TTIP — WHAT? WHY?

**Under TTIP the complete privatisation of the NHS becomes inevitable.** Much of the NHS is already being privatised but the healthcare corporations want *all* the £80 billion plus annual spend on the NHS to go into their corporate pockets. Transnational corporations want to privatise all the public services, but, if you think about it, there aren’t that many of them left in public ownership.

**So what else do the transnationals want? Control.** At present they have to operate within rules and regulations made by the state. They want to get rid of any regulation that puts a brake on profits. Thus the central concern of TTIP is what they call ‘harmonisation’. The word sounds nice but has nothing to do with harmony amongst peoples; rather it means standardising regulations to the lowest level, usually that of the US. For example, the US bans only 13 chemicals from cosmetics, while in Europe we ban over a thousand. While the US allows potentially carcinogenic growth hormones in beef production, chickens washed in chlorine and all genetically modified foods, we ban them. Clearly such bans, health and safety regulations, workers’ rights, etc. are very important for our individual and collective well-being even if they may reduce profits. TTIP refers to them as ‘trade irritants’, ‘non-trade barriers’, as if they were of no more than minimal importance.

**TTIP assumes profit to be the highest human value and its power would lie in elevating commercial contract above public good.** The mechanism is ISDS (Investor State Dispute Settlement), the most controversial element of the treaty. ISDS allows transnational corporations to sue sovereign states over anything that threatens to reduce their expected profit. The most publicised current instance is Philip Morris, the tobacco giant, suing Australia for loss of profit because of the plain packaging of cigarettes regulation. At the moment similar issues are arising in the EU over proposed regulations on the packaging of nicotine vaporisers. The threat that transnational corporations will sue for loss of anticipated profit can stop a government from taking measures to slow global warming or legislating against environmental degradation. This is referred to as the ‘chilling’ effect. Canada provides an example; the prospect of cripplingly expensive lawsuits launched by corporations with bottomless pockets has neutered environmental action.

**Under TTIP we would lose our democratic rights.** Parliament would really be reduced to a talking shop. Government would lose its right to govern and public servants would become mere agents and administrators for the transnational corporations.

What can you do to stop TTIP?

*Ignorance and corruption are the greatest obstacles. Many MPs and public supporters of TTIP probably have not even read the documents (TTIP is being negotiated in secret but documents are regularly leaked). Many believe what they are told by equally ignorant colleagues or by those, less excusably, who have been lobbied by the transnationals. DON’T ACCEPT THEIR JUDGEMENTS!*

\*Raise your objections to TTIP with your MP and MEPs. If you get a bland dismissal, reply and insist that they inform themselves.

\*Where there’s an anti-TTIP petition, sign it.

\*Raise it in your trade union branch.

\*Raise it in your professional or small business association.

\*Raise the problem of TTIP’s damage to democracy in local associations.

\*Raise TTIP’s ethical failings in religious groups.

For more information, see

[www.waronwant.org/campaigns/trade-justice/ttip](http://www.waronwant.org/campaigns/trade-justice/ttip)

www.nottip.org.uk

Tweet #nottip