

INTERCONNECT

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*For Grassroots Movement-Building
and Sharing of Resources Within the
US-Latin America Solidarity Community*



(Photo: From L to R - Rita Calvert (SOAW activist living in Costa Rica), Fr. Roy Bourgeois, President Oscar Arias, Lisa Sullivan, Fernando Berrocal Soto (Minister of Government, Police and Public Security), Isabel MacDonald (Director of the Peace Center in Costa Rica))

Our Movement's Best Weapon: A Hug

On the SOA Watch website (www.soaw.org) staffer Lisa Sullivan describes the scene when Costa Rica agreed to stop sending its police to the SOA (US Army School of the Americas/aka Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation):

“On our last evening in Costa Rica, Roy, Rita, Isabel and I were shown into the office of President Oscar Arias, re-elected last year 20 years after his first presidency. The Nobel Peace Laureate ushered us in with a warm welcome. Looking at a room filled with photos of Arias with other former recipients of this coveted peace prize, I found myself hoping that they could somehow inspire this president to continue on the peacemaking path. Our task was not easy. Costa Rica was a faithful client of SOA, sending more than twice the number of students as Mexico, in spite of its tiny size and no army.

“[Father] Roy [Bourgeois] launched into our concerns about SOA, sharing his own story and the testimony of so many prisoners of conscience, in his unique form of bayou-accented Spanish. Arias turned to me to clarify what we wanted him to do. Caught off guard in my invocations to these peacemakers, I simply said, 'Don't send any more police to study at the SOA.' Then I explained how Argentina, Uruguay and Venezuela had chosen to stop sending any troops to the SOA. With almost no hesitancy, Arias responded, 'It is done. We will send no more.' Forgetting my president-visiting protocol, I jumped up spontaneously, hugged President Arias, thanking him 'in the name of the martyrs who had been killed at the hands of SOA grads.' Realizing the significance of his decision, Arias appeared genuinely moved and said, 'That means a lot.'”

(Lisa Sullivan-Rodriguez is with SOA Watch: lisavenezuela@gmail.com.)

LAST CHANCE!

Thanks to all of you who have sent us your e-addresses or told us you'd prefer to continue with the printed edition of INTERCONNECT.

If you haven't let us know your preference please take a minute to do it now. It's as easy as sending an e-mail to interconnect_mott@frontiernet.net with SUBSCRIBE as subject. This is the last issue that you will receive unless we hear from you. The reason for this change is the increase in postage for small non-profits plus our awareness of the need to be more mindful of the environment. If you do opt for the printed edition and can send a contribution, please do. However, as over the past 13 years, we will send the newsletter to anyone free of charge.

All of you will be able to find us on the web at www.interconn.org - with a new Latin America blog. We are looking forward to your comments!

“Latin American countries don't have to care anymore what the US thinks, and that is mainly because of the collapse of IMF influence.”

Mark Weisbrot, codirector of the Center for Economic Policy Research, quoted in the Christian Science Monitor, 7/11/07

“The liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to a point where it becomes stronger than their democratic State itself. That, in its essence, is Fascism - ownership of government by an individual, by a group, or any controlling private power.”

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

INTERCONNECT

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Editorial: To Blog or Not to Blog?

Fourteen years ago INTERCONNECT was imagined into life at the Central America Solidarity Roundtable to be a communication device for helping build the US-Latin America solidarity movement. Over the years this has proved true - INTERCONNECT helped to organize four national conferences and to create the LASC Coordinating Committee. We continue to work toward better and more effective communication.

Our new website (www.interconn.org), including the new Latin America Policy Blog, should help greatly in this regard - with your input.

We hope your organization will participate, raising issues you consider vital, such as:

- NAFTA - How can we terminate it?
- Haiti - How do we stop US involvement in the UN Peacekeeper raids - and killings - in the pro-Aristide slums?
- Drug War. Could our movement work with others to change or end this?
- National Endowment for Democracy (NED). How can we organize to end its subversion of democratic processes (Cuba, Venezuela, Haiti and others)?
- Immigration. Do the Powers want the migrant population to remain vulnerable and controllable? (See INTERCONNECT 7/07, p. 3, “Immigration: Another Look,” in the Archives on our website.)
- The PPP (Plan Puebla Panama) and SPP (Security and Prosperity Partnership - or “NAFTA Superhighway”): Do they exist?

Hope you'll Blog with us!

BorderLinks: Making the Connections

- by Rev. Ken Kennon

BorderLinks is a bi-national nonprofit educational organization along the border which traces its roots to the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980's. It offers experiential educational delegations focusing on the border issues of global economics, militarization, immigration, and popular resistance to oppression and violence. With these topics occupying the spotlight in public and political debate, it is more important than ever that US citizens witness a reality affected by our policies and lifestyles.

BorderLinks offers unique trips for unique groups in the compelling setting of the borderlands. Each experience is fitted to the needs and interests of its participants. Facilitated by a bilingual-binational staff, delegation itineraries along the US/Mexico border are from one day to two weeks long.

With binational headquarters on either side of the border, one in Tucson and the other in Nogales, Mexico, BorderLinks educates us about the global economy, free trade, NAFTA, international debt, microcredit programs, community banking, maquiladoras, labor and environmental problems. Social issues include politics, women's rights, immigration policy, the US Border Patrol, crime, health concerns, and human rights. The goal is to give participants an opportunity to personally experience these issues and develop their own opinions.

