

# Darrell G. Moen, Ph.D.

Promoting Social Justice, Human Rights, and Peace

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## **Another World is Possible: Impressions of the 2002 World Social Forum**

Produced by Mark Dworkin and Melissa Young

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Transcript courtesy of Bullfrog Films ([www.bullfrogfilms.com](http://www.bullfrogfilms.com))

**Music / words on screen:** In early 2002, over 50,000 people from 131 countries met in Brazil for the World Social Forum. Their goal was to oppose corporate globalization and to develop alternative visions for the future. Their theme was: "Another world is possible!" 11,000 young people camped out in a city park. Representatives of all ages exchanged ideas and found hope in one another. Major U.S. media ignored the World Social Forum. Most people in the U.S. have no idea it took place. But we were there, and this is what we saw.

**Woman from Mexico/Switzerland:** To get together with people like me who have other ideas, who want to change the world, to one where we all belong . . .

**Mexican man:** Basically it's a struggle for morality, a solidarity economy, and a healthy and sustainable environment.

**Palestinian man:** Well I came all the way from Palestine to ask for your help to support the Palestinian people who are now suffering from great oppression.

**Mae Won Ho, U.K.:** All sorts of different groups are converging. They realize that they want to go somewhere and it's the same place.

**Naomi Klein, Canada:** We're seeing greater inequality, greater disparity between nations and within nations. We're seeing lower environmental and labor standards. We're seeing higher fences and barriers rather than lower ones. We're seeing global fortresses instead of the promised global village.

**Kevin Danaher, USA:** We need a whole paradigm shift to a different set of values, away from money values and violence to life values and non-violence.

**Title:** ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE, impressions of the World Social Forum

**Ricardo Navarro, El Salvador:** Because of his unequal consumption of resources, the unjust commercial and financial systems, the white man owes an ecological debt to people of color and indigenous people.

**Vandana Shiva, India:** The defense of life, the defense of our caring for each other, the defense of compassionate and sustainable economies, is being defined as a crime. And crimes against Nature, against women, against children, against local economies, against democracy are being defined as corporate rights.

**Robert Bullard, USA:** These big transnationals, they are not citizens, but they are given rights. And they have been given licenses and rights to kill us.

**On-Screen text:** In hundreds of workshops people discussed what's wrong with the world and how to work together for change.

**Naomi Klein, Canada:** Suddenly there are these overtures coming from the World Bank and representatives from the European Union who want to come to the World Social Forum and turn this meeting into another meeting where everybody agrees and nothing changes. That's exactly what we're fighting against. We need to talk about not what is said but what is done. And we need to no longer be polite, and we can't always be civil, and we certainly can't be patient.

**Wolfgang Sach, Germany:** The type of development we are in is an optical illusion. Because while it produces all kinds of glorious products and services, the world already consumes more resources than Nature can regenerate.

**Vandana Shiva, India:** It is a system in which the 80% of the population must be written off as dispensable merely for deriving their life from the resources the corporations have set their eyes on.

**Naomi Klein, Canada:** We have been told by our politicians, even by our educators that basically everything is impossible. Addressing poverty is impossible; launching any kind of ambitious new social program is impossible. What we have been doing is the opposite of this conspiracy of lowered expectations. We've launched a kind of global conspiracy of inspiration and possibilities, a world in which people laugh openly in the face of tremendous power.

**Phumi Mtetwa, S. Africa:** Changing things also implies a deep reflection in the way we operate on a day-to-day basis with those who are different from us. The indigenous peoples, retanos, Afro-descendants, immigrants, gay people and so on. That is that richness that will guide our proposals.

**Ana Rivera Lassen, Puerto Rico:** All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. Exercising the right to a healthy environment and the right to development, these rights are joined when speaking of sustainable development. But that isn't possible without the participation of civil society, without eliminating

extreme poverty and without establishing the relationship between poverty and environmental degradation.

**Rigoberta Menchu, Guatemala:** The movements, the struggles, the tenacity we now see in our people, is a great advance. We have help from international agencies that now don't ignore us, they maybe even are a little afraid of us. We have lawsuits against the genocides in Latin America, like in Argentina and Chile. I just presented a lawsuit against Kissinger, my fellow Nobel Peace prizewinner . . . . The tenacity you see in defending our truths, there is a major ingredient and it is because we are indigenous people.

**Megan Wilbert, USA:** What we're trying to do is educate people about the truth of what happens if you join the military.

