



our developing world's voices

Spring, 2001 — Vol. 7, No. 2

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)

What is this all about? In April, Foreign Ministers from the Americas and almost all of the Caribbean countries met in Quebec to discuss the many paged trade negotiations which have been released to many corporate CEOs but not to our elected representatives in Washington or to the public. Leaked information indicates that the trade agreement, called FTAA, is based on principles of the

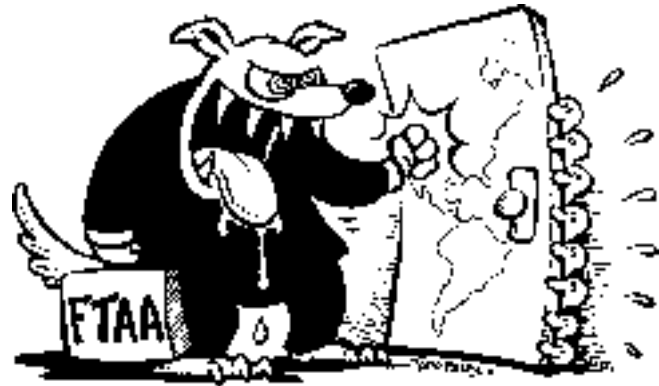
- the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA),
- the World Trade Organization (WTO), and
- the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

In short, FTAA would bypass electorates, forcing local city, county, and state governments to change a diverse set of laws to favor foreign corporate investment. FTAA would instigate a hemispheric free-trade system that would destroy the environment and exploit workers.

FTAA is NAFTA on steroids. Whereas NAFTA is an agreement between Canada, the U.S., and Mexico, the FTAA would include 34 countries in the Western hemisphere—that's every country except Cuba.

Under FTAA, Workers Would Lose

So far, similar trade agreements of the '90's have resulted in workers losing their jobs. Under the U.S./Canadian Trade Agreement, 200,000 Canadians lost jobs. Un-



Courtesy of Stop the FTAA.

der NAFTA, hundreds of thousands lost jobs over the past seven years. For example, in Mexico, 2 million farmers were forced out of farming due to cheap U.S. corn imports—real wages declined 40%. Additionally, two million middle class Mexican shop keepers are now poor because of corporations like WalMart and KMart.

Under NAFTA, an estimated 750,000 U.S. jobs were lost by corporations moving to Mexico. Corporations remaining in the U.S. are able to keep wages low by threatening to move to countries like Mexico. Mexican trucks bringing goods into the U.S. are supposed to be inspected, but few stop and of those a high percent have dangerous defects.

If implemented in 2005, the FTAA agreement will spread these conditions throughout the Western Hemisphere. According to a U.S. Government Accounting

Continued on page 2 →

Join Us on a Tour of Laos, Cambodia, and Viet Nam! odw's 2- or 3-week Adventure Begins July 21

Learn and see from locals their struggles, successes, and dreams. Visit historical sites that help you to understand their culture. Enjoy the verdant tropical forests!

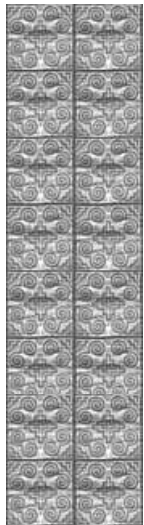
odw study tours are designed for adventurers desiring an in-depth, grassroots, non-Hilton tour. We'll be staying at locally owned accommodations.

The 2-week tour of Laos and Cambodia lasts from July 21 to August 4,

2001. The price, which excludes transpacific airfare, is \$2,799.

The 3-week tour of Laos, Cambodia, and Viet Nam lasts from July 21 to August 12, 2001. The price, which excludes transpacific airfare, is \$3299.

Three tour participants may still join us! If interested, please contact Barby or Vic Ulmer at (408) 379-4431 as soon as possible.





Continued from page 1 →

Office (GAO) document, 800 million people, \$11 trillion in production, and \$3.4 trillion in world trade would be covered. These people live in some of the wealthiest (U.S. and Canada) to the poorest (Haiti), and the largest (Brazil) to the smallest (St. Kitts and Nevis) of countries.