Each year more than 1,000 BorderLinks participants from about 60 delegations return home ready to share with others from their own experience.



For scheduled programs for 2007-2008, see Resources: Travel, below.

BorderLinks can help you organize a group delegation or join one. Sample itineraries and other program details are available online at www.borderlinks.org and by calling (520) 628-8263.

(The author is president of the board of Borderlinks in Tucson, a pastor, and a poet.)

Help Stop the Spread of New "Free" Trade Agreements!

An aggressive monitoring campaign is being carried out by members of the Stop CAFTA (Central America Free Trade Agreement) Coalition, together with the Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART) to evaluate the effects of CAFTA in each country. One of their goals has been to stop CAFTA from being approved by Costa Rica. Coalition members had encouraged the local media in Costa Rica to cover the Referendum process thoroughly, including paying full attention to US Rep. Linda Sanchez' letter of complaint about the US ambassador's interference in this process. Unfortunately, the Referendum result was a narrow victory for CAFTA. A recount, however, is likely (as of this writing) because of the many reports of fraudulent electoral behavior across the country. Most worrisome is the report that – one day before the Referendum vote – the White House issued a warning to Costa Ricans that, if they didn't approve CAFTA, the US would not re-negotiate any modification of the Treaty. The Stop CAFTA Coalition and their allies in the country are meeting to plan next steps.

Meanwhile, the involved US solidarity groups are investigating the reaction of the people of Peru, Colombia and Panama to the new "free" trade agreements proposed by the US for their countries.

To join this work, contact Tom Loudon, ART, the Quixote Center, tom@quoxotecenter.org.

(From the 10/2/07 meeting of the LASC Coordinating Committee and a 10/9 talk with Kathy Hoyt of Nicanet.)

Urgent Action requested by the Haiti Action Committee:

Purpose: To Call for the Safe Return of Haitian Human Rights Advocate Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine, founding member and national coordinator of the September 30 Foundation, a Haitian human rights organization which advocates for victims of the 1991 and 2004 coup d'etats against the democratically-elected governments of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He has been missing since 8/12/07 when he met with a US human rights delegation, and he is presumed kidnapped.

Mr. Pierre-Anatoine is a renowned grassroots leader and tireless advocate for the Haitian people. As a young psychologist working in Port au Prince during the 1991-94 coup, he helped establish a program which helped children, a center for teenage mothers, and Map Viv ("I Live"), a program of psychological and medical aid to the thousands tortured, exiled and imprisoned by the coup). The September 30th Foundation emerged out of this work. Similar to the Mothers of the Disappeared in Central and South America, the foundation has held weekly vigils demanding justice for victims of human rights violations and release of political prisoners.

Please help by faxing a letter (sample below) or telephoning the following offices:

UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). FAX: 011-509-244-9366/67

Office of UN Secretary General in New York: FAX: 212-963-4879

United States Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Tel: 011-509-223-4711, or 222-0200 or 0354

FAX: 011-209-223-1641 or 9038

Sample Letter

Dear Ambassador/Secretary General,

I am writing out of grave concern for the safety of Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine, leader of the September 30 Foundation, a victims' rights group which addresses human rights abuses which occurred in Haiti during and after the 1991 and 2004 military coup d'etats.

I urge you to do all that you can to guarantee the safe return of Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine to his family. This is not a plea for UN troops and Haitian military in Port-au-Prince to crack down indiscriminately as they have in the past. Rather, the authorities should continue their investigations and officials should express their concern through any and all channels that Lovinsky needs to be released unharmed.

Sincerely,

your name and contact information here

Radical Social Change

- by Tom Hansen

The foundations of radical social change are consciousness raising and effective strategy. Without an appreciation of strategic alternatives in confronting capitalism, paternalism, racism, etc., we often end up using internally contradictory strategies and tactics that are ineffective. For example, we heap scorn on the federal government and the political class, then mobilize tactics (lobbying, call-in days, electoral politics) that put the government in control.

The first step in radical organizing is consciousness-raising. We have to start by breaking elite domination in the field of ideas. Our acquiescence is developed mainly through the formal education system and the mainstream media. We come to accept the “politics of the possible” as defined by elites. Our strategies are limited to actions that often end up reinforcing the legitimacy of current power dynamics rather than offering radical alternatives. We can develop alternative consciousness and then effective action.

The US context is unlike Latin America, where a good deal of popular education and even much formal education is infused with Marxist and neo-Marxist analysis, and strategies that include anti-capitalist (this isn't a “dirty word” in Latin American discourse), anarchist and autonomous orientations. With formal education in the US dominated by neoliberalism and an “inside the beltway” logic of political action, we find few spaces to develop the consciousness and strategies necessary for genuine radical alternatives. Four hour workshops or weekend conferences don't fill the void, and week-long delegations to Latin America often only pique one's curiosity. I think we are all aware that the left in the US is largely isolated, poorly developed and ineffective.

This is why the Mexico Solidarity Network developed our semester-long study abroad program focused on the theory and practice of Mexican social movements. The 14-week program links American students with organizers and social movements, including the Zapatista movement, Campesino struggles in central Mexico, and the families of femicide victims and maquiladora workers in northern Mexico. Students are immersed in the theory and practice of these movements. The study abroad program is part of a larger project we call the International Autonomous University for Social Movements (IAUSM). Based in our community center in Chicago, the IAUSM is developing into a center for popular education, community-building, strategic analysis and skills development for organizers.

