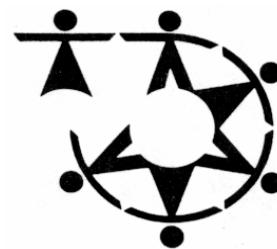


# THE MUSTARD SEED

Denver Justice & Peace Committee



901 W. 14th Avenue, Suite 7, Denver, CO 80204 • 303-623-1463 • www.denjustpeace.org  
June 2007 • Volume 28 • Number 2

## Economic Integration through the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas

By Juan Muñiz

The Fifth Summit of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) was held in late April in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. The summit was attended by the rank and file of a number of South American and Caribbean countries that considered joining the model of economic integration first proposed by Venezuela President Hugo Chavez in 2002.

*Progreso Weekly's* Eduardo Dimas reported that the summit was attended by Haiti President René Preval; Ecuador's Foreign Minister María Fernanda Espinosa; and representatives from other Caribbean countries, including Panama, which are studying the potential impact of joining the agreement.

To date, four countries have signed on to the initiative: Venezuela and Cuba entered into a bilateral agreement in December of 2004, Bolivia joined in 2006 and Nicaragua signed on earlier this year. These four countries comprise what is currently known as the TCP – Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos, or Peoples' Trade Agreement. ALBA has not yet reached hemisphere-wide status, but interest in the initiative is growing, echoing a left-leaning trend currently sweeping Latin America.

ALBA, the brainchild of Chavez and Cuba President Fidel Castro, is a response to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), heavily advocated by the U.S. government since first being introduced in 2003. FTAA is often billed as a neo-liberal model that encourages the elimination of trade barriers among all

of the countries on the American continents, akin to the North American Free Trade Agreement. Chavez has called FTAA a "tool of imperialism" and from the outset has been vocal in protesting its implementation.

Caribbean Net News reported that Chavez has been trying to rally support for anti-U.S. alliances, in particular opposing the creation of free trade zones in the Americas. This year's summit was intended to encourage an "anti-imperialist" alliance, Caribbean Net News reported.

Unlike its neo-liberal predecessors, ALBA promotes economic integration based on social welfare and mutual economic aid. Venezuela, for example, has been sending thousands of barrels of oil to Cuba every day (*continued on page 5*)



Protestors around the world have raised opposition to the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Is ALBA the alternative we have been waiting for?

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Denver Justice and Peace Committee is a volunteer organization dedicated to promoting human rights, economic justice and lasting peace in Latin America through education, solidarity projects and nonviolent activism.

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**Thanks to everyone who continues to help work on program development, fundraising, newsletter publication, mailings, the website, etc.**

**We couldn't do it without you!**

## *Message From the Board*

Were you on the 16<sup>th</sup> St. Mall at noontime on April 20<sup>th</sup> calling out “*Presente*” as the names of hundreds of Guatemalan villages that suffered massacres during the 36 year civil war were read? I wish I could have been there. That day, DJPC members joined with Amnesty International and students from DU’s Graduate School for International Studies in a rally outside the Guatemalan Consulate to demand that former Guatemalan dictator General Efraín Ríos Montt be brought to justice for his 1982-83 “scorched earth” campaign during which hundreds of indigenous communities were decimated.

Carrying red tissue paper carnations bearing a tag with the name of a massacred village, the date of the massacre and the number of people killed, demonstrators went up to the Consulate office in small groups and laid the carnations on conference room chairs. Kara Martinez reported that “this went on for a long time, a strong symbol of the magnitude of the genocide. The Guatemalan Consul told our members in a meeting later that afternoon that they planned to ship the flowers to their Embassy in Washington, D.C.” A strong message was sent that day to the Guatemalan government that people all over the U.S. are standing in solidarity with the Guatemalan people in their struggle for justice.