**Jia Ching Chen, USA:** In the U.S. people of color make up about 25% of the population, yet during the Gulf War, people of color made up 50% of the front line. In order to make some other connections around the kind of racism that exists in different forms of militarism around the world, we have Laura to speak about the war on drugs and Plan Colombia.

**Laura Moisa, Colombia:** We have a war in Colombia because of basic social problems like education and health. Poverty and unemployment are high. This situation provoked the organization of movements to improve life for Colombians. During the whole war we have had North American intervention in the form of military aid, and the ideology put forth through the U.S. press. Plan Colombia, seen from outside, is a campaign against drugs. In reality it is a plan to counter the revolutionary movement.

**Oscar Huenchunao, Chile:** During the protests against the meetings of the Inter-American Development Bank last year, we faced a huge, huge repression. And even when some of the demonstrators tried to do non-violent actions and pacific resistance, they were crushed by the police.

**Dustin Washington, U.S.A.:** I've seen some shirts around, especially at the youth camp, that kind of show the World Trade Center being blown up, and like fuck the USA. And that was such a trip to me --if someone wore that back home, we'd probably get beat up, right? So my question is, what was the initial reaction of people, like maybe people's friends or students or comrades that they struggle with of that when they saw that that day?

**Amilcar Mafra, Brazil:** We used to think the government and the people of the U.S. were the same thing. We didn't think about U.S. people of conscience before the attack. The media presented the U.S. government and people as if they were the same.

**Marcio Teixeira Lopes, Brazil:** People I work with are very political. At the moment I have to admit that some of us felt glad - not because all those people in the U.S. were killed, but because it was against U.S. policies of political and economic domination.

**Jarmon Philippes, Brazil:** It is very sad what happened on Sept. 11, that many people in the U.S. died. But on Sept. 11 some years ago, there was an attack that killed many Chileans, and not just on one day but for several years. It was an attack on the Allende government and it installed a military dictatorship that took away hope and smiles from many young Chileans during many years.

**Naomi Klein, Canada:** The world has changed since Sept 11 - we've heard this over and over again. And one of the ways in which it has changed is that power now acts with incredible defiance, with greater and greater defiance. It's fast becoming a world where power laughs in the face of people.

**Naomi Klein:** What we've been doing all week here is telling each other rumors about creative and brave resistance, telling each other stories, that are true stories, that it is possible for instance for India to create and disseminate affordable drugs to treat people with HIV; how it is possible for the people in Cochabamba Bolivia to fight the privatization of their water system against incredible state repression.

**Jaime Apaza Chuquimia, Bolivia:** I bring you greetings and a warm embrace from the Aymara and the Quechua people, the original, indigenous peoples who have been subjugated for over 500 years. We have to develop our strategies to care for our Mother Earth. Our ancestors used to take care of the ecology, but earth is not cared for today.

**Maria Jose Marinheiro, Brazil:** Things are terrible since we don't have our river any more. They are taking so much water out of our river in order to take over our lands. We are trying to keep the river from dying. The water has gotten so low that we can no longer travel on our river, and the fish have disappeared.

**Blanca Chancoso, Ecuador:** We are claiming our intellectual property. We are the authors of this knowledge. No one "discovered" medicinal plants. As for our clothing and our food, they belong to us. Why don't they put indigenous people on their patents instead of someone else? This knowledge belongs to all of humanity.

**Naomi Klein:** We've been telling each other stories about how it is possible for unemployed workers in Soweto in South Africa to fight privatization of water and electricity by systematically re-connecting each others electricity and water; and we tell each other stories about how it is possible for landless people in Brazil to reclaim huge pieces of land and turn them into sites of sustainable community agriculture and development.

**Woman Announcer in sustainable agriculture workshop:** Our agriculture connects us with life. We live with dignity, planting our values and hopes, cultivating love to heal our hearts, feeling secure upon our land.

**Man reading statement:** Food security at the national, regional, and local level is a basic human right. And the key to achieving that is democratic agrarian reform that guarantees campesinos access to the land.

**Flavia Londres, Brazil:** Genetically modified crops are prohibited in Brazil thanks to a broad mobilization of the people. If Brazil begins to produce GM crops, Europe and Japan will have no other option than to eat GM food. Each continent has its achievements in the struggle against GMOs and people are uniting to propose an international moratorium on GMOs.