We did not come by these projects without a lot of struggle, especially around our own political and strategic orientations. And we offer these projects as experiments in the making, not prefabricated answers. Ultimately, our hope is to create communities of action that include directly affected communities, particularly immigrants and left-oriented youth. It's not easy for these groups to work together. Their life experiences and political orientations are very different, but they each can bring something important to the struggle for radical social change. We hope the IAUSM will be a space for community building, learning processes, consciousness raising and, ultimately, radical social change.

(The author is Director of the Mexico Solidarity Network at 775-583-7728.)

Ed. Note: We welcome readers' comments, questions and further discussion on these topics.

Invitation to Join the Militarization Working Group of LASC

At the Latin American Solidarity Coalition (LASC) conference in Chicago last April a number of separate solidarity groups decided to form a new LASC Working Group, this one aimed at the increasing US militarization throughout our Hemisphere.

Specifically, the group is concerned about all the US military bases. A crucial example: What should happen to the Manta base in Ecuador?

President Rafael Correa of Ecuador wants Manta closed (see excerpts of his interview with the Washington Post and Newsweek in this newsletter).

Several groups represented in the LASC Coordinating Committee have worked with John Lindsay-Poland of the FOR (Fellowship of Reconciliation) Task Force on Latin America to write, translate, circulate, and get support and signatures for a letter supporting President Correa's strong statement against renewal of the US lease for the Manta base.

To join this struggle, contact Burke Stansbury or Krista Hanson at CISPES, 202-521-2170 or Chuck Kaufman of the Nicaragua Network, 202-544-9355.

“According to the Economic Policy Institute, income disparities between and within the NAFTA partners have grown during the years since its implementation, a damning reality that is central to understanding the immigration debate.”

Global Exchange, Fall, 07



Photo: Chapin Gray with folks at the picket in Birmingham, AL, in solidarity with the Drummond workers.

Drummond Coal Gets Away with Murder

- by Chapin Gray, Jim Toweill, & Meredith Aby

This past summer, 2007, the Drummond Coal Company got away with murder when it was found 'not liable' in the deaths of three Colombian labor unionists: Valmore Locarno, union president, Victor Orcasita, vice-president, and Gustavo Soler, replacement president. The leaders

of the Sintamienergética miners union worked at Drummond's La Loma mine in northern Colombia. Drummond death squads murdered them in 2001, shooting Locarno in front of other workers.

The cards were stacked in Drummond Coal's favor from the start. The Bush-appointed Judge Bowdre threw out the wrongful death charge before the trial even began, which left the plaintiffs the difficult task of proving the murders constituted a war crime. Key witnesses like Rafael

Garcia, who saw Drummond's top Colombian executive Augusto Jimenez hand over a briefcase containing \$200,000 in cash to a well-known paramilitary member, were not allowed to testify.

During the trial, union treasurer Francisco Ruiz testified to Drummond's lack of concern for its workers' safety and poor working and housing conditions. Drummond refused to allow threatened workers - who were in the middle of contract negotiations - to sleep on company grounds between shifts

Even more damning is that retired army sergeant Edwin Manuel Guzmán and former security guard Isnardo Roperó González say Drummond regularly paid the paramilitaries and allowed them to roam at the mine.

Since 2000, the US government has given close to five billion dollars in military aid under "Plan Colombia". The right-wing Colombian government funds death squads and tramples on the peoples' movement for social and economic justice. US military advisors go into combat with Colombia's Military against the rebel

insurgency of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Other US companies also have Colombian workers' blood on their hands. The Colombia Action Network (CAN) leads campaigns to boycott Coca-Cola and Chiquita banana. These US companies commit human rights abuses inside and outside their Colombian operations. As Chiquita admits, they fund and arm the death squads. This summer the CAN organized pickets outside the Drummond trial with the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) of Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

The CAN raises awareness of the real cost of US military aid to Colombia. Congress is questioning the role of US corporations in Colombia and Bush's support for Colombian President Alvaro Uribe. More protests and actions to stop the U.S. dirty war in

Colombia are being organized.

(The authors are members of the Colombia Action Network. To reach Meredith Aby, www.colombiasolidarity.org.)

Current Labor Campaigns

- by Stephen Coats

On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, USLEAP has been asked to share with INTERCONNECT an update on some of our key issues:

Colombia

Despite pledges by the Uribe government to address violence against trade unionists and impunity, Colombia once again led the world in murders of trade unionists, with more killed in 2006 (78) than in the rest of the world combined (144), according to a September report released by the International Trade Union Confederation. Their record number of cases ending in impunity remains abysmal, with only 3 convictions during the first half of 2007. Nearly 400 trade unionists have been murdered in Colombia since President Uribe took office in 2002.

US trade unions have been working closely with the Colombian trade union movement to block consideration of the pending Free Trade Agreement with Colombia. In June, thirteen US trade union organizations sent a letter to Congress urging defeat of the Colombia FTA as well as opposition to Plan Colombia and foreign aid for the Colombian military.