A huge “thank you” to DJPC folks who were there as part of the Denver Justice & Peace Committee’s persistent efforts on behalf of human rights, economic justice and lasting peace in Latin America! And *special thanks* to Hayden Gore who serves as the CAMINOS intern, and others for all you did in organizing the rally. Thank you also to members Harriet Mullaney and Jonathan Moller who, along with Hayden, represented our collective call to end impunity during the meeting with the Guatemalan Consul.

DJPC will continue to provide opportunities to act in solidarity with the peoples of Latin America.

*You can get involved:*

- Sign a petition on our website at [www.denjustpeace.org](http://www.denjustpeace.org)
- Attend the Salon discussions (help plan them, too!)
- Sign up for our email listserve to become informed of upcoming activities and take part in Urgent Actions.
- Volunteer with CAMINOS or our Advocacy & Nonviolent Activism Committee. We welcome your involvement!

*Connie Curtis*  
DJPC Board Member

# Wine Tasting Benefit

Thursday  
September 6, 2007  
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Lumber Baron Inn  
& Gardens  
2555 W 37th Ave  
(37th & Bryant)  
Denver



*Featuring Latin American  
wines generously provided by  
Mayfair Liquors*

\*\*\*

*Appetizers and Music*

\*\*\*

*Registration  
\$30 by August 31st  
\$45 at the door*

*(To register, please return the form on page ten  
of the Mustard Seed along with payment)*

\*\*\*

*Proceeds benefit DJPC's work  
towards human rights  
in Latin America*

For more information, tickets, and a map to the venue, please contact our office or  
visit our website: 303.623.1463 [www.denjustpeace.org](http://www.denjustpeace.org)

## CAMINOS: Focus on Justice for Genocide in Guatemala

By Hayden Gore, CAMINOS Intern

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, nearly 100 protesters attended a downtown rally organized by the Denver Justice & Peace Committee to urge the Guatemalan government to move forward on the genocide cases against ex-military dictator Efraín Ríos Montt and his high command. DJPC's rally coincided with similar events at Guatemalan consulates across the country in coordination with Amnesty International's National Day of Action.

Since the rally, the FRG Party has registered Ríos Montt's candidacy for the Guatemalan Congress with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal in what the *Prensa Libre* referred to as record time. In public statements, Ríos Montt has tried to project a blithe indifference towards the charges against him. Recently, he dismissed them as the political machinations of "the communists and anti-communists that failed to take over the country in 1982," when he was *de facto* president of Guatemala. Despite his apparent lack of concern about the charges, he is clearly aware of the importance of gaining parliamentary immunity to protect himself from prosecution.

A recent opinion piece in the *Prensa Libre* questioned whether or not the congressional seat will guarantee Ríos Montt the immunity he is seeking. The article referred to a statement by the former dean of the Rafael Landívar University law school that parliamentary immunity was never intended to have a retroactive effect. If the law is applied correctly, it protects congressmen only from prosecution for crimes committed during their time in Congress and has no bearing on their legal standing for past crimes.

The international Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide supports this position. According to the Genocide Convention, states have a positive obligation "to prevent and to punish" genocide "whether committed in time of peace or in time of war." Guatemala ratified the convention on January 13, 1950, more than 30 years before Ríos Montt took control of the country by military coup. DJPC is working to see that not another 30 years pass before justice prevails.



Above: Univisión covers the rally at the Guatemalan Consulate. The story ran on their evening news broadcast.  
Photo credit: Margie Thompson

Below: 100 activists rally for justice on the 16th Street Mall, demanding Ríos Montt be held accountable for his role in the genocide.  
Photo credit: Margie Thompson



## **Costa Rica to Cease Training at the SOA/WHINSEC!**

*By School of the Americas Watch (SOAW)*

Costa Rican President Oscar Arias announced Wednesday that Costa Rica will cease to send police to train at the U.S. Army Ft. Benning facility after citing its history of involvement in military coups and human rights abuses throughout Latin America.

