

FTAA—SOME CORPORATIONS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

by Helen Lawler, MA and Leanne Wylet, B.A.

The Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) will expand the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) geographically, to include the entire western hemisphere except Cuba.¹ It may also increase the rights of multinational corporations—including pharmaceutical companies—to change local, state, and national laws that conflict with potential profits.¹ Although some of the proposals are not yet final, FTAA negotiations have been going on behind closed doors since 1994, with the goal of regional economic integration.² Like the WTO and NAFTA, FTAA will be governed by secret tribunals,³ and citizens will not have the right to appeal

Multinational corporations have already benefitted from NAFTA and the World Trade Association (WTO). WTO mandated 20-year patents are being phased in on all new patents, including medicines.⁴

NAFTA allows patenting of life forms, including medicinal herbs⁴ and seeds for agricultural crops. NAFTA also encourages agribusiness at the expense of consumers and small farmers.⁵

NAFTA set the precedent for “investor-to-state” lawsuits,⁶ which allow any foreign-investor-owned company to challenge local, state, and national laws which limit their potential profitability. Examples of NAFTA lawsuits impacting public-health include:

- Ethyl corporation vs Canada—re toxic fuel additive⁴
- Methanex Corp. vs. US—re toxic fuel additive
- Metalclad Corp. v. Mexico, re toxic waste dumping
- S.D. Myers Corp. vs Canada, re PCB waste disposal

FTAA Proposed expansion of corporate rights includes: ending compulsory licensing that allows

developing countries to produce drugs cost-effectively; privatization of services, including water systems⁷ (Sweatshops) and other utilities, and hospitals⁸, corporate rights to exploit natural resources; harmonization of laws and regulations (subtly at first)⁵ and eliminating government oversight over public

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If “FREE trade” were free, it would mean that GOVERNMENT HAS NO CONTROL. PEOPLE can make their own trade deals, when they are FREE. FTAA is NOT about free trade. FTAA is about government control of everything; including trade. Under FTAA, government is accountable to international dispute resolution courts, but not to the governed. they are just calling it “free”, because it sounds better that way. Who would favor if they called it what it is? It is tyranny over an entire continent.

services⁹ and foreign investment capital.³

Although FTAA publications address public health, environment and labor concerns,⁸ they are not backed up by any means of enforcement. If anything, FTAA will discourage governments from legislating and enforcing meaningful laws in these areas⁹

From a modern western world-view, the subordination of public health to corporate profits is intolerable, but it is consistent with a post-modern world-view, in which human beings are considered merely resources to be exploited.

(For endnotes, see p. 9)

For more information:

Read “Erasing America,” *The New American* magazine, http://www.thenewamerican.com/current_issue/

See “False Opposition” web site at: <http://www.stopthftaa.org/opposition/>

See: http://www.stopthftaa.org/artman/publish/article_131.shtml

See: http://capwiz.com/jbs/mail/oneclick_compose/?alertid=5769006

See: vetzine@rovin.net and <http://vetzine.blogspot.com/>

See: http://www.stopthftaa.org/artman/publish/article_131.shtml

What you can do:

Go to the FTAA web site and sign their online petition, www.stopthftaa.org/

Contact Congress and check their voting record at: www.stopthftaa.org/congress

Please join Freedom Force International at <http://www.freedomforceinternational.org> and help spread the word.