

**Please copy this leaflet and send it to anyone who cares about public services, the environment, poverty or democracy**

***“At stake is not just the future of local democracy, but the future of public services”***

*Professor Allyson Pollock and Dr David Price, The Lancet (Vol 356, 9 December, 2000)*

### ***All our public services are threatened***

An international treaty is being negotiated behind closed doors at the headquarters of the WTO (World Trade Organisation) in Geneva - which is designed to go further and further until all public services are privatised - health, education, local council services, the police, and the rest. It is called the **GATS** (General Agreement on Trade in Services) and big business is behind it. And GATS will be essentially irreversible. To get out of it, a government will need the agreement of every other member of the WTO. With multinational corporations pulling the strings, that isn't going to happen.

### ***A coup against democracy***

We won't be able to regulate the privatised public services easily either. The WTO is trying to introduce a rule to make all regulations promote the free market and competition. That will restrict regulations which aim to protect consumers or the environment. The GATS is a slow-motion coup against democracy. Already 262 British MPs have signed an Early Day Motion expressing concern about the lack of parliamentary debate on it, requesting an independent inquiry to “ensure that there is an independent and thorough assessment of the likely impact of the extension of the GATS on the provision of key services both in the UK and internationally”.

### ***Local councils under attack***

GATS doesn't just affect national laws, local councils are also under attack. Council controls over planning permission, licensing of taxis, waste management, road maintenance and many other areas are threatened. Already a number of local authorities in the UK have passed anti-GATS motions. More will become alarmed when they learn about this treaty.

### ***What you can do***

Few people know about GATS and its serious threat to democracy. Once people are informed they will demand changes.

- \* Please help to distribute this leaflet far and wide. Copy it to your friends, relatives, neighbours and workmates.***
- \* Inform the media about GATS - write letters to the papers, participate in radio/TV phone-ins and talk shows. Send them emails.***
- \* Lobby your councillors, MPs and MEPs. They may not be aware of the serious anti-democratic implications of GATS.***

***For more information or to get involved in the campaign against GATS see <http://www.gatswatch.org/> or phone John Courtneidge on +44 (0)1992 501854***