Arias, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, made the decision after talks with a delegation of the School of the Americas Watch, including the Rev. Roy Bourgeois and Lisa Sullivan Rodriguez. The human rights advocacy group has campaigned since 1990 for the closure of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), formerly known as the School for the Americas (SOA), located at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Costa Rica has no army but has sent approximately 2,600 police officers over the years to be trained at the school. Minor Masis, leader of Costa Rica's former "Comando Cobra" anti-drug squad attended the School in 1991 and returned to Costa Rica, only to serve a 42-year jail term for rape and murder committed during a 1992 drug raid. Costa Rica currently has three policemen at the center.

"When the courses end for the three policemen we are not going to send any more," Arias said.

Costa Rica is the fourth country to announce a withdrawal from the SOA/WHINSEC. In 2006, the governments of Argentina and Uruguay announced that they would cease all training at the school, becoming the second and third countries to announce a cessation of training. In January of 2004, Hugo Chavez announced that Venezuela would no longer send troops to train at the school.

Costa Rica's withdrawal from WHINSEC is a great victory for human rights in Latin America. With this major breakthrough, Costa Rica adds its name to the list of countries who are rejecting the destructive approach of institutions such as the SOA/WHINSEC. Combat training and military spending as a means to "solve" social problems do not bring peace and democracy.

*This article comes to DJPC from School of the Americas Watch, which can be found on the web at [www.SOAW.org](http://www.SOAW.org).*

*(Economic Integration - continued from page 1)*

in exchange for assistance from Cuba's state-employed medical personnel. The implications of such a model of integration are far reaching and of growing concern to U.S. interests.

Ben Dangl, an author on social movements in Bolivia and editor of *Upside Down World*, an online magazine dedicated to coverage of Latin American politics, recently told the e-zine *Toward Freedom* that Venezuelan advisors and funds have contributed greatly to grassroots movements in Bolivia—fueled largely by Evo Morales' administration. According to Dangl, Venezuelan loans, advice and other monetary aid are replacing those of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in many ways.

Money and advice from Venezuela, Dangl says, have no neo-liberal or imperialistic strings or conditions attached—a common feature of similar IMF or U.S. aid. He calls this integration and solidarity among left-leaning South American leaders an historic shift, powered at least in part by the failure of neo-liberalism in South America. Leaders such as Chavez and Morales, Dangl says, are not giving in to the U.S. government or to U.S. corporate interests.

This autonomy is evidenced by Chavez' moves toward nationalizing Venezuela's oil industry, which holds the world's largest oil reserves outside the Middle East and is the third largest provider of foreign oil to the United States, according to CNN.

## **ADVOCACY & NONVIOLENT ACTIVISM UPDATE**

*By Doug Stephens, Advocacy & Nonviolent Activism Intern*

### **Fast Track**

Trade Promotion Authority, more commonly known as Fast Track, delegates to the President Congress' constitutional authority to set the terms of trade agreements. Under Fast Track, the President is authorized to negotiate trade deals with foreign countries without consulting with Congress or state legislators. Once the deal is solidified and the executive branch writes the implementing legislation, the bill is submitted to Congress. Congress cannot amend the President's bill either in committee or in the Senate or House, and is only allowed a yes or no vote. The bill can be passed with a simple majority and must be voted on within 45 days of submittal to each house. Therefore, the entire Congressional consideration can take no longer than 90 days. Though Fast Track legislation is legal, many argue that in a broad sense it is unconstitutional.

Congress enacted Fast Track in the Trade Act of 1974. In 1994, the authority expired when the Republican Congress did not renew it for President Bill Clinton. Under the authority granted to the executive branch of the government, a number of contentious trade agreements were established, including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). President Bush made Fast Track an integral part of his campaign platform in 2000. Despite a narrow House vote, the Trade Act of 2002 passed both houses of Congress, reestablishing the authority for the President.

Under the more recent period of Fast Track authority, Congress approved the U.S.- Chile Free Trade Agreement and the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA), among others. The Democratic leadership recently reached an historic agreement with the Bush administration that will advance trade deals with Peru, Panama, and Colombia before Fast Track expires. The details of the agreement have not been disclosed but early indications suggest that all three agreements still fall short of the Democrats' promises to protect labor rights and environmental standards.

