

# Global trade protesters focus on human rights

by Merrill Goozner  
Chicago Tribune  
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WASHINGTON (KRT) — A snowballing student movement that is mounting the largest on-campus protests since the anti-apartheid demonstrations of the 1980s gathered in the nation's capital over the weekend to join protests against International Monetary Fund and World Bank policies in the developing world.

The students bring the idealism of youth and moral passion to a question that rarely enters the sterile debate over the costs and benefits of freer trade: is there room for justice and equality in the new global economy?

For years, those questions have been largely overlooked because most Americans have benefited from the free trade policies pushed by the Clinton administration. On the lobbying front, business supporters of a more open trading system could dismiss the complaints of organized labor — the loudest voice against the North American Free Trade Agreement and China's entry into the World Trade Organization — as nothing more than protectionism.

But for the first time, the architects of the new global economy are being confronted with a moral challenge to their fundamental belief that trade benefits the world's poorest workers. A student movement that began as a protest against sweatshops in the developing world is now raising basic questions about the fairness of the entire system, and the students are turning their anger against any institution that plays a role in its governance.

"People don't see it as just a campaign against sweatshops," said 23-year-old Molly McGrath, a senior at the University of Wisconsin. "They

see it as a broader campaign around human rights."

After four years of organizing, United Students Against Sweatshops, a nationwide umbrella group, now says it has thousands of activists on 175 campuses across the U.S. The group has targeted university apparel shops that buy logo sweatshirts, caps, and T-shirts from companies that manufacture in countries like China, Indonesia, and Honduras, where wages are low, hours long, and workers are fired if they try to form independent unions to improve conditions.

In the past year, the student movement has escalated its tactics by staging sit-ins and hunger strikes at university offices and stores.

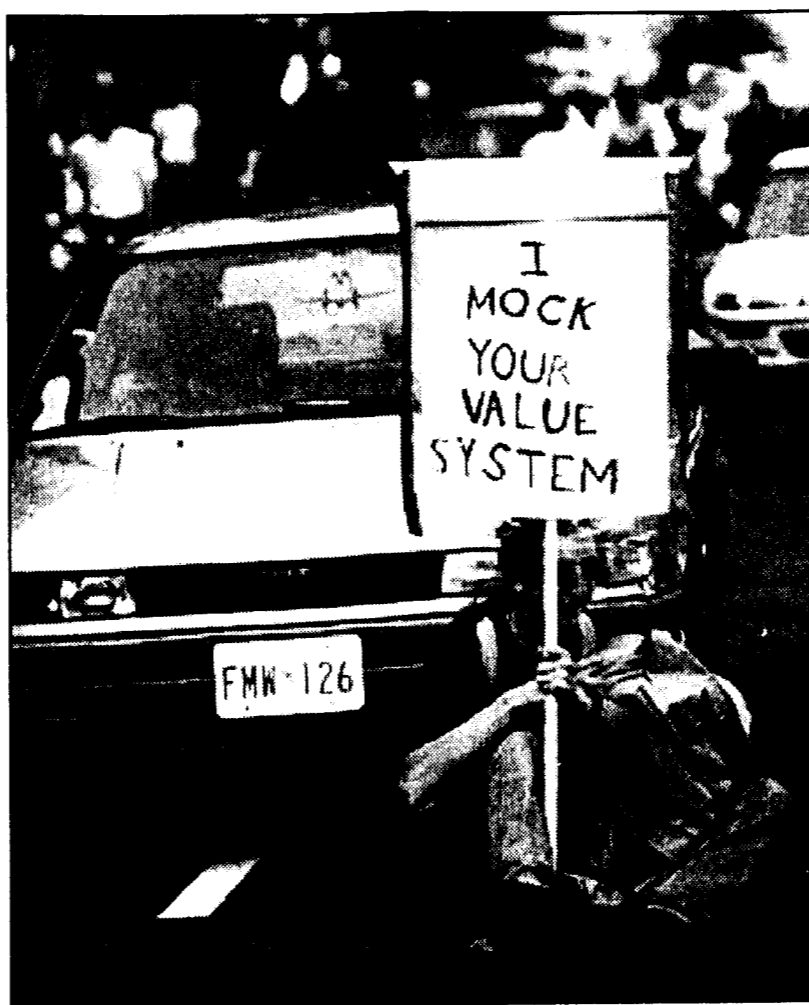
The students have won some major victories, too. Last month, Nike canceled a contract with a major supplier that student activists showed had systematically violated labor standards the sneaker and clothing retailer claimed it upheld in its factories.

Starting Friday, April 14, the activists have brought their militant tactics to the streets of the nation's capital. Local police and federal officials are girding for the same type of civil disobedience that disrupted the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle last December.