Flower workers in Colombia have been organizing to establish the first independent unions in the flower sector in order to address working conditions. Colombia supplies 60% of the flowers sold in the U.S. Dole, the largest exporter of flowers from Latin America, has used an array of tactics to bust union-organizing efforts in Colombia. A new campaign to support Dole flower workers is kicking off this fall with Valentine's Day 2008 looming as a key time for pressure. The Flower Committee of South Florida Jobs with Justice, based in Miami where Dole Fresh Flowers is headquartered, would welcome support for the campaign at the local level.

Guatemala

There has been a sharp rise in violence against Guatemalan trade unionists since the passage of CAFTA (Central America Fair Trade Agreement). In September, a

leader of the banana union SITRABI, the largest private sector union in Guatemala, was murdered, making him the 4th trade unionist murdered in Guatemala this year (while none were killed during the year prior to CAFTA's passage).

Ecuador

The banana sector in Latin America is the most unionized in the private sector but the unions are threatened by a "race to the bottom," led by companies sourcing from low-wage, non-union Ecuador and the south coast of Guatemala. The Coordination of Latin American Banana Worker Unions last year asked groups in the North to launch an international campaign against Dole, considered public enemy number one by the unions because of its largely non-unionized operation. The primary background document for the campaign is Dole, Behind the Smokescreen, available in English and Spanish on the USLEAP website.

To learn more about these and other issues, visit our new website at www.usleap.org or contact us at 773-262-6502.

(The author is Executive Director of US/Labor Education in the Americas Project.)

Protests Against Neoliberal Policies

Rock Peru

- by Benjamin Dangl

In July, protests against neoliberal policies rocked Peru, leaving three people dead and several wounded. Rejections of a free trade agreement with the US and a crackdown on workers rights were at the heart of the protests aimed against the Alan Garcia administration.

Miners, farmers, construction workers and teachers in Peru demanded better wages and revisions to the free trade agreement. The international Manco Cápac airport in Juliaca, Peru was occupied by 5,000 workers who set fire to furniture and office equipment. Members of the Unified Trade Union of Education Workers of Peru protested the passage of an educational reform law which teachers contend will privatize education and put hundreds of teachers out of work. The



The author in Peru



teacher strikes closed down 70 percent of the country's schools, while other protesters blockaded roads and occupied government buildings. Ollanta Humala, a left wing candidate in the last election against the neoliberal Garcia, has joined the workers' protest movement to rekindle interest in a future bid for the presidency.

Responding to widespread protests, Garcia proposed a Social Pact to redistribute wealth in the country and increase the minimum wage by up to 10%. However, results from the vague Social Pact are a long way off, and major unions, including the National Confederation of Peruvian Workers, refused to participate in what they believe is an inefficient plan. Humala says the Social Pact is a weak attempt to calm protests. "In the case that the agreement comes from up above to convince those below that the country can be developed, [the Social Pact] is not going to have a future," Humala told Latinamerica Press.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration continues pushing for the free trade agreement; and Congress is scheduled to vote on it this fall. The Bush administration sees the passage of this deal as a way to counter the influence of Hugo Chavez and other leftist leaders in Latin America.

US labor groups, including the AFL-CIO, oppose the deal with Peru, citing the destructive impact of CAFTA and NAFTA as evidence that free trade with Peru is destined to harmfully affect workers rights, salaries, and employment levels in the US. Critics in Peru, where most of the population of over 27 million survives on less than a dollar a day, believe free trade policies only benefit large corporations while destroying the poorest sectors of society.

US-based activists can pressure their representatives in congress to vote against this free trade agreement with Peru. Information on how to take action, and about the harmful impact of free trade in Latin America, is available at the Public Citizen website: www.citizen.org/trade/afta/ For ongoing news in English on political and economic issues in Peru, and elsewhere in Latin America, visit www.UpsideDownWorld.org

(The author is Editor of www.UpsideDownWorld.org and author of "The Price of Fire," reviewed in this issue.)

Attend the LASC Breakfast and Help Close the SOA

Will the 17th vigil (November 16-18) be the one to bring down the School of the Americas? Father Roy Bourgeois, founder of SOA Watch (SOAW), predicts this year's vigil will finally convince enough members of Congress to close down the US Army School of the Americas - forced by this movement to be renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC). The massive annual protest at Ft. Benning in Columbus, Georgia, which drew 20,000 activists last year, is expected to be even larger this year.

The LASC (Latin America Solidarity Coalition) organized a hugely successful breakfast meeting at last year's vigil and will do it again this year. Come and enjoy coffee and donuts while getting an update on LASC accomplishments and being in solidarity with SOAW, one of LASC's member organizations.

For more information, or to help, ask John Hunt at the Campaign for Labor Rights, 212-544-9355 or Burke Stansbury at CISPES, 202-521-2570.

Help Plan the Venezuela Symposium

March 14-16 in DC

The Venezuela Solidarity Network, formed from the LASC's Venezuela Working Group, invites all of us to an important Symposium at Howard University in Washington, March 14-16. This will be a major "teach-in" with an array of speakers, including social movement leaders from Venezuela. Many aspects of the Bolivarian Revolution will be discussed, including currently proposed changes in their Constitution.

To help with planning and publicizing the Symposium please call Bambose Shango at the Alliance for Global Justice, 202-544-9355.

