



our developing world's voices

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Free Trade Agreements Are Neither Free Nor Mainly About Trade

NAFTA on January 1, 2004 became ten years old. All three countries involved: Canada, the U.S. and Mexico were promised more jobs and cheaper consumer goods. All three have lost hundreds of thousands of jobs and though costs for manufacturing in *maquilas* (sweat shops) have decreased enormously, consumer prices for these goods have not gone down.

But NAFTA is much more than run-away shops and poorly paid workers in even poorer working conditions. NAFTA is about investments. Not in infrastructure and job creation, but as a means to maximize profits and minimize or eliminate risks. That means privatization with no risks.

- Water privatization by Bechtel in Bolivia was protested by townspeople who couldn't afford to buy their own water. They ran the company out, but Bechtel won in a WTO secret court. So FTAA would mean more of the same. Examples from the Chapter 11 NAFTA secret court decisions:
- California realized the gasoline additive MBTE was polluting ground water so ruled to ban it. The Canadian firm who made it sued the U.S. in NAFTA Court and won to the tune of many millions of dollars in



punishment for the loss of future profits. So California reversed its ruling to ban even though it's a health hazard.

- The Canadian government was sued by the U.S. firm Ethyl that was supplying an additive illegal in the U.S., that Canada had banned. NAFTA said that will cost you a lot of money, so they lifted the ban and also had to sign a document that said science hadn't really found it harmful!
- U.S. Metalclad bought an abandoned dump by a small village in the Mexican state of San Luis Potosi with the help of the Mexican government. The townspeople asked that they clean it up before adding more toxic waste. Metalclad said no. The state tried to stop operations, the town demonstrated. NAFTA said the

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→ *Continued from page 1*

Mexican government owed Metalclad millions of dollars.

- Monsanto genetically modified crops were grown next to a Canadian certified organic farm, polluting the farm. Monsanto took the farmer to NAFTA saying he profited while not paying Monsanto. The company won and wiped out the farmer.

There are more horrendous stories to prove that Chapter 11 protects companies from loss for whatever reason. NAFTA can be repealed. And CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement), hopefully not yet approved, a NAFTA on steroids, would add all of Central America to this travesty. Central American countries don't have a joint customs union, the same prohibitions or tariffs on imports, and yet under CAFTA they would all have to adhere to the same rules. The major complaint at this point is that their poor economy based mainly on agriculture would be competing with U.S. agribusiness that is highly subsidized by our government yet they are being told they'd have to stop their subsidies to poor farmers while the U.S. continues subsidizing! The U.S. said let's take this matter to the WTO. And that's what brought the CANCUN WTO negotiations to a standstill.

The FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas) extending the steroid fix to all of Latin America is having the same stumbling block.

The U.S. wants to have CAFTA agreed upon by the end of 2003 and FTAA by the end of 2004.

Our legislators need to learn that we know that the U.S. people don't benefit, nor do our neighbors. Corporations

are the winners. As was said in Seattle: *If It's Not Fair For Working Families It's Not Fair!* and *No Legislation Without Representation!*

Many legislators hadn't read NAFTA when they passed it on Fast Track (they couldn't debate sections, merely vote yes or no). Fast Track will be in force until sometime next year so we can try to get a moratorium until it runs out and then it will be easier to defeat.

Declarations from the Third Trade Union Summit held in Belo Horizonte in 1997 and the Jesuits Seminar on Free Trade in July 2003 in Quito, Ecuador envision a different kind of globalization based on humanizing the economy: subject to rules that guarantee the distribution of income within and between nations; the supremacy of human, economic, social and cultural rights and the rights of peoples; and the planet's sustainability.

Other considerations include security for internal investors before foreign ones, open transparent negotiations and operations, human rights and benefits. Essential to development is environmental protection, labor and social policies that are humane, that include fairness in migration, gender based economies and food security. This would lead to sustainability. It would protect human and plant genes from patents. Water would be a human right, as would the ability of earning a living at a livable wage under humane conditions, housing, health care and education.