The Fast Track negotiation authority will expire June 30 of this year unless Congress votes to renew the legislation. Though few actions have been taken thus far, DJPC – in conjunction with advocacy efforts across the nation – encourages you to contact Senators Allard and Salazar and your House Representative to let them know that you favor sane trade agreements, characterized by Congressional debate, transparent negotiations, and an adherence to human rights standards.

FOR CONGRESSIONAL MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:

<http://www.denjustpeace.org/legislativeadvo.html>

### **Let DJPC Know When You Take Action!**

In an attempt to improve our advocacy efforts, DJPC would like to know when members take action on an issue. If you contact you legislators in response an Urgent Action Update, a Mustard Seed article, or other information brought to your attention by DJPC, please e-mail [legislative@denjustpeace.org](mailto:legislative@denjustpeace.org) with the subject "I took action on [...]." Our collective voice becomes stronger with each individual's participation. **Thank you for your cooperation!**

## **DJPC Actions taken since February 2007**

- Contacted Governor Bill Ritter and State Rep. Dorothy Butcher to protest the virtual enslavement of prison inmates as a replacement to a shortage of farm hands due to harsh and hastily written state anti-immigration laws.
- Signed on to a letter circulated by the Venezuela Solidarity Emergency Response Network that urged celebrity philanthropist Bono to withdraw his investment in Pandemic Studios. Pandemic Studios recently released the videogame, “Mercenaries 2,” which depicts the invasion of Venezuela, the overthrow of the government, the destruction of major Venezuelan cities and rural areas, and the takeover of the oil industry.
- Urged Colorado Representatives to support H.R.1176, the “Child Citizen Protection Act.” The bill would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1996, giving immigration judges discretion in ordering the deportation of alien parents of citizen children. Rep. John Salazar co-sponsored the legislation.
- Signed onto a letter against the renewal of “Fast Track,” and to a letter circulated by Padres y Jovenes Unidos in support of the Dream Act.
- Urged Colorado Representatives to co-sponsor H.R. 1707, which calls for the suspension of operations at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) in order to investigate the history of human rights abuses and failed policies of the institution. WHINSEC replaced the School of the Americas in 1999. Rep. Diana DeGette co-sponsored the bill.
- Contacted the U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica and Costa Rican President Oscar Arias requesting that they desist from pressuring the Costa Rican Assembly to ratify CAFTA. The repression of opposition was preventing substantive debate on the issue within the Costa Rican Legislature.
- Wrote Dr. Santiago Canton, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico requesting that they take measures to ensure the Mexican government conducts a thorough and open investigation into the murder of Santiago Rafael Cruz in Monterrey. Santiago Cruz was a staff field organizer for the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC). The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has granted FLOC's petition for protective measures, obligating the Mexican government to provide security for FLOC personnel while in Mexico.
- Thanked Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez for bowing to international pressure and prohibiting new coalmines and the expansion of existing coalmines in the indigenous territories of the Sierra de Perija. The action set important precedents for the rights of indigenous peoples, environmental protection, and movement away from fossil fuel energy.
- A DJPC delegation met with staffers from Senator Salazar’s office to discuss concerns regarding Plan Colombia, Guatemala, and trade issues. This was part of an ongoing effort to inform our Congressmen of their constituents’ concerns for Latin America and to strengthen DJPC’s voice in Congressional offices.
- Urged Colorado Representatives to sign onto a letter circulated by Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) that called for the extradition of Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt to Spain for prosecution of gross human rights violations committed during his dictatorship in Guatemala in the 1980s. Congressman Udall joined 30 other representatives in signing the letter, as well as writing a separate, personalized letter to the Guatemalan Ambassador to the U.S.
- Asked that local churches and activists engage in Days of Prayer and Action for Peace in Colombia.