**Rubens Nodari, Brazil:** The industry doesn't ask about the origins of these pests, they only ask questions about how to attack the problem. We've been using chemical agriculture since the fifties. The first thing that happens is the toxins kill a lot of insects. They eat the genetically altered vegetation and they die.

**Butterflies enter:** We are not agricultural pests, but many of us are dying from your experiment called transgenics.

**Rubens Nodari:** If we don't control this science, if the people keep going along with it, we're going to see a lot of damage.

**Vandana Shiva, India:** We have had marches of half a million farmers, a million farmers to say seeds belong to farmers, farmers have a right to save seed, farmers have a right to know what went into their seed just like consumers have a right to know what went into their food. The Corporations are trying to introduce transgenics against people's will through food relief. When the Orissa cyclone happened, we immediately did tests on the corn and soya being distributed and it was all genetically engineered. Now the poorest of famine victims have rejected these foods, the women of the slums of Delhi had actions against GE soya imports.

**Renske von Staveren, USA:** There is a movement against genetic engineering in the United States, and it's growing. Surveys are consistently showing that between 40 and 50% of U.S. consumers would not purchase genetically engineered ingredients if they were labeled, and that close to 100% actually are demanding labels. There is also a voluntary labeling brigade that has started in the United States that is actually going into stores and labeling products, saying these products contain GMOs.

**Alfredo Galli, Argentina:** Everyone knows that Argentina's economic model has failed. But in Argentina we never talk about the agricultural model that has contributed a great deal to this failure. Prices are dropping, and the farmer to get by has to plant more land. And where does this land come from? From the small

producer. That is the Argentine miracle. Argentina has hungry people because farmers are not producing for them, for the poor. Farmers aren't producing food --in order to survive they are producing commodities.

**Dustin Washington, USA:** We had total fun last night, to hear hip hop, especially to hear Afro-centric hip hop is really cool, just to be around Black people in another country, just to feel the same vibe, the same connection is cool.

**Megan Wilbert, USA:** Like remember that first day we went to the youth camp? And at first like you just saw the tents off in the distance, and then you got closer and closer and there were all of those like MST signs and the worker party signs and everything, and I've never seen anything like that in my entire life and I was kind of shocked, but in a good way, where I was like this is actually a big deal.

**Dustin Washington:** People openly proud to be socialist or to have socialist thinking, that's what was really cool. Then like the rally at the end, there were just so many people there, and you could feel the spirit of love throughout the whole crowd.

**Katie Wepplo, USA:** Social change is all about celebrating life. I mean marches should be fun, they should be things that we can dance at and have music at and enjoy each other's company and celebrate the fact that we actually want to do something good, and here there is so much energy. I mean it's important to know that people who think like this are all over the world, and that we are not just by ourselves.

**Brenda Anibarro, USA:** Every time like a proposal gets made, it's almost this reform or like a step like a token tax. And then they'll be like a woman of color, an economist of color, or somebody from the global South who will present something and it will be like 5 steps more radical. So it will be like you know, we need to change the IMF, and then like this one woman I went and heard, and she said no, we need the IMF out of our country.

**Megan Wilbert:** Like I've never felt more guilty about being American than I do here. You know having people like ask where are you from? And just being like I don't want to tell you I'm from the U.S. I like the U.S. and then I want to tell them, but I don't like a lot of things too.

**Dustin Washington:** As Americans, I think people have been really friendly to us and open. You know where I can imagine much more animosity towards us and especially when you look at how we as Americans treat immigrants and people from other countries.

**Josh Karliner, USA:** It's a Carnival of ideas, it's a Carnival of proposals, it's a Carnival of action. The fact that there are just so many people committed to these

issues in different ways from around the world coming together is a very inspiring thing, if a little bit chaotic.

**Vandana Shiva, India:** We will celebrate sharing; we will celebrate giving. We will not make sacred the principle of organized greed which is what globalization has become. I believe another world is not just possible but it is necessary and we will make it. Thank you.

**Naomi Klein, Canada:** And we have many alternatives. The alternative for instance to privatization is not the uncritical defense of a centralized state. The alternative to privatization is a genuine democratic public sphere. The alternative to top down power is power that rises from the grassroots. The alternative to one size fits all systems, to homogeneity, is an embrace of diversity. The alternative to political spectatorship is political participation. And the alternative to paralysis, to a culture that tells us that there are no possibilities, is not civil society, it's civil disobedience.