The Jesuits stress an integration that starts with people's interests and values and doesn't leave humanity's future in the hands of the market.

Envio, October 2003.🌐

On Civil Disobedience

by Larry Purcell

Larry was one of those who briefly blocked workers from entering Lockheed/Martin's weapons factory. He writes: I could not and would not pay a fine. Since I consider my whole life at the Catholic Worker House to be community service, I saw no sense in that. I could not honestly promise to abide by all laws for the next two years. I tried to explain that in the past year our government had dismantled decades and decades of diplomacy in the U.N.; had rejected the global Kyoto accords; had cir-

cumvented the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; had refused to join the International Criminal Court and had initiated a new policy of "preemptive" war . . . progressed toward unilateralism, millions and millions protested to no avail. I could not predict what outrageous decisions our government might make.

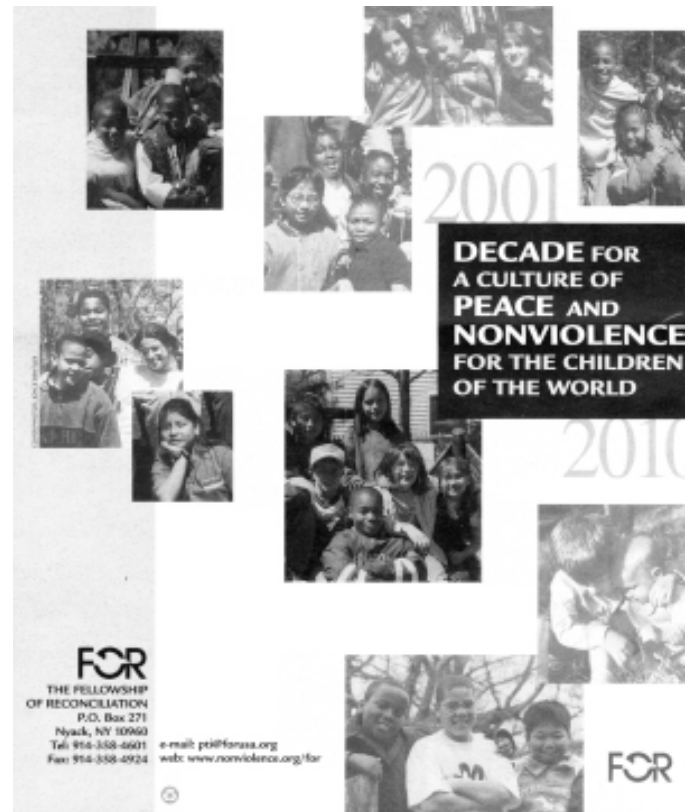
It scandalizes me that war creates everything I live and work to alleviate: homelessness, hunger and poverty.🌐



Kate Chatfield, of Catholic Worker House San Bruno Community,

in their newsletter *BREAD AND SALT* recommends *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, the historical account of the French Huguenot village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, and the villagers' collective resistance to the forces of death. In this village, during the course of the World War II, thousands of Jews were housed and hidden by villagers, some on their way to Switzerland, some for the whole course of the war. It is an astonishing account because of the clarity of vision of the villagers —from pastors to peasants.

Every day they risked their lives with their acts of nonviolent resistance . . . To save lives was simply what had to be done because to them, human life is intrinsically valuable. Though everyone had to less to eat and wear during the whole course of the war, not one person went to the government authorities. One villager said, “we were simply raised to do good” If the villagers had not done what they did, their lives would not have made sense to them. In the face of death, one entire community chose to remain human.🌐



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One Billion Equals . . .

10 x \$100 = \$1000

Spend \$1000 every day since Christ was born, and you still would not have spent one billion dollars.

How could one count a billion dollars?

One day of the Iraq war cost \$1.1 billion, so five days of the war could have eliminated illiteracy in the world —\$5 billion.

