

Free Trade Assault on America

Trade ministers from 34 countries will arrive in Miami this week for talks aimed at creating the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), an economic free-fire zone stretching from Alaska and the Yukon Territories to Argentina and affecting more than 800 million people.

Labor leaders from across the Americas will also be in Miami this week – alongside tens of thousands of union members determined to protect themselves and their countries from becoming trans-national cannon fodder in this latest global greed fest.

FTAA proponents make no secret of their goal to establish NAFTA-like trade rules that would be binding on all countries of the Western Hemisphere, except Cuba. As you know, the North American Free Trade Agreement triggered a decade of de-industrialization across North America and cost millions of jobs.

Working families are coming to Miami to bear witness to the damage done even in countries that were the supposed beneficiaries of NAFTA. In Mexico for example, impossibly low wages and miserable working conditions are being preserved to ensure an uninterrupted parade of expatriate U.S. and Canadian corporations.

Sadly, the gross exploitation of workers in undeveloped nations is nothing new. What is unique about the FTAA is how it proposes to simultaneously extract wealth from workers in developed *and* undeveloped countries. By opening borders and allowing the greatest economic achievements of developed nations to be auctioned off to the *lowest* bidder, the FTAA guarantees a hemispheric reduction of wages, living standards and social conditions.

The fight for justice and fair treatment across the Western Hemisphere will take place in Miami this week – but the battle will ultimately be won or lost in the halls of Congress. To learn more about this important issue and events that will take place this week in Miami, visit www.goiam.org and www.aflcio.org/stopftaa.

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