

“Davos By the Hudson”

A Clarion Call to all NY Area Activists Fighting Corporate Globalization

- Consumer Activists
- Labor Unions
- Think Tanks
- Environmental Organizations
- Faith-based Networks
- Human Rights Organizations

This Means YOU!

**The World Economic Forum is coming to
New York City's Midtown**

January 31st - February 5th, 2002

The allies and affiliates of the ad-hoc Knickerbocker Fair Trade Campaign invite you to help plan a civil society welcome to the political and corporate elites. Think teach-ins, peaceful rallies, town hall meetings, plenaries and panels, press events, hootenannies, workshops, skills sharing, trainings, ideological cross-pollination.

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Not Everything You Need to Know About the World Economic Forum

- *Since its inception in 1971, the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum has become the world's global business summit. Gathering to address key economic, political and societal issues, over 1,500 of the world's leading citizens from business, government, media, religion, academia, and the arts make the annual pilgrimage to the Forum. Harvard University (www.ksg.harvard.edu/alum/honors/1999aaa.html)*
- The World Economic Forum's meetings are invitation-only and closed to outsiders. The WEF closely vets media attendance at its forums. Most journalists from the major media institutions are only allowed access to selected events and are thus dependent for copy on WEF-vetted releases. Alternative media outlets are routinely denied admittance.
- This elite, member-based institution is funded largely by 1,000 or so multinational corporations, which pay as much as \$300,000 a year for the privilege. Not surprisingly, the agenda at the Forum's annual meeting has reflected the postwar Western consensus in favor of free markets and open societies. *Time Europe*
- The WEF is a ruling class caucus. It is a forum for developing elite consensus on the most important issues of the day—what type of economic policy should be advocated and implemented? What stance should be taken on major geopolitical issues? What response should be made to critics of these policies?
- Unlike, say, the International Chamber of Commerce, the WEF is not a business lobby group or representative confederation but rather a focus for elite dialogue. In the last five years, the WEF has become the most important site for discussion between the world's major political and business leaders on how to drive the process of “globalization”, and how to sell it.
- As the Forum's web site puts it, there is a “club atmosphere which prevails during the Annual Meeting [which] creates the most propitious environment for business networking and for the acquisition of first-hand information on the latest trends in business, management, culture, economic and political domains.” What this means is that the forum is where the schemes that lead to atrocities like GATT and the WTO are actually hatched. The latter for instance, originated from an informal gathering of trade ministers that the Forum hosted in the early '90's.
- The WEF does occasionally allow a small number of critics from non-government organizations. At Davos 2000, it allowed seven such people in, and in 2001, a total of 36 NGO representatives were in attendance. However, as one such attendee, Focus on the Global South's Walden Bello put it, “There were unstated rules for the NGO representatives present: they had to be civilized and respectful of ‘diverse’ views and above all grateful they were invited. The discordant voices on the left...were given their brief opportunity to exercise free speech and the bandwagon rolled on.”