million people have already died of AIDS. There's just this visceral, gut reaction that emerges where people say, "Wait a minute, this is the commons, this is the public." Even if we don't have a public sphere, even if we've totally bought into this Thatcherite idea that there is no such thing as society, that we're all consumers and investors, suddenly we know that actually you can't place value on human life and you can't commodify seeds, and the depth of the ocean are commons. That's why I'm involved in this, because I think that we need to reclaim the public, the commons.

Jaggi Singh and the Anti-Globalization Protests in Quebec

INTERVIEWER: What happened to Jaggi Singh [a protestor featured in Episode Three who was arrested at the demonstrations in Quebec]? There was no footage of him being arrested. What happened yesterday?

NAOMI KLEIN: I interviewed a bunch of people who were on the scene, and what happened was that the protest got pretty heavy at the fence. The fence came down. I was on the phone with Jaggi because I was MC-ing this teach-in, and we wanted to get a report from Jaggi directly from the streets so we could tell all the people who were at the teach-in what was going on. So I was on the phone with Jaggi, and he agreed to come to the teach-in. We were really excited he was going to come, and so this is what happened. The fence came down—we've got 6,000 people in one group there, 15,000 people on the streets total. I was on [the phone], and he was telling me all this ... and actually he said something very uncharacteristic to me on the phone. He said it was really inspiring, which isn't really Jaggi's style. I was like, "What? Wow, okay," and then he called me back and said that he'd decided that he can't come to the teach-in because the city is too difficult to navigate. At that point I decided that I would go because basically it was over. There was one band that was going to play and that was it. I asked him to tell me where he was, and he told me exactly where he was.

We were about to leave, and then two minutes later we got a phone call saying that Jaggi had been kidnapped. [We] went to the location, and there were about five eyewitnesses who all had been instructed to write down exactly what had happened in their notebooks, but not talk to each other. That's what was happening when we got there. We waited till they finished, and then each of them read what they saw happen. Basically what they all said was that Jaggi was talking to people, trying to get them to move away from the fence, to go to a green zone which was under a bridge, which was like a safe place. He was talking [to] another activist, a guy from Chicago, and a guy came up behind him took his arms and threw him to the ground. Then three guys, big guys—they all said they looked like bouncers or football players or something, all like twice the size of Jaggi—threw him to the ground. The thing was that these guys, all the witnesses said they looked like activists. They were wearing hooded sweatshirts, bandanas, a little bit dirty. This was the words of activists, [saying that] this is what an activist looks like.

INTERVIEWER: And so the police were there?

NAOMI KLEIN: The people who took Jaggi were dressed as activists. They were wearing hooded sweatshirts, bandanas, flannel shirts, and they were kind of grubby. All the people around Jaggi did not know what was going on, like why he was being dragged and tackled to the ground, so they tried to rescue him. At that point the police took batons out and identified themselves as police and started beating back the crowd. [They] threw Jaggi into a beige van. The people who I interviewed had bruises and bandages from where they had been hit.

INTERVIEWER: As far as you know right now, roughly, what did he do wrong? What are they saying he did?

NAOMI KLEIN: Jaggi is well known as being one of the most effective organizers in this movement. He chairs meetings, [but] he would not say he was a leader because I think he doesn't like the term. But he's definitely a very effective organizer, and he's a fantastic speaker and a fantastic writer. The truth is he's motivated a lot of people and gotten a lot of people to join this movement. That's what Jaggi does. He travels around, he talks at universities. He says let's get on buses and let's go to Quebec City. This is why. Essentially he's a popular educator, a radical popular educator. I've known him for years. We went to university together. I believe that that's his project, and I think that the police will know that that's probably the most dangerous thing. It's more dangerous than any weapon. It's more dangerous than breaking a window. He's changing people's minds, and they've been after him.

His first arrest like this was in 1997, where some people think this movement began in Seattle, but actually that was just when the U.S. joined this movement. One of our pet peeves here in Canada, there was a really big protest, a sort of precursor to Seattle, during the 1997 APEC summit in Vancouver. Jaggi was one of the key organizers of that protest. It became a scandal in Canada, and there was a big inquiry about it because of the incredible use of force against protestors. They were pepper-sprayed at very close range while they were peacefully sitting on the road. But the most scandalous thing that happened leading up to the APEC summit was that Jaggi was organizing a teach-in, once again involved in popular education. It

was the day before the big protest was planned. It was on the University of British Columbia campus, where Jaggi was a university student at that time. Jaggi was just walking on campus, going to pick up one of the speakers to bring them to the teach-in, and he was tackled by plain-clothed police officers, thrown to the ground—there are photographs of it—and dragged once again into an unmarked car. So constantly what is happening with Jaggi is the police are always trying to arrest him and take him out of commission, make sure he's in jail while the protests are happening. It's a preemptive arrest, which we're seeing more and more of. Sometimes it happens with lots of activists at the same time, which is what happened in Washington during the protests against the World Bank and the IMF, where 600 people were arrested the day before the protest.

INTERVIEWER: [You said] you went to college with him. What's driving him? What does he want?

NAOMI KLEIN: Jaggi is a really important part of this. He's an intellectual as well as an activist, and part of what's interesting about this movement is how quickly people put ideas into action and the blurring of lines between theory and activism. I think that he is part of this process of developing a new organizing model which decentralizes power, which is why he wouldn't like to be called a leader. In a sense [this new model] responds to the centralizing forces of globalization and capitalism in general, [these] centralizing and homogenizing forces, with radical dispersal, and we're seeing that on the streets right now. In a sense it's almost intellectual guerilla warfare. It's saying, okay, you guys have all the power. Rather than trying to create our own centralized party and take you on, we're going to disperse and come at you from all directions and do that through local organizing, but also create living alternative models where we live and where we work we work differently and organize differently. I can't speak for what motivates him, but I think that that's what he represents to a lot of people: a new kind of organizing, a new kind of movement.