Officials at the IMF and World Bank seemed baffled last week as the protesters began gathering. Bank president James Wolfensohn complained that his 10,000 employees go to work every day with the mission of alleviating poverty in the less developed world.

But his institution and the demonstrators have irreconcilable differences over the best means of achieving those laudable goals.

The economists who run the IMF and World Bank argue that foreign investment in poor countries is the sur-



TMS CAMPUS PHOTO

A protester sits in front of cars in Washington, D.C., bringing a halt to downtown traffic. An estimated 10,000 demonstrators, who accuse the IMF and the World Bank of hurting the poor and harming the environment, ringed the police cordon refusing to let anyone enter the meetings, including reporters and area employees. One group of charging demonstrators was hit with pepper spray and tear gas.

est route to eliminating the poverty that still plagues much of the planet. They see IMF loan programs that enforce stringent balanced budgets and open markets as the best route to building up export-oriented industries, which can provide jobs and income for millions of workers.

Yet those free-market policies have

a mixed record in getting the benefits of the global economy to trickle down to the world's poorest citizens. The World Bank's annual report released last week showed that while East Asia has posted strong gains in basic social conditions in the past decade, the number of people living in extreme poverty actually rose in both South

Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In the 63 poorest countries that contain 57 percent of the world's population, average income is still less than \$2 a day. The number of people subsisting on just a dollar a day remained constant at 1.2 billion between 1987 and 1998, the bank reported.

In his forward to the report, Wolfensohn admitted that "progress in reducing poverty rates stalled, especially in Asia, as a consequence of the [1997-98] financial crisis, and in Europe and Central Asia income distribution worsened." Many critics say the IMF and World Bank response to the crisis only made things worse in developing countries.

Many of the students who have been attracted to the anti-sweatshop movement are using the tools of the global economy to learn first-hand about conditions in the developing world. They frequently exchange e-mails with the Third World non-government organizations (NGOs) that criticize IMF and World Bank policies in their home countries, and they make occasional trips to inspect conditions.

Wisconsin's McGrath, who grew up in a conservative home, traveled to Indonesia last fall to interview workers who worked in factories making sneakers for the U.S. market. She stayed in the home of a local NGO representative.

What she found were young women her own age who lived in shacks, worked long hours without overtime pay, and couldn't afford to send money home to their families who lived in the countryside.

"Their main issue was they wanted to be treated with respect and not like animals," she said. She also said the workers told her that the conditions the IMF attached to its bailout program in Indonesia had made it harder for them to organize unions.

"They're most concerned about the IMF's role in demanding labor flexibility," she said.

The students are demanding that university stores quit doing business with firms that buy goods made in factories that haven't adopted codes of conduct for how to treat their workers. The activists have targeted firms such as the Gap, Starbucks, Nike, and Reebok, whose marketing strategies suffer when they receive negative publicity on campuses.

"It's not that university apparel makes such a high profit for the companies," said Dillon. "But the university can have a much bigger impact on the larger society."

The escalating student protests in Seattle and Washington have forged political alliances that were unthinkable in previous eras.

About 200 student activists met Friday with a similar number of rank-and-file steelworkers who had been bused into Washington to lobby against the U.S.-China trade deal. Beneath a banner proclaiming "Students and Steelworkers uniting to combat worker exploitation," United Steelworkers of America president George Becker praised the students for investigating the conditions of workers in the developing world.

"We're not against Chinese workers or Korean workers or Mexican workers," he said. "We're against laws and governments that don't allow those workers to share in the wealth that they create."

For many of the students who have had their social consciousness awakened by the anti-sweatshop movement, the new alliance has also put a spotlight on conditions closer to home.

"There's 30 documented sweatshops in Chicago," said Loyola's Dillon. "This isn't just an international issue."

## UCF must put a lid on student housing

by Scott Maxwell  
Knight-Ridder Tribune  
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ORLANDO, Fla. — Residents who dread the sounds of late-night college parties — and the early-morning aftermath — may be in for some relief.

Orange County commissioners clamped down Tuesday, April 11, on the burgeoning student housing surrounding the University of Central Florida, just hours after UCF officials celebrated the groundbreaking of a new on-campus dormitory.

The new law will require future student apartments to be more than a football-field's length from any residential property. And they will cap the number of units in any complex at 750.

If such a law had been in place a few years ago, the massive Knights

Krossing complex in eastern Orange County that has stirred up so much conflict would not exist. That complex has more than 2,500 students and abuts nearby homes in Orange and Seminole counties.

The commission's ruling was designed to give some solace to residents such as Jerry Stewart, who told the board that he was stirred out of bed Tuesday morning.