Because the FTAA documents were developed in secret, not even our Congress has them. For a general outline of what was being discussed, we went to the GAO. One of their publications listed the following topics:

- 1) Increasing market access by eliminating tariffs and other barriers for goods;
- 2) Increasing investment opportunities;
- 3) Opportunities and barriers associated with services, including but not limited to utilities, education, water, water treatment, and health care.
- 4) Government procurement;
- 5) Dispute settlement;
- 6) Subsidies/antidumping/countervailing duties;
- 7) Agriculture;
- 8) Intellectual property rights;
- 9) Competition

Countries like Costa Rica, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia are especially concerned about these issues. Labor, environmental, and church groups among others from many countries raised concerns at the FTAA Quebec meeting as well as in their own countries.

The following NAFTA disputes illustrate what is likely to be repeated under the FTAA guidelines:

- A community in Mexico lived near a toxic waste dump used by a U.S. company. When the community realized that waste from the dump was damag-

ing the environment, they passed an ordinance preventing further dumping. The company sued under NAFTA and won.

- Canadian canola farmer Percy Schmeiser, 70 years old, is still farming and standing up for his rights against the multinational agro-chemical company Monsanto. Recently, Monsanto won a court case that, unbelievably, awarded Monsanto Schmeiser's profits after Schmeiser's crop was contaminated with Monsanto's patented genically modified (GM) canola.
- A Canadian firm that produces MTBE is suing California, claiming California is responsible for reimbursing it for billions lost in potential sales. California environmental law has prevented the firm from legally selling the gasoline additive in California.
- United Parcel Service (UPS) is suing Canada for \$230 million under Chapter 11 of NAFTA, arguing that Canada's publicly funded postal network unfairly hinders UPS from gaining customers.

Act Now!

These examples provide just a preview of what could happen if FTAA passes. Stop this from happening by preventing the passage of the fast track authorization proposal (PTPA) President Bush needs to have for Congress to approve the FTAA agreement. Also, ask why this document is secret. Is it really just an international agreement promoting freedom and democracy as plugged by President Bush? ☹

The Fast Track Proposal

The Presidential Trade Promotion Authority (PTPA) proposal would allow the Bush administration to have trade agreements approved by Congress without the inconvenience of amendments or thorough debate. Most importantly, it would bypass the need for a two-thirds majority vote as normally required by the U.S. Constitution.

The following recent mainstream publications express concern over FTAA and PTPA:

- 1) *Business Week* (3/5/2001, "Horse-Trading for Free Trade"). Paul Magnusson wonders how labor rights and environmental standards will be incorporated into trade agreements.

- 2) *Inside US Trade* (3/2/2001). Extremely thorough review of most of the political variables, including the Vietnam and Jordan bilaterals, steel imports, FTAA, a new WTO Round and those pesky labor and environmental issues.
- 3) *Congress Daily* (3/5/2001). Quotes Lori Wallach, Director of Global Trade Watch, who opposes any partial, fig leaf-like compromise on Fast Track, implications in this article to the contrary notwithstanding.

Join this policy debate. Contact elected officials to vote **no** on PTPA, to be vocal in the direction and premises of U.S. participation in the global economy. ☹



Latin America: 20 Million More Poor Than in 1997: A Result of Globalization?

Rome, February 21 (RHC) — Poverty in Latin America has increased by more than 20 million over the past three years —rising to a record 100 million people. The United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development revealed that part of the reason for this growth can be attributed to natural disasters such as Hurricane Mitch, which devastated Central America in October 1998, and the worsening situation for the region’s 80 million indigenous peoples.

Presenting the U.N. Report on Rural Poverty 2001, Raquel Peqa, Director of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, stated that the goals set for reducing rural poverty by the year 2015 cannot be reached, the result of a lack of resources and political willingness on the part of regional governments. Peqa noted that the goal of reducing poverty by one-half was made in 1996. She told reporters in Rome that rural investment by international lending banks has been reduced by 40 percent in recent years. She said that poverty is greatest in El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti —but emphasized that the phenomenon affects all of Latin America.



Report on Rural Poverty 2001:

- One billion, 200 million poor throughout the world survive on less than one dollar a day.
- 68 percent live in Asia, 24 percent live in Africa
- 5 1/2 percent of the world’s poor are in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Three-quarters of the poor live and work in rural areas, many of whom are subsistence farmers without land of their own. 🌐

500,000 Indigenous Live on the Edge in Mexico City

By Bertha Teresa Ramirez

La Jornada, Mexico City

Forgotten by the law, without health care, education or human rights, around 500,000 indigenous eke out a living in Mexico City, more defenseless than in the towns they come from, migrants deceived by the illusion of benefits they never receive.

