

Justice Rising

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JUSTICE RISING is a publication of **The Alliance for Democracy**, whose mission is to end the domination of our politics, our economics, the environment, and our culture by large corporations. The Alliance seeks to establish true economic and political democracy and to create a just society with a sustainable, equitable economy.

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Migration Blues

by Jim Tarbell

In Ecuador, on the west side of the Andes, just south of the Río Guayllabamba, the eighth graders in the town of

Los Bancos made a homage to the reality that migration has had in their lives. The mural covers the wall surrounding the school. The portion shown above says “The Migration: You can not buy happiness, not even with all the money of the world.” Like many villages, the families of Los Bancos have been torn apart by migration. This mural is the anguished cry of the children left behind.

Thirty-five years ago, I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer there, when Los Bancos was a thriving frontier town. It stood at the center of a land reform project created by a new road carved into the inaccessible jungle. People were excited to start a new life, in a new land, where they could raise their own family in their own homes, much as the American pioneers did.

Now life has changed. All of Ecuador has been devastated by globalization. Oil in the Amazon promised prosperity for all, but only delivered toxins along the route of the pipeline that now passes through Los Bancos. At the turn of the millennium, mired in international debt, the Ecuadorian financial system went bankrupt. The political elites abandoned the national currency and took on the US Dollar as their national currency. The savings of middle-class Ecuadorians vanished in the transaction. Breadwinners had no choice but to migrate to North America or Spain, leaving the cries of the children scrawled on the school walls. Repatriated income from workers overseas is now the second largest income source in the country.

The north side of the Guayllabamba River, however, is a different story. There, in the magical communities of Mondriacas and the Intag, people have formed coops for selling their coffee and lufas around the world in the burgeoning fair-trade market. When multinational corporations threatened to put copper mines on their land, they burned them down—twice. Their hand-written sign (shown to the left) says “FRONTLINE OF THE FIGHT FOR LIFE: All of the communities working together with the state of Imbabura and the county of Cotacachi, DECOIN, Intag, Talleres del Gran Valle y otras organizaciones. ESTAMOS DEMOSTRANDO CON HECHOS Y NO CON PALABRAS COMPROMISOS SIGAMOS UNIDOS PARA DEFENDER EL DERECHO DE NUESTRAS COMUNIDADES POR UNA VIDA DIGNA, ECOLÓGICA Y DE PAZ.”

No one wants to leave their family and communities to find a job in another country—not the parents or the children. Building alternative, local economies that work for people, their communities and the planet and is the only viable solution to the pains of migration.



photo: Jim Tarbell



photo: Jim Tarbell

Next JR

The next issue of *Justice Rising* will look at energy, who owns it, who controls it, the Corporations or the People? Sub-missions are welcome. Articles should be 600 words. The deadline will be June 15, 2008. Send submissions to jr@thealliancefordemocracy.org

AfD Says No to Corporate SPP Coup d'État

The Alliance for Democracy now has multiple teachable items to download about the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). On April 21-22, the 4th SPP Summit took place in New Orleans—where the failure of the corporatocracy—government of, for and by the corporate elite—could not be more on display. We will post reports of this “People’s Summit” on the website. The SPP, a handshake deal in 2005 between Bush, Fox of Mexico and Martin of Canada, is more than a trade agreement. Not debated or approved by Congress, it created a parallel bureaucracy of tri-national security and prosperity working groups whose members include military, government officials, and corporate executives.

The AfD has signed a “Letter to Congress” to halt the SPP until there is debate. The Alliance also has many new materials for education and action on the website at www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/SPP. Included are: an action alert “There Is No Time to Lose”; a color poster “We must join Canada and Mexico in mobilizing resistance!!!”; four fact sheets on 1) The Corporate Vision, 2) Super Corridors Linking Mexico, the US and Canada, 3) Corporate Control, Trade and Transport of Water and 4) West Coast Corridor; and two articles by Ruth Caplan and Nancy Price in recent issues of the Progressive Populist. There are PowerPoint presentations and published news articles. These all can be used to grow this tri-national movement against this corporate agenda to move money and commodities anywhere they like in North America, trampling on the rights of communities to control their resources and destinies.