"It ought to be seen as a blessing and a privilege for both sides of the border that migrant workers be able to move with legal documents and temporary documents back and forth so that their families, and their work is valued..."

Rev. John Fife

THANK YOU!

We appreciate Donations From:

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 57 South Main Street
 Pittsford, NY 14534

Join Witness for Peace to Close the School of Assassins November 16-18, Columbus, GA

Each year tens of thousands of people gather at the gates of Fort Benning, home of the notorious U.S. Army School of the Americas, which teaches techniques of torture and repression to Latin American armies. We gather to remember the victims of SOA graduates and to demand that the school be closed. Let's make this year's vigil the largest ever.

Join us for these workshops and gatherings to build our knowledge, our inspiration, and our community.

Presidential Room, Howard Johnson, 1011 Veterans Parkway

Friday, November 16

3:30 - 5:30 PM

Colombia Teach-In

Saturday, November 17

8:30-11:00 AM

WFP Breakfast / Open House

Convention Center Room 201

Saturday, November 17

5:00-6:30 PM

Workshop: Violence Against

Faith-Based Communities in Colombia

6:30-8:00 PM

Workshop: The Roots of Migration:

FreeTrade and US Foreign Policy

People Power Prevails in Bolivia: A Book Review

- by Malcolm Bell

The Price of Fire: Resource Wars and Social Movements in Bolivia (AK Press, 2007) by Benjamin Dangl makes a nice bookend for "Cowboy in Caracas" (reviewed in the July "Interconnect"). The former discusses Evo Morales and recent events in Bolivia more comprehensively though less conversationally than the latter discusses Hugo Chavez and recent events in Venezuela. Both leaders derive their political power from power asserted by an aroused public. Both embody the historic trend in Latin America to struggle free from U.S. domination and exploitation. "*The Price of Fire*" is an informative, broadly researched, in-depth report on the following:

The US War on Drugs, to eradicate the coca that is "one of Bolivia's most cherished natural resources," has produced hardship and injustice for subsistence farmers, militarization of some of the countryside, tortures and deaths, yet no reduction in the cocaine on US streets. Resistance to this facet of US imperialism advanced Morales' career.

The 2000 Water War broke out in Cochabamba after San Francisco-based Bechtel Corporation, through the magic of neoliberalism, monopolized the public water supply and jacked up the price. The people, through strikes and mass protests that cost the life of a teenage boy shot by an SOA graduate, ousted Bechtel. There was another Water War in Alto in 2005.

Taxes and Death in 2003. Before the IMF would grant a badly needed loan, it pressed neoliberal President Gonzalo Sanchez de Losada to increase taxes on the poor. Again protesters took to the streets, 31 were killed and hundreds wounded, and Sanchez de Losada repealed the increase.

The 2003 Gas War. Should most profits from Bolivia's natural gas continue enriching foreign corporations or start benefiting Bolivians? The answer to this no-brainer killed 67 protesters, wounded hundreds more, and drove Sanchez de Losada to flee like some Salvadoran general to Miami. "The legitimacy and power of the Bolivian government was forever changed," Mr. Dangl concludes.

He situates these and other events in history and in the context of related events in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. He shows us the mass mobilizations, the union and street protests, and some grassroots movement-building that have redirected Bolivia's history; and he sorts out the successes and disappointments (so far) of the Morales presidency that began in January, 2006. There is much to think about here, lessons for North American movement-builders to ponder, and considerable reason for cautious hope.

"Working in Haiti taught me several things:... that community-based care, relying on village health workers is the secret to success for programs for chronic diseases, including AIDS and tuberculosis; that some services should not be sold, even for the tiniest price, because there will always be some who cannot pay these 'users' fees,' as they're called, and the ones who cannot pay are precisely the people we came to serve in the first place."

Dr. Paul Farmer

A Revealing Interview

[Ed. note: Lally Weymouth is a reporter for the Washington Post and Newsweek. Both publications carried her interview with President Correa of Ecuador - but with significant omissions in the editing of the Post version. Below is the Post article, with certain Newsweek passages in bold. Thanks to Timi Gerson of Fenton Communications and Chuck Kaufman of Nicanet for the referrals.]

Ecuador's Hugo Chavez? Washington Post, 10/1/07

Ecuador's new left-leaning president, Rafael Correa, studied economics in the United States, but the U.S. way of governing does not seem to have rubbed off on him. He appears set on following the example set by Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez. Last week Correa sat down with Newsweek-Washington Post's Lally Weymouth. Excerpts:

Q. People want to know if you are as anti-U.S. as your rhetoric would indicate. *A. I lived here and have two academic diplomas from the University of Illinois. Historically we have had very good relations with this country, so we are not anti-American at all. We would like to improve our commercial cooperation with the U.S.*

Q. Then why do you oppose the U.S.-Ecuador trade pact? *A. Because it will destroy our agricultural sector.*

From the Newsweek interview

Q: [Then] why do you oppose the U.S.-Ecuador trade pact?

A: Because it will destroy our agricultural sector. Do you believe that free trade is positive for every country? That is a huge mistake. That most protectionist country in history has been the U.S. We believe in trade, but free trade is dangerous for countries like ours.