# Graft Mars the Recruitment of Mexican Guest Workers

*By Elisabeth Malkin © The New York Times, May 24, 2007*

*NOTE: In late March, DJPC put out an action alert on the murder of Mexico-based migrant labor organizer Santiago Rafael Cruz (see page 7). This is an abridged copy of an article that was written as a result. The full article can be found at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/24/world/americas/24unions.html?ex=1180756800&en=f80a801009f3eaaf&ei=5070&emc=eta1>*

TAMPAMOLÓN CORONA, [Mexico](#) — Cástulo Benavides, a union organizer, came to this forgotten mountain town to tell its men how to get legal jobs in the tobacco fields of North Carolina. But this year he introduced them to a change in a longstanding practice: the men will not have to pay anyone to get those jobs.

“That’s something that we won with the union,” Mr. Benavides explained to the workers in the sweltering municipal auditorium here. “We are stepping on some people’s toes, and we’re doing it hard.”

The response, if that is what it is, has been brutal. In April, Mr. Benavides’s co-worker Santiago Rafael Cruz was bound and beaten to death at the union’s office in Monterrey, in northern Mexico. The Ohio-based union, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, says the killing was a political attack after the union cleaned up corrupt practices of recruiting workers, like charging them a fee to be hired.

Mr. Rafael Cruz’s killing comes as the [United States Senate](#) has restarted debate on a long-stalled [immigration](#) package that proposes an expanded guest worker program. But the way those workers are recruited in Mexico has received little attention in the debate. Before planting and harvest time in the United States it has been common for local recruiters to fan out across Mexico’s parched countryside to sign up guest workers. The recruiters charge the Mexicans hundreds of dollars, sometimes more, for the job and the temporary visa that comes with it.

“That line of corruption touches both countries,” said Baldemar Velásquez, the president of the union. “And the people at the bottom in Mexico end up paying the price.”

The aftermath of Mr. Rafael Cruz’s killing has rippled all the way to Washington.

Last year the United States issued about 37,100 temporary visas for agricultural workers, said Todd Huizinga, a spokesman for the United States Consulate in Monterrey. Mexico accounted for 92 percent of them.

Mr. Rafael Cruz, 29, who was originally from Oaxaca, began working with Mr. Benavides in Monterrey in February after working for the farm workers’ union in the United States. He was sleeping in the union’s office while looking for an apartment.

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Debajo del Agua  
Presents its first record release  
Arte-Sano

Original music fusing a vast diaspora of genres, styles, and influences into a medley that incorporates elements of hip-hop, Andean music, salsa, samba, cumbia and reggae. Debajo del Agua is a local Denver-area band, made up of seven musicians from Chile, Peru, El Salvador and the States.

Their songs include messages of social justice and peace.

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A portion of the proceeds will benefit DJPC's work for human rights in Latin America.

*DJPC Wine Tasting Benefit Registration*

Please mail this form in with payment for advanced registration.  
DJPC will notify you by phone or e-mail to confirm receipt.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF GUESTS: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please note that all attendees must be 21 years of age and carry ID with them to be admitted to the event.)

Registration is \$30 in advance (must be postmarked by August 31st)

Checks should be made out to "DJPC Education Fund"

Mail to: Denver Justice & Peace Committee

901 W 14th Avenue, Suite 7  
Denver, CO 80204



# Welcome to DJPC!

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\_\_\_\_\_

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I would like to continue to receive *The Mustard Seed* and renew my DJPC membership for \$30 per year.

I would like to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help with the work of DJPC and its programs.

I would like to receive Events Announcements & Action Alerts via e-mail.

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

For tax deductible contributions, please make checks out to "DJPC Education Fund."

## SAVE THE DATE!

DJPC's Annual  
Celebration and  
Global Peace  
AWARDS NIGHT

**Saturday, November 3**

Featuring  
Keynote Speaker  
**Jennifer Harbury**

### Denver Justice and Peace Committee

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