

1990's. In adopting an ever-expanding agenda, the summiteers were also inclined to — or forced to — include specific goals. Perhaps it was deemed necessary to do so to add to the *gravitas* of the institutional commitment, or to the credibility of the lengthy piles of paper. Or because it played well with the media's demand for policy by sound byte. But if the goals are unrealistic or are simply based on the hope of catalyzing action either by reluctant member governments or other multilateral institutions this is a rather imprudent approach. (It might be wise to recall World Bank President Robert MacNamara's pledge in 1973 to eradicate poverty by the year 2000!) The goals for debt reduction of poor countries set at Cologne have not been met. The broad and ambitious development targets announced by the U. N.'s Millennial Summit covering poverty, infant mortality, and primary education seem, at present, most unlikely to be reached. Rather than enhancing credibility, this mode of operation has led to an increasingly skeptical view of the institution in the press and among some academics. But added to these voices, of course, has been the often more raucous shouts of the NGOs. This is worth a brief digression before I turn to my concluding remarks.

The Anti-Globalization Movement

In 1998, at the Birmingham Summit which the host government wanted to focus on debt relief for poor countries, 50,000 people demonstrated. The message was that the Summit should commit to deliver complete debt forgiveness by 2000. The NGOs were mainly British development groups and Christian charities and the Jubilee 2000 campaign was launched. The slogan "Break the Chains of Debt" caught the attention of the media and the public.⁷ The demonstrators organized a human chain six miles long encircling the convention centre to reinforce the message. For the most part the protest was peaceful although a small group of vandals did try to break some windows.

The results on debt relief which came out of Birmingham were disappointing but the NGO network didn't give up. A new commitment was made at Cologne in 1999. It was not met at Okinawa in 2000. And by Genoa, the peaceful Birmingham demonstrations seemed a distant memory.

The Birmingham demos didn't get worldwide T.V. coverage. That was hardly true of the WTO Ministerial meeting in Seattle a few months later.