

# Features

# THIS

is what  
democracy  
looks like!

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*"If you've come here to help me, you're wasting your time.*

*If you've come because you've realized that your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."*

— Australian Aboriginal woman at New York's protests.

Ten Guilford College students from GANE (Guilford Action Network) and several from Amnesty International joined an estimated 13,000 people (according to indymedia.com) in New York City on the weekend of Feb. 1-3 to protest the World Economic Forum. Here's what they have to say about the weekend:

"It felt wonderful to be around so many kinds of people that united for the same cause," said Debbie Harris, a sophomore.

Harris also said, "Union workers, environmentalists, minority groups, and students created quite a sight: rhythmic drumming, puppet shows, and chanting. As a think tank, the World Economic Forum has a great amount of representation when policies are made. However, they are only representing

the most powerful and wealthy, and inherently the voices of the powerless and poor are silenced. At

this time of international crisis, it's absolutely critical for those of us who seek a better world to unite and spread our message. We believe that a more democratic, civil, and compassionate society is possible."

Leonora Tisdale, a junior, commented, "It was successful because so many kinds of people showed up, (like the Anti-Capitalist Convergence and Another World is Possible) and there was solidarity among them. But peace doesn't make the press."

World Economic Forum organizers said that they moved the conference to New York City to show support for the city, still ailing in the wake in Sept. 11. However, many people suspect that the W.E.F. simply needed a new place to meet, since protests were getting so heavy in Davos, Switzerland, where the conference is usually held.

These same people theorize that since New York City is so freshly traumatized and its police and fire departments are so heroic in many Ameri-

cans' minds, protesters would be intimidated.

In a sense, their strategy worked. There was less willingness to do direct action or confront the police. However, there was still a similar number of people as at recent meetings of organizers of corporate globalization, like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization.

Gigi Burkhalter, a senior, added, "There were so many cops that we really didn't have any control."

Near the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel (where the W.E.F meetings were held, and the destination of the march), the police barricaded protesters into a small area. The only way out was to go back, or to exit where police let the protesters out one by one. Once protesters left that way, police would not let them back in; the police effectively ended the march.

"People sometimes accuse activists of not being well informed," sophomore Ryan Maher said. "It was great to see so many kinds of people who knew what

was going on and actually gave a damn. This is real. It's deeper than sensational. It's more than romantic. The WEF, FTAA, IMF, and WTO are B.S."

Maher also said, "We're on the threshold. The times we're living in, it's like an orgasm, and now the time when we're going to either regret the orgasm or be forever thankful that we had sex. Choices are being made by people who aren't elected. Their power isn't checked, and if we don't get pissed off, they're going to continue to feed us Soma."

Ari DeToro, an active member of GANE, was planning to go to the protest in New York, but couldn't at the last minute. Still, she had a statement: "When 1000 rich, mostly western men gather privately to lay plans to exploit the majority of the world for personal gain, it doesn't sit well with me. The ethnocentric capitalist drive that lines so few pockets with riches and destroys cultures needs to be stopped, and as a privileged white American, I feel I should utilize my privilege because this is affecting so many people with no voice."



Democracy alive and well in New York City

## Lover of people, Afeni Shakur

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Somehow she deserted her anger and prayed for the strength to let her son go gracefully, "my most beloved son, my light of my life, spirit of my family, God help me ... let me help him leave."

Afeni discussed art, and how influential it was in Tupac's upbringing. Music was his passion in life, and for Afeni (as well as millions of Tupac fans) it "covered every emotion".

The integrity of his work, including its deeper social messages, has been very important to Afeni.

"It's a garbage can," was her response to an audience question regarding the quality of music that all too often is a result of the cut-throat, capitalist music industry. "Tupac never gave you any garbage," she said of her son's music.