"This morning at 3 a.m. I could hear some girl screaming her lungs out," Stewart said.

Commissioners were sympathetic, which is why they agreed to the 400-foot buffer between future complexes and homes.

Developers, brokers, and landowners fought the proposal every step of the way. Many argued that the extra buffers will essentially prohibit build-

ing more of the needed off-campus housing.

One development attorney also contended that the county's new law could violate the nation's Fair Housing Act because it discriminates against students. County officials, however, said that wasn't true because students aren't protected under that law.

The 400-foot buffer was something of a compromise. Developers had argued against anything more than 250 feet, while residents lobbied for 1,000 feet.

"We have a problem here that has no perfect solution," said County Chairman Mel Martinez.

One solution that all of the commissioners agreed upon, however, was that UCF should build more student housing on its sprawling 1,400-acre campus.

Less than 7 percent of the school's

32,000 students live on campus. And even though the school has plans to increase that to 15 percent by 2002, commissioners and residents want more. The national average of students living on campus is about 25 percent.

UCF officials have reminded angry neighbors and county leaders that the university generates thousands of jobs and tens of millions of dollars for the local economy.

The debate over UCF's role in providing housing is not over yet. A housing task force comprised of school officials, residents, and developers is set to offer suggested changes to the new law this fall.

Commissioner Ted Edwards, whose district encompasses UCF, said he hopes the task force will find solutions, as opposed to the county's new law, which offers only restrictions.

## SPITFIRE TOUR RAGING ACROSS NATION

TMS Campus



TMS PHOTO, COURTESY SPITFIRE TOUR

Founded by Rage Against the Machine frontman Zack De La Rocha and presented by colleges.com, the Spitfire Tour is a one-of-a-kind event, bringing actors, musicians, and activists together under one roof to speak out on global affairs and instigate social activism.

At left, Rosie Perez works the crowd during a recent stop on the Spitfire Tour. Other celebrity guests on the tour include Andy Dick, Ice-T, Zack De La Rocha, and Krist Novoselic.

## "Club drugs" finding their way into younger hands

by Nancy L. Othon  
Knight-Ridder Tribune  
April 12, 2000

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — People say ecstasy makes them feel enlightened and loving. The anesthetic GHB gives people a profoundly intoxicating effect. Ketamine can put people in a dreamy state.

Ecstasy also can increase heart rate and cause dehydration. GHB easily can send someone into a coma. Ketamine, better known as "Special K," a dissociative anesthetic, can practically immobilize users.

Whether mixed with other drugs or alone, these drugs and other so-called "club drugs" are killing at a scary pace, say substance abuse and drug policy experts. And while ecstasy, GHB and Rohypnol were once the drugs of choice at clubs or raves, all of them now have made their way into teenage hands.

"It's alarming. Teens are doing it like people used to drink beer," said Mary Naples, a licensed mental health counselor in Boca Raton, Fla. "These kids can use these drugs anywhere, and they are."

Florida Drug Control Policy spokesman Tim Botcher said the situation with club drugs, or designer drugs, is "absolutely" at a crisis mode.

"We consider club drugs to be the chief threat to the younger kids," Botcher said. Ecstasy, or MDMA, a mixture of a stimulant and hallucinogen, was listed as the direct or related cause of more than a dozen deaths in South Florida in the past three years.

Other "club drugs," such as the anesthetic GHB, or gamma-hydroxybutyrate, and methamphetamine, ketamine, and nitrous oxide were linked to dozens of deaths.

Authorities say these designer drugs are popular among people in their early 20s and increasingly popular among teenagers.

"Having these kids use a single drug is one thing, but what we've found is kids like to mix these drugs," Botcher said. "If you mix GHB and alcohol, there's a good chance you're going to go into a coma and die."

Last month, four young adults almost overdosed after taking GHB at a Hollywood, Fla., party. Richard Julian of Davie, Fla., and his three friends ended up on life support; their conditions later improved.

"I don't know that much about 'G,'" Julian told the *Sun-Sentinel* last month. "But I know I won't do it again. GHB sucks."

Teenagers, college students, and other party attendees frequently take GHB for its immediately intoxicating effects and its relatively low price. It is also easy to find, according to police and several users interviewed.

"What's worrisome about GHB is if you have the raw ingredients, you can make it at home," Botcher said. "You don't have to be a chemist."

Timothy Condon, associate director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, said GHB is one of the easiest and cheapest drugs to make. "I've heard reports from people in Florida that they were literally giving it away," Condon said.

Federal agents arrested a Boca Raton man less than two weeks ago after he received a 55-gallon shipment of the controlled substance GBL — enough to make 98,000 doses of GHB. GBL is sold through the Internet as a natural supplement that breaks down into GHB.