At nine in the morning, at number 23 Lopez Street, most of the 70 Triqui families living in the decrepit building, listed among high risk structures in historic downtown, have already left the foul, dark rooms where they live, forgotten even among the forgotten, a stone’s throw from the offices of the federal and local governments, excluded from public programs and from justice.

Those who remain walk along the narrow, smelly alleys and hurry to close the doors of the tiny rooms without windows, which make up both kitchen and bedroom for

up to 10 people. These Triqui Indians, most originally from San Juan Copala in the mountains of Oaxaca, are only some of the indigenous who resist the social indifference which condemns them to live in these urban caverns. Caverns ruled by chaos, illness, silence, and darkness, without any kind of social aid, in the heart of the city.

Through the door left open by an old woman leaving the room, the magnitude of the neglect is visible. The scene contains a baby of only a few months sleeping on the floor, in the middle of the room, while a weak light bulb lights up its face, revealing as well a gas tank and a mountain of old clothes.

A few steps from there, while she gets ready to go out to sell food, Dolores Jimenez says that in her hometown the houses are better: “you feel that you are the one in charge of your home. Here, people treat us worse than animals, because you can see that they love their dogs, they protect them. But not us . . .”

Continued on page 4 →



Continued from page 3 →

“What hurts us the most is that they treat our children badly; I wish that they would see them as equal to the others. Because we are indigenous, they call us Injuns, they call us dirty scum, lice. Most people don’t know what it means to be an Indian.

Right Now We’re the Latest Trend

A few blocks from Lopez Street, on New Veracruz Street, you can find another old building threatening to crumble, but this one is inhabited by Mazahua Indians. There Maribel, 32 years old, says: “Right now we’re the latest trend; right now everybody wants to see us, everyone wants to help us. Everyone wants to take possession of whatever we say, do and think. But that’s only right now while they (the Zapatista caravan) are here; later they’ll go away and who is going to remember about us?”

Desmond Tutu Calls for World-wide Struggle Against Poverty

Rome, February 21 (RHC) — South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu has issued an urgent appeal for the elimination of poverty throughout the world, warning that falling short of this goal will mean that there will never be complete justice and freedom.

Speaking at a consultative meeting of the International Fund for Agricultural Development in Rome, the Italian capital, Archbishop Tutu noted that more than 50 years ago, the world’s forces united to defeat Nazism and, more recently, the racist apartheid system in South Africa. The

—”Do you identify with the Zapatista march?”

—”It’s more that we’re fighting against being forgotten. Many people say that there are no indigenous in Mexico City; that’s a lie, there are many. It’s just that, like we say, we disguise ourselves in order to avoid being assaulted, humiliated, walked on, pissed on.”

Their situation in Mexico City encompasses a reality full of injustice, explained anthropologist Margarita Nolasco, ex-director of the Postgraduate Division of the National School of Anthropology and History, and professor at that institution.

“The Indians who live in Mexico City, like those in other cities throughout the country, are not treated with dignity, she says. “We see them and treat them as inferior beings.” Even when all the modern conveniences are within reach, they can’t have them. She assures me that in Mexico City more of these defenseless Indians can be found; in their hometowns, “they have recourse to their own authorities, while here, on the other hand, they don’t count on those authorities, nothing but systems of authorities, in charge of bureaucracies.”

“When people from Mexico City walk down Alameda Street, right by the Mazahuas selling their products, they don’t even notice them; they see them as part of the urban landscape. There are even some who say that all the indigenous in the city are the three dozen women selling farm produce.”

But the more serious matter is that local and federal governments don’t see them either. The official line, in accordance with the last census, is that there are no more than 240,000 indigenous in the City who, in a city of 8 million, just don’t count for much. But at the present time there may be more than half a million indigenous in Mexico City, while in the larger metropolitan area there are about two million. ⊕

1995 Nobel Peace Prize winner said that now was the time to unite against a new enemy: the devastating poverty that affects millions. He said that many who suffer from poverty do not even have access to clean water or electricity.

The South African religious and human rights activist emphasized that women must play an important role in wiping out poverty, stressing that the majority of women who live in rural areas of the Third World are poor. And Archbishop Desmond Tutu added that the fight against ignorance and curable diseases must take on the same force as the struggle against poverty. ⊕



For Moms Everywhere

For the mothers
of the survivors, and the mothers
who sat in front of their TVs in horror,
hugging their child
who just came home from school, safely.