Q. What is wrong with the free-trade agreement? *A. When you are trading with a country with huge subsidies for the agricultural sector like the U.S. -- the impact of this free-trade agreement would be dangerous for our farmers.*

Q. But surely overall, the impact would be positive? *A. You are wrong. Even for Mexico, you can see a lot of problems [from NAFTA]. The impact on small farmers is very dangerous.*

Q. How close are you to Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez? *A. He is a very good friend of mine.*

From the Newsweek interview

Q: How close are you to Venezuela's Hugo Chavez? You invited him to your Inauguration and called him a close personal friend. A: He is a very good friend of mine. [But] we are building a national Ecuadorian project and don't accept any foreign intervention from either Venezuela or from the U.S.

Q. Do you admire Chavez and think he has done a good job? *A. Yes, I think he's a very honest person -- a clear leader, a very democratic president.*

Q. You are now calling for a new constituent assembly as Chavez did. Why? *A. We don't have a true representative democracy because our representatives don't care about us. So we don't have means to push them to do what people want to do.*

From the Newsweek interview

Q: You are now calling for a new constituent assembly as Chavez did. It's said that this will make the executive branch stronger. A: In our country, the executive power is very weak. Here [in America] you have a much stronger executive power. The executive needs more power in order to lead the country.

Q. It's said that the constituent assembly will make the executive branch

stronger. *A. In our country, the executive power is very weak. . . . The executive needs more power in order to lead the country.*

Q. Why have you said that you would not renew the U.S. lease on the base at Manta in '09? *A. You are asking me why not. I am asking you why "yes."*

Q. Because it is used for anti-drug surveillance flights. *A. Ecuador is not a drug producer, and we have been very successful in our fight against drugs. So why put a foreign military base in our country?*

Q. You have spoken about either not paying or restructuring Ecuador's foreign debt. What is your plan? *A. We are going to pay the foreign debt as long as the situation in the country allows us to pay it. If we don't have enough money to pay the social claims in Ecuador, salaries, etc., and at the same time to pay the foreign debt, our ethical and technical priorities are very clear. First, to attempt to face the national needs, later, the foreign debt.*

Q. In order to create jobs, don't you have to attract foreign direct investment? *A. At this moment, Ecuador doesn't have external financing. We have enough national and public savings in order to make loans to start the growth process and employment creation.*

Q. Why wouldn't it be smarter to attract foreign capital instead of using up public savings? *A. We are not refusing foreign investment. If foreign investment wants to come, it is welcome, but we have our own savings.*

Q. So you are not going to get outside companies to come in and finance refineries? Are they welcome to own them? *A. They are welcome, but we are counting on our own savings in the first instance.*

Q. What's the law? Are they welcome to own them or are you going to nationalize them? *A. We prefer that the kind of business related to non-renewable resources to be owned by the state or by public enterprises.*



Q. Why do you support the seizing of the Occidental oil fields? A. *Because they broke 52 times the contract, our Ecuadorian law -- they believe we are still a colony.*

Q. What is your priority? A. *Constitutional reforms in order to have a true democracy.*

Q. Didn't you crack down on the press and arrest an editor last May? A. *You have very uneducated journalists in our country.*

Q. What is your idea of an uneducated journalist? A. *They believe that in order to have an interview, they have to aggress the other person. They must learn to respect people, especially the president of their republic.*

Q. Our politicians probably don't like being attacked, but they respect the free media. A. *I respect the media, but I also respect the rights of the other person. You don't have the kind of journalists we do. Secondly, not all things are good in this country. In our country, if someone calls you a killer, a thief, a dishonest man, he must prove it; otherwise he goes to jail. I know that here in the United States you can say a lot of things without proof.*

Q. What do you think about President Bush and your relationship with the United States? A. *We have not had any high-level contact with this administration.*

Q. Is there anything you would like the American people to know about you? A. *Perhaps they can be convinced that we are honest people who are doing what any one would do in our country with huge inequalities.*

Democracy!" tour and talk about her union's work to stop the privatization of the public health care system and the increasing repression that social movement and union leaders are suffering from the Salvadoran government. (CISPES, 202-521-2510, cispes@cispes.org).

Special Reports

- "Behind Closed Doors: What they're not telling us about the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP)." Council of Canadians (www.canadians.org).
- CAFTA Monitoring Report on Costa Rica (Stop CAFTA Coalition, www.stopcafta.org).
- Venezuela's Economy During the Chavez Years (Center for Economic Policy Research, cepr@cepra.net).
- Venezuela after the re-election of Hugo Chavez: Political Dynamic and Policy Changes, conference report 7/07 (Washington Office on Latin America, www.wola.org).
- Lifting the Burden, Weighing the Rules: Faith foundations for the Trade Justice Campaigns (www.christian-aid.org.uk/campaign/trade).
- Justice for All. The Struggle for Worker Rights in Colombia (Solidarity Center, www.solidarity-center.org).
- Colonial Capitalism: Crisis and responses in Puerto Rico (www.nacla.org).
- Dyn Corp's Tentacles, from Puerto Rico to the Mexican Border (<http://news/nacla.org/2007/09/10/dyncorp>).

Videos

From the Chiapas Media Project/Promedios (www.promedios-mexico.org/eng/videos).