GHB and Rohypnol, known as roofies, can easily be slipped into drinks without detection because they are odorless and tasteless. Both are referred to as "date rape" drugs because they can render someone helpless and produce amnesia in a victim.

Rohypnol belongs to the benzodiazepine class of drugs and has never been approved for medical use in the United States, making it more difficult to find.

Condon said he thinks GHB has taken the place of roofies among teenagers because of its accessibility. And while the sometimes deadly effects of GHB are scary enough to Condon, he is more concerned about two other drugs.

"I'm not an alarmist when it comes to drugs, but I am very alarmed about methamphetamine and ecstasy," Condon said.

Methamphetamine, also known as speed or crank, is a highly addictive stimulant. Effects include anxiety, paranoia, and cardiovascular problems.

A small faction of psychotherapists who prescribed MDMA before it was outlawed in the mid-1980s has long argued that there is no proof that ecstasy is harmful. But the latest research shows otherwise, Condon said.

Brain imaging research at Johns Hopkins University shows that ecstasy damages brain cells that produce serotonin. Heavy ecstasy users also had

memory problems that persisted for at least two weeks after they stopped using the drug, according to a study. Immediate effects are dehydration.

The challenge for police and substance abuse experts lies in convincing teenagers and adults of those long-term effects, which continue to be studied.

"One reason we're having such a problem is that people find it hard to believe that something that makes you feel so good can be bad for you," Condon said. "But you don't really want to have your brain changed."

Ecstasy, sold in tablets for \$20 to \$30, is not physically addictive, but many people are hooked on its psychedelic effects, which include feelings of peacefulness and acceptance. Ecstasy sometimes is referred to as the "hug drug" because users experience feelings of closeness and have desires to touch others.

One ecstasy user, a 25-year-old Hollywood, Fla., resident, said she has researched the drug's effects and doesn't think enough studies have been conducted to deem it dangerous. She uses the drug about six times a year, she said.

She does ecstasy because of the "euphoric high," she said, and has never had a bad experience other than vomiting once.

"It's not something I want to do all the time. I see people that overuse," she said. "It's like they lose their souls after a while."

The Hollywood woman said she always does the drug with friends and would never promote it for teenagers.

But teenagers across South Florida

already have been exposed to designer drugs, and ecstasy seems to be a favorite.

One 18-year-old from Boca Raton said she first did ecstasy two years ago with friends, most of them white, upper- to middle-class teenagers.

"Some nights, we'll plan a big night out and we know we need to get our stuff," she said. "It just depends on how much money we have."

The teenager said she has done ecstasy, cocaine, and GHB, but she doesn't plan to do GHB anymore after seeing one acquaintance overdose.

Even though she has undergone drug rehabilitation therapy and said she isn't addicted to ecstasy, the high school senior said, "mentally, you just keep wanting that feeling."

"It sounds ignorant and stupid, but it's kind of hard to stop," she said.

Her mother said she missed the signs though she considers herself educated about drug abuse.

"The thing parents need to realize is to stop looking for typical signs," said the mother, 44, adding that her daughter has a "B" average in school.

"This is a serious problem," she said. "People need to wake up. This isn't going away."

Naples, the therapist, said some parents and educators have never even heard of GHB or ecstasy.

They don't know the lingo, so if they hear their daughter or son tell a friend "let's roll tonight," the parent might not know they plan to do ecstasy. In turn, teenagers aren't aware of the dangers because only the message "don't drink

and don't smoke" has been ingrained into their heads.

Parents should notice differences in their children's behavior, Naples said, and they should make a trusting relationship with their teenagers a priority.

"What to look for isn't so clear as someone lighting up a joint or drinking alcohol," she said.

One Wellington, Fla., teen said he has been doing ecstasy and Special K for the past three years and his parents are oblivious.

He said most high school students have tried designer drugs at least once. "It's like this collective, 'Let's do drugs,'" the 18-year-old said. "Mainstream kids have moved from keg parties to rolling parties."

Even though the Wellington student said he doesn't rule out doing ecstasy again, he agrees that designer drugs are a threat to young people.

"But they shouldn't be targeting raves, it's at our schools," he said. "They shouldn't be targeting something that's weird to them."

Botcher, from Florida's drug control policy office, said the "rave culture is largely responsible for a good part of what's happening out there."

McAfee, the narcotics agent, said that even though club drugs aren't street-corner drugs, they are easy to find outside raves.

GHB is part of the bar scene in larger cities, he said.

"If you're a college-age individual, you're going to be able to get it really easy at a bar, just as at a gym you can get steroids."