For all the mothers
who run carpools and make cookies
and sew Halloween costumes.

And all the mothers who DON'T.

What makes a good Mother anyway?

Is it patience?
Compassion?
Broad hips?
The ability to nurse a baby,
cook dinner, and sew a button on a shirt,
all at the same time?

Is it the ache you feel
when you watch your son or daughter
disappear down the street,
walking to school alone
for the very first time?

The jolt that takes you from sleep to dread,
from bed to crib at 2 A.M.
to put your hand on the back of a sleeping baby?

This is for all the mothers
of Kosovo who fled in the night
and can't find their children.

For all the mothers
of the victims of the Colorado shooting,
and the mothers of the murderers.

This is for all the mothers
who teach their sons to cook
and their daughters to sink a jump shot.

This is for all mothers
whose heads turn automatically
when a little voice calls "Mom?" in a crowd,
even though they know
their own off spring are at home.

This is for you all.





Hard Questions for U.N. Nominee

LA TIMES Editorial on Negroponte (abridged)

April 19, 2001

Under normal circumstances, President Bush's nomination of a veteran U.S. diplomat like John D. Negroponte to be ambassador to the United Nations would be a routine matter. Negroponte is well regarded in the State Department and close to Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. Senate approval would be all but certain.

But while Negroponte's 37-year career in the foreign service has admittedly been an impressive upward arc of increasingly important ambassadorships, it was not routine.

Negroponte as ambassador includes troubling activities in Honduras there between 1981 and 1985. Then President Ronald Reagan ordered the CIA to launch covert activities against the Sandinista government in neighboring Nicaragua. The key element of Reagan's anti-Nicaragua strategy was a guerrilla war waged by a puppet Contra army based in Honduras. It was composed largely of former soldiers of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, whom the Sandinistas had ousted. With such unseemly allies, the Contra war was immediately controversial, and Congress

imposed limits on how the CIA could wage it, insisting on Embassy approval of human rights for massive increases in military aid (from \$4 million a year to \$77 million during Negroponte's tenure).

The human rights reports that Negroponte signed off on during his tenure in Honduras need to be carefully reviewed by the Senate. For while he routinely reported few violations by the Honduran government . . . since declassified government documents state that the Honduran military was indeed engaged in some very brutal activities in support of the Contras and U.S. policy and document the disappearance of as many as 184 Honduran citizens, not just political dissidents but innocent civilians. Most of these kidnappings and murders were carried out by a secret, CIA-trained Honduran army unit, Battalion 316.

The Senate should probe deeply regarding how much of this activity Negroponte was aware of and whether he hid what he knew from Congress.

The Contra war was an ugly and inconclusive affair — Negroponte had a legal obligation to truthfully inform Congress of what was happening in Honduras in support of U.S. policy. If Negroponte did not live up to that obligation, it calls into question his suitability for an important post at the United Nations. 🌐

Another Iran-Contra Era Official Nominated

Otto Reich has been nominated for the position of Assistant Secretary of State/Western Hemispheric Affairs. He directed the Office for Public Dissemination (OPD) responsible for a propaganda campaign against American citizens to win support for the Contra war.

- A key player in the Iran-Contra scandal, responsible for writing and placing opinion articles in U.S. newspapers, falsely claiming they were written by others.
- The OPD ran smear campaigns against U.S. journalists and activists.

- Reich hired CIA Psychological Operations staff.
- Otto Reich directed this office in cooperation with Ollie North, and though he was not punished for his work with the OPD, the OPD shut down. After OPD, he has been a lobbyist for Bacardi, Inc., drafting the Helms-Burton legislation in 1996 that tightened the Cuban embargo, and in the dispute with Cuba over Havana Club to ignore Cuba's trademark rights. He has also lobbied for Lockheed Martin to get fighter jets sold to Chile, despite a 20-year moratorium.

How could he work for peace and reconciliation? 🌐

ACTION: Our Senators need to hear from us. Urge them to ask the hard questions. If Negroponte didn't know about these matters, why not? No to Negroponte. No to Otto Reich.