- "The Other Campaign: Indigenous Voices of the North (part 1) - a 4-video compilation in Spanish and Pima with English subtitles. 2007. Last year The Other Campaign (the Zapatista initiative launched in an effort to evolve new governance

Resources

Major Events

- **October.** Fair Trade Month (fair-trade@globalexchange.org).
- **October 21.** No War, No Warming. Mass mobilization, Washington (co-sponsor, Global Exchange, 800-497-1994).
- **November 16-19.** Shut Down the School of the Americas Vigil, Ft. Benning, Columbus, GA (SOAW, 202-234-3440, www.soaw.org).
- **March 15-16.** Possible peace demo, Washington - early planning stages.
- **March 14-16.** Venezuela Symposium, Washington (Alliance for Global Justice, Bambose at 202-544-9355, bambose@afgj.org).
- **March 16-17.** Close the National Endowment for Democracy, Washington (Venezuela Solidarity Network, 202-544-9355).

Campaigns

- Cancel Debt Fast for 67 impoverished countries. Get Congress to pass the

Jubilee Act (Jubilee, USA, www.canceldebtfast.org, Witness for Peace Nicaragua, 202-547-6112).

- Cancel Haiti's Debt (Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, www.HaitiJustice.org).
- Haiti Truth Act. H.R. 351: To establish the Independent Commission on the 2004 Coup d'Etat in the Republic of Haiti. Rep. Barbara Lee's bill in Congress for investigation of human rights abuses since President Aristide's ouster, and the US role (www.HaitiJustice.org).
- Free the Cuban Five (see article in this issue and www.freethefive.org, 415-821-6545).
- End the Travel Ban to Cuba (Latin America Working Group, 202-546-7010, lawg@lawg.org).
- Trade Justice, Fair Trade (www.trade-justiceusa.org).
- US Stop Denying Visas. Example: Salvadoran Maria Pleitez was denied a visa to participate in CISPES' "We Are Not Terrorists, Organizing is

structures in Mexico) spoke with many indigenous communities in Northern Mexico.

- “*A Very Big Train Called The Other Campaign.*” (Sp. with Eng. subtitles, 39 min. 2006). Preparatory meetings between indigenous communities and Mexican civil society before launching La Otra.
- “*Water, Our Life, Our Hope* (Sp. with Eng. subtitles, 68 min. 2006). Indigenous communities in Mexico documenting severe water disparities, transnational industrial pollution and social organizations trying to solve their situations.)
- “*You’re Saying That We Can’t Pass?*” (Sp. with Eng. Subtitles, 13 min. 2007). Teachers’ struggles in Oaxaca and political prisoners in San Salvador Atenco.
- “*Letters for Our Words: Steps Toward Autonomy*” (Sp. and Tzeltal, Eng. subtitles, 13 min. 2006). The right to education, one of basic demands of the Zapatistas. An autonomous educational project independent of government.
- “*Crossroads*” -Three 10 minute reflections inspired by experiences traveling in Mexico, Nicaragua and Cuba with Witness For Peace. They are about the spiritual journey, personal conversion and the sacred path of peacemakers. There are three 10 minute narrations followed by a series of discussion questions.
<http://www.peaceloft.com/Store.html>

Books

Hugo! The Hugo Chavez Story from Mud Hut to Perpetual Revolution, by Bart Jones. Hardback, 570pp. Steerforth Press. Sept. 2007, \$30.

An Unbroken Agony: Haiti, From Revolution to the Kidnapping of a President, by Randall Robinson. Basic Civitas Books, New York, 280 pages, USD \$26. www.randallrobinson.com.

NAFTA From Below: Farmers and indigenous communities speak out on the impact of free trade in Mexico, by

Martha Ojeda and Rosemary Hennessy (www.coalitionforjustice.net or 210-732-8957).

Travel (see Codes, below)

Argentina: 1/7-17 (GX, Building economic justice)

Bolivia: 11/24-12/4 (GX, natural resources, social movements, water privatization, the Andean highlands).

Border: 10/30-11/4 (WP, El Paso-Ciudad Juarez); 2/17-22 (WP, Reynosa-Matamoros); 4/24-27 (GX, free trade effects). Note: to design your own delegation or to join one call Borderlinks at 520-628-8263 or www.borderlinks.org.

Colombia: 10/20-11/1 (WP, Contrasting political systems, Venezuela and Colombia); 1/18-29 (CPT, Bogata, justice, human rights, Magdalene Medio, politics, history, economics); 1/26-2/5 (WP, Waging peace instead of war); 3/5-15 (WP, Free trade and sustainability, flowers and food); 5/14-27 (CPT, Bogata, accompany indigenous Awa people in Narino); 5/25-6-2 (WP, Globalization and coffee, free trade and fair trade - with Equal Exchange); 7/16-29 (CPT, Bogata, mining zone in E. Bolivar, San Lucas, conflict, repression).

Costa Rica: 7/21-31/08 (GX ecotourism and sustainability).

Cuba: Note: GX can take research delegations for full-time professionals. 11/25-12/4 (GX, agriculture); 12/27-1/5 (GX, Educations delegation, New Years); 2/3-12 (GX, agriculture); 3/2-11 (GX, health and healing); 4/6-16 (GX, architecture); 6/22-7/1 (GX, health and healing). Note: Despite the travel ban, Burlington College in Vermont has a license for an overseas study program in Havana - open to students (sbaird@burlington.edu or 802-862-9616).