For the \$75 billion initially passed for the cost of the war in Iraq we could have hired 1,155,715 elementary school teachers. Many states face deficits and consequently many teachers have been laid off.

President Bush's "Leave No Child Behind" is woefully underfunded except for the military recruiting part. Unless a parent writes a letter to the school, their Junior or Senior high school student will receive recruiting letters and phone calls.

Counter recruiting is beginning in many cities. Check with your peace and justice organization or Veterans for Peace.🌐

Guns or Butter?

Enroll 2 children in Headstart	\$14,000	1 cluster bomb
Eradicate polio worldwide	\$130 million	3 tests of missile defense system
7,000 affordable housing units	\$494 million	Military aid to Columbia (1 yr)
38,182 elementary school teachers annual salary and benefits	\$2.1 billion	1 Stealth bomber
Minimum 1 year U.S. share to fight AIDS worldwide	\$3 billion	3 days U.S. military spending
Replace 42,000 deteriorating U.S. drinking water systems	\$8.6 billion	Missile defense system development (1 year)
Healthcare coverage for 7 million children	16.5 billion	Nuclear weapons program (1 year)
Save 11 million lives from infectious diseases	\$38 billion	1 month U.S. military spending
\$8000 for every man, woman, and child in	\$2,300 billion	Expenses for which the Pentagon has no accounting*

* According to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, CBS Evening News, 1/29/02.



Once upon a time, our Defense Center had enough money for toys and teachers, and the Pentagon had to hold Bake Sales..



Walnut Creek Intermediate Students Share Experiences and Feelings about the Nicaragua Tour

Again students from Walnut Creek Intermediate (WCI) spent two weeks in Nicaragua with teachers helping with a CANTERA community project. This CANTERA community project is especially needy. For example, students must not only pay school fees and for uniforms, but also for their own textbooks. So almost half-a-million kids aren't going to school. Sometimes just access to textbooks can make the difference. So the WCI kids built a little text book study library with a roofed, partially sheltered study space and four concrete tables with stools outside for 24 more students.

Here are excerpts from two students whose older siblings were on the first work tour to Nicaragua where they spent time working on projects for youth in the rural town of Mateare:

We all did different kinds of work: some cut metal, some dug trenches for the gazebo, some poured concrete. I shoveled dirt and sand & painted poles.

Lunch was beans, rice, strong tasty cheese, and this thing which looked like a banana but tasted like a potato.

Even though it was horrible seeing the conditions these wonderful people were living in, when I walked down the street I felt hope not depression. I got the message that people in Mateare feel content, despite how little they have.

We went through this extremely poor village. All the houses were dirty shacks made out of scraps of metal, old wood, clothing and trash.

Malnourished dogs and kids wandered through the dirty roads. I have never seen poverty like that before. It doesn't seem fair for me to live in this wonderful clean house, to have new and expensive clothes.

It's hard to handle. These shacks are smaller than my bedroom. Every kid I have met so far has been so happy and kind. I have never seen sky like Nicaraguan sky. It's one of the most beautiful things I have seen in my life. It almost seems like the extreme beauty of the sky and land collide with the extreme poverty of the people. Nicaragua is gorgeous.

Natalie Gabbard



1st row: Nica kids from Mateare. 2nd row: Jonas Zimmermann, Megan McAllister, Mackenzie Moody, Greg Drosky, Chelsea Weinberg-Lynn, Molly Clasen, Samantha Cavanaugh. 3rd row: chaperone Maria Guerrero, Jessica McCammon, Erin Greene, Lia Breunig, Tyler Duncan, chaperone Mitch Madigan, Natalie Gabbard, Teacher/chaperone: Brendan Hurd, Paul Handly. 4th row: Nica boys from Mateare.

