Another Hole in the Head

This week thirty-four heads of state will meet in Quebec, Canada to decides who wins and who loses in the Free Trade Area of the America agreement. At this “Summit of the Americas” they hope to impose a NAFTA-style pact on workers from Chile to Canada.

Corporations argue that an FTAA agreement will mean lower prices for consumers and higher rates of economic growth for the hemisphere. If NAFTA is any guide, their cheerleading ignores the harsh facts.

In the Economic Policy Institute’s report *NAFTA AT SEVEN,* what really happened to workers in Canada, the United States and Mexico becomes crystal clear. Workers in all three countries suffered:

CANADA

- **Imports destroyed more Canadian jobs than exports created. Over 296,000 Canadian jobs were lost to imports.**
- **Unemployment held at 9.6 percent for most of the 1990’s and was higher than any decade since the 1930’s.**
- **Manufacturing employment remains 6 percent below its level when Canada and the U.S. entered into their 1989 Free Trade Agreement.**

UNITED STATES

- **Trade deficits with Canada and Mexico exploded from $16.6 billion to $62.8 billion since 1993.**
- **Those trade deficits meant 766,000 Americans lost jobs due to NAFTA.**
- **Plus NAFTA pushed down wages for blue collar boomers who account for 72.7 percent of the U.S. workforce.**

MEXICO

- **Maquiladora jobs grew from 420,000 to 1.3 million in the 1990’s.**
- **Yet manufacturing wages fell 21 percent across Mexico. Incomes of salaried workers fell 25 percent by 1998. And the self-employed saw their incomes cut by 40 percent.**

North American workers need another NAFTA like another hole in the head. Instead of exporting our jobs, President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Jean Chretien ought to work overtime to save the jobs that remain.

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