Videos Demonstrating the Impact of Globalization

Sweatshops will spread if FTAA is approved. For the cost of postage, you can borrow the following videos from *odw*:

“Mickey Mouse Goes to Haiti” (Sweatshop workers producing Disney products)

“Zoned for Slavery” (Honduras-women workers)
Both available from: National Labor Committee (NLC), 275 7th Ave., New York, NY 10001, (212) 242-3002

“Santiago's Story” (Nicaraguan coffee farmer)
Transfair, 52 Ninth St., Oakland, CA 94607



Photo: ©2001 Wayne Martin, Times Newspapers.

Privatization of services is encouraged by organizations supporting FTAA such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization.

In Cochabamba, Bolivia the multinational corporation Bechtel successfully privatized the city owned water project. After a bitter struggle involving demonstrations around the world, the local citizens successfully regained control of their water supply.

This photo was taken on April 23, 2001, and shows sympathy protesters in Auckland, New Zealand in front of the Bolivian Consulate. Currently, citizens of Auckland are waging their own political battle against water privatization.

Protest FTAA!

Resources and Contacts:

FTAA Newswire, maintained by the S.F. Bay Area Independent Media Center:
<http://sf.indymedia.org/ftaa/>

Global Exchange:
<http://www.globalexchange.org>
stop-ftaa@globalexchange.org
ftacollab@egroups.com

Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund:
Martin Wagner, (415) 627-6700

CIEL:

Stephen Porter, (202) 785-8700
cbrouillet@igc.org

Education Committee Meeting of the Bay Area Coalition to Stop the FTAA:
elaine@justact.org

Michael Dolan:
mfrancisdolan@yahoo.com

Background and protest information:
SIUHIN@aol.com
<http://www.juliette@globalexchange.org>

odw Calendar — DO JOIN US!

MAY 19 8:00 p.m.

A Joint Program by Maiko Women's Drum and Poetry Group and the Peace Chorale, Mexican Heritage Plaza Theatre, Alum Rock and King Contact *odw* for tickets, (408) 379-4431.

MAY 27 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Listen to KKUP FM radio on "Globalization" with Bill Ferguson, Paul Burks and Barby Ulmer.

MAY 27 6:30 p.m.

odw pot luck at 6:30 p.m., followed at 7:30 p.m. with a new 53-minute film, "The Man We Called Juan Carlos [Wenceslao Armira]." This man inspired the founding of *odw*.

The film follows the extraordinary life of Armira, a Mayan from the highlands of Guatemala. Spanning two decades, his story explores the personal side of economic development, human rights, and political commitment.

Roger Bunch, who knew Wenceslao and collaborated on the film, will be with us to answer questions.

JUNE 2 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Teach-in on Globalization and what you can do. Unitarian Church, Third Street, San Jose. See flyer, register now.

JUNE 3 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Ted Smith, Executive Director of Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition (SVTC), shares his stories and photos at *odw* that document the toxic realities of Asia's Silicon Island on Taiwan.

He met with public officials and with grassroots environmentalists. SVTC's work is serving as a model for Taiwan. Ted Smith is being honored by the Dalai Lama as one of 50 individuals "who through their loving kindness and service to others, have made their communities and our world a better place."

Hear about Ted's trip first-hand—and learn what we can do here to stop the spread of high tech toxics in Taiwan and other "Silicon" communities around the world. Learn about Europe's computer give back and recycle law. Join us for light refreshments.

RSVP (408) 379-4431.

Moving? Dont' miss an issue of voices!
Please notify us of your new address.

We are now asking \$10 per year from our readers to support the publishing and broader circulation of this newsletter. This issue is volume seven. Have you sent your donation for this year to the address below?

Thanks

our developing world

13004 Paseo Presada, Saratoga, CA 95070



Address Correction Requested

a non-profit educational project teaching about developing countries and diverse cultures through:

Local Lending Resource Library: hands-on material, original primary sources, visuals and K-12 ready to copy/use lessons, etc.

Teacher Staff Development, Presentations in the community

Study Tours, For purchase: videos, posters, simulations.

Co-Directors: Barby and Vic Ulmer, tel. (408) 379-4431

Fax: (408) 376-0755; e-mail: odw@magiclink.net

website: <http://www.magiclink.net/~odw>

Midwest Representative: Marilyn Peretti

voices layout editor: George Clark

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Saratoga, CA
Permit No. 208

TIME DATED: PLEASE DO NOT HOLD