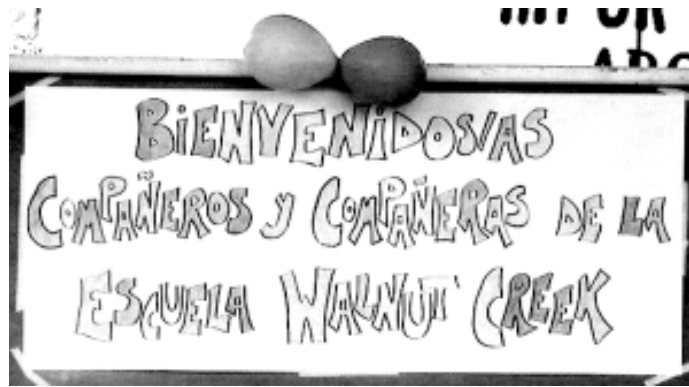
If you asked a little kid to sit on your lap or come over, they would smile a shy smile, then come over and you could tell they felt special. It told me how much we are doing and how they really appreciate us.

They made me feel so good. It's beyond words. At one point I was in the middle of tons of Nica kids. Being able to play with them despite the language barrier was amazing. We saw the school. Compared to it, Walnut Creek Intermediate is heaven. The boy's bathroom was a bush behind a wall. There were 60 kids to a classroom.

We saw the poorest part in all of Mateare. It made me feel blessed and incredibly lucky. When we got back, they had decorated the whole place for us. The way they went out of their way to make sure we know how much they appreciate us makes me feel really loved. I just felt bad I couldn't do more.

Chelsea Weinberg-Lynn

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Greg Drosky helping to build the gazebo wall.



Samantha Cavanaugh and A.J. Handy working with two Nica boys.



Megan McAllister, Natalie Gabbard, Samantha Cavanaugh, and Molly Clasen.



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And Chelesa's older sister wrote this, recalling her experience, when applying to be a Global Studies student in her university application:

I know that not everyone is as fortunate as I. Still the true eye-opener is the joy of life and deep sense of community these villagers possess, and are so willing to share. I just experienced the Nicaraguan culture, where people's lives are rich in community spirit, not material possessions. The contrast of my world and their world is sharp and deep, something I am constantly reminded of—seeing faces of children, men and women, young and old, a world away yet fresh in my mind fuels me on a daily basis to look beyond my front doorstep. Education: the sustenance of life.

Take one dry, grassy knoll, add volunteers from California, 100 Nicaraguan villagers and the result, a new school to replace the scattered desks which were arranged under the trees.

Britney Weinberg-Lynn



Tyler Duncan and Molly Clasen (girls with backs to camera are Jessica McCammon and Megan McAllister).



odw Calendar — DO JOIN US!

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FRIDAYS 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

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POTLUCK & PROGRAM: ELECTION WATCH '04, AN EVENING OF STRATEGIZING

JANUARY 30 (FRIDAY) 6:30 p.m. - potluck/ 7:30 p.m. - program

During the pot luck supper we will listen to a 30-minute tape of National Radio Project's Election Watch '04. Afterwards we'll discuss, and then brainstorm what the National Radio project can do to help us with the "Anybody But Bush Campaign." Everyone is welcome. Contact *odw* at odw@magiclink.net, (408) 379-4431, or write us at 13004 Paseo Presada, Saratoga CA 95070 for more information.

PEACE DEMONSTRATION

MARCH 20 (SATURDAY)

Join the Peace Demonstration near you. Demonstrators will be marching in major cities, including San Jose and San Francisco.

During the darkest days of the Vietnam war, A. J. Muste stood like a lone sentinel in front of the White House, holding a candle every night for weeks on end . . . One evening, a curious reporter approached and asked him, "Mr. Muste, do you really think you are going to change the policies of this country by standing out here alone at night with a candle?" "Oh, I don't do this to change the country," Muste replied. "I do this so the country won't change me."

We also do it because it helps us know we're not alone! —Check Larry Purcell's story inside.

Moving? Dont' miss an issue of voices!

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