Ecuador: 12/27-1/5 (GX, social and environmental justice).

El Salvador: 2/3-9 (CGE, putting a face on microfinance).

Guatemala: 1/7-15 (GX, fair trade in action); 3/12-22 (GATE, Holy Week); 5/19-6-1 (CGE, environmental justice, sustainable development); 5/26-6/3 (GX, fair trade in action).

Haiti: TBA: Haiti for Karnaval 2008, history, art, environment, Carnival (elise@konpay.org).

Mexico: 10/26 - 11/2 (Native Seeds/SEARCH, 800-726-7231, cultural immersion, markets, folkart, Day of the Dead); 10/26-11/3 (GX, Oaxaca autonomous communities here and in Chiapas, fair trade, co-ops, environment); 12/27-1/4 (GX Chiapas, New Years); 1/7-17 (GATE, artists, Tonantzin); 1/25-22 (WP, Globalization and coffee, free trade and fair trade in Chiapas); 2/16-24 (GATE, Oaxaca, cultural immersion, women's spiritual quests); 3/1-3/9 (WP, Oaxaca crisis and the roots of migration); 3/26-4/3 (GX, Chiapas); 6/4-12 (GX, Chiapas).

Nicaragua: 11/9-17 (CGE, CAFTA and its discontents, free trade, development); 1/4-13 (WP, winter break: Nicaragua on a new horizon); 12/14-23 (GX, fair trade, Fair Harvest Exchange Program); 1/4-13 (CGE, coffee with a conscience, the LWR Coffee Project); 1/12-20 (Wisconsin Coordinating Council, 608-257-7230, www.wccnica.org-alternative. Economic projects, fair trade, housing).

Venezuela: 10/20-11/1 (WP, contrasting political systems, Venezuela and Colombia); 11/18-28 (GX, new vision for the Americas); 12/9-19 (GX, same); 1/26-2/5 (GX - same); 3/1-11 (GX, women's rights); 4/12-22 (GX, new vision for the Americas); 5/24-6/3 (GX, oil and economy); 6/21-71 (GX, Afro-Venezuela culture); 7/26-8/1 (GX, health and healing). NOTE: May to August GX has 2-4 week Spanish language programs in Caracas-Merida).

CODES

CGE: Center for Global Education, Augsburg College. 612-330-1159; globaled@augsburg.edu.



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CPT: Christian Peacemaker Teams. 773-277-0253 or www.cpt.org.

GATE: Global Awareness Through Experience. 608-791-5283 or www.gate-travel.org.

GX: Global Exchange. 800-497-1994, x242, latinamerica@globalexchange.org; www.globalexchange.org.

WP: Witness for Peace. 202-547-6112, www.witnessforpeace.org, erik@witnessforpeace.org.

Movement News

Banco del Sur: To bypass the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Banco del Sur is being formed by Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay. Uruguay plans to join (Christian Science Monitor, 7/11/07).

Bolivia: (1) The government of President Evo Morales announced control of the national railway system, having already nationalized Bolivia's oil, natural gas, and much of the mining industry (Christian Science Monitor 7/17/07). (2) In 6/07 Bolivia withdrew from the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (part of the World Bank), joining Venezuela and Bolivia. Bechtal had used the ICSID to sue Bolivia for kicking them out of its water company (Mark Weisbrot, Center for Economic Policy).

Mercosur: The South American Economic Alliance and many Latin American foreign ministers demanded, on 5/23/07, that the US prosecute Luis Posada Carriles for acts of terrorism in 1976 (Central America News 5/26/07).

Haiti: 10,000 marched on 7/18 to demand the return of President Aristide (Randall Robinson, as interviewed 7/23/07 by Amy Goodman of "Democracy Now".)

Ecuador: On 9/30/07 the army carried ballots and election kits for the election of a 130-member assembly to write a new constitution (Democrat & Chronicle, 9/30/07).

Venezuela: Pandemic Studios (principal investor Bono) announced on 9/24 it is delaying release of the new video game Mercenaries II, following a campaign of international resistance to its depiction of an invasion of Venezuela (VSN, www.vensolidarity.org).

Mexico: (1) In Chiapas Zapatista communities are under increasing attacks by police, army, and paramilitaries to give up the land taken in the 1994 uprising (Mexico Solidarity Network [MSN], 9/17/07). (2) Mexican trucks began 9/6 to enter the US in a NAFTA pilot project after the Teamsters, Sierra Club and Public Citizen lost a federal district court decision. Truckers were greeted at border crossings by Teamsters with racist signs and chants (MSN 9/07).

Colombia: Army-backed, armed paramilitary groups are forcing peasants off their land to allow for plantations of palm oil. Palm oil is a biofuel that several corporations are trying to produce there. The people displaced add to one of the world's worst refugee crises (CLASP, summer 07).

Cuba: IFCO/Pastors for Peace (at work for 40 years!) completed the 18th Friendshipment, again with no arrests despite crossing the US-Mexico border and returning from Cuba without a license. They delivered tons of medical and other equipment, five school buses and other vehicles (IFCO newsletter, 6/07).

Portland OR: Activists have pressured the City Council to adopt a sweat-free ordinance.

US Social Forum: 6/27-7/1 in Atlanta. 10,000 people, representing over 100 US organizations plus 400 international delegates from 68 countries, attended.

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